

**Khorunzhaya I.
E.M. Azaryan, research supervisor
National M. Tugan-Baranovsky University
of Economics and Trade of Donetsk**

COUNTRY AS A BRAND: WORLD PRACTICES

Brands have great power: they differentiate certain products; they promise value and high quality, they help customers make their choices. Can a country be seen as a brand? The answer is definitely yes, and to prove this idea some of the examples are given below.

Today, consumers look not only at the performance of the goods-their color, shape, and design- but also at the country, where these products are made. So, these labels as “Made in Germany”, “Made in the USA”, “Made in Switzerland”, and finally “Made in China” influence the choice that consumers make. Certainly, the label “made in China” is the least preferred from the list presented above.

For some touristic countries like Turkey, Greece or Cypress, their country brands start to play an extremely important role. As an example, a greater number of European tourists still prefer Greece to Turkey due to the fact that Turkey has an image of extremely religious, and far from being democratic, country, whereas Greece is associated more with ancient traditions, history, like Olympic Games. So, until Turkey manages to reposition itself as a safer and more “European type” of country it will continue to lose this competitive battle to Greece.

Consequently, when designing an image of the country, this is necessary to be as true as possible, turning country’s weaknesses into its strengths. For example, Muslim culture could be repositioned as something unique and original to learn about in Turkey. It is a great idea to use some catchy titles like: ”Spain- Everything under the sun”, “Greece- Be Closer to Olympic Gods”, “Turkey-Perceive an Ancient Muslim Culture”. Moreover, this is a must to use visual images and symbols that will be associated with this particular town, country: Statue of Liberty in New York, Eiffel Tower in Paris, and Red Square in Moscow. However, many country brand managers forget that negative image of the country is often caused by some serious internal problems, and until these problems are solved this would be impossible to improve the image. So, for Turkey, until there will be terrorist incidents, none of the country brand manager will be able to convince tourist that

Turkey is a safe place to have vacation at.

This is necessary to look at the experience and practices of other countries in building their country brands. Spain is a great example of the country that managed to attract thousands of tourists in a very short period of time.

In 1980s Spain was seen as a poor country, rather isolated and much under effect of France and other neighboring country. However, by 2000 Spain managed to grow its GDP by 23%, becoming one of the most popular touristic places. The secret of success of Spain lies in the following activities undertaken by Spanish government:

- Advertising of Spain on the national and international level (through Discovery Channel, BBC and even MTV international).

- Hosting Barcelona Olympic Games, inviting thousands of tourists from all over the world.

- Penelope Cruz brand also contributed to the image of Spain as a country where beautiful tanned girls live.

All of these actions were carefully planned and coordinated to improve image of Spain as an attractive resort location. In spite of the fact that Spain does have its own problems, like bomb attacks by separatist group ETA, it became famous as a one of the sunniest touristic places in the world.

Ukraine has to adopt the best world practices, following an example of Spain, Greece and even Turkey. Ukraine can offer a great variety of beautiful sights, starting from the Carpathian Mountains and Crimea, finishing with ancient traditions of Lvov and Kiev. So, this is a matter of building a strong country brand for Ukraine.