

7TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
**INTERNATIONAL
PLACE BRANDING
ASSOCIATION (IPBA)**

**PLACE BRANDING IN TIMES OF CRISIS
AND UNCERTAINTY**

**OCTOBER 18-20, 2023
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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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Special thanks to our distinguished keynote speakers, session chairs and paper presenters for sharing their valuable insights and research.

Thanks to the reviewers who, together with the scientific committee, were responsible for the academic quality of the conference papers: Malin Andersson, Daniela Argento, Emma Björner, Roberto Bruni, Josefine Östrup Backe, Alex Deffner, Jörgen Eksell, Jesper Falkheimer, Laura Ripoll Gonzalez, Szilvia Gyimothy, Özgun Imre, Isabelle Karlsson, Olga Kolotouchkina, Marie Ledendahl, Maria Månsson, Sara Vinyals-Mirabent, Jan Henrik Nilsson, Eduardo Oliveira, Monica Porzionato, Efe Sevin, Åsa Thelander, Gary Warnaby, Giannina Warren.

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Sincerely,

Cecilia Cassinger, Olga Rauhut Kompaniets, Lisa Källström, and Ola Thufvesson

2023 IPBA Conference Organising Committee

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Welcome from the conference committee

Dear colleagues, delegates and friends,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the 7th Conference of the International Place Branding Association in Helsingborg, Sweden. The conference is hosted by the Department of Strategic Communication, Lund University, in cooperation with the Department of Service Studies, Lund University, Faculty of Business, Kristianstad University, and School of Business, Innovation and Sustainability, Halmstad University.

This is the first time that the IPBA conference has been held in the Nordic region – home to many remarkable place brands. However, the brand image of the Nordic countries, and Sweden in particular, is currently in a state of flux and is the subject of controversy. These challenges make the conference and a deeper understanding of place branding discourse and practice even more urgent. This is why the theme of the conference – “Place Branding in Times of Crisis and Uncertainty” – is even more relevant today than when it was first formulated a year ago. There is a growing sense that we live in a time of constant crisis and uncertainty, from the catastrophes of climate change to the fractured security architecture in Europe after the war in Ukraine, to the damage to the global economy, to the spread of authoritarianism around the world.

To examine place branding discourse and practice in relation to today’s global crises and uncertainty, we are excited to bring together some of the world’s most prominent researchers and a large number of place brand communication practitioners. Over Swedish ‘fika’ and vegan local food, we hope to discuss questions such as: What do crisis and uncertainty mean for research and practice on place communication and place brands? How can research on place branding contribute to the strengthening of dialogue and co-operation around places? How can places be recreated in a world of crisis and uncertainty?

We hope that you will enjoy your stay in the historic city of Helsingborg and its surroundings. With a bit of luck, we might even get to see the sun rise over Kronborg castle.

Helsingborg, October 2023

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Measuring place branding strategy implementation

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Place branding caught significant attention both among researchers and practitioners in the last decades, moving from corporate branding and marketing concept to a more multidisciplinary approach. Being an influential part of new public management, urban planning, and governance place branding concept became more complex and broader.

Place branding is considered as a way for places to differentiate themselves addressing concrete actions highlighting identity and communicating values to beneficiaries and targets. Even if the literature and practitioners share frameworks and processes to design place branding strategy, problems emerge with the implementation of plans. The question on how to measure place branding strategy implementation remains. A paradox occurs when measurement models and indicators are fragmented or too broad and complicated. Moreover, these models are mostly focused on measuring results and outcomes of events and campaigns, confusing tactical with strategic results. It is necessary to search for measurement systems and indicators focusing on the day-by-day communication and implementation of place branding values and identity coming from the concrete activities, approaches and decisions of place brand primary stakeholders.

This study aims to discuss the nature and possibilities of identifying a measurement model of place branding strategy implementation and to propose a framework for collecting qualitative and quantitative data among the primary stakeholders of a place. The study's conceptual framework adopts place branding and identity concepts to identify measurement indicators of place branding strategy implementation. In particular, the role of primary stakeholders is recognized in their strategy implementation and place identity diffusion.

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Economic and not economic activities, organizations, and citizens that everyday work and live the place can communicate and implement the place branding strategy. For this reason, this work presents a selection of indicators, mainly based on secondary data, helpful to identify if primary stakeholders of a place are on the right track in communicating and implementing the place branding strategy.

Different from the actual existing models about place branding assessment, this study focuses on the primary stakeholders and their interpretation, communication, and implementation of the place branding strategy. Because place branding is a strategy to highlight place identity and values to beneficiaries and targets, the work selects indicators to measure the compatibility between the place identity and values and the effective communication, investments, and actions on the ground coming from the primary stakeholders.

The research makes it possible to measure the alignment between the place branding strategy and place stakeholders' practices, aiding desired positioning and amplifying brand value dissemination. Researchers and practitioners can obtain valuable elements to understand if strategy implementation, stakeholders' involvement and even the communication is going toward the right direction identified by the place branding. It is a process useful at the end of the place branding process but even in progress.

Keywords: place branding, measurement, target groups, primary stakeholders



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