PLACE BRANDING through PHASES of the IMAGE

Balancing Image and Substance

Staci M. Zavattaro

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To Mom and Dad
And to Art Sementelli

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Preface

During 2013, I set a goal for myself to reach out to scholars whom I respected, as a sort of digital thank you for their interesting research and reading. One of those scholars was Mordecai Lee, who studies public relations from a public administration perspective. He kindly responded to my e-mail, indicating that he had actually read some of my work. A minor geek moment ensued. Several weeks later, Dr Lee wrote to me asking if I could help one of his friends and colleagues regarding literature on marketing and branding in the public sector. After enthusiastically agreeing, I then participated in two conference calls with this other professor and her doctoral student. The student was interested in conducting research in place marketing for his dissertation.

The professor started our second call by noting how few people, specifically within public administration, are studying place branding and marketing. They both had the same realization that I had several years ago: branding, marketing, and public relations communications are all happening in public-sector organizations, so it is now incumbent upon scholars in our discipline to not only begin studying *how* to create strategic and meaningful place branding strategies that can positively influence democratic governance but also to *understand the implications* of such place branding endeavors. In other words, we also need to know the consequences of place branding and not just best practices, which certainly are important. Combined, the antecedents and consequences create a powerful picture of the potentials—and also the

pitfalls—of place branding and its associated communication mechanisms within the public sector.

Place branding is a relatively new academic area of inquiry (Govers & Go, 2009; Hankinson, 2010), so scholars are still finding their footing, borrowing theories and practices from other disciplines that include, but are not limited to, urban planning, corporate branding, marketing, public relations, sociology, psychology, management, and organizational communication. Scholars are introducing many useful, yet sometimes dramatically different, theoretical frameworks to explain intricate place branding processes (see, for example, Anholt, 2007; Daspit & Zavattaro, 2014; Gaggiotti et al., 2008; Govers & Go, 2009; Hankinson, 2004; Hanna & Rowley, 2011; Kavaratzis, 2004; Zavattaro, 2012). No matter the construction of the framework, the basic underlying principles remain the same: when executed fully, place branding is a communicative, co-productive, socially constructed, often hard-to-measure strategy that, despite challenges, is becoming a critical governance tool because of increased competition between places (Eshuis et al., 2013;Klijn, et al, 2012; Tiebout, 1956).

That few people are studying place branding from a public administration perspective is neither good nor bad; place branding is naturally interdisciplinary and can benefit from viewpoints from marketing, public relations, urban planning and design, public policy, corporate relations, travel and tourism, hospitality, etc. The aim of this book is to utilize a public administration lens to converge these diverse literature streams as a mechanism to understand how city government organizations are undertaking place branding practices (or engaging in more marketing and public relations) and the related effects of these practices. In other words, what could happen to an organization-public relationship when a place branding campaign is launched?

The approach I take in this book is a bit different from some of my colleagues, as research focuses, quite necessarily, on Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) that are the designated marketing and branding arms for most cities. The theoretical framework presented

in this book (Figure 3.1) is derived from an examination of policies and practices in 21 US cities, coupled with a thorough literature review. City governments here are taken as the lead Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in charge of developing, implementing, and evaluating brand identity. Sometimes, if a CVB also operates within the city (as in Denver, Colorado, Billings, Montana, Las Vegas, Nevada, Chicago, Illinois, for example), there could be tension between the organizations, especially if different brand identities are offered. Studying how city government entities define and shape brand identity is important, as cities are typically thought of as monopolistic service providers not often interested in promoting value added elements. Despite monopolistic intentions, city government officials (both elected and appointed) are turning toward holistic place branding strategies that are becoming critical governance components akin to human resources, budgeting and finance, and public works (Eshuis et al., 2013; Eshuis & Edwards, 2013) because of the realization that resources are scarce, so competition for those resources is often intense. Therefore, it becomes essential to understand *both* the implementation and consequences of this shift toward place branding at the local government level.

To carry out this exploration, I relied upon critical philosophy from Jean Baudrillard (1994) as the overall organizing structure to showcase how cities, based on a combination of governance system, communications style, and promotional tactics used (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a), can proceed through, or stop within, four phases of the image, which have been adapted herein to provide another theoretical framework to explain place branding practices. Detailed further in Chapter 2, phases of the image traces how objects move from a connection to reality (phase one) all the way to a simulation for reality (phase four), whereby objects become, in Baudrillard's view, entirely detached from their original intent. The combination of governance structure, communication style, and promotional tactics used shows where cities progress or stop in phases of the image. Again, placement in a certain

phase of the image is neither good nor bad, though there are democratic governance implications for each, as noted in Chapter 5.

Though there is a critical philosophical underpinning to the book, I believe it is still user friendly to academicians in myriad disciplines, as well as street-level practitioners implementing place branding strategies. To wit, I include quotations from practitioners at CVBs throughout a Southern state to illustrate points being made. One may ask why I quote CVB practitioners after having explained above that this book examines city public administrators rather than those working for a CVB? The answer is because practitioners in any sector can learn from each other, and place branding and public administration are perfect examples of such interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary fields. Simply because I take city government entities as the units of analysis in this book does not dismiss the insights that CVB employees (who themselves are public administrators) have regarding place branding, which is their main job.

Day in and day out, CVB managers concentrate on developing a place's overall identity (branding) and then communicating that identity (marketing) through the best channels possible. Local government place brand managers might not have the luxury of strictly devoting time to shaping, promoting, and measuring the brand, as they probably have other communications-related duties that are of equal importance. Therefore, city government employees who are lead brand managers can learn tips and tricks regarding topics such as brand development, dissemination, and evaluation from their CVB counterparts because of their vast place branding experience. That is why, throughout the book, readers will see quotations and insights from place brand managers working in various CVBs throughout a Southern state to shed light upon their challenges as *public managers* and *brand developers*; hence the synergies between CVB administrators and local government brand managers. CVB managers' knowledge can aid lead DMO officials, no matter the organization, with myriad aspects of the place branding process outlined herein and faced in the field every day.

Acknowledgments

As with any project, this is truly a collaborative effort. This work started as a "long" six-page paper for a course in my doctoral program with Dr Art Sementelli. I pitched the idea while chatting with him in the parking lot after class one night. He got quite animated and I hoped that was a good thing. From that paper, the research expanded into not only a dissertation that Art chaired but an entire research agenda as I moved into academia. For Art's support, then and now, I am grateful. I also want to thank Dr Donald Cooper and Dr Terence Garrett, instrumental members of my research committee, who shaped this work. I completed this project while on faculty at Mississippi State University, so I owe thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, as well as the College of Arts & Sciences and university community as a whole, for their support of this endeavor.

Tremendous thanks to my friend and colleague Dr Josh Daspit for providing me with wonderful, thoughtful feedback on Chapter 6. He never flinched as I sent revision after revision to his inbox, and he always delivered instrumental critique that helped shape the chapter. Thank you to my colleague and friend Dr Frank Adams who also gave valuable input into elements of Chapter 6, as did Mrs Paige Hunt, the former Executive Director of the CVB at Greenwood, Mississippi, who looked with a practitioner's eye at my recommendations. My colleague and friend Leslie Baker also deserves thanks for

CHAPTER 1

Utilizing Philosophy in Place Branding

I view the CVB as just to bring money here, and that's it. Sometimes that makes me the bad guy, because in many of these small towns, people want you to be the guy that cuts the check to have the party for the locals, and I don't care about that. My brand, and this is my opinion, my budget is not big enough so that you will know what my brand is. I can't spend enough money to break through the bubble because I don't have a big enough budget. Honestly I don't think about my brand [but] two times a week. I think about how we get people in here, making money, and if they notice my logo, great, and if they don't know if the CVB is even here, I don't care.

— Executive Director, Southern City CVB

This was one of the bluntest answers my colleagues and I heard in the summer of 2013, during our interviews with managers from Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) throughout a Southern state. Though this person's remarks might seem extreme, several other interviewees also detailed the difficulty

of creating, implementing, and measuring a distinct, strategic place brand. We began each of our 12 semi-structured interviews with a seemingly easy question: "In your own words, what is your place's brand?" About half of the practitioners used an audible pause before responding to the query: "Our brand, um, well, it's uh, I'll probably jump around," or "What is its brand or what do we want its brand [to be]?"

As researchers, we had not anticipated that this question would give CVB professionals any trouble as they spend countless hours developing, honing, refining, implementing, and evaluating place branding and marketing strategies. That the question caused some hesitation highlighted for us the challenges faced by place branding practitioners and scholars working within the field, both as managers of organizations as well as place brand identity creators, two challenging tasks in and of themselves. As place branding practices still are developing at all levels of government, the focus turned toward finding synergies between municipal place branding—the main focus of this book—and what the CVB managers, often serving as the chief branding officers for a destination, do to develop, execute, and evaluate strategic place branding campaigns. The questions, then, became: How are cities implementing place branding strategies? What are the effects of those strategies on democratic governance? This book is a step toward answering these questions from a public administration perspective.

Place promotion is happening in light of intense competition among places for the benefit of diverse stakeholders, such as residents, business owners, and tourists (Dinnie, 2011; Eshuis et al., 2013; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Kotler et al., 1993; Pike & Page, 2014; Tiebout, 1956; Zenker et al., 2013). Therefore, it is essential for scholars and practitioners alike to understand not only the development of place brand strategies *but also the consequences of the strategies*. To address these points, I relied on my background and training in public administration and, hence, some of the information within this book is geared toward public

service scholars and practitioners, be they in urban planning, non-profit management, hospitality, education, hospital management, or government. Despite that lens of understanding, content within these pages is applicable, I believe, across disciplines, including within private corporations.

Jean Baudrillard's philosophy, specifically his phases of the image (Baudrillard, 1994), is the overarching theoretical mechanism I have used to explore how cities are moving through or stopping within those phases based upon a combination of governance strategy, communications style, and promotional tactics. These three streams in the literature are the foundational elements that make up the analytical framework offered later, and Baudrillard's phases tie these streams together. Phases of the image explains the progression of an object from a connection with reality to that of simulation (Baudrillard, 1994), so a city can end up in phase one, two, three, or four of the image depending upon the combination of the three foundational elements. Placement of a city in each phase of the image has different implications for democratic governance and can either positively or negatively influence overall organization-public relationships. By utilizing phases of the image as the theoretical tie for the three foundational elements, the research presented herein simultaneously addresses both research questions posed above. To address the first question, city branding and communications strategies were evaluated to determine depth and breadth of the branding strategy. Regarding the second question, the phases of the image framework and each phase's associated consequences get at the potential effects of place branding campaigns if practitioners do not take care to balance image with substance. The main units of analysis are US cities because local governments have been instrumental in shaping public administration theory and praxis. Municipal research bureaus emerged during the Progressive Era to give credence to a field embroiled in corruption (Stivers, 1995). For better or worse, these bureaus guided public administrators toward a reliance on quantitative data to make changes, often pushing aside the socially minded,

service-driven practices inherent within public administration (Lee, 2011; Stivers, 1995). Scholars and practitioners were depending upon science to find that "one best way" to ideally reduce the uncertainty and discretion that led to corrupt practices, known as the "spoils system." Today, we still see machinations of these data-driven policies in terms of performance measurement and contracting out/privatization movements, coupled with a general drive to have government run like a business (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Despite the best efforts of Progressive reformers and today's market-minded counterparts, evidence of the spoils system still pepper news coverage.

More information regarding market models is included in Chapter 2, but a key takeaway is that business-minded inter-ventions in the public sector changed values and practices of public service delivery (Box, 1999; Fox, 1996; Patterson, 1998). Government agencies began flattening hierarchies, implementing entrepreneurial practices, and encouraging risk taking. Along with these changes came an embrace of branding, marketing, and public relations (Kavaratzis, 2004), as these are common business constructs that attract (marketing) and retain (public relations) consumers, ideally to engender brand loyalty and equity. All of us can name our favorite brands of soft drink, toothpaste, laundry detergent, jeans, and more. The list is endless, and this is our personal manifestation of consumer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993). These cognitive shortcuts help us choose brands in a sea of choices, making our decisions a bit easier (de Chernatony, 2010; Lindstrom, 2011). Just as we have favorite product brands, we might also have favorite destinations. Something initially attracted us to those product and place brands, be it advertising, word-of-mouth, family use, personal experience, or something else. Eventually, place marketing evolved into fuller, more holistic place branding strategies that included marketing and public relations communications but now also involved a change in organizational culture to align internal and organizational environments (Govers, 2013). An end goal of place branding strategies is place brand

equity (Jacobsen, 2010, 2012), which means having stakeholders choose one destination instead of another. But, considering that the "how" of place brand equity development and measurement still remains fuzzy, Chapter 6 begins to explore the creation and evaluation processes of brand equity from a managerial and strategic perspective. Ideally, if managers have a better idea of how to evaluate brand equity within a specific public-sector setting, then they can create not only competitive advantage for the place but also work toward building trust and mutually beneficial organization-public relations. The goal for managers is to align organizationally created brand identity with consumer-based brand equity, as "the lack of alignment between identity and image can cause confusion and weaken the brand's equity" (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 77).

With place branding now seemingly commonplace in public-sector and non-profit organizations (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013; Eshuis et al., 2013; Kotler et al., 1993; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014), it is important to better understand both the inputs and outputs (effects) of these developments to both guide theory development and to improve practice. Place branding has been coming into its own as a self-aware discipline since its evolution from roots in product branding, urban policy, and marketing theory (Hankinson, 2010). As people, we enjoy places for emotional, hedonistic, and rational reasons (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). As an example, in 2013 I celebrated my thirtieth birthday at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Florida, with a close friend. I made sure to buy Minnie Mouse ears with pink sequins and pastel ribbons to feel like a princess. Disney World, and all related Disney parks and associated brands, has such powerful emotional connections for people, making the company one of the world's strongest brands (James, 2013).

I chose Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom because, as a child growing up in Florida, going to a Disney theme park was a rite of passage. I can still remember when my parents took me for the first time; it was a big surprise and incredibly fun. My friend,

who did not grow up in Florida, could not understand why I wanted to celebrate a birthday as an adult at Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom. I explained that the experience brought back happy memories, and being in the park helped me (and other visitors) forget everything else going on in life. My friend related that feeling to the one he gets when he goes back home to Texas and can eat his favorite meal at his favorite restaurant as many times as possible (brand loyalty). We all have connections to places and, if those places do not match our expectations, gaps emerge (Govers & Go, 2009). If my friend's usual order of "square fish" (a fried-fish dish) did not meet expectations, he would leave disappointed. Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom exceeded all my birthday hopes; brand equity was achieved, as I went back several months later with another friend, and this trip too was equally enjoyable.

Image and Substance through Phases of the Image

While Walt Disney World's Magic Kindgom stirs happy memories, there is also an underlying concern. I noted earlier that being inside the theme park makes people forget what is going on in their lives, forget reality. Naturally, escapism is the point of entertainment. This reality breakdown, however, could become problematic, as Baudrillard pointed out (Baudrillard, 1994). Baudrillard argued that people forget that the areas outside of Disney parks are real, thus confusing contrived experiences inside the park as reality. The two systems—areas outside the theme park and the parks themselves—become so entwined that people have difficulty separating fact from fiction. Describing Disneyland in California, Baudrillard wrote "this world wants to be childish in order to make us believe that the adults are elsewhere, in the 'real' world, and to conceal the fact that true childishness is everywhere – that it is that of the adults themselves who come here to act the child in order to foster illusions as to their real childishness" (ibid., p. 13). This is a potentially harsh denouncement of what so many adults would consider a place of joyful memories both as children and

grownups, but Baudrillard's point is that images become more important than reality (Sementelli, 2012). (My friend and I, being consummate academics, or big nerds, had this exact discussion while waiting in line for the Pirates of the Caribbean ride during my birthday celebration.)

Explained further in Chapter 2, phases of the image (Baudrillard, 1994) traces how a signifier and signified become separated. The idea is that signs come to stand for the real without anything necessarily attached anymore. "The symbols betray reality, vacating it of substance, and intersecting abstraction in its place. Image is the essence, the new reality" (Miller, 2002, p. 17). Red roses signify love, green can denote envy, sustainability, and traffic flow (go on green, stop on red). Some symbols become so powerful that they lose ties to their referents. Baudrillard elucidated four phases of the image: reflecting profound reality, masking or denaturing profound reality, masking the absence of profound reality, and disconnecting from reality to become a simulacrum (Baudrillard, 1994). Movement along this quasi-continuum toward simulacrum indicates that a *sign* has come to represent reality instead of the real element. One colleague describes this progression as such: When someone says the word "stapler," for example, the receiver of the message does not need an actual stapler to conjure an image in her mind. She automatically thinks of a hand-operated mechanical device to fasten papers together. Now, this image might not be the same in everyone's mind. Someone might picture a pocket-sized stapler, while someone else might imagine the industrial-size version. The signifier (the stapler) and the signified (mechanical object for fastening papers) are not needed together anymore to develop a mental picture.

Plan of the Book

Baudrillard described the process of moving from reality to simulacrum as embedded in a culture of hyperreality whereby what is real and what is fiction blend together (Baudrillard, 1994).

Consumerism and our obsession with "keeping up with the Joneses" spur and foster hyperreality (Baudrillard, 1998). We purchase goods and services not only for their quality but also for what those goods and services can do for our projected image (Goffman, 1959). Similar logic applies to why we choose to live in or visit certain places. Psychologically, for example, people perceive "broken windows" as physical and social manifestations of negative spaces (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004). At our core, we all want a wonderful place to live, work, and play (Insch & Florek, 2008), and will do research to find the perfect place for our needs.

The blending of consumerism, sloganeering, and the dominance of a market mindset within public administration are the lines of inquiry from which this book stems. The argument put forth within this book is that cities, based on a combination of market models of governance, style of communication used, and number of place promotional tactics employed (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a), can move through or stop within Baudrillard's phases of the image as adapted herein. All phases have certain implications for democratic governance that could lead to positive or negative relations between internal employees and external stakeholders, thus positively or negatively influencing place brand equity. Each element within the presented framework is given more explication in Chapter 2, laying the foundation for the argument. The narrative herein asks place brand practitioners to think about balancing image with substance (Grunig, 1993), as both are necessary elements of communication because they serve different purposes. Image-based communications engender short-term relationships with stakeholders, while substantive communications foster long-term, behaviorally based relationships that encourage dialogue and discourse between stakeholders (Grunig, 1993). Working in concert, image and substance can create strategic place branding campaigns that not only present an overall place identity but can leave room for genuine engagement with relevant stakeholder groups (Zenker & Seigis, 2012).

How the foundational elements from Chapter 2 come together to form the analytical and practical framework is the focus of Chapter 3. Chapter 4 includes examples in practice, studying 21 US cities to understand progression through phases of the image. Analysis of all 21 cities will not be given because of space constraints; however, I present examples of cities in each phase of the image to highlight how the framework manifests in practice. Chapter 5 offers conclusions and implications of the framework, as well as ideas for future research. Finally, Chapter 6 is a guide for practitioners looking to implement or refine place branding or place marketing strategies. The chapter is a basic introduction to brand development and communications, so I caution practitioners to implement policies and practices in line with organizational capabilities and available resources. As readers will note, the process is certainly not easy and takes an investment of both human and economic resources to move beyond a simple logo and slogan (Govers, 2013).

Contributions of the Book

As detailed above, this book is written from a public administration (PA) perspective, intersecting PA with place branding literature and practice. Taking this approach, there are several implications and contributions from this work. First, the literature within PA regarding place branding is limited yet growing. Recently, one of the field's top journals published an article relating specifically to place marketing (Eshuis et al., 2013) instead of organizational communication as a whole. PA scholars who employ the lens of place branding, public relations (PR), and marketing to their studies make up a small group. Mordecai Lee was a trailblazer regarding this line of inquiry, looking at PR practices within a public setting (Lee, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2009, for examples). Naturally, scholars in other disciplines study the field, but a PA lens adds yet another layer (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013) to this already complex scholarship and practice. I am not arguing that

there is no overlap between disciplines, as public administration is naturally interdisciplinary (Raadschelders, 2010). What I am noting is that more PA scholars should consider writing and researching within the area of place branding, as place branding strategies are certainly taking place, so not studying them better means risking place branding becoming collateral damage within our scholarship (Zavattaro, 2013b).

Second, the theoretical framework presented herein crosses into other disciplines, making it useful for scholars and practitioners in a wide variety of discplines. Lines that denote the "public sphere" are becoming blurred with the advent of market interventions such as privatization and contracting out in government service provision. Writers have termed this a shift from government to governance; the former relies on formal institutions, while the latter recognizes the role of formal institutions in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the business community, and citizen networks (Bevir, 2006; King, 2011). Therefore, not only can public administrators working with formal government institutions use this book but also practitioners in urban planning, sociology/social work, school/education administration, hospital administration, museum administration, first responders, landscape design, non-profit administration, and many more.

Third, the book adds another theoretical framework to the growing place branding literature. The framework understands and appreciates the social constructivist, relational nature of place branding processes (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013) while giving practitioners a possible blueprint to achieve place brand equity (Keller, 1993) and a competitive advantage (Anholt, 2007; Barney, 1991) to build trust and forge partnerships (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). City administrators, when within this mindset, can take stock of elements that make their place special—green space, eco-friendly policies, the biggest building east of the Mississippi River, the tallest ball of yarn, the people, and culture, whatever it is. Administrators can begin taking control of the narrative through various communication

tools, including marketing and PR campaigns that ideally tie into an overall place brand ethos.

Developing a place brand is not easy and goes beyond a simple logo and slogan (Govers & Go, 2009; Govers, 2013). Crafting a long-term, strategic place brand rooted in genuine place aspects and meaningful organizational culture is not a quick process and, therefore, should be treated as carefully as, say, downtown redevelopment or human resources practices. In all, a strong place brand could lead to economic development opportunities (Horlings, 2012; Kotler et al., 1993), competitive advantage (Anholt, 2007) through exploiting organizational capabilities (Daspit & Zavattaro, 2014), and increased trust from stakeholders (Kavaratzis, 2012; Kleiner, 2012; Zenker & Seigis, 2012). This requires a holistic approach that reaches beyond a logo and slogan (Govers, 2013).

Finally, the book is meant to be *used* in addition to being read. Therefore, the work is interactive in nature. I encourage academics to debate the framework presented herein, while I call upon practitioners to implement some of these strategies detailed in Chapter 6 and report back regarding success, failure, challenges, and opportunities. Continued discussion into place branding, and the addition of theories guiding place branding, is necessary as city competition is not going away (Clare, 2013; Zenker et al., 2013). People, even if not perfectly mobile, often choose with their feet (Tiebout, 1956). In other words, if people become dissatisfied with a place, they can move. Present-day Detroit, Michigan, is a clear example of this flight and the detriment it can have upon a place economically, politically, and socially. Understanding how place branding influences or does not influence such decisions is an area of growing importance within PA and related disciplines. This book is another mechanism through which readers can understand not only place branding processes but also the implications of relying too much on symbolism and rhetoric instead of genuine brand promises.

CHAPTER 2

Laying the Foundations

A lot of people locally don't understand what the CVB does. My argument has always been, "If I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing, then local people won't see it." Because it's not geared toward local people. Well, local people don't like to hear that, but it's true. So I need advocates here . . . other than just me and my board saying, "No, really, what she does is important." So by sharing what we're doing with those people, they then anecdotally pass it on to their constituents . . . [Locals] don't understand the importance of [the CVB] until it goes away and they realize how many dollars [are lost].

<div align="right">— Executive Director, Southern city CVB</div>

Despite the views of this particular manager, local residents are vital stakeholders in building a place brand (Kavaratzis, 2012; Zenker & Seigis, 2012). There are many moving parts involved in the place branding process, including an established historical and cultural foundation that often cannot be ignored or simply be rebranded, as well as stakeholder coordination

among sometimes-competing interests. When established correctly, place branding can move beyond a simple logo and slogan (Govers, 2013) to become an integral part of strategic place governance efforts (Eshuis et al., 2013) that foster democratic legitimacy (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). Devising a meaningful place branding strategy that appreciates the relational, co-creational (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013) process often proves challenging both in theory and in practice. The theoretical framework offered herein attempts such an integration by showing how cities can move through phases of the image (Baudrillard, 1994) based upon a combination of market models of governance, communication style and language used, and six promotional tactics (branding, media relations, in-house publications, use of outside people or organizations as PR surrogates, aesthetic and affective appeal, and the built environment) (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a).

Public Administration Theory: A Brief Primer

Before delving into the background information of the foundational elements, it is necessary to briefly engage with the overall public administration literature, including fissures regarding the field's "identity crisis" and the need to better connect theory with practice. As detailed in Chapter 1, my training is in public administration, and within that literature specifically, there is an emerging discussion about place branding and place marketing. My research aims to add to this much-needed discussion, and the framework is one step toward that process. Understanding a bit about the field's background and evolution can help readers connect the logic behind the foundational elements.

One of the foundational elements of the given framework is market models of governance, which really took footing globally in the 1980s and 1990s. Such models emerged in response to heavy bureaucrat bashing that portrayed government as them (Terry, 1997) rather than as us (King, 2011; King & Stivers, 1998). Movement toward market-minded forms of governance,

though, follows a path of administrative evolution that focused on altering existing patterns of service delivery to better reflect societal changes (Raadschelders, 1999). Waldo (2007) referred to Public Administration (capital letters) as the discipline and public administration (lower case letters) as the practice, so I will do the same, as have others (Raadschelders, 1999).

The discipline and formal practice of American (P)public (A)administration often cites as its foundational piece Woodrow Wilson's (1887) "The Study of Administration," written during the Progressive Era, as a treatise for good governance in the wake of political corruption that weakened the administrative state's legitimacy. Though the piece brought Public Administration into its own self-conscious discipline of study, public administration had been taking place for millennia before (Farazmand, 2012). Since the time of Public Administration's inception, discussions regarding the field's intellectual foundations rooted in Wilsonian scholarship have emerged in the scholarly literature. Wilson's place in theoretical history, as well as his actual intention behind "The Study of Administration," is a debate that still rages today (Georgiou, 2014; McCandless & Guy, 2013). Wilson advocated for separating the spheres of *partisan* politics and administration in an effort to stave off corruption, ushering in a reliance on science and scientific management (Taylor, 1911) to thwart the practice of a spoils system that led to a corrupt government. Most interpretations of Wilson's writing, however, incorrectly assume that Wilson promoted a strict separation of all politics from administration, leading to the popular politics-administration dichotomy in P(p)ublic A(a)dministration that guided the field's study and practice for decades (McCandless & Guy, 2013; Overeem, 2008; Rosenbloom, 2008; Waldo, 2007) and still emerges in contemporary theory and practice.

As Stillman noted (1973, p. 586), Wilson "vacillates between the two poles of thought regarding the separability and inseparability of administration and politics (thereby providing generations of later scholars with ample footnote ammunition for both

sides of the argument)." Stillman reasoned that Wilson might not have developed the dichotomy fully because his concern in writing was more to bring back ethics, morals, trustworthiness, and honesty to public administration (ibid.). The dichotomy became the driving principle within the scholarly literature for decades until Waldo's exploration of the administrative state (2007). Tracing various intellectual foundations of political and administrative theory, Waldo asserted that there cannot be a separation of politics from administration. In fact, efficiency (what the politics-administration dichotomy should support) and democracy are often contradictory, as democratic practice is inherently messy and often inefficient because of the myriad actors involved. Throughout time, the dichotomy "was broadened to include politics over public policy rather than limited to partisan politics. At that point, it became untenable, though difficult to shed . . ." (Rosenbloom, 2008, p. 60). Svara (2001) went on to describe the dichotomy as a myth and introduced complementarity, which envisions politics and administration as separate though mutually supportive arenas, as both are "instrumental and constitutive" (p. 179) actors within government processes.

Debate regarding the applicability of the dichotomy still exists within the scholarly literature (Demir & Nyhan, 2008; Georgiou, 2014; McCandless & Guy, 2013; Spicer, 2010; Svara, 1999, 2001). To wit, Demir and Reddick (2012) found that the spheres of politics and administration interact in a local governance context based on a city manager's role expectations and also the council's expectations. Traces of a throwback to separation of all politics and administration emerge in today's business-based forms of governance that favor quantitative performance measures, for example, over qualitative understandings of governance impacts (Zavattaro, 2013c). Personally, I adopt the view of complementarity (Svara, 2001) that politics and administration cannot and should not be separated, as this depreciates the vital role of political *debate and discourse* within administrative processes (Spicer, 2010). In terms of place branding, removing the debate, discourse,

and discussion among relevant stakeholders could lead to a government-led program that ignores stakeholder perceptions of the place, potentially diminishing the brand's strength.

Ontologies within Public Administration

Though aspects of the field's foundational politics-administration dichotomy still pervade public administration theory and practice, some of the present scholarship is moving toward defining other ontologies that can guide research and praxis. Stout (2012) defines ontologies as "theories of existence that generally stem from philosophy, religion, or physics" (p. 389). Ontologies give the bigger picture, asking the nature of reality and influencing what we know and how we know it. There is not enough space here to delve deeply into the nuances of ontological expression, but the discussion is included to show the need for using philosophical treatises as a mechanism of understanding contemporary phenomena, as ontologies "drive everything from the question of sovereignty to a public ethic and the proper institutions of government" (Stout, 2012, p. 390). Ontology undergirds our understanding of reality, and "if the nature of reality is in conflict with how we perceive it, then our socially constructed reality will be incongruent and thus problematic" (ibid., p. 391). When we as people understand our assumptions about reality, we can work toward comprehending the current situation to possibly change the status quo (Marcuse, 1964).

Debates within public administration scholarship regarding ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Whetsell, 2013) only add to the field's pluralism *qua* identity crisis. Connecting theory with practice sometimes proves difficult when speaking at such meta-theoretical levels, but as Stout noted (2012) practitioners at one PA's largest professional conferences were excited to hear about foundational ontologies to better appreciate how organizations operate within constructed boundaries. The typical theory-practice link is often simplistic, what Cook and Wagenaar (2012)

dubbed the Received View. In this view, the theory-practice link is made when

> people engage in an activity, they articulate the situation that confronts them as a particular kind of problem, after which they apply the relevant knowledge (including rules, procedures, and so on) that enable them to solve the problem. In this view, the knowledge people hold in their heads enables the activities that lead to the resolution of the problem. Thus, it is commonly said that knowledge is applied in practice (ibid., p. 4, emphasis in original).

Instead, the authors suggested focusing on a combination of context, practice, and knowledge, leading to a more dynamic rather than a dyadic view of theory-practice applications. In the context of place branding this transition makes sense, as place brands are more than a logo and slogan (Govers, 2013) and require an interaction of myriad stakeholders, policies, practices, and values (Anholt, 2007; Kavaratzis, 2012; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Put simply, administrative scholars should move beyond a focus on scientism as *the* way of knowing and broaden horizons to include deeper, relational meanings inherent within government practices (Hummel, 1991; Raadschelders, 2010). P(p)ublic A(a)dministration is a field without clearly defined boundaries, but the underlying concern is understanding the institutions and practices of governance. The same is true of place branding. Giving identity to a place requires a look outside of its predetermined geographic borders to comprehend stakeholder needs. Especially in this digital age, the world is getting smaller and we can gather information about a place that can help or hinder our perceptions. Place branding is also interdisciplinary (Hankinson, 2010), and deals with spaces that are inherently open and inclusive, just as public administration theory and practice.

Foundational Element 1: Business-based Forms of Governance

Now that a brief background on PA has been given, attention can then turn toward the core foundational elements of the framework presented in Chapter 3. The first foundational element is the aforementioned market-based forms of governance that emerged as a means to reduce what was labeled as excessive, big government. In the context of this research, whether or not a government has a clear market-based form of governance helps determine its placement within phases of the image, as detailed in Figure 3.1 (see Chapter 3). Though often thought of as a new governance approach, business-like practices emerged when Wilson (1887) wrote that "seeing every day new things which the state ought to do, the next thing is to see clearly how it ought to do them. This is why there should be a science of administration which shall seek to straighten the paths of government, to make *its business less unbusinesslike*, to strengthen and purify its organization, and to crown its duties with dutifulness. This is one reason why there is such a science" (ibid., p. 201, emphasis added). This portion of Wilson's essay sometimes gets overlooked in favor of the politics-administration separation detailed above.

Such a call resounded 100 years later in the 1980s and 1990s, and still holds precedent today as market models take footing in governments throughout the world. Springing from the policies of Reagan and Thatcher, market models of governance take the form of interventions as broad as New Public Management (NPM), Total Quality Management (TQM), and Reinventing Government (RG), which are sometimes used interchangeably (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Market-based interventions encourage business-like practices and moving from government to governance. Recommendations of these models often include risk taking, flattening hierarchies, entrepreneurial thinking, and recasting citizens and customers, to name a few (Frederickson et al., 2011; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Moreover, there is a reliance on

inter- and intra-agency collaboration with other government agencies, as well as non-profit and private sector actors. Interestingly, analysis shows that market-based governance recommendations were not particularly new and found roots in traditional administrative theories noted at the outset of this chapter, such as those by Wilson and Taylor (Schachter, 2007; Zavattaro, 2013c).

Pushing these recommendations was the influential, though much-maligned (see Fox, 1996) *Reinventing Government* (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Osbore and Gaebler's main thesis was that "governments that developed in the industrial era, with their sluggish, centralized bureaucracies, their preoccupation with rules and regulations, and their hierarchical chains of command no longer work very well" (ibid., p. 12). The authors wanted to return power to the people instead of to institutional monoliths. The point was to be able to speak to power (Farmer, 2003) rather than simply accept the government's propositions. How this was to come about remained unclear at best. Overall, business-based interventions collapse differences between the public and private sector, and shift the focus to accountability results rather than process results (Hood, 1995). This alteration in values and policies forces administrators to focus on *outputs* rather than *outcomes* (Frederickson, 1996).

With suggestions to change foundations of public service delivery, NPM and related governance styles came under scrutiny within the academy. One of the harshest critiques of reinventing government and associated movements came from Charles Fox, who denounced Osborne and Gaebler's book as postmodern symbolic politics. Fox (1996) noted that the book is postmodern in nature because recommendations within rely on slogans and symbols, more than theory and examples, to make a point. For example, the book's (and overall movement's) emphasis on performance management is a communication victory rather than a practical victory, especially when performance measures are not often well developed (Greiling, 2006).

One change that administrative scholars found particularly troubling regarding these business-minded governance interventions

was socially constructing citizens as customers. Customer-service orientation recasts government as "they" instead of "we" and "the attempt on the part of the public administration community to carve out a position in postmodern hyperspace. It is their *public relations* gambit; their attempt to manage perceptions" (Fox, 1996, p. 261, emphasis added). Calling someone a customer puts the person in a passive, reactive position rather than an active, engaged position that is required of democratic governance. When we as customers go into a store to buy, say, a piece of clothing, we have the option of returning the garment if it is not acceptable to us. Of course, the popular mantra is that the customer is always right. With public service delivery at a local level, cities usually have a monopoly. A caller cannot dial 911 and ask the operator to send officers from a nearby city because they are so much nicer than those within the caller's existing city limits. Nor can a person call the Internal Revenue Service and say, "Considering I am a customer, I do not feel like paying my taxes this year. I hope that is okay." I always tell my students that if they are customers of the university and earn a grade that is unacceptable to them in my course, or any course for that matter, they should head to the Registrar after the semester and demand a tuition refund. I have yet to hear if anyone has tried this exercise, but I highly doubt any university would be forthcoming with that reimbursement.

In other words, this customer construction can become potentially problematic when imported into a governance context. Within government, customer construction can render the citizen as "unnecessary" because their actions are "increasingly marginalized" (Patterson, 1998, p. 222). Getting customers to agree on anything often proves challenging (Peters & Savoie, 1996), and this leaves the government as the mediator rather than an equal party (Patterson, 1998). Customer rhetoric "disguises the extent to which government exists to ameliorate problems of inequality" (ibid., p. 224). Favoring market principles pushes to the fore our individualist nature rather than our communal nature. We could turn into self-maximizing individuals and bureaucrats who lose

sight of service delivery (Ostrom & Ostrom, 1971). If wealthy individuals/elites (Mills, 2000) begin to control governance, this could, and often does, lead to disparate treatment of customers (Patterson, 1998).

When the primary focus turns to outputs rather than outcomes, symbols and slogans emerge to convince people that interventions are working toward their best interests, whatever those might be (Catlaw, 2007; Kelly, 2005; Miller, 2002, 2012). For example, sometimes the solution to ameliorating the disconnect between citizens' expectations and government service delivery is "reporting performance data more *persuasively*" (Kelly, 2005, p. 80, emphasis added). This only feeds the simulation noted earlier and is discussed in more detail later within this chapter (Baudrillard, 1994). Citizens as customers, then, often have reduced opportunities to influence policy and administration meaningfully (Box et al., 2001), though it is not impossible. As a remedy to the passivity that customer construction often brings, Box et al. (2001) emphasized the need for dialogue and discourse. Zanetti (2011) pushed for empathy from administrators to regain a human connection, while Rawlings and Catlaw (2011) suggested living democratically. The creation of citizen boards in the name of inclusive governance, for example, can lead to direct participation in the government apparatus and to increased buy-in. Notice, though, they are called *citizen boards* and not customer boards.

Final Thoughts about Governance Structures

In Public Administration, we like to put the label "new" on theories when there might not be anything inherently new about the position being advocated (Frederickson, 1996; Garrett, 2006; Schachter, 2007; Zavattaro, 2013c). As scholars and practitioners, we should not forget our intellectual foundations (Lynn, 2009), or even histories that are not often deeply detailed (Stivers, 1995). Knowing historical and ontological foundations allows P(p)ublic A(a)dministrators

to acquire knowledge outside of given boundaries, understand reasons for actions taken, and better link theory to practice via context (Cook & Wagenaar, 2012). These interactions point to the inherent dynamism of public administration and, in turn, place branding. While it might be hard to define the public (Catlaw, 2007), government is indeed us (King, 2011; King & Stivers, 1998) and we should take an active role in framing governance strategies, leading to increased calls for active citizen participation (Cooper et al., 2006; King, 2011; King et al., 1998; Roberts, 2004).

In sum, market models of governance emerged as a mechanism to improve organizational efficiency and give stakeholders (citizens, other government agencies, non-profit organizations, etc.) an increased role in decision making. Governance as a term indicates a networked approach to decision making and service delivery rather than traditional, top-down government that relied on formal institutions to deliver services and tackle problems. Market models, however, could potentially alienate citizens by recasting them as customers, placing them in a passive, non-dialogic role with government officials. When implemented correctly, market-minded methods could encourage citizen engagement via governance strategies, fostering stakeholder buy-in to projects, policies, and programs. Ultimately, administrators are the people responsible for designing and deploying governance approaches as well as the communications tools described herein; each can be as power-laden or inclusive as the administrators choose.

Foundational Element 2: Communication Models

The second foundational element used to create the analytical framework is communication style utilized. Again, before delving into that, it is important to situate that discussion within the overall fields of organizational communication and place branding. I should make clear that this is not an attempt at an exhaustive review of organizational communication or place branding scholarship and

practice (see Anholt, 2007; Govers & Go, 2009), just as the above was not a complete treatise on the evolution of the study and practice of Public Administration. This background serves as a mechanism for understanding the essence of both, as well as how they fit within the overall research presented within this book. Organizational communication forms the backbone of where place branding practices manifest and so situates the overall discussion. Place branding, if it is carried out in a holistic manner, not only encompasses *more than* communication but also includes *marketing and public relations-driven communications* as vital elements to disseminate the overall place branding structure.

Organizational Communication

As noted above, a new ethos of government—market models—has changed ethics, values, policies, and practices of service delivery. The governance style also changed how organizations communicate internally and externally. During the period of classical schools of public administration outlined earlier, communication was task-specific and focused on helping managers and workers achieve goals directed toward efficiency (Barnard, 1938/1968; Euske & Roberts, 1987; Farace et al., 1977). The next shift in organization development came with a move toward the human relations school focusing on employees as people and individuals rather than the mechanistic view of people as replaceable cogs. Human relations advocates wanted to foster positive worker-supervisor relationships and saw open communication as a way to achieve that. Here, the communication structure was comparatively more horizontal and likely to come from different levels of the organization (Farace et al., 1977). No matter the role, communication ultimately is an exchange relationship—the sender wants the receiver to pick up on certain messaging, which then gets returned from the receiver to the sender. At an organizational level, "communication is *the* vital link in the chain of

events comprising the process of managing a business. It is the single factor that makes an organization viable, successful, effective and enduring" (Foltz, 1981, p. 5, emphasis in original).

In addition to the internal communications that sustain organizations, there is another element in play—external communications. Organizations pay attention to both internal and external communication because they can shape public opinion (Cheney & Vibbert, 1987), and organizational success often depends upon responding to changes in the external environment (Barney, 1991). Governments at all levels, but especially the US federal government, recognized the need for specialized communication officers in the 1800s because "it is generally accepted that whenever the American people are properly informed of government activities, they are more likely to understand what is being done and why" (Fitzpatrick, 1947, p. 530). Congress, though, did not like the term that the Department of Agriculture used to refer to people charged with disseminating information—publicity experts—and therefore passed a law in 1913 banning the federal government from hiring publicity experts. Instead we now have public information officers, public affairs officers, marketing directors, and other incarnations of this publicity function.

No matter the name, the function is essential to governments (Levy, 1963). "Any public object—product, person, institution—has an image for the publics, audiences or consumers who know of it" (ibid., pp. 25–26). Cities are building their images for both current and potential customers. People form their image of government based upon expectations from government and what it actually does for them via concrete experiences and encounters with public-service personnel (Levy, 1963), so one untoward or unsatisfying experience can solidify a negative image in a person's mind. Therefore, all departments—police, fire, water, parks and recreation, utilities, human resources, and more—are part of the organizational apparatus building a city's image (Kotler & Levy, 1969; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014).

A growing subfield of research within the communication literature envisions a communicative city, "referring to a community whose environment facilitates development of a communication system that integrates its residents into a dynamic whole, that enables its citizens to get involved in civic activities and participate in a variety of roles, and makes possible a balance between mobility and stability" (Jeffres, 2008, p. 258). Others might term this movement place making—the blending of art, culture, community, and sustainability to create a sense of place in local areas (Nowak, 2013). The idea of the communicative city is one where citizens are actively engaged in civic activities through involvement opportunities, collective problem solving, and an open communication system. The communicative city is an open network of integrated media within a community but does not expressly take into account the *city government entity itself* and the role it plays in shaping this image of a communicative city. That is one area this research attempts to address—how the city itself undertakes place branding, marketing, and public relations strategies to shape an overall place ethos.

Place Branding and its Associated Practices

Closely related to organizational communication is place branding, an area of scholarship that is still trying to find conceptual foundations (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). At its core, place branding is about appreciating a place's unique attributes, such as culture, language, architecture, cuisine, heritage, and more, by synthesizing those elements to shape brand identity and influence brand image, which is how those receiving messages (organizational communications) understand the branding campaign. One potential goal of place branding campaigns is to influence place brand equity, or what would make someone choose to live in, visit, open a business in, etc. one place instead of another. Through this view,

place branding is not static; instead, it is relational and mutual (ibid.) and goes beyond a simple logo or slogan (Govers, 2013). Following Blain et al. (2005, pp. 331–332, emphasis in original), place branding is understood as activities:

> (1) that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both *identifies* and *differentiates* a destination; (2) that convey the *promise* of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; and (3) that serve to *consolidate* and *reinforce* the recollection of pleasurable *memories* of the destination experience, all with the intent purpose of creating an *image* that influences consumers' decisions to visit the destination in question as opposed to an *alternative* one.

Those authors are writing from a travel perspective, but the same logic can apply to, for example, potential residents looking to relocate or a business owner scouting a new location. The point of view taken in this book is that of city government entities acting as the lead Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). This is an interesting view given that lead DMOs are often CVB employees responsible for marketing activities to attract business to the place. Even though city government agencies are frequently thought of as monopolistic when it comes to service delivery, competition for prospective stakeholders takes place *before* the purchase decision is made (Tiebout, 1956), whether that purchase is a new home, business location, or vacation destination. Therefore, city government employees working in an area without a dedicated CVB (or even with a CVB in place) might take up the lead DMO mantle to promote the place's unique attributes. Competing messages, however, risk diluting the brand identity being created.

As competition among places increases, place branding becomes an important tool for differentiation and economic development (Anholt, 2007; Kotler et al., 1993). Kavaratzis (2004)

argued that the rise of entrepreneurial cities led to the acceptance of business practices in the public sector, and "the use of marketing was only a natural consequence of such entrepreneurial governance" (ibid., p. 59). This idea finds roots in Kotler and Levy's (1969) seminal piece that imported private-sector marketing practices into the public sector. Those authors argued that public organizations often market their goods and services similar to product brands. Municipal leaders use communication techniques, including marketing and public relations practices, to correct or ameliorate negative impressions because "a place's image is a critical determinant of the way citizens and businesses respond to the place. Therefore, a place must try to manage its image" (Kotler et al., p. 141). Events, programs, and policies within the city can give substance to the image, as a place's image is "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place" (ibid.). Trueman et al. (2004) agreed, noting that if a person has a poor perception of a city, then there could be an overall decrease in inward investment, economic development, existing business-community activities, growth opportunities, and potential tourist traffic.

Defining Terms

The essence of place branding is multifaceted and multidisciplinary, similar to public administration theory and practice. Clearly its roots are in branding in general, but what are brand, branding, brand identity, brand image, and brand equity? How do marketing and public relations relate? There are so many terms, yet not one has a definition that is agreed upon (Hanna & Rowley, 2008). A **brand** (the noun) is "the good name of a product, an organization or a place; ideally linked to its identity" (Govers & Go, 2009, p. 16). Every reader of this book can name a favorite brand of something— coffee, toothpaste, clothing, cologne, makeup, sneakers, music player, computer, or anything else. **Branding** (the verb) is about channeling

those unique elements of a place or product and strategically communicating those to build identity, reputation, and equity. To wit, McDonald's famous Golden Arches appear in every advertising campaign and on physical locations in some form or fashion throughout the world because those are idiosyncratic to the restaurant chain. The arches are so identifiable that people do not even need to see the restaurant's name before knowing what the logo signifies to them, for better or for worse.

Brand identity refers to the "historical, political, religious and cultural discourses" about a place, shared through local knowledge, stories, power struggles, photographs, and more (Govers & Go, 2009). Identity is what brand managers shape and put out to stakeholders via communications tools, landscape design, and other elements of place making. **Brand image**, on the other hand, "is the perception of the brand that exists in the mind of the consumer or audience" (Anholt, 2007, p. 4). Ideally, a place brand or product brand should align created identity with the images consumers conjure up. If not, potential gaps emerge (Govers & Go, 2009). **Brand equity**, an outcome of place branding campaigns based upon the identity-image alignment and brand promise delivery, is understood through a combination of loyalty, brand awareness/perceived quality, and brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Buil et al., 2013; Keller, 1993). Brand equity means the price premium a consumer is willing to pay for a branded product versus a comparable non-branded product. Brand equity is an amorphous construct and difficult to measure because of the emotional, affective, hedonistic aspects of place branding, but brand equity remains an important aspect of the process.

Finally, **place marketing** and **public relations** are terms often conflated with a comprehensive place branding strategy. To reiterate, place branding includes elements of marketing and public relations. Until better definitions of the terms exist (Anholt, 2008), we can turn toward the American Marketing Association (AMA) for guidance. According to the AMA, **place marketing** is "marketing

designed to influence target audiences to behave in some positive manner with respect to the products or services associated with a specific place. Comment: Attempts by an individual or organization to educate target audiences or change their attitudes about a place are not marketing" (American Marketing Association, 2013, p. 1). Anholt (2008) takes issue with this definition, however, arguing that marketing can at least indirectly influence attitude and image change, as the definition's comment seems to dismiss. As the definition from Blain et al. (2005) tells us, marketing is a pivotal part of place branding and should be taken seriously and as a *companion* to a strategic place branding campaign.

Related to this, the AMA dictionary defines **public relations** as "that form of communication management that seeks to make use of publicity and other nonpaid forms of promotion and information to influence the feelings, opinions, or beliefs about the company, its products or services, or about the value of the product or service or the activities of the organization to buyers, prospects, or other stakeholders" (American Marketing Association, 2013, p. 1). Public relations communications, then, help foster (or potentially harm) organization-public relationships (Grunig, 1993).

The difficulty of reconciling all these terms—brand, branding, brand identity, brand image, marketing, and public relations—is that the word "brand" itself often has four varying views (Anholt, 2008). According to Anholt (ibid.), the four ways in which the term is used include: name of a product, designed identity of the product, organizational culture guiding the product, and as a synonym for brand image, which often translates into brand reputation. The problem is when people use the term branding "as a kind of generalized or collective term to embrace all the techniques used to enhance brand image—PR, advertising, design, sale promotion, direct marketing and so forth—but this is not correct. The correct portmanteau word for such activities is surely 'marketing communications' or 'promotional activities'" (ibid., pp. 9–10).

Anholt continued, noting that branding is bi-directional, in that consumers play a large part in co-creating the brand experience. "Marketing communications create *interest*, which results in *sales*, which results in *consumer experience* of the product, which, if satisfactory and shared, results in brand equity" (ibid., p. 10, emphasis in original). The bottom line is that place branding is a holistic, strategic approach to shaping a place's identity, which consumers then co-create based on their experiences with the place. Identity and image cannot be separated easily in place branding as they might be in corporate branding because a place cannot (readily) create a separate image for its myriad stakeholder groups (Govers, 2011). Govers (ibid.) essentially recommended balancing image and substance by catering to internal city stakeholders (residents, other local actors, and the civil society as a whole) rather than concentrating only on creating contrived images external stakeholders might desire.

Brand identity is often planned carefully, as "all encounters with the city take place through perceptions and images . . . Everything a city consists of, everything that takes place in the city and is done by the city, communicates messages about the city's image" (Kavaratzis, 2004, pp. 66–67). Brand identity is disseminated through primary, secondary, and tertiary channels, according to one model that Kavaratzis (2004) put forth. Primary means include landscape, structure, infrastructure, and behavior of the organization, items not typically thought of as communication tools but that certainly become part of a strategic communicative arsenal as the discussion of "broken windows" in Chapter 1 indicated. Secondary communication "is the formal, intentional communication that most commonly takes places through well-known marketing practices like indoor and outdoor advertising, public relations, graphic design, the use of a logo, etc." (ibid., p. 68). Secondary tools are expressly concerned with conveying an image. Tertiary communication is word-of-mouth (and increasingly word-of-mouse) feedback from organizational supporters or

detractors and is often "not controllable by marketers" (ibid., p. 69), at least directly.

In all, place branding is not a one-way monologue but a multi-way dialogue between a place's myriad stakeholder groups and the existing environment, making place branding a challenging endeavor (Gertner & Kotler, 2004; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Kemp et al., 2012). Place branding *includes yet extends beyond marketing and public relations communications* to include holistic organizational culture, policies and practices that foster an organizational ethos rooted in place making as a governance strategy (Eshuis et al., 2013). Social construction is at the heart of place branding, as there are both physical and psychological aspects involved (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005), so balancing image with substance becomes critical so destinations do not trend more toward one pole, which could potentially alienate stakeholder groups and strain the organization-public relationship. Responsibility for shaping a place brand is not the confine of one department or unit. "No longer do marketing departments rule the domain of branding. Instead, responsibility radiates out from the very top of the company to every nook and cranny of the organization, and, beyond even this, into the web of stakeholders that make up the enterprise" (Hatch & Schultz, 2008, p. xvii). For a place, this means that everyone from the top elected and appointed officials down to the people maintaining parks, answering phones, collecting water bills, etc., foster the place brand. Developing a place brand that centers upon building a strong organization-public relationship not only has economic impact (Anholt, 2007; de Chernatony, 2010) but can build trust among all involved (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014; Zenker & Seigis, 2012) and possibly lead to brand recommendations from satisfied stakeholders (Chung et al., 2013). Without this stakeholder involvement, democratic governance might suffer, resulting in loss of trust, auto-communication, and stunted organizational learning.

Models of Communication

With the brief background on place branding given, we can now turn toward models of public relations communication that are the second foundational element of the framework. James Grunig and his colleagues developed these models about 30 years ago, covering communication styles ranging from one-way asymmetrical to two-way symmetrical. I take the view that public relations is, like place branding as a whole, not a monologue but a dialogue that is meant to foster mutual behavior changes between the organization and its publics. This was not always how a public relations' role was viewed, but it is one that is becoming accepted and embraced in the field (Huang & Zhang, 2012; Kent & Taylor, 2002; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998), even within nation-building practices (Taylor, 2000). Despite the acceptance of interactional frameworks, the construct of dialogue is tricky and not wholly appreciated in the public relations literature (Theunissen & Noordin, 2012). Furthermore, though these models were developed from a public relations ethos, I extend them to encompass overall organizational communication style, as PR and marketing communications *build the overall place brand* as detailed above.

Communication within the public sector is unique because those working for a public organization often face different challenges from private-sector counterparts. Some of those obstacles include politics, public service delivery, legal constraints, media scrutiny, communication devaluation or mistrust, negative public perception, federalism, and lagging practical development compared to private-sector counterparts (Liu & Horsley, 2007). Moreover, public managers face an increased expectation of transparency and accountability given the use of public tax dollars (Graber, 2003). Organizational communication, both internal and external, becomes critical to manage in the face of such diverse challenges.

Returning to the four models of public relations communication, they are: press agentry (one-way asymmetrical), public information (one-way symmetrical), two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). **Press agents**, using one-way asymmetrical tactics, put forth propaganda and positive information about the client (e.g., publicists). Within this research, I take a literal interpretation of the one-way asymmetrical model to refer to a purely informational form of communication dissemination. This reconceptualization relies on the charge that organization members are putting out information without regard for public desires. In other words, "Here is the information, take it or leave it." Spicer (1997) explained both asymmetrical models as "highlighting the achievement of organizational goals, encouraging organizational ethnocentrism, prizing efficiency and production at the expense of innovation, and subliming the individual to the will of the organization" (p. 65). This is an important distinction because *the one-way asymmetrical model and two-way symmetrical models risk masquerading as one another*, as detailed in Chapter 3. Put simply, organizations that claim to be engaging in a dialogue might be simulating one (Theunissen & Noordin, 2012).

The **public information model** (one-way symmetrical) emerged in response to organizations needing more professional relations with the media after press agentry models took hold (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). As an illustration, Lee (2000) detailed media relations practices public administrators often create as counter-strategies to communicate directly with organizational stakeholders in light of government distrust and media erosion. These first two models are examples of the one-way, non-dialogic communications, as the information comes directly from the organization but usually through the media filter.

Two-way models, on the other hand, seek to engage the public in a dialogic relationship. The **two-way asymmetrical** approach utilizes research to discern messages likely to resonate with the audience, but practitioners deploying this model have little desire

to change organizational or stakeholder behavior (Grunig et al., 1995). Research serves to make the messaging more personalized. The **two-way symmetrical model**, on the other hand, "uses research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics" (Grunig & Grunig, 1992, p. 289). The two-way symmetrical model is the supposed ideal, as it is based on dialogic practices that align organization and stakeholder preferences to lead to mutual behavior change.

There is disagreement, however, with the treatment of the "dialogue" construct because persuasion, often the backbone of the asymmetrical models, should not be discounted (Theunissen & Noordin, 2012). Persuasion is often necessary, especially when delicate topics are at hand. Additionally, the two-way symmetrical model is criticized for its inability to capture the complex environmental aspects that might constrain organizational communication, as well as the role of other entities in creating noise within the messaging process (Liu & Horsley, 2007). Another concern is that all four models, based on a systems view (commonly known as inputs, throughputs, and outputs), denote a progression from persuasion (bad) to dialogue (good). The problem is that this relationship might proceed the other way, with elites controlling the dialogue, which is eventually used to persuade others to agree, a common problem called groupthink (Janis, 1982). Practitioners are attempting to change this view by focusing on dialogue and "achieving symmetry, [which] has resulted in scholars increasingly viewing public relations as a management process rather than a communication process" (Theunissen & Noordin, 2012, p. 7). Like other constructs, dialogue is situational and mutable. To rescue dialogue, Theunissen and Noordin suggested focusing on dialogue as a *process* that might include persuasion rather than on dialogue as an outcome.

Nonetheless, the Grunig and Hunt (1984) models still find grounding in the scholarly literature and so are used herein. Table 2.1 illustrates characteristics of each model.

Table 2.1 Four Communication Models

Press agentry/ publicity	*Public information*	*Two-way asymmetrical*	*Two-way symmetrical*
Likened to propaganda and persuasion	In-house press relations	Takes behavioral sciences into account when constructing PR programs but aim is not behavior change	Uses research to craft a message
Goal is positive Promotion	Professionals develop own information to give out to the media		Dialogic principles
One-way asymmetrical	Two-way asymmetrical	Realization that people could be manipulated to do good or bad	Sees PR as mutually adjusting the relationship of the organization and its publics

Foundational Element 3: Selling Tactics

Making up the third foundational piece of the framework are the six selling tactics city officials often implement for place promotion. These tactics came together by conducting a detailed content analysis of municipal websites and documents to find patterns, coupled with an extensive scholarly literature review. Explained in detail elsewhere (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a) but related briefly herein, the six tactics are ways that cities communicate place branding programs and practices.

When executed fully, with citizen participation and organizational buy-in, place branding can foster democratic governance (Eshuis et al., 2013; Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). A problem people often have with hearing the word branding is that connotations emerge regarding power and control. One of the concerns I raise herein is that branding can lead to auto-communication and can

fissure organization-public relationships if not executed within this bottom-up participation at the outset. When relevant stakeholders have an opportunity to participate, democratic legitimacy can increase. "Translated to urban governance, a marketing-oriented approach can involve the creation of a symbolic place brand that fits the demands of citizens, but it can also be intertwined with wider urban policies that are adjusted to citizens' demands. Thus citizens' influence on brands may also effectuate change in wider policies" (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013, p. 1069). The tactics listed below are some common—and perhaps not-so-common—ways organizations can communicate aspects of the place branding process.

Branding

Branding, outlined above and hence not recounted in depth here, is purposefully listed as the first tactic, as the others ideally go toward building the brand. Branding, again, involves channeling unique elements of a place or product and strategically communicating those aspects with the intent to build identity, reputation, and brand equity. "As people, capital and companies have become more footloose, it is vital for places, in all scales, to provide in all these areas an environment capable not only to attract new activity and place-users but also, and perhaps more importantly, to keep existing ones satisfied with their place" (Kavaratzis, 2005, p. 329). At a practical level, developing, implementing, and evaluating a strategic, holistic place brand is not an easy endeavor because of the myriad stakeholders involved (Hankinson, 2009), often making place branding more difficult than corporate product branding whereby stakeholders are typically easier to define. Interviews with place brand managers throughout a Southern US state indicated that defining a brand is one of the job's trickier aspects. As one practitioner noted when asked to define the city's brand, "What is its brand or what do want its brand [to be]? A brand, it's a really complex issue. People want to talk about brands, and they want to

drill it down to be in a logo and a tag line or something, and that's just a little bit more than what it is. I think your brand image is how people perceive you, and that's kind of perception is reality, and then your brand identity, you want people to see and so we make all these brand policies that kind of bridge that gap between the two."

Place branding faces unique challenges as compared to corporate product branding. For example, places already have a firm image whether or not professional marketers do anything to shape or alter that image (Anholt, 2007; Hankinson, 2004; Kotler et al., 1993; Skinner, 2011). Moreover, place brand managers have less control over the brand identity than do corporate brand managers because of the diverse stakeholders involved (Skinner, 2011; Zenker & Seigis, 2012).

Media Relations

Media relations, the second promotional tactic, are how an organization interacts with external stakeholders through a media relationship. Examples of external media include, but are not limited to, newspapers, radio, television stations, and weblogs. In addition to building relationships with members of the media, city communications professionals might also develop promotional materials such as "organizational press releases, affiliate press releases, email press kits, searchable press archives, biographies of leaders, policy papers, newsletters, organizational history, and links to stories about the organization" (Reber & Kim, 2006, p. 324). These materials are usually easy to construct and inexpensive to disseminate (Motion & Weaver, 2005). Media relations are a major way for organizations to get messages out to the public, and there is ideally a symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship between the organization and key media players. "At any level, dealing with the media is an integral part of much public relations activity, and its impact and power should never be under-estimated" (Johnston, 2004, p. 260).

In-house Publications

In-house publications refer to any city-produced media that can be utilized to circumvent the media filter (Lee, 2000). There is a balance, then, between internal and external communications present within the media relations and in-house publication tactics. Examples of in-house publications include, but again are not limited to, city magazines, city-run TV and radio stations, annual reports, website(s), fliers, brochures, banners, etc. In-house publications would be examples of the counterstrategies Lee (ibid.) details, and fit best with press agentry style communications. Ideally, all of the materials produced within the city, right down to e-mail signatures and business cards, for example, will have the same look and feel so people know they are seeing official city documents. There should be consistent use of the slogan, logo, font, and colors to build an overall brand identity (Govers, 2013).

Outside People or Organizations as PR Surrogates

Using outside people or organizations as PR surrogates means getting *others* to tell the place's story and creating brand ambassadors. This tactic, however, is not random, as city officials often tightly control who is selected so this is conceptually different from word-of-mouth feedback, which is frequently random and uncontrolled. Brand ambassadors are vital for organizational success, as internal employees who "live the brand" can then promote the brand to other current and potential stakeholders. Managers, however, should be on the lookout for brand saboteurs who might damage the brand's reputation (Wallace & de Chernatony, 2008). People not directly employed by the city can also serve as brand ambassadors.

Using a personal example, I was invited to give a talk about my research in place branding to a group of hospitality promotion professionals in Greenwood, Mississippi. After the event, a local advertising executive, who is also a native of Greenwood, offered

to give me and a colleague a tour downtown. We took him up on this offer, and he explained the history of some of the buildings and streets as we strolled downtown. It was an insider tour we never would have received otherwise, and the gentleman even told us at one point that he hoped he was a good brand ambassador. The CVB had not employed him; instead, he was a passionate resident giving us his perspective of the place. As another example of creating brand ambassadors, Coral Springs, Florida, has something called the Community Partner Program (as of this writing). This program allows local businesses to join forces with the city, but the major benefit these businesses get is the ability to post city materials in their shops (City of Coral Springs, 2009). By posting this city-produced information, local businesses become another PR tool in the city's arsenal.

Aesthetic and Affective Appeal, and Built Environment

The final two tactics are closely related and so are treated together. Aesthetic and affective appeal captures emotive, image appeals (Carlson, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2004; Russell & Pratt, 1980) that city brand managers can leverage as selling points. Cities project a grand aesthetic, but communications materials studied for this research rarely offered any definition of what administrators meant by aesthetics, likely because what is aesthetically appealing to one person might be an eyesore to another. Achieving an overall aesthetic should be part of an "urban designscape" (Julier, 2005, p. 869), which takes into account both the tangible and intangible aspects of place branding, including urban design.

> In considering the emergence or positioning of place-identities via the mobilisation of the symbolic capital of design, we must therefore not restrict the analysis to visual identity programmes and *grands projets*. Instead, the full range of design production and consumption has to be considered. In this way, the coherences and contradictions—and, indeed, the contradictions that form

part of those coherences—within their practices and discourses add up to an extended field of consideration (ibid., p. 873).

Within city planning, to illustrate, aesthetics should be a chief concern, especially in light of "architectural and structural changes" taking place in cities, including gentrification, historical preservation, expansion of downtown shopping areas, and globalization demands that lead to cities that represent "service centers of late capitalism" (Boyer, 1988, p. 49). Based upon research done by others as well as myself (Knight, 2008; Sussman, 2013; Zavattaro, 2013c), one of the prominent ways aesthetic and affective appeal manifests in practice is via public art. By public art I mean permanent art installations city administrators have control over choosing (Knight, 2008). While temporary exhibits are nice and draw attention to the place (such as the Gates Exhibit in New York City's Central Park in 2010 that included orange draperies hovering above the park's walking paths), the focus here is on how city administrators use public art to build a sense of place and shape brand identity (Spayde, 2012). "Thus, public art is art which has as its goal a desire to engage with its audiences and to create spaces—whether material, visual, or imagined—within which people can identify themselves, perhaps by creating a renewed reflection on community, on the uses of public spaces or on our behaviour with them" (Sharp et al., 2005, pp. 1003–1004).

Public art ventures would also fall into the category of culture-led regeneration, which focuses on utilizing cultural artifacts such as restaurants, museums, art galleries, and others to create a sense of place and, possibly, regeneration (McCarthy, 2006, p. 243). McCarthy recommended that place brand managers and developers include public art within cultural quarters as mechanism to encourage creativity, innovation, a sense of community, and economic development. Administrators, however, should be aware of the kinds of art being chosen, ensuring that it does not reflect hegemonic, power-laden preferences of city elites (Sharp et al., 2005).

Built environment as a promotional tactic refers to how place brand managers understand and utilize a built environment to shape an overall image then promote those built aspects as being unique to the place. This is why the final two tactics work together, as there is a chance to blend man-made artifacts with natural occurrences. For example, Denver, Colorado, brands itself as the Mile High City because of its copious mountain ranges (natural, affective occurrences), which fosters an outdoor, healthy lifestyle through hiking and biking trails (built environment). Cities often control built environments through planning practices (Boyer, 1988). The point I wish to stress is that cities might focus on built environments and aesthetic/affective elements, *but the key is how place brand managers choose to promote these elements as value addeds.* Simply mentioning public art is not the same as using language to promote art's purpose in overall place making (Spayde, 2012). Simply mentioning a city's livability via the built environment and greenspace is not the same as branding those as unique assets.

Several scholars have already made links between the built environment and aesthetic and affective appeal. According to Rapaport (1990, p. 13), "people react to environments in terms of the meanings that environments have for them." Preziosi (1979, p. 1) also detailed the environment-affect link, noting that the built environment has an "architectonic code" that represents "sign-tokens in a system of visual communication, representation and expression." Related, aesthetics and the built environment are linked through plan review processes in government agencies (Jones, 2001), although sometimes there is tension between artistic vision and government regulations. The environment-aesthetic fit aligns with Kavaratzis' (2004) conceptualization of primary communicators, as the built environment becomes another dialogue the place brand managers aim to control (Duncan, 1990).

Often, studying cities through the lens of symbols corresponds to representational cities, whereby "messages encoded in the environment are read as texts" (Low, 1996, p. 386). Cities can take on

images of their own—the global city, informational city, divided city, modernist city—and each of these images are reflected in practices followed within the city. To illustrate, Low highlighted several authors who conducted postmodernist studies on buildings and spaces in cities, calling Hong Kong and Walt Disney World good approximations of postmodern places, as nothing seems real. In Hong Kong, the buildings are so close and green space so scarce that workers must picnic on the sidewalks, while at Walt Disney World, "Main Street USA" is an idealized version of where visitors wish to live. As Baudrillard (1994) elucidated the same phenomenon, this is a good link through which to discuss his theories as related to this study.

Taken together, aesthetic and affective appeal and the built environment can be used as tools to design and promote an overall sense of place that ideally sets one locale apart from another (Florida, 2005) because of an increased emphasis on "*collective* creativity and clusters of creative enterprises" that appreciates the "relationship between place and *individualised* creativity" (Drake, 2003, p. 511). City administrators can promote this sense of space as not only a marketing tool but one for economic development as well.

Social Media in Strategic Place Branding

One element not included when the six selling tactics were developed is social media. The idea for this book, and subsequent data analysis, began in 2009. Social media platforms certainly existed then, but were largely used for personal benefit and not as prominently adopted by organizations, and, therefore, were not a popular means of place brand dissemination. Today, it is commonplace to see links to myriad social media platforms feature prominently on city, business, or product websites. In the updated 2013 analysis, social media was included as a mechanism to expand the media relations tactic. I chose to put social media tools within this category because administrators can control brand identity

elements on the social sites while simultaneously interacting with media professionals and other stakeholders (citizens, visitors). Therefore, the tools can either be used as a means to push information out (information redundancy) or to engage followers and open the government entity up to all kinds of feedback, both positive and negative. "Social media not only allows public relations practitioners to reach out to and engage their publics in conversation, but also provides an avenue to strengthen media relations" (Eyrich et al., 2008, p. 412). Certainly, there is variety in terms of how city administrators deploy the tools and design the social platforms (Bryer, 2011), but ideally, a city's social media presence should contain the same look, feel, and brand identifying information so that users know this is an official city site.

According to Waters et al. (2010), journalists are turning toward social media not only to find potential sources for stories but also to engage with public and corporate entities. The authors dub this turn toward social media *media catching* (ibid., p. 242), whereby "thousands of practitioners are being contacted at one time by journalists and others seeking specific material for stories, blog postings, and Web sites with upcoming deadlines" (ibid., p. 243). Savvy city administrators can then use the tools to not only push a message out (Mergel & Greeves, 2012) but also actively engage followers in a knowledge-sharing, co-creation process (Mergel, 2013).

What are social media? "Social media applications include third-party platforms that allow for social interactions among users; content (co) creation, including text, videos, or pictures; and the sharing of status updates and news" (Mergel & Bretschneider, 2013, p. 391). Some examples of social media platforms include, but are certainly not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, Instagram, LinkedIn, Vine, and others. Not all social media, however, have to be web based (Bryer & Zavattaro, 2011), though most are thought about under a Web 2.0 umbrella. Web 2.0 implies a synchronous, dialogic interaction rather than static, one-way information flows often found in traditional Web

1.0 spaces (West, 2004). At the federal level within the United States, these social networking tools became an integral part of President Obama's Open Government Initiative not only to share data with citizens but also to increase participation in the democratic process (Godwin et al., 2008). Agencies at all levels of government continue to embrace social media platforms as a mechanism to open government 24/7. Within the US federal government, there are 1015 Twitter accounts alone (Mergel, 2012). The reason for this widespread adoption is that, as of May 2013, 72 percent of online adults use a social networking site (Brenner & Smith, 2013).

With social media relatively new in government, scholars are grappling with understanding how practitioners can leverage these tools for success. Social media platforms are not dialogic in and of themselves; designers can make them static—used only to push out information instead of encouraging dialogue (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994; Mergel, 2012). Other challenges remain, including privacy, public records, digital divide, trustworthiness of third-party sites, work-life balance for employees in charge of social media deployment and monitoring, and cyberattacks (Bezboruah & Dryburgh, 2012; Bryer, 2011; Fountain, 2013; Franks, 2010; Jacobson & Tufts, 2013; Oxley, 2011). Bryer (2011) noted other costs associated with implementing a social media program: production, participation, and communication. Together, these are the costs of democratization, understood as the costs an organization is willing to incur to fully implement a two-way social media platform. For example, production costs are what the organization itself accrues regarding staff time, equipment, facility use, website acquisition, etc. when implementing social media programs. The ideal space is an agency willing to spend time and money on production and participation costs to reduce democratization costs. Put simply, if an organization invests more up front, there should be increased citizen-organization interaction (ibid.). Recent scholarship, however, has revealed that government agencies are not using social tools to their full capacities and

capabilities (Brainard & McNutt, 2010; Brainard & Derrick-Mills, 2011; Bryer, 2011; Hand & Ching, 2011; Mergel, 2013; Mergel et al., 2009) and might only be creating capacity for engagement rather than actual interaction (Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014).

Additionally, there is confusion regarding the metrics for measuring social media success. Does a "like" or "share" or "followers" indicate success? The US federal government recently released evaluation metrics that cover seven main areas: breadth, depth, direct engagement, loyalty, customer experience, campaigns, and strategic outcomes (HowTo.gov, 2013). Measures of social media success should balance both quantitative and qualitative approaches to give a bigger picture (Fisher, 2009). There is no agreement on what exactly to measure and how to do it within a social media realm, but Owyang (2007) suggested measuring activity, tone, velocity, attention, participation, and qualitative discussion attributes. Managers can combine the myriad how-to guides to create measurement plans that become idiosyncratic to the organization. Essentially, government employees can use social media as mechanisms to potentially spur deliberation (Gordon & Manosevitch, 2011; Rishel, 2011), collaboration (Brainard & Derrick-Mills, 2011), interaction (Thomas & Streib, 2003), decision making (Poister & Thomas, 2007), and power sharing (Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). Administrators, however, must consider how the tools can stunt collaboration and instead lead to group polarization (Bryer, 2011; Jaeger, 2005; Poister & Thomas, 2007; Rowe & Gammack, 2004; Sunstein, 2001; Zavattaro & Sementelli, 2014).

Foundational Element 4: Baudrillard's Phases of the Image

Starting this section of the chapter with another personal story might help connect to Baudrillard's phases of the image (1994), the final foundational piece that ties the framework's elements together. I remember sitting in class called Images of Public

Administration (Sementelli, 2009) at Florida Atlantic University, where I earned my PhD. During one class meeting, Dr Art Sementelli wanted to show *The Matrix* as an illustration of the real-virtual space blending. He asked, "Has anyone in here not seen *The Matrix*?" I took this class in 2009. The movie came out in 1999. I was the only one to raised a hand indicating I had not seen the film. Everyone looked at me as if I had three heads. The professor hit play and I watched as a character named Thomas Anderson (played by Keanu Reeves) came on the screen, grappling with his professional career as a computer programmer by day and as a hacker known as Neo by night.

Without giving away too much of the plot, Neo is eventually drawn into a world deemed the Matrix, which a man named Morpheus runs. Morpheus is a government-named terrorist, and he shows Neo the "real world" is a wasteland where machines have replaced humans. We watched only about 20 minutes of the film in class that day, but, a couple of years after my graduation, I was talking on the phone with Dr Sementelli (my dissertation chair), who asked if I had finally seen the whole film. When I replied that I had not, he told me to watch it and that if I did not understand the movie then he would personally come and take away my degree. When I finally rented the film, I noticed a detail I missed the first time around. When Neo hides his pirated software, he stores it in a hollowed-out version of Baudrillard's book *Simulacra and Simulation.* The movie is an embodiment of Baudrillard's critique of society dominated by consumerism, imagery, and eradication of the real. Thankfully I understood the plot and was allowed to keep my degree, as Baudrillard's work was the foundation of my dissertation research and this volume.

I share this story to show how prevalent philosophy, imagery, and symbolism are in our lives whether we realize it or not (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Borins, 2011, 2012; Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1990; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Miller, 2012; Morgan, 2006; Sementelli, 2009; Stout, 2012). Baudrillard, who has been called both a postmodernist and poststructuralist

because of his concern with "the destabilization of classical modern signifiers and with the overall destruction of symbolic order" (Ashley, 1990, p. 130), is perhaps best known for *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994). He took what one might characterize as a bleak view of the world and argued that simulation stems from "*the radical negation of the sign as value*, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference" (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 6, emphasis in original). He decried any chance of reality, as society (he denied the existence of the social) moves toward appreciation of, and hinging upon, signs instead of reality or what was once reality. With that premise, Baudrillard offered four phases of the image (ibid.):

1. Reflection of a profound reality—a good appearance, the image shows truth
2. Masks and denatures a profound reality—the image hides the truth
3. Masks the *absence* of a profound reality—plays at being an appearance, the image is empty
4. No relation to any reality—simulacrum, the image is unhinged from reality

His is a view of non-reality, arguing that "the era of simulation is inaugurated by a liquidation of all referentials . . . It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process to its operational double . . . Never again will the real have a chance to produce itself . . ." (ibid., p. 2). He defended his point about images taking the place of reality by giving various examples, including religion, Disneyland, the nuclear arms race, the space race, and science fiction. Each is becoming more connected to imagery and simulation than anything real. The assumption is that the world can slip into that of non-reality, that at worst nothing exists, and at best it becomes difficult to tell reality from virtual reality, as in

The Matrix. That is why I caution about balancing image with substance throughout the book.

Not only does this theory find practical and dramatic interpretations, scholarly grounding for using phases of the image as an analytical device exists as well. Rubenstein (1989) applied the concept of simulacra to study President Reagan, arguing that the man himself and his presidential terms were nothing more than a simulation. She envisioned Reagan as a hyperreal object, largely because of his foundations as a successful Hollywood actor before his election as US president. Her point was that the roles are largely the same, actor and president, and that "fiction of the real" (ibid., p. 601) is problematic when it is difficult to distinguish where the actor ended and the politician began. Baudrillard would probably argue that telling the difference is impossible.

Sticking within a political arena, Noe (2002) applied Baudrillard's phases of the image to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The moniker "9-11" has morphed into a catch-all term to guide discourse and policies regarding terrorism, a term with no connection to the real events of the day and with a shared image that is "more real than the original" (ibid., p. 574). In this context, 9-11 is a policy tool invoked in any policy arena that could even be tangentially related to terrorism. For example, Noe detailed drilling for oil in Alaska and a rail travel bill. In the case of the Alaska oil drilling, the image of 9-11 was invoked to argue that drilling there would give the United States resources needed to defeat terrorists. Regarding rail travel, Noe cited a Congressional press release that noted that the bill is paramount in a "post–9-11 world," to expand the railways and keep citizens moving freely in case of another attack.

As a final example of how scholars have used Baudrillard's phases of the image to understand a phenomenon, Garrett and Storbeck (2011) examined the wall (or fence, depending upon how it is socially constructed) along a small portion of the Mexican-American border. Tying into Noe's argument, Garrett and Storbeck

argued that "the events of '9-11' . . . makes other hyperreal actions possible, such as the border fence. The proposed border fence becomes a manifestation of 'security' based on the fears of preventing another '9-11'" (ibid., p. 534). They traced the fence/wall through all four of Baudrillard's phases of the image. In phase one, the fence was a real representation of Homeland Security. In phase two, the wall became an image of oppression and suppression, as it cut people off from one border and artificially created a new one (where the fence is built is not directly on the geographical border between the two countries, creating an artificial border). In the third phase, the wall was meant to give an impression of security, which led to phase four, where the fence cannot provide any actual security because it covers a geographically small space and has holes where wealthier neighborhoods sit. The wall is now simulacrum, because it was erected based on thoughts of stopping another "9-11" (ibid., p. 6) when in reality, the wall often cannot stop people and objects from crossing the border.

Taken to the full extreme of phases of the image, organizational decisions and policies no longer reflect reality, leading to "catastrophic events" (Ashley, 1990, p. 133) and a void where reality cannot exist. This makes a harkening to nostalgia "irresistible" (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 140) because people who are now inundated with symbols, images, and text want a connection to something more recognizable and nostalgic, something that to them is reality. "As soon as the referent develops into a simulacrum, the sign ceases to masquerade as a reflection of basic reality and comes to bear no relation to any *extrinsic* reality whatsoever" (Ashley, 1990, p. 140, emphasis in original). Baudrillard (1994) himself detailed this reliance on image and what he called the implosion of meaning in the media. There is so much information available that meaning cannot be created or conveyed because of this onslaught. "Rather than producing meaning, it exhausts itself in the staging on meaning" (ibid., p. 80), thus creating total entropy. Taking this view to an organizational level, members of the organization might become so focused on shaping and pushing a message that appearance

supersedes substance (Grunig, 1993). The messages run the risk of becoming self-referential to all parties, both in an organization and an audience (Miller, 2002), and auto-communication might occur, whereby organizational members essentially end up talking to themselves when a message is pushed back from audiences into learning practices (Christensen, 1995). Potential inability to meaningfully engage with citizens (King et al., 1998) could render an organization-public relationship strained at best, moot at worst.

Balancing Image and Substance

Hence the call in this book to balance image with substance. Grunig (1993) detailed this problem at length, noting that people often cannot separate image from substance. What, though, is an image? Image is often used as a synonym for message, reputation, credibility, belief, etc., emphasizing the problems with the denotative meaning that makes defining, measuring, and observing occurrences of an image particularly challenging (Cutlip, 1991; Grunig, 1993). "The concept is tricky to define and its ontological status is not easy to establish. It is sometimes used to refer to somebody's inner picture of a particular object, and at other times it refers to the communicated attributes of an object" (Atvesson, 1990, p. 376). Atvesson explained that the former portion of the definition indicated someone's active role in creating an image to serve his or her needs, while the latter placed the onus on the image's sender. He called these the "inner picture (sense image) and fabrication (communicated image)" (ibid.), and the interplay of the two might cause confusion or contention. Such image-based tensions lead to an impasse, whereby images struggle for dominance (Miller, 2012; Miller & Fox, 2007). When one symbol/image finally overtakes another, policy or administrative practices can move forward.

There have been many full-length works written about image and its resulting practices (see, for example, Boorstin, 1961; Lyotard, 1979; Miller, 2012; Miller & Fox, 2007), and there is

not enough space within this book to delve into all the intricacies surrounding the term and its practical uses. Usually, but certainly not always, these scholarly projects are grounded in postmodern thought, which eschews traditional fact-based, Truth (with a big "T") in favor of the interaction between rationality and imagery (Miller & Fox, 2007). Atvesson (1990) argued that society's substantive nature is lessened because of an interplay between cultural changes, increased complexity and turbulence, service sector expansion, and mass media influence. Personal and professional identity crises could result, so we often turn toward images and associated feelings in which we find comfort (Baudrillard's nostalgia). "Communicated corporate images thus reduce identity-threatening anxiety and help to attain a closure upon the precariousness of meaning created by fragmented cultural patterns, increased complexity and ambiguity, the noise level of modern mass-media and labour processes aiming at creating favorable interactions rather than transforming material" (ibid., p. 385).

As organization members are moving toward increased emphasis on image-driven aspects of organizational life, it becomes incumbent upon people to balance image with substance. Despite the problems with co-creative discourse noted above (Theunissen & Noordin, 2012), "the distinction between superficial symbolic activities—the quest for 'positive images'—and substantive behavioral relationships between organizations and publics constitutes perhaps the most important paradigm struggle in the field today" (Grunig, 1993, p. 123). As organizations embrace both image and substance, two different purposes are being served. Positive image generation is a short-term goal, while behavioral changes based on substance is a long-term goal (Grunig, 1993). Not balancing the two might have audiences believing that organizations shape and present an image out of nothing, rendering an organization-public relationship potentially moot.

Place branding practitioners produce images on behalf of the organization by communicating symbols (ibid.). Audiences receive produced messages in a variety of ways, including cognitive,

perceptual, and behavioral, and the point is to try to hit them all. Images move to substantive behavioral relationships when PR programs focus on "reciprocity, trust, credibility, mutual legitimacy, openness, mutual satisfaction, and mutual understanding" (ibid., p. 135). To quote Grunig:

> When symbolic relationships are divorced from behavioral relationships, public relations practitioners reduce public relations to the simplistic notion of image building. Public relations practitioners then offer little of value to the organizations they advise because they suggest that problems in relationships with publics can be solved by using the proper message—disseminated through publicity or media relations—to change an image of an organization. For public relations to be valued by the organizations it serves, practitioners must be able to demonstrate that their efforts contribute to the goals of these organizations by building long-term behavioral relationships with strategic publics—those that affect the ability of the organization to accomplish its mission (ibid., p. 136).

Concluding Comments

This chapter has developed the foundation for the book, detailing administrative theory, governance practices, place branding and communications styles, selling tactics, and Baudrillard's phases of the image. How these foundational elements come together in an analytical and practical framework is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Putting It All Together—The Framework

. . . a lot of it is just education, visibility in the community, and whether it's clubs or, you know, partnering with other people about doing stuff in the community, it's, you know, try and try again. I mean it's hit and miss because you just never know, but it's getting people, and it's also having the same brand out there and making sure that our branding is consistent, that every time they see an ad from the CVB it looks, it feels the same.

— Marketing and Public Relations Director, Southern CVB

As the above quote illustrates, place brand development and maintenance is a job that cannot be confined solely to the lead destination marketing organization. Place brands are living social constructions (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Zavattaro, 2013b). The marketing and PR director quoted above was explaining the difficult process of getting community stakeholder groups to share the brand vision. One theme that emerged throughout the data analysis was a focus on educating hospitality professionals and locals regarding the importance of strategic place brand campaigns,

especially where it related to economic development. As many practitioners (all working for CVBs or CVB-like organizations)[1] in our study explained, their job is to increase the tax revenue within the city while limiting the drain on resources provided by the city.

That is not a job that can be handled alone, and the focus of this chapter is on a framework that practitioners and scholars can use to analyze the effects of place brand practices. Though I derived this framework of cities through phases of the image based on municipal government entities as the lead DMO, it has applicability across organizations and sectors. Examples presented herein come from US cities, entities not *traditionally* thought of as PR and marketing firms (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a) because of monopolistic tendencies. Considering the increase in competition for scarce resources, promotional practices are found within all organizations and are no longer the purview of private corporations (Anholt, 2007; Kotler & Levy, 1969).

Introducing the Framework

The importation of business-based practices into the public sector brought about an increase in PR, marketing, and overall branding activities (Kavaratzis, 2004). As outlined in Chapter 2, several foundational elements like form of governance, communication style, and selling tactics come together to form this framework. Baudrillard's phases of the image (1994) is the knot that ties these threads together. Coupled with phases of the image, which explains how an object loses its mooring to reality, is a global desire for consumption that accounts for why place branding professionals are undertaking increasingly sophisticated campaigns to set a place apart from others (Eshuis et al., 2013). The idea of "keeping up

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[1] In this state, legislation dictates the name of the destination marketing organization. Some are called Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, while others are regional tourism associations. Nonetheless, the function is the same—to attract tax-generating ventures to the state.

with the Joneses" means we as people often pride ourselves on having the latest and greatest gadgets and gizmos, lest we feel left behind. Baudrillard (1998) argues that this consumerism is not necessarily rooted in the consumption of tangible things but rather in the consumption of images, myths, signs, and feelings. "In a way, the generalized consumption of images, of facts, of information aims also to *conjure away the real with the signs of the real,* to conjure away history with the signs of change, etc." (ibid., p. 33, emphasis in original). This is what is happening as cities move through phases of the image.

Baudrillard critiques capitalism and the absurdities it levels against society. Take his example of personalization in a consumer society. People might carry the same smartphone, but we use different cases to express our uniqueness. Really, we all have the same product but are trying to import something special into it, something that sets ours apart from others. Advertising and monopolistic consumption kill the individual consumer, making them all the same, leading to conformity (Baudrillard, 1998). This could also happen to cities that move through the phases of the image as people want to be in a place that they think is unique and end up choosing what others have in the past. We see this manifest in tourist destinations especially. There always seems to be a list of the "hottest places to visit." Everyone flocks there, no longer making the destination special. Urban gentrification policies aimed at attracting a certain kind of people to live the "urban good life" might also bring about these exclusionary results (Gibson, 2005, p. 266). Green tourism, in another example, functions the same way. When places are marketed as pristine, tourists might come in droves and trample (literally and metaphorically) upon the very reason they came in the first place (Gossling et al., 2002).

The remainder of this chapter elucidates the framework shown in Figure 3.1 (Zavattaro, 2012), which depicts how cities can flow through, or stop within, phases of the image. I derived this framework from an extensive literature review regarding place branding within the public sector, combined with a content analysis of
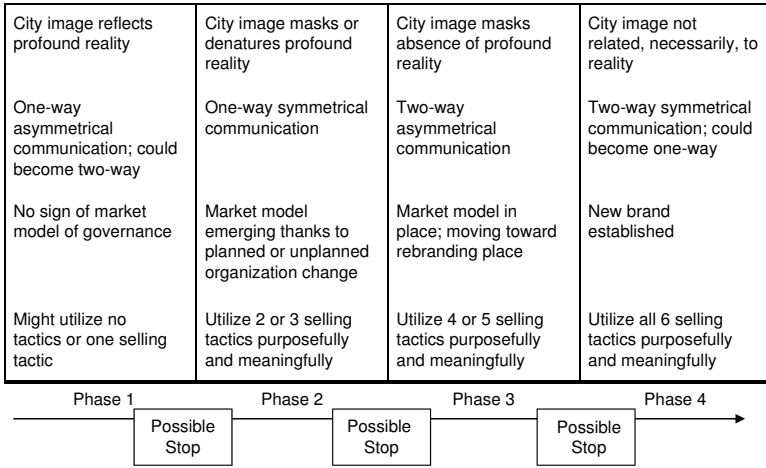
City image reflects profound reality	City image masks or denatures profound reality	City image masks absence of profound reality	City image not related, necessarily, to reality
One-way asymmetrical communication; could become two-way	One-way symmetrical communication	Two-way asymmetrical communication	Two-way symmetrical communication; could become one-way
No sign of market model of governance	Market model emerging thanks to planned or unplanned organization change	Market model in place; moving toward rebranding place	New brand established
Might utilize no tactics or one selling tactic	Utilize 2 or 3 selling tactics purposefully and meaningfully	Utilize 4 or 5 selling tactics purposefully and meaningfully	Utilize all 6 selling tactics purposefully and meaningfully
Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Possible Stop	Possible Stop	Possible Stop	

Figure 3.1 Cities through Phases of the Image
Source: Reprinted with permission from Emerald Publishing

20 US city websites and documents. The framework highlights the dynamic, interactive nature of place branding and its related practices, as it details the relationship between core governance practices, communication, and stakeholder relationships. It fills a gap that Berglund and Olsson (2010) had noted regarding the need for additional conceptual understandings of place branding and its connection to organizational publics by reflecting upon the impacts, rather than inputs, of place branding practices. Movement through phases of the image depends upon the depth and breadth of the overall branding program and related communications elements (Braun, 2008). Each phase reflects how administrators and citizens interact, communicate, and influence each other (Kavaratzis, 2012).

Cities in Phase One

As Figure 3.1 indicates, cities in phase one of the image commonly have certain characteristics such as one-way asymmetrical communication, no signs of a market model of governance, and

one or no selling tactic (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a). In this phase, the identity that brand managers project reflects a profound reality (Baudrillard, 1994). Found in phase one is what I term a literal reading of the one-way asymmetrical model of public relations communication (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). One-way asymmetrical tactics see information coming directly from the organization without stakeholder desires being taken into account.

Grunig and Grunig (ibid.) meant for the tactic to elucidate how organizations would put a positive spin on a policy, person, or event. Instead, I rely upon what Feldman and March (1981) would term as a classical decision-making organization when interpreting this communication style. "Within this basic framework, search behavior, investments in information, and the management of information are driven by the desire to improve decisions" (ibid., p. 172). Lack of informational pretense, then, should ideally improve decision making for those *receiving* the communications, in this case the place's myriad stakeholder groups. Administrators in phase one, therefore, might be utilizing two-way symmetrical communication (Grunig and Grunig, 1992) *disguised as* one-way asymmetrical. In other words, practitioners within phase-one cities could engage in a genuine, democratic dialogue with stakeholders who can digest the information *without* city-generated sloganeering, and can then react to the information in the most fundamental ways of voting or participating. In other words, if administrators are not placing an express focus on brand identity and releasing information as is, then citizens and stakeholder groups might have a better chance for meaningful engagement without having to wade through organizationally generated rhetoric and slogans. Hence, the implication for democratic governance in this phase could be positive if citizens and stakeholders use the government-presented information to affect change and engage with city officials.

In this phase, any marketing would reflect its social responsibility (Stidsen & Schutte, 1972). The authors note that marketing is both a communication and a decision-making process, yet also has

elements of control. Within this lens of control, which sometimes manifests in phase-four cities, there is a focus on marketing to derive specific outcomes for the organization. On the flip side, the best that marketers can do when operating within a communications-based lens is put out information to assist in decision making, as "there is no justification for arbitrarily deciding what is in a consumer's best interest" (ibid., p. 23). In the latter view of marketing, Stidsen and Schutte (1972) stress that the role of marketing is to help people make decisions about products, which is what city officials are doing in phase one—putting out information about the place without focusing on an overall brand image, based upon a literal reading of one-way asymmetrical processes. If communication is bad, decision making will be too.

Furthermore, administrators working within phase-one cities will use no tactics or one of the six given in Chapter 2 (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a)—branding, media relations, in-house publications, using outside people or groups as PR surrogates, aesthetic and affective appeal, and built environment. If a tactic emerges in phase one, it will not be used meaningfully or purposefully. In other words, there might be an occasional press release rather than a substantive media relations program. As another example, a city might have a public art program but provide a website and brochure that simply informs people about the presence of the art rather than how art fosters a sense of place, of wellbeing, and of aesthetics (Knight, 2008). There is a difference, then, in language and presentation.

This distinction sets cities apart and makes their presence in one phase or another clearer. There is a certain kind of language and presentation in action. Oftentimes, this language is akin to professional advertising campaigns, speaking directly to "you" as the citizen-turned-consumer. Manifestation of this kind of language, especially in cities in latter phases of the image, ties into Baudrillard's (1998) claims of personalization as distinction, which actually turns into conformity.

Cities in Phase Two

Phase two of the image masks or denatures a profound reality, and cities here move away from the press agentry model found in phase one (also called one-way asymmetrical) to the public information model (one-way symmetrical) that involves recognition and use of communication tactics to influence both positive and negative impressions of the place. Cities in phase two use the public information approach (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), which means the organization will put out largely accurate though one-sided information. Again, public information models emerged as a response to one-way asymmetrical tactics and often serve as counterstrategies that administrators can use when interacting with (or subverting) popular media (Lee, 2000). In phase two, cities will embrace two or three promotional tactics meaningfully and purposefully, for example, the emergence of a robust media relations program, or budget documents that might begin to reflect the idea of telling a story in addition to putting forth policy (Zavattaro, 2013d).

Based on my research, I found that cities in phase two usually emerge in response to two circumstances: (1) countering or masking a crisis through the use of public relations, and/or (2) selling some organizational change, either planned or unplanned, to key audiences. Usually this change involves moving from *government to governance*, with a reliance on business-based practices and increased public interaction. Such movement begins to have implications for democratic governance, as market models change the ethos and values of government service delivery (Box et al. 2001). Governance denotes a networked, communicative, participate approach to government policymaking and service provision. In some cases, both phase-two factors could be in play, as a crisis might lead to organization change that needs selling internally and externally. In the former case, the organization will use words, rhetoric, or images to hide something. The "something" might not be sinister; the idea is that words are used to mask or denature

the profound reality of what is happening within the city. Regarding organizational change, oftentimes a move toward a business-minded form of governance requires flattening hierarchies (firing people). Language might be used internally and externally to justify these organizational alterations, potentially even covering up massive budget crises as happened in Detroit, Michigan, for example, with the organizational rhetoric before the bankruptcy filing covering up traces of financial problems for years.

Business-based changes not only alter governance structures but also the language administrators use, which eventually manifests in internal and external communication tools. Public information is no longer pure information; it is intended to mask a reality within the city (when something needed changing). This type of information might be what Feldman and March (1981) have called strategic misrepresentation whereby information is produced to "persuade someone to do something" (p. 176). Foucault (1972) touched on this form of hiding in his description of the discursive statement. Statements, he argued, are not simply sentences; they are also sign codes that give meaning not just to the objects themselves but to various social orders (p. 106). In other words, discourses can be used to hide facts and are then used to hide a reality (perhaps an organizational crisis).

Cities in Phase Three

Baudrillard's third phase of the image masks the absence of a profound reality. Cities in this phase of the image often use the two-way asymmetrical communications approach (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), as this model sees practitioners utilizing some research but still largely pushing an agenda. City administrators in this phase embrace four or five of the selling tactics. For example, a city might not have delved into public art but does have robust media relations, in-house publications, and community partners accompanying the overall branding campaign that has moved beyond the simplistic to strategic (Eshuis et al., 2013).

Based upon my research, a common characteristic of cities in phase three is an effort toward branding or rebranding. A city in phase two, remember, might be beginning the transition to (usually) a market-based form of governance or overcoming a crisis. Once these practices are shored up and ingrained into an overall organizational culture, city administrators might begin to think about rebranding to remove signs of the old reality. This usually denotes progress to something better, something improved. The new brand is slowly realized and rolled out, confounding any sense of reality as the new and old brands intermingle. For example, administrators might have settled upon a new logo or slogan but have not had time to remove the old images from all their city's communications materials. This might leave people confused as to the place's strategic direction.

There is an absence of profound reality here because stakeholders are inundated with both new and old images so do not know where to look for a reality, thus potentially negatively influencing democratic governance and chances for participation and interaction with the government agency. This is an example of what Miller and Fox (2007, p. 114) called an impasse when "old habits no longer work." An impasse is where ideographs collide. Ideographs are symbolic ways of ordering the world, and, with the impasse, various ideographs come together. Practitioners, such as those who are dissatisfied with the old way, seek out something better—or create something better. ". . . Social change happens when the ideographs transform" (ibid., p. 117), so the new brand is fostering and shaping a new reality. The impasse is settled via whatever images and accompanying discourses "win" the day.

Cities in Phase Four

I take the bulk of this chapter to describe the elements that go into a phase-four city, as this latter phase is where the delicate balance between image and substance (Grunig, 1993) is more visible. Cities in phase four exhibit similar characteristics, including

a business-based form of governance, two-way symmetrical communications, and meaningful use of all six promotional tactics to convey the brand identity. Image-driven communications and substance-based communications are both important as they serve different functions in cultivating an organization-public relationship (ibid.). The former builds critical short-term relationships to attract stakeholders, while the latter cultivates and maintains those relationships (ibid.). The potential problem with cities in phase four is focusing too much on image rather than substance. When place brand managers put attention to images, slogans, and rhetoric, instead of using strategic place branding and its associated communication tactics as part of an overall governance strategy (Eshuis et al., 2013; Hanna & Rowley, 2011), simulacra and simulation (Baudrillard, 1994) might emerge. Communications meant only to socially construct the image could lose connection to reality, slipping into simulation. Images and their interpretation will control the discourse (Miller, 2012).

I need to be clear here that I am not making a general, blanket statement about all cities that exhibit phase-four characteristics. Undoubtedly, there are cities that meet phase-four criteria but also have an interest in genuine, as opposed to token, citizen participation (King et al., 1998). I am cautioning city administrators trending toward increased place promotion that, if not done delicately and strategically, there could be negative effects that widen gaps between promise and delivery (Eshuis et al., 2013; Govers & Go, 2009) instead of closing them, which has impacts on democratic governance, organizational learning, and trust. Emphasis should be placed on representing "interactive perspectives authentically and collectively" (Aitken & Campelo, 2011, p. 914).

The bottom line is this: city administrators undertaking place branding activities, including marketing and public relations, should move beyond reinforcing logos and slogans and instead incorporate branding practices and logic into short- and long-term strategic governance strategies with an eye toward meaningful dialogue,

knowledge sharing, and co-creation with various stakeholders. The focus should be on how the brand identity is *co-created* rather than pushed from the organization.

Returning to explaining phase-four cities, there is a risk of having no relationship to reality; the image is a simulacrum. Cities in this phase have moved to a market-based form of governance and have adopted the rhetoric, values, and practices that go with being a market-based organization. Citizens, for example, are constructed as customers. Traditional values of justice and fairness could be supplanted by market values such as efficiency and effectiveness (Box et al., 2001). Regarding efficiency, the focus is on using it as an end rather than a means, despite criticism that efficiency as an end is relatively unachievable in a democratic society (Waldo, 2007). In market-oriented organizations, three core functions seem to be prevalent: customer focus, coordinated marketing, and profitability (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Market-oriented organizations diffuse these responsibilities throughout the organization as a whole, so there is always more than one department or entity gathering and putting out marketing information. Cities with market models in place focus on customers, subscribe to consistent imagery and branding, and strive toward efficiency, understood as the flip side of profitability that involves saving money. With business-based practices and values such as these being imported into the public sector, marketing, PR, and branding became natural consequences (Kavaratzis, 2004).

Cities in phase four are practicing, ideally, two-way symmetrical communications, but these communications run the risk of morphing into a one-way monologue when the brand is developed, launched, and evaluated without concern for myriad stakeholders. With the two-way symmetrical approach, the organization and its audiences together shape the campaigns to construct that important behavioral bond between the organization and the public, what Kavaratzis (2012) might describe as a multilogue. Instead, if the focus is on image rather than a balance with substantive communications, the problem of top-down control could

become exacerbated, resulting in a power push (Aitken & Campelo, 2011).

One can find a similar occurrence in public policy discourse. Organizational language is enforced to the detriment of client/customer service (Miller, 2002). Miller's example is a caller to a telephone company who started out in an irate state, calmed down, then got annoyed again when she felt that the call taker was merely repeating what she said, almost as if this call taker was making fun of her by sticking to an organizational script.

> The policy pretends to be relational by its phony politeness and fake customer service orientation, but is so non-relational that participants in the conversation are unable to interact in an authentic conversation. The transaction does not rely on empathy, caring, or social intercourse. Rather, a utility-maximizing logic informs the process, which is composed of a *one-way monologue that disguises itself (although not very well) as a conversation* (ibid., p. 12, emphasis added).

Cities in this phase of the image, then, might become adept at simulating dialogue with constituents rather than fostering engagement beyond tokenism because of the intense and express focus on brand identity control.

Challenges of Phase-Four Cities

A city in phase four faces challenges when implementing place branding campaigns because of the breadth and depth expected. It is within this phase that place branding campaigns are complete or nearly complete. Of course, a place can rebrand once again and start the process once more, ideally to refine its image. As noted, place branding campaigns, when executed properly, are multilayered and involve interactions with many diverse stakeholders (Anholt, 2007; Braun, 2008; Hankinson, 2009; Kavaratzis, 2012; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Laidler-Kylander &

Stenzel, 2014; Zavattaro, 2013a; Zenker & Seigis, 2012). As such, there are several obstacles that cities emerging in this phase might face that heighten a move into simulation: alienation of stakeholders, connection between genuine place culture and heritage muted, auto-communication, and power-laden language. (For a counterargument to the slip into simulation, which details the laudability of pastiche, see Hildreth [2010]).

First, customer construction can leave citizens and other stakeholder groups feeling alienated. A business-based form of governance emerges as the ideal to which cities subscribe. Cities, then, feel the need to adopt and adapt market practices, lest they are left behind the competition. Market-based forms of governance are first seen in phase-two cities, so following the progression to phase four, these governance structures should be better developed in cities in latter phases of the image. A natural occurrence within these cities is to construct citizens as customers. The problem that scholars have noted is the influence this customer construction has on the organization-public relationship. As with traditional business consumers, customers of government service are placed in a dichotomous relationship with the product: the customer is always right, and the organization must respond as such, which is a tricky predicament (Patterson, 1998).

In this view, information from the government agency presents, idealizes, and compartmentalizes customer values, leaving little room for genuine discourse (Ventriss, 2000). Market-based models of governance offer "*reduced opportunities* for collective citizen decision making through *discourse*" (Box, 1999, p. 20, emphasis added). Taken to the level of simulation, words, slogans, and, at worst, policies this kind of organization might implement could themselves become social constructions that lose connection to reality. For example, "efficiency thus becomes a simulation, another instance of rationality taken too far; another image of rationality that floats into hyperreality" (Miller, 2002, p. 19).

Second, the new brand, especially if presented in a top-down fashion, risks losing a connection to the city's unique attributes,

culture, and history that are important links for place brands and alienating local stakeholders. The focus on logos and slogans to gain quick relationships might cause a forsaking of what actually stands out about the place and gives it competitive advantage (Anholt, 2007; Govers, 2013). As seen in the move from phase three to four, the old reality is replaced with a new reality that organization members socially construct. Sometimes there is too much reliance on manufactured reality, such as Las Vegas and the attractions in Dubai (Hildreth, 2010). Despite the potential for success via simulation, oftentimes people can see through the manufactured experience and desire authenticity (Govers & Go, 2009).

Third, a phase-four city might lose connection to reality by pushing messages in so many places, both online and offline, that people wholeheartedly believe the rhetoric, losing a sense of genuine thought, critique, or interaction. This phenomenon is known as auto-communication, whereby organizational members end up talking to themselves (Christensen, 1995, 1997). Auto-communication focuses on how messages meant for external audiences can also impact internal audiences, basically flipping the traditional communication process to a more sender-focused view instead of a receiver-focused view, as "auto-communication seeks to establish, maintain and affirm the culture of the sender through the use of forms and rituals well-known to its members" (Christensen, 1995, p. 660). Marketing, both internal and external, risks becoming auto-communication, elucidating the concern with some cities in phase four because "through marketing communications such as advertising, sales promotion, PR etc., the organization, on the one hand, enacts, that is, defines, specifies or simulates its own specific environment. On the other hand, this construction, identified as 'the market' constitutes a 'mirror' in which the organization reflects on itself and evaluates its performance *vis-à-vis* the external world" (ibid., p. 662).

Finally, cities in phase four might see language, images, and slogans as power-laden tools to construct social reality because of auto-communicative practices that could inhibit organizational

learning (Heracleous & Hendry, 2000). Auto-communication means that organizationally derived messages can be parroted back during formal and informal learning processes, potentially leaving the organization stagnant. Heracleous and Hendry (ibid.) called this the interpretive approach to discourse, whereby "language, as the basic building block of discourse, has been seen not merely as an instrumental means of information exchange but primarily as constructive, through its effects on actors' thoughts, interpretations and actions, of social and organizational reality" (p. 1255).

Auto-communication can happen both among internal stakeholders and between internal and external stakeholders. Cities in phase four might be bent on generating images in the minds of diverse audiences through as many outreach tactics as possible. To construct this new reality, practitioners find themselves using language and imagery, such as brand statements and logos, in as many media as possible because "symbols and things symbolized are independent of each other; nevertheless, all of us have a way of feeling as if, and sometimes acting as if, there were necessary connections" (Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1990, p. 17). The problem, though, is that these seemingly two-way dialogic opportunities offered in phase four cities can be disguised as *one-way asymmetrical* approaches because they utilize prescribed organizational rhetoric or images—language as a tool of control. Language games (Wittgenstein, 2001) that are meant to control can reduce chances that citizens have for speaking up to influence meaningful change (Farmer, 2003; Sementelli, 2009). Dialogue becomes what the organization wants to hear (Christensen, 1997). "If we think in terms of communication, we might conclude that communication in an organization characterized by asymmetry will be oriented toward advocacy persuasion or presenting the organization's claims" (Spicer, 1997, p. 65).

This is the point where the second and third concerns of phase-four cities align, especially within cities that trend toward simulation with a focus on images and slogans. Language as a control

mechanism can lead to both internal and external stakeholder auto-communication, whereby dialogic communication becomes a simulation; it is a symmetrical model obscuring an asymmetrical one. Symmetrical models are intended to align the organization with its environment, putting the organization at the central locus of power (Spicer, 1997). Implicit in this are elements of control. Administrators, then, use a dialogical approach as a control mechanism. "Advocacy communication is largely based on a managerial point of view that it clearly is used as a means of controlling the ways in which situations are defined and given meaning" (ibid., p. 202).

Market analyses become self-fulfilling as the organization only hears what it wants. The organization might dictate ahead of time "which *kind* of feedback is needed . . . thus potentially enhancing established preconceptions about consumers and their needs" (Christensen, 1995, p. 662, emphasis in original). Therefore, the city risks not learning any new information by hearing its own message coming back in. This turns what is supposedly an open system into a closed system "in which the different aspects of the communication process (e.g. advertising and market analysis) confirm each other" (ibid., p. 663).

When auto-communication comes into play, the major objective is adding feeling to the communication to make it one's own (Broms & Gahmberg, 1983). Put another way, people internalize the messages as meant for them and glom from them meanings pertinent to their frame of reference.

> In other words, when organisations communicate to the marketplace they first of all talk to themselves, sometimes confirming a self-image based on future aspirations rather than self-insight into the organisational culture. This can mean that external images of the corporation formed by stakeholders have little in common with the images projected by and held within the organisation (Hatch & Schultz, 2001, p. 1050).

Feedback becomes almost routine when taken in through the organization's learning processes. Citizen participation and information risk becoming simulations for what really was intended because of this intense focus on an image. Information becomes self-referential (Rasmussen & Merkelsen, 2012).

Concluding Comments

Balancing image and substance becomes the fine line that place brand managers and administrators alike must walk when delving into promotional programs. Unfortunately, there is no buzzer that sounds when a city is trending too much in one direction. Decidedly, administrators must know their stakeholder needs to better tailor campaigns. Some people might, for example, need pure information they can use to make a decision on their own. Others might want the gist of the story, the essence. Therefore, we as people, for better or worse, often adopt images, slogans, metaphors, narratives, and more as cognitive shortcuts to make policy and practical decisions (Abel, 2011; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003; Miller, 2012). It is up to the place brand managers to ensure that a projected identity aligns with the place's reality, lest there is a gap between identity and image (Govers & Go, 2009). Gaps potentially influence revenue streams from future residents, business owners, and tourists. No one wants a promise to go unmet.

With the foundational elements tied together through Baudrillard's phases of the image, we can look at its practical manifestations. Chapter 4 takes up that task.

CHAPTER 4

Examples in Practice

From a brand vision, destinations are all very competitive, especially with the economy where it is today, and you have to set yourself apart. That's really done through the experience that you portray through your advertising and your messaging to potential visitors.

— Chief Executive Officer, Southern State CVB

In the previous chapter, several foundational elements of the framework given in Figure 3.1 were detailed. How those elements mesh for a practical and analytical tool is the focus of this chapter, which showcases cities through phases of the image. For reasons of space, narratives for all 21 cities analyzed are not presented; instead, examples of cities in each phase of the image are highlighted to show differences in rhetoric and presentation. I draw particular attention to the distinction in language, color, imagery, and meaningfulness behind the characteristics present in cities within each phase. As indicated in earlier chapters, I only

considered a selling tactic (Zavattaro, 2013a) significant if a city used it regularly and meaningfully. To illustrate, I counted a city as using media relations if it had a regular press release schedule, dedicated media relations contact, and the systematic, strategic use of other media relations tools such as policy papers, e-mail press kits, newsletters, etc. (Reber & Kim, 2006). If, on the other hand, the city issued press releases every month or so, I did not count this as a meaningfully used tactic. How tactics were used and the language found within organizational documents influenced a city's placement in phases of the image and subsequent implications for democratic governance. I encourage readers to search the web for each city studied herein to see for themselves the distinctions in language, color, imagery, and meaningfulness. Then, readers can search their own city websites and documents and use the framework to determine its placement in phases of the image.

What this research shows is that cities in each phase have certain inclinations toward an overall place branding or place marketing scheme that range from holistic and strategic, to piecemeal and unguided. The closer a city moves toward phase four, the more robust the place branding architecture becomes, based on my findings. Cities in these latter phases implement myriad communication strategies, have well-refined brand identity, and utilize wide-ranging communications devices to promote organizationally derived imagery and rhetoric. As indicated earlier, there are consequences of focusing too much on imagery while forsaking substance, including fissuring an organization-public relationship, straining democratic governance, and lessening chances for organizational learning because of the risk of auto-communication. Public administrators ideally should engender internal brand buy-in, both from organizational employees and city residents, to create a culture that fosters brand appreciation, making it easier to engender brand ambassadors (Kemp et al., 2012).

Research Background

The main theoretical driver of this research was Baudrillard's phases of the image, which was used as an overarching analytical device to determine city placement based on a combination of governance structure, communications style, and promotional tools. To study the chosen cities, I examined each website and various documents for language and imagery; I needed a methodological approach that appreciated the importance of researcher-subject interaction. Qualitative Media Analysis (QMA) (Altheide, 1996; Altheide & Schneider, 2013) was the best fit because it is ethnographic and iterative rather than detached and static. The approach appreciates and encourages the important role researchers play in studying a phenomenon. Before detailing QMA further, I describe the importance of language in public administration theory and practice, as language is an important thrust to this research.

The Power of Language

Language is a constitutive vehicle through which we communicate, both formally and informally. A successful language game (Wittgenstein, 2001) emerges when all players understand the terms and words used. Doctors use jargon they comprehend but which, at the same time, is foreign to those not in professional practice. The same happens with lawyers, construction workers, teachers, police officers, lawmakers, and so many other professionals—each has an idiosyncratic way of communicating so insiders understand what is transpiring yet outsiders are left a bit confounded. When meanings change, or new words come into the vernacular, there might be a breakdown in the language game that confuses players. For purposes of this project, I analyzed organizationally created discourse from the 21 cities studied to look for patterns in language, specifically customer construction, and sales-based, advertorial

language. I also looked for personalized language in line with what Baudrillard (1998) noted was present in a consumer society. The most obvious manifestations of this personalization were the words "you," "your," "we," and "our." Such language is a direct plea or relation to people, asking for *their* help or calling *them* to action.

People use language to create discourses that orient our worlds (Wittgenstein, 2001). Typically thought to be spoken language, discourse can include non-verbal communications, images, and even silence (Fairclough, 1993, 2005; Patterson, 2000). Put differently, "we continually and actively build and rebuild our worlds not just through language, but through language used in tandem with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, objects, tools, technologies, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing, feeling and believing. Sometimes what we build is quite similar to what we have built before; sometimes it is not. But language-in-action is always and everywhere an active building process" (Gee, 1999, p. 11).

Understanding language means understanding human behavior (Hayakawa & Hayakawa, 1990). Knowing the roles of both speakers and hearers is important, especially when broadened from a typical sender-receiver model of interpersonal communication to organizationally created discourses (Goffman, 1959). In this case, brand managers try to create, shape, and disseminate brand identity (speaker), and internal and external stakeholders (hearers), and then interpret that discourse through their own lens, using their own ways of orienting the world to generate brand images. Therefore, interpersonal communication models, complete with noise and feedback, can be elevated to an organizational level (Zavattaro, 2013b), especially in the context of place branding whereby word-of-mouth and "word-of-mouse" feedback that is not organizationally controlled can alter the messaging.

For place branding managers and scholars, it becomes important to understand the formal and informal role that discourse, shaped through language (verbal and non-verbal) and images, plays in everyday knowledge creation and sharing (Hayakawa & Hayakawa,

1990; Miller, 2012). As humans, we have the ability to make a sign, slogan, word, or color stand for something (red roses signal love, green denotes envy). Symbols become powerful storytellers even apart from the original intended meanings, so studying and understanding the manifestation of organizational discourses emphasizes the active, socially constructed, affective elements of place branding, in addition to the concrete and objective (Govers, 2013; Miller, 2012). Better acquaintance with the power of words, images, pictures, logos, and symbols, and how they all work in concert, can go toward balancing image with substance.

Qualitative Media Analysis

Studying language requires a methodology that is flexible and appreciates the researcher's ability to interpret words and symbols; hence, a qualitative approach was the best fit for this research. With its roots in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), QMA was chosen because it takes an ethnographic approach to analysis based on the interaction of the researcher with the documents. Documents are understood as more than text, similar to language itself (Marsh & White, 2003), so they

> enable us to (a) place symbolic meaning in context, (b) track the process of its creation and influence on social definitions, (c) let our understanding emerge through detailed investigation, and (d) if we desire, use our understanding from the study of documents to change some social activities, including the production of certain documents! (Altheide, 1996, p. 12, punctuation in original).

QMA includes 12 steps, from designing the problem and testing/refining a research protocol, to analysis and presentation. I followed each step in the original 2009 research, as well as within the updated 2013 analysis. In 2009, 20 cities were used for analysis but updated to 21 in 2013. The 21 US cities used to create and refine the framework are listed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. For each city,

I evaluated not only the home page but also additional documents that aligned with the six selling tactics noted in Chapter 2. For example, if there were documents related to a public art program, I saved each of those documents in a folder with the city's name. Those documents, governance styles, communication style, language used, images, and website look went into determining placement in phases of the image. Analyzed documents came from the city government website, as my interest was in seeing how city government organizations, not typically thought of as entities that engage in branding, marketing, and public relations activities, were deploying place branding practices. Lead DMOs could be the city government entity itself (Coral Springs, Parkland, and Sunnyvale are a few examples), but marketing functions are typically relegated to something akin to a CVB in terms of attracting tourists, conference groups, sporting events, and others. There surely is a collaborative effort between internal (city employees, DMO employees, residents) and external (hospitality professionals, visitors, business leaders, sports teams, etc.) stakeholders to foster and shape the brand, so each entity can learn from the other (why I use quotes from CVB professionals throughout the book). Some cities in the sample also have CVBs (New York City, Billings, and St. Paul all do, for example), but I wanted to see how the city entity itself was promoting the place, taking a unique view of place branding and marketing strategies by looking at an organization not typically thought of as promotional.

To illustrate the above point, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) is responsible for the famous "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" campaign. The LVCVA website reflects the glitz and glam tourists often associate with Las Vegas (Lee et al., 2010). Conversely, the *city's* website, in 2009 and 2013, remained gray, drab, and purely informational, representing a stark presentational contrast. For the initial and repeat study, I examined the City of Las Vegas website, as opposed to the LVCVA website, to see how city government employees were shaping and controlling the message. Anecdotally, during presentations, when

I show people a screenshot of the city's website, with the information identifying Las Vegas removed, audience members describe the site using words such as "boring," "drab," or, a personal favorite that stands out, "I would never want to go there." When the location is revealed, people are stunned. That is an example of identity and image disconnect, and perhaps of a city government entity that realizes the power of its already globally known image and so has a website geared toward giving information to local residents without all the glitz and glamour.

Cities are important to study because destination marketing is not confined solely to one organization or group (Zach, 2012). Each city in the sample was picked for different reasons. Some (such as New York City, Orlando, and Las Vegas) were selected as this is where tourists spent the most money while visiting the United States. Others (Coral Springs, Charlotte, Phoenix, for example) were selected because they were cited in the scholarly literature as having premier managerial models rooted in business practices. Finally, others were chosen on a purposive basis (Detroit, Parkland, Anaheim, for example) to see the applicability of the framework across geographic, social, and economic boundaries. To assess changes in imagery and language through time, I relied upon an internet-based resource called the WayBack Machine® that captures websites as snapshots in time. Results of the initial analysis are presented in Table 4.1 (2009), while Table 4.2 shows the updated (2013) analysis.

Table 4.1 Results of 2009 Data Analysis

Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three	Phase Four
Albany, NY	Charlotte, NC	Billings, MT	Anaheim, CA
Chicago, IL	Detroit, MI	Denver, CO	Coral Springs, FL
Frankfort, KY	Las Vegas, NV	New York, NY	Orlando, FL
Kingsport, TN	Parkland, FL	Reno, NV	Phoenix, AZ
	Sunnyvale, CA	St. Paul, MN	Roanoke, VA
		Tamarac, FL	

Table 4.2   Results of 2013 Data Analysis

Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three	Phase Four
Brandon, MS	Albany, NY	Billings, MT	Anaheim, CA
Kingsport, TN	Charlotte, NC	Denver, CO	Coral Springs, FL
	Chicago, IL	New York, NY	Orlando, FL
	Detroit, MI	Sunnyvale, CA	Phoenix, AZ
	Frankfort, KY	Tamarac, FL	Reno, NV
	Las Vegas, NV		Roanoke, VA
	Parkland, FL		St. Paul, MN

Cities through Phases of the Image

Table 4.1 indicates where cities ended up in phases of the image during the initial data analysis that was based on presence or absence of a market-based form of governance, communications style (asymmetrical versus symmetrical), and presence or absence of one of the six selling tactics used. Again, analysis was done to determine the meaningfulness of each selling tactic, which determined placement in phases of the image. The remainder of this section presents narratives for the 2013 results, as depicted in Table 4.2. By repeating the analysis, the framework's utility as an analytical tool is heightened, and readers can compare the tables to see the movement of cities between phases of the image. Clicking to the cities' present-day websites will be an immediate visual indicator of the language and selling tactics used, showing comparisons between sites, colors, language, and interactivity that distinguish a phase-one city from one in phase four.

Cities in Phase One

Based on the analysis, the following cities emerged in phase one of the image: Kingsport, Tennessee, and Brandon, Mississippi. Since 2009, three of the four original phase-one cities have since shifted to phase two. Kingsport, however, remained in place. To include another example in phase one, I chose Brandon as a purposive

sample. As of 2013, Brandon's minimal promotional practices, lack of a business-based form of governance, and use of mostly asymmetrical communication tools makes it a good example of a phase-one city but with potential to make a transition as well.

Kingsport is a small town in the northeastern portion of Tennessee and is cited in the literature for having a top business-based form of governance (Furterer & Elshennawy, 2005). Kingsport officials still embrace media relations as a selling tactic but have no overarching place brand or readily available in-house publications, for example. There is a distinct logo in place that depicts hills above the city's name, but there is no presence of an overall brand identity. The city (as of this writing) is still relying on its 2009 receipt of a Harvard Innovation in American Government award to promote the place. Online archives indicated that the city has used the same logo since 2001, which is fine but suggestive of no forward progress toward leveraging that brand identity.

Moreover, the city does have a public art program, indicating that it could be in a later phase of the image, but the distinction is in *how* city administrators choose to promote the program. In Kingsport, the language utilized indicates that public art is not seen as a meaningful promotional tool. There is a program mission statement that reads: "The mission of the public art committee is to enhance the quality of life of the Kingsport Community by the nurturing and management of its public art" (City of Kingsport, 2009, p. 1). To contrast, the website of the City of Orlando, Florida (a city in phase four) contains the following description of public art: "it *stimulates* public spaces, which encourage a sense of ownership and pride within the community, acting as a land-mark or gathering place" (City of Orlando, 2007, para. 1), and art also "speaks to quality of life issues" (ibid., para. 2), "aids in recreation and intellectual pursuits of a community" (ibid., para. 4), and is "a reflection of the quality of a region" (ibid., para. 5). Language differences become apparent when comparing the two descriptions.

To give another example of a city in phase one, I turned toward Brandon, a small town near Jackson, the state capital, looking to reinvigorate its visual identity. Several Master of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) students at Mississippi State University helped the city develop its renewed brand logo and slogan during the Fall 2013 semester as part of a capstone course project, making it an interesting example for this book. Therefore, my students and I have a first-hand view of how the city is looking to progress, beginning with its downtown revitalization project (City of Brandon, 2013). As of 2013, Brandon is in phase one because it lacks a business-based form of governance, embraces one selling tactic, and does not use symmetrical communications.

Visitors to the city's website will see a sparse product, a visual manifestation of one-way asymmetrical communication. City officials do favor media relations, specifically through their (albeit limited) social media program. After recommendations from the MPPA students to enhance social media, the city has quite an active Facebook presence, but there are two possible official Twitter handles, making it confusing which the correct City of Brandon presence on the site is, though personal communication with city officials indicates that there are steps being taken to merge these accounts to lessen the confusion. The city's website provides mostly transactional interaction (West, 2004), offering citizens an ability to report public works and code enforcement issues online. The city does have a slogan and logo (Growth and Stability), but those are changing as of this writing. Conducting the analysis again in a year or so might move Brandon into phase two if branding changes are made beyond implementing a new logo and slogan.

Cities in Phase Two

The cities I highlight as examples of phase two include Frankfort, Kentucky, Albany, New York, and Chicago, Illinois, as they moved into phase two based on the updated analysis. All are

geographically and socially diverse—Frankfort is a Civil War–era town with deep historical ties, Albany has strong Dutch colonial roots, and Chicago, an international trading hub, is home to varied cultures, diverse communities, and vast economic growth. As noted earlier in the chapter, diversity in cities represents the potentially broad applicability of the framework as an analytical and practical tool.

Frankfort was in phase one in 2009 because of its plain, asynchronous website, lack of a market-based form of governance, and no meaningful use of any selling tactic. The shift into phase two took place based on the city's adoption of social media (Facebook and YouTube), aesthetic retooling of the website, and use of blog-style postings to interact with residents. The city still does not have an overall brand identity and only seems to be using two selling tactics (media relations and in-house publications) meaningfully, justifying its placement in phase two. Looking back at the 2009 analysis, it is not surprising that Frankfort made the jump into phase two by 2013. In 2009, city administrators hosted a citizens' forum regarding changing the city's governance structure. The executive summary indicated that participants in that visioning session answered the question: "What can city government do to make Frankfort a place people want to be?" (City of Frankfort, 2009, p. 1). On that list were items indicative of a governance switch: create an entrepreneurial environment, engage in public-private partnerships, explore redevelopment, develop a strong brand, hire an ombudsman to assist citizens, and establish policies and practices related to sustainability (built environment). Should the city continue with these trends, it might end up moving into phase three.

Albany went through changes similar to Frankfort regarding its overall marketing and public relations communications. Although still lacking a defined brand identity, Albany now has extensive social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn), a city mobile application called AlbanyWorks4U (also found as SeeClickFix) that allows users to snap pictures

of quality-of-life issues city staff should address (City of Albany, 2013), and its Albany 2030 program, which represents Albany's first strategic plan and a move toward more business-based governance. These activities toward symmetrical communications, as well as the delving into a market-based form of governance, are why Albany is now in phase two and potentially poised to move to another phase in the future. When compared to cities in later phases of the image, Albany's website is still about giving information rather than promoting a message. For example, readers who click over to Albany's website then, for example, Roanoke, Virginia's city site, will notice a difference in branding tactics.

Chicago is also another example of a city that has moved into phase two. In this instance, what pushed the city into the next phase of the image is an explicit interest in municipal marketing, which was surprisingly absent in 2009. Passed as an ordinance in 2011, the city's marketing initiative is meant as a mechanism to increase revenue through innovative marketing opportunities and partnerships (City of Chicago, 2013a). Interestingly, the Chief Financial Officer and employees in the Department of Finance are spearheading this initiative, likely because of the focus on increasing revenue rather than building brand equity. The program has several goals, including protecting the city's brand integrity, fostering creativity, and aligning social interest with corporate marketers' goals (ibid.). Moreover, the city established a Municipal Marketing Advisory Council comprised of professionals with experience in marketing, arts, and architecture (City of Chicago, 2013b) to help push the initiative. Additionally, the city is focusing on increasing cultural opportunities, including investing in public art (City of Chicago, 2012), potentially making this a meaningful future promotional tactic. Despite these moves, the city can still make progress in establishing an overall brand identity and use of promotional tactics. Essentially, it is the active steps toward place promotion that pushed Chicago into phase two.

Cities in Phase Three

Just as cities shifted into phase two from phase one, similar progression occurred with cities moving into phase three. For example, Sunnyvale, California, is now in phase three as city administrators deployed additional selling tactics in a meaningful manner. Others, such as, Tamarac, Florida, St. Paul, Minnesota, and Denver, Colorado, have stayed in phase three since 2009, while Sunnyvale has made a noticeable leap into phase three since 2009. Administrators in Sunnyvale overhauled the website to make it more user friendly and it now includes prominently displayed city announcements (in 2013), links to social media tools (Google+, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and Flickr), and a city manager's blog. In 2009, Sunnyvale administrators used branding, media relations, and in-house publications as selling tactics. The city's brand slogan, "The Heart of Silicon Valley," is trademarked but ostensibly not used on all materials (at least those found online), as a city in phase four would do. An embrace of the built environment tactic, manifested in sustainability practices, put the city into phase three. Sunnyvale adopted a plastic bag ban in December 2011 (City of Sunnyvale, 2013a) and passed a law against the use of foam food containers in December 2012 (City of Sunnyvale, 2013b). Additionally, city personnel now include newsletters and events centered upon sustainability, making this an additional promotional tactic.

I need to be clear here, as elsewhere, that simply because a city is using a practice or policy as a marketing or public relations tool that enhances the overall place branding strategy, that does not mean that there will not, or cannot be, positive outcomes. The plastic bag ban ideally will result in fewer plastic bags clogging city drains and cluttering streets. There is a difference in simply *presenting* information and in making a point of differentiation in *promoting* a policy, program, and practice as part of the *place ethos*.

Next, Denver remained in phase three during the updated analysis. While officials in the City and County of Denver (referred to as the City of Denver for ease of understanding) made

changes to the website since the 2009 analysis, including a Connect Denver feature at the top of the homepage that includes the city's social media presences, along with mobile applications and websites for smartphones, the city remained in phase three because not all six selling tactics are prominently embraced. It is difficult to find how Denver uses outside people or organizations as brand ambassadors, at least through a website search. To reiterate, embracing five promotional tactics is neither good nor bad. Cities can use as many tactics as possible within given organizational capabilities and stakeholder needs. What has remained relatively stable is the city's brand identity and slogan, "The Mile High City," which alludes to the city's physical terrain and embraces a deep-rooted, given image that people already have of Denver. The brand logo appears on in-house publications, making it easy to identify materials coming directly from the city entity. Some of the promotional tactics were difficult to find via the city's website, such as the in-house publications and public art program, but a search revealed their presences. There seemingly is movement toward expanding the city's arts and cultural offerings with the introduction of the Imagine 2020 plan, which outlines guideposts to increase art in schools, revamp the city's website, and generally promote art in the community. Perhaps after this plan begins implementation city officials will move toward using public art as a broader promotional tactic.

Cities in Phase Four

Finally, cities in phase four employ all six selling tactics meaningfully, have a strong market-based form of governance, and utilize two-way symmetrical communication that could, if not balancing image and substance, masquerade as one-way asymmetrical communication, possibly resulting in auto-communication. In other words, organization members might push a message so often that it becomes rote and almost background. Stakeholders might then parrot this information back through learning mechanisms, leaving

the organization pressed for ways to enact organizational growth or change (Christensen, 1995, 1997). Auto-communication is talking to one's self, and is often interpreted as how members of an organization talk to themselves via internal communications and branding (Morsing, 2006). For this book, auto-communication still has organizational members talking to themselves *through external feedback that is based on organizationally derived language* as opposed to unique, independent feedback. Readers should look to the cities in phase four for both inspiration and caution when deploying a place brand campaign. Sometimes placement in phase four is not always ideal.

Based on analysis, Reno, Nevada, moved into phase four since 2009. Not only have Reno employees expanded the city's social media offerings, there is now a mobile website, open government initiative, and a Living in Reno campaign (City of Reno, 2013a). In 2009, administrators made use of branding, media relations, aesthetic and affective appeal, and built environment. With the inclusion of social media and the Living in Reno campaign, a photo contest for residents to share what living in Reno means to them (using outside people or organizations as PR surrogates) pushed the city into phase four. The pattern of Reno acting as a public relations and marketing firm-style city (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a) is evident when compared to cities in phase one. For example, Frankfort's website and communications program are not as robust and are even plain by comparison. Reno, on the other hand, has a website that is colorful (blues and greens), a brand statement prominently placed (on the header), easily accessible links to social media sites, and spaces to sign up for e-mail alerts and to give immediate feedback. These features are often not present on the websites of cities in phase one.

Coral Springs, Florida, the city where I used to work, is an interesting example of a phase-four city. As the city underwent a comprehensive rebranding strategy, it *reverted* into phase three to emerge again in phase four with the rollout of the new brand identity. Characteristic of a phase-three city is a rebranding initiative, which

Coral Springs undertook to move away from the Community of Excellence brand that played off the city's 2007 receipt of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. At that time, the city was the first non-profit or government entity to receive a distinction typically reserved for private-sector companies. (Since then, and as of this writing in 2013, only one other city has earned the honor, Irving, Texas.) The 2009 analysis revealed that in Coral Springs, city branding, marketing, and communications materials changed to include this Community of Excellence brand statement, which meant removing the old SunTree logo, a sun with a tree. As an anecdotal aside, I remember when the Communications and Marketing Department team introduced the Community of Excellence logo and slogan. One employee was not pleased with these changes, and, as a form of protest, came into our office wearing a city shirt with the SunTree logo covered in black electrical tape.

In 2012, administrators decided to undertake a more holistic, inclusive place branding endeavor, as the previous brand came from top management. To take on the comprehensive overhaul, city administrators contracted with North Star Destination Strategies. According to North Star's final report (North Star Destination Strategies, 2013), the company compiled more than a dozen different research elements, including citizen surveys and competitor screenings, to develop the new brand. Findings, organized using a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) format (detailed in Chapter 6), revealed that the most-cited positives for the city included strategic planning, recreation, schools, location, and family friendliness. Challenges included redevelopment, declining aesthetics, and dissatisfied business owners (ibid.).

Putting all this information together, the company came up with "Everything Under the Sun" for the city's slogan. "The concept leverages the preferred climate in South Florida and uses the phrase 'under the sun' as an allegory for promoting quality of life and preferred assets in the community. The vibrant, positive, and casual tone of the concept is in line with the atmosphere and culture in Coral Springs" (ibid., p. 8). Not everyone, however, was happy

with the new brand identity (Govers, 2013; Mayo, 2013), but city staff are changing communications devices, everything from the magazine to entryway signs to car decals, to reflect the Everything Under the Sun brand identity. City staff are still transitioning materials to include the new brand identity, so that when changes are complete Coral Springs will be firmly back in phase four.

Balancing Image and Substance: An Example

A phase-four city that does a fine job of balancing images and substance is Phoenix, Arizona, for several reasons. First, the city earned recognition for its transparency practices from the non-profit group Sunshine Review. According to a city press release, "Sunshine Review uses a 10-point 'transparency checklist' to measure government websites on what they provide against what should be provided. Phoenix's website was recognized for the availability of information on budget, taxes, elected officials, audit reports, public meetings, public records, and building and zoning" (Shalley, 2013, para. 3). The city's website is set to change in 2014, so by the time readers embark upon this chapter, the Phoenix website might look different from the last screengrab offered. According to the city's website, the program is billed as phoenix.gov Refresh Project, and new features will include a screen-responsive design (so no separate mobile website is needed), prominent brand identity, and better ability to drive users to official city information from search engines (City of Phoenix, 2013a). Again, I do not perceive this website change as a negative element of the framework; indeed, it shows the applicability of the theory presented herein through time.

Second, the Phoenix brand logo, literally a phoenix, is present on the upper left of the first screengrab from the 1997 website (Figure 4.1), obtained through online archives. Screenshots are used with permission from the City of Phoenix, all rights reserved. On the 1997 site is a link to the city's vision and values, along with information about the brand development. As the brand story details,

PHOENIX AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Winner of the Carl Bertelsmann Prize

Welcome to *Phoenix At Your Fingertips* where you'll find information and services regarding our city government and activities, as well as access to other web sites and agencies offering citizen services.

Our city's Vision and Values statement and Seamless Service mission describe our commitment to serving our citizens as we develop new ways to run our city more efficiently and cost-effectively. Take a look at the city's Year 2000 Internet Website. Discover the legend of the Phoenix bird and our international recognition by Germany's Carl Bertelsmann Foundation. Scroll down for complete menu.

WHAT'S NEW!!

If you're curious and want to know what new listings we've added to *Phoenix At Your Fingertips*, keep your eye on this menu.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Use the Electronic Community Calendar to create a customized calendar (by date, location, type of event or area of interest) of Valley special events: arts, cultural and sports activities and programs. Other agencies and additional calendar of events also are available.

WELCOME TO CITY HALL

Mayor/City Council profiles; district newsletters and information; public meeting notices and agendas; city service and phone directories; voter/election information; city budgets, reports, publications and demographics; citizen involvement on boards and commissions; how city government works, and access to other agencies.

DOING BUSINESS WITH THE CITY

Figure 4.1 City of Phoenix Website Screenshot, 1997

the logo is a phoenix, itself a mythical creature. From the start, the brand is based on a simulation, an image of rising and reinvention. According to city history, there were more than 30 different phoenix logos at one point, so city officials standardized the brand logo in 1986 (City of Phoenix, 2013b). After hosting a design competition, city officials selected a winning logo, which is still being used today.

The 2001 website, shown in Figure 4.2, still featured the bird prominently but turned toward a purple color scheme. There were more links to departments and city services than in the 1997 site and a shift toward selling, with the emergence of news and graphics on the homepage. Figure 4.3 shows how the website appeared in 2006. While the text might be difficult to read, the important change is the drastic color scheme alteration. If readers venture to find the online archives, they will see changes from the original purple and orange color scheme to the more contemporary white and maroon. Figure 4.4 shows how the website appeared in 2013,

Figure 4.2   City of Phoenix Website Screenshot, 2001
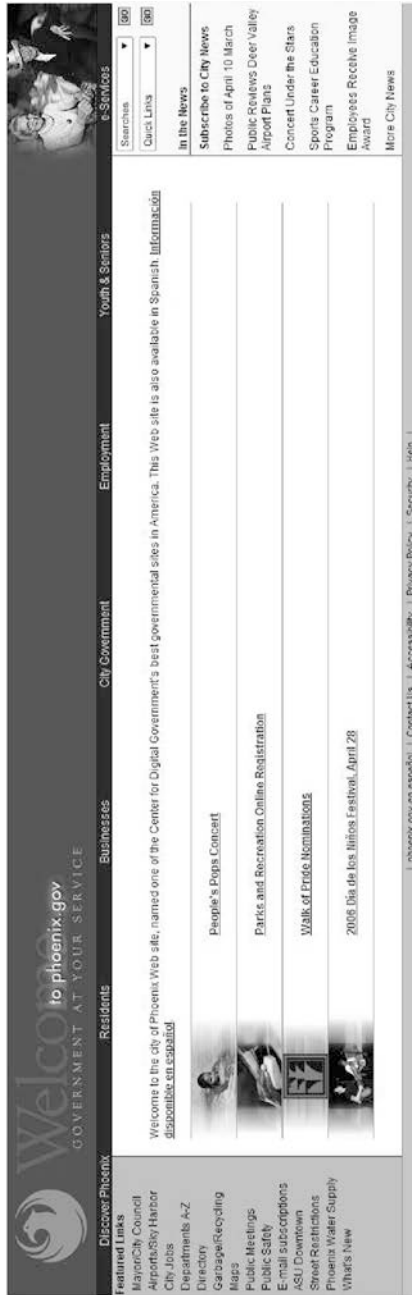
Figure 4.3   City of Phoenix Website Screenshot, 2006

Figure 4.4 City of Phoenix Website Screenshot, 2013

before the change. The 2013 look is more streamlined compared to earlier versions, yet the logo still has a place of prominence.

Phoenix has a distinct brand logo apparent in all the screenshots, it embraces all six promotional tactics, and has a market-based form of governance. Links to promotional tactics are readily identifiable, but others required a search to find them. For example, I began the search with the Public Information Office, which "functions as the *public relations* arm of the city by assisting departments, the mayor and the city council in communicating the goals and activities of city government to its many publics, both internal and external" (City of Phoenix, 2013c, para. 1, emphasis added). As characteristics of a city acting as a public relations and marketing firm (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a), the information office is embracing promotional functions. The city newsletter, one of the ways Phoenix utilizes the in-house publications tactic, is certainly not as catchy as those from the fellow phase-four cities of Coral Springs or Anaheim but there is breadth and depth of information included, thus balancing image and substance. Elements of the aesthetic and affective appeal tactic are present as well. Grant money goes toward an Aesthetic Fund to make improvements to certain areas of the city (City of Phoenix, 2008a). The other element of this tactic is public art, and personalized language encourages people to get involved. According to the city's arts and culture plan, "public art will anchor the city's built environment" (City of Phoenix, 2008b, p. 6), showing a blend of two selling tactics:

> Public art can be a change agent for the community. It creates and enhances neighborhood and community identity. It enhances the visual landscape and character of the city. It turns ordinary spaces into community landmarks and promotes community ownership of the city's infrastructure. It promotes community dialogue, and, most importantly, it is accessible to everyone. This includes access to the creation process and to the content and meaning of the artwork (City of Phoenix, 2007, p. 1).

Third and finally, in 2010, city leaders launched a Marketing Partnership Program to "develop mutually beneficial business partnerships and to generate revenue for the city of Phoenix programs and services" (City of Phoenix, 2013d, para. 1). Partners then become brand ambassadors promoting city services, and the city in turn uses these partners in its promotional communications. City officials will then launch a Community Partner Program after the Marketing Partnership Program, thereby expanding opportunities for brand ambassadors (The Pathfinder Group, 2010). Phoenix officials balance image and substance by being transparent with data, sticking true to the Phoenix brand, offering residential stakeholders a transaction-friendly web platform, and promoting the city's assets to other myriad stakeholder groups. Language is not focused overtly on flourish or promotion as other phase-four cities. Data are made fully available for inspection (Behavior Research Center, 2012).

Concluding Comments

This chapter showed practical examples of cities in each phase of the image. Readers are encouraged to explore for themselves the differences in presentation and language used within each city by clicking through each city's website followed by the site of their own city. Doing so should shed light upon the variations in overall place branding strategies, which might be no more than a logo or slogan at the end (Govers, 2013). Implications of the overall framework are offered in the next chapter, but those curious about how to implement place marketing and branding strategies can skip to Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

Implications of the Framework

Many of the place marketers don't have the funds to do it correctly, and that's something that concerns me, . . . is if you can't do it correctly, should you be doing it, and where is that negative return?
— Executive Director, Southern City CVB

By the time readers finish this book, some of the cities analyzed might already be moving into a different phase of the image. Some cities might have updated websites and added additional communication tools. Some might be switching to a business-based form of governance. The place brand manager's quote above highlights the ever-changing field of destination management and the associated challenges those changes bring about. In my view, these shifts and punctuations do not show shortcomings of the framework of cities through phases of the image. Changes within cities do not render the framework incomplete. To the contrary, changes highlight the framework's inherent advantage—its dynamic nature that accounts for shifts in governance policies

geared toward developing strategic place branding practices. That is why I could repeat the analysis from 2009 in 2013 using the same framework and research strategy.

The genesis for the research began with my experience of working part-time with the City of Coral Springs, Florida. As one of 10 members of the Communications and Marketing Department, I assisted on a variety of projects including press release writing, developing stories for the city's magazine, writing scripts for the monthly television show, and more. The department still has experts in areas including television production, graphic design, web design, media relations, radio and broadcasting, and overall place branding. The full-time and part-time staffers were able to generate nearly 30 mechanisms of communicating with the city's stakeholders, ranging from the larger media noted above down to fliers and mailings. I was intrigued by the breadth and depth of knowledge within the department regarding these marketing and public relations devices and so started looking at other cities to determine if this promotional drive was happening elsewhere.

Not surprisingly, other cities were undertaking a similar endeavor, though the levels were different. The focus of my research is diverse in that attention is turned toward the city government as the lead destination marketing organization rather than a CVB, the entity normally charged with branding the place to attract stakeholders to the city. This matters, as cities are typically thought about as monopolistic entities that do not necessarily need to engage in branding practices. Early economic theory, however, suggests that people "choose with their feet" (Tiebout, 1956) when selecting a place to live. As such, competition among cities takes place *before* a purchasing decision is made (Zavattaro, 2013b). Kotler et al. (1993) agree, arguing that place brand managers recognize six distinct place buyer roles—initiator, influencer, decision maker, approver, buyer, and user. In other words, someone might decide upon several potential destinations to visit or to have a conference, another person might be responsible for making a final decision, then many others become users of the

place. Each of these people requires different information to help with the decision, thus the importance of stakeholder identity and management (Freeman, 1984; Jones & Wicks, 1999).

To generate a framework of how cities are understanding and deploying place branding strategies, I conducted an initial literature review and content analysis of other cities' websites. Based on this search, I identified three foundational elements that come together to shape the cities through phases of the image framework—governance style, communications style, and promotional tactics. First, governance style within the framework refers to the presence or absence of market-based models of governance, which became especially popular in the United States in the 1990s, during the Clinton–Gore administration (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), with the embrace of an entrepreneurial state (Eisinger, 1988). Such governance interventions suggested adopting and adapting policies and practices often found in corporate sector counterparts in the name of efficiency and effectiveness, despite the assertion that democracy and efficiency are inherently difficult to achieve simultaneously (Waldo, 2007). Accompanying market models of governance were business values and practices, including marketing and public relations (Kavaratzis, 2004). Cities operating within this ethos began increasing attention toward communications and branding to craft an image that made the place unique from neighboring cities.

Second is the style of communications that cities are undertaking. This element of the framework is based on Grunig and Grunig's (1992; first Grunig and Hunt, 1984) four types of public relations communication: press agentry (one-way asymmetrical), public information (two-way asymmetrical), one-way symmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. In Chapter 2, I expanded the constructs beyond only PR-centric communications into an overall communications ethos. If city officials believe, for example, in interactivity and citizen involvement, then most organizational communications will reflect those values. A concern was raised in Chapter 3 that one-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical

communications styles often masquerade as each other. Cities putting out basic information (phase one) might be giving their stakeholders better information than those cities with myriad communication platforms, all of which contain city-driven rhetoric and sloganeering (phase four). Hence is the call herein to balance image and substance lest auto-communication occur (Christensen, 1995).

The third piece of the framework stems from selling tactics city brand managers often utilize when promoting a brand strategy (Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a). The six selling tactics detailed previously were derived from a content analysis of city websites and documents combined with scholarly literature. City communication managers can choose to use no tactics, one tactic, several, or all six when communicating with stakeholders. The further a city falls along the phases of the image framework, the more likely there will be a broad array of tools used in a meaningful way with advertorial and personalized language. Language use is a decisive factor in determining if a city is utilizing the tools in a promotional or information manner. For example, if a city listed presences on social media sites, that alone does not necessarily indicate a meaningful embrace of those platforms. An official would have to update each social site at least daily with new content for it to count as a meaningful media relations tool. For example, Coral Springs sends out at least one Twitter message each day while Brandon (as of this writing) has two Twitter accounts, neither of which are regularly updated and are often in conflict leading to inconsistent messaging. Again, personal communication with city officials indicates they are working to correct this imbalance and deploy social media tools in a more strategic manner.

Finally, these foundational elements come together through Baudrillard's phases of the image, which shows how objects move from connections to reality to simulacrum removed from original referents (Baudrillard, 1994). Baudrillard argued that we are in a period of hyperreality, where signs, logos, slogans, images, and narratives rule our discourse. For example, Miller (2012) detailed

how policy narratives, rather than policy actors, create action. Words and images equal power. Based on a combination of the three foundational elements, a city can emerge in any of Baudrillard's four phases of the image as interpreted here.

There are several implications of this framework for scholars and practitioners alike: (1) giving strategic importance to place branding campaigns; (2) avoiding empty slogans and logos; and (3) achieving place brand equity. Each of these has positive and negative aspects. All three implications are detailed below.

Strategic Place Branding Importance

The first implication shines a light on the *effects* of place branding campaigns for cities and destinations of all sizes, geographic locations, political bents, and socioeconomic standings. That is why the 21 cities used within this research were taken from diverse locations throughout the United States—to show the applicability of the framework across a spectrum of cities. Not only can the framework apply to cities, but counties, states, nations, and even specific places (universities, parks, schools, hospitals, etc.) can incorporate elements into place branding practices. "The intent of such efforts typically is to achieve one or more of four main objectives: enhance the place's exports, protect its business from 'foreign' competition . . . attract or retain factors of development and generally position the place for advantage domestically and internationally in economic, political and social terms" (Papadopoulos, 2004, p. 37). The framework in Figure 3.1 is unique in that it details the effects of place branding campaigns, showing the implications for democratic governance rather than prescribing the "one best way" to create brand identity.

I chose the term place branding to indicate a wider, holistic approach that includes, yet reaches beyond, marketing and public relations to involve the interactivity of myriad place stakeholders to shape brand identity and governance practices (Klijn et al., 2012; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). "Place marketing has

evolved from applying particular promotional techniques for purposes such as increasing tourism to marketing as an integral part of urban governance" (Eshuis et al., 2013, p. 507). Place branding campaigns should be viewed with as much strategic importance as, say, human resources management, budgeting, public works, information technology, etc. Coordination between internal city departments and external stakeholder groups, such as those in the hospitality industry, residents, non-profit organizations, political officials, and business owners, is necessary for a successful campaign (Anholt, 2007). Implementing these strategic governance interventions via holistic place branding efforts is not always easy (Eshuis et al., 2013). Some obstacles include the field's borrowing from corporate practices (Hankinson, 2010), lack of coordination among municipal departments (Braun, 2008), lack of coordination with external stakeholder groups (Anholt, 2007), trust (Zenker & Seigis, 2012), multiple stakeholder involvement (Klijn et al., 2012), lack of understanding among scholars and practitioners of this relatively new area of study and implementation (Hanna & Rowley, 2008), and gaps between promises and reality (Govers & Go, 2009). For example, one CVB managers in our research described the difficulty of coordinating the city's hospitality stakeholders: "A great CEO hires people better than them at certain things, and I'm a relationship building person. I will get out there, and I will build these relationships and find out what's going on and kind of be the eyes and the ears and figure out, you know, what we can we do better, what can we do differently. You just can't give up."

Despite challenges, more city officials are turning toward place branding as a governance strategy (Eshuis et al., 2013; Kavaratzis, 2004) and an integral economic development approach (Allen, 2007). Place branding is not reserved only for large metropolitan areas; rural areas are also recognizing the importance of place branding to increase economic development opportunities (Boyne & Hall, 2004; Kerr & Johnson, 2005; MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003; Tellstrom et al., 2006). A rural destination has

"its own traditions, heritage, arts, lifestyles, places, and values as preserved between generations. Tourists visit these areas to be informed about the culture and to experience folklore, customs, natural landscapes, and historical landmarks. They might also enjoy other activities in a rural setting such as nature, adventure, sports, festivals, crafts, and general sightseeing" (MacDonald & Jolliffe, 2003, p. 308). No matter the size, place branding is important for cities to: stand out from competitors (Tiebout, 1956), build positive organization-public relationships with residents (Zenker & Seigis, 2012), create competitive advantage (Anholt, 2007), shape organizational identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013), enhance economic development (Allen, 2007), and attract the creative class (Florida, 2005; Zenker, 2009).

Put differently, city administrators can think of strategic, holistic place branding campaigns that go beyond a logo or slogan (Govers, 2013) as mechanisms to leverage and enhance the organization's and place's unique capabilities (Daspit & Zavattaro, 2014). Capabilities are routines that give brand managers decision options for producing outputs using available resources (Winter, 2000) and give leaders meaningful ways to learn from internal and external stakeholders, as well as improve frontline brand delivery, to ideally better align brand identity and image (Anholt, 2007; Daspit & Zavattaro, 2014).

Avoiding Empty Logos and Slogans

Using the rationale given above, a strategic, holistic effort toward place branding can transform the practice into a fundamental governance intervention (Eshuis et al., 2013) rather than a reliance on simple logos and slogans. The importance and relevance of, as well as problems with, logos and slogans is a prominent theme within the place branding literature. Most scholars agree that the "practice of place branding continues the logo fetish," and this is problematic because "logos and slogans seem to be ascribed with powers that they do not possess, diverting focus,

resources and effort from what actually is important in place branding" (Govers, 2013, p. 71). This point is interesting, as it brings about a tension between the passivity and activity of logos, slogans, images, words, rhetoric, etc. (Miller, 2012).

Often called a simplistic view of place branding, reliance on logos and slogans as the creators of change misses the integral point of place branding: managing reputation and brand equity (Govers, 2013) to build trust and partnerships (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). Govers noted that reputation management and brand equity are necessary in commercial marketing, whereby consumers often have to make snap decisions based on brand images. Brands, for better or for worse, become cognitive shortcuts in consumers' minds (Lindstrom, 2011), so even place brand managers attempt to shape and manage brand identity to influence brand equity. Distilling a place down to a logo and slogan does not take into account the myriad markets in which places operate (tourism, product development, leisure, housing, urban design, etc.), budget constraints, the political environment, and disconnect between the brand logo/slogan and a strategic campaign (Govers, 2013). "A good brand strategy not only builds engagement with the outside world, but also among stakeholders and internal audiences. It should be built on a sense of belonging and shared purpose and hence generate the kind of engagement that is desired and impossible to imitate elsewhere" (ibid., p. 74).

One of the examples given in Chapter 4 was Coral Springs, Florida. As noted, the end result of a consultant-driven place branding exercise was the new slogan "Everything Under the Sun." *South Florida Sun-Sentinel* newspaper columnist Michael Mayo wrote a blistering editorial decrying the hiring of North Star Design Strategies for $70,000 to create the new slogan. "In a way, it almost would have been better if the North Star gang spared everyone the time, pretense and BS and just took the $70,000, blew it on stone crabs, hookers and a week at the Hard Rock, and cooked up the same slogan" (Mayo, 2013, para. 12). Mayo also took issue with seemingly empty slogans from

McKinney, Texas (Unique by Nature) and Brookings, South Dakota (Bring Your Dreams). "Oftentimes, logos and slogans are introduced without any idea about what they mean or what intended equity they are to build, as the examples above show. In such cases, generally, engagement is lacking, the visual identity is just something that goes in the corner of the page on stationary, business cards and flags and hence the initiative is extremely limited in its effect" (Govers, 2013, p. 74).

Though moving beyond a logo and slogan is well articulated in the literature (Anholt, 2008; Ashwroth & Kavaratzis, 2007; Fan, 2006; Govers, 2013; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005; Zavattaro, 2010, 2013a), there remains an interesting tension regarding the power of images and words (Balfour & Mesaros, 1994; Borins, 2011, 2012; Dodge et al., 2005; Farmer, 1995; Fox, 1996; Hummel, 1991; Miller, 2012; Morgan, 2006; Terry, 1997; Wittgenstein, 2001). The focus here is on Miller's (2012) argument that the *images themselves*, rather than people, are change agents in a public policy arena. According to Govers (2013), this is a power that logos and slogans do not have. Miller argued the exact opposite. So who is right? Both are.

This is why balancing image and substance in place branding is critical. If the logo and slogan become the only identifiable aspects of the place, via them being hammered home without context or meaning in all communications material, then there is the risk of moving into simulation (Baudrillard, 1994) as some cities (again, not all) in phase four illustrate. Remember, cities in phase four face potential auto-communication (Christensen, 1995) when organizationally generated narratives are parroted back to administrators during learning processes, such as community surveys, town hall meetings, social media feedback, etc. Images become powerful change agents (Miller, 2012). Calls to action can be positive (social marketing meant to affect a meaningful behavior change) (Andreasen, 1994; Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Lee & Kotler, 2011) or negative (manipulation potentially creating docile bodies unwilling or unable to speak to power)

(Bloom & Novelli, 1981; Farmer, 1995; Foucault, 1972; Sementelli, 2009, 2012). Brand managers should work toward striking the appropriate balance between image and substance, lest the place brand identity misalign with the brand image consumers picture when devising brand associations.

A strategic governance view of place branding can help practitioners move beyond the logo and slogan into a project that is more meaningful, interactive, and organization-wide (Eshuis et al., 2013; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). One mechanism for achieving this is bottom-up stakeholder involvement (Klijn et al., 2012) to build trust (Zenker & Seigis, 2012) that Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) call brand democracy. Including many stakeholders is an important aspect of *governance* rather than *government*, as governance appreciates the applicability of networks to service delivery and decision making (Agranoff, 2006; Klijn et al., 2010; Klijn, Steijn, et al., 2010; McGuire, 2002; O'Toole, 1997). Moreover, considering place branding from a stakeholder identity lens shows the mutuality of interests between stakeholders, understood as those with a concerted interest in the organization and who can influence its direction (Freeman, 1984; Jones & Wicks, 1999). In this view, stakeholders are put on relatively equal footing whereby one group does not subordinate another.

While this process might be difficult (Catlaw, 2007), place brand managers should work toward inclusion to build trust and buy-in (Aitken & Campelo, 2011; Kavaratzis, 2012; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Zenker & Seigis, 2012). Hankinson (2004) advocates, for example, a relational approach to place branding to achieve these desired ends. "Thus, although marketing activities and the brand image themselves certainly will be of importance to the success and the effect of the brand, there is a growing literature that stresses the involvement of consumers both in the creation of the brand image and in the process of sustaining it to achieve greater impact" (Klijn et al., 2012, p. 504). Place brands are relational, interactive, and co-produced, so managers cannot rely on

top-down mechanisms any longer when devising, deploying, and evaluating place brand success (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). A holistic approach is needed that balances image and substance to engender brand equity.

Place Brand Equity

A final implication is an ability to understand possible influences upon achieving place brand equity. Brand equity is an ultimate outcome of place branding campaigns (Govers, 2013). Similar to many constructs in various disciplines, brand equity and place brand equity lack agreed-upon definitions. Brand equity can be grouped into two main categories: consumer-based brand equity and financial brand equity. The former evaluates brand success from the perspective of the consumer, while the latter relies upon financial returns (Buil et al., 2013). Brand equity is related to consumption decisions that consumers would not make without a strong brand association; it is the value of one brand over another (Farhana, 2012). Typically, brand equity has four elements: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty (Buil et al., 2013). (In some studies, perceived quality and associations are taken together.) "Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (Aaker, 1991, p. 15). How the brand equity construct translates to places still remains elusive, as place brand equity is "the real and/or perceived assets and liabilities that are associated with a place (country) and distinguish it from others" (Papadopoulos, 2004, p. 43).

The focus of this section is on how place brand managers themselves take steps to control, measure, and understand place brand equity. Therefore, the focus is on what place brand managers do day in and day out to coordinate organizational functions while also developing, implementing, and evaluating place branding and marketing strategies to bolster overall economic

performance in their cities. To be clear, then, this is a more micro view of managerial operations geared toward shaping place brand equity, understood as an outcome of place branding programs. Following Agarwal and Rao (1996), this is an indirect, as opposed to direct, approach to place brand equity. The direct approach to brand equity "tries to assess the added value of the brand" (financial), while the indirect approach "tries to identify the potential sources of brand equality" (ibid., p. 238). An indirect, organization-centric view of place brand equity often goes missing from scholarly literature (Hanna & Rowley, 2013). Steps offered in Chapter 6 highlight a strategic brand-building process that aims to influence overall place brand equity with the dual goals of building economic success and trust via partnerships with stakeholder groups.

A problem, though, is that place branding scholars and practitioners alike are still grappling with ways to understand and measure place brand equity (Zenker & Martin, 2011). When dealing with consumer products, brand equity is usually measured by drivers of economic success (Farquhar, 1990; Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011), but, for a place, brand equity measures must also include hedonistic, affective dimensions (Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011), which are undeniably difficult to quantify. The multidimensional, cognitive, and perceptually driven nature of place branding often defies clear measurement schemes (Insch & Florek, 2008; Jacobsen, 2010; Yoo et al., 2000; Zenker & Martin, 2011). Despite that, place brand managers need ways to know if their efforts are working to attract sector stakeholders. "This approach implies that active management of the brand is only possible through the management of brand identity" (Burmann et al., 2009, p. 391).

Forming a strong brand identity can lead to long-term consumer commitment and brand loyalty. For places, that means people return for vacation, for example, recommend the place to potential new residents, or extol the friendly business climate. As

one practitioner in our study noted, her CVB is selling experiences, not products:

> The biggest part of my job is to make sure that we are always fresh, we're always informative, and that we always generate an interest or motivate people on the outside to want to come and experience our destination. It's who we are and what we do . . . I tell people this because most people are confused about what a CVB sells. You know, really, we don't sell a thing . . . So what a destination does sell as a whole are memories.

When relating place brand equity to the framework of cities through phases of the image, cities on either end (phase one or four) might not adequately develop or evaluate brand equity programs for different reasons. Cities in phase one, as a reminder, do not noticeably focus on creating a place brand identity. Information in phase-one cities is often put out without pretense, making for a literal application of one-way asymmetrical communication (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Therefore, managers in phase-one cities do not deliberately try to undertake strategies that influence brand equity. Conversely, managers in phase-four cities are so acutely attuned to devising brand identity strategies that they risk going too far toward image rather than substance. The messaging risks becoming lost on, or even ignored by, both internal and external stakeholders (Grunig, 1993; Zavattaro, 2012). Skepticism rather than loyalty might emerge in this instance. Simulation might replace meaningful information (Baudrillard, 1994; Zavattaro, 2012), thus making it difficult to meaningfully measure aspects of place brand equity.

What can place brand managers do? Burmann et al. (2009) recommended an identity-based approach to brand equity that encapsulates both rational and hedonic measures critical to a holistic view of place branding. The identity-based view of brand equity has three components: psychological, behavioral, and financial brand equity. The first two combine into an evaluation of brand

strength, which "comprises the internal behavioral significance of a brand for internal stakeholder (e.g. employees) and the external behavioral importance of a brand for its external stakeholders" (ibid., p. 391). Brand strength plus financial measures equate to an assessment of potential brand equity. This model accounts for the importance of both internal and external stakeholders in the identity and image construction processes inherent in place branding. To evaluate internal stakeholders, the authors recommend measuring brand citizenship and commitment. Brand citizenship relates to employees who "live the brand," while commitment is the underlying psychological construct that leads employees to become brand citizens. Brand strength, the combination of psychological and behavioral equity valuations, meshes with financial components to influence the current cash flow of the organization, trigger future cash flows, and influence risk-taking behaviors of managers and employees (Burmann et al., 2009).

While it might remain a tricky prospect, developing and measuring place brand equity can help a city (or lead destination marketing organization) see what works and what does not when setting places apart from each other. This way, financial resources can be directed into successful programs or removed from those that are not achieving anticipated goals. Some suggestions for evaluating place brand equity include: an internal communications analysis, surveys of internal and external stakeholders, web analytics, tax revenues, cost-benefit analyses, social media analytics, and benchmarks. A balance between quantitative and qualitative methods would work to assess these measures, highlighting both the rational and hedonistic qualities of place branding programs. One practitioner aligned the three implications—the importance of place branding, going beyond a logo and slogan, and influencing brand equity—when responding to a question about measuring success:

> I think that what we market ourselves as is, in fact, what we are, so when people come and experience the brand, they are experiencing

what they have been sold. Thus they leave with a positive experience, and they tell their friends and their friends come back and do the same thing. What I think is important is that we are truthful in our branding and marketing what is actually here and available. I have people come to me and tell me all the time, "Oh we need to go after such-and-such or this-and-that." That's great and fine. We don't have the flexibility to host something of that size. We don't want to market ourselves and go after an event and go out to an event and encourage people to come and then get here and not have the experience that we want them to have. It's not just good.

Scholarly and Practical Recommendations

The dynamic framework presented herein shows how cities can move through phases of the image based upon communications styles, promotional tactics, and governance strategy. This section details ways that both scholars and managers can utilize the framework in both research and practice. Combining the framework of cities through phases of the image with the blueprint outlined in Chapter 6 can put practitioners on the path toward developing a holistic place brand strategy that strikes a balance between image and substance for important stakeholders.

Avenues of Future Research

There are several ways that scholars can utilize the conceptualization of cities through phases of the image. First, scholars could borrow the same logic and apply it in various other settings, including but not limited to, hospital, universities, banks, schools, parks, museums, resorts/lodges, states, companies, non-profits, religious institutions, etc. Kotler and Levy's (1969) seminal article extending marketing practices beyond the corporate sphere makes such analyses possible. Hospitals, for example, engage in strategic marketing campaigns, complete with objectives, goals, survey measurements, and benchmarks (Zalloco & Joseph, 1991). Hospitals,

operating in an increasingly competitive environment to deliver high-quality patient services at a low cost, have turned toward diverse marketing strategies to establish brand equity. Hospitals in the United States utilized YouTube, a video-sharing social media tool, to share informational, advertising, educational, and entertainment videos (Huang, 2013). Scholars even recommended that hospital administrators adopt a market orientation (Wrenn, 2006) as a means to build relationships with people rather than engage in transaction-based marketing strategies (Kotler et al., 2008).

Religious institutions—as another example of how the framework could be used in multiple contexts—have turned toward marketing and transformed into "megachurches" that are often bigger than a spiritual message (Kuzma et al., 2009). Religiously themed stores and entertainment also work toward branding a particular religion, institution, or person, bringing to light an inherent "tension between commerce and ministry" (Brown, 2012, p. 114). The framework can be used, for example, to analyze what sets one religion apart from another, differences between religions, differences among institutions within the same religious contest, and institutions across religious lines.

Second, scholars, when using the framework to analyze these diverse areas, can see what adjustments should be made to make it more applicable within a specific context. Are there certain marketing tactics that religious organizations use that are not represented in the framework? How does branding in one realm (say, universities) differ, if at all, from another area (kindergarten through high school education)? What kind of language predominates hospital marketing? What are key areas within which universities market, and why? How does university administration go about developing a distinct brand for the institution, and why? What is the orientation of these strategic maneuvers: customer-oriented or transaction-oriented? Does the orientation make a difference in outcomes and success, however defined? These questions scratch the surface of how the framework can be used as a descriptive and analytical tool.

Third, scholars can examine the role of leadership in developing successful place branding campaigns. The framework does not directly account for this variable, so this can be a way to extend its applicability and hone in on the role that leaders play in not only spearheading brand initiatives but in "living the brand." To wit, Morhart et al. (2011) found that transformational leaders, those deemed charismatic and inspirational, are better at building brand ambassadors than transactional leaders, those who see leadership as an exchange relationship. Transformational leaders were better than transactional counterparts at helping employees internalize the brand, which increased "in-role and extra-role behaviors such as participation in brand development, advocacy of the corporate brand, and a higher retention rate" (ibid., p. 39). Findings from their study reveal that building an organizational culture centered upon the brand goes beyond simple guidelines, rewards, sanctions, and trainings. This line of inquiry speaks directly to the role of internal marketing in building brand ambassadors.

For place brand leaders looking to build a brand-centric culture, Hankinson (2009) recommended combining three central managerial components: human resources, leadership, and communications. Brand-centric human resources should work toward building a brand-based culture by, first, hiring people who align with the overall culture and brand identity. Next, he recommended immediate brand training for new employees. When I worked for the City of Coral Springs, for example, this was one of the first things that happened—new employee orientation that not only covered organizational basics but included a detailed explanation of the culture, and how we as employees were expected to embody said cultural values every day. Targeted training can lead to brand citizenship.

In terms of brand leadership, the leader's role is critical, especially as strategic campaigns are undertaken that permeate the whole organization. Leaders should have a clear vision, communicate brand elements at all levels, and act as role models for all employees (Hankinson, 2009; Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006).

"Leaders not only influence the internal brand building process via verbal communication, but also through non-verbal communication, experienced in their social interactions. Successful internal brand building conceives employees as brand-related information carriers" (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006, p. 772). Studies can examine leadership differences between sectors, the role of unofficial leaders in building the brand (those not in managerial positions but line employees), and best practices leaders use to foster brand culture.

Fourth, Hankinson (2009) recommended that brand communication should be directed toward both internal and external stakeholders as a means to align identity and image to potentially influence brand equity and balance image with substance. Internal dissemination of brand messaging speaks to the realization that all employees, not just those responsible for brand development, are integral for brand management (Aaker, 1991; Kotler & Levy, 1969; Zavattaro, 2013a). Scholars can examine how human resources, leadership, and communications combine in terms of developing, dispatching, and measuring branding efforts. Is one more important than another, and why? What tools do place brand managers use in each of these areas? How does the human resources department work to hire employees who align with organizational culture, and why? How, if at all, do place brand managers differ from corporate brand managers in terms of internal marketing and communication? How do managers deal with employee resistance toward internal marketing?

Practical and Managerial Implications

Outlined above are ways scholars can examine various aspects of the cities through phases of the image. Practitioners and managers, too, can take away strategies for implementing place branding and place marketing programs. First, as I have argued throughout the book, is a recommendation to balance image with substance when executing place branding programs. Practitioners can look

at the framework and decide their ethos fits more with a phase-two or phase-three style city and adopt and adapt policies and practices that follow those preferred characteristics.

Second, the framework brings additional attention to the social constructivist nature of place branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Zavattaro, 2013b) and the power of language within public administration scholarship and practice. This means that practitioners can examine language used within their communications materials to get a feel for how people are perceiving the place. In other words, practitioners can think about: (1) tone of language, (2) words used, (3) images accompanying the language, and (4) color palette. Even on printed communications materials, citizens and other stakeholders can get a feel for the place by asking: Is the city gearing more toward giving information or promoting a lifestyle? Put simply, what place brand managers choose to highlight shows what they consider the most important aspects of the organization and place as a whole.

A major component of the framework offered, then, is language used with each selling tactic identified. As with the public art example given in Chapter 4, there is a difference between *giving* information and *constructing* information. The selling tactics become part of an overall strategic place branding strategy, and organization members usually take great care to ensure the narrative is told regularly and consistently. When there is an impasse, as shown in the transition from phase three to four, there could be confusion among all stakeholders while a winning narrative is waiting to emerge (Miller, 2012). Again, the caution is that managers should not rely *only and exclusively* upon organizationally generated rhetoric, lest people ignore it, causing potential simulation and auto-communication.

Through this research, I have identified a personalized, advertorial-type language used in cities emerging in latter phases of the image. City communications would ask "your help" to go green or to participate in a town hall meeting. Personalized language goes beyond democratic principles of citizen engagement

and instead appeals to an emotional, rather than practical, connection between citizens and places. Scholars can examine promotional and communications materials from other cities to either confirm this occurrence, extend it, or refute it. Sectoral differences can also be an avenue for future research to ascertain language patterns used in other kinds of organizations.

Scholars and practitioners alike can examine language used within organization communication materials. Scholars can ask: What is the difference between language used in public versus non-profit organizations? Does context of the language matter? How do images accompany the language? For practitioners, they can carefully select words and images depending upon stakeholder needs, as tailoring campaigns toward certain audiences is not new and is indeed encouraged (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). If an organization's stakeholders require more factually based information and often dislike what could be seen as spin, then practitioners can be mindful of word choice to reflect a more direct approach to information dissemination. The converse could also work in practice and for empirical investigation. Studying and practicing language choice reflects the idea that place brands are an intermingling of rational and hedonistic indicators that are not created in a top-down manner but in a shared, co-creative way (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). After all, "brands are socially constructed texts which mediate meanings between and amongst consumers and producers" (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 582).

Finally, consumer-based brand equity is becoming an important measure of place branding success. Practitioners often use results of evaluation to convince relevant stakeholder groups of the branding's efficacy (Jacobsen, 2012). Though brand equity, as described earlier, embodies financial and affective elements, traditional measures focus on how consumers perceive the brand via awareness, associations, and loyalty (Buil et al., 2013). "The value of a brand—and thus its equity—is ultimately derived in the marketplace from the words and actions of consumers. Consumers decide with their purchases, based on whatever factors they deem

important, which brands have more equity than other brands" (Farhana, 2012, p. 225). Practitioners realize the importance of brand equity, though perhaps they are not using an *exact* measurement of brand equity. For example, place brand practitioners might realize that a region has more brand recognition than their city, so will capitalize on those associations (Iversen & Hem, 2007). For example, in Mississippi, the Delta and Gulf regions have more name recognition than smaller cities within those regions, so practitioners in our study detailed the importance of umbrella branding.

Practitioners wanting to work toward brand equity can utilize recommendations given in Chapter 6 with the realization that everything about an organization talks (Kotler & Levy, 1969), and that brand elements contribute to building brand equity (Farhana, 2012). To wit, a logo, slogan, color, font, or design can influence a person's overall impression of the place, either positively or negatively. As Farhana points out (ibid.), people traveling in other countries can recognize familiar restaurant logos and even know that red means "stop" even if the language is unclear. Additionally, the importance of brand elements including those mentioned above is why, for example, some cities—and even non-profit or for-profit organizations—will use colors such as blues and greens that engender trust (see Adams & Osgood, 1973; Guilford & Smith, 1959; and Lazreg & Mullet, 2001; for examples Zavattaro, 2013a).

Concluding Comments

Overall, this book is meant to be a theoretical addition to place branding frameworks that emerge as a means to understand a still-developing field. Based on a content analysis of city websites and documents, combined with recommendations from scholarly literature, the framework traces how cities can move through, or stop within, Baudrillard's phases of the image (1994) depending on an intermixing of governance strategy, selling tactics, and

communication style. Baudrillard only has four phases in his model, but what might a city look like in phase five? I am still not sure such a construct could exist but, to paraphrase Fox and Miller (1997), there is no putting the toothpaste back into the tube. Once city administrators make a decision to engage in a strategic place branding campaign that moves beyond a logo and slogan, a balance between image and substance needs to be established from the outset rather than retroactively. If administrators put out too much image, too much rhetoric, too much spin, that is when the concerns of auto-communication and simulation come to the fore. City administrators can retool, as they did in Coral Springs by going backward into phase three to rebrand then emerging again into phase four. In my view, there is no way a city can go from over-communication to under-communication.

Using Hankinson (2004) and Harrison-Walker (2012) as guides, practitioners can focus at the outset of a place branding campaign on the relational rather than only transactional aspects of place branding as means to balance image and substance. Harrison-Walker (ibid.), expanding on Hankinson's (2004) relational place branding model, showed how brand identity, brand positioning, and brand affect intertwine to create a place branding practice that balances image with substance. Brand identity (organizationally created) relates to image (consumer created), positioning (what brand managers do) mirrors position (consumer perceptions of a brand's position relative to another), and finally, brand personality (organizationally created) intersects with affect (how the brand makes someone feel). Realizing that every image-driven maneuver has an equally important substance-driven maneuver can make the job of balancing image and substance seem less daunting. When in doubt, remember that everything about an organization talks (Kotler & Levy, 1969), so make those words, images, and actions count.

CHAPTER 6

A Guide for Managers

I can pull up on my laptop right here at my desk and . . . look at two different sized ads on two different websites that are trying to reach that millennial market, and view the number of clicks . . . You can tell the wording that works better, and which online venue is reaching the target market faster, and you can adjust your marketing dollars how that's done . . . So those types of measurements and the way things have changed, it's so much different than it was just a few years ago. How do you adapt to that?
— Executive Director, Southern CVB

This quote from a CVB manager expresses the difficulties many professional place brand managers have with defining, refining, deploying, and evaluating a strategic place brand program. Despite challenges, place branding and its associated practices are taking place in public and non-profit organizations, hence, it becomes incumbent upon scholars to understand the rationale, challenges, and implications, while practitioners need tools to improve existing branding processes or begin fresh

strategies to create and leverage a distinct brand identity and ethos. While the former part of this book relied heavily upon theoretical constructs, this chapter is dedicated to briefly giving practitioners a strategic process for place brand development, implementation, and evaluation.

It should be noted that there are many recommendations available for building a brand (Anholt, 2007; Burmann et al., 2009; Clark et al., 2010; Daspit & Zavattaro, 2014; de Chernatony, 2010; Govers & Go, 2009; Kavaratzis, 2004; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013; Kotler et al., 1993; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014; Zavattaro, 2013a). Of course, no author is wrong just as none either has yet come up with the definitive place branding model. The reason is simple—considering that place branding, like public administration, is inter- and multi-disciplinary, various viewpoints can be brought to inform both scholars and practice, so combining elements from various disciplines and models can help practitioners pick the branding strategy right for their organizations. As an example of the differences between models, Clark et al. (2010), when describing a brand-building process in Athens, Georgia, outline 17 steps ranging from forming a branding committee, to conducting interviews and studies to gauge brand preferences, to defining the brand promise and ethos, to executing the brand. On the other hand, Kavaratzis (2004) focuses on the communicative aspects of the branding process, while Burmann and colleagues (2009) highlight an identity-based brand equity model. Each author takes a different stance while trying to get to the same end goal—creating a meaningful, interactive, relational approach to place branding development and evaluation.

The thrust of the framework I present in this chapter combines recommendations from the place branding literature with those from strategic management (Barney, 1991). In Barney's seminal piece, he focuses on how organizations can use resources to develop and, ideally, maintain a strategic competitive advantage. To do so, he relies on a resource-based view of the organization, which simply means that organizations must be aware of and

responsive to environmental changes that can influence, either positively or negatively, overall performance. For example, when the global economy crashed in 2008, people had less money to spend on items deemed luxuries, and that included vacations. Several organizations, then, began offering deep discounts to attract customers—responding to external environmental changes.

Ultimately, an organization wants to attain resources that are valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and not strategically substitutable. Ideally, when these four factors combine, an organization can gain strategic competitive advantage—but only for a short time (ibid.). This is what building brand equity is about; organizations want to stand out among competition by combining their unique attributes to create something special, and communicating those assets is a key part of achieving said competitive advantage and trust (Biggadike, 1981; Zenker & Seigis, 2012). Cities want to do the same, building up a place image that relies on factors that cannot be readily duplicated, are rare, and lack substitutes— Walt Disney World and the Las Vegas Strip have replicas of the Eiffel Tower, but there is only one original. Combined with financially based brand equity achieved via competitive advantage, managers working within public and non-profit sectors also want to think about "soft power" strategies to build trust, forge partnerships, and strengthen brand associations (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). This framework gives practitioners ideas for achieving both ends of the place brand equity spectrum. Therefore, my focus here is on helping practitioners drill down into *place* resources that are unique, as well as *organizational* resources that can be utilized to gain competitive advantage (leadership team, personnel allocations, diversity of team members, coordination components, communication style, etc.) while also focusing on building trust and partnerships critical to place brand success via long-term brand loyalty.

The brand-building process I offer combines these two views and includes the following steps: (1) conduct a SWOT analysis,

(2) create brand vision, (3) set program goals and benchmarks, (4) implement brand vision, and (5) brand equity evaluation. The relationships between and among these are depicted in Figure 6.1; this considers an *interaction between internal and external organizational environments* in line with a resource-based view
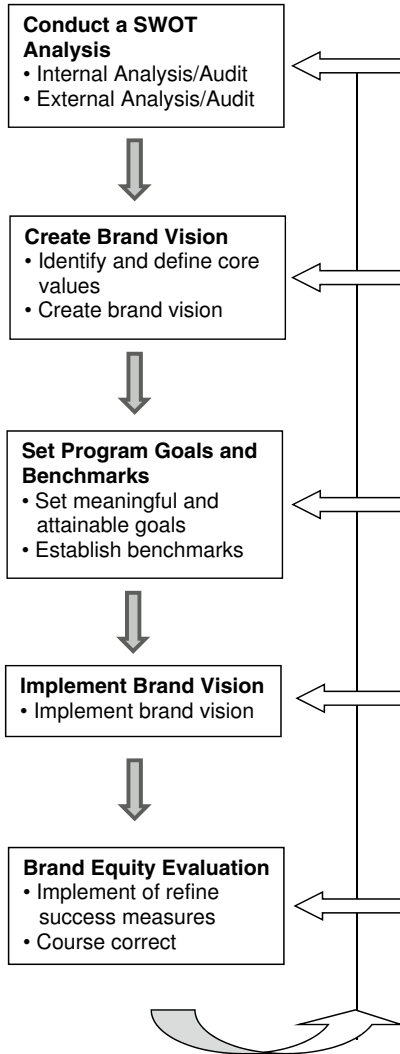
Figure 6.1 Steps in the Brand-building Process

of the organization described above. The important takeaway before reading the rest of this section is that managers are encouraged to devise mechanisms for integrating external feedback into internal operations to create synergies and leverage organizational resources toward the best avenues that can ultimately work toward building brand equity through brand awareness and loyalty. Misalignment between internal capabilities and external environments can potentially harm democratic governance, the organization-public relationship, and stakeholder trust (Christensen, 1995; Zenker & Seigis, 2012).

The process shown in Figure 6.1 and outlined in this chapter is meant as a mechanism for managers to jumpstart—or refine—a strategic place branding process or expand/retool marketing communications. This is why steps are left intentionally simple, as there is much work and many nuances that go into each step. Though feedback and evaluation is listed as the final step in this framework, practitioners are encouraged to include constant feedback *throughout* (represented by arrows back to the steps in the process as opposed to a solid feedback line) to correct their course, as needed.

Deploying any portion of this strategy requires resources and support, be they financial, political, social, human resource, and more. Place brand managers need to begin with a realistic assessment of their readiness to execute a holistic place branding strategy. Perhaps place marketing might be more appropriate given certain constraints, as it might be easier to develop press releases or launch a social media page to communicate a message rather than change organizational values, policies, and practices to reflect a holistic branding practice. If practitioners reading this section are interested in an approach that is more marketing-based, focusing on expanding communications offerings, then skip to the selling tactics offered and choose one, two, or as many as are feasible and adapt them to organizational and place specifics. Finally, administrators already undertaking a strategic place brand strategy closely related to overall governance practices and goals

(Eshuis et al., 2013) can use the guide to enhance or expand existing programs, or devise new ways to keep the brand fresh and relevant (de Chernatony, 2010).

Practitioners ideally take care to balance image with substance, lest one form dominate and alienate stakeholders, potentially fracturing an organization-public relationship (Kavaratzis, 2012; Zenker & Seigis, 2012). As detailed in earlier chapters, focusing too much on brand image and rhetoric leaves out other features such as a brand's ability to mitigate risk, become a cognitive short-cut, generate revenue based on the name, brand positioning (associating a place brand with a certain ethos and functional benefit), and overall value added (de Chernatony, 2010). One mechanism through which to balance image with substance, and work toward achieving buy in from relevant stakeholder groups, is through what Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014) term brand democracy. Brand democracy is understood as the means through which place brand managers engage internal organization and external stakeholder groups (i.e. hospitality providers, elected boards, appointed boards, state legislature, etc.) to both define and communicate the brand identity. This process ideally yields brand ambassadors as detailed in Chapter 2. To be clear, brand democracy "does not mean that every stakeholder must have input or that the brand is subject to a vote" (ibid, p. 86). Instead, managers shape the process and determine how, when, where, and why stakeholder input is given then incorporated into the organization. As such, practitioners can work toward balancing image with substance through this participative practice.

Based on the context of this book, managers are encouraged to think about the following questions before designing a holistic, strategic place brand process:

1. Why does our place need a brand identity?
2. Does our organization have appropriate internal capabilities to create, deploy, and evaluate a holistic place branding strategy?

3. What are some of our place's unique features that set us apart from others, and how can those build core values and an overall place branding governance strategy?
4. How do we communicate these features internally and externally while balancing image with substance to ensure our brand promise is delivered?
5. How do we know our branding (or marketing) efforts are working? In other words, how do we define success?

These questions parallel Allen's place branding focus areas, which are: "understanding the role and dynamics of government, isolating key points of brand contact, focusing marketing campaigns internally, as well as externally, understanding the physical and virtual requirements of the brand experience, [and] developing new research frameworks that drive meaningful customer experience" (2007 p. 64). Considering that place branding involves unique, idiosyncratic capabilities (Daspit & Zavattaro, 2014), there are no hard-and-fast rules toward implementation offered herein. Managers should develop policies and practices that help them strategically achieve organizational goals and sustained competitive advantage based on their available resources (Barney, 1991). Additionally, some tasks might require official policies, council approval, legal vetting, significant monetary commitment, and personnel resource expansion. Practitioners ought to ensure all proper channels are covered before delving into one of the strategies offered herein.

An ultimate goal of place branding is to enhance brand equity, understood as the general return received from implementing strategic place branding programs and practices whereby consumers are willing to pay a price premium for a branded product over a similar, non-branded product or place experience (Well-Known Ski Lodge versus Small Family Ski Lodge, for example). Place brand equity, detailed in Chapter 5, is not easily understood, but common measures encompass financial returns on investment *and* consumer perceptions of the brand (Buil et al., 2013).

One problem for place brand managers is that many of these measures come from products rather than place brands, so scholars are still working to adopt and adapt more appropriate place brand equity conceptualizations. Perhaps practitioners can inform scholarship in this area by telling researchers how they, as managers, understand and measure success.

It remains a challenge to directly link brand equity as an outcome to the branding and marketing campaigns involved, as hospitality providers working within the broader tourism industry might not conduct their own evaluations, making it hard to realize a holistic picture of branding efforts (Pratt et al., 2010). However, practitioners ideally work to implement measures of success to determine the influence upon brand equity's dimensions and justify expenses to relevant stakeholder groups. The discussion above offers practitioners sight of an end goal—place brand equity, which means having stakeholder groups choose your place over another. The remainder of this chapter briefly details the components of the brand-building process—the *how* of working toward building place brand equity. Some or all steps might be appropriate depending upon available resources. Marketing strategies that focus largely on a logo, slogan, and communication tools, rather than holistic branding strategies that includes broader organizational culture, policies and practices, could be deployed if resources are scarce.

Step 1: Conduct a SWOT Analysis and Compare Internal/External Results

When beginning a strategic place branding process, practitioners should first begin by evaluating internal and external landscapes to gain an operational baseline and a better understanding of existing internal capabilities that are helping or hindering the organization from achieving competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis examines internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities

and threats) factors likely to influence the organization either positively or negatively (Pickton & Wright, 1998). Managers can focus on the communications health of the organization in an effort to narrow the SWOT analysis' scope; however, an overall organizational assessment is the ideal (Porter, 1991). Strategy is about aligning an organization with its external environment, which, along with the organization's internal capabilities, is subject to change. A goal of strategy, then, is to maintain a dynamic, not a static, balance between internal and external environments (ibid., p. 97).

According to Holzer and Schwester (2011, p. 270), during a SWOT analysis "the evaluator essentially wants to ask: What does the program do well (strengths)? What does the program need to improve upon (weaknesses)? Is there anything that the program does not do that it should (opportunities)? Is there anything that could potentially be damaging to the program's future (threats)?" Data for a SWOT should be a mix of quantitative and qualitative feedback from relevant stakeholder groups. There are myriad ways to collect this data, including, but certainly not limited to: community surveys (mail, telephone, online), focus group interviews, person-on-the-street interviews, tax revenue increases/decreases, housing market inclines/declines, community town halls, etc. Importantly, administrators need to know what internal resources are available to address issues found in a timely, cost-effective manner (Cernas Ortiz & D'Souza, 2010; Collis, 1994; Daspit, 2012; Daspit & Zavattaro, 2014; Winter, 2000, 2003).

Internal Analysis

As noted, a SWOT analysis focuses on internal and external organizational environments, so the remainder of Step 1 does the same with a lens focused on communications strategies. Practitioners should conduct a holistic internal analysis, but, if resources are limited, they can focus on communications practices only. Conducting a communications analysis early in the brand development process will give practitioners a baseline from

which to develop, deploy, and evaluate a place brand strategy (de Chernatony, 2010). "Just like a financial audit attempts to form an economic portrait of a company by identifying areas of waste and efficiency, a communication audit examines communications issues in detail . . . by determining what goals the institution has in regard to the opinions and attitudes the institution wants its key publics to hold, and then determining if the communication program is meeting those needs" (Henderson, 2005, p. 289).

To conduct this communications analysis, practitioners should gather all communications items from every city department, including police and fire. Next, practitioners should analyze these collected items for patterns to see similarities and differences among and between communications devices. "When similar patterns or stories begin repeating, an evaluator knows that he or she has uncovered important information" (Holzer & Schwester, 2011, p. 270). Patterns become either points for correction or exploitation, and practitioners must be aware of internal capabilities or the capacity to address areas of concern revealed during the SWOT analysis. Based upon findings, if, for example, someone realizes that there are several different versions of a city logo being portrayed, or one department is using outdated clip art in publications, or that e-mail signatures are not consistent, recommendations can be made to align organizational brand identity and practices (change logos to an agreed-upon brand identity, do not use clip art in any publications, change e-mail signatures by a certain date and offer employees a template for consistent style).

External Analysis

Following the internal analysis, an external analysis should also be undertaken to identify primary stakeholders, social networks, and other organizations that have a role in conveying the city's message (Goldhaber & Krivonos, 1977). While I recommended a holistic internal analysis above but gave an option just to study communications tools and practices, the same holds true for the external

analysis. The point of the external analysis is to assess competitors not only for ideas but areas where stakeholders are choosing rival places or destinations, exposing opportunities and threats toward place branding success. To conduct this external analysis, practitioners should first begin by outlining important stakeholder groups—who or what organizations play a vital role in promoting the brand identity? Second, similar places/destinations should be identified, both in terms of peer competitors (What places are we most like?) and aspirational competitors (What places would we like to become?). Third, if the budget permits, practitioners can craft formal surveys that combine open- and closed-ended questions to get feedback from identified stakeholder groups about their brand awareness, associations, quality, and loyalty (brand equity measures). If there is no adequate budget or there is a time constraint, research can be done informally via person-on-the-street interviews, e-mails, social media platforms, or telephone calls, for example.

Once practitioners have completed both the internal and external portions of the SWOT analysis, the results of *both* should be compared and reconciled. First, practitioners will assess internal strengths and leverage those as capabilities able to provide a competitive advantage and build trust internally and externally. Second, internal weaknesses should be addressed and ways devised to correct weak areas (again either formally or informally, depending upon organizational resources). Third, external opportunities and threats should be evaluated to see if internal capabilities are available to remedy threats or exacerbate opportunities. In other words, practitioners can ask themselves: Do we have the capacity to respond to external threats? Do we have the capacity to capitalize on these opportunities? If yes, what is the next step? If no, what would we need to close these gaps? Put simply, it is of critical importance that practitioners work toward aligning internal capabilities (what are we good at doing?) with the external environment (where are opportunities for growth, or potential threats?). Practitioners need to continuously learn and not get stuck in a routine that embraces the status quo.

Step 2: Create Brand Vision

Once a communications and/or holistic SWOT analysis is complete and steps are taken to address findings, the next step is to develop brand vision based on the analyzed feedback as well as the organization's core mission and values. A place brand strategy is valuable when used correctly because it can become an integral governance strategy (Eshuis et al., 2013) with as much importance as human resources, budgeting, public works, planning, etc. Essentially, a brand identity aligns organizational mission, values, and goals with an overall culture, as a clear brand identity "gives one the ability to succinctly describe who the organization is, what it stands for, and why it is important" (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014, p. 10). Therefore, there should be a clear focus on developing strategic place branding goals that align with an overall organizational mission and not just on designing a new logo or slogan (Govers, 2013) because "the analysis of internal and external environments of a firm is to maximize the utilization of *resources* in relation to *objectives*" (Bracker, 1980, p. 221, emphasis in original). This step is divided into two wide-ranging areas: (1) identify and define core values and (2) create the brand vision. "Similar to a company brand, a place branding strategy must be based on a clearly defined vision, which is firmly rooted in the existing policies, resources, capabilities, motivations and perceptions of the place" (Iversen & Hem, 2007, p. 607). Practitioners should work toward developing a unique, idiosyncratic brand identity and core values that will ideally enhance place brand equity and lead to sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991) and trust (Kavaratzis, 2012; Zenker & Seigis, 2012).

Identify Core Values

The first portion of this step involves defining (or re-defining) organizational core values. Core values give organization members

a sense of identity, guide actions toward sustaining these core values, and engender a sense of stability (Duh et al., 2010). Brand core values can guide an individual organization or a network of like place brands, commonly called umbrella brands (Iversen & Hem, 2007). Core values, then, are defining elements for internal organizational members that "the brand will always uphold, regardless of environmental change, and will always be a central characteristic of the brand" (de Chernatony, 2010, p. 142). There are many prescriptions for creating strategic core values, but practitioners can take guidance from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards program. Baldrige Award criteria are often implemented in top-performing organizations, and the award is one of the United States' most prestigious management recognitions. There are categories for government and non-profit agencies, making the recommendations applicable herein. Baldrige criteria for strong core values in the business and non-profit sectors include: a systems perspective, visionary leadership, a focus on the future, managing for innovation, agility, organizational and personal learning, valuing workforce members and partners, customer focus, social responsibility, management by fact, and focus on results to create value (Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2013).

To be clear, organization members should tailor strategic core values to organizational specifications, which means that some of these Baldrige suggestions might not be applicable. Moreover, an organization should narrow core values into a manageable list with specifiable, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely goals (Fried & Slowik, 2004). Core values are part of an overall organizational culture that breeds brand loyalists. "An appropriate organizational culture can help to create a competitive advantage for a brand, since it is not so much *what* a customer gets, but also *how* he/she gets it" (de Chernatony, 2010, p. 101). Clearly defining organizational culture, mission, and values helps strengthen the overall brand identity as well as guide decision making, as

partnerships, policies, and brand extensions should align with overall brand core values. As Laidler-Kylander and Stenzel (2014, p. 56) explain:

> When brand embodies the mission and values, there is also less potential for dissonance between how the brand is used or deployed and the values that the brand embodies. The mission and social impact become integrated into the brand, and the brand becomes a sources of pride and passion for everyone connected to the organization. The brand is expressed and used in ways that are consistent with the mission and that mirror the organization's ethics and values, thereby reducing the potential for ethical concern in communications.

Create the Brand Vision

Once leaders have analyzed internal and external environments, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in each, and defined core values (What is this organization about?), they can then work on drafting a brand vision and plan. Brand vision involves the ability of top leadership to establish a clearly articulated direction that is easy to understand, embrace, and follow (Mathieu, 2005; Winter, 2000). According to de Chernatony (2010), brand vision includes the interaction of future environment, purpose, and values. Managers who are future oriented (transformational) ideally ask if the vision is desirable, inspirational but achievable, stretchable, and communicable (ibid., p. 119). Identifying brand purpose involves practitioners asking, "Why is the brand important?" then drilling deeper into all the answers that the question elicits (de Chernatony, 2010). Virgo and de Chernatony (2006) found success with this method when working on developing a brand with stakeholders in Birmingham, United Kingdom. Finally, brand values, conceptualized as enduring beliefs that remain stable no matter the environmental punctuations, are critical to reinforcing brand purpose because they drive

internal behavior, relate to certain personality traits that work toward person-organization fit, and influence consumer behavior via increased (or decreased) sales. Ideally, brand visioning should consider all these areas based upon SWOT analysis data and findings.

Meaningfully and strategically creating a brand beyond a logo and slogan (Govers, 2013) takes time, effort, and both human and capital resources. Organization members can work to ensure that there is enough buy-in from employees and other relevant stakeholders before launching a strategic initiative (de Chernatony, 2010) that properly aligns vision, policies, and practices (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014). Therefore, education of, and coordination between, relevant stakeholder groups are two of the place brand manager's biggest challenges—both involve getting stakeholder groups to buy into the brand vision, which is challenging considering each stakeholder group has its own priorities. "Too often, within the public sector itself, agencies with overlapping and competing responsibilities lead either to inaction or cross-purpose actions" (Kotler et al., 1993, p. 42), so place brand managers often turn toward educating critical stakeholder groups—such as hospitality professionals, appointed governing boards, elected officials, local residents, etc.—about the brand's core values.

This coordination, of course, depends upon resource allocation. City officials can either place the communications/public information department in charge of this endeavor, or they can outsource the project to a professional firm. There is no right or wrong answer; the choice depends upon organizational capabilities. No matter the avenue chosen, leaders should be cognizant of aligning vision, culture, and image (Hatch & Schultz, 2001), lest gaps emerge and brand values and vision do not align with internal and external delivery and analyses (Govers & Go, 2009). Brand managers should realize brand vision creation is humanistic, as internal stakeholders must buy in to the shared vision so they can "live the brand" when interacting with external stakeholders (Becker, 2011).

If the process of creating a brand vision remains in-house, and while there is no formal agreed-upon blueprint for creating a place brand, then practitioners can consider focusing upon developing the following elements adapted from Hanna and Rowley (2011) and Kavaratzis (2004):

- Brand core—developing or refining organizational core values;
- Brand infrastructure—leadership, stakeholder engagement;
- Brand identity—creating the brand's essence;
- Brand articulation—verbal and visual expression of brand identity, such as logo, slogan, color, font, or photographs;
- Brand communication—primary, secondary, tertiary; formal and informal; tangible and intangible (i.e., landscape, green space, etc.);
- Brand experience—how stakeholders engage with the brand; experiences lead to brand image;
- Brand evaluation—gathering feedback on image and experience; should be from a consumer and organizational perspective; include both verbal and digital feedback.

As readers will note, many of these elements are mirrored in the framework offered within this chapter. Determining the brand core and its associated values emerges after the SWOT analysis. Brand infrastructure details the essential role leadership plays in fostering brand buy-in (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005). "To act as 'brand ambassadors' employees do not only need to understand their brand values and have the right skills and organisational support, but they also have to firmly believe in and internalise the brand values" (ibid., p. 183), which ideally leads to successful internal brand building upon shared values. Brand identity is the associated values and imagery organizational members themselves create (Govers & Go, 2009), while brand image is how consumers interpret that created identity. Brand articulation

and communication go hand in hand, as organizational members communicate the desired brand values through tangible and intangible methods, including marketing and public relations communication. Practitioners wish to create positive brand experiences for stakeholders, but misalignment can happen between image and identity (ibid.). Finally, evaluation is how practitioners can measure if they are balancing image and substance—and influencing place brand equity—by finding out what works, what does not, what can be feasibly changed, how environmental punctuations might influence the overall brand strategy, etc.

Measuring brand equity is challenging in a public setting as against a private-sector company because managers cannot directly control the city experience, target markets often fluctuate, and multiple stakeholder groups are present (Virgo & de Chernatony, 2006). This is often why practitioners resort to a simpler logo and slogan-based project that tends toward place marketing (Govers, 2013) as opposed to a strategic governance approach to place branding (Eshuis et al., 2013). A strong brand vision can work toward aligning internal and external environments because the vision "provides a holistic method to build the long-term future for a city and unites stakeholders and steerers with a common, united, view of the future which they would like to create" (Virgo & de Chernatony, 2006, p. 383).

Step 3: Set Program Goals and Benchmarks

Steps 3 and 4 are so closely related that practitioners would be on solid ground grouping them together. Each suggestion for implementation should ideally have program goals and measures for success, be those internal or external benchmarks (ideally both). Scholars have shown that effective brand management geared toward both internal and external stakeholders is an influential driver for success (M'zungu et al., 2010), and program goals and benchmarks can help effective brand management. Constant

evaluation should reveal areas that need correction or addressing, so "checking the results against the aims originally specified for the brand should provide inspiration about changes to help the brand achieve its goals" (de Chernatony, 2010, p. 358). This step includes the following sections: (1) set program goals, and (2) establish benchmarks. Setting goals and benchmarks is Step 3 because practitioners should know the direction and success measures before jumping into implementation. This recommendation aligns with strategy literature (Porter, 1991), as well as de Chernatony's (2010) assertion that brand managers need to turn the vision into measurable objectives before launching an overall strategy.

Set Program Goals

First, practitioners should work toward setting meaningful and attainable goals at both the micro (employee) and macro (organizational) levels that work toward enhancing the overall place brand strategies. There is not enough space to delve into the nuances of goal setting, but once an organization establishes its core values and mission, goals should be set to track progress. When setting goals, there should be participation from organizational members and stakeholders to ensure buy-in, which should also lead to self-regulation and motivation to achieve said goals (Erez & Kanfer, 1983). Goals are important for individuals to have within organizations, as all actions are goal directed, whether people consciously accept this realization or not (Locke, 1978). Practitioners can follow recommendations from Rouillard (2003) when setting goals: (1) define the accomplishment(s) to be achieved; (2) devise measurable outcome(s); (3) set a time to complete the goal; and (4) list resources needed to achieve the goal. Additionally, goals should be clearly written so employees can reach them (ibid.) and relatively easy to achieve, lest people get frustrated and abandon goals (Hellriegel & Slocum, Jr., 2011). No matter the department, employees can set not only job-related goals, but also

additional goals that help develop the overall brand identity, as defining and communicating the brand is not confined to one department or person (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014).

Establish Benchmarks

Once goals are set, brand managers should then establish relevant internal and external benchmarks. Benchmarking is the process of comparing organizational processes and progress to similar organizations within the same industry or best practices from other comparable industries. Developing, measuring, and understanding benchmarks is an important mechanism through which place brand managers can understand their progress toward achieving set goals and developing place brand equity (Xiang et al., 2007). Benchmarks give managers a baseline for internal comparison, as well as comparative elements between similar places/cities. Practitioners should consider current benchmarks, how organizational offerings compare to the competition (Reynolds & Phillips, 2005), areas for benchmark expansion, and a balance of internal and external benchmarks. This relates to the future orientation of brand development (de Chernatony, 2010). Practitioners should create benchmarks that are realistic and meaningful to the organization. For example, comparing a city of 10,000 residents to practices in New York City is not helpful. Recommendations for benchmarking include (Xiang et al., 2007):

- A comprehensive approach that appreciates internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats;
- Informational components (industry reports, political environment, economic development, for example);
- Explicit ways to learn from the benchmarks, including a strategy to execute learned information, making the benchmark meaningful rather than token;
- A change orientation, whereby managers are open to adapting to environmental punctuations.

Step 4: Implement the Brand Vision

With the initial SWOT analysis complete, the brand values and vision designed, and goals and benchmarks set, practitioners can begin implementing the communicative aspects of the brand, geared toward internal and external audiences. It is in this step where the brand elements—the core values, mission, goals, logo, slogan, programs, practices, colors, language, ethos, brand vision, etc.—come together to showcase what the city is all about. In other words, the previous steps involved intensive research including both internal and external stakeholder groups to help set brand identity, organizational goals, and brand buy in. It is in this step that practitioners can begin to communicate the brand identity both internally and externally to start building place brand equity focused on achieving competitive advantage as well as trust and partnerships. Throughout the process, it is recommended that practitioners evaluate the alignment between this created brand identity and external brand image to reduce gaps between provision and expectation (Govers & Go, 2009; Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014).

As noted earlier, this is not a comprehensive treatise on brand development, implementation, and evaluation, so this chapter is intended to give practitioners a jumpstart toward achieving program goals. Some suggestions herein could be achieved readily in the short term, while others are more long-term focused (de Chernatony, 2010). Practitioners can use this list of implementation strategies to pick and choose elements that work best within identified capabilities and available resources.

This brand implementation step is divided into three subsections: (1) brand communications, (2) brand expansion, and (3) logistics. Brand communications reflect primary, secondary, and tertiary means of communication (Kavaratzis, 2004). Brand expansion means expanding the brand into other venues, but practitioners should be careful of overextension because that could dilute brand power (de Chernatony, 2010). Finally, logistics refers to internal policies and practices that govern brand management.

Brand Communications

Within brand communications, there are two major steps: (1) launching an internal educational/marketing campaign, and (2) launching an external educational/marketing campaign. I include the word educational because practitioners should work toward balancing image with substance, so the information goes beyond marketing to include relevant information that stakeholders can use when making decisions. Announcing the brand in a top-down manner could alienate employees and break trust. The six selling tactics detailed in Chapter 2 make up the backbone of these recommendations. An internal educational/marketing strategy should be the first step when launching the brand, as employees are a vital stakeholder group that should be included within initial phases because employees need to live the brand before delivering the brand.

Inclusion ideally builds internal brand ambassadors who can promote the initiative to both colleagues and external stakeholders (de Chernatony, 2010; Foreman & Money, 1995). Internal marketing can improve organizational commitment among employees and dedication to goals, as well as engender support for organizational rebranding and change (Finney & Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010). Practitioners should focus upon building an open culture that supports branding initiatives and aligns potential employees with core values (de Chernatony, 2010). Similar to other communications strategies, internal marketing should involve creating a plan and embracing an organizational culture to support open communication, applying integrated communication tools throughout departments via many channels, listening for feedback to course correct, and measuring program results (Ferdous, 2008). Practitioners should reflect upon existing internal communications practices, points for improvement, mechanisms to address employee concerns and integrate feedback into improving the brand and communications strategies, and how organizational units should alter practices to align better with the brand culture.

Ideally, strengths and weaknesses regarding internal communication and marketing are found during the SWOT analysis at the outset, but as noted above, it is prudent to keep checking for internal brand buy in.

Once a brand identity is established, tangible and intangible elements need to be changed to reflect the new brand identity, and sometimes this means convincing employees that the money spent is vital to the city's success. Materials need to be changed because the organization might have a new logo or slogan (established during the brand visioning process) that better reflects re-established organizational goals and mission. When new and old logos and slogans mix, it becomes unclear what the direction of the organization is, as noted in Chapter 3. Again, changing the items needs human and capital resources, so managers should be prepared to address potential push back from employees regarding the costs involved in this change. Tangible items include, but are not limited to, stationery (business cards, letterhead, envelopes, etc.), website (intranet and external website), e-mail signatures, uniforms, vehicle decals, entryway signs, street banners, merchandise with city identity, etc. Intangible items include training employees to live the brand, enhancing the built environment, and cultivating brand ambassadors to communicate the brand to relevant stakeholders. The former involves changing the physical, while the latter involves shifting the affective.

Once internal marketing strategies are defined and deployed, practitioners can then turn toward external marketing and communications strategies. To reiterate, marketing is just one part of brand building and should be treated as such (Govers, 2013). To offer wide-reaching information, practitioners can put the brand's story on the city's website and offer in-person community forums, if resources allow, that introduce and explain the rationale behind a branding strategy. The six selling tactics can communicate the brand and should be tailored toward specific audiences. Branding, the first tactic listed, is the point of this chapter so is not pulled out separately as the other tactics are here. Indeed, as

argued earlier, all the tactics ideally work together toward building the overall place brand. Therefore, should practitioners want to take place branding as a strategic governance intervention that moves beyond a logo or slogan, the tactics below should be considered *means* through which to execute that overall vision, which is inextricably linked with an overall organizational culture, mission, values, and goals.

Media Relations

Practitioners can utilize media relations to better connect with media personnel serving the region. Media relations involves more than putting out an occasional press release. There should be a comprehensive strategy in place that fosters the connection between the organization and media representative, ideally leading to a symbiotic, respectful relationship between the two. Practitioners delving into media relations should evaluate current offerings, room for expansion, ability to undertake media relations, short-term and long-term strategies and goals (e.g., include biographies of elected officials online, create an online press room (Kent & Taylor, 2002), meaningfully introduce press releases), media training for employees (Adams, 1995), personnel requirements, and success measures. An online press room can serve as a one-stop-shop for media professionals and can include items such as organizational history, city facts, frequently asked questions, a searchable press release archive, downloadable graphics that are print-ready, contact information for staff members, and social media links (Kent & Taylor, 2002). Additionally, practitioners can monitor social media sites from local journalists to communicate with them regarding story ideas or even misinformation. City-run social media sites can then work in concert with—or go around—a media filter.

In-house Publications

In-house publications are communications materials city brand managers produce and disseminate, circumventing external news media. Publications can be as small as notepads and as big as operating a

television channel. Practitioners should take an inventory of current publications (ideally revealed during the SWOT analysis), areas for broadening in-house publications, abilities for creating and sharing the communications materials, audience refinement for each publication (Erb, 1986), budget allocation, consistent brand identity on all in-house publications, and consistent narrative (Lee, 2000). Moreover, practitioners should think about making publications easily accessible to those not directly within city limits, and the city website is an ideal vehicle to achieve this goal, considering brand awareness is a major component of building brand equity. Stakeholders can become aware of a brand only if information is readily accessible.

Use of Outside People or Organizations as PR Surrogates
Place brand managers should consider this function a critical tool to build a network and create additional brand ambassadors (Hankinson, 2009). Network building begins with identifying some of the organization's stakeholders (e.g., residents, business owners, tourists, large corporations, small to medium enterprises, families, farmers, older adults), and tailoring brand messaging accurately and meaningfully to each group. Identifying current and potential networking practices can also help refine or expand the brand offerings. One way to achieve this is by creating community partners, as Phoenix, Arizona, and Coral Springs, Florida have done, for example. Moreover, city officials can begin to think about how outside people or organizations can be incorporated into in-house publications so brand ambassadors tell your story.

Aesthetic and Affective Appeal, and Built Environment
As these are similar and interrelated, they will be treated as such here, as they were in Chapter 2. Aesthetic and affective appeal encompasses what Julier (2005, p. 870) termed an urban design-scape, denoting the "network of activities and [artifacts] that produce place identity within cities." Thinking of the intertwining elements that make up aesthetics moves this tactic beyond simply cleaning

streets and pruning shrubbery. Broadening takes into account the tangible and intangible aspects of place design, aligning neatly with the built environment tactic. Regarding the built environment, this is seen as a holistic approach focusing on placemaking rather than piecemeal applications of planning. "From a relational perspective, place is a social construct combining the material and the mental, taking us into how we understand the city's built environment and cultural landscape" (Boland, 2013, p. 252).

City planners can think of physical designscapes along with how built elements relate to affectivity. A wider view of place identity moves place branding beyond marketing to encompass elements of planning, sociology, urban design, and planning (Hospers, 2009). The built environment becomes another primary communications mechanism through which practitioners can promote brand identity (Kavaratzis, 2004). Practitioners looking to implement aesthetic improvements should consider the current look and feel of the city, important areas for improvement, capabilities to achieve such improvements, mechanisms to differentiate spaces within the city (downtown, sports area, government center, etc.), and success measures. One of the more commonly found ways to improve aesthetics is to include public art. Points to consider are places for public art, funding, community involvement, and longevity. Other places for improvement include increasing parks and recreation offerings, examining the use of green space, altering building codes, and increasing code enforcement. Place brand managers want to distinguish between short-term and long-term goals when altering affective elements, which closely relate to the built environment.

Brand Expansion

Brand expansion (sometimes called extension) is "growth opportunities that enhance brand equity while extending the brand's meanings in a way that preserves its cultural, semiotic, and social value" (Spiggle et al., 2012, p. 967). I purposely chose the word

expansion rather than extension, as extension typically means using an existing brand name to launch a new product line. Herein, I mean expanding the brand to similar organizations or ventures in previously unexplored areas. Leveraging a strong brand name and associations can add value to the organization just as easily as it can diminish positive brand relations in consumers' minds (Aaker & Keller, 1990; de Chernatony, 2010; Volkner & Sattler, 2006). Brand expansion should be used strategically to further the destination's message, lest the brand be diluted. When expanding the brand, practitioners can consider fit, marketing support and parent brand experience as measures of potential success (Völckner & Sattler, 2006). Therefore, there are no hard-and-fast rules toward brand expansion, but there is an eye toward alignment with core values when engaging in partnerships. As one practitioner in our study of place brand managers explained:

> Yes, we had some locals that have said, "Can we literally use your look and change it up just a little bit?" And we've done that a couple of times . . . We never trademarked it, and we want to know who is going to try to use it so it would not be done in a shabby way if you will. We haven't had any issues with it at all . . . So everyone who wants to do that has to get it approved like you just don't want to be walking around one of your cities one day and go, "Oh, where did that come from?"

One mechanism for brand expansion includes offering social media, which were added to the framework's media relations section. Delving into social media is not as simple as signing up for a Facebook page or Twitter feed, as there are myriad issues to consider, including public records maintenance (Franks, 2010), content to post, privacy (Oxley, 2011), third-party tracking cookies, first-amendment concerns, public meetings laws, personnel capabilities, etc. City officials should roll out a few platforms at a time to best connect with people (Mergel & Greeves, 2012). Digital social media platforms should clearly include the city's brand identity so

users know they have arrived at, and are interacting with, an official government site. There are so many social platforms available and offerings constantly change, so practitioners should pick media that best align with stakeholder needs. Bonsón et al. (2012) offer a typology of technologies—blogs, wikis, media sharing platforms, and social networks. There is overlap between categories, but they are offered here to give practitioners an idea of functionality when considering what platforms to adopt and why.

- *Blogs*—Short for weblogs, blogs stand alone and often are used as tools of citizen journalists. Several cities, for example, use city manager blogs to offer updates of city happenings.
- *Wikis*—Wikis are similar to online encyclopedias that users can modify, with the most popular being Wikipedia.
- *Media Sharing Platforms*—These platforms allow users to share media with a wide audience. Examples include YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest.
- *Social Networking*—These sites allow users to exchange personal information and visualize existing networks or create new ones. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

A clear social media policy should then be put in place so that it covers the concerns noted above, as well as items such as centralization or decentralization (Mergel & Greeves, 2012), work-life balance for employees monitoring social media (Bezboruah & Dryburgh, 2012), employee rights (Jacobson & Tufts, 2013), comment policy for outside users, and internal employees maintaining personal social presences. Practitioners can then look toward other cities and public entities for guidance on creating policies that comply with public-sector regulations and expectations.

Next, visualizing and expanding network opportunities assists with brand expansion. Place branding is not the purview of only one main organization; indeed, many actors play a role in developing and socially constructing the brand (Anholt, 2007; Iversen &

Hem, 2007; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Managers "have to work with various stakeholders over whom they usually have no control or authority, in order to influence them in managing and designing experiences that make a positive and coherent contribution to the overall place brand experience" (Hanna & Rowley, 2013, p. 478). Managers need to be aware of entities currently in their network based upon the external analysis recommended at the outset, as well as stakeholders that could potentially make a contribution to expanding (or harming) brand awareness. Understanding a brand network is an indicator of what people think about the brand and suggests ways to leverage those associations (John et al., 2006). Network realization ties into using outside people or organizations as PR surrogates, spreading the message through others in varied media. As one CVB practitioner interviewed during our research noted regarding networking:

> We really just want as many people to find out about what's going on in this town as possible because if our locals know, the rest will follow. So it's very important, and we promote events that are happening in our community. Basically if you're open to the public, then you can be listed on our website and on our events page . . . We started becoming a source for not only visitors to find out what's going on but community people have also started using our website to find out what's going on in town. And it's important for everyone to know what's happening in your community and if the people in the community don't know the story, how do we expect tourists to get it?

Logistics

The final subsection of this step is termed logistics because it underlies what an organization is capable of achieving utilizing existing, and future, resources. In other words, brand logistics means the steps taken to create, communicate, leverage, and evaluate the established brand identity. Some logistical recommendations for brand management include: hiring a dedicated communications

staff person, establishing processes for interacting with the communications person or department, and implementing brand use standards. Again, all these tie in to organizational resource availability, so practitioners must be realistic about capabilities (Daspit, 2012). The latter two suggestions can be implemented in any order, but the hiring of staff should come first.

Hiring a communications staff person can range from either an intern or full-time staff person (or both) depending upon organizational priorities. Some cities have expansive communications and marketing staffs, while others have one or two people. There is no right or wrong regarding staff size, but it does mean that, based upon my research, a city with a smaller staff is likelier to appear in phase one or two of the image, while cities with more expansive staffs (and more expansive branding programs that are part of strategic governance) usually end up in phase three or four of the image because of resource availability. If there are fewer resources available to develop a holistic place brand, then practitioners will likely focus more on delivering information in a quick and easy manner characteristic of phases one and two. No matter the route chosen, the person (people) hired ideally should align with the organizational brand values and strategic priorities to work toward brand buy-in at the outset (Hankinson, 2009). Moreover, there should be benchmarks and success measures for the person (people) in this position.

Now that there is a person (or people) in place dedicated to communications roles, steps can be taken to ease interaction with the department, lest communications staff get flooded with e-mail requests for assistance. A city's communications department serves as an internal service provider, helping other department staff create and disseminate public relations and marketing material related to the place branding strategy. Communications staff should ensure that employees stick with the new process to help with streamlining requests for service. Steps and policies need to be clear and easy; if the city has an intranet, directions can be posted there. For example, practitioners might want to include a form for

the requestor to detail the project, goals of the event/request, timeline, quantity needed (100 fliers, one banner, website update, etc.), how the event/request relates to the overall strategic branding goals, services needed, and a possible deadline.

Finally, practitioners can consider refining or implementing brand use standards to ensure consistent identity and messaging across platforms and network members noted above. The standards, however, are usually geared toward how internal employees can use the brand identity and are a mechanism by which managers can tell a reliable story about the place. "A cohesive graphic identity allows everything from business cards to the door on a city vehicle to tell a brand's story" (City of Ankeny, 2009, p. 1). Moreover, brand values are often embedded in brand standards (Punjaisri et al., 2009). There is not enough space in this book to elucidate all the elements that go into a strong brand identity standard, but the recommendation is that practitioners put in place a how-to guide for using the new logo and slogan to ensure its integrity.

For example, practitioners can include directions for colors (stick with official colors and do not use similar hues), size, contrast (if the logo will be placed on a dark versus light surface), font, rotation, and outside organization use (be sure to know who is using the city's identity). Some headings practitioners might consider utilizing within the policy are: (1) logo and brand image—history, about, importance, etc., (2) logo selection (what to use when placing the logo on a dark-colored surface versus a light-colored surface), (3) brand colors, (4) brand font, (5) stationery, (6) city signage, (7) in-house publications, (8) e-mail signatures, and (9) procedures for interacting with the communications department. These are not exhaustive but are a start toward thinking about points for a brand identity guide. A brand use manual can be as strict or forgiving as practitioners want. A balance is giving employees throughout the organization leeway when utilizing some of the recommended standards, as long as the brand integrity is maintained (Laidler-Kylander & Stenzel, 2014).

When expanding the brand identity to external organizations, managers might want to take a firmer stance so that colors, fonts, and images are not distorted, which would dilute the purpose of the brand expansion.

Step 5: Brand Equity Evaluation

Once brand implementation has taken place internally and externally, practitioners can then focus upon measuring overall success, understood herein as place brand equity (Buil et al., 2013). Measurement, however, is no easy task. "Unfortunately, success measurement is not often performed on a regular basis: marketers mostly limit their data to key figures and indicators (such as tourist overnight stays or press clippings) because of the high cost of more comprehensive methods" (Zenker & Seigis, 2012, p. 35). There is, not surprisingly, no agreed-upon measurement of place brand equity or place branding success in general (Zenker & Martin, 2011). I recommend that practitioners think about developing benchmarks and success measures for *each element* of the place branding strategy and/or marketing mix (a holistic place branding strategy will encompass a well-defined marketing mix) detailed within this chapter. For example, there needs to be diverse metrics for social media and in-house publications, as each serves a different purpose for brand building. Evaluating success links to the overall SWOT analysis conducted at the outset, as evaluation lets practitioners see progress toward addressing threats and elevating strengths to achieve competitive advantage and build trust.

Therefore, practitioners are encouraged to consider defining success for each aspect, in addition to defining success for the overall place brand strategy. Definitions of success can be based on more than evaluating the brand image to include measures for brand and place experience (Hanna & Rowley, 2013). To be helpful, measures should capture the affective and rational aspects of place branding (Zenker & Seigis, 2012). Success measures ideally reflect overall core values and goals set earlier in the process, bringing strategic

place brandingfull circle within the organization. This step is divided into two parts: (1) implementing or refining success measures, and (2) course correcting. As Figure 6.1 indicates, the feedback arrow runs from brand evaluation to the top, but course correction and evaluation can occur at any step in the process. Therefore, feedback is recursive and not exclusive to annual, formal evaluations.

First, practitioners established goals and benchmarks for the overall place branding strategy earlier within the strategic process herein. It is within this evaluative step that they can determine achievement and movement toward goals and redefine goals if necessary (de Chernatony, 2010; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). Measurement of goal achievement should target various stakeholder groups, including but not limited to, residents, visitors, and businesses and industries (Zenker & Martin, 2011). Each is important to understand because "these target groups not only differ with regard to their structure, but also in their particular place needs and demands" (ibid., p. 34). Considering an overall outcome is place brand equity, practitioners are encouraged to devise measures that evaluate financial success (de Chernatony, 2010) as well as the brand equity's affective elements of brand awareness, associations/quality, and loyalty. Utilizing both financial and hedonistic/psychological measures works toward achieving a balance between image and substance and aligning brand identity with consumer-based brand image.

From a financial perspective, brand equity measures could capture outputs such as cost-benefit analyses, brand ratings (Luo et al., 2013), net profit margins, and tax revenue increases (Isberg & Pitta, 2013). Measuring some of these financial aspects can include utilization by managers of year-by-year tax dollar comparisons, organizational budgetary growth based on sales taxes, hotel stays, etc. Practitioners in our CVB study, for example, reported comparing their tax earning to those of like cities throughout the state to see changes not only within their city but throughout the state as a whole.

From a consumer perspective, brand equity evaluates what are essentially measures of brand image, or what consumers think of the brand. To evaluate these affective elements of the place branding process, authors have developed consumer-based brand equity scales (Yoo & Donthu, ; Yoo et al., 2000) that might prove useful for understanding how consumers are reacting to brand programs and messaging. If budgetary or personnel constraints prevent a thorough SWOT evaluation, some cost-effective measures include person-on-the-street feedback, visitor's center surveys, and online town halls with a specific hashtag or other searchable device. Bottom line: practitioners need at least basic measures for success to justify branding-related expenditures.

The former financial measures can be thought of as the *substance*, while the latter affective measures can be viewed as the *image.* Typically, brand equity is measured using four dimensions: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991)—all image-driven qualities that combine to influence the organization's bottom-line performance. Research has confirmed the relationship among these factors in building brand equity, so authors recommend that brand managers focus on actions that not only promote the brand but can potentially harm it as well (Yoo et al., 2000). Based on a combination of these measures, it should become easier to tell if consumers experienced what brand managers promised when balancing image and substance— either revenue increased or it did not, either people recommended the place or they did not.

Based on these evaluations, practitioners can then course correct if internal capabilities allow. "Monitoring expectations and satisfaction requires close collaboration with stakeholders to ensure brand infrastructure meets and exceeds expectations. Brand evaluation is central to the evolution of the brand and its experiences" (Hanna & Rowley, 2011, p. 464). Identifying points for improvement allows organization members to create an emerging strategy. In other words, if organizational members identify that most goals are being met, then there is room for revision and the creation of

new goals. If goals are not being met, then actions should be taken to reframe the current strategy to one that is better executable given the organization's capabilities (Teece et al., 1997). Overall, understanding what elements of the branding program and marketing mix are working—and those that are not—can help practitioners focus usually limited resources on areas that have a larger influence on brand awareness and loyalty.

Concluding Comments

This chapter gave a foundation for implementing place branding, rebranding, or place marketing strategies. Place marketing is a portion of overall place branding, but practitioners operating within resource constraints wanting to explore some of these recommendations could begin with simpler marketing communications rather than holistic place branding, which takes time, coordination, resources, and support. As noted at the outset, this is not a complete treatise on how to design, implement, and evaluate a place brand. Instead, the process outlined in Figure 6.1 and described herein is meant to be challenging and ongoing. Place branding done holistically and strategically is no easy task (Govers, 2013), so readers can use both frameworks (Figure 3.1 and Figure 6.1) as steps toward that intricate, ongoing, socially constructive process.

A question practitioners need to ask themselves out the outset is: Why do we want a place branding strategy anyway? Visioning sessions such as those outlined in SWOT recommendations can help answer that question. Is it because place branding is the latest economic development tool? It is because place branding sounds like a panacea to fix economic woes? Is it because our neighbors did it? Practitioners ideally first take a macro view before expending valuable resources on an endeavor that might not work. They might consider undertaking a place branding strategy, apart from only a logo and slogan common in marketing-driven strategies, to attract relevant stakeholder groups. While a holistic strategy is not easy,

practitioners should work to align internal capabilities with external changes to stay ahead of competition. As one marketing director explained during our research, innovation—either incremental or radical—is vital to surpassing competitor cities.

> I hate to say we encourage, but really it is more than encouragement, it's kind of a mandate in our office, you know, not to be afraid, not to be afraid of new ideas, not to be afraid to try something you have never done . . . I guess we mandate it. Our employees look for different ways to make things better, make things more efficient, to do something that is going to captivate somebody's imagination.

Throughout the brand development, implementation, and evaluation process, place brand managers want to keep in mind the balance between image and substance to engender meaningful organization-public relationships to build both trust and relevant partnerships with stakeholders. As place branding becomes a popular governance practice, additional mechanisms of understanding both the research and practical side are needed. This book takes a step toward expanding research into this nascent area and advocates balancing image and substance to maintain an open, honest, trustworthy government not mired in rhetoric and sloganeering. To sum up, the following points from this book are viewed as key takeaways:

1. Understanding that the *effects of* place branding practices can influence democratic citizenship either positively or negatively.
2. Utilizing philosophy is a unique way to shed light upon some potentially unforeseen consequences and implications of place branding strategies.
3. Trending largely toward image-driven place branding and communications practices can potentially harm an organization-public relationship by causing auto-communication and fracturing trust.

4. Developing holistic place brand strategies takes time, resources, and organizational support that includes residents as an important stakeholder group that can help create and shape the brand identity initially rather than post hoc—and potentially alleviate the concern mentioned just above.

5. Moving through or stopping within a certain phase of the image has different implications of democratic governance, and placement within a certain phase is neither good nor bad. Practitioners should be aware of consequences within each phase and find the correct mix that works for their stakeholder groups.

6. Setting clear core values, program goals, and benchmarks can assist with place branding success.

7. Creating and leveraging place brand equity is difficult, but steps are given to aid practitioners through that journey.

8. Communicating program goals, and associated expenses and time, to audiences is critical to building brand ambassadors and program success.

9. Researching the evolution in place branding practices can give scholars in many fields insights into how, why, when, and where these strategies are deployed. Specifically, studies from a public administration perspective are needed because place branding policies and practices influence nearly everything the organization does (budgeting, meaningful citizen engagement, interactivity on social media, landscaping, purchasing, policy making, hiring, etc.).

10. Leveraging organizational capabilities, and aligning those capabilities with external environmental opportunities and threats, is important to ensuring the success of place branding strategy.

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