

**Abstract.** *Intensified globalisation has lead to increased competition among cities for wealth, talent, visitors, investment and others. In this quest, cities become marketable products and were applied branding strategies. After a theoretical review of the concepts of place marketing and city branding, this article studies the contribution of education in general, and of higher education, in particular, to the city branding strategies. A conceptual framework is proposed to analyse the congruence of city and university branding strategies and to investigate the role higher education plays in city branding strategies. The research method of case studies provides a big picture of the links university-city and brings to the attention different branding experiences from city and university levels.*

**Keywords:** brand, higher education, internationalization, branding strategy, place branding, organisational branding.

**BRANDING CITIES  
AS EDUCATIONAL CENTRES.  
THE ROLE OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**Alina Irina POPESCU**

*Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest  
6, Romană Square, 1<sup>st</sup> District, Bucharest,  
Romania  
e-mail: [alina.popescu@rei.ase.ro](mailto:alina.popescu@rei.ase.ro)*

*Management & Marketing  
Challenges for the Knowledge Society  
(2012) Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 493-512*

## 1. Introduction

Globalisation has allowed cities to compete with other cities from all over the world to attract resources: human, financial, and infrastructure. The image and the reputation of a city affect the attraction of the desired resources. This is why city managers in partnership with stakeholders have largely adopted marketing strategies. Branding strategies, initially developed for businesses, are now successfully used by public administration managers to create a powerful brand of cities.

Globalisation has impacted on the educational sector as well. Higher education institutions compete on the international arena to attract the best international students, teaching and research staff, and financial resources. Strong university brands have developed over the years, and are currently capitalized by applying branding techniques to universities. Thus, managers of higher education institutions desire to build awareness and reputation for the institution and its educational programs at international level. Strong university brands ensure a higher degree of internationalization, outcome desired by university managers in the current context of globalisation of markets. The internationalization strategy of higher education institutions must focus on the core values of the university's brand developed through the university's branding strategies. In this context, the article proposes conceptual and practical analyses of the issues of branding of cities and universities, emphasizing the need for congruence between branding strategies at both levels (urban and institutional).

The premise of the research is that a 'consumer' of the university either student or academic staff becomes, in most cases, a 'consumer' of the city in which the university is located. This is an original perspective from which the congruence of city - and university branding strategies was investigated. Also, the usage of the congruence model in this analysis represents an element of novelty of the research.

## 2. Exploring city branding. The role of education in creating city brands

A brand is a guarantee of superior quality. It is a promise made to consumers to deliver a good or a service according to their expectations. Many scholars attempted to define the concept, by capturing its complexity. Among them, Hankinson and Cowking (1993) argue that "*a brand is a distinctive product or service through its personality and position over competition, a unique combination of functional features and symbolic values*".

The emergence of a global market for talent, investors and cosmopolitan elite determined nations, regions and cities to increasingly make use of place branding techniques, especially due to their role of "*key centres of human activity and the engines of economic growth in the world today*" (Ratcliffe and Krawczyk, 2004). The concept of 'place marketing' emerged in the early 1990s as an attempt to create a new

### **Branding cities as educational centres. The role of higher education institutions**

---

approach in the field of marketing (Asworth and Voggd, 1990, 1994). The works of Kotler et al. (1999, 2002) discussed several main issues of place marketing, having as starting point the traditional marketing, and proposed a theoretical framework for place marketing. At present, numerous opinions plead for the need to 'market' places, and subsequently cities, in a similar manner to that of companies marketing products and services (Kotler et al., 2002). As such, city marketing emerged as a sub-concept of place marketing.

Branding is an optimal starting point for place marketing (Popescu and Corboş, 2011). However, place branding seems to be a much more difficult process than product and service branding (Hankinson, 2001; Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Rainisto (2001) argues that place branding brings attraction to a place, the main problem being that of building the identity of the respective place. Brand identity creates a relationship between the brand and its consumers, making a value proposition that comprise both functional and emotional benefits.

The key to successful branding is to create a relationship between the brand and the consumer, so that "*the functions and values of the brand to fold up the consumer's needs*" (Hankinson and Cowking, 1993). Kotler et al., (1999) argue that the use of branding techniques for cities aim to achieve three main goals: (1) to create prosperity and improve the city life standard; (2) to protect enterprises and their brands from the governmental or political or other unnecessary or negative influences; (3) to support enterprises and their brands participate in global competition.

City branding is thus considered to be a strategy to increase competitive advantage, by providing cities with an image, a source of economic value, political and cultural significance, and socio-economic development. According to Kavartzis (2004) the main aim is "*to attract more inward investments, potential residents, and tourists, along with community development and the reinforcement of local identity*". A 'branded' city promises to provide its 'consumers' (inhabitants, tourists, investors, businesses etc) with several benefits, among which we find: attractive employment, good schools and development opportunities (education, training, research), good and affordable housing, reasonable living costs in relation to wages, good public transportation system, attractive cultural and recreational attractions, public safety, lower taxation, stable economic climate etc.

Among the promises cities usually make, education distinguishes itself as predominant. Education is very important for individuals' success in life as well educated individuals have better chances to develop personally and professionally. It is generally seen as the foundation of the society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability.

Universities have played major roles within cities being usually engaged in a wide range of activities with local communities and contributing to the development of the community. Universities are places where new ideas are developed and debated, and social and policy entrepreneurship is fostered. They have a positive impact on economic growth, by channelling financial resources into the city. In several cases,

they are the largest employer from within the city. But their primary mission is to contribute to the development of human capital through teaching. Yet, research activities conducted within universities strengthen the relationship between the university and the community. The joint development of technologies with the business community and the transfer of know-how create jobs and promote local economic growth.

The relationship between universities and cities made the subject of previous researches. The strength and the nature of the relationship vary from a situation to another, according to the past experiences, policy orientation and the size of the university as compared to the city. *“Universities and cities simultaneously admire, mistrust, and misunderstand each other. Depending on time, place, economic conditions, and personal chemistry, the connection between locality and university can waver between wary goodwill and outright hostility, and it reflects fundamentally different organizational structures and institutional purposes”* (O’Mara, 2012, p. 236). She concludes that the quality of university – city relationship is influenced by numerous factors that vary from case to case, *“often not viewed similarly or interpreted with the same degree of reflection”*.

Universities’ involvement in the development of the local community is expected and encouraged, especially when the local taxpayers are contributing to the funds allocated to universities. This role of universities becomes more prominent when the university is the largest employer of urban residents. Several cities around the world with traditional and reputed universities have evolved into the so-called ‘cities-university centres’. All urban activities are developed around a major university, which attracts students not only from a wider national area, but also from the international arena. Examples of cities-university centres include: Bristol (UK), Groningen (The Netherlands), Bologna (Italy), Montpellier (France), Salamanca (Spain), Iasi (Romania), Coimbra (Portugal). Let’s take the example of the city of Bristol. In 1960s the economy of Bristol was dominated by heavy engineering, aerospace industry and manufacturing. The University of Bristol had a minor contribution to the local development in comparison to the one major industries had. Now, when all the industry except for the aerospace industry had left the city, the University of Bristol has grown into the largest employer of the city, responsible for 5500 jobs and a further 4500 from indirect employment (Thomas, 2009). The university’s involvement in the local community comes from: the development of human capital, technological innovation processes, participation of academic staff as trustees in local charities, collaborations with local businesses through the Research and Enterprise Directorate, and participations in a local network for regional development.

Good educational systems are emphasized in place branding strategies, either directly (as in the case of Australia where the focus is on the quality of the educational institutions and the programs being offered) or indirectly (when the focus is on people development opportunities, quality of life, technology and innovation). More precisely, higher education - together with innovation and technological development,

### **Branding cities as educational centres. The role of higher education institutions**

is the most recently mentioned drivers of competitiveness. It is considered a crucial field for economies that want to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products (Porter, 1990). Higher education creates the premises for the secondly mentioned driver of competitiveness, the innovation. Innovation approaches and surpasses the frontiers of knowledge, and enhances the technological development. Fostering a city's higher education and innovation environments can make the city more competitive at the international level. As a consequence, including education as a pillar of a city's branding strategy positions the city as a location to attract talents, innovative companies and foreign direct investments, moving beyond the promotion of its tourism or its exports.

City branding requires partnerships between stakeholders that can effectively shape, and more importantly, implement a brand strategy. A city brand partnership must include all the key stakeholders of the city (Dinnie, 2011). The key stakeholders are those that can significantly contribute to shaping the future of the city through their policies, actions, investments, behaviour and communications. Actors from cultural, educational and sports fields are usually involved in shaping and implementing the city branding strategy.

### **3. Higher education branding and internationalization**

The concept of branding has gained increasing popularity in higher education institutions in the last decade. Universities and colleges from all over the world have begun a search to find a unique position and definition of what they are in order to differentiate themselves and attract students, academic staff and financial resources (Chapleo, 2004; Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009).

Branding of organizations ("corporate" branding) is generally considered to be a more complicated process than product branding, as the organisation consists of people whose attitudes, beliefs, and values may vary considerably. Organisational culture influences corporate branding to a much larger extent than product branding, requiring "total corporate commitment to the corporate body from all levels of personnel" (Balmer, 2001).

Branding means to "make known the attributes of the organisation's identity in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition" (Balmer, 2001). An educational brand is often equated to an institution's academic reputation, but this view is rather narrow. In order to create a branding proposition, the institution must first define the essence of its existence - its mission ("what" and "who" it is), and the core values and characteristics ("what it stands for"). This definition should be as precise and consistent as possible in order to create a consistent brand image. The communication should be integrated and orchestrated (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007), and employees should all share and endorse the same views about the organization, by "living the brand" (Ind, 2004). Hence, to achieve a consistent expression of the organization's identity, the organization must not only strive for a consistent definition of its identity, it should also have a consistent, single identity.

There is an extensive literature on marketing higher education that focuses on the following main research areas: strategic marketing (Balwin and James, 2000; Reindfleisch, 2003), positioning and branding (Gray et al., 2003), marketing communications (Klassen, 2002; Mortimer, 1997), marketing models (Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009), market planning (Maringe and Foskett, 2002). As regards to the branding of higher education Waeraas and Solbakk (2009) underline a striking paucity of research on this topic. They assessed that previous researches either focus on external aspects of branding (Bulotaite, 2003; Gray et al., 2003) or discuss branding policies in general or in specific institutions (Belanger et al., 2002; Chapleo, 2004; Judson et al., 2006).

Higher education branding borrowed several good practices from the business environment, making authors to suggest that the higher education sector has begun to function like an industry (Gumport, 2000). Others considered that the concept of branding, as it is applied to higher education, is somewhat different from the branding concept applied to the business environment. Black (2008) suggests that branding in higher education is about people, not necessarily limited to a particular product or service offering in the marketplace. According to Nicolescu (2009) the higher education sector has two main features that influence the marketing ideas that can be applied to it. First of all higher education in most countries is a not-for-profit sector, therefore marketing concepts applied to the sector do not function as in the business sector, where the primary goal is profit making. Secondly, higher education is a service; therefore all peculiarities applicable to the marketing of services apply to higher education.

Branding rationales for higher education institutions should initially consider what branding in a wider context seek to achieve. Originally, branding was conceived as a means to establish a product's name and to convey the prestige, legitimacy and stability of the manufacturer. The brand is a promise of quality a manufacturer makes to its consumers. De Chernatony and McDonald (2005) claim that a successful brand delivers sustainable competitive advantage and invariably results in superior profitability and market performance. These can be translated to any sector, including higher education.

The vocabulary of higher education managers includes more often nowadays terms like: competitiveness, differentiation, awareness, market share, strategy and positioning. This lead many authors to argue that universities require strong brands to build awareness of their existence and course offerings, to differentiate themselves and to gain market share (Bennet et al., 2007).

The most frequently identified objectives of university branding in an exploratory study conducted in UK by Chapleo (2011) were:

- to explain or clarify what the university 'does' or 'is';
- to communicate a clear position;
- to communicate a competitive advantage;

### **Branding cities as educational centres. The role of higher education institutions**

---

- to enhance reputation;
- to communicate the various ‘ facets ’ of what the university does;
- to increase awareness.

All the objectives converge towards the ultimate purpose of a higher education institution: to attract national and international students, staff and financial resources. In the existing context of globalisation, this competition for students, staff and financial resources surpasses national boundaries and expands at world level.

During the past decades we can easily observe the internationalization of higher education in the globalization process that takes place worldwide. From the perspective of the process analysis of the academic activities, Nicolescu et al. (2009) distinguished three dimensions of the internationalization activity of higher education: 1) At the level of educational processes: student mobility, curricular development, pedagogical modernization, development of programs with double degree or delocalization of degrees abroad; 2) At the level of research activities: mobility of teachers and researchers, participation in European and extra-Community thematic networks, staff recruitment at international level; 3) At the level of the relationship with society: development of public-private partnerships, participation in national and European funding programs.

The internationalization of higher education is often the aim of public policies, but the decision of internationalization lies at the institutional level. Qiang (2003) identified numerous factors that put pressure on the academic management to internationalize the higher education: attraction of foreign students for educational and/or research programs that universities develop, ensuring often financial resources for universities that are not to be neglected; evolution of the labour market, which requires more and more adapted graduates to the needs of the new economy: besides the theoretical knowledge and practical skills, these need to know more foreign languages and to have social and multicultural competencies; specialization of the scientific research, asks often for increased resources, insufficient at local level, imposing the establishment of international scientific consortia and networks; employment of the newest information and communication technologies, to allow surpassing the geographical barriers in offering academic services of high performance (Nicolescu et al., 2009).

The relationship between university branding and university internationalization acts like a spiral. On one hand, a strong university brand attracts international students, academic staff and financial resources, thus providing the basis for a higher degree of internationalization of the university. On the other hand, a highly internationalized university enjoys a more powerful brand on the international arena. In other words, university’s internationalization is a goal of university branding strategies in the current globalised settings. But when achieved, it helps building a stronger brand for the university world-wide, which helps increase the internationalization degree of the university.

#### 4. Methodology

Given the role higher education plays in the development of cities acknowledged in the specialised literature, the general aim of this research is to investigate the role of higher education institutions in city branding activities by proposing a theoretical framework to be used when examining the congruence of city branding strategies with university branding strategies. In general, a congruence model offers a systematic way to consider the elements that drive the performance of a system and it is used to assess the alignment of elements' functionality and purposes. Here, the performance of city branding strategies is envisaged, by evaluating the role of university branding strategies as part of the investigated system (Figure 1).

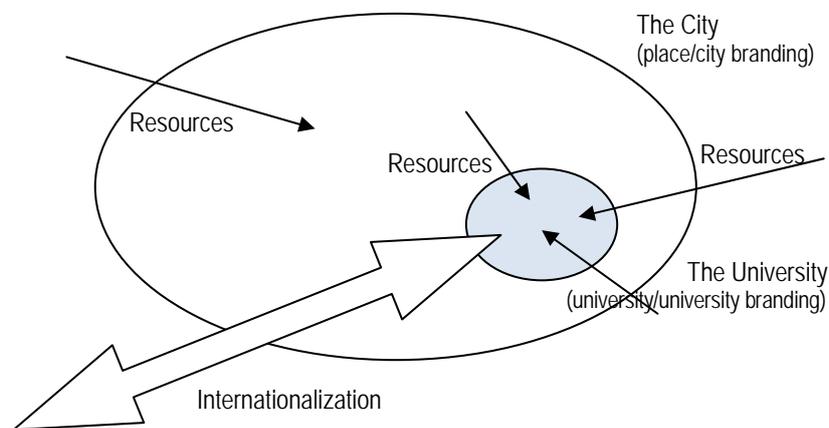


Figure 1. The proposed conceptual framework for the investigation of congruence

Specific objectives of the research were the following: the investigation of the city branding strategies of selected cities; the exploration of similarities and differences between branding strategies applicable to cities (place/city branding) and universities (university/university branding); and the investigation of the stakeholders' roles in the elaboration and implementation of branding strategies of both cities and universities.

The research method employed was the case study. Case study research, through reports of past experiences, allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues. Recognised as a tool in many social science studies, the role of case study method in research becomes more prominent when investigating issues with regard to education (Gulsecen and Kubat, 2006), sociology (Grassel and Schirmer, 2006) and community-based problems (Johnson, 2006) etc. In the current research context, the investigation of the congruence between the branding strategies of cities and universities is better conducted through the analysis of several cases that provide a

big picture of the investigated conceptual framework. In order to understand the role of higher education in city branding strategies, three notable city experiences were selected: Lyon, Eindhoven and Edinburgh. The selection of the cities was made based on two aspects: the existence of a city branding strategy and the emphasis the city branding strategy places on higher education, among other sources of differentiation.

### **5. Study of the congruence of city branding strategies and higher education branding**

Several common points emerge when we analyse branding strategies at the levels of cities and universities, because branding strategies have a common purpose: to create or strengthen a brand by building awareness and reputation. Globalisation has affected both cities and universities. It forces cities to build a competitive advantage at international level, and universities to internationalize. Thus, cities use branding strategies to create a competitive advantage over others in order to attract resources. In a similar manner, universities use branding strategies to attract students, academic and research staff and financial resources. The role of stakeholders is significant in the implementation of branding strategies of cities, respectively, universities.

In the relationship city – university the “consumer” represents the link between the branding strategies at city and university levels. The “consumer” of the university, either student or academic/research staff, becomes in most cases a “consumer” of the city. The question that rises for further research becomes the following: does the “consumer” choose the city or the university? Universities might attract consumers with a high quality teaching and/or technological innovation capabilities, but at the same time “consumers” need a safe urban environment, affordable accommodation, entertainment possibilities, and others. On the other hand, cities might emphasize in their branding strategies a good quality of life, developed transport infrastructure, but personal development opportunities might lack. This rationale leads to the idea of congruence between the branding strategies of cities and universities, although the latter are part of the urban environment.

To discover the role of higher education in city branding strategies three notable international experiences were investigated: the evolution of Lyon towards the most highly internationalized higher education and research centre in France, the positioning of Eindhoven as the “brainport” of The Netherlands due to high quality research and innovation in a higher education setting; and the continuous development of Edinburgh as a highly inspirational cultural, educational and research centre in Scotland.

#### **5.1. Lyon: from Gastronomy to Research and Higher Education**

With a rich cultural heritage, Lyon is a city that understood that education and human capital development lies at the heart of innovation and competitiveness. The branding strategy of Lyon developed in 2007 aims at positioning the city by asserting

## Management & Marketing

---

its difference, its values, its identity, its personality and its uniqueness, and lays on four pillars: tourism (Visit Lyon), quality of life (Live in Lyon), education (Study in Lyon) and economic growth and competitiveness (Set up my business in Lyon).

The objectives of the branding strategy “Only Lyon” (2007) emphasize the role of higher education in the development of the city, among other roles like:

- to boost the University of Lyon into the top 30 in Europe;
- to become a biotech capital and organize world-level clusters;
- to continue ambitious urban development with emblematic projects;
- to attract and build loyalty among business opinion leaders;
- to strengthen the financial and services system to make the city a world-class capital;
- to develop the tourist industry.

Awareness and recognition of the Lyon city brand are pursued with a visible, clear, easy to spot and memorable signature that portrays a red lion. The Only Lyon brand was the result of an admirable collaboration between local economic and institutional actors aware of the need to join forces to the benefit of all.

The success of the Lyon’s branding strategy is demonstrated by a recent survey conducted by APEC, the employment association for executives (Only Lyon website, 2012). Lyon was considered to be the most appealing of all major French cities by 73% of the young graduates and 66% of the young executives taking part in the survey. Lyon’s appeal is due to its exceptional quality of life and economic vitality.

Education and research activities are a point of strength of Lyon. There are four universities and 54 higher education institutes in the Greater Lyon area, the second highest number of higher education and institutes in France, after Paris. With its nationally and internationally renowned schools and training programmes, the region has nearly 10% of the higher education students in France. Created in 2007, the University of Lyon - a state-run higher education and research consortium - is a federation of 18 higher education institutes, with more than 150,000 students and 10,000 researchers (University of Lyon website, 2012).

As a student city, Lyon appears to be more internationalized than Paris, which is very attractive for French students. The members of the University of Lyon strengthen their international influence through thousands of partnerships with universities across the world, encouraging international students to study at the University of Lyon. Indeed, data show that around 10% of the students were international students in 2011; more than 16 000 foreign students studied in Lyon, 12,000 students at three major universities in Lyon, and 4000 other institutions (e.g. Insa, the Catholic University of Lyon). The regions of origin of Lyon’s international students are: Europe (23%), Maghreb countries (22%), Sub-Saharan Africa (19%), Asia (20%), Near and Middle East (6%), South and Central America (6%), and North America (3%) (Lyon Campus website, 2012).

### **Branding cities as educational centres. The role of higher education institutions**

Although the University of Lyon hasn't a clear branding strategy to the knowledge of the author, precise promotional activities are conducted abroad by the university's agency called Campus France. The international promotional strategy of University of Lyon focuses on the organization of events and international communication (e.g. Shanghai World Expo, 2010; Salon Euro-Pos de Sao Paolo, 2011) and the management of international and group projects (e.g. Todai Forum, 2011), as main promotional methods. Major emerging markets like Brazil, China and India, together with Japan, Canada, USA, Chile and Peru, stand as geographic priorities in terms of international communication and promotion.

Results of Lyon's branding strategy and of the University of Lyon communication strategy have not waited to appear. Lyon ranked 16th among the most attractive European cities for real estate, claims a report by PwC cited by Only Lyon website (2012). According to the British survey firm QS, Lyon ranked 14th in the top 50 of student cities in the world. Furthermore, Lyon is an especially affordable city, with very low tuition fees and living expenses. The study also emphasizes the city's quality of life and remarkable heritage. The city enjoys high research potential which encourages scientific and technological innovation. Lyon ranks the 8th most innovative city in the world, according to the Innovation Cities Global 256 Index calculated by the global innovation agency 2thinknow (2011).

#### **5.2. Eindhoven: from the "City of Lights" to the "Brainport of The Netherlands"**

Eindhoven is a city of around 210,000 inhabitants (2010) located in the south of The Netherlands. The city's development was shaped by the evolution of the Dutch multinational electronics company Philips, since the company's foundation in 1891. Philips made of Eindhoven a "single company town" by growing into the largest company of the city, changing the relatively small town into a 'boom town' by its sudden and rapid growth (Schippers, 2007). The process of de-industrialisation started in the 1970s, Philips ceased to be the dominant employer of the city, and the brand of "Eindhoven – City of Lights" slowly faded away.

In search for a new brand, Eindhoven policy makers together with knowledge institutions and firms selected the term "brainport", which aimed to position Eindhoven by contrast to the other two main ports of The Netherlands: the port of Rotterdam, and the airport of Amsterdam. The first Brainport Strategy (2005-2013) formulated priorities and actions to position the region as the top technology breeding ground for innovation and the home base of world-class businesses, knowledge institutes and research institutions. The main objective was the creation of a continuum for economic and social development. The mission of the Brainport programme was to compete successfully on a worldwide scale by means of an innovative knowledge industry.

## Management & Marketing

Four pillars provide the structure of Eindhoven's branding strategy: people, technology, business, and basics. As shown in Table 1, people and their development were assigned an important role with the Brainport Strategy. Even the name of the strategy emphasized the power of the brains, consistent with the idea that people with high knowledge have a large potential for high levels of value creation.

Table 1

**The four domains of the Brainport Programme (2005-2013)**

People	Technology
Entrepreneurship (mentality) Education ('Brainport-fit') Labour market (match supply and demand) Brainport pride	Centres of Excellence (open innovation) Knowledge transfer (notably to SMEs) Key areas (design, food)
Business	Basics
Stimulating start-ups (financial support) Acquisition ('Brainport-fit') Information/communication (to SMEs) Business development (open innovation)	International community, quality of life Accessibility, image ICT, business locations Co-operation (Triple Helix)

**Source:** Brainport Navigator 2013, Beyond Lisbon! (Brainport Eindhoven, 2005).

The achievement of high quality of human resources is obtained through high quality international universities and research institutes. The central role in Eindhoven's knowledge region is played by the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). Established in 1956, TU/e is a higher education institution with tradition in the field of technical education and research. The university's branding strategy reflects the positioning through differentiation, as a pole of innovation in The Netherlands. Its motto "TU/e: Where innovation starts" reflects this commitment to innovation and technology transfer to industry and related organizations in the region.

The internationalization strategy of the TU/e envisages all four areas (Knight, 2008; Agoston and Dima, 2012): academic programs, research activities and common research projects, international relations and services, and extracurricular activities. TU/e supervises three multidisciplinary institutes, five research schools recognized by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Nine strategic research areas have been selected to attract research funding at national and international level, as well as top researchers and Master students. In 2009, the university had approximately 7,100 students, out of which 1,023 international students; they represented 16% of the master students, and 2% of the bachelor students (TU/e, 2010). International relations and services were developed to attract international students and researchers, from within an enlarged network covering Asia, Central America and Europe. TU/e has tight collaborations with the Northeastern University in Shenyang, China (with Philips Medical Systems), Manipal University India, Middle East Technical University (METU) in Turkey, Instituto Tecnológico y Estudios Superiors de Monterrey (ITESM) in Mexico, Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China (with Philips Research).

### **Branding cities as educational centres. The role of higher education institutions**

University's Strategy 2020 aims to increase considerably the internationality of TU/e by setting a target of 30% for the number of foreigners on the permanent scientific staff. The internationalization strategy will be supported by focusing on increasing the university's international recognition and reputation (international "branding"). The strategy goals are:

- Differentiation in education through multidisciplinary Bachelor Programs and University College Eindhoven.
- Strengthening of research in Strategic Areas around key societal issues: Energy, Health, Smart Mobility.
- Transform campus into TU/e Science Park of national importance and international allure.

Thus, TU/e creates added value for the society and plays a major role in developing the Eindhoven region into a hub of expertise by training excellent specialists (engineers, designers, and researchers) who contribute to social and economic developments, by providing technological knowledge of a very high academic standard and by contributing to innovation, in a broad-based national and international network of companies and knowledge institutes.

### **5.3. Edinburgh: The inspiring capital**

The capital city of Scotland, Edinburgh, is a major historical, cultural and educational centre in the UK. The city is a centre of learning, and has as key industries: tourism, education, high-tech research, and financial services. Its diverse economy and highly educated and motivated workforce have determined several major global financial institutions (banks, investment houses and brokers, insurance companies) to establish their headquarters in Edinburgh.

The Edinburgh City Region Brand was developed by a public-private partnership. Public sector partners involved in developing the branding strategy were: the City of Edinburgh Council, the Scottish Enterprise Edinburgh and Lothian, and the Visit Scotland Edinburgh Network Office. The Edinburgh brand essence is 'Inspiring Capital' (since 2005). This means that the city's intellectual tradition and its natural beauty have been a springboard for invention and creativity. Through this branding strategy, Edinburgh seeks to position as influencer in arts, education and business.

Consistent with the brand essence, the values of Edinburgh's brand are (Edinburgh Brand Guidelines, 2005):

- *Inventive Visionary* – Edinburgh excels in the arts, science, business and education;
- *Rich Diversity* – Edinburgh has a vibrant and cosmopolitan culture with a great mix of people and skills – all within a setting of inspiring architecture and natural beauty;
- *Striving for Excellence* – Edinburgh and Scotland share the work ethic, which drives the city's past successes and future ambitions;

## Management & Marketing

---

- *Sincere Warmth* – Edinburgh people extend a helpful, genuine welcome to all;
- *Understated Elegance* – city’s confidence in its capabilities is communicated firmly, without arrogance.

Education plays a major role in ensuring the ‘inventive visionary’ character of the city. Also, by enhancing skills and competences, it allows Edinburgh to ‘strive for excellence’ in its services to the community and businesses.

There are four universities in Edinburgh (The University of Edinburgh, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh Napier University, Heriot Watt University), several business schools and colleges. It is estimated that over 100,000 students are studying in the city (Napier University website, 2012).

Established by Royal Charter in 1583, the University of Edinburgh is one of UK’s ancient universities and the third most popular university in UK by volume of applicants (The Times, 2010). The international prestige of the University of Edinburgh was recognized by international university rankings: the university ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in the world (QS Ranking, 2011), and 6<sup>th</sup> in Europe (QS and Times Higher Education Ranking, 2011). These rankings highlight the University’s international standing, its excellence in teaching and research and the employability of its graduates.

The mission of the University of Edinburgh is the creation, dissemination and curation of knowledge. As a world-leading centre of academic excellence the university aims to: enhance its position as one of the world’s leading research and teaching universities and to measure our performance against the highest international standards; provide the highest quality learning and teaching environment for the greater wellbeing of students and deliver an outstanding educational portfolio; produce graduates fully equipped to achieve the highest personal and professional standards; and make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health and economic and cultural wellbeing (University of Edinburgh Facts and Figures, 2012).

The strong brand image of the University of Edinburgh has led to a high degree of internationalization. 28% of the University’s students are international students (UKCISA, 2011). This demonstrates the long tradition as an internationally focused university. The University is engaged in a range of international groupings of Universities, such as Universitas 21 (an international network of 21 leading research-intensive universities in thirteen countries), League of European Research Universities (an association of 22 European research-intensive universities sharing the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research) and the Coimbra Group (an association of 38 long-established European multidisciplinary universities of high international standard) in order to promote internationalization and collaboration in learning and research.

University’s branding strategy is convergent with Edinburgh’s branding strategy. They both promote the attractiveness as a place for studies, the quality of life, the multicultural diversity and the propensity towards research and innovation.

## **6. Are there lessons?**

The investigated cities provide us with examples of best practices of branding strategies applied at different levels: urban (city/place branding) and institutional (organisational/university branding). Branding strategies at these levels proved to be more complicated than product branding. This is due to the numerous aspects that impact on the brand, some of which are visible, others invisible.

Several lessons related to the relationship between university and city that emerged from the analysis of branding strategies need to be emphasized:

First of all, higher education in the studied cities is dominated either by a large university (as in the cases of Edinburgh or Eindhoven) or by a consortium of universities (e.g. Lyon). This provides several advantages: a better coordination of the efforts to build a coherent branding strategy for the higher education within the city, a better planning of higher education resources and outputs, a single co-ordinating body to discuss with on social and economic matters (including the city branding strategy).

Secondly, universities undertake their roles in the development of the local community (city) and even in the development of the region in which they are embedded. Their roles as large employers, as spaces where creativity and innovation are fostered, as places where new ideas, philosophical or ethical issues are debated, are clearly stated in their development strategies for the long run.

In all cases, city branding strategies were developed and implemented by public-private partnerships. Public-private partnerships imply a common understanding of shared goals, a continuing public-private dialogue on what needs to be done to promote their realization, a willingness to repartition responsibilities for goals' achievement, and an adequate institutional framework. They appear to be the key for the success of the studies city branding strategies. Involvement in building strategies creates undoubtedly acceptance, commitment and effective implementation of all actors involved.

The investigated universities had a strong brand image, built and consolidated over their long existence. This image is positively associated with the city, thus creating the premises of branding the city as educational centre. In this case, the city branding strategy relies on the strong image of the educational institutions from within the city.

The communication of the university brand image at the international level was supported by the brand image of the city. The latter comes to provide prospective international students, academic staff and researchers with a big picture in terms of the quality of life, the cultural and historic backgrounds, the economic landscape and career opportunities.

Higher education institutions from the investigated cities were highly internationalized, and continuously seek to increase their degree of internationalization. Scott (2005) referred to the need to accelerate the process of internationalization of universities in order to cope with the effects of globalization and to prevent its

negative effects. The process of internationalization is future oriented and based on the shared vision for the university, implying converging efforts from several internal stakeholders (teaching, research and administrative staff) and external ones (decision makers of educational policies in a country, city managers).

Geographical priorities in terms of international communication and promotion are represented by the largest emerging countries (China, India, Brasil), other developing countries from Asia, Africa and South America, and developed countries (Japan, USA, Canada). Thus, the brain gain is envisaged by attracting highly skilled and innovative minds.

### **7. Conclusions**

Branding strategies designed for cities aim to improve the reputation and to make a city appear more interesting and attractive. Branding strategies capitalize on existing strengths of the city that are drawn from the fields in which the city has a long standing tradition. Education, tourism, research and innovation, transport or financial services are key areas in city branding strategies.

The prestige and tradition of educational institutions play a central role in the city branding strategies, if the case. The article presented three case studies that were selected from different cultural backgrounds. Similarity is provided by the Western-European location, whereas differentiation is provided by the type of the lead higher education institution (university versus technological institutions). Investments in education and research provide an image about how a city values its people, and the extent to which private and public actors invest in the development of human resources.

Universities are central actors in the knowledge regions, and in most cases coordinate the efforts of city branding strategy's implementation. The strategies of the studied lead-universities (University of Lyon, Technological University of Eindhoven, and University of Edinburgh) proved to be consistent with the branding strategies of the cities in which they are located. More so, the branding strategies of the cities emphasize the role of higher education to a large extent. The experiences of the selected cities – Lyon, Eindhoven and Edinburg – show that education was assigned an important role in the development of human resources and in the attraction of talent (students, academic staff and researchers) from the international arena.

### **Acknowledgements**

This work was co-financed from the European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, project number POSDRU/1.5/S/59184 “Performance and excellence in postdoctoral research in Romanian economics science domain”.

**References**

- Agoston, S., Dima, A.M. (2012), "Trends and strategies within the process of academic internationalization", *Management & Marketing*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 43-56
- Ashworth, G.J., Voogd, H. (1990), *Selling the City: Marketing Approaches in Public Sector Urban Planning*, Belhaven Press, London
- Ashworth, G.J., Voogd, H. (1994), "Marketing and place promotion", in Gold, J.R. and Ward, S.W. (Eds.), *Place promotion, the use of publicity and marketing to sell towns and regions*, John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, pp. 39-52
- Balmer, J.M.T. (2001), "Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing. Seeing through the fog", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 35, No. 3/4, pp. 248-291
- Balwin, G., James, R. (2000), "The market in Australian higher education and the concept of student as informed consumer", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 139-148
- Belanger, C., Mount, J., Wilson, M. (2002), "Institutional image and retention", *Tertiary Education and Management*, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 217-230
- Bennett, R., Ali-Choudhury, R., Savani, S. (2007), "Defining the components of a university brand: A qualitative investigation", International Conference of Higher Education Marketing; 2-4 April 2008, Krakow, Poland
- Black, J. (2008), *The Branding of Higher Education*, SEM Papers, [http://www.semworks.net/papers/wp\\_The-Branding-of-Higher-Education.php](http://www.semworks.net/papers/wp_The-Branding-of-Higher-Education.php)
- Brainport Eindhoven Group (2005), *Brainport Navigator 2013: Beyond Lisbon!*, Eindhoven
- Bulotaite, N. (2003), "University heritage - an institutional tool for branding and marketing", *Higher Education in Europe*, Vol. 28, No. 4, p. 6
- Chapleo, C. (2004), "Interpretation and implementation of reputation - brand management by UK university leaders", *International Journal of Educational Advancement*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 7-23
- Chapleo, C. (2011), "Exploring rationales for branding a university: Should we be seeking to measure branding in UK universities?", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 18, No. 6, pp. 411-422
- de Chernatony, L., McDonald, M. (2005), *Creating Powerful Brands*, Elsevier, Oxford
- Dinnie, K., (2011), *City Branding: Theory and Cases*, Palgrave MacMillan, London
- Grassel, E., Schirmer, B., (2006), "The use of volunteers to support family caregivers of dementia patients: results of a prospective longitudinal study investigating expectations towards and experience with training and professional support", *Zeitschrift Fur Gerontologie Und Geriatrie*, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 217-226
- Gray, B.J., Fam, K.S., Llanes, V.A. (2003), "Branding universities in Asian markets", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 108-120
- Gulsecen, S., Kubat, A., (2006), "Teaching ICT to teacher candidates using PBL: A qualitative and quantitative evaluation", *Educational Technology & Society*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 96-106
- Gumport, P.J. (2000), "Academic restructuring: Organizational change and institutional imperatives", *Higher Education*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 67-91
- Hankinson, G., Cowking, P. (1993), *Branding in action*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, London
- Hankinson, G. (2001), "Location branding – A study of the branding practices of 12 English cities", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 127-142

## Management & Marketing

---

- Ind, N. (2004), *Living the brand: How to transform every member of your organization into a brand champion*, Kogan Page, Sterling
- Johnson, M.P., (2006), "Decision models for the location of community corrections centers", *Environment and Planning B: Planning & Design*, Vol. 33, No. 3, pp. 393-412
- Judson, K., Aurand, T., Gorchels, L. (2006), "Building a university brand from within: A comparison of Coaches' perspectives of internal branding", *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 97-114
- Kavaratzis, M. (2004), "From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands", *Place Branding*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 58-73
- Klassen, M. (2002), "Relationship marketing on the Internet: The case of top – and lower – ranked universities and colleges", *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, Vol. 9, pp. 81-85
- Knight, J., (2008), *Higher Education in Turmoil: The Changing World of Internationalization*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam
- Kotler, P., Asplund, C., Rein, I., Haider, D. (1999), *Marketing places in Europe*, Prentice Hall, London
- Kotler, P., Donald, H., Haider, I., Rein, M., Alan, H. (2002), *Marketing Asian places*, John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York
- Kotler, P., Gertner, D. (2002), "Country as a brand, product and beyond: a place marketing and brand management perspective", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 9, No. 5
- Nicolescu, L., (2009), "Applying marketing to higher education: Scope and limits", *Management & Marketing*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 35-44
- Nicolescu L., Pricopie, R., Popescu, A.I. (2009), "Country differences in the internationalization of higher education – How can countries lagging behind diminish the gap", *Revista de Management Comparat International*, Vol. 10, No. 5, pp. 976-989, [http://www.rmci.ase.ro/no10vol5/Vol10\\_No5\\_Article14.pdf](http://www.rmci.ase.ro/no10vol5/Vol10_No5_Article14.pdf)
- Maringe, F., Foskett, N. (2002), "Marketing university education: The South African experience", *Higher Education Review*, Vol. 34, No. 3, p. 18
- Mortimer, K. (1997), "Recruiting overseas graduate students: Are their information requirements being satisfied?", *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 3, pp. 225-238
- O'Mara, M.P. (2012), "Beyond town and gown: university economic engagement and the legacy of the urban crisis", *Journal of Technology Transfer*, Vol. 37, pp. 234-250
- Ratcliffe, J., Krawczyk, E. (2004), "Imagineering cities – creating liveable urban futures in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." The Futures Academy, Dublin Institute of Technology. [Online] Available at: <http://arrow.dit.ie/futuresacart/1>
- Popescu, R.I., Corbos R.A.(2011), "Vienna's branding campaign – strategic option for developing Austria's capital in a top tourism destination", *Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management*, Vol. 6, Issue 3 / August 2011, pp. 43-60
- Porter, M.E. (1990 ), *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*, Free Press, New York
- Qiang, Z. (2003), "Internationalization of higher education: towards a conceptual framework", *Policy Futures in Education*, Vol. 1, No. 2
- Rainisto, S. (2001), "City Branding – Case Studies Lahti and Helsinki", Licentiate Thesis, Helsinki University of Technology

### **Branding cities as educational centres. The role of higher education institutions**

---

- Reindfleisch, J.M. (2003), "Segment profiling: Reducing risk in higher education management", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 147-159
- van Riel, C.B.M., Fombrun, C. (2007), *Essentials of corporate communication*, Routledge, London
- Schippers, H. (2007), "Cityplan 1967-1970", *Het modernste ontwerp voor de stad*, Walburg Pers Zutphen
- Scott, P. (2005), "Cross-border higher education and internationalisation: overview of concepts, trends and challenges", IAU International Conference Alexandria, Egypt, 15-16 November 2005
- Thomas, E. (2009), "The role of the university in city/regional development: a view from a Vice-Chancellor in Bristol", [Online] Available at: <http://globalhighered.wordpress.com/2009/01/05/the-role-of-the-university-in-cityregional-development/>
- Waeraas, A. & Solbakk, M. (2009), "Defining the essence of a university: lessons from higher education branding", *Higher education*, Issue 57, pp. 449-462

### **Websites**

- 2thinknow, *Innovation Cities Index 2011*, <http://www.2thinknow.com/reference/innovation-cities-index-2011-launched/>
- Edinburgh Brand Guidelines (2005):  
<http://www.edinburghbrand.com/PDF/Brand%20Guidelines.pdf>
- Lyon Campus website: <http://www.lyoncampus.info/>
- Napier University Website: <http://www.napier.ac.uk/Pages/home.aspx>
- Only Lyon: <http://www.onlylyon.org/>
- Only Lyon (2007),  
[http://www.onlylyon.org/content/media/document.php?id\\_document=1192&id\\_format=1](http://www.onlylyon.org/content/media/document.php?id_document=1192&id_format=1)
- PwC (2012), *Emerging Trends in Real Estate in Europe*,  
[http://www.pwc.com/en\\_GX/gx/investment-management-real-estate/pdf/emerging-trends-real-estate-europe-report-2011.pdf](http://www.pwc.com/en_GX/gx/investment-management-real-estate/pdf/emerging-trends-real-estate-europe-report-2011.pdf)
- QS World University Rankings® 2011/2012, <http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings>
- QS and Times Higher Education Ranking (2011):  
<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2011-2012/top-400.html>
- Technological University of Eindhoven (2010), *Facts and Figures*, <http://www.tue.nl/en/>
- The Times (2010): <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/>
- University of Lyon website: <http://lyon-university.org/>
- UKCISA website: [http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/about/statistics\\_he.php](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/about/statistics_he.php)

**About the author**

**Alina Popescu** is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Business and Economics (REI), Bucharest Academy of Economy Studies, Romania. She obtained her Doctoral degree in International Business in 2007, and she was a team member of over 10 research grants. Currently, she is involved in postdoctoral research. The main fields of research and specialization are: International Business, Social Sciences and Education.