THE IDEA OF DESTINATION BRAND LICENSING AND THE QUESTION OF ITS EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract
Purpose – Destination branding is one of the most popular topics among tourism destinations researchers and practitioners however recent research revealed that it doesn't have a clear concept. The purpose of presented paper is to enhance the destination branding theory by introducing some new elements taken from other popular concepts used in destination management into destination branding theory. The concept of destination brand licensing was undertaken as a response to several critical arguments raised against the existing idea of destination branding. However the concept is not completed and practical examples presented so far need scientific background to prepare some guidelines on successful procedure for implementing destination brand licensing. The aim of the paper is pointing out some crucial elements which are conditions for effective implementing of destination brand licensing.
Design – Five main areas were discussed, namely: the proper definition of the product, the brand name, the nature of cooperation and network, financial stability and the scope and the nature of promotional actions. The structure of the paper follows this division. After introduction and presentation of destination branding and destination brand licensing concepts further chapter are devoted the five presented problem areas. At the end, there is a chapter in which effectiveness of destination brand licensing procedure is discussed.
Approach and methodology – The paper is theoretical with limited use of case study approach. Within the frame of those five areas several dilemmas and potential problems were presented on the basis of several practical implementation examples of destination brand licensing ideas from different European countries.
Research findings and originality – Apart from the five problem areas, three overall effectiveness indicators were proposed. These are: increased volume of tourism movement, improvement in destination image and enhancement of local stakeholders for better cooperation. However both, problem areas and indicators should be perceived as initial proposal and further discussion is expected.
Keywords Destination Branding, Brand Licensing, Stakeholder Cooperation, Network Effectiveness

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary competitive tourism market calls for new effective marketing tools to develop a competitive advantage of a tourism destination. Among those tools network approach to creation of a destination product and destination branding are among the most commonly used. Proper use of both tools might give to a destination strong positive power in the process of enhancing its competitiveness however both concepts are still being discussed among tourism researchers regarding the proper way of their implementation in tourism destinations. What remains clear and obvious is the fact that

if those tools are going to bring expected benefits they have to be used with concern and precisely planned.

Destination branding is often discussed in the context of its comparison with corporate branding. Among the most popular conclusions from such a discussion it is possible to point the one stating that one of the basic mistakes in destination branding is too strong relying on well known and grounded theory of corporate branding. A tourism destination can be characterized by many features which differentiate it from companies. Those features leads to necessity of implementation of important modifications to the branding process or even of rethinking the whole process of branding in the context of destinations. Contemporary literature gives more and more examples of how such a process should be constructed. Oppositely, numerous researches and publications show that destination branding is treated often in a very one-dimensional way – as a perceptual concept. Not enough attention is paid to organizational questions as well as to analysis of entities involved in destination branding. Additionally, some of branding tools developed within corporate branding theory like naming or brand licensing are not considered in destination branding even though use of them could enhance the branding effect. The paper is though devoted to the trial of fulfilling described gap in the literature.

Even though destination branding and networking are commonly perceived as important and effective tools in destination marketing, the domination of perceptual approach to destination branding leads to the situation that in predominating part of the tourism literature destination networking and destination branding are perceived as separated tools. However looking for synergetic effect between those two might increase effectiveness of marketing actions. Presented tool called destination brand licensing is an example which presents that networking approach to destination branding might empower destination branding giving meantime an answer to some questions about destination branding from theoretical point of view, especially when comparing destination and corporate branding. From the other side, this concept eases cooperation between destination's stakeholders which is the starting point for managing the networking process.

Presented paper is aimed at underlining some potentials of destination branding that have not been so far strongly presented in tourism research literature. The paper, looking for destination branding enhancement possibilities in other theoretical concepts, as well as in destination marketing practice is actually not presenting new ways of branding of tourism places. On the contrary, there are examples of actions which are convergent with presented here concept of destination brand licensing known from many years, but a proper theoretical description seems to be missing. The concept of the destination brand licensing and its procedure is presented and some of conditions of its effectiveness are discussed.

1. DESTINATION BRANDING

The topic of branding first appeared in the marketing literature fifty years ago, and most of the published research since this time appears to provide a valuable resource for consumer goods marketers (Pike 2005), but in tourism destinations branding started to be more discussed and used only about 10 years ago. In such a situation it is not surprising that from the very beginning the concept of destination branding (DB) is derived from much older and better known idea of corporate branding. This caused a big scientific debate with the differences between a destination and a company and between a destination product and a consumer good as a starting point. Seaton states that '*the concept (DB) has a number of fundamental problems because of intractable differences between destinations and other kinds of tourism product.(…) A successful brand emerge from the design of homogenous product, correctly priced, distributed and promoted to a defined market segment. Most of these requirements are impossible for destination marketers*' (Seaton 1997, 367). Further, Seaton presents three most important reasons for such a situation, namely: absence of homogenous product, impossibility for destination marketers to set prices nor control distribution system and embracing with one brand offers targeted at very different markets, and promoted often through a single campaign. (Seaton 1997, 367-368). This list is even prolonged by Mundt (2004, 48), who adds among others, difficulties with producer identification, very limited influence on the product possessed by destination management as well as only indirect quality control, and legal reasons connected with European legislation exempting geographically defined areas from branding. Only these statements are enough to understand that it is too simplistic to apply traditional corporate branding and brand management into DB practice (Blichtfeld 2003, 31; Kozak and Mazurek 2011). The growing body of the literature is though devoted to the debate on the coherent theory of DB not relying on the corporate branding tradition any more (Cai 2002; Pike 2005; Kerr 2006; Konecnik and Gartner 2007). Pike (2005) points six reasons for necessity of creation of new DB theory, which should be taken as a cornerstones of DB concept. These are: 1) destinations are far more multidimensional than consumer goods and other types of services, 2) the market interests of the diverse group of active stakeholders are heterogenous, 3) the politics of decision making can render the best of theory irrelevant, 4) there is a fine balance to be struck between community consensus and brand theory and a top down approach to destination brand implementation is likely to fail, 5) different idea and brand loyalty and its symptoms, 6) scale and consistency of funding. In similar context Hankinson (2007) points: 1) co-production of the product, 2) co-consumption of the product, 3) variability of the product, 4) legal definitions of place boundaries, 5) administrative overlap, 6) political accountability. DB being a very niche concept from the point of view of general marketing theory gained new importance with growing popularity of place branding concept and place marketing in general (Anholt 2006, Dinnie 2008, Anholt 2009, Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2010). Growing interest in brand equity, brand image and brand value within destination branding, which are typical topics in place marketing illustrates the process of "cutting off" DB from its roots in corporate branding and moving toward place branding.

However this way of thinking might be too simplistic. First, because corporate branding is also evolving. Merz et al. (2009) divide the evolution of branding literature into the four brand eras that conceptualize the brand and brand value from different perspectives: 1) Individual goods-focus brand era, 2) Value-focus brand era, 3) Relationship-focus brand era, 4) Stakeholder-focus brand era. In this categorization it is easy to notice that the two latter eras - the relationship-focus brand era highlighting dyadic brand relationships and brand as a promise and the stakeholder view acknowledging brands as dynamic and social processes between the firm, brand and all stakeholders are very close to the most important issues which are dealt with in DB. Another question is the fact that up till now many important tools developed in corporate branding have not been considered widely in the destinations marketing context. These are, among the others, naming, the brand name strategy, brand licensing and brand widening.

Much more attention should be devoted to the dispute on what DB really is, as the term, although commonly used, seems to remain unclear and ambiguous. The problem begins with the absence of commonly accepted definition of DB (Mundt 2004, 47) but is much deeper. Usually when talking about destination branding the image creation is what is the most obvious. Two studies of experts opinions on the nature of destination branding (Park and Petrick 2006; Tasci and Kozak 2006) reveal that the concept of DB is regarded not to be much different from destination image building and those two are vulnerable to be confused. Park and Petrick wonder if 'DB might be "old wine in a new bottle"' (Park and Petrick 2006, 264). Conclusions reached by Hankinson (2003, 113-114) on the basis of review of 20 papers on DB are very much the same. He found four possible perspectives on DB: brands as perceptual entities, brands as communicators, brands as relationships and brands as value enhancers, but the most of reviewed papers fell into first two groups. Hankinson, states also that *the dominance of perceptual perspective has seriously limited the development of destination brands and destinations which focus purely on brands as a perceptual entity or as a communicator fail to address the issues associated with organizational structure and managerial control.* (Hankinson 2003, 114). So, the typical strategy of destination branding based on communicating by destination management organization or local authorities the desired image of the destination to the potential customers is not effective and a strong destination brand should be based on strong relationships between stakeholders (Hankinson 2003, 16). The concept of partnership marketing is a cornerstone of the model offered by Hankinson (2003), which is the consequence of taking destination brands as relationships perspective. Traditionally regarded elements of DB, such as brand personality, positioning and reality constitute the core brand, which yet has to be strengthened by numerous relationships between stakeholders that include primary service providers, media, infrastructure operators and consumers. These relationships are dynamic and evolve over the time (Hankinson 2003, 114). The necessity of creation of partnership and/or network within destination stakeholders was acknowledged also by other researchers as Telfer (2001), Prideaux and Cooper (2002), Cai (2002), Gnoth (2004), Scott and Marzano (2006) and Kozak and Mazurek (2011). Still it is difficult to say that the network approach is the domination approach to destination branding.

2. THE IDEA OF DESTINATION BRAND LICENSING (DBL)

It is postulated that effective creation of primary services relationships is possible by developing a network such as cluster or virtual service firm, which should embrace tourism small and medium enterprises working under a common brand which is the consequence of acceptation of Hankinson's model. The concept of DBL was created on the basis of observation of numerous examples of actions undertaken in different destinations in different time and motivated by different purposes (Żemła 2010). The cornerstone of the idea is an assumption that a destination brand to be used with the full scope of benefits for the destination should " be alive" which means that not only promotional publications of the destinations should be labeled with the brand but also products and services which are really bought by visitors. Created brand becomes an offer for tourist companies and is developed through licensing. The brand is though created by the network of entities from both public and private sector in a destination. Those entities realize a common vision and their products are labeled with a common brand and commonly promoted and commercialized.

The key role has to be played by a sound destination's tourism leadership, which might be conveyed by a focal company, local/regional/national authorities or a destination management organization, or any other organization having necessary resources, knowledge and authority. This leader is the brand creator, designs brand personality and positioning, and specifies requirements which must be met by a product sold under the brand. Also promotion of the brand is under the responsibility of the leader. Finally, the leader licenses this brand to particular small and medium enterprises accepting the rules. Contrary to traditionally understood process of brand licensing regarding destinations, this does not necessarily involve any fees to be paid by licensee.

Creation of a brand in presented meaning is not possible without licensing it which means that entities entering the network, especially in the stating phase, has to trust the brand creator as brand bought in specific moment of time might be worthless and those companies believe that the creator is able to effectively promote it in the future. Still the risk bear by the licensees is relatively lower than in traditional brand licensing. The aim of brand creator is often connected with tourism development of the destination rather than direct profit from the brand and the license fees are very low or even do not exist.

Process of destination brand licensing begins with the emergence of the leader which is going to create the brand and to design it: its name, logo, desired image, target markets and its requirements and connected with them features of the product. As the effect, the specification of the product is prepared. This specification has to be communicated properly to potential members of branded network. Usually , most of licensees are accommodation facilities operators, but in some examples also operators of tourist attractions, gastronomic facilities or producers of traditional local products. Those entities might become the network members fulfilling exact conditions. The most commonly such a condition is connected with submitting to an inspection of fulfilling requirements described in the product specification. In some cases this can be also paying some fees for using the brand or presenting demanded level of knowledge about

the destination, the network and other members of the network which should ease cooperation within the network and guarantee the high level of services.

3. THE CASE OF PORTA LUBAVIA ZIELONE DOMY BRAND AND OTHER PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF DESTINATION BRAND LICENSING

Some practical examples are used to illustrate discussed issues. The first and the most used is the example from Polish Sudety Mountains where Kammienna Góra county's authorities have created the brand Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy and licensed it to local agro-tourism facilities and some other tourism entrepreneurs. Other analyzed examples are from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and France. Porta Lubavia is a new brand created by county authorities in Kamienna Góra, located in Sudety Mountains in Southern Poland. The brand name is a Latin name of this area situated on a Roman track to Northern Europe. The brand name was created to escape from the image of the town of Kamienna Góra, perceived by many Poles as a heavy industry area, where especially coal mining developed in the nearby former Wałbrzych county. Utilization of this brand and its subbrand, Zielone Dome (Green Houses) is offered to county farmers setting their agrotourism activity. Established in 2005 Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy at the beginning examined tough greenness of a brand as after two years only about 10 entrepreneurs had entered the network, and even those participating in the program remained passive. Sometimes, the brand name and logo are not even presented on the accommodation facility. Moreover, it was difficult to enhance closer cooperation between program members, including information about and recommendation of services provided by other members. Actual and potential members simply did not see benefits from being branded, as promotional campaign was missing and Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy brand remained totally unknown to Poles or tourists from abroad. After another few years some changes can be observed. The number of members acceded thirty and members begun appreciate the market benefits of being branded. Still the problem of their passiveness remained and most of their action within the network are reflections of authorities initiatives.

Another example of DBL can be taken from France and was presented in work by Woods and Deegan (2003). The authorities of Aude departement (district) created the brand Pays Cathares. The similarity between Polish and French example are connected with the fact that both examples are concentrated on rural tourism and the brand creators are in both cases local authorities at similar level of administration. The main difference is the scope of DBL, as here under the brand not only accommodation is offered but also other services for tourists and local, traditional food (Woods and Deegan 2003). This branded network is also relatively well established in comparison to quite new Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy set up few years ago. Some other examples are acknowledged in the text. In the Czech Republic the brand Valašske Kralovstvi (the Wallachian Kingdom) was created by a private promotional agency and is offered mainly to tourism attractions' operators located in the historical area of Wallachs which is not in regard with contemporary administrative borders (Rumpel and Siwek 2008). The important part of this project is the Wallachian passport, which might be bought by a tourist in tourist agencies and similar places throughout the region. Provided with such a passport, the tourist is entitled to make use of several discounts on tourism

services in the region, which include accommodation, gastronomy, museums and other tourism attractions. In return, tourism facilities may use the Valašske Kralovstvi brand in their promotion, and are promoted in a special guidebook attached to the Wallachian passport. Additionally, the brand created also a very promising market of branded souvenirs based mainly on traditional art and craft of the region. Valašske Kralovstvi brand owes its success to a very interesting and amusing personality, patronage of well-known Czech stars and popular events. Presented here solution is very close to city cards offered in many cities, however, involves much more sophisticated branding actions.

Another examples can be found in action conducted by Austrian National Tourism Organization (Seaton 1997). Also projects regarding tourism routes can be included into DBL practice. This is actually what took place in Malokarpatska Vinna Cesta (Small Carpathians Wine Route) in Slovakia and Niagara Wine Route in the USA, and Canada (Telfer 2001) or famous pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostella, Spain.

The presented examples of DBL are known since several years and presented in the literature. However the stress put in the analysis of the action taken in those examples was so far different than brand licensing or enhancing stakeholders cooperation and strengthening brand value which are include in DBL. Pays Cathares brand was analyzed as quality brand – the focus was put on relation between the brand and product quality (Woods and Deegan 2003). In analysis of Valašske Kralovstvi brand the main idea was participation of external promotion agency as brand leader and role of celebrities in popularizing the brand (Rumpel and Siwek 2008). Finally, Telfer (2001) concentrated his research on Niagara Wine Route purely on stakeholders cooperation.

4. DISCUSSING EFFECTIVENESS OF DESTINATION BRANDING PROCESS

A theoretical concept of DBL has been created by finding examples of DBL practice and then by pointing out their common features. The next step though is to improve theoretical guidelines for those who would like to implement presented procedure. Following parts of the paper present some of such guidelines. The aim of the following parts of the paper is discussion of the conditions of the effective implementation of DBL and setting preliminary criteria which should be taken into consideration when DBL is implemented. Those criteria include: the proper definition of the product, the brand name, the nature of cooperation and network, financial stability, the scope and the nature of promotional actions.

5. DEFINITION OF THE PRODUCT

Definition of a tourism product to be branded begins with the question about the brand creator and its aims. Public bodies and destination management organizations are much more concentrated on tourism development of the area by destination brand licensing while tourism companies and other for-profit entities want to strengthen their

competitive position establishing effective network cooperation and powerful brands. Also for-profit and non-profit brand creators might differ in their vision of branded products. However some basic questions are the same. The first thing is about compatibility of the product to be branded with the nature of the area. It is much easier to establish a strong brand when branded product is strongly connected with what is offered so far in the place and with what customers tend to imagine about the place. Usually the destination brand licensing in a destination begins with the best developed product of the destination. Most of analyzed examples are in accordance with this statement. This is the case of agro-tourism in Kamienna Góra county and Aude departement, vine tourism in Male Karpaty region. Somehow different is only the example of Valašske Kralovstvi. This brand connected mainly with historical and cultural heritage of the area was developed in the mountain region famous rather for its active tourism possibilities.

However, is it necessary that only one product in the destination is to be branded under the process of the destination brand licensing? In all analyzed examples this is the case, however there are no constraints to introduce succeeding brands in the destination. This is presented in Seaton (1997, 367) when the destination brand licensing in Austria is presented. In places where there are several destination brands which are licensed, their role is changing from supporting the development of the strongest tourism product to widening the tourism offer and increasing the role of new, developing products.

Finally the product definition is about who can be a licensee. In the Polish example the members of the branded network are almost only accommodation facilities owners. In the Czech example the offer is directed mainly to tourism attractions operators. In the Slovak example the network is made of vineries' owners. The widest definition can be observed in French example, where the brand is offered to accommodation and gastronomy facilities owners, tourism attraction operators and even to traditional local products (especially local food) producers. Addressing the offer to the specific group of local entrepreneurs results from the definition of the nature of the branded product however the wider group of members the wider offer of branded network for tourists, but also the more difficult the network to be managed.

6. SELECTING THE RIGHT BRAND NAME

Naming as a specific tool within the area of branding has achieved big and still growing interest (Kohli and LaBahn 1997) also among tourism companies (Holloway and Robinson 1995, 124-125). Destinations usually have their brand names fixed and this tool was rather not addressed to the practice of the destination branding. Some examples of changing destinations name for promotional purposes as well as main advantages and disadvantages of such an actions are presented by Pike (2005, 258-259). Another interesting example of introduction of naming into marketing research on tourism destinations is work by Clark (2008). However in most of cases instead of thinking about the brand name destination, marketers introduced slogans added to the name to underline the most important features of the product (Pike 2005, 258).

The concept of the destination brand licensing enhances destination marketers to take into the consideration the idea of destination naming. The name of the brand which is to be licensed can use existing destination's name or be a new one. Similarly, like when creating new brand names of other types (eg. companies, products), destination marketers have to consider advantages and disadvantages of several possible names. They are to be evaluated regarding two most important criteria: clear information about branded product and its features and having a 'catch' – attracting consumer attention and being easy to understand and remember. Apart from those two, a new destination brand name also have to precisely inform consumers about product's localization. Additional question is connected with the target market – is the brand name understandable and easy to remember for people from different countries and speaking different languages? Usually destination's brand names which are licensed, to ensure simultaneous fulfilling of those criteria are combined brands and one part of the brand name is responsible for spatial information and the next one for informing about the product. This situation gives additional advantage in destination branding – it enables introducing several branded products using modern combined brand strategy in a similar way like, for example, cars manufactures do. In such a situation the part of the brand name responsible for spatial information plays the role similar to family brand name and the other part is used like an individual brand name.

It is difficult to find a practical example of a name of the licensed destination's brand which fully fulfills all those criteria. It seems that usually creators of those brand names were concentrated on the 'catch' factor forgetting about informative functions of a brand name. An example of such a situation is French Pays Cathares brand name (Woods and Deegan 2003). This catchy brand not only does not inform clearly potential customer about product and place but can be misleading. Brand name addressed to medieval, mysterious sect promises visiting old castles, mysterious churches etc. In reality inside one can find an agro-tourism based offer and the sect's heritage plays only the role of a background. Misleading is also the fact that medieval sect Cathares existed on a territory much bigger than contemporary Aude departement where the branded product is located even though that the most famous objects of Catheres' heritage are truly located in Aude department. The Polish example of Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy (Green Houses) is better however there are some inconsequences. The first part of the brand name gives precise information about the product localization. Probably even too precise as neither Polish nor foreign tourists are supposed to know this small mountainous area (Porta Lubavia). However the use of Latin name of the area implicates that the brand name is created mainly for tourists from abroad. It is not clear why in such a situation the second part of the name introducing well the agro-tourism offer is used only in the Polish language version. After all, this brand name looks to be also too long and too sophisticated.

7. COOPERATION AND NETWORKING

7.1. Establishing destination network

Focus on long term stakeholders partnership can be listed among the strongest points of the concept of DBL. Establishing cooperation between members of the network is however probably the most difficult and the most important issue in the destination brand licensing. This part is strongly influenced by the definition of the product described earlier. The more network members are numerous and the more they are diversified the network is more difficult to be managed. However the problem begins with the brand creator itself and its position among prospective network members. Licensing companies brands like McDonald's is easier as the brand before is licensed has to be valuable. In destination brand licensing the only way to establish brand equity is licensing it, which means that, at least several first network members, have to enter the network before the brand equity is established. In consequence, it is very difficult to begin the process of DBL, and the first members have to present high level of trust to the brand creator. The brand creator has to be perceived as credible and having enough knowledge and financial and other assets to conduct DBL successfully. It is difficult to establish such a position for both public and private entities. It is especially a serious problem in former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe where traditions of local democracy and entrepreneurship are very weak. This fact can be well illustrated by a comparison of the situation in Polish Kamienna Góra county and French Aude departement. In the French example lack of trust between departement's authorities creating the brand and local entrepreneurs was not stated as a constrain in the network building (Woods and Deegan 2003), while in Poland partially defeating this mistrust is stated as one of the biggest successes.

7.2. Managing development of the network relations

However, establishing the relationships between the brand creator and the network members is just the beginning not the end of the journey. The network works efficiently when members cooperate with each other directly not only via mediation of brand creator. When the crucial position of brand creator is established it can be difficult to diminish it a little bit in favor to direct relations between the members. The perfect example of such a situation is Aude departement where cooperation between network members is treated as one the most important issue. Network members are trained and examined on the knowledge of the network's offer. They are expected to promote the offer of other network members to their customers especially when the product element demanded by a customer is not delivered by the host. This situation is much easier to achieve in the situation, like in the French example, where network embraces companies offering different kinds of products. And this is much more difficult to establish in the Polish example where Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy embraces almost only agro-tourism farms, however many of them offer specific attractions not present elsewhere in the county like horse riding or beekeeping. Still it looks that the county authorities are so satisfied with their preliminary success with enhancing network membership and fighting the mistrust that they forget about supporting creation of inter-members relationships.

This problem is connected with another important issue: the branded network is somehow a living organism and has to evolve. Success in one moment of time should not weaken the search for enhancement in network future operations. With a growing number of members and the awareness of a brand among prospective customers the aims of the network also have to change. Orientation to inside, concentrated on internal relationships creation have to be extended by more external orientation on enhancing the marketing position of the brand. Also the nature of inter-members (including the brand creator) relations have to be developed from from-time-to-time cooperation into stable long-term partnership, where strategic planning and visioning are commonly conducted, instead of temporary actions. This task is however beyond networks in presented examples.

When talking about the creation and the development of the inter-members relationships it is necessary to ask about the reason why particular entrepreneurs enter the network. Regarding the fact that DBL network membership is connected with some kind of costs, usually financial, and at least inconveniences connected with accreditation procedure, they have to perceive some benefits for themselves. Convincing presentation of those benefits is the key to success at the first stage of network creation. How complicated issue it is can be illustrated by the example of Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy early members who did not understand benefits that they could derive from their membership so strongly that they even did not use a brand logo in their promotional leaflets or in signposting of their facilities. This perception is changing over the time and the first marketing successes of the brand is what is enhancing it even stronger. The stable network is established when members perceive themselves as integrated parts of the network and can see clearly the dependency between their market success and the market success of the network.

8. FINANCING NETWORK OPERATION

Remembering that effective destination brand licensing and destination marketing as a whole needs collective actions (Fyall and Garrod 2005) the question about financing of those actions have to arise. Formalized Destination Marketing Organizations have different nature and different sources of financing of their actions (Pike 2004, 40). Even more difficult is the situation when considering informal destination networks. Effective DBL procedure can be expensive and sufficient financing have to be ensured. The most visible direction of spendings are: internal promotion aimed to encouraging network membership, accreditation procedures and external promotion of a brand. Especially the last one needs high level of financing. The balance between membership fees and the donation of the brand creator depends strongly on the character of brand creator. A public body realizing its mission is ready to be the main sponsor of the brand while for-profit entities will demand important contribution paid by licensees. Both solutions are connected with some risk. A high membership fee can establish too high barrier for many entrepreneurs. Financial dependency of the whole network on brand creator's donations can lead to passiveness of members and general centralization of the network as in Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy example.

Nevertheless the situation is, ensuring sufficient level of financing is a difficult task. One of the possible solutions is to search for some external founds, especially this can be the case in analyzed examples as all of them are from European Union countries. Enhancing entrepreneurship, public-private cooperation or small and medium companies development are among the most popular topics in European Union's structural founds and all of them are present in the DBL procedure. Also other international or national institutions might be interested in supporting the innovative project. Surprisingly, in none of analyzed cases external founds play an important role. In the example of Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy external founds were gained only in the pre-implementation stage when the preparation of a master-plan and external expertise were financed by the World Bank and the United Nations.

9. BRAND PROMOTION

The main advantage of offering a branded product is connected with the fact that potential customers know a lot about the product and appreciate its features (Sandhusen 2000, 356). This advantage has to be experienced by DBL network members unless the BDL procedure is successful. Reaching such an effect needs not only internal actions and work on members relationships, but also, or especially, external promotion of the brand. At the beginning of DBL procedure the brand is known to anyone and a quick change of this situation can be pointed as one of the major conditions of the success in DBL. However big, mass advertisements campaigns are usually beyond the financial limitations presented above.

The scope of a promotion campaign reflecting financial possibilities of the network is not the only dilemma. Setting proper goals and selecting tools which can facilitate reaching those goals is as important. At the beginning of the existence of a branded network the most urgent need is to inform potential tourists about the brand and its advantages. After the brand awareness is established the brand image and the long-term relations with tourists are the next topics. Building brand awareness may need involvement of mass promotion including mass advertisement which might be very expensive, while alternative use of the publicity might be difficult as media tend to put more interest in well-known brands then newcomers. Realization of the goal connected with brand awareness can be though difficult as financial potential of a branded network at the beginning is the lowest. In this situation making some kinds of shortcuts might be tempting. The example of such a situation is Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy brand. The brand few years after being established remains almost totally unrecognizable for both Polish and international tourists and instead of informing potential new tourists about its existence the network has been concentrated on promotional activities based on direct marketing targeted at previous tourists, like sending birthday cards or informing them about events. Without the brand awareness and the positive brand image it is difficult to hope that prospective network members would appreciate benefits from using the brand which should act as one of the most important motivations to become a member.

10. OVERALL SUCCESS INDICATORS

10.1. Statistical data on visitation level at destination

The issues presented above present how to conduct DBL process. Fulfilling those criteria should facilitate success however it is difficult to find practical examples where all or none of them is fulfilled. Another question is also about the level of fulfillment. Can a criterion be fulfilled better or worse? Though, following presented guidelines cannot be treated as a guarantee for the success. What are then the measures of the success of DBL? How to recognize that DBL procedure was successful?

There are at least three indicators allowing to evaluate overall effectiveness of DBL procedure. Two of them are connected with perception and one is based on statistical data. This indicator is connected with the most obvious business goal of DBL. If visitation is higher than before licensing a destination brand, the procedure was successful. However one have to remember that there are several measures of this visitation like number of tourists in the destination, volume of branded network members, their occupancy rate etc.

10.2. Destination image's enhancement and brand image

However benefits from DBL might be more uncountable. It is worth to offer a branded product because customers tend to perceive it as being better generally or in some characteristics than its competitors. The same effect should be created by DBL. So another way to search for the answer on the question about DBL effectiveness is by research conducted among prospective customers on their perception of benefits hidden behind the brand. Apart from a complicated procedure of marketing research on not well specified group of 'prospective customers' some information about perception of the brand value can be extracted also from observation of price changes at network members. Customers perception of a high value of a branded product not only enhances higher visitation but also allows increasing prices and margins because people are ready to pay more for a better product.

10.3. Perception of benefits among local stakeholders

Effectiveness of DBL is not all about market results. DBL can be treated also as a factor enhancing cooperation of local stakeholders and the licensed brand integrates them around. This is not only the condition of contemporary market results but especially influences future successful existence on the market. Also facilitating stakeholders' cooperation can be especially important in new democracies countries, like Poland or The Czech Republic, where there are no traditions and previous experiences of such a cooperation. The example of Porta Lubavia Zielone Domy where from the very beginning the accent was put not on a quick market success but on long-term cooperation of local entrepreneurs can be given here. However the question is why entrepreneurs enter the network. Desired situation is when they perceive high benefits from being a network member and using the brand. In such case they are ready to some extension to cover some cost and bear some inconveniences connected with

the membership. Opposite situation is when the main motivation of a membership are low costs and no problems connected, also without expectation of high benefits. Also in such case it is relatively easy to built a network, however the network will not be stable and efficient as members do not perceive the membership as an important part of their business. Attracting new members with low costs is a good way at the beginning of the creation of the branded network, however after the brand is established low costs have to be exchanged by the perception of high benefits as the factor integrating the network. So the high perception of benefits derived from their membership by the network members can be stated as third measure of DBL procedure effectiveness. Looking into best established examples of DBL those benefits for network members are visible. Seaton (1997, 368) presenting the actions taken by Austrian National Tourism Organization (ANTO) states that accommodation facilities, members of branded consortia obtained a 10% higher occupation rate than non – members, even though they set their prices higher by 16%. Similar findings concerning Pays Cathares brand are presented by Woods and Deegan (2003, 279), where they also describe the positive effect of brand implementation on the economy of the whole district due to having other industries involved, besides hospitality only.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Presented paper is aimed to present the idea of DBL and to create some basic measures of efficiency in DBL procedure. Generally, DBL concept aggregates ideas from two popular concepts in destination management – destination branding (Morgan and Pritchard 2002; Blain et al. 2005; Murphy et al. 2007) and stakeholders cooperation and networking (Beritelli et al. 2007; Wang and Xiang 2007; Scott et al. 2007). Unfortunately those two are considered together rare and Hankinson's model of destination branding based on stakeholders relationships (Hankinson, 2003) as well as his further discussion on five principles of destination brand management (Hankinson, 2007) and the works by Morgan et al. (2003) and Cai (2002) are among the exceptions. In this situation proposed criteria of efficiency in DBL are the trial of combination of ideas taken both, from destination branding and networking. However those concepts are also not free from problems. Regarding above, proposed criteria might also be discussable and wider debate seems to be necessary and described measures have to be treated as initial proposition and a starting point for this debate, than the final conclusion.

Some of factors influencing success in DBL were presented. However further research are necessary to create coherent theory of DBL. In order to become an established theory, DBL needs a thorough scientific discussion, as well as further investigation into practical examples that will present different possible ways of implementing it. Both practical benefits and theoretical enhancement should be further deeply examined. The list of examples presented in this paper cannot be treated as complete or even representative since it plays rather an illustrative role, and further research seems to be necessary. Preparation of the model and optimal implementation of DBL can be pointed out as another aspect for research.

DBL licensing should not be treated as an alternative tool to destination brand positioning or creating a brand personality. Destination brand to be licensed has to be well positioned and to have its personality, which is the consequence of accepting Hankinson's model. Licensing destination's brand poses some additional difficulties in comparison with licensing brands of other types. Usually, the brand to be licensed has to be established and to have an unquestionable value to become the subject of demand for entrepreneurs. In a destination practice destination management organizations, local authorities or other brand creators cannot establish the brand before licensing it. On the contrary, licensing seems to be the only way to establish the brand, which tourism small and medium enterprises would like to buy or at least use under strict conditions, which means that those companies that enter the network at the beginning have to show a high level of trust to the brand owner. This explains partially troubles with Porta Lubavia brand, as generally in Poland entrepreneurs do not tend to trust authorities and are rather unwilling to cooperate. A quite different situation may be observed in Austria where local democracy, and the role of local and regional authorities have been set for many years.

DBL seems to be more suitable as a managerial tool at the local or regional level (possibly small rather homogenous countries like Austria), rather than at the level of big differentiated countries. Moreover, it will work much better at destinations where small accommodation facilities and other tourism companies prevail, while may not be very useful in places with a limited number of big companies, which may be less interested in destination branding as they can establish their own strong brands.

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