

despite Glasgow initiating an extensive urban regeneration programme and complete re-branding, still vibrant to this day. Indeed, empirical measures do not necessarily reflect unpredictable effects of projects at a set time (see Table 6).

Nevertheless, in March 2004, Glasgow launched the UK's most ambitious city branding campaign with the aim of projecting a new and confident image on the world stage. Under the strap-line *Glasgow: Scotland with Style*, the new brand will position Glasgow as a cosmopolitan European city as well as a modern, dynamic location for investment and tourism.

A total of £1.5m is being injected into the initial stages of the campaign, which is expected to generate investment of £42m in the city's economy over the next two years and create up to 1,000 full-time jobs. The campaign will endeavour to drive Glasgow up the European league table of cities in terms of employment, investment and increased tourism revenue and build on the significant progress made in transforming the city over the last 20 years. The campaign is inspired by Barcelona's success to capitalise on Gaudi's influence and aims at celebrating the legacy of designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh in the same way.

Research has shown that negative perceptions of Glasgow still remain and the biggest challenge is to address these particularly in the target markets of London and the South.<sup>21</sup>

## Table 6 Estimated impact of the Angel of the North

This monument has undoubtedly contributed to changing people's perception of the area and today, it would be easy to assume that a major project such as the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts would never have been built if it wasn't for the Angel.

Estimated impacts of the Angel

- £46m project
- 450,000 visits in Year 1
- Spend on retail and catering in three units
- 75 new jobs created directly
- Critical mass of attractions at Gateshead Quays<sup>22</sup>

### Development and people

Cox believes that

*the kind of urban redevelopment cities like Liverpool want is often at the expense of 'real' people. Smart new loft apartments, museums, galleries and cafes are for the 'cultured' middle class and often just about builders making money.<sup>23</sup>*

If Cox is right, it would be crucial to question the nature and ownership of the culture that is being promoted. Is it just a quick but expensive coat of make-up? How long will it last? In the past, culture wasn't created for the sake of it: it was financed from 'the earnings of international trade and industry'.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, it might be fashionable today, but 'popular success has not always been followed by financial success'.<sup>25</sup> If all cities reproduce

An artist's impression the new 'Fourth Grace' by Will Alsop, to be the home of a new Museum of Liverpool on the Pier Head, beside the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board building. (virtual artworks London 2002)





Liverpool-based 'Yellow House', a youth-arts organization, celebrates Liverpool's year of 'Faith In One City' with a feature-length film of 'Divine Comedy'. Filming (left) at the Walker art gallery in front of Henry Holliday's painting of Dante being ignored by Beatrice. In the film, paintings hanging in the Walker represent Heaven and Hell. The cafe in the art gallery is being used as the waiting room – Purgatory.

## Table 7 Retail and the tourism experience

### Bluewater shopping centre

Bluewater was opened in 1999 and at the time was the biggest shopping centre in Europe. Although the first year end-of-year sales forecast was £550m, the immediate success of the attraction was such that the prediction was revised and sales in real terms were increased by 19%. This was mainly due to highly original and successful advertising campaign, which 'was in the top 5% of all campaigns in terms of efficiency and had a branding score of 96%'.<sup>31</sup>

It inspired Bluewater's staff to such an extent that the experience they provided to visitors attracted repeat business and allowed the attraction to enhance its reputation.<sup>32</sup>

However, in order to continue its growth, the shopping centre decided to offer additional 'experiences', thus transforming into a destination.

In addition to the existing cinema, Land Rover opened an adventure zone 'inviting members of the public to tackle the six-kilometre Land Rover Experience Challenge with winners receiving a £500 cash prize' and so far 6,500 people have participated.<sup>33</sup>

Other activities include:

- climbing a 36ft climbing wall inside the mall
- cycling in 50 acres of landscaped parkland
- boating in one of Bluewater's six lakes
- fishing in a lake stocked with roach, tench and perch
- walking the Timberland Discovery trail as an introduction to the nature and wildlife that surrounds Bluewater
- putting on a golf course designed by PGA professional Derek Scott
- enjoying the treatments and relaxing at the Molton Brown day spa.<sup>34</sup>

the same accepted model, how will they be able to differentiate and sustain visitor interest and satisfaction?

## Creating a long-lasting brand

If Liverpool is to become a destination icon it will have to emulate and hopefully surpass Glasgow's ability to 'differentiate and project a unique image'.<sup>26</sup> To do this, the city must acknowledge that city brands, although supported by

*high culture and iconic architecture have more to do with making cities live'*

through creating the right atmosphere.<sup>27</sup> However, this is especially difficult since the expansion of the low-cost airline network overseas, which has led to tougher international competition amongst destinations. OAG estimates that

*the number of low cost flights to and from the UK has risen by 18% since 2003, whilst domestic flights increased by 10%.*<sup>28</sup>

It is also estimated that 5.7m holidaymakers took short break holidays in 2003.<sup>29</sup>

### Creating the appeal

Today, cultural and architectural heritage are being capitalised on to create a unique character for the destination. This also includes the growing sector of retail (see Table 7). Indeed, the baby-boom generation is fashioning 'new tourism', displaying more demanding and discerning needs, which must be met by offering

more choice and quality, concepts embodied by the capital city of culture.<sup>30</sup>

### Culture, architecture and atmosphere

The notion of culture is most attractive as it embraces *not only art, opera but also food and locally produced craft.*<sup>35</sup>

It provides the opportunity for increased tourism income as the cultural tourist is a higher spender. As Judd and Fainstein argue, *cities that lack powerful symbols or historical and architectural signifiers must devise them as they make the city into a kind of nature.*<sup>36</sup>

Destinations are frantically attempting to build more increasingly creative monuments acting as seductive landmarks (see Table 8). However, cities with too many landmarks can easily be subsumed by them.

Davidson and Maitland explain that 'regular events such as festivals can be a major and long-lasting attraction'.<sup>40</sup> However, even though events add 'fun' and interest, it is essential to consider to which extend they fit the image of the destination.<sup>41</sup>

Spaces are rich and differ in nature, in feel and in functions. They are 'the living room of a community', which visitors long to be invited to. They

- ❑ make up the destination's cultural identity
- ❑ embody local distinctiveness
- ❑ provide a platform to meet locals and ease orientation
- ❑ provide landmarks
- ❑ stimulate senses, touch, sound and smell
- ❑ evoke memories
- ❑ can be settings for rituals.<sup>42</sup>

Table 8 Architecture and tourism

#### Bilbao – Geelong



The Guggenheim Bilbao is estimated to inject £508m into the city's economy. It has been so successful that an obscure destination such as Geelong (Australia, 70kms away from Melbourne) has nominated a company to oversee the bid for another Guggenheim gallery to rival Sydney's opera house.<sup>37</sup>

#### Birmingham

Last year, the Bullring (interior, right) was Europe's largest retail regeneration project. It has helped to push Birmingham into the top three shopping centres in Britain. The city has moved up ten places and is now just behind London's West End and Glasgow.<sup>38</sup>



#### Colchester



The new VAF (Visual Art Centre) in Colchester is expected to bring in £50m tourist spending a year: 'it will provide the town with the means to compete with other towns in the area and will make Colchester stand out internationally'.<sup>39</sup>

Table 9 Successful re-positioning of Newquay

- ❑ Although 75% of all domestic holiday trips in the 1960s were taken on the English seaside, this is no longer the case. The past 25 years have seen a 25% drop in staying visits.<sup>46</sup>
- ❑ However, between 1989 and 1999, the number of tourists to Newquay increased by nearly one third to 4.55m trips; over the same period, actual tourism spend increased by over 50%.<sup>47</sup>
- ❑ Newquay is now promoted as the surf and sex capital of Cornwall. The success of surfing around Newquay has drawn in more of the youth market, offering an alternative to the traditional image of beach holidays for families with young.<sup>48</sup>
- ❑ The surfing industry is worth an estimated annual £40m to Cornwall's economy and as such, Newquay hosts very popular events, such as the Rip Curl Newquay Boardmasters festival, a nine-day event with a series of contests for professional surfers. It is the British leg of a world tour and attracted an estimated 100,000 visitors.<sup>49</sup>
- ❑ The success of the Eden biosphere project and more upmarket hotels have also attracted visitors outside the high summer season, spreading tourism income. This has led Ryanair, which expects to carry 90,000 holidaymakers a year to make Cornwall a viable weekend destination for those living in London and the south-east, to offer twice-daily services from Stansted.<sup>50</sup>
- ❑ More recently, Rick Stein has been given planning permission for a multi-million pound development, called Project Blue Fin, which will include a 30-bedroom hotel with a bar, terraces and a seafood restaurant.<sup>51</sup>

### Sustaining the appeal

Nonetheless, a long-term successful destination must provide a package, or more precisely 'an experience'. What will Liverpool do after 2008? Have Graz, Bergen or Weimar really become must-see cities? Destinations can no longer rest on their laurels: one year in the limelight doesn't guaranty everlasting stardom. Indeed,

*we have entered the Experience Economy, a new economic era in which all businesses must orchestrate memorable events.*<sup>43</sup>

Destinations are under pressure to constantly provide the 'promise of fulfilment in function and performance over time' because 'the competitive battleground lies in staging experiences'.<sup>44</sup> They must sustain interest to lengthen their life cycle or be able to re-invent themselves (see Table 9).<sup>45</sup>

## Marketing the tourism product

The tourism experience is especially hard to market as *there is no one product over which the producer has total control [...] and the image of a destination can be affected by events quite beyond the marketer's control.*<sup>52</sup>

This makes quality extremely difficult to attain, sustain and improve.

## Conclusion

Being a European Capital of Culture is the ultimate opportunity for a destination to transform its image, economy and infrastructures. In fact, it has less to do with increasing the appreciation of music or literature than with investment, economics, jobs and money. This is why the title is so sought after.

However, being nominated doesn't come without challenges. To ensure long-term effects of this internationally publicised event, destinations must consider two issues: how far will the new image stretch and for how long?

Indeed, customers are increasingly sophisticated and in the light of rising international competition, Liverpool must deliver an experience that will create an emotional bond, which will in turn lead to enhanced local community pride and repeat business. Still, this requires constant innovation and a sharp awareness of market trends. Moreover, the needs of visitors and residents may conflict and Liverpool is under pressure to reconcile the interest of both parties in order to deliver a sustainable legacy for the future.

Nonetheless, the process of becoming a cultural capital provides a framework that can be built on, not only because it involves greater private and public sector partnership but also because numerous lessons can be drawn from previous successes and failures.

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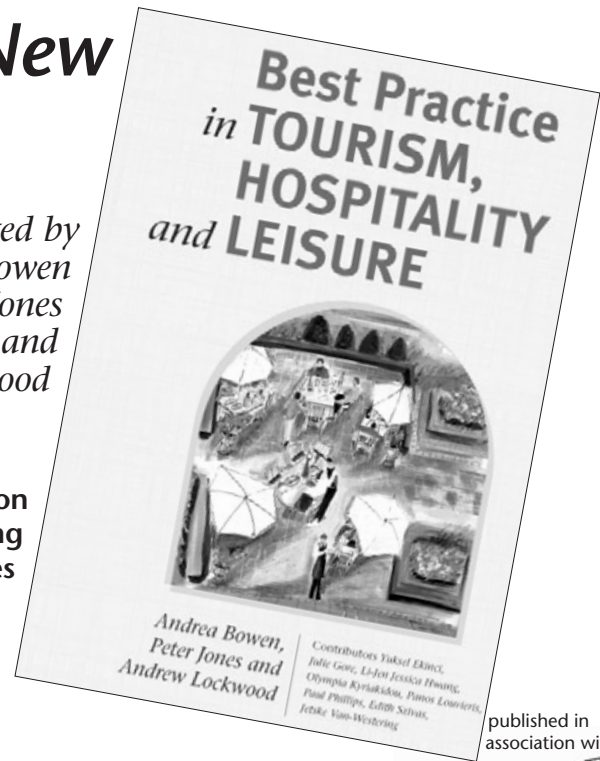


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