Foreword

This is a timely book about what we have learned about branding cities, regions, and nations. Places have been engaging in global competition not only to attract visitors, residents, and investors but also to enhance their share of mind, income, talent and voice in the international arena. In global competition, the ability to brand (highlight) or rebrand (reposition) a place is to large extent determined by the power of brand image, reputation, and identity. However, the conceptual underlining as well as the tools and methods available are often ignored in the global race to place branding. This oversight becomes even more critical in the age of digital marketing and big data where the rules of consumer engagement and marketing are being re-written.

Simply put, those with strong and unique image, reputation, and identity for destinations, cities, regions or nations will attract tourism and investment which constitute competitive advantages and lifeblood to an economy, while others will flounder. Skilled employees whose presence shapes the long run livelihood of a place also prefer to live in places that have favorable image and reputation. Thus, residents who are integral to city life and culture are also one of the key elements for developing favorable place image. Strong place brands result in happy and satisfied residents who contribute to quality of life. Therefore, place branding can be considered successful when locals, workers, and firms, are satisfied with their community and neighborhood, and when the place –destination, city, region or nation- attracts tourists and investors who find what they expect and more. In addition, favorable place branding can attract film productions (which can further serve to reinforce the brand), global sporting events, and conferences. The question then becomes how to realize these beneficial outcomes.

Ahmet Bayraktar and Can Uslay are to be applauded for addressing this question and diligently putting together this collection of very insightful chapters about the theory and concepts, and equally important, the tools and methods for place branding. This collection of chapters effectively captures fresh approaches and presents a valuable window on the contemporary tools and methods that place branding actors can use for promoting destinations, cities, and nations. By bringing together scholars from various disciplines such as marketing, hospitality and tourism, public relations, communications, economics, health management, architecture, geography, and urban planning and design, the editors have successfully brought theory and practice of place branding together.

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