

THE FUTURE OF CITY MARKETING

City Marketing needs to adapt to the new ways of researching and communicating

In times when everything is changing and many industries are challenged by the digital revolution, it is essential that also City Marketing adapts to the new ways people are researching, communicating, traveling, buying, making decisions and connecting with each other.

Today it's not only about marketing a city and helping its image, but about finding ways to constantly reinvent and create platforms which help cities and everybody living and working in them to improve and market themselves. This requires new thinking and a more collaborative way of approaching present and future challenges. Only then can we turn changes into opportunities and lead the global competition in the field of City Marketing.

Here are just three examples of the responsibilities that Future City Marketing faces; they touch on some key areas where fresh and innovative strategies are required:

Politics | We need to connect the citizens of the city with political leaders and empower them with social/mobile tools, giving them real influence and impact on local and international projects and discussions.

Industry/Tourism | To speed up cities innovation outcome, we need to kick-start collaboration between the industry and municipal departments, create a culture of public/private partnerships to help reduce and bypass bureaucracy.

Environment | In partnership with the industry, we need to launch platforms to gather suggestions on how cities and their communities can help increase industry and business while simultaneously reducing their environmental impact.

New Guidelines are needed | But a new approach also requires a new set of principles that have to guide City-Marketing. They should help to come up with those innovations and solutions that are urgently needed. Here some first examples of guidelines that should drive future City-Marketing initiatives:

Rule 1 | Socially oriented City Marketing initiatives will yield rich data, stronger advocacy, and more focused R&D, allowing the City to become more efficient on all levels.

Rule 2 | Inspiring conversations and sharing will help turn once passive citizens and workers into active ambassadors of the City.

In the future, cities will need to create platforms and define where and how dialogue can and will happen. If cities help to connect like-minded citizens, consumers and companies they will benefit from citizen-engagement that constantly feeds City Marketing initiatives with valuable information in the long run. Such a step would make cities a better, richer and more enjoyable place for the people visiting, living and working in it.

Guest article by Christian Behrendt, recipient of a 'City Marketing' scholarship offered by the City of Heidelberg and financed by REUTAX. Mr. Behrendt is writing his master thesis about City Marketing and is researching the effects of mobile, digital and social media in this field.

Cities need to create new platforms and help to connect like-minded citizens



Christian Behrendt, standing between New York Chairman Don Reynolds and Mayor Eckart Würzner, became a member of the HCI in March 2013

