



European Journal of Marketing

Building brand value online: exploring relationships between company and city brands

Myfanwy Trueman Nelarine Cornelius James Wallace

Article information:

To cite this document:

Myfanwy Trueman Nelarine Cornelius James Wallace, (2012), "Building brand value online: exploring relationships between company and city brands", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 46 Iss 7/8 pp. 1013 - 1031

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090561211230179>

Downloaded on: 20 January 2016, At: 02:08 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 66 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 3194 times since 2012*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

Geoff Simmons, Brychan Thomas, Yann Truong, (2010), "Managing i-branding to create brand equity", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 44 Iss 9/10 pp. 1260-1285 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090561011062835>

Jochen Wirtz, Anouk den Ambtman, Josée Bloemer, Csilla Horváth, B. Ramaseshan, Joris van de Klundert, Zeynep Gurhan Canli, Jay Kandampully, (2013), "Managing brands and customer engagement in online brand communities", Journal of Service Management, Vol. 24 Iss 3 pp. 223-244 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09564231311326978>

Bill Merrilees, Dale Miller, Carmel Herington, (2012), "Multiple stakeholders and multiple city brand meanings", European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 46 Iss 7/8 pp. 1032-1047 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090561211230188>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:522623 []

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.



Building brand value online: exploring relationships between company and city brands

Building brand
value online

1013

Myfanwy Trueman

*Department of Marketing, Bradford University School of Management,
Bradford, UK, and*

Nelarine Cornelius and James Wallace

Bradford University School of Management, Bradford, UK

Received 1 December 2010
Accepted 5 April 2011

Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this research is to investigate how local company web sites can contribute towards the value and characteristics of city brands online, particularly where post-industrial cities are concerned, and to establish a predictive model for this.

Design/methodology/approach – Interviews were conducted to gain an understanding of how post-industrial city brands can be influenced by local companies, leading to the notion of a “constructed” city brand. An overarching brand model was developed based on the works of Christodoulides *et al.* and Merrilees and Fry and a survey of company web sites conducted. Structural equation modelling was then fitted to these data.

Findings – Trustworthiness, responsiveness, online experience and emotional connection were confirmed as dimensions of company online brand value. It was further shown that company brand and constructed city brand are influenced by customer perceptions of brand value. Company brand was not, however, related to constructed city brand for the case study of Bradford, UK, which has a pervading negative reputation.

Originality/value – A model incorporating company brand and city brand has been developed and validated for a typical post-industrial city that is in decline. The influence that local companies can exert on these brands via their web sites and behaviours was established. It is further demonstrated that company brands become disassociated from a city if it has a negative brand image.

Keywords Company brand, Company online brand value, Corporate branding, Brand management, Cities, Constructed city brand, Post-industrial cities, United Kingdom

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The business men who are members of the Better Business Bureau in cooperation with other civic bodies, have determined to secure the city's good name – not to gloss over crimes and deny facts, but to produce facts that tell the truth. The truth is that Chicago is a prosperous and industrious city where life and property are as safe as anywhere else, where the rewards for hard work and decent living are as great as any other community (Chicago Better Business Community 1930, in Strauss, 1968, pp. 2-3).

The internet and new information technologies play a key role in the communication of destinations and their brands (Roig *et al.*, 2010, p. 121).

The authors wish to acknowledge the invaluable suggestions made by three anonymous reviewers in the development of this paper.



European Journal of Marketing
Vol. 46 No. 7/8, 2012
pp. 1013-1031

© Emerald Group Publishing Limited
0309-0566
DOI 10.1108/03090561211230179

As the Better Business Community of Chicago noted in the 1930s, a city's reputation can change over time, and there is a need for a truthful appraisal of the situation (Strauss, 1968). In this respect business forms the essential character and purpose of a city, providing an engine for growth and prosperity (Booth, 2005, Warnaby *et al.*, 1998), as well as shaping the identity and fortunes of the urban environment (Scott, 2006, Landry, 2004). But today, customer perceptions of a place or "destination" can be influenced by the virtual world as much as traditional communications channels (Roig *et al.*, 2010), and a dynamic, online relationships between company and customers will allow transactions to take place outside the physical confines of the built environment (Christodoulides *et al.*, 2006, Merrilees and Fry, 2002). However if companies become disassociated from a place, this makes it difficult for planners to successfully manage the architecture of a city brand, because business forms an integral part of place branding architecture (Balakrishnan, 2009, Cheshire, 2006). Yet there has been little research into the relationship between corporate brand value online and stakeholder perceptions about cities, even though today's virtual world has the potential to rebuild links between business communities, and urban locations, to mutual advantage (Roig *et al.*, 2010, Edvinsson, 2006, Hospers, 2003). Yet there is an opportunity for city brands to be revived by harnessing a positive image, generated through commercial activity online. In this way the virtual environment can be used as a catalyst for change to re-build city brand value. Consequently this research argues that local companies play a critical role because they have the potential to influence the profile and identity of cities online, thereby reaching a wider audience to enhance brand value.

Background

Many post-industrial European cities have similar characteristics, with evidence of decline that can have an adverse influence on brand confidence and reputation.

The morphology of cities throughout the continent began to display the common characteristics of unplanned and unforeseen change. Spaces, varying from huge sites to empty city centre apartments or shops, have been left abandoned in and around the core of all major urban areas. This leaves a visual legacy of dereliction that impacts an air of decay to these areas, and is a disincentive to investors (Fraser, 2003, p. 21).

This dynamic often leads to unemployment, particularly in industries that have been subjected to intense global competition and recession, often followed by migrant workers who become "entrapped in the downward cycle of deprivation" when they take up low paid jobs vacated by the indigenous population, (Fraser, 2003). As a result, Porter (1995) observes that inner cities can act as a barometer of national economic and social wellbeing, reflecting the "brand" reputation of a country. A negative brand reputation can blight local companies, and, in turn, is more likely to accelerate their disassociation from the city (Roig *et al.*, 2010; Anholt, 2006; Hill and Nowak, 2002). Relationships between business and place can therefore change dramatically over time, indicating the need for a fresh look at this problem (Fraser, 2003).

The UK city of Bradford has been chosen as a suitable case for investigation as it is a good example of the problems faced by a post-industrial city in decline. Currently, Bradford is at a "counter urbanisation" stage of evolution, typified by lost employment (Van den Berg and Braun, 1999), and tensions between the indigenous white population and the South Asian community, who were invited to fill a labour shortage in the textiles industry after the Second World War (Carling, 2008). Yet there are still

successful companies that have adapted and survived, often building on expertise developed from the textiles explosion in the nineteenth century (Trueman *et al.*, 2004). This raises the question of whether companies can re-engage and reshape the identity of places with negative reputations such as Bradford. The potential is highlighted by Bailey *et al.* (2002), who observe that business can impact upon the physical environment as well as the image of a city:

The value of a firm to a city is determined not only by its current profitability and future growth prospects but also by factors such as the income it generates for residents through returns to labour, the quality of employment opportunities it offers, its impact on the physical environment and image of the city; and its contribution to the overall quality of life" (Bailey *et al.*, 2002, p. 135).

This research would argue that the image, trust and reputation communicated via corporate web sites can positively influence stakeholder perceptions about city brands as well as companies (Roig *et al.*, 2010; Puusa and Tolvanen, 2006). For example Hospers(2003) and Edvinsson (2006) observe that the efficacy of web site design can be a reflection of business prowess, and a city brand that features local (often independent) companies could provide cities with a means to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Companies can therefore be seen as a platform on which to build a distinctive or "constructed" city brand, as well as an online portal for trade. Specifically, we consider how the perceived value of company brands online can enable us to re-examine the brand identity and reputation of post-industrial cities. We define constructed city brand as a cumulative, online account and representation of a city to create a distinctive, customer perception for which the brand may be evaluated.

Therefore the relationship between company web sites and city brands is worthy of a thorough examination to explore the following questions:

- What is the perceived relationship between company and post-industrial city brands?
- How can web sites influence "customer" perceptions of company brands?
- What is the relationship between company on-line brands and "constructed" city brands?

What is the perceived relationship between company and post-industrial city brands?

Cities have constantly changed and evolved over hundreds of years and, as such, city brands are more difficult to manage than corporate brands, often representing a collection of local places (Scott, 2006; Cheshire, 2006). From a marketing perspective, the notion of brand "ownership" is seen as a measure of corporate brand strength but there is no clear definition or legal obligation about the ownership of a city brand (Kavaratzis, 2010, Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). Local companies can be seen as stakeholders or "internal customers" of the city, since they are part of the multiple audiences to be addressed alongside "local citizens, government regulators, stockholders, employees, pressure groups and politicians" (Dukerich and Carter, 2000). If, as Bailey *et al.* (2002) observe, local companies are part of the city's identity and built environment, then there is a need to examine the city from a business perspective to reveal the inherent strengths as well as weaknesses of the concomitant city brand (Hankinson, 2006; Lloyd and McCarthy, 2003).

However for Bradford, a prevailing negative reputation has been exacerbated by race riots in 2001 (Ouseley, 2001), a continual change of political strategy over the past 60 years (Firth, 1997) and the poor state, repair and maintenance of its built environment (Carling, 2008). A local campaign to produce a new logo for Bradford in order to counter its negative image (Barnett, 2011), highlights how the city's negative reputation persists, and that businesses have struggled to create a positive impression. One company was so concerned by the appearance of Bradford that it had a policy of flying customers in by helicopter, rather than them gaining the wrong impression by driving through the city (Trueman *et al.*, 2010), illustrating a deliberate policy of disassociation from the Bradford brand. Recently a loss of flights from the local Leeds-Bradford airport to the capital city, London (Holland, 2011a), a failure to reverse the decline in retail provision, and poor management of vacant buildings (Telegraph and Argus, 2011a, Holland, 2011b), has added substantially to negative perceptions of the city as a place to do business. Consequently, for this research, it is important firstly to understand how local businesses convey their corporate brand identity to customers online; and secondly to investigate any possible associations between company and city brands.

As the Chicago Better Business Community in the 1930s observed, there exists the potential for a positive relationship between business and cities. This is illustrated today by a clear association between the smart shops and big businesses of central London or New York, where perceptions about company and city brand are highly correlated. Therefore this research hypothesizes:

H1. There is a relationship between “company brands” and “city brands”.

How can web sites influence “customer” perceptions of company brands?

Effective brand management relies on understanding customer perceptions so that actual and potential identity can be aligned in a credible way to gain trust and confidence in the organization (Balmer, 2008; Aaker, 2007). For place brands, identity is a combination of the built environment, local culture and public policy that can influence what people see and experience when they visit, work or live in a city (Trueman *et al.*, 2008). From a trust perspective this relates to the notion of the brand as a promise that can be reinforced or undermined by the ability of an organization or city to deliver the expected products or service in practice (Puusa and Tolvanen, 2006; Van Riel, 2000). Similarly, in the virtual world, carefully designed web sites not only convey brand identity but also foster trust and an emotional connection between customers and the company (Hospers, 2003). To this end, criteria such as identity, trust, confidence and experience have been taken from the corporate brand literatures as well as research into the virtual world, where authors such as Christodoulides *et al.* (2006), explore “online experience”, “responsive service” and “emotional connection” as well as “trust”. Similarly Merrilees and Fry(2002) use the descriptors of “e-trust”, “e-navigability”, “e-interactivity”, “fun and other site attractions”, and “brand loyalty” (Table I).

In each case there is an assumption that the online experience of customers visiting the web site will result in positive or negative value judgements about company credibility and hence brand value. But Da Silva and Alwi (2008) observe that “there is still a lack of solid evidence about what drives value online”. They adopt the classic Davis(1989) “ease of use” criteria for web site evaluation as well as “security”, “customer care”, “personalisation”, and “reliability/fulfilment”. All five measures resonate with the approach taken by Christodoulides *et al.* (2006), since “security”

Merrilees and Fry (2002)		Christodoulides <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Da Silva and Alwi (2008)	Revised latent variables	Web site and brand relationships
1	E-trust	Trust	Security	Trust	(Stage 1) <i>Web site interaction latent variables</i> Attractive, responsive, reliable site will enhance perceptions of company
2	E-Navigability	Online experience Fulfilment (accuracy, delivery)	Ease of use	Online experience	
3	E-Interactivity	Responsive service nature	Personalisation Customer care	Responsive service	
4	Fun and other site attractions Corporate brand attitude	Emotional connection	Reliability, fulfilment	Emotional connection	(Stage 2) <i>Brand equity latent variables</i> Enhanced web site perceptions will add brand value for company and city
5		–		Company online brand value	
6	Brand loyalty	–		Constructed City brand	

Table I.
Latent variables for the
evaluation of company
web sites

correlates with “trust”; “fulfilment” relates to “emotional connection”; “customer care” and “personalisation” can be linked to “responsiveness”; and “ease of use” is part of “online experience” (Table I). Consequently this work adopts the Christodoulides *et al.* (2006) four criteria for evaluation that are reinforced by a body of opinion. For example Becerra and Korgoankar (2011) discuss the relationship between trust and online intentions from a Business to Consumer (BtoC) or “e-tailer” perspective, where trust in a product or service and company brand is a key deciding factor in whether a purchase takes place. Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa(2004), and Ha(2004), also observe the importance of developing customer trust online. Hence we hypothesize that:

H2. “Trust” in a company web site is a dimension of “company online brand value”.

On the other hand Mitussis *et al.* (2006) explain how the notion of “emotional connection” relates to the theory of customer relationship marketing, redolent of Merrilees and Fry(2002) notion of “fun and other site attractions” as well as “brand loyalty”, leading to the following hypothesis:

H3. Emotional connection with a company web site is a dimension of “company online brand value”.

From an online experience perspective, Constantdides (2004) examines how e-marketers can “influence the outcome of virtual interaction and buying processes by ... shaping the customer’s virtual experience”. This is echoed by Merrilees and Fry (2002), who focus on “e-navigability” and the Davis (1989) classic “ease of use” perspective. Therefore we hypothesize:

H4. Online experience of the company web site is a dimension of “company online brand value”.

As discussed above, Da Silva and Alwi (2008) explain the need for a responsive service in terms of “personalisation” and “customer care”, reinforcing the “perceived usefulness” concept explored by Davis (1989), and Shankar *et al.* (2002). Hence the hypothesis:

H5. A responsive service from the company web site is a dimension of “company online brand value”.

What is the relationship between company on-line brands and “constructed”, city brands?

In spite of challenges for Bradford, it is economically the third most important city in the north of England, and a hub for professional and financial services, providing a contact and distribution centre in a robust economic region (Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 2011). There are many high profile events in the city as well as successful local businesses (Telegraph and Argus, 2011b), and incubator activity for local companies is strong (Holland, 2011c). At a recent awards ceremony, “Bradford Means Business”, to celebrate the successes of local companies, the following comments were made:

After the glitter has been swept away and the champagne lost its fizz, these firms will continue to move forward and help take the city forward at the same time, proving that Bradford really does mean business (Telegraph and Argus, 2011b).

However the relationships between company and city brand underpin a traditional brand building pillar in terms of establishing identity, meaning, and response (Keller, 2003). For example Spilling (2011) explores the role small companies in Sweden play in supporting the local community by creating employment and enhancing the infrastructure of a city, thereby reinforcing their relationship and emotional connection with a place. In this respect, successful companies not only promote trust and confidence in themselves (Aaker, 2007), but also in the city. Moreover Hospers (2003, p. 263) describes how companies, working as an integral part of cities, can promote themselves creatively in a “cultural-technological” manner in today’s “knowledge economy”. He describes this creativeness in terms of “technological – organisational cities”, where leading companies create a positive culture in places such as Tilburg, where the city is almost run like a company.

Furthermore, Roig *et al.* (2010, pp. 121-122) observe that “The internet and new information technologies play a key role in the communications of destinations and their brands . . . it has . . . two functions, first to build brand image and second to obtain a direct (desired) response from users”. In fact customers today are likely to use a virtual route to obtain information about an organization as well as a city. This online experience will result in value judgements about company credibility, reliability, accessibility, resources, and industrial expertise, which, in turn, may impact upon perceptions of place (Hatch and Schultz, 2003). This phenomenon is described by Christodoulides *et al.* (2006) as the need for a “bricks and mortar brand” that can enhance perceptions of brand value. Therefore we suggest that:

H6. “Company online brand value” is positively related to “Company brand”.

Similarly, it is important to explore how company and city brands are conveyed in the virtual world, since this research makes an assumption that online brand value can impact upon company and city brands (Hospers, 2003; Spilling, 2011). In fact the complexity and historical context of cities is more suited to the notion of the brand as a story (Van Riel, 2000; Larsen, 2003), which can be communicated online and by word of mouth as much as by the physical environment. To this end Hospers (2003, p. 261) discusses the “death of distance” and observes that “the city of streets, squares, stations, shops and restaurants will be replaced by a ‘city of bits’, a virtual city with a street pattern consisting of digital ‘information highways’”. For example Therkelsen *et al.* (2010, p. 149), analyse the Danish city of Aalborg, and warn that it is important to “integrate the branding campaign in the urban modernisation projects of the city” so that the (tangible) “city of stones” must relate directly to (virtual) “city of words” if that story is to have any credibility. We therefore hypothesise:

H7. “Company online brand value” is positively related to “Constructed city brands”.

Research methods

This research was progressed in two stages; a series of in-depth interviews with local companies in order to understand their perceptions of, and relationships with, the city, followed by an extensive analysis of local business web sites to measure company on-line brand value and examine how they influence company and city brands. First, telephone interviews were conducted with owners or senior managers of 30 companies across the city, and from different sectors (see Table II).

Respondents were asked what it was like to do business in Bradford, what support they received from the city, how long they had been trading, and their positive as well as negative perceptions of the city and how this could influence customer perceptions of their corporate brand. They were probed to capture views about the city that were beyond the stereotypical. However, once these were recorded, transcribed and analysed we visited company web sites and a very different picture began to emerge, indicating the need for a second stage of research online. This took the form of an extensive analysis of 171 local business web sites to measure company online brand value, and the interrelationships between company and city brands. Firms were selected from:

- different parts of the city;
- different industries; and
- new and established organizations, to form a representative cross-section of businesses.

To avoid bias, two independent researchers evaluated each company web site to enhance consistency in scoring, using a seven point scale from: 1 = No evidence of presence of the criterion in the web site, through to; 7 = Very strong presence of the criterion in the web site (Table III).

As discussed earlier, the criteria for analysis shown in Table III, are built around the four latent variables developed by Christodoulides *et al.* (2006) namely:

- (1) "Emotional connection";
- (2) "Online experience";
- (3) "Responsive service"; and
- (4) "Trust" (Table I).

Based on a review of the extant literature, a further two latent variables, "Company brand" and "Constructed city brand", were introduced. The first four latent variables reflect an active response to using the company's web site and are hypothesised to cause "Company online brand value". The two additional latent variables represent reflective, value perceptions of company brand and city brand, respectively (Table III). It is further hypothesised that "Company online brand value" will have a positive impact on "Company brand" and also "Constructed city brand". In total, 19 criteria were used as values for the indicator variables for the latent variables, and a partial least squares structural equation model (PLS SEM) using Smart PLS, (Ringle *et al.*, 2005) was fitted to these data. This is appropriate

Table II.
Industry type for 30
interview companies

Industry type	No.	Industry type	No.
Carpets, Floor covering and Blinds	4	Furniture, Joinery and Tools	3
Catering and Hotel	2	Motoring, Transport and Removals	6
Construction, Building, Metal Fabrication and Guttering	4	Office Equipment, Cleaning and Security	3
Engineering, Boiler-making and Plumbing	3	Pharmacy	1
Entertainment	1	Printing and Design	2
Finance	1		
Total	15		15

Latent variable	Indicator	Criterion	Description
Emotional connection	EC1	Evidence of welcoming and empathising with visitors?	A user-friendly page, verbally welcoming and reassuring the visitor, offering their services in a manner that relates to, and empathises with, the customer rather than just promoting themselves. Solicits opinions and views from customers where appropriate. Generally looks like they have made an effort
	EC2	Business understands customer expectations: Site appearance meets customer expectations?	Presents visual images that reflect customers' expectations given nature of vendor's business (e.g. if vendor is a law firm, the site conveys a sense of trust and professionalism by having a smart, formal layout, etc)
	EC3	Site attractiveness: Interesting; inviting; appealing?	Site visually engages and appeals to the customer; makes them want to revisit the site
Online experience	OE1	Site easy to follow: Easy to navigate around the site?	Site very easily navigated with links that are clear and easy to follow
	OE2	Quick access to information: A speedy, responsive site?	Facilitates getting information required quickly, near immediate responses
	OE3	Site easy to use: Site is easy to use?	Site does not require much technical expertise
Responsive service	RS1	Business anticipates customer needs: Site shows business anticipates customer needs?	Business clearly addresses the potential needs of the customer, anticipates what the customer might want/need/be thinking, possibly offering solutions
	RS2	Site has feedback facility: Interactive site with section for customer feedback?	Contact details clearly accessible, with encouragement and support for customers wishing to interact with the site to provide feedback and criticisms
	RS3	Flexible site: site shows flexibility, offering provision for needs that do not conform to usual requirements?	Prepared to consider offering services and facilities that are not standard/usual

(continued)

Table III.
Description of indicators

Table III.

Latent variable	Indicator	Criterion	Description
Constructed city brand	CCB1	Bradford location stated or emphasised on site: Is the city featured on site?	Bradford present in pictures or map(s); vendor identifies or associates themselves with Bradford
	CCB2	Site promotes Bradford as a good place to do business: Promotes Bradford as having a supportive business environment?	Evidence of Bradford city being promoted as providing a supportive business environment
	CCB3	Site promotes visiting Bradford as a rewarding experience: Promotes Bradford as a place worth visiting when purchasing?	Bradford is portrayed in a positive way to encourage trading, e.g. multicultural, green spaces, curry houses, warm Yorkshire hospitality, Yorkshire Dales, heritage (Saltaire world heritage site) etc
Company brand	CB1	Clear visual identity to differentiate company: Strong and distinctive visual appearance?	The company makes an effort to stand out by being distinctive/novel visually, use of striking style, colours, textures and design, etc.
	CB2	Information reflects corporate mission: Does site state, and possibly develop the business's mission?	Information provided reflects and is consistent with the business's stated mission
	CB3	Company logo, company uses logo or symbol for identification and recognition?	Business logo is present and prominent on site (high scores for prevalence)
	CB4	Site includes company demographics and ethos: Does site reveal the background of the vendor and their ethos?	Information regarding the company's origin, number of employees, financial turnover, etc?
Trust	T1	Site has provision for privacy of customer information: Personal information is kept safe?	Site provides options for customer's personal details to be kept private
	T2	Site guarantees financial security: Financial transactions are secure?	All financial transactions are guaranteed to be secure
	T3	Kite marks and reputation indicators: Site contains quality and reputation indicators where appropriate?	Site includes recognised standards of excellence, previous customer testimonials, prestigious awards won, etc. to indicate quality of business's offerings (services/products)

because this model has no distributional requirements (Chin, 1998) and is suitable for exploratory investigations (Gefen *et al.*, 2000; Gefen *et al.*, 2011), on relatively small sample sizes (Barclay *et al.*, 1995). Since tests of the mean values and variances did not show any differences between the responses from the various company sectors, all 171 cases were combined for analysis. The hypotheses (*H1-H7*) were represented in this PLS SEM as paths in the hypothesised model; the weightings for the first order reflective latent variables “Trust”, “Emotional connection”, “Online experience” and “Responsiveness”, onto the formative, second order latent variable, “Company online brand value”; representing *H2*, *H3*, *H4* and *H5*, respectively. The hypothesised positive relationships *H6* and *H7* between “Company online brand value” and “Company brand” and “Constructed city brand” are further represented by the corresponding structural paths. To test *H1*, that there is a relationship between “Constructed city brand” and “Company brand”, a structural path joining these exogenous latent variables is presented in the model (Figure 1).

Initially, factor analyses were undertaken to confirm the dimensionality of the six first order reflective variables, and the dimensionality of the four latent variables that comprise the second order “Company online brand value” formative latent variable. Following the two phase approach advocated by Hulland (1999), the measurement model for the SEM was then tested to further confirm the presence of the corresponding six, first order reflective latent variables as well as the second order “Company online brand value” formative latent variable, and that the putative indicator variables all fit onto their designated constructs. In the second phase, the structural path model was tested for significance, leading to confirmation, or otherwise, of the corresponding hypotheses.

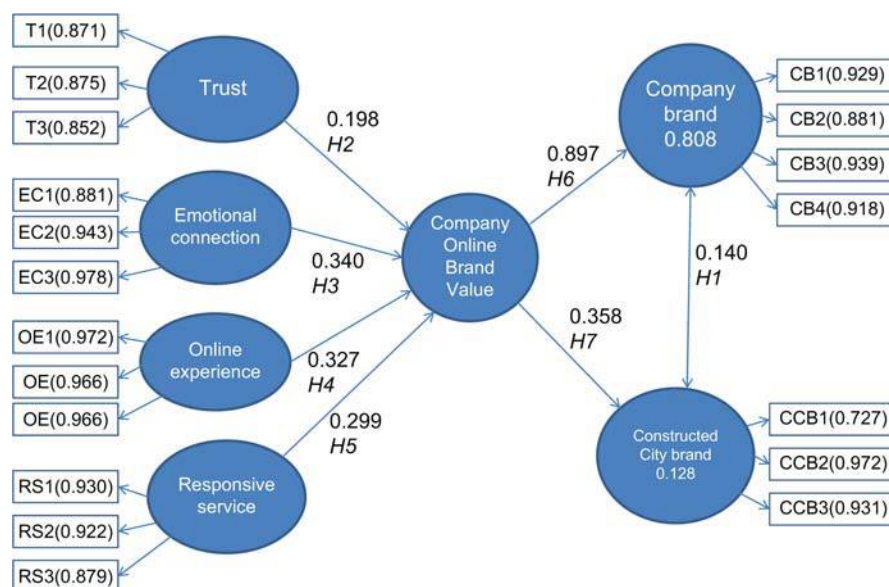


Figure 1.
Structural equation model
of 171 company web sites

Results*Stage 1: interviews with company owners and senior managers*

The qualitative data from the telephone survey indicated that some respondents had negative perceptions, but most were able to identify some advantages of a Bradford location. For example the owner of a discount tool business explained; “Customers are quite loyal which you don’t find that in (nearby) Leeds for instance . . . I think we have a lot of loyal customers who come in regularly”, (ACJ-C9). But the co-owner of an office supply company observed “You walk around Bradford feeling intimidated. It’s scruffy, the people are scruffy. You walk around Leeds, it’s vibrant. People are very smartly dressed, very different. (it’s) almost as if there’s no pride within Bradford left” (ATO-C3). In fact a number compared the two cities, such as the owner of a woodworking business; “I think it’s harder to make any money here. If you are in Leeds or other areas of West Yorkshire that are probably more affluent, I think you could charge a bit more for quality jobs that you do. But it’s quite tough trading in Bradford” (BFJ-B10). On the other hand, the owner of a carpet business spoke positively; “Over a period of 27 years all my contacts are in Bradford, because we do a lot of trade work, a lot of contract work. There’s a massive network of customers that we’ve got in Bradford” (CC-C7).

Although some respondents had confidence in their customer base, few expressed trust or an emotional connection with the city, and some deliberately disowned the brand. Altogether these responses revealed the strength of perceptions about Bradford in comparison with other cities.

Stage 2: company web site data analysis

Descriptive statistics for the indicator variables are exhibited in Table IV. Only the indicators associated with “Constructed city brand” and “Trust” are below the

Construct	Indicator	Mean	SD	Loading
Trust	T1	3.32	1.59	0.871
	T2	2.92	1.68	0.875
	T3	3.53	1.59	0.852
Emotional connection	EC1	4.14	0.68	0.881
	EC2	4.97	1.85	0.943
	EC3	4.58	1.62	0.978
Online experience	OE1	5.19	1.56	0.972
	OE2	5.20	1.44	0.966
	OE3	5.30	1.49	0.966
Responsive service	RS1	4.65	1.43	0.930
	RS2	4.77	1.61	0.922
	RS3	4.43	1.57	0.879
Company brand	CB1	4.44	1.70	0.929
	CB2	4.53	1.55	0.881
	CB3	4.65	1.68	0.939
	CB4	4.58	1.52	0.918
Constructed city brand	CCB1	3.28	1.67	0.767
	CCB2	3.02	1.54	0.972
	CCB3	2.85	1.76	0.931

Table IV.
Descriptive statistics for
indicator variables

mid-value of 4, indicating low average scores for these latent variables. To ensure that there is no common method bias present and that these data are multidimensional in nature, Harman's single factor test was undertaken. A maximum likelihood factor analysis for a single factor present was obtained and this accounted for 44.46 per cent of the total variance. Furthermore, a factor analysis was conducted and accounted for 88.24 per cent of the total variance. These results suggest that common methods bias is unlikely to be present and that the data is multidimensional. From the measurement model, the indicator variables load onto their designated first order latent variables with all values in excess of 0.850, well above the 0.7 Hair *et al.* (2010) benchmark, with the exception of one of the indicators for "Constructed city brand", CC1, which is lower at 0.767 but acceptable (Table IV).

The dimensionality of the second order formative latent variable, "Company online brand value", and the independence of the constituent four putative first order reflective latent variables, as manifest variables, was investigated using Exploratory Factor Analysis for the relevant indicators. A four-factor model, using the varimax rotation, showed that all the indicators loaded onto the latent variables with values in excess of 0.7, as advocated by Hair *et al.* (2010). Moreover, this model accounted for 88.00 per cent of the total variance, demonstrating that these are appropriate to be considered as indicators for the proposed formative latent variable. The internal consistency reliability for each of the latent variables was appraised by calculating the composite reliability (Dillon and Goldstein, 1984). Next the more conservative Cronbach alpha measure was calculated and each value is sufficiently high, in excess of 0.7 as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010), suggesting that these data are reliable. Finally, the R^2 values for the latent variables, "Constructed city brand" and "Company brand" are exhibited in Table V.

Convergent validity was confirmed with the average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable exceeding 0.5, as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). In addition, no cross loading for any indicator is higher than its loading onto its designated latent variable. Discriminant validity was confirmed by the square root of AVE of every latent variable exceeding its correlations with any of the remaining latent variables (Table VI).

For phase two, the path coefficients for "Trust" to "Company online brand value" ($\beta = 0.198$, $t = 11.198$), "Emotional connection" to "Company online brand value" ($\beta = 0.340$, $t = 28.941$), "Online experience" to "Company online brand value" ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 26.490$), and "Responsive service" to "Company online brand value" ($\beta = 0.299$, $t = 32.844$) are all highly significant (Figure 1). These confirm $H2$, $H3$, $H4$, and $H5$, respectively, demonstrating they are appropriate formative indicators for the

	AVE	Composite reliability	Cronbach α	R^2
Constructed city brand	0.800	0.922	0.889	0.148
Company brand	0.841	0.955	0.937	0.808
Emotional connection	0.874	0.954	0.927	–
Online experience	0.937	0.978	0.967	–
Responsive service	0.829	0.936	0.897	–
Trust	0.750	0.900	0.836	–
Company online brand value	0.613	0.949	0.939	1.000

Table V.
Average variance
extracted (AVE),
composite reliability and
 R^2

second-order latent variable “Company online brand value” (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The path from “Company online brand value” to “Corporate brand” ($\beta = 0.897$, $t = 59.252$), and “Constructed city brand” ($\beta = 0.358$, $t = 2.058$), confirming *H6* and *H7*. By contrast, the path coefficient between “Corporate brand” and “Constructed city brand” ($\beta = 0.140$, $t = 0.758$), is not significant, so that we have no evidence, that the latent variables are correlated, rejecting *H1*. This confirms our belief that the traditional association between business and the city has become lost or blurred for post-industrial Bradford.

In all cases, estimates for the standard errors for the coefficients were obtained from 1000 Bootstrap replicates by re-sampling. The SEM adequately predicts the variation in these data for “Company brand” but only partially for “Constructed city brand” (Falk and Miller, 1992), with 80.8 per cent and 12.8 per cent of the variation being accounted for by the proposed latent variables, respectively. Values are not available for the four first order latent variables of “Emotional connection”, “Online experience”, “Responsive service”, and “Trust” as these are exogenous indicators for the formative second order latent variable, “Company online brand value” which is established by these indicators. As shown in Figure 1, “Emotional connection” makes the greatest contribution to “Company online brand value”, whereas “Trust” is the weakest latent variable, reflecting the importance of building a strong “Emotional connection” online.

Discussion and conclusions

This research has examined the relationship between company and city brands at a virtual level, with a view to enhancing perceived brand value online. It has limitations, since it is based on a single, post-industrial city, and does not investigate the relative importance and influence of non-web based activities. Clearly further case studies into other post-industrial cities would test the significance of these findings. However, this work has found that for Bradford, the association between business and the purpose of cities has become blurred, although, as observed by the Chicago Better Business Community in the 1930s, and Bailey *et al.* in, 2002, business can shape the “physical environment and image of a city”. In today’s virtual world, company web sites may provide a catalyst for change where companies and city planners can enhance perceived brand value online. To this end, we confirm the existence and establish the importance of creating trust, an emotional connection, a positive online experience, and a responsive service on corporate web sites. We show that these factors are associated with online brand value, with a positive influence on company brand, but a weaker association with a “constructed” city brand.

However for Bradford, despite the presence of some successful businesses, there is no online connection between company and a constructed city brand, and little attempt to use these companies to create a distinctive brand profile and differentiate the city

Table VI.
Latent variable
correlations with $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$
(average variance
extracted) along lead
diagonal

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6
Constructed city brand (1)	0.894					
Company brand (2)	0.181	0.917				
Emotional relationship (3)	0.187	0.893	0.935			
Online experience (4)	0.167	0.774	0.722	0.968		
Responsive service (5)	0.214	0.764	0.812	0.693	0.911	
Trust (6)	0.247	0.571	0.537	0.374	0.564	0.866

from other destinations. This appears to be a missed opportunity because companies are in a position to enhance corporate brand value, and to positively affect the “constructed city brand” if web sites have a strong emotional connection, online experience and a responsive service. Similarly, the need for trust in terms of web site confidentiality, reliability and security, is likely to enhance brand reputation and perceived value for company and city. This approach would re-establish a reciprocal process for building brand value, but first, cities must establish a level of “brand credibility”, by enhancing the built environment. In other words, it is important to have a correlation between the virtual “city of words”, and the actual “city of stones” described by Therkelsen *et al.*(2010); and is redolent of the relationship between the “desired” and “actual” identity of corporate brands, observed by Balmer (2008), as well as the need for a “truthful appraisal” advocated by Strauss (1968). In this respect an emotional connection, gained from a positive online experience, might provide the first step towards influencing customer perceptions about cities as well as company brands. This is of particular importance since emotional connection was shown to make the greatest contribution towards generating brand value online.

Moreover, we argue that Bradford based businesses, with established web sites, are in a position to enhance company brand value, and positively influence a constructed city brand, if they focus on these web site evaluation criteria. Emotional connection as well as online experience and a responsive service underpin web site design to create brand value. Trust can similarly be enhanced by guarantees of security, quality of service, and confidentiality. Opportunities to further extend this process might be achieved by marketing the company’s ethical standards online, such as behaviour, guarantees to fair trading, and the potential to engage in corporate socially responsible activities (Bart *et al.*, 2005; Kim *et al.*, 2000; Reast, 2005). This could re-establish the notion of companies as well as cities as a barometer for social wellbeing observed by Porter (1995), as well as providing a means of differentiating one brand from another (Aaker, 2007; Keller, 2003). These opportunities provide avenues for further research since they too may enhance the value of brands online.

Overall company and city brands could benefit from a more coordinated strategy to integrate the historic strengths and ongoing entrepreneurial, creative spirit of the metropolis, into corporate web sites, possibly by adopting a “brand as a story” approach. Such a measure is unlikely to require additional costs, but could reap benefits for local business and the city, if it adds value and confidence in a distinctive brand. In this way a coordinated focus on local web sites and the virtual world can re-establish the “good name” of a city as well as enhance corporate brand value, reinforcing the Kavaratzis (2010) notion of brand ownership. In essence it is time for post-industrial cities to understand and take ownership of their actual and virtual relationships with local business communities, if they are to construct and manage a sustainable brand, and re-establish the purpose of a city.

References

- Aaker, D. (2007), “Innovation: brand it or lose it”, *California Management Review*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 8-24.
- Anholt, S. (2006), “The Anholt-GMI city brand index: how the world sees the world cities”, *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 18-31.

- Bailey, N., Docherty, I. and Turok, I. (2002), "Dimensions of a city competitiveness: Edinburgh and Glasgow in a UK context", in Begg, I. (Ed.), *Urban Competitiveness: Policies for Dynamic Cities*, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 135-60.
- Balakrishnan, M.S. (2009), "Strategic branding of destinations: a framework", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 43 Nos 5/6, pp. 611-29.
- Balmer, J.M.T. (2008), "Identity based views of the corporation: insights from corporate identity, organizational identity, social identity, visual identity and corporate image", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 42 No. 9, pp. 879-906.
- Barclay, D., Higgins, C. and Thompson, R. (1995), "The Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to causal modeling: personal computer adoption and use as an illustration", *Technology Studies*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 285-309.
- Barnett, B. (2011), "Artist speaks up for district as children create motifs in a bid to help city's image", *Telegraph and Argus*, available at: www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/8934517.Zara_s_logo_design_is_a_positive_winner_for_Bradford/
- Bart, B., Shankar, V., Sultan, F. and Urban, G.L. (2005), "Are the drivers and role of online trust the same for all websites and consumers? A large-scale exploratory empirical study", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 69 No. 4, pp. 133-52.
- Becerra, E.P. and Korgoankar, P.K. (2011), "Effects of trust beliefs on consumers' online intentions", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 45 No. 6, pp. 936-62.
- Booth, P. (2005), "Partnerships and networks: the governance of urban regeneration in Britain", *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 257-69.
- Bradford Metropolitan District Council (2011), "Manningham centre regeneration masterplan", Bradford Metropolitan District Council, available at: www.manninghammasterplan.co.uk/
- Carling, A. (2008), "The curious case of the mis-claimed myth claims: ethnic segregation, polarisation and the future of Bradford", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 553-89.
- Cheshire, P. (2006), "Resurgent cities, urban myths and policy hubris: what we need to know", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 43 No. 8, pp. 1231-46.
- Chin, W.W. (1998), "Issue and opinions on structural equation modelling", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. vii-xii.
- Christodoulides, G., DeChernatony, L., Furrer, O., Shiu, E. and Abimbola, T. (2006), "Conceptualizing and measuring the equity of online brands", *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 22 Nos 7-8, pp. 799-825.
- Constantinides, E. (2004), "Influencing the online consumers behaviour: the web experience", *Internet Research*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 111-26.
- Da Silva, R.V. and Alwi, S.F.S. (2008), "Online brand attributes and online corporate brand images", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 42 Nos 9/10, pp. 1039-58.
- Davis, F.D. (1989), "Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 319-40.
- Dillon, W.R. and Goldstein, M. (1984), *Multivariate Analysis: Methods and Applications*, Wiley Blackwell, London.
- Dukerich, J.M. and Carter, S.M. (2000), "Distorted images and reputation repair", in Schultz, M., Hatch, M.J. and Larsen, M.H. (Eds), *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 97-114.
- Edvinsson, L. (2006), "Aspects on the city as a knowledge tool", *Journal of Knowledge Management*, Vol. 10 No. 5, pp. 6-13.

Falk, R.F. and Miller, N.B. (1992), *A Primer for Soft Modeling*, University of Akron Press, Akron, OH.

Firth, G. (1997), *A History of Bradford*, Phillimore, Andover.

Fornell, C. and Larcker, D.F. (1981), "Evaluating structural equation models with unobserved variables and measurement error", *Journal of Market Research*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 39-50.

Fraser, C. (2003), "Change in the European industrial city", in Crouch, C., Fraser, C. and Percy, S. (Eds), *Urban Regeneration in Europe: Real Estate Issues*, Blackwell Science, Oxford, pp. 17-33.

Gefen, D., Rigdon, E.E. and Straub, D. (2011), "An update and extension to SEM guidelines for administrative and social science research", *MIS Quarterly*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. iii-xiv.

Gefen, D., Straub, D. and Boudreau, C.-M. (2000), "Structural equation modelling and regression: guidelines and research practice", *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, Vol. 4 No. 7, pp. 1-77.

Ha, H.-Y. (2004), "Factors influencing consumer perceptions of brand trust online", *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, Vol. 13 No. 5, pp. 329-42.

Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. and Anderson, R.E. (2010), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, 8th ed., Prentice Hall, London.

Hankinson, G. (2006), "The management of destination brands: five guiding principles based on recent developments in corporate branding theory", *Brand Management*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 240-55.

Hatch, M.J. and Schultz, M. (2003), "Relations between organizational culture, identity and image", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 31 No. 5, pp. 356-65.

Hill, E.W. and Nowak, J. (2002), "Policies to uncover the competitive advantages of America's distressed cities", in Begg, I. (Ed.), *Urban Competitiveness: Policies for Dynamic Cities*, The Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 257-82.

Hospers, G.J. (2003), "Creative cities in Europe: urban competitiveness in the knowledge economy", *Intereconomics*, Vol. 38 No. 5, pp. 260-9.

Holland, C. (2011a), "Leeds-Bradford airport service to Gatwick ends", *Telegraph and Argus*, available at: www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/8948111.Final_flight_leaves_for_London_airport/

Holland, C. (2011b), "Leader Ian Greenwood says: it's like a house with the front door hanging off", *Telegraph and Argus*, available at: www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/business/8805077.Reviving_Bradford_city_centre__central_to_council_strategy_/

Holland, C. (2011c), "Successful Bradford base is aiming to grow thanks to loan and community grants", *Telegraph and Argus*, available at: www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/business/8936500.__500_000_plan_to_improve_growing_business_centre/

Hulland, J. (1999), "Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: a review of four recent studies", *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 195-204.

Kavaratzis, M. (2010), "Is corporate branding relevant to places?", in Ashworth, G. and Kavaratzis, M. (Eds), *Towards Effective Brand Management*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.

Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G.L. (2005), "City branding: an effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick?", *Tijdschrift voor Economic en Social Geografic*, Vol. 96 No. 5, pp. 505-14.

Keller, K. (2003), *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*, 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

- Kim, J.B., Kwak, G. and Koo, Y.-R. (2000), "A note on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in city branding and design", *Asian Journal on Quality*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 251-65.
- Koufaris, M. and Hampton-Sosa, W. (2004), "The development of initial trust in an online company by new customers", *Information and Management*, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 377-97.
- Landry, C. (2004), *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, Earthspan, London.
- Larsen, M.H. (2003), "Managing the corporate story", in Schultz, M., Hatch, M.J. and Larsen, M.H. (Eds), *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 196-207.
- Lloyd, G. and McCarthy, J. (2003), "Dundee: a city discovering inclusion and regeneration", in Couch, C., Fraser, C. and Percy, S. (Eds), *Urban Regeneration in Europe*, Blackwell Scientific, Oxford.
- Merrilees, B. and Fry, M.L. (2002), "Corporate branding: a parameter for retailers", *Corporate Reputation Review*, Vol. 5 Nos 2/3, pp. 213-25.
- Mitussis, D., O'Malley, L. and Patterson, M. (2006), "Mapping the re-engagement of CRM with relationship marketing", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 40 Nos 5/6, pp. 572-89.
- Ouseley, H. (2001), *Community Pride not Prejudice: Making Diversity Work in Bradford*, Bradford Vision, Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Bradford.
- Porter, M.E. (1995), "The competitive advantage of the inner city", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 73 No. 3, May-June, pp. 55-71.
- Puusa, A. and Tolvanen, U. (2006), "Organizational identity and trust", *Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organization Studies*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 29-33.
- Reast, J.D. (2005), "Brand trust and brand extension acceptance: the relationship", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 4-13.
- Ringle, C.M., Wende, S. and Will, S. (2005), *Smart PLS 2.0*, University of Hamburg, Hamburg.
- Roig, A.H., Pritchard, A. and Morgan, N. (2010), "Place-making or place branding? Case studies of Catalonia and Wales", in Ashworth, G. and Kavaratzis, M. (Eds), *Towards Effective Brand Management*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 116-36.
- Scott, A.J. (2006), "Creative cities: conceptual issues and policy questions", *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 1-17.
- Shankar, V., Urban, G.L. and Sultan, F. (2002), "Online trust: a stakeholder perspective, concepts, implications and future directions", *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 325-44.
- Spilling, O.R. (2011), "Mobilising the entrepreneurial potential in local community development", *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 23 Nos 1-2, pp. 23-35.
- Strauss, A.L. (1968), *The American City: A Sourcebook of Urban Imagery*, Allen and Unwin, New York, NY.
- Telegraph and Argus (2011a), "City's retail heart needs to be vibrant", *Telegraph and Argus*, available at: www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/news_opinion/featuresourview/8829968.City__s_retail_heart_needs_to_be_vibrant/
- Telegraph and Argus (2011b), "City really does mean business", *Telegraph and Argus*, available at: www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/news_opinion/featuresourview/8935985.City_really_does_mean_business/
- Therkelsen, A., Halkier, H. and Jensen, O.B. (2010), "Branding Aalborg: building community or selling place?", in Ashworth, G. and Kavaratzis, M. (Eds), *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Region*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 136-55.

-
- Trueman, M., Cornelius, N. and Killingbeck-Widdup, A. (2008), "Urban corridors and the lost city: overcoming negative perceptions to reposition city brands", *Journal of Brand Management*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 20-31.
- Trueman, M., Cornelius, N., Baig, M.M.A. and Liddle, J. (2010), "Doing good in a post industrial city: public policy, communications and regeneration", in Ashworth, G. and Karavatsis, M. (Eds), *Branding and Cities*, Edward Elgar, London, pp. 156-72.
- Trueman, M.M., Klemm, M. and Giroud, A. (2004), "Can a city communicate? Bradford as a corporate brand", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 317-30.
- Van den Berg, L. and Braun, E. (1999), "Urban competitiveness, marketing and the need for organising capacity", *Urban Studies*, Vol. 36 Nos 5-6, pp. 987-99.
- Van Riel, C. (2000), "Corporate communications orchestrated by a sustainable story", in Schultz, M., Hatch, M.J. and Larsen, M.H. (Eds), *The Expressive Organization: Linking Identity, Reputation, and the Corporate Brand*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 157-81.
- Warnaby, G., Alexander, A. and Medway, D. (1998), "Town centre management in the UK: a review, synthesis and research agenda", *International Review of Retail Distribution and Consumer Research*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 15-31.

Corresponding author

Myfanwy Trueman can be contacted at: mtrueman@bradford.ac.uk

This article has been cited by:

1. Senay Oguztimur, Ulun Akturan. 2015. Synthesis of City Branding Literature (1988-2014) as a Research Domain. *International Journal of Tourism Research* n/a-n/a. [[CrossRef](#)]
2. Plavini Punyatoya. 2015. Effect of perceived brand environment-friendliness on Indian consumer attitude and purchase intention. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 33:3, 258-275. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]
3. Wen Gong, Rodney L. Stump, Zhan G. Li. 2014. Global use and access of social networking web sites: a national culture perspective. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing* 8:1, 37-55. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]
4. Emma Björner. 2013. International positioning through online city branding: the case of Chengdu. *Journal of Place Management and Development* 6:3, 203-226. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]
5. Philipp Klaus. 2013. The case of Amazon.com: towards a conceptual framework of online customer service experience (OCSE) using the emerging consensus technique (ECT). *Journal of Services Marketing* 27:6, 443-457. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]
6. Phil Klaus, Bang Nguyen. 2013. Exploring the role of the online customer experience in firms' multi-channel strategy: an empirical analysis of the retail banking services sector. *Journal of Strategic Marketing* 21, 429-442. [[CrossRef](#)]
7. Don E. Schultz, James (Jimmy) Peltier. 2013. Social media's slippery slope: challenges, opportunities and future research directions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing* 7:2, 86-99. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]
8. Myfanwy Trueman, Nelarine Cornelius, Tom Franks, John Lawler. 2013. Regeneration and well-being: research into practice. *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 26:3, 180-189. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)]