

City branding in Győr, from the change of regime to the current days



INTRUDUCTION

Nowadays town marketing activity pervades the entirety of a settlement; a town has an identity just like a human being, a business association or a corporation. Town branding does not have long traditions; the concept was first used by Kotler at the beginning of 1990s.^[3] This was the first time when professionals experienced that a branding system contributes to the development of the settlement, which must be shaped and formed more and more intensely. Branding of individual settlements is the duty to be carried out by city management in the first place, since the primary aim of city politics is to make the city successful^[4] and certainly involving local key participants increases the brand image of cities further on. In the 21st century making cities attractive and marketable as well as creating a positive city brand is already a high priority.

Rich historical past, solid industrial traditions, attractions, a favourable geographical location and numerous other advantages of Győr are well-known among investors, those wishing to settle down and tourists visiting the city alike. The goal of Győr city brand is to bring a rising number of visitors, investors, future residents to Győr, in other words to make more and more people decide to purchase the city as a „product”. In our study the change of elements of Győr city brand (identity, slogan and image) starting from the change of regime to our current days will be analysed.^[5]

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[3] Kotler, P. – Haider, D. – Rein, I. J. (1993): *Marketing places: attracting investment, industry, and tourism to cities, states and nations*. Free Press, New York.

[4] Enyedi Gy. (1995): *Városverseny, várospolitika, városmarketing*. Tér és Társadalom, 9(1-2). 1-3.

[5] Hereby we would like to say thank you to Tóth Nándorné, former head of Cultural Department at Municipality of Győr Town with a County Rank for her professional assistance provided in writing this article.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Depending on their size and economic development, cities offer subsistence, entertainment and accommodation for the various generations living there. A city has become a product of our time. The conscious, successive and thoughtful selling of the city product is a decisive part of city development, whose significant element is city branding. Both international and national entities have to be made aware of the city brand, so that the city in question becomes renowned and reputable on a larger scale, urging investors, tourists, and settlers to view the settlement in a rather favourable and positive way.

City branding is a long-term process with elements building on each other in a complex manner. Its main aim is to enhance the recognition of the subject city, highlight its unique nature and distinguish it from other cities. A good city brand strengthens the economy of the city, but it is also true the other way round, a town with a solid economy owns a well-thought- over and applied brand equity. It has been proved that emphasizing the economic output, assets and attractions of cities has an impact on the success of towns.^[6] As for Papp-Váry if a city is well-branded:

- the inhabitants' satisfaction grows, their identity is strengthened as well as their pride, the city becomes more and more attractive and simultaneously with increasing local patriotism, brand loyalty rises too;
- the settlement becomes more and more attractive, the number of tourists increases and investment mood also improves;
- the reputation of the city improves, prices of real estates increase along with the intention to settle there;
- furthermore the work performed by the city management is accepted and appreciated more.^[7]

When creating a city brand a particular city image is established. It is quite fortunate if the city has a „local value” characteristic of the settlement (economy, industry, nature, monuments, historical past, thermal water, tradition, gastronomy etc.), which defines the brand of the settlement. According to Ashwort the name of a city having historical, cultural, and industrial or any other outstanding attractions develops into a brand itself.^[8] In many cases the industrial production, products of the city specify the brand or the symbol of the city (for instance: Audi, Vagongyár, Győri Keksz, Győri Balett, etc.). With regard to local products manufactured or special local services rendered at the settlements, the aim of branding is to be distinguished from others, to acquire a competitive edge or publicity of various factors. Each city is delighted to hear that their name is intertwined with a

[6] http://www.macrame.tv/storage/Saff_CityBrandBarom.pdf, downloaded: 17.01.2015.

[7] Papp-Váry Á. (2011): *Hogyan lesz a településből márka? A városmárkázás alapjai*. In: *Beszédek könyve polgármestereknek*. Raabe Tanácsadó és Kiadó Kft., Budapest. 1-24.

[8] Ashwort, G. J, (1992): *Is there an urban tourism?* Tourism Recreation Research, 2. 2-8.

unique attraction or a product that cannot be found elsewhere; however it is only a mere attempt for towns trying to display themselves via symbols in order to position the town at the globalised competitive space.^[9]

The essence of building a city brand is differentiation, to show in what way the town is different from other towns with similar endowments, what other opportunities can it offer, namely, why is it worth choosing that certain town to investors, tourists and those wishing to settle down. A town is an immobile „product”,^[10] therefore the unified identity of these media (for instance: colourful publications, advertisements, different organisations, websites, Facebook, Instagram etc.) as well as the city image (external and internal judgment of the city) plays an outstanding role. It is advisable to harmonise the establishment of the (external, internal) image and the identity and provide enough time for those showing interest to get to know and accept it. In the following chapters the city brand, identity and image of Győr will be analysed starting from the change of regime to the present.

THE CHANGE OF GYŐR CITY BRAND

Throughout history various and ever-changing adjectives have been attached to Győr. In the Turkish times Győr was referred to as the largest and most modern border castle, the saviour of Europe, in the 17th century it was called the city of guilds, later it was named a baroque or commercial town, in the 19th century it was defined as the centre of trading crops and animals, in the 20th century it was labelled as an industrial city, and nowadays it is frequently mentioned as the centre of the national automotive industry and vehicle production. The trends of town development are well described by these concise and concentrated explanations which also signal function changes and the transformation of major roles to be attributed to the city. While earlier these adjectives and characteristics used to serve only as the means of separation and expressing uniqueness,^[11] nowadays – particularly due to the town turning into a product – they are interpreted as a brand.

In Győr conscious city branding started after the change of regime with the co-ordination of the Municipality from the middle of the 1990's. Nowadays it is the Town Marketing and Event Organisation Department of the Municipality^[12]

[9] Zukin, S. (1991): *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*. University of California Press.

[10] Probáld K. (1994): *Kommunikáció a településfejlesztés szolgálatában (városmarketing)*. Szakdolgozat. BKE, Külgazdasági Tanszék, Budapest.

[11] The city of rivers, The city of three rivers, Labourer's city, Baroque city, The city of meetings, etc.

[12] The change and transformation of urban organisations demonstrate that this issue is more and more appreciated. In 1993 a public benefit company was founded to organise actions of the planned World Exhibition, then it turned into Győr 2000 Touristic Public Benefit Company to promote developments in tourism. In 1996 Tourinform Győr Office was opened in the main street.

which implements and guides continuous building of the city brand. The main goal is to make every person interested in Győr and be familiar with characteristic values, attractions, opportunities for investment available in the city.

Slogans, logos and symbols are fundamental means of city branding which facilitate communication and make the public aware of current values, possibilities and novelties. Győr is a complex system, a destination of investments, a scene of quality life, and a centre offering job opportunities, a scene of consumption, or a concentrated supplier of institutions of training, education and culture. All these versatile roles convert Győr into a marketable or even a consumable product. Consequently, Győr needs concrete marking which separates it from other locations, expresses its features so that it is distinguished from its competitors by drawing attention to its originalities, uniqueness and specialties.

Our study starts with the introduction of changes in the external image of Győr. External image is based on the perception of participants far away from everyday duties of local life, thus it can be modified more easily with means of communication related to city marketing activity than internal image.^[13] Books and publications popularising a town are sort of „tourist gazes”,^[14] where the visitor associates the image, slogan, logo seen or heard with the reality.^[15] It is quite favourable if the slogan embodies and expresses the character, atmosphere, perhaps vision of the town.^[16] Table 1 demonstrates the changes in official logos and slogans of Győr.^[17]

Meanwhile a touristic referent worked at the Town Hall whose job was supported by the Touristic Committee. In 2006 Communication and Town Marketing Team was established to manage town identity and image which transformed into Town Marketing and Event Organisation Department (2014) after several restructuring. In 2012 the Municipality of Győr handed over a cutting-edge Visitor's Centre in Baross street which serves tourism in a complex manner.

[13] Kavartzis, M. – Ashworth, G. J, (2005): *City branding: an effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick?* Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie, 96(5). 506-514.

[14] Urry, J. (1990): *The Tourist Gaze*. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies, London.

[15] Szijártó Zs. (2010): *Városlakók, turistatekintetek: Az én kulturális fővárosom*. Magyar Lettre Internationale, 76. 11-14.

[16] Papp-Váry Á. (2014): *Hogyan válasszunk szlogent és logót? A verbális és vizuális arculat szerepe a városmárkázásban*. In: *Beszédek könyve polgármestereknek*. Raabe Tanácsadó és Kiadó Kft., Budapest. 1-28.

[17] Tóthné Kardos K. (2016): *Győr turizmusának szinergiákon keresztül történő vizsgálata*. Doktori értekezés, Győr.

Table 1: Official logo and slogan used by the Municipality of Győr Town with a County Rank, 1996–2016

Year of introduction	1990 –1996	1996 -July 2007	July 2007 – March 2011	March 2011 -
Logo				
Slogan	The City of Rivers The City of Three rivers	Győr, The City of Meetings!	Me, You, Győr! A Town for Everyone!	Health Culture Innovation The future is built in Győr.
„Imprinting period”	Became well-known before the change of regime (approximately 30 - 40 years)	11 years	4 years	Currently valid (5 years)

Source: data collected and edited by the authors.

The very first slogans propagating Győr - the „City of rivers”, „The city of three rivers” were quite commonly used by town and local historians as well as geographers (Czigány Jenő, Fehérvári Alfréd, Göcsei Imre). Although there has never been an official standpoint on the use of such, and it was a pure civilian „slogan sprout” initiative, which has already been applied by local patriots of the city in guidebooks on Győr prior to the change of regime.

It was in 1996 when „Győr, the city of meetings” logo and slogan were officially introduced and they were used by the Municipality for 11 years. The one-time slogan is a widely-known and much-liked one, having been favoured by both professionals and local residents until the present day.

In 2007 the Municipality of Győr advertised a slogan tender to implement its touristic concept and ideas. The central target was to work out a new city marketing element adequate to the internal and external identity of Győr.^[18] „Me, you, Győr! A city for everyone!” was the winning slogan that had been applied by the city for 4 years.

[18] <http://kozgyules.gyor.hu/data/files/kozgyulesek/szlogen.doc> downloaded: 25.01.2016.

The currently valid, official slogan and logo „Health. Culture. Innovation. The future is being built in Győr” were introduced in 2011. The slogan and logo consolidating the city image is not only used by the Municipality but also by Audi Motor Hungaria Ltd. playing a determining role in the economic, cultural and sport life of the city jointly with Széchenyi István University and mutually strengthening the position of the city, automotive industry and the university at the same time. The colourful logo attached to the current slogan is basically a miniaturised city „map” in which blue „lines” mark rivers and colours equivalent with words mark different parts of the city:



Figure 1: Logo of Győr Town with a county rank

Source: City Marketing Department of Győr Town with a County Rank.

- Health: Újváros – Sziget (currently: Rába Quelle Thermal Bath and Spa, in the future – location for sport infrastructure developments related to EYOF in 2017),
- Culture: Belváros-City centre (buildings, museums, exhibition centres, information centre, etc.),
- Innovation: Révfalu (Széchenyi István University, Mobilis Interactive Exhibition Centre, Audi Hungária Motor Ltd.).

The role of a logo or a slogan is a kind of positioning, which is why it is highly important that its message is unambiguous and easily associated with the city. Based on the data of the above chart it can be stated that the name of Győr has been part of all the three official slogans since 1996, therefore it can be linked to the town unmistakably when first heard and it is easy to remember and imprint it. (Figure 1)

From the aspect of the previously mentioned „Tourist-gaze” the authors associate Győr with several items (a product, a building, a famous person, attraction, festival etc.). Chart 2 was devised using slogans included in Győr guidebooks and tourist image publications published by the Municipality of Győr.^[19]

[19] Tóthné Kardos (2016): op. cit.

Figure 2: Győr Slogans 1990–2016



Source: collected and edited by the authors.

The slogans appearing in the printed documents are mirrors of sorts for the face of Győr. They convey concrete messages, information easing decision-making in order to establish a unified, positive city image. The above chart shows how variable and vibrant collection is made of slogans in publications. It can be detected that professionals in charge of city marketing in Győr are really fond of attaching adjectives (rivers, culture, innovative, sporty, meetings) to the name of the city. Consistent use of well-known buzz sentences having been used for many years increase the value of Győr city brand (e.g. Győr, the city of meetings, Győr, the city of rivers); nevertheless too many valid slogans may be confusing, linked to another city or a less concrete buzz word.

Between 2013–2014 in the course of the residents' survey carried out within the framework of Vehicle Industrial Research the publicity of slogans and mottos related to the city were examined. Chart 2 describes the chronological changes in city branding elements. Whereas in the past the City of rivers slogan emphasizing the natural endowments as well as the strongly system-specific "Labourers' city" was rather dominant, nowadays the respondents have a mixed attitude. The good old slogan: The city of rivers that had been imprinted has remained, "The city of meetings" applied in the 90's is still liked albeit on a smaller scale, but the most spectacular outbreak was presented by the slogan "City of vehicle production industry – Autopolis" Although one may not encounter this slogan in an official form it seemed to appeal to the public. Future-related definitions appear and the new identity "Health, Culture, Innovation. The future is being built in Győr", although „The city of automotive industry – Autopolis" has remained. In this sample the new slogan appears to be known, however the old ones cannot be erased from people's memory. All these demonstrate that the formation and transformation of city branding elements must be thoroughly prepared through wide acceptance of the urban society and adequate time must be left to approve and accept them.

Table 2: Publicity of slogans related to Győr and chronological changes
(References %-)

Name	Past	Present	Future
City of Rivers	47,4	33,2	12,2
City of Meeting	9,5	19,2	9,4
Automotive city – Autopolis	1,6	25,3	25,6
Labourers' city	24,4	1,9	1,7
Civic city	8,1	1,9	0,8
Baroque city	8,2	6,7	2,8
Me, You, Győr	0,6	6,3	7,8
The future is being built in Győr	0,2	5,5	39,8

Source: FAQ research, residents survey, processed by Páthy Ádám.

The figures of the above chart reveal and it is also confirmed by the findings of another survey in 2014,^[20] that the new slogan having been introduced in 2011 did not have time to be imprinted in the common knowledge in three-years time. The slogan “Health, Culture, Innovation. The future is being built in Győr” is mentioned by 5,5% at present, while when it refers to future it is mentioned by 39,8%.

An important tool to create and imprint the external image of Győr to the common knowledge is advertising on citylights and billboards. Since 2013 we have been able to meet this form of promoting the city on numerous surfaces like that all over the country, mostly beside busy motorways. Between 2013–2015 a conscious city branding activity based on a creative concept and affecting emotions could be detected which drew the attention to Győr with different mottos: „I went to Győr; please leave a message”, „To Győr? You lucky thing...”, „We were born in the right place.”, „I love Győr”,^[21] „One city, thousands of experiences.” We can agree with Kozma saying that city branding activity is a rather complex task, during which the city, as a physical space is sold to various “consumers” with different needs at the same time”.^[22] When city branding, unified slogans, mottos and experience pictures are to be applied in the long run a unified city brand feature of Győr can be formed over the years in the layer of the society (resident, tourist, settler, economic-, institutional participants) wished to be targeted. Ever-changing use of mottos does not do any good for the city since it may confuse those concerned.^[23]

City branding is not only interesting from economic and touristic aspects, it also aims to enhance internal image. It is highly important that local residents are proud of their city and their bonds for the city as well as their identity are strengthened. To research internal image of cities qualitative methods are the most wide-spread, since there is an opportunity to reveal deep causes and individual associations regarding the subject city.^[24] The findings of the questionnaire survey made among the social and professional elite of Győr in 2008 display that the system of symbols attributed to the city are fairly homogenous and stabile. It can be seen that the system of symbols most frequently involve certain elements of the built environment. As for the local residents, the image of Győr is mainly determined by the Town hall, the Bishop’s Castle and the entire city centre. Approximately half of the

[20] Dombi D. – Gabora B. – Kovács A. – Potháczki Á. – Vecsey V. – Zágonyi Sz. (2013): *Arculat. Élhetőség Győrben*. Városmarketing kutatás Győrben. Kézirat. Széchenyi István Egyetem. Kautz Gyula Emlék konferencia 2013. június 11. Győr.

[21] „I love Győr” is present at the largest social networking site too. Those giving likes to the site may acquire information on programmes, media performances, camps, old urban videos etc. In January 2016 the site has 3698 followers, and the operator of the site is working on a website under the same name to be launched very soon.

[22] Kozma G. (1995): *Városmarketing, mint a helyi gazdaságfejlesztés egyik lehetséges eszköze*. Tér és Társadalom, 9(1-2). 37–54.

[23] Papp-Váry Á. (2014): op. cit.

[24] Zenker, S. – Petersen, S. – Aholt, A. (2013): *The citizen satisfaction index (CSI): Evidence for a four basic factor model in a German Sample*. Cities, 30. 156–164.

respondents mentioned these elements when a question of free choice was put to them. In second place one can find the elements of natural environment, whereas objects and concepts related to the industrial nature of the city were designated to third place – representing a higher proportion than those in the survey of 2004 (however Audi was only mentioned by 14% of the respondents back then).^[25]

In 2014 Széchenyi István University did some research on various judgements in terms of the city among prominent residents of the city. One of the questions concentrated on the system of symbols finding out how those are infiltrated in the thinking and city formula of the elite.^[26] The world of city symbols is rather simplified since 75% of the questioned people designated three characteristic features, namely the Town hall (32%), rivers (25%) and Audi (13%). The researchers were trying to find out during the survey what symbols are the most suitable to express the future status of the city. Similarly to the above the answers focused on buildings (Town hall, Széchenyi square), rivers, automotive industry in third place and finally tourism followed by culture.

In our own survey carried out on the Internet in 2014 we were curious how the system of symbols of the city changes. In Chart 4 frequency of references are demonstrated in a word cloud.

Figure 3: Factors mainly determining the image of Győr according to local residents



Source: own edit, based on the replies given to the open question of the questionnaire, 2014.

[25] Csizmadia Z. – Páthy Á. (2010): *Győri elit és a városfejlődés - a gazdasági és társadalmi folyamatok megítélése*. *Tér és Társadalom*, 24(2). 63–91.

[26] Czákó K. – Poreisz V. (2014): *2014-es győri elitkutatás - összegezve a lakossági-vállalati kutatás eredményeivel és a 2008-as elitkutatás eredményeivel*. (előadás) GYIK szakmai projektzáró. 2014. szeptember 25. Széchenyi István Egyetem, Győr.

It is clearly visible that the highest number of references were given to the Town hall (29%), the rivers (20%), the Iron Rooster (19%) and Audi (11%). The author's mutual view is that identity buildings of the past 20-25 years are reflected in the replies, furthermore some new factors motivating economic growth too (e.g. vehicle production- Audi), as well as elements of social capital, such as knowledge production (e.g. university) and innovation (e.g. Siphon Fountain).

Other research also done in 2014 explicitly focused on the judgment of city image of Győr (700 inquiries and 50 in-depth interviews) and made an attempt to examine how much urban citizens identified themselves with the current city image.^[27] The analysis revealed that the Town hall also excels in the reputation of objects among all the other mentioned facilities or sights.

We totally agree with the statement of the authors that city development – we would add, that each factor shaping the city – must pay a great attention to the consistent, unified and coherent use of the city brand introduced and accepted by Győr in urban, national and international communication scales, thus the social capital of the city can be increased. The European Youth Olympic Festival to be held in 2017 offers new and great opportunity for branding the city on an international scale.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, it can be stated that Győr has been performing conscious and intense city branding since the middle of 1990s, some years after the change of regime. In the ever-increasing competition of cities a well-known, reputable Győr brand facilitates the imprinting the advantages of the city into common knowledge. Elements of current city branding in Győr are innovative, vibrant and youthful. There are common image elements (based on subjective views and simultaneously on the objective reality) which are able to address wide range of the society (residents, investors, settlers, tourists, young people) and also offer a vision. The slogan explicitly denotes that the city is open to innovation, concurrently presenting the development directions the city follows. Győr may become distinctive among domestic urban destinations with similar attributes, monuments and tourist attractions by conscious marketing communication. Besides, an active marketing activity with an economic and touristic approach covering all target groups may enable Győr to alter the picture of an “industrial city” still embedded in the common knowledge.

From this colourful cavalcade the place of Győr is unfolding in the city brand competition and we can declare that Győr had found its route with own identity which coincides with the mission and vision of Győr. Research findings prove that residents of Győr, tourists and investors recognise and have interiorised the slogan

[27] Dombi – Gabora – Kovács – Potháczki – Vecsey – Zágonyi (2013): op. cit.

„Health. Culture. Innovation. The future is being built in Győr.” even more. Nevertheless in 2015 the majority of people are not yet aware of – a unique, unmistakable city brand. Results of surveys unambiguously support that great effort must be made to apply a slogan or motto in a consistent, external and internal way, and sufficient time is to be provided for making it part of common knowledge so Győr can improve its reputation in the long run.

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HUNGARIAN SUMMARY

A győri városmárka célja, hogy évről évre minél több látogatót, befektetőt, leendő lakost vonzzon, vagyis minél többen döntsenek úgy, hogy a várost mint „terméket megvásárolják”. A városok egyre kielezettebb versenyében egy ismert Győr márka hozzásegíti a város előnyeinek a köztudatba való mélyebb „beégetését”. Tanulmányunkban elemezzük a győri városmárka elemeinek (arculat, szlogen és imázs) változását a rendszerváltozástól napjainkig.