

## **City Marketing – Bucharest Case Study**

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### **Abstract**

The current reality of social distancing and isolation brings big cities in front of a new reality. The investigated purpose of the article is to identify recent opportunities and challenges of cities. As well as understanding the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing strategies for Bucharest marketing. The basic experimental design of the study is organized in three chapters. The first part of the study analyzes integrated marketing communication and marketing strategies. In the second part, the marketing process of the city is evaluated, while in the third part the case study for Bucharest is researched. The basic methodology of the article is exploratory research and a survey of 459 respondents who know about Bucharest. Its purpose is to understand the phenomena and marketing processes of the city in order to know their essence. This is a crucial period for all big cities and metropolitans. Cities need to review their strategies and marketing to find a way to makes a difference or to get back to the usual pace of life they had before social, economic and health crises at least. The major findings of this paper are assessments of the impact of marketing on city image. Findings of research identify trends of successful marketing strategy for the Bucharest. The implication of the study results represents a basis for future studies in the improvement of marketing strategies in metropolitan regions. The added value of the paper is the identification of options for the marketing strategy that lead to the strategic development in Bucharest. The original contribution of the authors is discussing the degree of involvement that marketing plays in the image of cities in this period of restrictions.

**Keywords:** City marketing, integrated marketing communication, marketing strategy, Bucharest.

**JEL classification:** M00, M30, M31, M39.

### **Introduction**

In present time cities become visible worldwide and global competitiveness requires to adopt new strategies. The process of digitalization and globalization proposes the challenge to develop new methods with an effect on international scale. (Palasca, Enea, Jaba & Roman, 2014) Integrated marketing communication is one of easily perceptible tools of marketing activity with the goal to increase added value to country, city, company, products or brand image. The manner of marketing communication is an important factor. City marketing requires reckoning with "the functioning of cities" such as spatially, socially, administratively, economically, politically etc. The city marketing concept is described as a process "aiming to meet" the needs of city population also creating a favorable image of the city. (Zikiene and Gagiskyet, 2020)

The basic methodology of the article is exploratory research and a opinion poll results. Its purpose is to understand the phenomena and marketing processes of the city in order to

know their essence. The study design is organized in three chapters. The first part of the study analyzes integrated marketing communication and marketing strategies. In the second part, the marketing process of the city is evaluated, while in the third part the case study for Bucharest is researched. Romania's capital Bucharest has experienced a series of communication campaigns with a common message "a genuine appeal to the pride of being a Bucharest inhabitant". (Pînzaru, 2012)

The major findings of this paper are assessments of the impact of marketing on city image. The added value of the paper is the identification of options for the marketing strategy that lead to the strategic development in Bucharest.

### **1. Integrated Marketing Communication and Marketing Strategies**

Marketing is a means to "think ahead" and to develop pro-active strategies with a core, vital philosophy in understanding people. Marketing offers cities target strategies, a set of tools that can develop approach for citizens groups. Can be mentioned tools as segmentation, branding, account management, product development, marketing communication, etc. Marketing tools "have an effect" also on the city's images. (Braun, 2008) Integrated marketing communication is "a holistic concept using marketing mix elements to create and strengthen relationship with consumers, it could be outlined a synergistic action of product, price, placement and marketing communications, focused on the consumer behavior". (Mihart, 2012)

Integrated marketing communication subordinates the so-called communication effects hierarchy, mainly all elements of the company messages sends to the target audience. People are assessing information from all known sources in order to choose the optimal option, in decision process. Integrated marketing communication is one of "the most visible and easily perceptible tools" of marketing activity. (Durlia, 2018) Integrated marketing communication process into city strategic approach represents interest among researchers from the field. The goal is an add value to city image, company or population.

Strategy is required to be based on coherent theory of "effective internal coordination and resource allocation, of entrepreneurship and technical progress". It was noted the best strategy for company that is "to emphasize the successful explorations of others". (Williamson, 1999) Such a strategy may be implemented in a city marketing too. As an applying brand strategy was also mentioned place branding with other marketing techniques, disciplines to "the economic, social, political and cultural development" of cities, regions and countries. (Kasapi, 2017) Also, as effective strategies that can be implemented as city marketing, can be named cause related marketing campaigns (Anghel, Grigore & Rosca, 2011), product leadership with an innovative superior quality (Stancu, et al., 2020), the stores merchandising techniques that increase the sustainable products visibility (Balan, 2021), price fairness (Catoiu, Vranceanu and Filip, 2010) and network implementation (Catoiu & Veghes, 2009) in city's marketing activities.

The manner of marketing communication is an important factor for a city, company, product or service. For effectively promotion process it is required a marketing strategy. Customer focus is a major strategy in order to understand, satisfy the customer needs when expanding both "client base and profit margin"(Bunghez, 2020), that can be extended on city population focus. The city community strategy of development is a form of "creative co-production" linked to receptive, engaged citizens and attuned to enrolling those outside of industry, also policy circles. Music can be enrolled in "a creative-class strategy" to distinguish cities in "an environment of intense global competition" where "the world's top talent is highly mobile". (Bennett, 2020)

## 2. The Marketing Process of the City

Cities must find a balance between "the needs and wants" of different groups of the city's customers. City marketing can be as an instrumental in this way to promote a better match "between demand from the city's customers and the supply of cities". City marketing is defined as the coordinated use of "marketing tools supported by a shared customer-oriented philosophy", in order to create, communicate, delivery, and exchange urban offerings that "have value for the city's customers and the city's community at large". City marketing require to reckon with "the functioning of cities" such as spatially, socially, administratively, economically, politically etc. City marketing also was related in researches to the societal marketing concept. (Braun, 2008)

Zikiene and Gagiskyet (2020) suggested that city marketing register a significantly interest in the last decades, the prevailing concepts of city marketing is systemized as follow:

- ✚ Geo marketing - the characteristics and data of a geographical area for "the planning and implementation" of marketing activities.

- ✚ Place marketing - activities aimed "to create a positive opinion" about a place or region.

- ✚ Territorial marketing - marketing activities with plan that promotes "both tangible and intangible, quantitative and qualitative, features of the territory" promoting the competitive and advantages of the area in order to attract "external capital and businesses".

- ✚ Regional marketing - individual regions integration into common structures, mainly as "regional associations, regional cooperation, urban networks".

- ✚ Urban/city marketing - an overall strategy "covering urban development" and the object is groups of people as the general city audience, that can be described by the interest in the city culture.

These concepts of city marketing are single out elements that "unite" them all as concepts are connected by "the main element of the city's marketing – location". Another one is that it is described as a process "aiming to meet" the needs of city population also creating a favorable image of the city. City marketing is also defined as the creation of "a place that meets the needs of targeted markets". (Zikiene and Gagiskyet, 2020) People's lack of trust or convenience and availability, of choosing online payment are suggested as some barriers in implementing these marketing strategies in a post-pandemic period in Romania. (Constantinesu, Orindaru, Ionita and Caescu, 2020)

According to recent data from the [www.worldometers.info](http://www.worldometers.info) **54.6 %** of the Romania population is **urban** (in 2020). Population of the country is estimated at **19,122,546** as of May 25, 2021," based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data" and is "equivalent to **0.25%**" of the total world population. After conducted a study at the level of "the urban agglomerations" mainly Bucharest and Chisinau was described several categories of "multi-scale land-use conflicts", as for example "the exaggerate size of the newly built constructions" or others. (Ianos, Sirodov and Pascariu, 2012) Migration is directly influenced by the achievement of "the sustainable development goals". (Istudor, Dinu, Gogu, Prada, and Petrescu, 2020)

## 3. The Case Study for Bucharest

According to recent data from the [www.citymayors.com](http://www.citymayors.com) website Bucharest is the 9th Europe's largest cities with a population for city with legally defined boundaries of 2,016,000. According to a study based on a comparison of ranks Europe's largest cities based assets and attractions in report to the strength of cities brands in 2008 Bucharest was on 61 position while, Paris the French capital emerges as Europe's number one city brand. As an important marketing

strategy can be implemented Romanian cultural heritage as "a proud remembrance of the heritage conveyed" (Veghes and Popescu, 2018) or a cultural economy marketing (Cetina and Badin, 2019)

The editorial aims to conduct research on the case study in Bucharest. The research method of this editorial is an exploratory research based on secondary dates and a survey of 459 respondents, 43.9% male and 56.1% female. From which 60.9% are Bucharest residents while 39.1% know about the city as visitors, investors or entrepreneurs. In this study a 7-point Linker scale item defined as is respondents "are proud to name the country where they live - at home" and "city / country most efficient communicators" was analyzed. The design of our study allows a measurement of respondents' perception of city marketing.

**Table 1. Marital status: \* Affirmation - I am proud to name the country where I live - at home**

*Crosstabulation*

Count		Proud of residence country			Total
		disagree	neither agree neither disagree	agree	
Marital status:	celibate	12 (8,18%)	25 (17%)	110 (74,82%)	147 (100%)
	married	8 (8,26%)	10 (10,3%)	79 (81,44%)	97 (100%)
	I live with my partner, but we are not married	10 (18%)	14 (24,56%)	33 (57%)	57 (100%)
	divorced / widowed	1 (4%)	4 (16%)	20 (80%)	25 (100%)
Total		31	53	242	326

A sustainable urban development argues for increased citizen participation, with impact on city green areas, as parks, in the decision-making process (Constantinescu, Orindaru, Caescu & Pachitanu, 2019), also requires an environmental marketing strategy designed to support employee training campaigns, waste management and energy saving (Aceleanu, Serban, Suciú & Bițoiu, 2017). After an SPSS analysis (see table 1), the value of the "Pearson Chi-Square" test (see table 2) tends to confirm the hypothesis that marital status is related to citizens' feelings of pride regard to the country where they live. Mostly married respondents (81,44%) and divorced/widowed (80%) affirmed that are proud to name the country where I live - at home. Based on the results obtained, it is proposed to create information campaigns at city level to increase the awareness of citizens and their role to play in city marketing, namely that the city as well as the country is mostly needed for its citizens.

**Table 2. Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12,538 <sup>a</sup>	6	,051
Likelihood Ratio	12,138	6	,059
Linear-by-Linear Association	,983	1	,321
N of Valid Cases	326		

a. 2 cells (16,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2,38.

Romania's capital Bucharest has experienced a series of communication campaigns with a common message "a genuine appeal to the pride of being a Bucharest inhabitant". All these marketing communication campaign, actions and advertiser showed mainly the story of yesterday and today Bucharest. City has rather a confusing image which explains the fact that "it is not included in the annual monitoring report Anholt-Gfk Roper City Brands Index". This Index is establishing international hierarchies of city brand. (Pinzaru, 2012) As a response to "the local versus global debate" was highlighted Romania city branding status from the European perspective comparatively other countries' strategies. (Popescu, 2017) According to [http://countrybrandingwiki.org/index.php/Rankings\\_by\\_City](http://countrybrandingwiki.org/index.php/Rankings_by_City) portal Washington D.C. was in top 10 "Anholt – Gfk City Brands Index", mainly in 2013 it was on 6 position while in 2015 were already on 10 rank. In 2013 also Vienna was positioned on 9 ranks. In present time, from 2016 it was adopted a holistic city marketing strategies perspective that include all the four target-markets (residents, visitors, investors and entrepreneurs) within the city. The goals of Vienna marketing communication is based on top quality of life, also as a cultural metropolis, "a hub for Central European businesses and finance, center for education science and research, city of excellence in medicine". (Tsafka-Tsotskou, 2014)

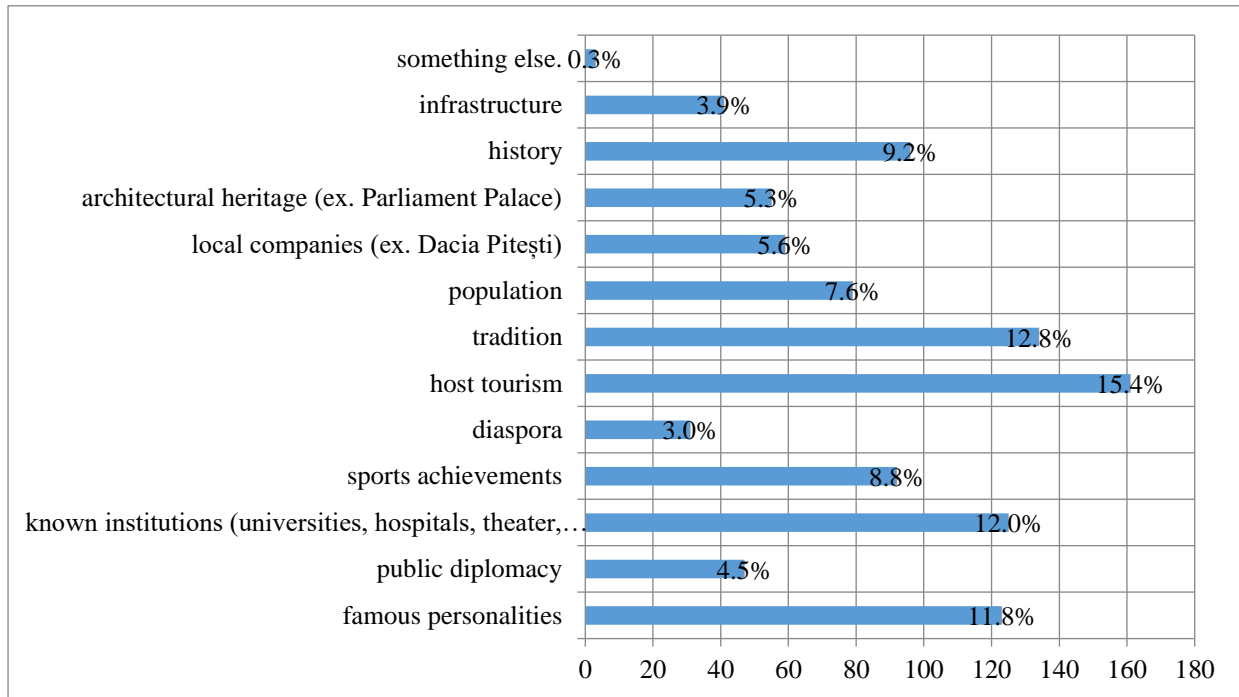
Using powerful marketing techniques (Popescu, 2001; Onisor, 2015) Bucharest can identify the latest opportunities for their residents. City has a potential to be capitalized in the future in order to become "an influent city" in the fields of business, culture, ecology, tourism and event planning. The city marketing activity is required to include: "diversity, cosmopolite and vibrant culture, the ambitious city, willing and capable of developing itself, the welcoming city etc". (Popescu, 2009) The creation of "an image with resonance for the public" is required for Bucharest city marketing. The local authorities need to chose realistic values that propel Bucharest which are addresses to residents, foreign tourists, national and international actors from the business area also, creative sector (marketing, design, mass-media companies etc.) in order to promote a co-operation climate. "That could create and sustain on long term" the city marketing strategy, that will allow people to empathize and be proud of Bucharest. City marketing is known as be "built in the minds of people" and efficiency of strategies is regard to target group as visitors, investors and residents. It is recommended also to imply people as those who "make the city" in the urban marketing. In this purpose may be created "the communication platform opened to all the residents". (Popescu and Corbos, 2010)

Few mobile apps "have been specifically developed for the tourists" visiting the city. The website [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com) in may 2021 present Bucharest, with its "café culture and neoclassical monuments", as "a cosmopolitan vibe sits alongside an intense national pride. Explore the grand halls and marble rooms of 'People's House', the largest parliament building in the world, climb the Arcul de Triumf for panoramic views, or find a quiet spot in the old

Lipscani quarter to take in the vibrant mood." The Parliament Palace from Bucharest is well known tourist site. While tripadvisor.com portal in May 2021 are mentioning about Bucharest: "Vlad the Impaler stated his claim to Bucharest in 1459. His citadel on the Dambovitza was the first of fortifications of palaces, many of which still stand. Four subway lines and a modern bus network transport visitors and commuters. Nicknamed "Little Paris", Bucharest's elegant early 20th-century architecture shows French influences. Don't miss the Village Museum, Romanian Athenaeum and the Peasant Museum. You can't miss the Palace of Parliament, the second-largest building in the world (after the Pentagon)." The research noted about the necessity to develop marketing and communication tools of Bucharest metropolis via social media networks, websites, or mobile applications. (Surugiu et al., n.d.) At the digitalization era beginning, companies are willing differently to invest in this field (Tala & State, 2020) as well as cities. As the communication marketing approaches that may be initiated by the authorities in order to build the image of the city of Bucharest is suggested to create a city web portal, as for example Amsterdam (<https://www.iamsterdam.com/en>) where all the amenities including "hospitals, education, entertainment, tourism, hotel services and transportation" are available. (Somayya & Ramaswamy, 2016)

Ecological marketing is not representative in Bucharest and after a researcher resulted that did not represent an opportunity for city business development. Even if many of city citizens declared themselves as being ecologists and oriented for sustainable development their ecological behavior is still low. This although citizens consider that they "live in a polluted city". (Popescu, Corbos, Comanescu and Bunea, 2017) After a research of Bucharest residents and tourists perception to present practices and the city level of promotion was suggested that city "lacks an appropriate promoting strategy and a strong urban brand". In order to improve the effectiveness of this marketing activity was mentioned that public authorities should initiate activities "for promoting the city, by developing a complex and long-term urban marketing strategy". Also was noted that private initiatives prove to be "the most successful". (Popescu and Mina-Raiu, 2019) After a research Tigu et al. (2018) mentioned that people agreed that Bucharest has no coherent official marketing strategy and only initiatives from private actors (major events, online environment, word of mouth, airlines operators or other). Moreover, it was suggested that city "is sometimes promoted by chance" or casually through national and international events and fairs. Even if people consider city as "safe, green and clean" they mentioned the weaknesses of Bucharest promotion as the lack of an organization and of a coherent marketing strategy. Bucharest due to a well organized marketing strategy has the potential to develop its image on the international level.





*Figure 1. City / country most efficient communicators*

After preliminary results of the survey it is indicated as the city/ country most efficient communicators by the most of respondents (15,4%) tourism, followed by tradition (12,8%), known institutions, as universities, medical centers (12%), personalities (11,8%), history (9.2%), sports achievements (8,8%), residents (7,6%) and others (local companies, architectural heritage, public diplomacy, infrastructure, diasporas, others). As a result of the case study it is suggested a holistic strategic marketing action of the authorities in order to build the image of the city of Bucharest based on traditional, digital as well as mixed marketing communication. Another strategic marketing approaches that may be initiated by the authorities in order to build the image of the city of Bucharest may be similar of the Danish government's within "a framework of nation branding the focus on risk reduction" with public diplomacy that maintain a function to link transnational publics to national security. It is suggested that the public relations of states will be transformed to the state marketing (Rasmussena & Merckelsenb, 2012) or city marketing. Bucharest needs to pay more attention among "the elements of reputation management" as place branding, cultural and public diplomacy in order to acquire an identity and positive image. In order to improve city distinction it is suggested to Bucharest authorities a strategic coordination, collaboration and communication with institutions and actors erratically involved. (Dumbrăveanua, 2010)

## Conclusions

The city community strategy of development is a form of "creative co-production" linked to receptive, engaged citizens and attuned to enrolling those outside of industry, also policy circles. For effectively promotion process it is required a marketing strategy. City marketing also was related in researches to the societal marketing concept. City marketing is also defined as the creation of "a place that meets the needs of targeted markets". Bucharest is one of the Europe's largest cities while based on a comparison of ranks Europe's largest cities from 2008 as it was on only on 61 positions. In order to improve city distinction it is suggested to Bucharest authorities a strategic coordination, collaboration and communication with

institutions and actors erratically involved. It is also recommended to involve residents, such as those who "make the city", in urban marketing through local authorities educational programs that will develop of the bilateral link. This is a crucial period for all big cities and metropolitans. Cities need to review their strategies and marketing to find a way to makes a difference or at least to get back to the usual pace of life they had before social, economic and health crises.

As a result of the case study presented in paper are suggested communication actions based on communication techniques as advertising (at local, regional, national and international level) for the purpose of information communication, which have as objectives pursued besides the commercial and corporate form, the socio-humanitarian one; with a focus on public relations to promote the image of the city that indirectly contributes to increasing future results; communication through events to enhance the image of the city due to the organization of fairs, exhibitions; also various sponsorships (such as US and China sponsorships related to Cov19 vaccines) and patrons. Bucharest, as an European metropolis, tend to be a society multiracial, multi-religious, multiethnic democratic society information and education campaigns are needed regarding the people role and value within the city and abroad in order to create a city brand. The importance of the theoretical notions regarding the marketing and communication strategy is huge in order to be adopted to improve the image of Bucharest. This can create a link between residents, visitors, investors and entrepreneurs within the city with the goals of Bucharest marketing communication to improve the top quality of life, to ensures security, also to lays the foundations as metropolis of culture, businesses, finance, education, science, research and excellence in sports, medicine or value other performance. Also are suggested holistic communication actions based on the typology of the marketing strategy as traditional, mix and online programs.

Findings of research identify trends of successful marketing strategy for the Bucharest. The implication of the study results represents a basis for future studies in the improvement of marketing strategies in metropolitan regions. The original contribution of the authors is discussing the degree of involvement that marketing plays in the image of cities in this period of restrictions. Even if people consider city as "safe, green and clean" they mentioned the weaknesses of Bucharest promotion as the lack of an organization and of a coherent marketing strategy. Bucharest due to a well organized marketing strategy has the potential to develop its image on the international level.

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