Destination Marketing and Place Branding: Building and Promoting City and Tourism Brands

11 – 15 January 2027
London - Central London four-star



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Ref: 1218_6986 **Date:** 11 – 15 January 2027 **Location:** London - Central London four-star **Fees:** 23000 SAR

Technical depth: Practitioner · **Practical mode:** Case study

Introduction

Cities, regions and attractions now compete for visitors, events, investors and talent as intensely as consumer brands, yet many are promoted through disconnected campaigns that change with each budget cycle and leave no lasting identity. Residents, operators and investors hear different stories, and results are hard to prove. This course equips destination and place marketers to build a coherent place brand, align stakeholders behind it and market it across the visitor journey with measurable results. Participants analyse destinations from several regions and leave with a Destination Brand and Marketing Plan for their own place or attraction.

Course Objectives

- Assess a destination's current image, competitive position and life-cycle stage using perception research and the Tourism Area Life Cycle model
- Define a place brand identity, positioning and brand architecture that serves visitors, investors, residents and talent
- Segment and prioritise source markets and visitor personas using demand and booking data
- Plan integrated destination campaigns across paid, earned, shared, owned and partner channels along the visitor journey
- Measure destination marketing and brand performance with visitor, economic and reputation indicators
- Produce a Destination Brand and Marketing Plan ready for board or stakeholder approval

Target Audience

- Destination marketing and promotion managers in tourism boards and destination management organisations
- City, regional and economic development marketing managers
- Brand and communications managers at attractions, venues, heritage sites and resorts
- Tourism product and partnership managers working with hotels, airlines and tour operators
- Investment and talent attraction marketing managers
- Account and strategy managers in agencies serving destination clients

Course Outline

Day 1: The Destination Marketing Landscape and Current Image

- Destination Marketing Versus Destination Management: DMO Roles in UN Tourism Guidance
- Butler Tourism Area Life Cycle Stage Diagnosis
- Destination Image Research: Perception Surveys and Social Listening
- Competitive Set Benchmarking Using the Anholt-Ipsos Nation and City Brands Indices
- Destination SWOT and Visitor Economy Baseline Assessment

Day 2: Place Branding Frameworks

- Anholt Place Brand Hexagon and Competitive Identity
- Kavaratzis City Brand Communication Model
- Keller Brand Resonance Pyramid Applied to Destinations
- Place Brand Architecture: Umbrella, Sub-Destination and Partner Brands
- GSTC Destination Criteria and Sustainability Positioning

Day 3: Destination Marketing in Practice

- Source Market Prioritisation Matrix and Visitor Personas
- Visitor Journey Mapping: Dreaming, Planning, Booking, Experiencing and Sharing
- PESO Channel Plan for Destination Campaigns
- Destination Storytelling and Brand Toolkit for Partners
- Trade Marketing with Airlines, Tour Operators and Online Travel Agencies

Day 4: Reputation, Risk and Performance

- Destination Reputation Crisis Response and Recovery Communications
- Overtourism, Resident Sentiment and Community Buy-In Measurement
- Brand Consistency Audit Across Stakeholder Communications
- Destination Marketing KPI Framework: Awareness, Consideration, Arrivals, Spend and Length of Stay
- Campaign Effectiveness Evaluation Using Visitor Economy Data

Day 5: Case Work and the Destination Brand Plan

- Heritage City Case Study: Repositioning a Mature Destination
- Emerging Coastal Destination Case Study: Building a Brand from Launch
- Events-Led City Case Study: Integrating Major Events into the Place Brand
- Destination Brand and Marketing Plan Drafting
- Stakeholder Panel Presentation and Plan Defence

Skills You Will Gain

- Destination Image Analysis
- Place Brand Positioning
- Brand Architecture Design
- Source Market Segmentation
- Visitor Journey Design
- Stakeholder Brand Alignment
- Destination Performance Measurement

Why Attend This Course

- Return with a Destination Brand and Marketing Plan for your own destination or attraction, challenged by a stakeholder panel
- Give partners, operators and public stakeholders one brand story they can use consistently
- Defend marketing budgets with arrivals, spend and reputation evidence rather than impressions alone
- Compare destination approaches with marketers from cities, regions and attractions in different countries

Conclusion

A destination brand works only when visitors, residents, investors and partners recognise the same promise and the place delivers it. This Core Concept course moves from diagnosing a destination's current image, through place branding frameworks and brand architecture, to visitor journey marketing, partner channels and the reputation and community risks that can undo a brand. The final day produces a Destination Brand and Marketing Plan that participants can present to their board or stakeholders and use to guide campaigns over several seasons.