

**The Top 50 U.S. City Slogans:** 1. What Happens Here, Stays Here. Las Vegas, NV 2. So Very Virginia. Charlottesville, VA 3. Always Turned On. Atlantic City, NJ 4. Cleveland Rocks! Cleveland, OH 5. The Sweetest Place on Earth. Hershey, PA 6. Rare. Well Done. Omaha, NE 7. The City Different. Santa Fe, NM 8. Where Yee-Ha Meets Olé. Eagle Pass, TX 9. City with Sol. San Diego, CA 10. Where the Odds Are With You. Peculiar, MO 11. Where Your Ship Comes In. Gulfport, MS 12. Soul of the Southwest. Taos, NM 13. Experience Our Sense of Yuma. Yuma, AZ 14. The City Was So Nice They Named It Twice. Walla Walla, WA 15. There's More Than Meets the Arch. St. Louis, MO 16. Keep Austin Weird. Austin, TX 17. Where Chiefs Meet. WY 18. City with a Mission. San Gabriel, CA 19. Where the Trails the Buck Stops. Independence, MO 20. The City That Never New York City, NY 21. The Aliens Aren't the Only Reason to Roswell, NM 22. Lose Your Heart to the Hills. Kerrville, TX 23. Take Me to the River. Vicksburg, MS 24. We've Got All the tion You Need. Riverton, WY 25. The Town Without a Frown. TX 26. The Town Too Tough to Die. Tombstone, AZ 27. the Stars Come Out to Play. Fort Davis, TX 28. Rollin' on River. Manchester, OH 29. Named for the Turn of a Show Low, AZ 30. More Than Just a Song. Shenandoah, TX 31. Where

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# Branding the Generic City :)

by Alfredo Andia

## Tacoma

Less than a decade ago the little-known city of Tacoma, Washington, was regarded as a high-crime neighborhood in the Seattle Metropolitan area near an indecisive industrial area distinguished by the odors of its pulp mills. In 2000, the city of Tacoma spent approximately \$500,000 in a marketing and public relations campaign to re-brand its image. After city-wide interviews and workshops, the promotional effort decided to concentrate on the new \$100 million municipal high-speed fiber optic network placed on every city block. Tacoma was publicized as "America's No.1 Wired City." The endeavor produced more than 100 positive articles about the city's renaissance. The city was ranked as one of the "Top 5 Tech Towns" in America by The Industry Standard, it made the cover story of Inc. Magazine, it was ranked 10th in the Digital cities Survey, and Entrepreneur Magazine rated Tacoma the No. 1 mid-sized city for doing business. Soon after the promotion more than 100 technology companies moved to or expanded into Tacoma.

Tacoma's branding story is not unique. Taos, NM, became the "Soul of the South West," Eagle Pass, TX, became "Where Yee-Ha Meets Olé," McKinleyville, CA, became "Where Horses Have the Right of Way," and Happy, TX, became "The Town Without a

Frown." Moreover, even entire towns such as Halfway, OR, changed its name for the dot com company Half.com, and Clark, TX, adopted the DISH name, in exchange for free satellite television from the DISH Network. City branding, more than being the exception, is becoming an important revitalization instrument for the deep crises second and third-tier American cities have experienced during the past three decades.

The peripheral American cities expanded without remorse in the first two thirds of the 20th century. They invented the infinite lawn cities along the highway, the mall, the drive-thru, and even exurbia. But the optimism that tinted these new inventions and expansion entered gradually to a halt after 1970 as many cities began to transform their economic base from manufacturing economy to a service one.

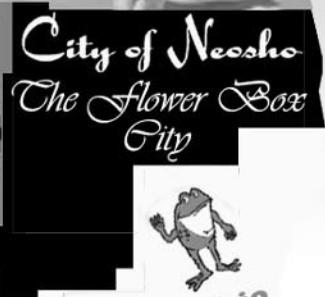
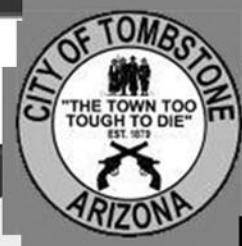
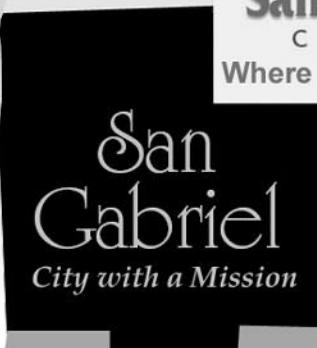
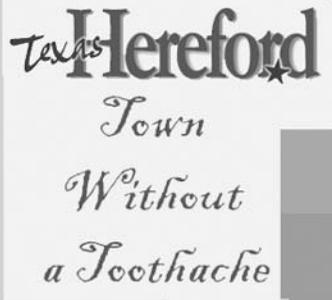
## City Branding

The "I ♥ NY" campaign created in the 1970s, by the ad agency Wells, Rich and Greene and graphic designer Milton Glaser, gave American cities a new way to speculate with urbanism. It was perhaps the most evident proof that brand personality could be embodied into cities. Although the character of cities seems to be more complex than consumer products most tools used to manage city brands can be explained from the theoretical works from a large number of marketing authors such as Burleigh Gardner and Sidney Levy, Leslie De Chernatony, Gil McWilliam, and Michael Munson and Austin Spivey. Most of these works suggest that there are two independent components to control a trademark: (1) identity values, and (2) functional utility.

Horses Have the Right of Way. McKinleyville, CA 32. Only in San Francisco. San Francisco, CA 33. It's Not the End of the Earth, But You Can See It From Here. Bushnell, SD 34. Where Nature Smiles for Seven Miles. Spring Lake, MI 35. Live Large. Think Big. Dallas, TX 36. Real. America. Up Close. Rapid City, ND 37. The Richest Place on Earth. Virginia City, NV 38. With Time for You. Richmond, MI 39. Newark, on a Roll. Newark, NJ 40. Where the Trout Leap in Main Street. Saratoga, WY 41. Life, Celebrated Daily. Norfolk, VA 42. The Natural Place to Visit. Sitka, AK 43. People Say We're Old-Fashioned. We Hope So. Virginia City, MT 44. Where the People Are Warm Even When the Weather Isn't. Andover, KS 45. Where the Bald Eagle Soars and Drops! Prairie du Chien, WI 46. Where History Never Gets Old.icksburg, VA 47. The Town That Made Tulsa Famous. Glenpool, TX 50. Livable, Lovable Lodi. Lodi, CA

Honor-  
You Can  
Twenty  
More  
Some-

able Mention  
Do Better in Cando. Cando, ND  
Lakes in Twenty Minutes. Harrison, MI  
Than Just a Pretty Beach. Encinitas, CA  
thing to Remember. San Antonio, TX



(collage of branding projects of second and third tier cities)

**The Top 50 U.S. City Nicknames** 1. The Big Apple. New York City, NY 2. Sin City. Las Vegas, NV 3. The Big Easy. New Orleans, LA 4. Motor City. Detroit, MI 5. The Windy City. Chicago, IL 6. Beantown. Boston, MA 7. Baghdad by the Bay. San Francisco, CA 8. Tinseltown. Hollywood, CA 9. Mistake on the Lake. Cleveland, OH 10. La-La Land. Los Angeles, CA 11. City of Witches. Salem, MA 12. Berzerkeley. Berkeley, CA 13. The Graveyard of the Atlantic. Cape Hatteras, NC 14. The Protestant Vatican. Nashville, TN 15. The City of Brotherly Love. Philadelphia, PA 16. Hangtown. Placerville, CA 17. The Wickedest Little City in America. Dodge City, KS 18. The Mile High City. Denver, CO 19. Porkopolis. Cincinnati, OH 20. The Land of Lincoln. Springfield, IL 21. The Biggest Little City in the World. Reno, NV 22. The Mini Apple. Manhattan, KS 23. Whiskers. Crestwood, KY 24. Dynamo of Dixie. Chattanooga, TN 25. The Land of Oz. Liberal, KS 26. Brew City. Milwaukee, WI 27. The Big Sweet Grass Basket. Charleston, SC 28. Valley of the Sun. Phoenix, AZ 29. Naptown. Indianapolis, IN 30. Shampoo-Banana. Champaign-Urbana, IL 31. Chimneyville. Jackson, MS 32. The World's Largest Chee-to. Algona, IA 33. Jack-Home of the Catfish Stomp. Elgin, SC 34. Vice City. Miami, FL 35. The Big Gun. Canon, GA 36. Drunk Driving Capital America. Gallup, NM 37. The Little Apple. Manhattan, KS

With regards to the identity factor, city branding has usually been treated as fashion brands. Places, like fashion products, help define individuality, uniqueness, and distinctiveness of their customers. It facilitates the desires for self-expression and social status that inhabitants, tourists, and businesses search in a particular space. Branding places ultimately communicate messages about who you are to others. These promotions develop an emotional connection with space which transforms the place experience.

In order for a brand to be powerful it also must incorporate the second dimension: to be functional. It must have observable benefits such as physical infrastructure, weather, education, and employment. Characteristics that can help potential consumers differentiate the technical distinctiveness of a product from similar ones. According to these marketing authors no brand can be characterized by only one of these two dimensions but by a combination of the two. Most of these branding theories are divorced from cities traditional themes or spatial history. What is missing in most of these marketing hypotheses are a more broad, critical, and historical perspective to understand the challenges of the contemporary post-industrial city.

## History

Space branding is not new in America, in fact, it was the traditional device used in the 19th century to sell the next American frontier. The Federal and State governments and Railway companies developed the ideals of “going west” not by any elaborate means but by simple slogans and brochures that propelled the massive process of colonization into the unknown. Two books, *Selling Places* by Stephen V. Ward (1998) and *Signifying Place* by Sheila Gaffey (2004) suggest three different distinctive eras of place branding in cities in North American and Europe. In America these are: (1) “agricultural colonization” during the late 19th century, (2) the promotion of “industrial urbanity” from the 1900 to 1960s, and (3) our current efforts to develop “urban regeneration.”

The main place branding themes, during the “agricultural colonization,” were aimed was to create appealing descriptions of

fertile and friendly lands in the Wild West. In 1881, a railway company was selling open acres in Nebraska as “a new brass key.” The imagery and text were basic metaphorical and dedicated to create mainly regional and state boosterism. In a second period of branding, during the emergence of “industrial urbanity,” cities were booming and everything was new. Place branding main themes were dedicated to confirm the cities’ success - although most of those urbanizations were not yet fully consolidated. Themes of efficiency, modernity, progress, popular leisure, and a clean relationship with nature were fundamental to convey the message. These industrial campaigns had key visual elements like locations maps, plans, logos and slogans such as “Atlanta: Twentieth Century City” (1903). Entire resort towns such as Atlantic City and Miami Beach surfaced out of elaborate public relations promotions. And also played an important role in the suburbanization of the first street-car branded suburbs such as Brookline in Boston, Forest Hills in New York, Oak Park in Chicago in the 1880s and 1890s and car-suburbs such as Levittown after world war II.

A third period of city branding in America began to develop after the 1970s with the emergence of the declining post-industrial cities. As the manufacturing base of cities began to drastically dwindle entire regions became transitional spaces. Most generic American urbanizations in decay had little or no identity, no sense of purpose, and lack of distinctiveness. City branding campaigns mostly led by Local Governments, Downtown Associations, and Convention and Visitors Bureaus, in the past decade intended to develop policies of “urban regeneration” or “urban revival.” The purpose of these campaigns was primarily two fold: to lure new funding sources to substitute those that have vanished and to appeal to a more precise self-identity.

38. Home of Susie the Duck. Lodi, WI 39. Cow Chip Capital. Beaver, OK 40. Goat Ropin' Capital of the World. Gotebo, OK 41. Sparkle City. Spartanburg, SC 42. The Soo. Sault Ste. Marie, MI 43. Crunkville. Charlotte, NC 44. The Old Pueblo. Tucson, AZ 45. Spamtown, USA. Austin, MN 46. Home of the Candy Dance. Genoa, NV 47. Tackytoma. Tacoma, WA 48. Surf City, USA. Huntington Beach, CA 49. Space City. Houston, TX 50. The Dog Mushing Center of the World. Knik, AK

#### Honorable Mention

Winnemucca – City of Paved

Streets.

Winnemucca, NV

SLO Town. San Luis Obispo, CA

Poison Oak Capital of the World. Forestville, CA

Spokan't. Spokane, WA

Red Carpet City of the South. Vicksburg, MS

*(Top 50 U.S. City Slogans and Top 50 U.S. City Nicknames survey developed by Taglineguru in 2005.)*

## The Branding Themes of the Post-Industrial City

Branding post-industrial cities and neighborhoods have become a critical part of urban policy in America. This has been more critical for class-B cities which can not afford a bid for the Olympic Games or a Guggenheim Museum. Although it is very difficult to categorize these branding efforts, there are two distinctive themes that seem to guide these projects: (1) An emotional ideology of seduction, and (2) A process that is based on popular consensus.

Most branding projects work at the level of creating an “ideology or myth” for the specific sites. They intend to frame the discourse of space by envisioning highly emotional connections. Contrary to other public policy activities these marketing works do not usually derive any specific ideas that could transform the city’s functionality. Sites are just packaged and sold as consumer products. Place meanings are selectively picked and re-packaged to construct a more seductive city-image.

The majority of city branding projects are based on civic processes that are built upon public participation and popular consensus. Branding firms develop workshops, surveys, and other consultation devices that usually communicate with a significantly large portion of the local community. In a way these processes tend to look for what is called attitudinal marketing in which representation and reality become a blur.

Both themes develop a promotional imagery of cities that project “deeply caring sentiments.” These “ego” campaigns are relatively cheap, from \$20,000 to several millions, compared to traditional infrastructural changes. However, the cities’ character seems to be more complex than consumer products. Cities are more than a product one buys or destinations to which one transfers, they have been throughout history places that nurture ideas and enterprises over time.

The most profound campaigns are not about promoting relocation but the ones that help communities’ growth from the inside. Slogans and mottos may offer temporary boosts but if they do not embrace particular functional advantages they may not be worth much.

## The Effects of Things

The inevitable increase in city branding projects portrays something more fundamental about how we consume human-space in post-industrial cities. Branding or advertising efforts have become progressively more central to design. Americans spend annually around 25 to 30 billion dollar in architectural services but more than 350 billion dollars in general advertising fees. As the Situationists Attila Kotanyi and Raul Vaneigem said, if Architecture is a thing like a Coca-Cola then urbanism is comparable to the space to launch the advertising for the Coca-Cola. While architects and planners have been traditionally predisposed to focus on the functional and aesthetic quality of the built form, users are inclined to concentrate mostly on the effects of the spatial experience. UN Studio reminded us in their book MOVE in 1999 that the effects of form “do not resemble the thing that causes them: pain does not resemble the needle.” Projects that brand cities deal basically with the aura of things, not the things themselves. They work at the level of feelings. The effort is geared to develop strong emotional connections with users. They do not work at the level of reason, but on what is beyond reason and form. Experiential space-branding has been quietly and anonymously flowing into Starbuck’s coffee shops, Apple, and Tiffany’s stores. It has silently consolidated into the management repertoire of city halls, chambers of commerce, and visitor’s bureaus. It may have become one of the few possibilities for action in many third-tier post-industrial cities. The spatial crisis of the generic city in America is simply no longer about things or form.

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