NATION REBRANDING IN A PERIOD OF CRISIS AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: THE CASE STUDY OF GREECE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to highlight the crucial role of public diplomacy in rebranding a country, especially during a time of economic crisis, and to point out the ways it can become an important tool. Rebranding a country or a nation is the process by which a country's international image is recreated, essentially representing that nation or country with a new concept, effectively reintroducing it and establishing the country's modified image. Key tools of this process are communication in general and public diplomacy at state and professional level. Public Diplomacy helps governments launch communication campaigns that can promote a favourable image of the country to international publics, a core factor for successful rebranding. Nevertheless, campaigns alone do not amount to rebranding. Campaigns are good and useful and help reach a strategic goal; they are however only a component of the public diplomacy of a branding strategy. The main question of the study is whether Greece has a brand name and needs to adopt any sort of rebranding strategy. The study also examines whether the campaigns are aligned to a certain branding strategy, it describes the critical factors in rebranding the image of a country and the degree to which public diplomacy has developed. Finally, the paper proposes an integrated model consisting of four basic steps that can be followed by countries facing crises. The methodological approach is based on bibliography, previous studies, published case studies, field research and professional experience. The results of this study may help any scholar and practitioner avoid mistakes common in public diplomacy at times of crisis and add a new dimension to the relationship between nation brand and public diplomacy.

Keywords: Nation Brand, Nation Rebranding, Public Diplomacy, Nation Identity, Nation Image, Campaigns.

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this paper are to present an integrated model of promoting the image of a nation worldwide, underlining the importance of nation branding as

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strategy, and of public diplomacy as the key-tool in national marketing promoting the strategy. This model could be applicable for all nations, especially nations in periods of crisis.

It could generally be argued that image promotion is the ultimate goal of nation branding, and effective branding would require a long-term and consistent communication strategy implemented by a well targeted and organised public diplomacy.

Rebranding is the term used to describe the process of taking an existing brand and changing it or building a new or updated brand, thus creating the opportunity for a country to embrace a new message or position worldwide, allowing it as a result to reach new markets and attract a new international audience.

Rebranding can breathe new life into a country, for its products or services, changing the way it is perceived by the public. There are many reasons for a country to consider rebranding, most of them grounded in the need to reposition the country in the international marketplace. Nation-branding or rebranding can be a form of "soft power", a way of gaining back-door influence in the international community.

Moreover, in this paper it is argued that nation branding and public diplomacy are both dynamic processes which reflect the ability of a country to build and manage its attractiveness to achieve its strategic goals. To this end, it is underlined that the strategic goal of a nation brand is the repositioning of the country in the international marketplace and the best dynamic process to achieve this is by enabling the capabilities arising from public diplomacy.

Definitions and background

‘Nation branding’ as a term was first time used by British policy advisor Simon Anholt in 1996, and it incorporates political, cultural, sociological and historical approaches. According to Wally Olins, countries have always branded and re-branded themselves and it is just a new term for image management (2002). Also, nation branding can be seen as “branding and marketing communications techniques to promote a nation’s images” (Fan, 2006). Dinnie (2008) defines nation brand as ‘the unique, multidimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audiences’. This definition takes into account the target audiences in the minds of whom nation brands are ‘situated’.

Gudjonsson (2005), an Icelandic brand practitioner, argues that nation branding is concerned with image and promotion, and image promotion is identified as its ultimate goal. Moreover, he identifies the government as the initiator of branding, acknowledging its indirect involvement and influence. He maintains that ‘nation branding occurs when a government or a private company uses its power to persuade whoever has the ability to change a nation’s image. Nation branding uses the tools of branding to alter or change the behaviour, attitudes, identity or image of a nation in a positive way’ (Gudjonsson, 2005). He underlines that nations or their governments cannot be branded per se but governments and other public institutions can use the techniques of branding.

Nation brand can be defined as the strategic self-presentation of a country with the aim of creating reputational capital through economic, political and social interest
promotion at home and abroad, whereas public diplomacy traditionally means government communication aimed at foreign audiences to achieve changes in the “hearts or minds” of people (Szondi, 2008).

Public diplomacy was defined as ‘direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and ultimately, that of their governments’ (Malone, 1985).

There are three dimensions in public diplomacy: The first dimension is the condition in which the communication occurs, the one-way relationship between the communicating and the target country. The second dimension involves the levels of the objectives of communication from persuasion (one-way) to relationship building (two-way communication). The third dimension is power, defined as the ability to affect the outcomes one wants (Nye, 2004). In this context, Bátorá (2005) defined public diplomacy as the promotion of soft power – using resources and capabilities at the disposal of a nation to achieve its purposes by affecting the behaviour of others - while Melissen (2005) argued that public diplomacy is only one of the key instruments of soft power. The primary objective of public diplomacy is ‘to influence foreign public opinion in a way that supports a country’s national interest’ (O’Keeffe and Oliver, 2009). The vehicle used must appropriately engage foreign publics while at the same time delivering on the underpinning principles of public diplomacy. Those underpinning principles tend to encompass tailored credibility, dialogue and exchange, alliances and partnerships and authenticity of message (Ross 2006, Nye, 2004, O’Keeffe and Oliver 2009). Where these principles are adhered to, public diplomacy has a greater chance of building soft power outcomes for the nation.

According to Ham (2001), the modern world of geopolitics and power is being replaced by the postmodern world of images and influences. He argued that traditional diplomacy is disappearing and identity politics is becoming the main activity of politicians and states. Especially in periods of crisis, public diplomacy should put up this world of soft power of images and influences in order to modify the climate of conflict, contradistinction and tension, so as to convey positive nation values to foreigners and to create a climate of opinion in which policies can be successfully formulated, executed and accepted. Also, during a crisis period, a nation’s public diplomacy is required to be shifted from achieving behavioural goals to attitudinal/cognitive goals, from information provision (monologue) to communication (dialogue), from persuasion to relationship building and from managing publics to engaging with publics.

**Relationship between Nation Brand and Public Diplomacy**

Nevertheless, whilst the term “nation branding” was introduced by Simon Anhold in 1996, public diplomacy has been exercised by American foreign policy since the 1960s. As Szondi (2008) notes, both nation branding and public diplomacy have been defined in a plethora of ways which make them open to a wide range of interpretations. Nation branding has a more European root and appeal of clear British dominance by Simon Anholt and Wally Olins, the two ‘gurus’ and strong advocates of nation branding who have largely contributed to its evolution and practice, whereas public diplomacy was paved by American scholars and practitioners, and it was described as a ‘peculiarly American aberration’ (Laqueur, 1994).

According to Szondi (2008), there are five different views that can be identified concerning the relationship between nation branding and public diplomacy.
The first one relies on the concept that these two areas are unrelated and do not share any common grounds. In this case, nation branding and public diplomacy have different goals, strategies tools and actors. During the 1990s, both areas were considered distinct with their own line of developments. This approach is followed by some countries, adopting both public diplomacy and nation branding without any coordination or synergy between them.

The second view, which is the most popular amongst scholars and practitioners, is that public diplomacy is part of nation branding. Lewis (2003) described public diplomacy as ‘the branding techniques of politicians’. In this case, the view adopted is that foreign policy can also be the subject of branding, whereas the application of branding is referred to as the “commercialization” of foreign policy and public diplomacy. A branding-oriented approach to public diplomacy presents some advantages in the direction of making public diplomacy more strategic, facilitating strategic planning and co-ordination, integrating communication aimed at foreign audiences, improving public diplomats’ communication skills and competencies, increasing the nation’s competitiveness around the world etc.

According to a third approach, nation branding is part of public diplomacy and is considered an instrument of public diplomacy, through which foreign nations and international audiences can be reached. Peter Van Ham was amongst the first scholars to explore the potential correlation between branding and international relations in a wider context, examining how branding could be used in international relations as well in public diplomacy (van Ham, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008). In this case, the role of governments is crucial in directing and influencing public perception, and public diplomacy becomes the vital function protecting the country’s reputation, correcting poor or negative images and stereotypes and neutralising negative «attacks» or international pressure.

The fourth approach suggests that public diplomacy and nation branding share some common grounds but that each has its own special characteristics. This approach is advocated by Professor Jan Melissen (2005) who identified some conceptual differences as well as similarities between them. He concluded that the two concepts are ‘sisters under the skin’.

The final option argues that both nation branding and public diplomacy are the same concepts and cover the same activity: country promotion with the ultimate goal of creating positive nation image.

Melissen (2005) and Dinnie (2008) have found that image, promotion and country identity are the key similarities between public diplomacy (PD) and nation branding (NB). In addition, Melissen has proved that the difference between PD and NB concerns the nature of the actors of promotion. According to his theory, Public Diplomacy is initiated by practitioners, whereas Nation Branding is exercised by all of a nation’s forces able to contribute to the promotion of its image abroad.

According to the consensus of the Forum “New Exploration of Public Diplomacy and National Image Building”, public diplomacy and national image building are concerned as part of nation branding and have a joint responsibility shared by social entities including the government, mass media and enterprise. Furthermore, Forum participants agreed that international communication is a national strategy that requires coordination and collaboration among various diffusion subjects.
Questions of Research and Methodology

Greece has faced a long-time economic crisis with very serious consequences for the Greek people and the country’s international image.

Taking into account that Greece has to correct and improve its negative and fragile image around the world, which it is translated into an incapability to export its products and to achieve its purposes, the main hypotheses of the study are the followings:

Despite the fact that Greece faced a deep economic crisis, did it follow any sort of nation brand or rebranding strategy in order to change its international image?

Are the campaigns aligned to a certain branding strategy or do they serve as a temporary crisis management mechanism?

Does public diplomacy serve as a tool for nation rebranding? Are these two areas correlated or do they work independently?

What are the decisive factors in rebranding the image of a country with a negative brand and to what degree is its public diplomacy developed?

What are the steps that must be followed in order for a nation to achieve the right rebranding?

The methodological approach is based on literature review about the subject, previous studies, case studies, field research and professional experience gained over 22 years of service in Public Diplomacy.

The results of this study can help scholars and practitioners to avoid possible mistakes in international communication and promotion and to indicate steps that should be followed for successful nation rebranding mainly during difficult periods (economic crisis, social crisis, terrorism, immigration).

Results

An important source of information concerning Greece’s brand name was provided by two specific publications of the Secretariat General of Communication-Secretariat General of Information, “About Brand Greece” (2007) and “About Greece” (2007) which dealt with successful endeavours promoting Greece and laid out the advantages of the country in the form of a trade brand. (Petropoulos, 2011). These publications have not been renewed.

An easy and effective survey, like a quick Google search, of key issues relating to Greece can illustrate the country’s international image during the last years of the economic crisis. We have examined different topics, like ancient Greek culture, and symbols, like the Acropolis, and we compared them with “difficult” subjects producing negative reactions like Greek debt, Greek economic crisis and stereotypes like “lazy Greeks”.

Table 1: The Image of Greece on the Web

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greece’s Image</th>
<th>Results in internet</th>
<th>Time (seconds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acropolis museum</td>
<td>7,810,000</td>
<td>0,70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Acropolis</td>
<td>15,000,000</td>
<td>0,58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Greece</td>
<td>15,400,000</td>
<td>0,70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Crisis</td>
<td>67,900,000</td>
<td>0,61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Debt</td>
<td>47,300,000</td>
<td>0,76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy Greeks</td>
<td>31,500,000</td>
<td>0,62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Corruption</td>
<td>20,700,000</td>
<td>0,39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifices of Greek People</td>
<td>386,000</td>
<td>0,64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifices in Ancient Greece</td>
<td>578,000</td>
<td>0,66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst Greece is an easily recognizable country for its rich ancient heritage, history and global symbols, negative themes like the “economic crisis” (67,900,000 references in 0,61 seconds) are predominant, overshadowing areas important to the country’s image.

Figure 1 clearly shows that the greater part of online references concerns the Greek crisis, Greek debt, corruption and “lazy Greeks” as an example of bad stereotypes.

Figure 1: The image of Greece during the years of the economic crisis (2010 – 2017)

In response to the first question concerning the application of any sort of nation branding or rebranding strategy in order to change the country’s international image, we examined the country’s ranking in recent years according to Anhold’s Nation Brand Index. This index measures the power and quality of each country’s ‘brand image’ by combining six dimensions: Exports, Tourism, Investment and Immigration, Culture and Heritage, People and Governance.
During the years of the economic crisis, 2010 to 2015, Greece was ranked between 22th to 39th place on an Index of 50 countries, following on the tail of most European Union countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>#22</td>
<td>Value for Money is down from 32 to 70 in 2010. “Economic crisis issues and political tension, plus the lack of proper tourism branding, are damaging the country brand.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>#27</td>
<td>Greece was low ranked even in Tourism. Heritage and Culture attributes were the only factor for which it was ranked in place 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>#39</td>
<td>Greece’s business climate declined following a fifth year of adjacent economic crisis. Greece’s Good for Business ranking is at 78 place, with Investment Climate falling 13 places to 97, Regulatory Environment falling 15 places to 78, and Skilled Workforce falling 7 places to 84.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>#30</td>
<td>Greece is characterised as ‘experience country’, strongly associated with Tourism, Culture and Heritage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the fact that the country is associated with Tourism, Culture and Heritage, which give credit to Greece as a brand name, the 2010 the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands IndexSM edition underlines that the lack of proper tourism branding is one of the reasons damaging the country brand. It is also mentioned that, for the years 2012-2013, the business climate is limited and declined, whilst in the research for years 2014-2015, Greece is characterised as an ‘experience country’, which means that it doesn’t comply with the standards of a nation brand country. According to Professor Markesinis, the main problem of the Greek brand is the “tragic fact that those
characteristics by which Greeks are known, in their largest part, are being viewed abroad as negative”. In other words, the problem is not that the country does not have a distinctive identity, but that this identity, mainly in current times, is negative.

In response to the second question, whether the campaigns were aligned to a certain branding strategy or merely served as a temporary crisis management mechanism, we note that Greece was focused on its tourism sector, concentrating on temporary campaigns promoting the «strong industry» of the country, which is tourism. Thus, there was no well organised brand name strategy, and consequently, the country’s efforts to influence its international publics were fragmented and temporary.

Amid the current financial crisis, Greece has launched a large number of rebranding campaigns in the tourism sector in order to restore the country’s credibility with foreign audiences and global markets. Every year, the Greek Tourism Organisation chooses a different theme and motto for its advertising campaigns:

- "Live your Myth in Greece" (2005)
- "Greece 5000 years old: a masterpiece you can afford" (2006)
- "Greece: explore your senses" (2007)
- "My Greek experience" (2008)
- "Greece: Kalimera!" (2009)
- "Greece: You in Greece" (2010)
- "Greece: All Time Classic" (2014)

This paper notes that all these efforts are simply tourist campaigns and do not comprise a re-branding promotion. Campaigns are partial tools that help reach a short-term goal without a central organised branding strategy. The main problem in this case is the lack of a central authority that should have been responsible for connecting and directing the several “voices” of Greece abroad. The function of public diplomacy has been shared by the Press and Communications Offices, which belong to the Secretariat General of Information and Communication but operate as departments of Greek Embassies abroad, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through its Information and Public Diplomacy Department that operates as an independent sector under the aegis of the ministry. In addition, the Ministry of Tourism is considered to be an equally important PD sector through the activities of the Greek Tourism Organisation. Also, given that cultural diplomacy as a tool of PD has as special purpose to promote Greece’s image abroad, the Ministry of Culture and the Hellenic Foundation for Culture are also considered to be key players in the field. This multi-polarity creates confusing responsibilities, overlapping of efforts and a significant degree of malfunction.

Analysing the way that Greece is promoted abroad, Gilboa noted the lack of a central political message and lack of coordination among the various competent bodies of Greece’s soft power.

The third question concerns the correlation between public diplomacy and nation brand and whether public diplomacy serves as a tool for nation rebranding. It is mentioned that some initiatives have taken place during the period of economic crisis in order to attract the attention of foreign audiences and to provide a better image for the country.
The following initiatives are the most systematically organised ones by the private sector:

- **Reinventing Greece:** It comprises young Greek-Americans who have travelled to Greece to conduct a media project to report on how Greeks are addressing the many challenges they face today.
- **Greece Is Changing:** It is supported by large Greek corporations who invite foreigners to see through the stereotypes. They want to attract attention to the progress in Greece.
- **’Give Greece a Chance’:** More than 20 of Greece’s biggest businesses have joined forces to take out full page advertisements in several European newspapers calling on readers and politicians to “Give Greece a Chance”
- **GoodNews.gr:** a website broadcasting only good news from Greece.

All these initiatives are applied independently without any central planning and a certain strategy. They achieve some short-term goals but they are not organised under the same communication strategy umbrella. This means that they are endeavours undertaken by groups of citizens or organisations but not part of a broader strategy. They work on the sidelines and they do not contribute effectively to the main objectives.

The fourth question concerns key factors in rebranding the image of a country with a negative brand and the way that public diplomacy is developed. As Szondi (2008) identifies, there is general agreement among nation branding scholars as well as practitioners that countries and their governments should engage in nation branding to differentiate their countries from others so as to gain competitive advantages. A core idea of nation branding is to identify the ‘uniqueness’ of the country, its people, culture or landscape. In nation branding, therefore, the appeal factor -known as the soft power - is the difference, the otherness. Gilboa as speaker in a forum about the New PD organized by the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pointed out that Greece has significant comparative advantages, such as a very high level of human development, a high level of democracy and press freedom, a good image as a travel destination, with a long history and established culture to which greater emphasis should be given.

In this point of view, Greece and every country in crisis needs to identify its competitive advantages in some sectors and to form its brand name on that basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greece’s Image</th>
<th>Results in internet</th>
<th>Time (seconds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greek taste</td>
<td>63.000.000</td>
<td>0,60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek night</td>
<td>134.000.000</td>
<td>0,79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding in Greece</td>
<td>36.600.000</td>
<td>0,52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy in Greece</td>
<td>81.400.000</td>
<td>0,58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable energy in Greece</td>
<td>2.000.000</td>
<td>0,73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas in Greece</td>
<td>16.600.000</td>
<td>0,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent in Greece</td>
<td>47.000.000</td>
<td>0,44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy Greek</td>
<td>125.000.000</td>
<td>0,59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy Greek products</td>
<td>50.400.000</td>
<td>0,66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Greek services</td>
<td>146.000.000</td>
<td>0,65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>175.000.000</td>
<td>0,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made in Greece</td>
<td>46.000.000</td>
<td>0,63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greek gastronomy, the diet brand name, must be at the forefront of a challenging campaign. It could be rapidly developed with important results for the Greek economy and the country’s image. Another sector is Energy, taking into account the construction of new gas pipelines in the region as well as the hydrocarbon exploration and exploitation in different areas in Greece. Also, the creation of a strong “Made in Greece” logo as a high standard of quality should support the image and the credibility of a country.

Concerning the last question as regards the steps needed to be taken on the path to the right rebranding for a nation, it is useful to follow the findings of scholars and practitioners.

Some scholars argue that National Identity is the first step towards nation branding, which refers to the self-perception of a nation that could be followed by the nation brand identity and then by the perception of other people worldwide. A Nation’s image is defined by foreign publics and their perceptions are often influenced by stereotyping, media coverage or their personal experience of the nation state. The relationship between national identity, nation branding and a nation’s image can be summarised as below (Fan, 2009):

According to Annika Rembe, Director-General of the Swedish Institute, a country cannot simply create a new image. First, there is the need for research to find out what the current image is. Then, it can try to strengthen the positive aspects of that image, targeting specific priority groups. Being credible, relevant and authentic is the key, whether it comes to developing or to maintaining a country’s image abroad. The end goal is to build trust and future collaboration and co-creation. (Annika Rembe, 2016).

What is really impressive however is the opinion of Anholt (2007) about Greece. He believes that the Greeks’ biggest problem is that they do not understand that they are sitting on a country treasure. Greece has lost its purpose, direction, and, he believes, it is very important to rediscover these. He sees a beautiful and unique nation which does not believe that it is wonderful and unique. It is very difficult to love someone who does not know how to love oneself, and maybe that is part of the problem.

So, the three basic components to identify and rediscover the unique image - national identity, nation branding and nation’s image - can be summarized as below:
Table 3: Characteristics of National Identity, Nation Branding and Nation’s image

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>National Identity</th>
<th>Nation Branding</th>
<th>Nation’s image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Policy</td>
<td>To find out how people of a country feel and think about themselves and their identity</td>
<td>To identify comparative advantages. To produce qualified goods.</td>
<td>To promote the strong views of a nation, country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic goals, Scope,</td>
<td>High self-estimation</td>
<td>Arise of exports, investments and employment. Attraction of new international clients and investors. Reposition the country in the international marketplace.</td>
<td>Building soft power outcomes for the nation (credibility, reliability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Audiences</td>
<td>Nation’s people, citizens of the country</td>
<td>Domestic citizens and foreign publics</td>
<td>Foreign publics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Context</td>
<td>How to improve people’s perceptions and estimations</td>
<td>People identity and culture. Destination branding with focus on tourism, exports and investments.</td>
<td>Credibility, alliances and partnerships. Being credible, relevant and authentic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>People, opinion leaders, politicians, national heroes</td>
<td>Government, enterprises, investors, banks, funds, institutions</td>
<td>Government, mass media, think tanks, enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools, Instruments</td>
<td>Polls, analyses</td>
<td>Internal communication and Public diplomacy</td>
<td>Public diplomacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 describes the steps that correlate all the contributors of the model, mainly public diplomacy with nation brand and nation’s image. The four (4) steps follow each other and in the end of each session – every year or semester – the follow up and the results on nation’s image should be used as feedback for the new session starting from the first point which is the national identity.

Figure 3: Basic steps for an integrated policy

Public diplomacy could be considered the public communication aspect of the economic and every other dimension included in the nation brand. Public diplomacy should be viewed and executed as the marketing plan and promotion of the national strategy which should be defined in the framework of the nation brand. The national identity is the research of needs and desires of a nation of how it wants to express its image, the nation brand is the strategy, public diplomacy is the marketing mix plan at national and international level and the nation’s image is the result of the strategy.
Conclusions and Discussion

Greece has been facing serious image and reputation deterioration due to its economic crisis. It is for this that a concrete plan of nation branding focusing on competitive advantages and mobilising the forces of all Greek sectors under a common public diplomacy plan is required.

The lack of a central political message and coordination among the various competent bodies of Greece’s soft power is a huge mistake when it comes to the promotion of Greece abroad and its international face. Greece needs to obtain a common and unique “voice” abroad; therefore, the establishment of a Greek Strategic Public Diplomacy Committee that will manage and coordinate all PD issues, like international campaigns, is of paramount importance. This committee should be the central coordinator and the main consultant of the government. Amongst its primary responsibilities should be the strategic planning and management of every effort and activity for the nation’s image.

Nation branding could be conceptualised as the economic dimension of public diplomacy, or as the public dimension of economic diplomacy.

In this case, the success of nation branding relies on and taps onto the network of the country’s embassies, especially Counsellors and Attaches in public and economic diplomacy that can serve as local agencies in the particular countries, focusing on dimensions of nation branding that are relevant in the target country and taking into account special features of the target culture, people and think tanks. They would be responsible for correcting the effects of negative branding and to promote a new image based on a concrete strategy aiming for positive results.

The nation brand should be focused on a strong logo “Made in Greece” to support the image and the credibility of the country. Culture - history, civilisation, language - and heritage must remain exportable products. In parallel, gastronomy should take more standardised dimension and be in the forefront of a challenging campaign.

An effective public diplomacy should include 1) a central authority in order to ensure the resources available and the maximum level of cooperation, 2) strategic communication in order to satisfy the main goals of the brand name strategy and 3) targeted campaigns, focusing on specific countries/stakeholders. The programme developed must be structured, taking into account the particular conditions and requirements of each country. Each programme must include an analysis of the operational environment, the status of the nation brand, definitions of objectives, key messages, target groups, tools, and, ultimately, an action plan.
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