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**HOW TO BECOME LOCAL “SILICON VALLEY” - IS
STPs’ BRANDING NOTEWORTHY, INNOVATIVE
AND MEMORABLE?**

PARALLEL SESSION 7

Marketing and communication:
Attracting companies. Seducing stakeholders

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How to become local “Silicon Valley” - is STPs’ branding noteworthy, innovative and memorable?

Executive summary

In this paper the author discusses the branding strategy of technology parks and identifies the main problems of effective STP branding in Poland where technology parks don’t have a strong position in community yet. Parks’ promotion and building their image requires the intensification of variety activities.

The objectives of this paper are to present:

- the most popular tools of branding using by technology parks,
- new ways of conducting STPs branding which can enhance their position in region,
- creating the tenant community.

In order to achieve these aims, the author grounds the approach on a series of fundamental theoretical mechanisms of branding and provides practical examples, by examining the stages of development that Polish STPs passed through in the creation of their brands.

Introduction

Every organization has a brand or corporate image, regardless of whether manages it specifically or not, or whether is aware of this or not. “*A brand is simply an organization, product or service with personality*” - this is the shortest brand definition by Wally Olins¹ - one of the most experienced practitioners in the world of branding. Branding interacts with marketing, design, internal and external park communication and human resources management. It becomes a channel through the organization and has an impact on every part of the company and each group of stakeholders. Silicon Valley, Research Triangle Park and Technopolis are brands which are already known globally.

Although STPs branding and promotion are perceived as relevant issues by practitioners, the available literature is very poor; concepts and methodologies have therefore to be taken from business branding and adapted to the parks approach. This “adjustment” however is not simple at all because while branding and marketing of products and services are managed by a unique organization, managing the marketing and the branding of technology parks implies to include the view and the commitment of a variety of different actors.

To build consensus on the STPS brand strategy there is a need of:

- Shared vision and identity;
- Supportive institutional framework;
- Close collaboration among the tenants;
- Broad community involvement;
- Formal and informal flows of information.

In the case of technology parks, as well as for clusters which are much more than just a business, orientated on profit maximization, it is crucial to create brands with social mission, generating positive externalities. There are a few elementary questions for STP branding:

- Is there a clear vision of the park (main idea)?
- Do the tenants have similar feelings about what the park is, what it does and what for ?
- Is it clear for the external environment what's going on in the park and how it differs from other business institutions ?

¹ Brand New. The Shape of Brands to Come., Wally Olins, 2014

Different parks' models, different branding

Albert Link [2006] saying that: *when you were in a park you saw only one park*, clearly emphasized the specificity and diversity of this type of institution.

In many cases, STPs have become a "city within a city", where in addition to laboratory and office space, there are located large recreational areas, shopping centres, hotels, restaurants, residential buildings, kindergartens, libraries, etc. As a result, the park successfully builds its image, making it an ideal place as well as for working and living.

Globalisation has dramatically increased the need for specialization and excellence. Parks are often a remarkable lever to foster and accelerate this process as they speed up innovation, boost the cooperation among tenants and contribute to the territorial economic development. That's why park specialization can also improve its image as companies are willing to settle in a place where others from the same industry have been already located. In addition, specialization facilitates the interactions within the sector, enhances the impact of the STPs on certain branches of the local economy and might reveal the potential of the region by forming a cluster of innovative companies.

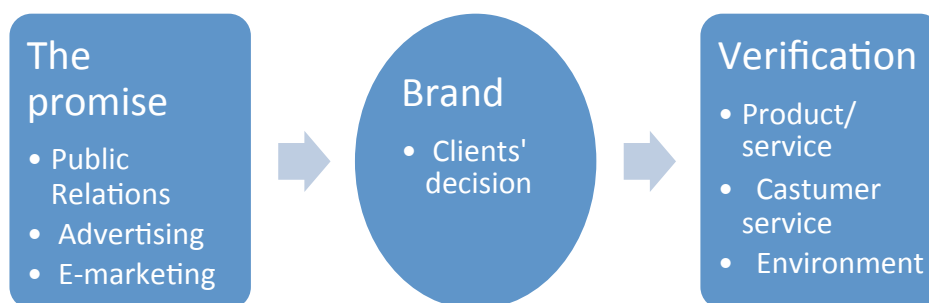
From the point of view of science parks with developed business incubation it is necessary to conduct the promotion of the park by creating its image as an institution that allows to minimize the risk of undertaking innovative activity and creates favourable conditions for the innovative solutions formation and implementation.

Since majority of technology parks are embedded in their respective territories and often supported by public administrations, the branding process should take into account also the branding strategy of the "place" in which they are located. More and more often countries, regions and territorial entities have or are developing strategies to brand themselves to communicate their excellences and their quality as place to live in, in order to attract new companies, investors, skilled workforce, resources and reinforce the community's "self-awareness". In this case the branding strategy of the parks and of the territorial area in which they are located should be harmonized to avoid confused messages. The image of the place and the perception of the quality of life in the mind of communities can be enhanced, and policy makers can use technology parks and areas of innovation as a powerful territorial marketing and to support the strategic development of the territory.

STPs' brand building process and its tools

Brand is the promise and verification and successful ones always make promises that meet the reality (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Branding process



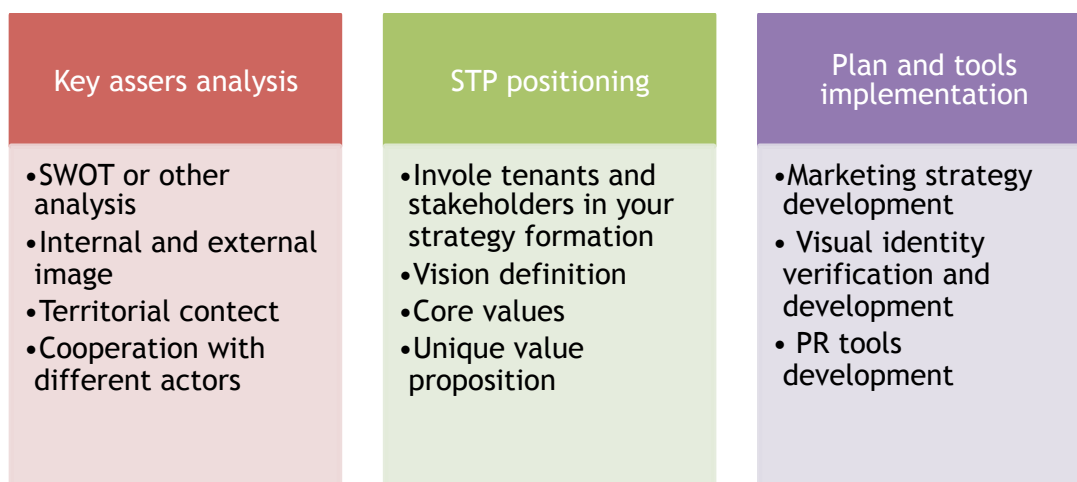
Different cases of STPs branding strategies share the idea that a well-structured and consistent communication strategy definitely helps them to perform better. Parks should be recognized for their uniqueness and they also should be able to attract external interest and resources such as skilled people and capital, and to mobilise local actors and potential tenants. A good example of effective promotion for a park is joint activities with the city (events organised together, social media, press and television). It is also beneficial to combine promotion of the park with the promotion of tenants. Joint promotion of the park and companies operating within its premises, companies using the park's brand, but also the brands of tenants, results in synergy for both

parties, enhances communication and the ability to compete on the market. Joint activities in this area may include, for example:

- advertising in trade magazines, radio and television,
- preparation of brochures, information folders and presentations at conferences, open days,
- websites,
- fair and exhibition activities.

There are many tools and elements for branding such as: name, logo advertising PR, internal communication, the value of brand, employees' motivation, knowledge management, relations with clients, leadership, trainings, HR management, environment. While absolute control over a brand is not possible due to outside influences, intelligent use of design, advertising, marketing, service proposition, corporate culture and so on, can really help to generate good associations of the company in people's minds. It should clearly define, especially in technology parks, what makes you different, what you offer, why you're doing it and how you're going to present it. Very interesting about STPs is their sophisticated "personality". There are different target groups for the parks - students, scientists, new-established enterprises, well-developed entrepreneurs, local authorities. The management board might be confused with the way how to present communication - the tone, language and design. For sure it should be "smart." So, how to find the balance between so many beneficiaries ? Figure 2 shows how to place the marketing and branding strategy within a comprehensive process which requires a strong analytical effort and the involvement of key stakeholders.

Figure 2 The process of marketing and branding strategy



Source: own materials

As a first step, it is necessary to understand where the park is positioned in relation to the market and to the surrounding ecosystem (local institutions, business associations, innovation actors, other business supporting institutions). Secondly, a strategic and forward-looking approach has to be adopted with a view to define where the park is heading to, clearly setting the mission, values and goals that tenants and local authorities can easily identify with. Once agreed how we would like the park should be perceived, it is important to develop a communication strategy accordingly to the target groups and use the suitable set of communication tools to reach the planned objectives.

A successful branding campaign requires:

- Value proposition - the key issues around which the strategy is built.
- Dissemination - delivering the right message to the right markets.
- Organisation - an entity responsible for sustaining the message.
- Building relationship with public authorities, researcher community, education organisations and enterprises.

In STPs case public relations are usually chosen as the main communication tool. Marketing and branding through public relations is perceived as a quick, cost-effective and trustworthy way to reach many people within the different target groups (existing and potential tenants, scientist, authorities or local communities).

One of the public relations tool is the storytelling. Technology parks may refer to their historical origin, to their founders or tenants' growth. What matters is that it should be consistent with the strategy and values of the park. Storytelling supports the brand because is a way to engage more directly the clients. The success stories might be memorable, exciting, credible and empathetic. Storytelling is not only a tool to form the corporate culture and influence employees behaviour. Recently it was recognized that it can also perform other functions: drive in solving problems, generating commitment to change and then can become the means of sharing knowledge. The telling of a story should not be seen only as a narration written to define the park's values. The words should be interpreted and repeated across all elements of the communication strategy such as a video, magazine page or web page. The "storytelling technique" is useful to catch the imagination of the audience and communicate intangible values. Regarding technology parks its strength depends on the strength of the tenants. Success stories about their fast growth, innovative products, using numbers as a proof is one of the best way of STPs branding strategy. For example, Poznan Science and Technology Park recently invested nearly 1,5 million Euro in thirteen ICT, chemistry and biotech start-ups. After over two years of intensive works of the park start-up fund, marketing department started promotional campaign giving the media the interesting and concrete stories.

It is commonly agreed that the rise of social media and a new generation of communication tools has changed the way the public perceives how information flows and reaches more people. Not only the traditional means have become more expensive, but also have a much more limited impact. Storytelling and the construction of narrations through events has become a crucial element to be carefully designed in branding and promotion strategies of technology parks. That's why traditional communication tools (brochures, fair, magazine advertisements) must be updated and accompanied by new media and tools that attract and engage the audience. As a result, internet can help to increase the range of marketing campaigns without a large financial outlay by spreading the message about the institution in a new way. At a time when millions of people are connected to the network, it would be difficult to ignore so popular and a real opportunity to build relationships with potential customers. Social media can serve several important functions for different institutions. Parks as innovative centres follow the trends and also benefit from this promotion tools. Companies that use such media as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn or Youtube are opening the door to communication with customers. Users of social networks have the opportunity to express their opinions regarding services of the company, talk about the products and all the company's activities. Moreover, enterprises can monitor what specific network participants say about them. Social networks are also a tool to generate lists of potential clients and identify the map of connections between members of the network. Facebook and other networking sites are an extensive database to develop a marketing campaign by the characterization of the target groups.

At present companies' communication strategy should focus on creating compelling content on their websites in order to increase the satisfaction of existing customers and attract new ones. It is also important to give the members of the network the opportunity to share their opinions and expectations concerning park's activities as it is part of building long-term relationships. Once a park's website is developed, it is misleading as to how much attention it should receive. It takes constant updating and cannot be ignored. A study from the Public Relations Review Journal, says it could easily be a full time job. "I wish that we could hire a third person who was in charge of just the website. You know, keeping it changing constantly. Keeping it up-to date" (Hill, White, 40, 2010). Small non-profit organizations could still reap all of the benefits from a website if they assign one employee to be in charge of it and that person allocates as much time as they can possibly spare on it. Making a website low on priority lists is one of the biggest mistakes in promotion activities. "Benchmarking of technology parks²" implemented by PARP (Polish Agency of Enterprise Development) - report from 2012 takes into account the most important information collected via the survey analyses and discussions conducted in the parks included their promotion indicators such as the average monthly number of articles in the press, the average monthly number of new entrants queries about the offer park, the annual average number of occurrences of the representatives of the park at conferences, seminars, meetings, percentage of park tenants

² Benchmarking of technology parks in Poland 2012 edition - this report was to provide support to the management and employees of technology parks as part of the modern process of strategic and operational management by demonstrating the best results of parks in various areas of management, and also to define best practices for technology parks in Poland.

participating in networking meetings organized in the park. For example evaluation of the park's website was performed on the basis of five criteria:

- Information on the website:
 - Information regarding products and services offered.
 - Information on organised training, conferences, etc.
 - Information regarding cooperation.
 - Information on location.
- Number of visits per year (numbers of unique hits for the website).
- Positioning in search engines (SEO).
- Adaptation of website to different browsers (e.g. Google, Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox).
- Other criteria, such as:
 - Availability of multiple languages.
 - Availability and updating of information about tenants.
 - Availability of information regarding work opportunities with tenants.
 - Visualisation and navigation.

Assessment of the website taking into account category other criteria constituted an additional part of the evaluation in comparison with the previous benchmarking study. Evaluation was done on a scale from 1 to 5 points, where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest score. The range of points obtained by parks involved in the study was wide - from 12 to 21 points. Parks obtained the highest rating for adjusting their websites to other browsers. They also fare well in relation to information contained on the website. This is important because the number and quality of information provided by parks makes it possible to understand their offer better. Parks that obtained maximum points for this criterion have, in most cases, also high ratings for the number of visits per year, but the number of points for this criterion is by far the lowest for the vast majority of evaluated parks.

Creating the tenant community

Building a positive image in the minds of the park tenants is a big challenge for the management board. The starting point to create a successful brand is defining the identity (core attributes and unique value proposition) the management board would like to link strongly with the park. Building relationships between tenants and the park (activities in the field of internal marketing should be focused, in particular, on better communication with the tenants (e.g. regarding the park's offer), which would result in increased awareness of the benefits stemming from activities in the park and integration. Polish parks also are trying to create, develop and strengthen their status in the community. Large companies perceive benefits from location in the park mainly in the culture of innovation, proximity of academia and modern infrastructure. In turn, companies from the SME sector are attracted by the strategic tenants - often global brands. An important task of managing the technology park should be internal promotion activities, in order to provide tenants identification with the park. First of all, the companies operating in the park should get to know each other. There are many examples of initiatives undertaken by technology parks' staff in order to create the community within the park, such as organization of study visits, formal and informal meetings, the participation in exhibitions and fairs, joint promotion, social initiatives etc. A good way is to organize events where companies present their offers, success stories and development plans. This is a good opportunity for the companies to build good relations and look for the partners for cooperation. The purpose of the park staff is to stay in constant touch with tenants and to attempt to connect ideas. Creating the image of the park as a place conducive to the knowledge spillovers, joint innovating undertakings, identifying leaders and market initiatives, for sure is a good direction for branding.

Parks very often organize joint promotion activities together with their tenants. In addition to presenting companies on websites, their activities are also described in the brochures, folders, trade fairs and conferences. The vast majority of parks publish a list of the tenants with their contact and business profile. Another example is of joint promotion is tenants advertising the magazines under park brand, which is associated with a place for innovative and fast growing companies. This allows for a significant reduction in advertising costs. Parks also promote the most active tenants during the various events related to innovation. In addition, parks notify their company for various competitions for innovative companies, organized by the public authorities, foundations, the media. In some Polish parks there is "Wall of Glory ", which gives the opportunity to promote successful tenants. What is the most important, the companies will be more interested

in participation in such initiatives only when they identify with the park , and perceive the park as a recognized institution in society, attractive and effective in its actions .

Polish parks often use external newsletters with the information about the new companies located in the park, new events, projects etc. The other tools are informal meetings when park community in a direct way is getting familiar with the new tenants. Informal meetings between companies inside the park are often a possibility for future cooperation. Table 1 shows the branding tools using Poznan Science and Technology Park as an example. Despite the more and more effective activities, building a positive image in the minds of the Polish parks' tenants is still a challenge for the management board.

Table 1 Poznan Science and Technology Park branding in a nutshell

Value proposition	Target groups	Communication	PR activities	Effects
<p>PSTP is an ideal place for those seeking innovative solutions. Due to its cooperation with scientists and close relations with universities, the PSTP is the perfect partner in the process of commercializing scientific and technological research results.</p> <p>PSTP also provides a wide range of services for small and corporate businesses. The services offered by the Park's experts are completed by professional, well-equipped laboratories, office space and IT facilities, as well as highly specialized research equipment.</p>	<p>Those planning to establish their own competitive and promising business activities. Entrepreneurs who want to improve their position in the market by increasing the innovativeness of a company. Research and development units, local government units, as well as university academics.</p>	<p>External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Media, authorities and other institution cooperation <p>Internal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Newsletter •Networking events •Intranet •Employees who are in charge of communication with tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Social media •www •Formal and informal events •CSR •Storytelling •Press releases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •In 2010-2013 period the number of press clippings in Polish media increased by more than 70 % (from 280 in 2010 to 476 in 2013). Generally overall awareness on the parks and its activities has increased in Poland. •Increasing number of Park's offer inquiries •Growing number of calls for experts from the Park to the conference as speakers •Increasing number of park tenants participating in networking meetings organized in the park •Increasing number of clients

Source: own materials

Conclusions

The paper concludes that corporate brand management is a dynamic process that involves keeping up with continuous adjustments of vision, culture and image. Branding is organisationally integrated and cross-functional, hence the thesis is that it is important to bring the (whole) organisation into

corporate branding. Parks should continue to convince businesses and academia that they are not just another bureaucratic institution, which function as simple as renting the space and the acquisition of budget funds for some projects which are not necessarily aimed at the stimulation of innovation processes and the creation of entrepreneurial relationships in the cooperative system (clusters and networks). Finally, the paper provides an overview of existing tools supporting technology parks marketing and branding and draws useful recommendations for STP managers. On the whole, it is suggested to smartly allocate resources on STP marketing and branding, valorise territorial branding, ensure a broad participatory process from the community around the park and promote the use of a new generation of communication tools.