



mmrziara

Tourism Brand Concept & Applications For Aleppo

Prepared by N'N Design Studio for the GTZ April 2010

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Brief

Mission

We aim at the following:

- To develop a sub brand from Madinatuna for tourism. Specifically a name and a logo. This sub-brand should be consistent with madinatuna, and serves as tourism certification logo for Aleppo. The brand will be used primarily for cultural Tourism in the Old City.
- To develop a design concept for an attractive tourist map for the old city of Aleppo
- To develop a design concept for tourist trail signs.

Tourism Brand

Why a Brand?

Tourism business is very competitive and we can't afford to stand still. We need to build on the Aleppo City existing potentials in attracting visitors. We have to find effective ways to be heard and do more to ensure that we stand out from the crowd.

The “madinatuna” (Aleppo CDS) is working on a city vision for 2025. A part of this vision sees Aleppo as:

“We imagine Aleppo as a place that displays the **authenticity** of a **contemporary** Middle Eastern city, a place where **modernity** and a **rich cultural heritage** do not conflict with each other, but merge into a mutually enriching relationship. The unbowed tradition of **openness** and **coexistence** of the local people, to be witnessed all over the city — be it in its exceptional medieval city centre or in its various modern subcentres — makes Aleppo a place of true authenticity. It is this authenticity combined with Aleppo’s manifold historical and cultural attractions, that are well connected by public transport and embedded in a network of high-quality public spaces, that will attract foreigners to the city and fuel local economies. We imagine Aleppo to be a place that provides as much opportunities for self-actualisation as basic human needs to its citizens, a place where private initiative and state share the vision of an evolving, **diverse and open city**.”

In order to achieve this vision, we need a brand identity that is consistent with Madinatuna brand, that is effective, and that encapsulates the positive impressions people already have of Aleppo City, and expresses more about what else the area has to offer

What Exactly is the Aleppo Tourism Brand?

We carried out rapid research to define the Aleppo Tourism Brand. We looked at research already carried out for tourism, under the local economic development efforts of Madinatuna, and GTZ in the past. We needed to understand what people thought of Aleppo.

The aim is to communicate and build a strong and meaningful identity that accurately encapsulates the unique attributes, values and personality of the Aleppo City. Our starting point is from the Old City of Aleppo.

It is planned for the brand to be used to direct all Old City marketing in tourism and signage.

Key to destination and business success is the building and maintaining of robust brand values. With consumer choice leaning to highly branded destinations, it is the brand strategy that will help to determine who is successful in today's competitive business environment.

Benefits

A destination brand for the Aleppo City will really make a difference. Here's how.

Good for tourism

It's simple: with everyone saying the same things about the City, more tourists will visit Aleppo and its surrounding areas.

Our destination brand will give every tourism business a real focus - from hotels to taxis and shops to restaurants. It will help shape people's experience of the City once they get here - opening up surprising new possibilities. And it will make them want to return.

When our local tourism businesses are talking to tourism businesses outside Syria, they'll instantly understand what makes Aleppo special - and associate these qualities with our local businesses. That means the chance for us to win more business.

Finally, our destination brand will help to encourage inward investment - as well as increased numbers of visitors and international events.

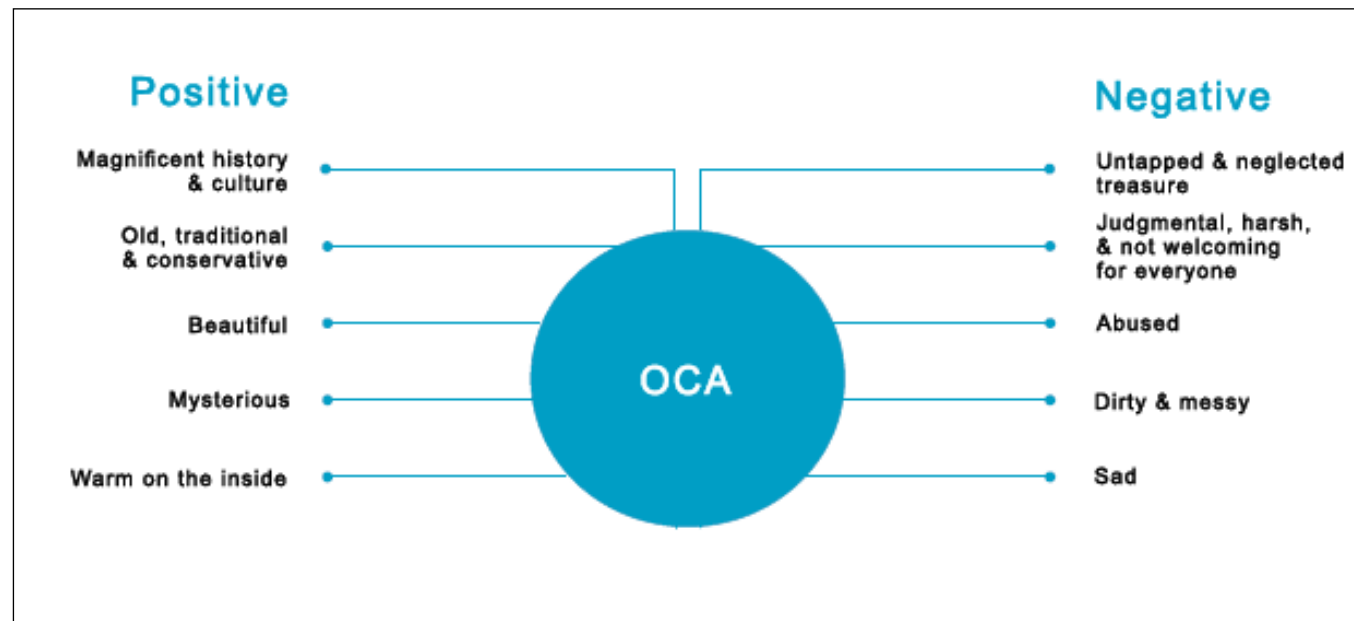
Research Findings

Aleppo – the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. A city that was home to numerous kingdoms, culture, arts, architecture, politics, religious science, commerce, and agriculture. A city that hosts the biggest souks in the world. A city that hosts the most impressive citadel of Islamic medieval times. The Old City of Aleppo (OCA) is dotted with hundreds of monuments and extending over 350 hectares, and boasts a living community of 110,000 residents and over 25,000 daily jobs.

We're doing fine – so why do we need to do anything differently? The answer lies in the following section.

- Aleppians have mixed views of OCA, illustrated below:

Top of mind associations - Aleppians



Source: N'N interviews

- The majority of OCA residents are unaware of it's tangible and intangible distinctiveness, and the majority think that historic buildings are not suitable for their needs and for contemporary life.
- Not on radar, OCA is not top of mind for tourism consumers – in fact, their awareness is limited.
- OCA does not really mean anything to people:
 - Inside Aleppo, awareness of tangible brand icons are limited and awareness of intangible/emotional supports are non-existent
 - The further distance you travel from Aleppo, awareness levels diminish dramatically
 - Inside Syria, the tangible and intangible assets of OCA are almost non-existent, and when they are present they are blurred and confused
- Quality of awareness is low – business and place to visit/live
- The Citadel of Aleppo is the only recognizable element – too narrow, static, do not evoke sense of what OCA is like
- Aleppian associations: traditional, slow, obnoxious – need to be overcome
- without a perceived value to the customer, OCA has to compete on price and it has failed to do so;
- OCA as a destination has become a commodity;
- competitors with a stronger and more positive brands are winning the business.

Developing a brand – not just a logo and catch-line but a positive and clear image of what we are and what we offer – will be a powerful tool in our efforts to keep people visiting OCA, and investing in tourism in the city.

Tourism Brand Goals

Premises

Several issues should be kept in mind in this process that OCA will use to build an instrument to present itself. Branding must:

- be used as vehicles to broadcast urban identity.
- be seen as instruments to increase competitive capacity, through providing OCA with an image, a cultural significance, a source of economic value, and an instrument to agilely convey OCA's strengths.
- target multiple groups, namely: tourists and businesses.

Goals

The development of a tourism brand for OCA will:

- Increase the city's stature, the impact of its communications and drive economic benefit
- Provide a clear vision and shared benefits for all stakeholders
- Create expectations of the destination, enhancing differentiation and driving preference
- Build a sense of civic pride and direction
- Encourage inward investment
- Attract visitors

Tourism Brand Concept

A “visit” that connects past, present and future

OCA is not only the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, but she has been a kingdom of commerce, culture, agriculture, spirituality, and wealth for most of its life. The picture of OCA today contrasts its past glory. It is an acutely depressed place, struggling with poverty, unemployment, low human capital, run-down built environment, dirtiness... etc.

The contrasting facets of OCA; present depression and past affluence, traditional fabric and needs for modern use, a local humble place with international heritage significance, all make OCA a city of contradictions. Problems associated with such contradictions threaten to lose OCA's unique identity. Moreover, the current image of poverty and clutter prevent the emergence of an adaptively reused and competitive OCA. For example, when the world sees OCA as linked to the stereotypes of poor immigrants; it becomes difficult to construct and consolidate a new image as an old place with modern use, which is competitive, especially in the eyes of the Aleppians.

The question, therefore, is the following: What can be done to overcome this contrast— the greatness (which is mainly from the past) and the present needs for development? How can we develop a new image that will sell OCA into the future?

The contrast between past and present of OCA, along with the OCA No.1 feature should give birth to the brand driver. One proposal is to create the OCA brand: **“Ziara”**. It covers the existing contrast. It brings a nostalgic past to today. It provides: meaning, modernity, link to past, adventure, and exploration.

Appeal to multiple audiences

The tourism brand will overlap with a brand for Aleppo (as a whole). This overlap will be present when target audiences. We have here 3 distinct audiences, with multiple segments, across: Live, Work and Invest. And they are served by a number of diverse organizations



Build on areas of strength

The Tourism Brand must be conceived in a manner that supports, in every level, maintaining OCA's unique identity features whilst contributing to increase its competitiveness. OCA's competitiveness is increased when it obtains the best return from the utilization of its assets.

The Tourism branding process, as an integral part of the positioning struggle, must identify what those assets are and which of those assets has the most potential of providing an outcome that is economically interesting, compatible with the city's existing values and social beliefs and non harmful for OCA's identity in the long term.

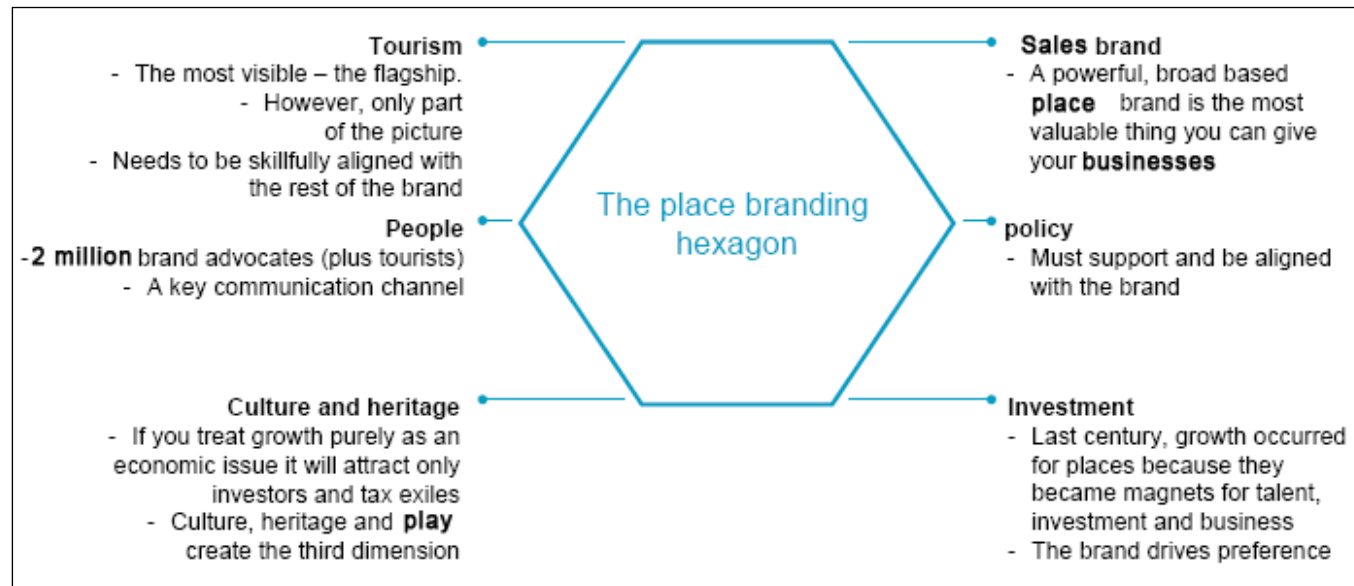
Branding must ensure that the strengths of OCA are properly connected to the needs of the marketplace, and, in areas in need for change, support a regeneration strategy that will bring economic renaissance.

During the research for the Tourism Policy for the Old City of Aleppo, professionals from different backgrounds were asked to identify areas of strength to build the new OCA brand platform. Their contributions are summarized below, they form a good starting point:

- **OCA Values:** unique, authentic, sensory, engaging,
- **OCA attributes:** the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, world heritage status, great architecture, multi-sensory place

Work on multiple dimensions

Again the Tourism Brand will overlap with the Aleppo Brand. This overlap is present in the dimensions of the brand. The place branding hexagon below illustrates how:

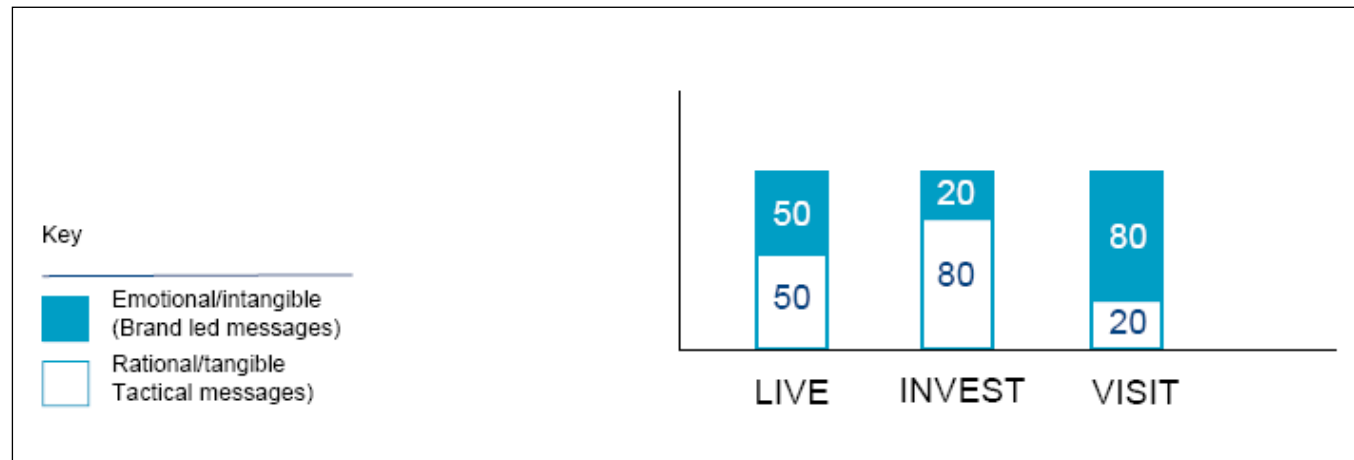


Source: modified figure, original from: The Economist, Brands and Branding, Place brands 2003

Work on multiple roles

The brand we will be selling is **OCA**; however, it will play multiple roles with varying degrees of influence, namely:

- **Live** - lifestyle vs. work / opportunity
- **Invest** - market suitability/ government policy/ talent pool vs. environment/ aspiration association
- **Visit** - Intrigue / fashion / aspiration vs. perceived negative images of terrorism and backwardness



must-haves

The brand must have the followings:

- **Truth** – we must be true to OCA, presenting a true, valid, believable, full and contemporary picture
- **Complexity and simplicity** – capture the richness of OCA but communicate this in a way that is simple, truthful, motivating and memorable
- **Aspiration** – we must present a credible, compelling vision for the future (not where we are today but where we want to be tomorrow)
- **Inclusive** – the brand should drive societal, political and economic objectives. For those less favored we must support them in other ways
- **Appeal** – the brand should be very appealing and unique.

Brand Visual Identity

The visual identity of the brand stems from the simple idea of bringing the past to today; **Ziara** (a visit) how Aleppo over the years has inspired many visitors, from all walks of life.

This has been captured not only through the name 'Ziara', but also through the use of lines as a graphic device. The 'lines of Citadel Bridge Pillars' create a sense of the energy and direction of the past, present and future ambitions of the city. Residents also feel the lines gently echo some of the distinctive physical characteristics of the city.

The following pages will explain the logo idea.

Logo



The graphic lines are a continuation from the Madinatuna logo. They are inspired from the columns of the Aleppo's Citadel entry bridge. The shape, proportions, and distribution of the lines are based, roughly, on the geometry of the Citadel's entry bridge.

The graphic lines have a number of representations:

- Historic: they represent the most important landmark of the City; its Citadel.
- Urban Form: they represent the skyline of modern cities (skyscrapers), a symbol that shows the future dimension of the CDS.
- Institutional: they represent order, organization, consistency, and structure that the CDS enjoys.
- Urban Life: the geometry of the lines reflect the personality of Aleppo; strong, bold, deeply rooted, and a bit ornamental.

The font used reflects the Ziara image as contemporary, modern, down to earth.

Colors

From Madinatuna Color Palette

These colors reflect the Brand's concern with the history, richness of culture and warmth of the city



Red Sandstone
PANTONE® 5005

C 0
M 50
Y 20
K 30

R 170
G 115
B 125



Brown
PANTONE® 7518

C 0
M 50
Y 40
K 70

R 90
G 60
B 50



Ochre
PANTONE® 7505

C 0
M 40
Y 60
K 60

R 110
G 80
B 50



Turquoise
PANTONE® 7475

C 50
M 0
Y 25
K 45

R 100
G 130
B 130



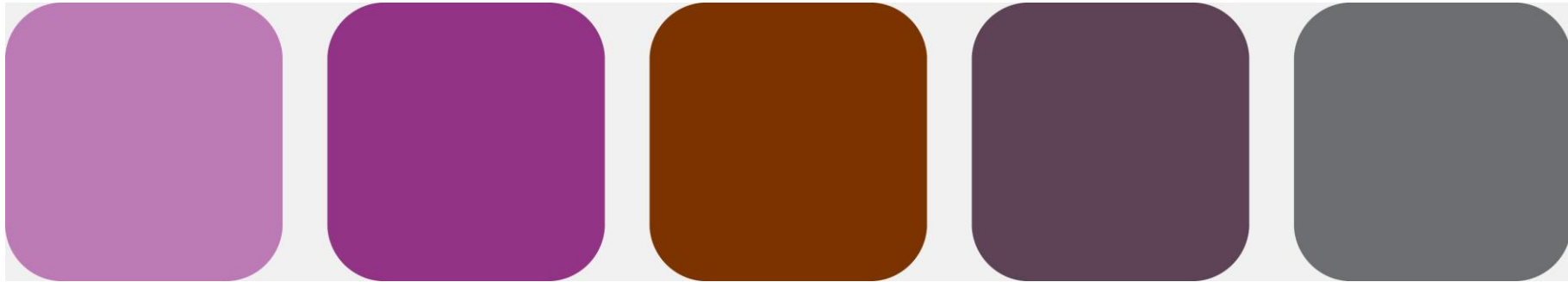
Slate
PANTONE® 432

C 20
M 5
Y 0
K 85

R 55
G 60
B 65

Variations From Madinatuna Color Palette

These colors are derived from the Madinatuna Color Palette and tailored to tourism needs.



Red Sandstone

Violet

Brown

Obregon

Grey

Tourist Map

Concept

The map is small, easy to handle, surprising, interesting to open/fold/flip, offers all useful info on 4 sections.





Tourist Signs

CONCEPT

The basic elements of the Tourist Trail sign system are the tourist trail logo/symbol, the shape, the layout, and the color.

The need for a tourist trail logo/symbol itself can hardly be overestimated. There is a huge need for a recognizable symbol that carries with it a weight of goodwill!! Something the tourists really need in Aleppo.

The rectangle with rounded edges follows the same spirit of the existing old city heritage landmarks signing.



COLORS

The color for old city heritage landmarks signing is brown, but there are other colors, shown on the right, which can to be considered for producing the tourist trail signing. We recommend that the brown color be used.

