

## The function on visual communication in the promotion of a city (as exemplified by the case of Gdańsk)

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The function of visual communication in the promotion of a city  
(as exemplified by the case of Gdańsk)  
*Znaczenie komunikacji wizualnej w promocji miasta  
na przykładzie Gdańska*

ABSTRACT

The promotion of Gdańsk is a risky task to undertake, given how easy, and – at the same time – how difficult it is. The contradiction stems from the city being so widely popular. Whoever does not know Gdańsk, if only from a photo of the Neptune Fountain? Who has not heard about the city at a history class? The development of an image strategy becomes quite a problem. Does a place that famous require any promotion at all, and if it does – what should it be like? Gdańsk's *genius loci* is, in fact, a mélange of realities. The interpenetration of spatial, urban, architectural and human planes, the twisted history of the city added, results in a unique atmosphere of the place. In order to reflect its nature, rich and varied means of expression should be used. It is just there that the visual communication comes to the rescue, allowing to make the message stronger both as far as content and image are concerned.

**Key words:** territorial marketing, promotion of the city, visual communication

## STRESZCZENIE

Promocja Gdańska jest zadaniem i łatwym, i bardzo trudnym zarazem. Skąd ta sprzeczność? No właśnie, któż nie zna Gdańska, choćby ze zdjęcia gdańskiego Neptuna? Każdy mieszkaniec Polski słyszał na lekcjach historii o tym ważnym, na tle kraju, mieście. Czy należy więc tak znane miejsce w ogóle promować, a jeśli tak, to w jaki sposób?

Promocja miasta stała się dla władz samorządowych sprawą oczywistą. Pokazać obraz Gdańska w sposób odmienny od innych, ukazujący niezwykłą atmosferę, która jest trudna do uchwycenia. Zaprezentować portret miasta, które jest melanzem dwóch rzeczywistości: przestrzennej, urbanistyczno-architektonicznej ze zbiorowością ludzką, bez której pełne pojmowanie miejskiego wizerunku jest niemożliwe.

Na przestrzeni ostatnich lat można mówić o rewolucji w sposobie promocji miasta. Zmiana dotyczy między innymi podejścia do komunikacji. Odkryto, że komunikacja jest kluczowa w diagnozowaniu rzeczywistych potrzeb rynku i odbiorców. Samorządowcy podejmujący decyzje dotyczące promocji porzucili też rutynowe myślenie, że jedyną formą upowszechniania informacji jest folder reklamujący miasto, ze stronami gęsto zadrukowanymi niezbędnymi informacjami. Odkryto i wykorzystano siłę komunikacji wizualnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** marketing terytorialny, promocja miasta, komunikacja wizualna

IMAGE OF A CITY AS THE OBJECT OF PROMOTIONAL  
ACTIVITIES

The analysis of how the visual communication has been employed to promote Gdańsk should be started from the determining of what the term of the “city” means. The author has drawn upon the definition presented by Tadeusz Markowski<sup>1</sup>, according to whom the word denotes “a system of interlinked elements clearly discernible from its environment, characterized by its structure and a set of rules governing it. The most essential elements of the structure is local authorities representing the interest of the self-governing community and striving to satisfy the needs of the people inhabiting the area of a specific city”. The presented definition fits well into the realities of the market economy re-established in Poland. It is within the realities that the operation of a city is subject to the legal rules provided by the legislation on local (municipal) government. The very existence of the local government has numerous affiliations with the modeling of the identity and image of the cities, all such places willing to distinguish themselves one from another and to fully present their values. Until recently, the main advantages

<sup>1</sup> T. Markowski, *Zarządzanie rozwojem miast*, Warsaw 1999, p. 13, 14.

the cities referred to in their competitive struggle were their size and location. Now it is the image existing in the minds of those being the addressees of the cities' efforts that comes to the fore. The image is an overriding feature, encapsulating various opinions and feelings, their "strength depending on the unique combination of various factors, material and intangible, rational and irrational. The mental pictures or imaginings of places, existing in human minds, influence people's decisions to visit a certain city or to invest and establish their business there"<sup>2</sup>. This is why the local government and the inhabitants should analyse, change and cherish the image being a total of the opinions and imaginings present in the human environment, doing that not just intentionally, but also in a planned and coherent way. "Hence it the marketing activity of the local government, their creativity and enterprise, expressing itself in the skills to shape the city's image by building up its desired identity that becomes particularly important"<sup>3</sup>. The practical implementation of the territorial marketing theory<sup>4</sup> entails the opportunity to use the numerous instruments which the discipline has in store.

2 Cf. a more extensive discussion by E. Glińska, M. Florek, A. Kowalewska, *Wizerunek miasta. Od koncepcji do wdrożenia*, Warsaw 2009.

3 *Ibidem*, p. 6.

4 It is defined as a social and managerial process aimed at the attainment of specific objectives by local entities, aimed at providing sustainable welfare to the inhabitants by satisfying the needs of the local partners. The characteristic features and determinants of the thus understood territorial marketing (viewed here, more narrowly, as the marketing of the cities), may include:

- acceptance of the marketing philosophy, as an approach to urban management, by the municipal authorities and local community;
- intentional orientation to the city's „customers”, their needs and preferences in any areas of urban operation and activity;
- analysis of internal capacities of the city, including, first of all, the city's offer, assessment of its competitive advantages, survey of the customers;
- monitoring and understanding of the phenomena present in the city's environment;
- systematic examination of potential buyers and anticipation of their behaviour;

As early as in 2007, a vast majority (87%) of the inhabitants of the agglomeration, when polled by Poland's TNS OBOP responded that the municipal authorities should take actions aimed at promotion of the city. Mere 7% found the activity an unnecessary expenditure. Given strong competition among big cities, evident in the light of numerous rankings held, local authorities attempt at attainment of a long-term competitive advantage by employing full sets of coherent measures intended to resolve all social and business issues. The objectives of such measures include<sup>5</sup>:

- a rise in number of domestic and foreign tourists;
  - development of projects to create jobs and assist in the growth of other lines of business;
  - attracting new inhabitants to increase the income gained by the city and to build up the city's intellectual potential, labour force supply, internal demand etc.;
  - gaining funds for the city's development (from domestic sources, the EU and other organizations);
  - arrangement of cultural/scientific/prestige-building/sporting events and the like;
  - attracting professionals from the fields of interest to the city;
- 
- setting marketing-oriented urban objectives (coherent with the directions of the city's development) and the marketing strategy of the city;
  - focusing on the selected targeted markets;
  - influencing the market by means of optimally selected marketing instruments;
  - coordination of all types of activities within the city, oriented to the achievement of its marketing objectives;
  - systematic control and adjustment of marketing activities and their results.
- For a broader discussion of the issue see: E. Glińska, M. Florek, A. Kowalewska, *Wizerunek miasta. Od koncepcji do wdrożenia (The Image of the City. From the Idea Up to Implementation)*, Warsaw 2009; M. Florek, *Podstawy marketingu terytorialnego (Essentials of Territorial Marketing)*, Poznań 2007.

5 *Ibidem*, s.14.

- placement of institutions as well as governmental organizations and NGOs, both domestic and international, within the city borders.

Considering the above said and bearing in mind the theory of territorial marketing, the brand, identity and image of the city can be talked of. "The image is the basis for the process of assessment and selection of the available offers. It is thanks to the image that the creation of certain emotional ties with the city becomes possible"<sup>6</sup>. For the municipal authorities and urban inhabitants the meaning of the image has become an essential element of the marketing strategy for their "homelands". The growing rivalry between the cities makes them appreciate the expressive, unique and strong image that allows them to distinguish themselves from their competitors. An image like that is developed over many years and is supposed to convey to those perceiving it various information about the place, to be further translated into a total of individual beliefs, impressions and interpretations. So while a city can be viewed as a broadly termed information platform where an exchange of people, ideas, goods and contacts takes place", its image results from the perception of the many messages that have reached human minds<sup>7</sup>. It is thus justified to state, after William Gartner<sup>8</sup>, that the image includes the elements that can be classified as:

- cognitive (the knowledge about a specific city);
- emotional (affective), representing the degree of a liking developed towards the city;

6 S. O'Leary, J. Deegan, *People, Pace, Place: Qualitative and quantitative images of Ireland as a tourism destination in France*, "Journal of Vacation Marketing" 2003, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 225.

7 Such a definition is consistent with the understanding of the image of a city, as presented by A. Szromnik in his book *Marketing terytorialny. Miasto i region na rynku*, Warszawa 2007.

8 A professor at the University of Minnesota, he discusses matters of the image in the paper *Image formation process*, "Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing" 1991, 2 (3), p. 191-212.

- behavioral (conative), or the readiness to undertake specific actions related to the place;
- evaluative, or the way in which the place in question is assessed.

The idea of a city image is inseparable from the concept of its identity which can be defined as a “set of historically conditioned features characteristic of the city, differentiating it from others, expressed by all the actions which are undertaken in the city to create its peculiar character, a personality, as it were”<sup>9</sup>. The identity includes certain fixed elements, such as the historical background, cultural heritage, location of the city and its natural conditions. As regards the variable elements, market situation, objectives of the city, organizational culture, intellectual potential and the available capital should be mentioned. The city’s identity is based on three main pillars:

- visual presentation of the city, its symbols (coat of arms, banner, colours);
- communication of the city with the inhabitants and with the wider audience;
- specific behaviour of the city’s representatives.

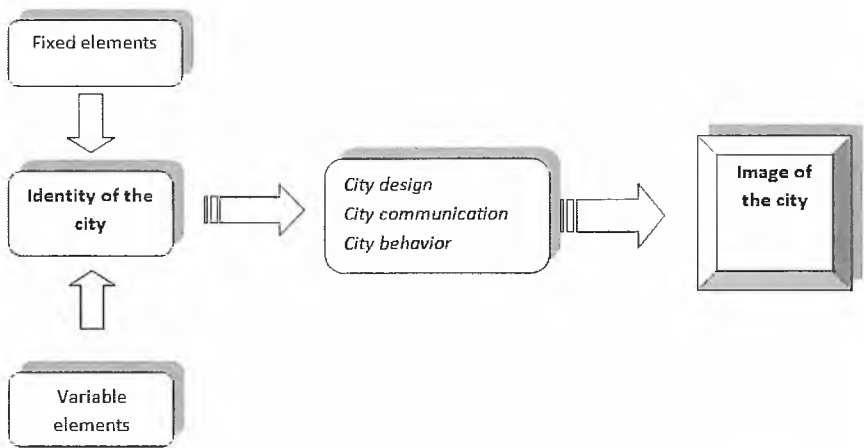
It is through the presentation of the fixed and variable elements of the city’s identity that its specific image is created (Figure 1).

The process of image formation is an important and responsible action, the fact resulting from the complexity of the city as a “brand” and the highly varied groups the prospective audience is composed of. Considering the strong competition, it is the sets of intangible factors, characteristic only of a specific place, that determine the uniqueness of the image.

9 A. Łuczak, *Istota tożsamości miasta*, “Samorząd Terytorialny” 2000, vol. 10, p. 47.



Figure 1. Identity vs. image of the city



Source: Own elaboration, based on: A. Łuczak, *Istota tożsamości miasta*, "Samorząd Terytorialny" 2000, vol. 10, p. 50.

To sum up, the identity of the city is considered to be an objective value, founded on the city's characteristic elements (its location, history, natural conditions). The image is an abstract value, formed by the perception of the city by members of the audience. Although just a reflection of the identity, the image is a vital factor of the city's social and business development.

#### IMAGE AND PERCEPTION OF THE CITY OF GDAŃSK BY THE INHABITANTS OF POLAND AND EUROPE

As Paweł Adamowicz, the Mayor of Gdańsk, has put it, the "brand is of crucial importance for the city. You cannot work effectively without being aware of it. The city and its environment keep changing, hence not only do you have to currently adjust it to the present needs, but meet them halfway. You are forced to do so owing to the ever stronger competition between countries, regions and

towns. The branding strategy responds to the questions concerning Gdańsk's identity, the city's unique character. It shows the differences between Gdańsk and the cities similar to ours, it presents whatever unique and unrepeatable is in Gdańsk, the city's main assets and the way in which it can make the most of its opportunities".

Gdańsk is, in fact, a unique place, one of a turbulent, dramatic and complicated history, many points of which do not lend themselves to simple interpretation. Since the very origin of the city it has been the destination of people from all over Europe, the newcomers seeking the opportunity to develop their artistic or academic talents and a safe haven against the religious persecutions here. It is hard to understand Gdańsk's history without taking into account its ethnic/national complexity, with two main nations – Poles and Germans dominating the city. The city's twisted fates is the subject of heated discussions among the historians of both nations, new interpretations of its Polish, German or multinational character being formulated time and again<sup>10</sup>.

Currently Gdańsk is the biggest business, academic and cultural centre of what is termed as the Gdańsk Coast. Abounding in historical monuments and natural attractions and offering an opportunity to actively relax on the Baltic, the city attracts about half a million of foreign tourists and 800 thousand domestic visitors annually.

In order to make decisions regarding the development of Gdańsk's brand by the year 2013, the city fathers decided to examine its image against the background of other cities of the Central and Eastern Europe<sup>11</sup>, since an image strongly appealing to human minds is vital for the launching of a successful promotional campaign. The survey showed that Gdańsk was a city familiar to and recognized by the

10 J. Kukliński, *Gdańsk wczoraj i dziś*, Marki 2005, p. 5.

11 The survey on the image of Gdańsk viewed against other cities of the Central and Eastern Europe was launched by TNS OBOP polling agency in 2007. The surveyed sample was 1,000 persons in each of the countries involved.

inhabitants of Europe. Among those polled, as many as 63% of the British, 89% of the Swedes and 78% of the Germans declared that they heard about Gdańsk. Among the city's main assets its Old Town, the Westerplatte peninsula, the August '80 strikes or Lech Wałęsa were most frequently named. In the opinion of the respondents, the attractions of Gdańsk place it among the country's three top cities, side by side with Warsaw and Cracow. Another survey launched to compare Gdańsk with other big cities of Poland was the report by PricewaterhouseCoopers, examining the city's image. Under the survey Gdańsk's rating was higher than the mean rating of the big cities of Poland<sup>12</sup>.

Having examined the results of various studies, the authorities of Gdańsk decided to promote the image of Gdańsk as the city of freedom. The decision-makers put particular stress on the proposed non-standard forms of communication. The city's branding strategy was developed considering that choice.

#### GDAŃSK'S BRANDING STRATEGY

The branding strategy for Gdańsk concerning the years 2008-2013, preceded by a thorough investigation and diagnosis of the situation, was titled *The Spirit of Freedom, The Spirit of Change*. When developing the brand of Gdańsk, it was the current image of the city that became the point of departure. There are not so many places in the world which, like Gdańsk, would play that important role in history (take, for instance, the outbreak of WWII, December 1970 tragedy, August 1980 victorious protest and the establishment of "Solidarity", the strikes of 1989 and the start-up of the movement that resulted in the overturn of communism in Europe, to name but a few events). Those very facts provided the foundation for the

12 Gdańsk's score was 103, compared to the mean value for big cities being 100.

positioning of the city's brand and determining its desired perception. As the creators of the strategy put it – Gdańsk has a very special aura which, on many occasions, would people unite and take up actions in the spirit of freedom, to change the world for the better. And the world does develop thanks to such places. Gdańsk compels you to think, forces you to act, sets the pace of changes, creates the future. It is Gdańsk that provides an impulse for the world to transform. In our days freedom does not necessarily associate with struggle, but rather with openness to changes, interest taken in the world, readiness to learn new ideas, get to know people, accept diversity. The main issue lies in stressing the city's openness to the future, and in adding a touch of lightness and emotion to the city's image.

The strategic goals of Gdańsk for the years 2008-2013 include<sup>13</sup>:

- building the perception of the city as a place where fresh ideas are born and changes for the better take place. An instrument for that is entering into cooperation and attracting to the city various organizations of public interest, endowments, ambassadors of ideas united by the desire to take up action for a better future;
- the erection of the European Solidarity Centre (ESC) and bringing into prominence its role as a major participant in the worldwide debate on the problems of contemporary world. Social mobilisation of the inhabitants and instilling in them a strong feeling of identification with their "homeland" (through the building of co-responsibility, involvement of the community in the citizen dialogue, integrating people to attain common objectives). Meanwhile, spreading the awareness that the quality of urban life depends, to a great extent, on the inhabitants themselves;
- building the image of Gdańsk as a city attractive to the young people;

13 Based on the Branding Strategy of Gdańsk 2008-2013.

- making an efficient use of the city's position as an organiser of EURO 2012 to present it to the world as a perfect place where major sporting events can be held.

The coordination and monitoring of the undertaken activities rests in the hands of the Office for Promotion of the City, reporting to the Mayor of Gdańsk.

The analyzed strategy reveals a true revolution in the thinking about the image of the city and its promotion, having taken place in the minds of the local decision-makers. The changes concern, *inter alia*, the way of communication with the world. As it is expected to be efficient, new means of the communication are needed and the structure of those existing should be changed, to make the message conveyed better audible. A good illustration of how the process in question goes is tourist folders, in their traditional (hard copy) format – the means of communication so well-known and so welcomed by their users. How should they be edited in order to attract people to the city, and to show its genuine *genius loci* ?

#### FOLDER AS A CARRIER OF THE CITY'S IMAGE

Few references can be found in the literature to the ways in which promotional materials aimed at the creation or maintenance of the image (as planned by those developing it) are edited. It could be thus inferred that the task is rather simple. When analysing various promotional materials, quite different conclusions may be arrived at, though. Among the many forms of communication employed to promote the city nowadays, folders are well-worth paying attention to. These, as the term rightly indicates, contain lots of photographs and make up an useful promotional tool, their traditional form being still more popular than the electronic version. Considering high competition among the folders available in the market, development of an interesting and attractive graphic form for them, displaying an

air of novelty, is a task that requires a team of people having a brilliant idea and wide, interdisciplinary knowledge. When designing a tool like that, the perception and notions about the city, as a network of space, history, historical monuments and people must be taken into account. As B. Jałowiecki puts it, the „perception, being a total of views, identification, comparison, classification, assessment and evaluation of the recipients is related to their experience, expectations and mindset”<sup>14</sup>. The imagined picture, says Barbara Pisarska<sup>15</sup> “goes before human judgment and behaviour, and is modified by the emotional attitude towards someone or something. The imaginings created by the community are extremely complex and require both visual and verbal encoding. In order to feel comfortable, man needs a mental map of the natural and social environment in which he/she lives, as well as that to which the person sets off. It is the frame of reference, used both for the person’s own orientation and for having the image of the world and the human being’s position in it”. It is thus worthwhile to refer to location in the folders, so as to give the reader a chance to find out where their position in the world is. Those creating folders should be aware that both the spontaneously formed and the reasonably based images are also shaped by mass-media, the clichés concerning the place, and – last but not least – the stories or gossips heard. This wide array of pieces of information should not be neglected but taken into account as a factor having impact on the conception of the folder, since it is bound to help develop the publication both in terms of the text and graphic material. The results of numerous studies have shown that modern communication is saturated with visual content. “We live in a visual epoch, with pictures playing main role in interpersonal

14 B. Jałowiecki, *Percepcja, waloryzacja i przyswajanie przestrzeni*, [in:] *Percepcja, scenariusze i przedsiębiorczość*, ed. by B. Jałowiecki, Warsaw 1989, p. 75.

15 B. Pisarska, *Zasady kształtowania wizerunku turystycznego poprzez materiały promocyjne*, “Turystyka i Hotelarstwo” 2008, 14, p. 155.

communication. They carry information, knowledge and emotions, appealing to the subconsciousness of the recipient. The abundance of the surrounding images shapes our sensitivity, the thinking and the perception of people. They turn away from verbal communication, to be replaced by visual. That very supplanting of content by images is a sign of our times<sup>16</sup>. Not that the text-based communication should be abandoned, though; the textual content included should, however, be reduced to the required minimum. The presented information should be provided interestingly and contain a central thought to weave a story around it, using both text and image. An important element is a slogan including an easy-to-memorise word or phrase. The latter is expected to catch the attention of the audience thanks to a promise it brings, an announcement of something interesting coming or a confirmation of certain facts. Its content may be general, universal, or – just the opposite – it may refer to a specific place or its characteristic features. The slogan should be evocative, appeal to the recipient's imagination, be attractive, original in its wording, surprise one with unexpected word connections, prove catchy. According to Antoni Benedikt, „a good slogan (catchphrase) should be worded so as not to leave any room for a repartee. Its task is to draw the attention of the audience and suggest that they should behave in a certain way, so that communication be, in fact, ended and an action, if any, induced. A slogan rules out a dialogue, it has thus to be memorised rather than discussed in order to find out whether it is right or wrong.”<sup>17</sup>

To sum up, a good slogan should:

- be concise (3-5 words);
- prove original and versatile;
- draw the recipient's attention to the place in question;

16 M. Łosiewicz, *Rola obrazu w komunikacji społecznej*, [in:] *Komunikacja wizualna w przestrzeni społecznej*, ed. by A. Obrębska, Łódź 2009, p. 183.

17 A. Benedikt, *Reklama jako proces komunikacji*, Wrocław 2004, p. 115.

- be coherent with the idea of the city's image;
- induce the audience to take actions;
- take into account the visitors' needs and desires;
- carry the relevant emotions (being its indispensable element);
- have an artistic form and display affiliation with poetry;
- respect legal and moral aspects and market customs.

In her book, Krystyna Wójcik provides a recipe for a good slogan, the features of which include: "originality, novelty, truthfulness, rhythm, succinctness (up to 5 words). When coining the slogan, idioms, professional jargon, ambiguity should be avoided. The slogan must have an appropriate phonetic and graphic structure. It should refer to the idea which is sufficiently hot and has the air of authenticity for the recipient, e.g. that of ecology, patriotism, the desire of freedom, friendship or safety"<sup>18</sup>.

The content must not be overly detailed and should thus not be oversaturated with an excessive number of dates, names, nor should it include descriptions containing specialist terms. A scholarly style makes the reader immediately weary with the presented text. Those developing folders must remember about whatever should be underlined, enumerated and printed in bold. Paragraphing should not be neglected, either. This allows the reader to identify the fragments with which he/she would like to get acquainted himself/herself first or to easily find them when necessary. A good solution is sorting the text out using frames or colour blocks. Colours, however, must be used sparsely, and those too gaudy and intense should be avoided, since rather than entice the reader to browse through the folder they may actually discourage him/her to do so. Pages with blocks resembling colourful blots do not allow one to focus the sight on the content, and it is hard to match the look of the text to the colourful extravaganza of the background. Meanwhile, too great number of too gaudy colours results in the readers' eye becoming too weary to

18 K. Wójcik, *Public relations od A do Z*, Warsaw 2001.



allow him/her read the text. The content overwhelmed by the colours is not likely to appeal to the reader and is thus neglected. The right choice of the size and style of the fonts is a vital part of the work done on the folder, which is particularly true when it comes to selecting the contrast between the colour of the font and the background. The letters are definitely better legible when dark fonts are presented against a light background. If dark background is to be used after all, the light fonts should be greater and thicker.

Reading the developed text a few, or even a dozen or so times, must never be omitted, as it allows to eliminate the many minute errors likely to appear in it. Tiny though they might seem, they may, nevertheless happen to be conspicuous and may be attributed to the authors' non-professional approach to the task, if not to negligence. Spelling should be paid attention to as well, just like the correct writing of foreign family and place names, the application of small and capital letters, syllabification, the use of spaces or the avoidance of what is termed as the "widows" and "orphans", or the single words dangling at the end of a new line, before the beginning of a new paragraph (the same holding true for the conjunctions left in such a position). Good selection of texts and a transparent layout of those is also crucial for the appearance of the folder. Barbara Pisarska reminds that, the right graphic composition rules being observed, the "text should make an interesting whole together with the photos and the captions underneath. The following rules of precedence must be obeyed:

- big images before small ones;
- coloured images before those black-and-white;
- warm tones preceding the cool ones;
- people before historical monuments;
- children before adults;
- actions preceding the images of stillness;
- small titles going before the big ones;
- and the decorative inscriptions before the ordinarily printed ones.

From the aesthetic point of view, the most important components of the style are shapes and colours. The latter are vital both for distinction and for decorative purposes. Colours have a language of their own, evoke specific emotions and atmosphere. Though everybody perceives colours in the same way, the emotions stirred by their application may be different with different people. Usually, a mixture of colours is more advantageous than monotony, as better opportunities for the creation of the impression of depth are offered and certain elements become more conspicuous. Where colours are combined, the safest solution is to use various shades of the same colour (or the colours neighbouring each other in the natural spectrum). Risky, though interesting, are combinations of contrasting colours<sup>19</sup>. Needless to say, the photos to be printed have to be ones of perfect quality – i.e. sharp, nicely set and framed. Just as important are the captions underneath (actually read more often than the main text); these have to be invented particularly carefully. Each folder should contain information about its authors (or the institution ordering the booklet), as the promotional character of a folder-type publication is obvious also in that respect.

As a tool of promotion, folder is a popular form, gladly used by many a local government to promote the image of cities or regions. A good and nicely developed folder is bound to become an effective tool of promotion.

#### GDAŃSK'S IMAGE REALITIES IN FOLDER-TYPE PUBLICATIONS<sup>20</sup>

Gdańsk counts among the cities that have come to believe in the power of image; their promotional strategies, implemented in the

19 B. Pisarska, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

20 This part of the paper has been based on the author's own materials and the folders made available by the Mayor of Gdańsk's Office for Promotion of the City.

day-to-day practice, being based on the concept. Those responsible for the creation and promotion of the image of the city are familiar with folders as a means of promotion and use them in their work.

The author decided to present just two, selected from many others, folders published in the period when Gdańsk was running for the title of the European Capital of Culture in 2016. Referring to the Branding Strategy for Gdańsk, according to which document the creation of the city's image should be based on the notion of freedom (as present in so many aspects of the urban life), it was decided to employ that very motive as the title and the leading theme of the materials. Consequently, the first of the folders was titled *Gdańsk – Space of Freedom, the other: Gdańsk – Freedom of Culture, Culture of Freedom*.

The inspiration for the development of the image-forming publication *Gdańsk – Space of Freedom* in 2009 was the celebration of two important anniversaries falling into the same year: the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of regaining national sovereignty [and the first (partly) free parliamentary elections] and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. Both facts, given their importance and international publicity (reflected, *inter alia*, in the interest shown by mass media) were of special meaning for the promotion of the brand of Gdańsk – the city of freedom. The expected participation of special guests (heads of states, representatives of governments and the EU, and opinion-forming media) in the celebrations provided a perfect opportunity for the promotion of the city and for the presentation of its image, based on the new style of thinking. There occurred a chance to alter the city's current image, associated hitherto either with the turbulent history or historical monuments, to be replaced by a vision of Gdańsk as the city of freedom, an important place on the map of contemporary Europe, an intrepid, fearless city, one keeping pace with the spirit of the time, giving room to new thoughts, able to provide breakthrough solutions, a forum of hot and creative debate on the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The reminding of the phenomenon of "Solidarity", the Gdańsk-born citizen movement which led

to the collapse of communism in Europe using peaceful methods seems to provide a clear evidence that the freedom has been, from time immemorial, the virtue most cherished here.

The publication contains materials presenting the city's greatest tourist attractions, both the richness of the architecture and cultural heritage, and the natural values of the coastal location of the city, surrounded by the Tri-City Landscape Park. The folder promotes Gdańsk as the World Capital of Amber, referring to the city's vast range of amber tradition. A section presenting the city as a perfect place to make investments nicely supplements the publication.

Considering its purpose, the publication has a lavish, sophisticated artwork and rather unusual shape, as it is composed of sheets in three various formats (the fact alluding to the multi-dimensional nature of the place). The folder has, altogether, 46 sheets in three formats: small (140 × 105 mm) – 24 sheets, medium (280 × 210 mm) – 15 sheets and large (297 × 230 mm) – 7 sheets. Texts and photos are placed on the sheets in all the three formats. The folder appeals to the reader's emotions mostly through the carefully selected photographs. The concise texts present the city's main advantages, at the same quoting the statements on Gdańsk, as made by the celebrities having visited the place. All of them confirm the unique nature of Gdańsk. The selection of colours is of primordial importance here and those used perfectly match the matters discussed. White font colour dominates in the publication. Against the background of coloured photos it gives the text the air of peace and order.

The target group for the folder is representatives of the opinion-forming circles, people from the world of politics, mass media and business, culture and academic communities, prospective investors, promoters of important events, undertakings and operators, tour operators – both domestic and foreign. It was handed to the guests arriving in Gdańsk on the occasion of:

- the celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of regaining national sovereignty and the first (partly) free parliamentary elections;

- the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War II in September 2009;
- the gala concert of Leszek Możdżer, held in Brussels to celebrate the Independence Day.

It is also handed to all those being opinion leaders. The folder is regarded as an element of the promotion of the city, a specific tool of communication.

The other publication discussed here is the *Gdańsk – Freedom of Culture, Culture of Freedom* folder.

The title includes the adage of Gdańsk developed when the city was running for the title of the European Capital of Culture in 2016. Also in that case, in accordance with the Branding Strategy for Gdańsk, the image was built around the notion of the broadly termed freedom. In its worldwide perception Gdańsk is a symbol of freedom, in all – political, social and cultural aspects of the word. The city is renowned for its broad intellectual horizons, and is viewed as a place open to changes and abounding in fresh ideas. Gdańsk is a forum of debates where bold ideas are presented, a space for dialogue, free thought and cultural ideas. The intention to present it materialised in a publication divided into 13 parts portraying the diversity of the local culture, its unusual richness and multi-dimensional character. The individual entries are supplied with original, expressive photographs illustrating various spheres of creation in Gdańsk. Each part of the folder opens with an introduction made up of selected statements or fragments of works of outstanding citizens of the city that have had a say in its culture. Using the red colour as dominating, the folder presents a wide array of artists and personalities, various cultural institutions and events and festivals of importance. The visual communication is additionally backed by striking, original photographs showing the genuine face of Gdańsk culture and its artists: uncommon and varied, bold and intrepid, capable of touching issues hard to discuss and suggesting daring answers to tough questions (not necessarily suiting the tastes of the public). The publication invites

the audience to enter the world of the city's artists and their works, presenting the complexity, richness and extremely wide spectrum of the artistic activity. The folder clearly shows how much the city can offer in the sphere of culture and encourages the reader to come and make the most of its many offers.

The folder is addressed to the inhabitants of the city, domestic and foreign tourists, participants of artistic events and creators of the latter, representatives of the opinion-forming circles, mass media, culture and science, promoters of events and undertakings, home and foreign tour operators.

The discussed publications provide an excellent example of the changes that take place in the field of communication concerning the city's image and its promotion.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The folders that were put to analysis in this paper are both effectual and spectacular. An innovative approach to the tasks, the application of new solutions concerning both the shape and content allowed the authors to avoid imitating the existing publications and prevented the use of stereotyped ideas, the case being rather infrequent in modern world, where slavish repetition of the assumptions made by others leads to the replication of errors and lack of professional skills in the field is revealed as a result.

The advantages of the presented folders lie in the right convention adopted, appropriately selected leading theme and its well-thought implementation with a due set of artistic means employed. Rather than treat the reader to long and unattractive passages, the authors have resorted to the use of short quotations or slogans, well carrying the main thought and nicely complementing the visual presentation of the topics discussed. Proper selection of colours, fitting the issues touched, makes the content dynamic. And the mosaic of

colours does not evoke the impression of a gaudy chaos. Instead, they match one another to provide a harmonious whole. It can be thus stated without exaggeration that the presented publications are works of art of its kind, strongly appealing to their readers. The use of visual communication has added a new meaning to the ways of presentation of the image of the city. It can be thus hoped that the folders will, in fact, set new standards for the approach to the application of visual communication.

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