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BrandStudio Dong Thap

Best Place Brand Strategy

Dong Thap



Dong Thap is an agricultural province in the south of Vietnam. Located only 150km from Hochiminh city (the biggest city of Vietnam), the province seems unfamiliar even to Vietnamese people because of its poor infrastructure and information systems. In 2014, the provincial authority in conjunction with Say Cheese developed a "Dong Thap Branding Plan"

The task was to build a coherent, focused brand identity which can create an impressive brand image in the perception of stakeholders and to alter the negative stereotype of a province which in the past has been thought of as poor and remote

We also needed to reposition Dong Thap as an ideal place for agricultural investment, ecotourism and to enhance the pride of inhabitants about where they live.

With the above purposes, our plan's long term objective is to make Dong Thap one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Mekong Delta (South-west part of Vietnam), be listed in the Top 5 of investment attracting provinces in the region and the top 10 of ideal places to live in Vietnam.

The collaborations among stakeholders in the place are weak due to the lack of a common shared vision and Place Marketing is a brand new concept in the transitional economy of Vietnam, especially in a "remote" province such as Dong Thap.

Despite these challenges, Dong Thap has also many positive images: The biggest rice, catfish, tropical flower and mango producers in Vietnam. The place is well known as the home of the lotus (the national flower of Vietnam). In the most recent 8 consecutive years, it ranks in the top 3 of Provincial Competitiveness Index (by Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry) which reflects its friendliness to the business sectors of local government.

Our place branding strategy is aimed at promoting Tourism, investment, the living environment and products from Dong Thap .

Vietnamese and international tourists are targeted (focused on Vietnamese in the first 3 three years) as well as agricultural and tourism investors and start-ups -

After research, the following Dong Thap identities were selected

- "Lotus",
- "Green and Pure Nature",
- "Friendly People",
- "Buddhism culture" and
- "Friendly Government"

Based on the above identities we selected images to reflect a place of plentiful agricultural potential, ecotourism and worth to live. The "Lotus flower" was chosen as the symbol of the province with two characteristics: Pure and Friendly and a lotus mascot was also born. The logo and slogan is: Dong Thap - Thuan Khiet Nhu Hon Sen (As pure as a lotus)

We wanted to position Dong Thap as a



place of GREEN and PURE agriculture which supplies high quality GREEN products and a place of ecotourism with PURE lotuses, wetland landscapes and buddhism culture.

In addition we wanted to establish Dong Thap as a FRIENDLY place to investors, entrepreneurs and tourists and a PURE and FRIENDLY place to enjoy living.

Main activities in the branding plan included building vision, mission and value statements and a coherent visual identity programme and a "Made in Dong Thap" mark for green products.

On 25 May 2015, the Dong Thap Branding Plan was officially approved by the People's Committee of Dong Thap.

Key tasks for the first year included propagating the vision and content of the Dong Thap Branding Plan to all stakeholders, especially to the officers in the local government system.

We also needed to apply the visual identity program of Dong Thap, and start developing community tourism. We are producing tourist gifts with the image of Lotus mascot and launched The "beauty of Dong Thap" photo contest to enhance the pride of local people about its province

After over one year of implementation of the plan, Dong Thap has emerged as a phenomenal case of place branding in Vietnam.

The number of tourists increased by 35% and the region has caught the attention of investors from home and abroad. Dong Thap is highly ranked in PCI index in 2016 and the lotus mascot has become a symbol of the Dong Thap people with branded souvenirs warmly welcomed by tourists. ●