

AGNIESZKA PERZYŃSKA<sup>1</sup>

## Brand identity of Lubuskie Voivodeship

*„ Modern cities need a deep, original  
and distinctive image to arouse emotions  
and attract people. They need a soul.”*

Florian Berci

### 1. Introduction

The aim of the article is to present how big a role a brand fulfils, which is a determinant of the development of economy in Lubuskie Voivodeship. Building a strong brand becomes a task for many years. The effects can be noticed earlier through promotion actions focused on organizing all kinds of cultural events and fixtures. Information civilization is inseparably connected with computer and modern mass media.

A contemporary man lives and functions in a media world. The achievements of technique enter into all spheres of our life.

An important role in building a brand regional is attributed to local governments,

M. Sc. Agnieszka Perzyńska  
University of Zielona Góra



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1 The author is a scholar within Sub-measure 8.2.2 Regional Innovation Strategies, Measure 8.2 Transfer of knowledge, Priority VIII Regional human resources for the economy Human Capital Operational Programme co-financed by European Social Fund and state budget.

which undertake such initiatives more and more actively. A good tourist offer or economic facility for potential entrepreneurs are not sufficient enough. Regions, which contribute to facilitating their image are doomed to failure.

"From the perspective of principles and goals of a current regional development of Poland, the analysis of a regional development from the point of view of changes emerging in the economy seems to be the most significant issue. It is not necessary to prove that what will decide about the success of realized programmes of development and restructuring is the economic growth. Thus, the most important context of the notion of „regional development“ in the present conditions of Poland should be the economic context. Therefore, a regional development is a process of an economic nature to a great extent, which is based on the transformation of regional factors and resources (internal and external) into goods and services. Its main feature becomes the economic growth of a region, that is the increase of the production of goods and services due to the quantitative increase of production factors used (material and personal) as well as the improvement of their efficiency. The quantitative changes should be accompanied by qualitative and structural ones"(Adamiak 2001, p. 29).

The technical and technological progress is also a significant aspect of regional development, which is formulated in a quality and innovativeness of goods and services produced in a region, enriching the range in the changes of material system of production and productive apparatus, which causes more and more effective use of elements and regional spectrums.

Examining the problem of a brand, its development, it is first of all necessary to define the very meaning of the notion.

## **2. The essence of the brand**

In marketing literature a brand is defined as „name, term, sign, symbol, picture or combination of these elements created or elaborated in order to mark a product (or service) as well as to distinguish it from competitors' offer"(Kotler, Armstrong 1989, p. 248). Such a "non-distinctive" definition brings the whole problem of building a brand to inventing the name of a brand and the graphic sign that accompanies it.

A brand: in a narrow interpretation, according to the definition of AMA (American Marketing Association), is a term, symbol or graphic design or their combination, whose aim is to identify goods and services and to distinguish them from the goods or services offered by competition. However, a broader meaning attributed to a brand is a bundle of functional and emotional values,

which communicates and influences emotions. Brands have a multidimensional structure: they function as a logo, are interpreted within positioning, are treated as a bundle of values, vision/mission, identity, image. All definitions of a brand highlight that it is consumers' experience – in other words, „brand” is identity, values etc. imprinted in a consumer's mind, the “image” of reality he possesses. Brands „represent clarity, certainty, consistency, status, affiliation – they represent identity. A brand refers to six implications, which should be taken into consideration in its description: features, benefits, value, culture, personality, users.

According to Lesie de Chernatony (2003, p. 34) „a brand is a term, symbol or graphic design or their combination, whose goal is to identify goods or services of one seller or group of sellers as well as to distinguish them from goods and services offered by competition”.

A brand according to Ph. Kotler (1994, p. 410) is: „Name, term or combination created to identify goods and services of a seller or their group and to distinguish them among competition”.

Regional brand is a brand that uses the region to its development, promoting it at the same time among its customers by making the region more known and sought after among potential investors.

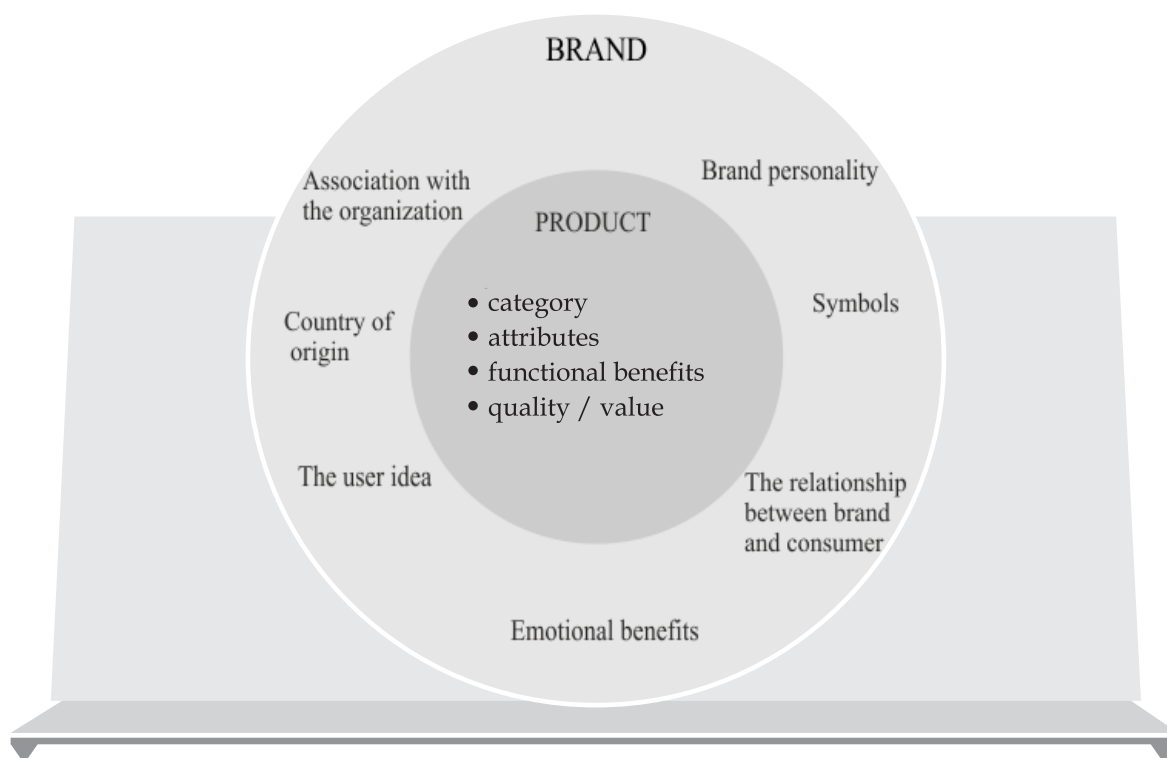
It is possible to distinguish three meanings of a brand:

- range position (product), line of product, family of products or whole range offered by a particular company,
- trademark,
- market image of a product, a set of products or/and an organization which offers them.

For marketing reasons a combination of those all meanings in one becomes a key element. It is possible to assume that: A brand is a product, which provides functional benefits plus added values, where consumers appreciate it sufficiently in order to purchase.

The brand of a region can be a name, term, symbol, inscription, pattern, image and their more or less complex combinations, which are also distinguished with the shape of letters and colours. A brand is not a real but a symbolic reflection of the product's properties as well as functional and emotional benefits offered to purchasers. The brand of a product is an aggregated category, within which it is possible to distinguish its different types. From the point of view of an entity being the brand's disposer, we can distinguish the brand of: productive organization and trading company. Taking the links of the brand with products and their types into consideration it is possible to distinguish the following brands: individual, collective and combined.

A brand is closely connected with a product. However, it is not allowed to identify these notions with each other (fig. 1). In a marketing context, a product is a set of functional features. It has neutral properties, i.e. technology used, content, whereas it does not include speculative associations, symbols, which appear in customers' minds and add values to products, which are the result of private beliefs. They can concern the organization, emotional benefits, symbols. Such an added value, which was created in the consumer's mind, makes them get satisfaction from using the product and they willingly purchase it again.



**Fig. 1. Brand versus product in a marketing context**

Source: D. Aaker, E. Joachimsthaler, Brand Leadership, Free Press Business, London 2002, p. 52

### 3. The characteristic of Lubuskie Voivodeship

Lubuskie Voivodeship is situated in a western part of Poland and abuts with Germany from the west at the distance of 198,8 kilometers. Taking the area into

consideration Lubuskie is one of the smallest regions in Poland - 13,99 thousands of km<sup>2</sup>, which makes 4,5 percent of Poland's territory (smaller provinces are the following: opolskie, śląskie and świętokrzyskie).

Lubuskie is divided into 14 districts, including 2 municipal districts and 83 communes (9 urban, 41 rural and 33 urban-rural). The province belongs to the group of urbanized regions of Poland, where the percentage of urban population reaches the value of 63,9 percent (this coefficient equals 61,2 percent for Poland). The number of population of the province is over 1 million people, which makes 2,7 percent of the population of the whole country – the least in Poland. The region has two main administrative centres: Gorzów Wielkopolski (the seat of the province governor) and Zielona Góra (the seat of the province marshal).

There is 2,4 percent of GNP of Poland produced in Lubuskie Voivodeship. In comparison to other provinces it is characterized with a small number of people employed in industry – 2,4 percent of domestic employment and it provides 2 percent of total value of sold production in industry, which situates the region on the last place in the country. The main industry sectors of Lubuskie Voivodeship are trade, industry of timber processing, textile industry, and also farm and food industry.

The biggest investments of foreign capital on the territory of the province are the following:

- Kostrzyn Paper S.A. in Kostrzyn (Trebruk AG, Sweden) – paper factory,
- SE Bordnetze Sp. z o.o.(former Volkswagen Elektro-Systemy Sp. z o.o.) in Gorzow Wlkp. (Volkswagen, Germany) – producer of electric bunches for cars produced by Volkswagen,
- Pharmaceutical Company Biowet in Gorzow Wlkp. (Askia AG, Switzerland) – producer of veterinary drugs,
- Swedwood part of IKEA group (Sweden) – furniture factory in Zbąszynek and Babimost,
- Kronopol Sp. z o.o. in Żary (Kronospan AG, Switzerland) – factory of chipboard,
- Rockwool Polska Sp. z o.o. in Cigacice (Rockwool, Denmark) – mineral wool factory,
- Steinpol in Zielona Góra (Bruno Steinhoff group, Germany) – furniture factory in Zielona Góra,
- Stilon S.A. in Gorzow Wlkp. (trade group Rhodia – French pharmaceutical-chemical group Rhône-Poulenc) – factory of chemical highly-processed articles,
- Podravka Polska Sp. z o.o. in Kostrzyn (Podravka, Croatia) – factory from food industry.

The main foreign receiver of the production of Lubuskie Voivodeship is Germany. According to the Marshal Office of Lubuskie Voivodeship, almost 70 percent of goods and services is exported on German market by Lubuskie companies.

Lubuska Land is one of the most attractive regions of western Poland. Numerous forests, lakes, landscape parks and nature reserves as well as monuments attract a lot of tourists.

According to the Central Statistical Office in the peak of the tourist season there were 319 accommodation places prepared for tourists visiting Lubuskie province, which provided 22,7 thousands of accommodation, including 11 thousands of all year accommodation.

Lubuskie province is a charming, modern home for citizens, a dynamic region with the future for investments and an undiscovered, non-crowded harbour for tourists.

Lubuskie Voivodeship has a number of features, which make the benefits offered by Lubuskie Brand more trustworthy. It is worth being, investing in Lubuskie province, as it is situated by the western border of the country, at the intersection of important routes. There is a dynamic Kostrzyńsko Słubicka Special Economic Zone. Lubuskie province is a national leader of using EU resources and it can use even over 90% of granted funds. As many as 40 projects of Lubuskie entrepreneurs were granted financing, due to which the companies will be able to enhance their innovative potential. The Voivodeship is characterized by high living standards of citizens and guests visiting them. It has its source in several features of the region, such as closeness to nature, middle-sized city centres (lack of metropolitan noise), it is easy to get to big metropolis as well as to the wilderness from the region. Almost 50% of the voivodeship territory is covered with forests, there are two national parks here (Drawieński and Ujście Warty), eight landscape parks and also numerous water reservoirs. The cultural richness of the region results from the possibility of deriving from many cultural traditions (heritage of natives and post-war newcomers from different parts of Poland), and also the proximity of huge city centres (Berlin, Wrocław, Poznań). The region cultivates wine traditions and it is well-known from its cabarets and music festivals (Przystanek Woodstock).

The brand region of Lubuskie Voivodeship was created in May 2012 and it realizes the following priorities:

- creates the image of the province as a place which is worth investing, living and which is worth visiting,

- supports the activities of province authorities heading for the development of business infrastructure and the province entrepreneurship,
- enhances the sense of self-esteem of the province residents with the conviction that Lubuskie voivodeship is their place on the Earth,
- fulfils the role of a flagship of the region, which is recognizable abroad.

Lubuskie Voivodeship involves more and more often its promoting actions in the realization of the economic development of the region.

Brand and image experts conducted the research concerning the degree in which Lubuskie province is recognizable in Poland and in Germany. The citizens of the province were also asked about their feelings. They talked to the residents of Zielona Góra, Gorzów, tourists, investors, managers of local companies. The research included 500 Lubuskie citizens and 600 inhabitants of the following provinces: dolnośląskie, wielkopolskie and zachodniopomorskie, 300 inhabitants of Warsaw, Łódz and Cracow. The questions were also answered by 300 inhabitants of three German lands - Saxony, Brandenburgia and Lower Saxony, and 100 of Berliners.

We associate the region mainly with the nature. – The results of the studies conducted among our neighbours look more attractive. It turns out that the inhabitants of nearby provinces have difficulty in determining the borders of Lubuskie province and mentioning its particular advantages. Lubuskie province stays still undiscovered for them – according to Andrzej Gołoś from ARC Market and Opinion, which prepared the studies for Bakalie Studio.

The inhabitants of Poznań and Wrocław visit willingly the province for a short period of time, a weekend rest. – In their opinions the Voivodeship is regarded as the oasis of peace and silence. – They often mentioned wine traditions as well – added Gołoś.

And how is Lubuskie province perceived by Germans? In no way, the very name of the region is not known for them. They are not able to mention main cities. – The cultural and tourist offer is not known by potential customers from the western border. Lubuskie province is only recognizable because Germans arrive here for shopping and for this reason they build their image about the place. For a German tourist, Lubuskie province must start existing, be visible, distinctive – says Gołoś. The lack of visibility is however better than common negative associations –image experts claim.

According to the research conducted by branding Studio Bakalie, Lubuskie Voivodeship is characterized by such icons as: Zielona Góra, cabarets, wine, Falubaz, Gorzów Wlkp., Stilon, Stal.

A strong brand, which is a determinant of the economic development:

- identifies the region (makes decisions easier),
- is the „abbreviation“ of its features and advantages,
- distinguishes the region highlighting its unique features,
- crystallizes a promise, which the region communicates,
- allows building, renovating, rebuilding or/and enhancing the image of the region,
- enriches the region with emotions, values = added value; generates emotions,
- speaks one voice – common vision, clear communication, one concept for many actors,
- enhances the identity and self-esteem of inhabitants,
- increases efficiency and effectiveness.

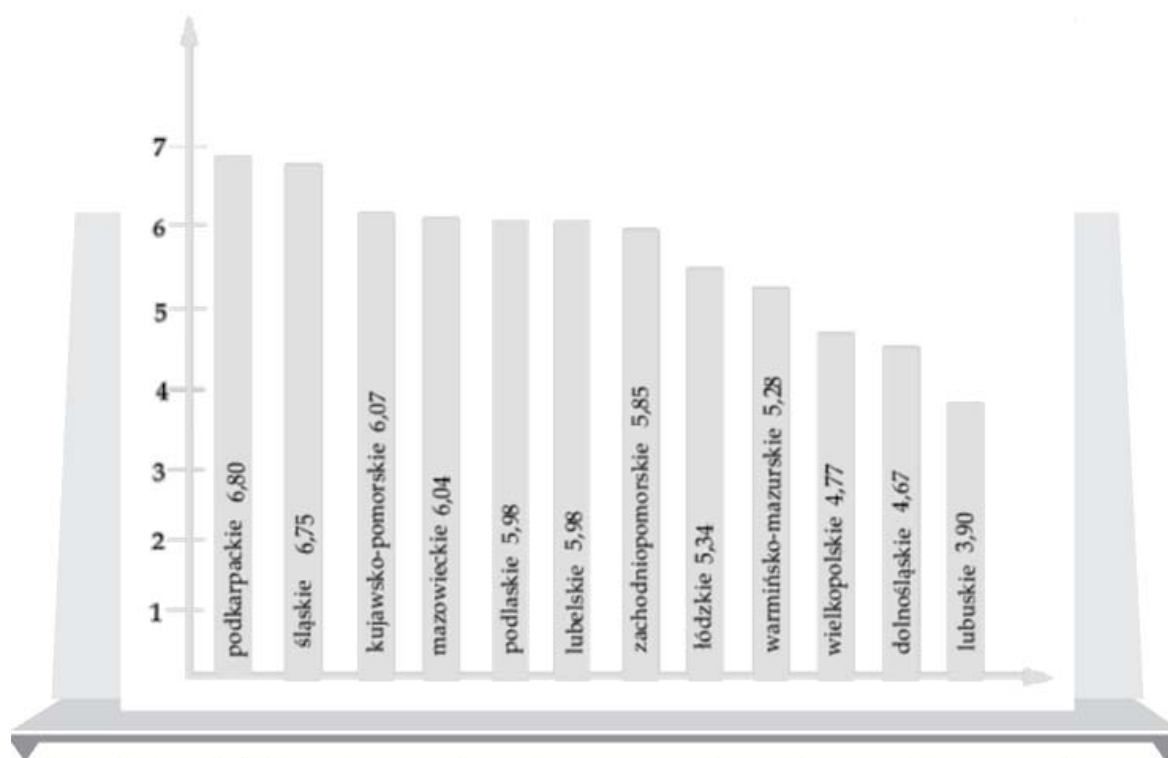
Equally to products, services or people, the region brand increases its attractiveness and uniqueness over what is treated as its capital in a material and functional aspect. However, strong emotional relationships between people and a place where they live, work or study cannot be realized without the participation of basic elements and tools typical of the region. Among them there are the key ones due to their role in this process, such as:

- scale of size,
- structure,
- functions,
- activities and events,
- manner of planning.

In general this kind of an approach to a city, region is included in a broad definition of a brand proposed by K. L. Keller (1998, p. 5), which additionally explains this term in relation to a product, assuming that a brand is a product, that is all that can be offered for reasons of consuming, using or paying attention with the addition of other variables distinguishing a particular product among those satisfying a particular need in a similar way. These variables can be of a rational nature connected with the product itself or of a symbolic and emotional one connected with what the product represents.

A good brand must present the region in the best light, distinguishing it from all other ones, however, without exaggerating and distorting the truth at the same time. The biggest work here is attributed to local government authorities, as they are the ones who have the greatest participation in the realization of creating a strong brand of the region. A good brand of the region must be first of all approved by leaders of opinions responsible for managing the region as well as inhabitants.





**Fig. 2 The visibility of promotion of communes in media according to provinces**

Source: own study

A brand is created not by promotion posters, but first of all by a direct contact different target groups establish with the region. In Lubuskie Voivodeship the authorities focused their attention on the strategy of the brand for entrepreneurs, new investors, tourists and inhabitants.

Particular provinces create slowly their promoting campaigns, however it is difficult to state that any of them has elaborated its distinctive image, recognizable not only in the area of the country, but also behind it. The below figure presents the visibility of promoting actions of communes in media according to provinces.

#### 4. Conclusion

A strong brand determines the present existence and distinction on the global market. Products and brands are associated with particular nations, on the other hand, however, a national brand or a regional one is created by values, specific location, past, distinctive products. A strong brand is transferred into the growth

of trust for local government authorities as mainly contributing to building the economic development of the region.

The investment potential of Lubuskie province has been already discovered by a part of entrepreneurs, but the Region needs new investments and it is necessary to highlight that it is „a place with investment potential“. The elaboration and distribution of particular information about the region will contribute in a great extent to drawing financial and intellectual capital, and therefore it will support innovative and restructuring processes. Thanks to „Lubuskie“ brand as well as consistent communication, entrepreneurs – potential investors will find out that this region is the place where it is worth investing. A clear vision of the voivodeship – communicated by the Marshal Office, supported by inhabitants and reached investors and tourists will allow for bigger efficiency in obtaining new structural funds, will allow for a high quality and will provide a rich cultural life.

Nowadays the brand identifies the region of Lubuskie Voivodeship. The local governors of Lubuskie Voivodeship still promote Lubuskie region, as they realize that the development of a brand and its promotion becomes the determinant of the regional and economic development.

Lubuskie province is still an undiscovered place, the brand created not long ago, due to which according to the research it is necessary to focus the attention on bigger regional promotion in order to increase the visibility of Lubuskie region in the whole country.

## Summary

### **A strong brand as a determinant of economic development in Lubuskie Voivodeship**

The aim of the article is to present how big a role a brand fulfils, which is a determinant of the development of economy in Lubuskie Voivodeship. Building a strong brand becomes a task for many years. The effects can be noticed earlier through promotion actions focused on organizing all kinds of cultural events and fixtures. A strong brand is a huge source of competitive advantage. Creating a strong brand is a catalyst of the economic development of the region.

A sign, logo, is not enough for the economic development to increase. The use of innovative information technologies is necessary to distinguish the region from the other ones.

The driving force is to build a strong image identifying the strength of the region values. A strong brand determines the present existence and distinction on the global market.

*Key words:* brand, a brand of the region, economic development.

### Streszczenie

#### **Silna marka wyznacznikiem rozwoju gospodarki w województwie lubuskim**

Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie jaką wielką rolę pełni marka, która jest wyznacznikiem rozwoju gospodarki w województwie lubuskim. Budowanie silnej marki miasta jest zadaniem na wiele lat. Efekty mogą zostać zauważone prędzej poprzez działania promocyjne skupione na organizowaniu wszelkiego rodzaju imprez kulturalnych, sportowych. Silna marka to potężne źródło przewagi konkurencyjnej. Stworzenie silnej marki jest katalizatorem rozwoju gospodarczego regionu.

Znak, logo to już nie wystarczy, aby rozwój gospodarczy wzrastał. Potrzebne jest wykorzystywanie innowacyjnych technologii informacyjnych w celu wyróżnienia regionu spośród innych.

Motorem napędowym jest zbudowanie silnego wizerunku utożsamiającego siłę wartości regionu. Silna marka warunkuje obecnie zaistnienie i wyróżnienie się na globalnym rynku.

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*kluczowe:* marka, marka regionu, rozwój gospodarczy.

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