

Mountains, Umbrellas & Heroes.

Branding Place.

A creative exploration in developing
the story of place brands.



Creative Thinking is Smart Business

Stuart Leo is the Director of Blirt!, a boutique brand strategy firm in Australia.

As founder of Blirt!, Stuart is responsible for the development of strategy, brand & creative communication.



Where do you live? Where do you holiday?

Think about how you answered that question.

Was it a house, a building, a street, a community... a suburb?

Everybody lives or visits somewhere and that "somewhere" can actually add or subtract significant value to the destination.

That somewhere is a brand.

A brand is simply the collection of what people think or say about a certain thing.

A brand is not the logo or the colour scheme or even the tag line. These are just things we use to communicate the brand.

Every place has a brand. It's just whether it's understood, favourable and communicated well.

A desirable brand will add value to a place or destination.

When it comes to branding place we want to understand the current perceptions, identify the ideal desires of the population and then set about affirming or changing mindsets.

Branding 'Place' is a process of mountains, umbrellas and heroes.

*Branding place
is a process
of mountains,
umbrellas and
heroes*



Branding place is a process of mountains, umbrellas and heroes.

Mountains

In Thomas Friedman's book, 'The World is Flat' he suggests a new era of globalisation that will flatten market places.

To be honest, if the world is flat (which I'm not sure it is completely) then our job as place marketers is to make mountains and dig valleys.

Brands are about a point of difference. As consumers stare out across the landscape your brand needs to be the everest striking a dramatic feature on the horizon.

Whether it be a country, region, community or home, a good place brand must hold a clear and tangible point of difference.

However, the greatest struggle in place branding is finding the pointy bit of difference that is so needed to create good communication.

Places are so diverse, so complicated, that drilling down to a single point of difference is often at the sacrifice of so much more.

Hence the need for umbrellas held by heroes.

Umbrellas & Heroes

Place brands work best when they're treated like a hero holding an umbrella.

Umbrellas are broad, diverse motherhood statements. The person standing underneath the umbrella brings a sense of clarity and purpose to the Umbrella. That person is the hero.

Let's use a place as an example.

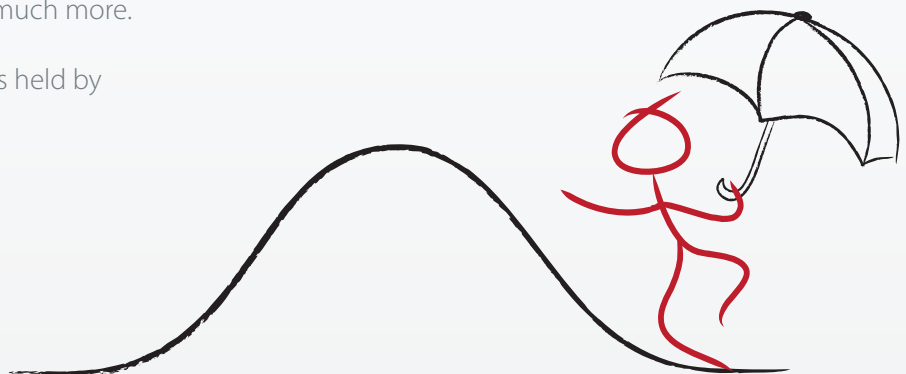
New York stands for high fashion, arts & entertainment, enterprise, urban, diversity and so much more.

These are broad motherhood statements that are often difficult to drill down to create a clear and tangible point of difference.

New York did not 'make' New York.

New York was 'made' by the Empire State Building, Wall St, The Statue of Liberty, Times Square, Central Park, the recovery from September 11, Frank Sinatra, the first Macy's Thanksgiving Parade and a host of other heroes.

New York is the umbrella and Times Square (a space), Macy's Thanksgiving Parade (a moment of time) and Frank Sinatra (a person) are the heroes.



The heroes are always spaces, people or moments of time.

It's the 'person' holding the umbrella that is the hero of the place.

The heroes are always spaces, people or moments of time.

What is often forgotten in place marketing is the need to sell the heroes when we start to sell place. That place can be as big as a country, as diverse as a large scale master planned community or as simple as a home.

Many talk about people, some talk about moments of time and some talk about spaces. But the great marketing campaigns weave an engaging story using all three to build remarkable place brands.

So where do you live? Where do you holiday?

If it's a great place it's most likely a mountain with a hero standing on it holding an umbrella.





Creative Thinking is Smart Business

P 1300 997 693 F 07 5607 6511
153 Varsity Parade Varsity Lakes Q 4227
PO Box 5203 Robina Town Centre Q 4230
info@blirt.com.au

Strategy | Brand | Create

www.blirt.com.au