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## **CITY PLACEMENT – INNOVATIONAL MEANS OF PROMOTING CITIES**

*A detail attempt of the “city placement” strategy, has been made in the article. Its main threads, components and decision making problems of the film producers teams have been emphasized. The author based his knowledge, in this case, on the diagnosis and analysis of the processes and decision making procedures adequate for big, Polish cities, their administrative authorities, promotional strategies and the rules of cooperation with media partners. Assumedly, the used process-structural conceptualization is to emphasize the main determinants of the “city placement” strategy introduction in marketing practice of the cities and regions.*

**Key words:** city promotion, "city placement", marketing strategies, "a city in a film business"

### **Introduction**

The main area of marketing innovations in the cities and regions promotional strategies are widely understood social media. Their common, current inclusion to the set of marketing means of communication, relevantly changed a typical promotion-mix profile of the settlement centers and appropriate frequency hierarchy of using individual communication channels. The social media adaptation process to the needs and conditions of the cities and regions marketing strategies, generally involved different classes of local government units, including rural and urban communities, big and small units, which have a developed range of functions, as well as the ones with limited eligibility.

The promotional means, which is called “the city placement” should be included to the marketing innovations, in the field of market communication of the cities and regions. It is a specific development or a variant of a known „product placement” concept. If there are relatively many domestic article elaborations and monographs about the “product placement” strategies, the “city placement” concept is intermittently a subject of research and analyses, especially in the theoretical-conceptual sphere. Rare publications about this subject do not give a full image of the range and promotional possibilities of the new means of marketing communication, do not explain operational problems of the audiovisual products, including a film, to promote the attractions the of settlement units either. In the article the „city placement” is when the units make their territories available to organize different artistic projects, mainly the film ones, which have strengthened and repetitive form, in exchange for the direct or indirect promotion of them.

The aim of the article is to make an attempt of a detailed ”city placement” strategy projection with the emphasis on its main threads, components and decision making problems of the film producers. The author based his knowledge, in this case, on the

diagnosis and analysis of the processes and the decision making procedures appropriate for big, Polish cities, their administrative authorities, promotional strategies and the rules of cooperation with media partners.

### **"City placement" – promotion without promotion**

In the cities and regions marketing, similarly to other sector (trade) marketing, known and accessible instrument – impact tools on the target markets, comes from a classical set of orderly means in a certain marketing composition-mix. That is why, in numerous articles dedicated to territorial marketing, it can sometimes be noticed, even a literal transfer and instrument marketing composition interpretation, appropriate for goods and services market, on the grounds of specific, without doubt, territorial products market – the market of settlement units.

The signaled phenomenon not always means absolute methodological mistake, approach and undefined operational territorial marketing concept mistake. It should be based, without doubt, on general philosophy, its essence, aims, functions and the aims realization tools. A simple analogy between the city and consumption markets, which in practice leads to simple comments of the marketing – mix 4P concept in relations to the marketing strategy of the territorial units cannot be accepted. In this case, however, there are no avoidance or explanation of the territorial product essence, prices concept or discounts used by the cities, especially products distribution system, that is the essence and structure of the market.

Despite the objections, it can be stated that in the territorial marketing, there are relatively many cases, maybe even the biggest number of people use the achievements in the field of marketing communication by adapting it for the cities marketing needs. It lead to the situation that published and introduced concepts of widely understood promotion of space-administrative (mainly in the cities) units base directly on appropriate speculations adequate to popular markets, its subjects and connected to the consumption goods and services. Such practice can be acknowledged as permissible, especially when the "urban organism" is treated as a specific concern, as a mega subject of various product markets.

On the background of the present studies, attention is paid to the use of theoretical and practical "strategy product placement" achievement – strategical and used by numerous producers of goods and services, especially in relation to the half luxurious and luxurious products [Choliński 2013, Gmerek i Misztak 2007].

The "product placement" strategy, which aim is to deliberate and payable product placement in film production (movies), and even in other audiovisual products of their own production with clearly emphasized brand in order to indirectly advertise them among the viewers [Urbaniec 2009]. That is nothing else than "a branded product placed in a product" – a gadget, exhibit, prop, object "playing" an episodic role in a film. Its use is connected to the certain salary, because in this way it is a subject of a commercial [Choliński 2002].

The main advantage of the "product placement" strategy is showing an object or even a property, in the functional context [Wyrwisz 2013]. It is not on the shop shelf, in the supermarket or in the saloon, but it is presented in an operational way, in movement, according to the direction of use. What is more, this way of promoting brands and their

products uses added value – it is an exhibit fulfilling the needs and used by widely known, admired and prestigious people or groups (film heroes) [Sadowski i Szymaniak 2008]. These figures with possessed and used (consumed) goods are objects of observation, extinguishment and admiration, and what comes after that imitation. Promotional presentation of the props brings sale effect in the end.

The promotional potential, which is in the “product placement”, was noticed by specialists from the territorial marketing range. They understood quickly that modern marketing of the cities and their groups (also other space-administrative units) can successfully use new promotional strategies fulfilling their typical, traditional promotion-mix or even replacing its less efficient components [Czarnecki 2002]. The directed market activity of the audiovisual producers, studio film owners, directors and representing them specialized agencies (committees) had influence on innovational marketing programmes transformations of the cities and regions. They and their representatives made the self-government authorities of the commune, counties and voivodships how, with the profit for both sides, use the „city placement” strategy [Gołata 2012].

The "City placement", as an integral part of the promotion – mix of the territorial units, is a commercial sharing of the city, region, country or other chosen parts (urban, architectural, or environmental ones) in order to organize artistic – film, theatrical, musical, literary, sport and other undertakings on their area, in a strengthened, repeatable form (media) in exchange for direct or indirect promotion of these units by showing them to the public.

The presented definition of the „city placement” is a word formulation, relatively expanded, consisting of a few threads as components of this definition. In marketing practice, in popularizing discussions and interviews, a deepened definition of the “city placement” can be replaced by short, one sentence terms, relating to the essence of the matter – the most important characteristics of this form of promotion [Zawadzki, 2013]. In this way, the following terms can be met – synthetic equivalents to the proper definition: city in the film, city attractions in the plot and image, city in the background of audiovisual undertakings (wider: artistic), presentation of the city by media production (audiovisual), the city promotion by film or image of it and its components strengthened in art.

These are some, keyword explanations of the “city placement” essence, short terms, possible to use only agreed on, conditionally. They do not show other important features of this strategy as a synthesis.

### **The determinants of differentiating the “city placement” strategy of the city.**

It can be generally stated that two main groups of factors influence the components of strategy preparation of promoting a city in a film. The first one includes the factors, which are known as engagement (contribution) of the city to a film project, including financial, material, service, organizational contribution, as well as immaterial one (constant contact with authorities and emergency services, change of the communication traffic system of the city, free of charge services etc.).

The second group of factors, influencing the individual character of the “city placement” realization strategy, are the city’s expectations from the film producers. They

concern, not only the range of expected promotional campaign of the city in a film itself, but also a degree of its identification for the viewers- including necessary parts of the city, geographical accent in the dialogues, showing city symbols (icons) etc. In both cases, the enumerated circumstances determine a different character of negotiations, range of necessary compromises, services, payments, which sometimes must be changes in relation to the offer or initial arrangements.

The financial factor, among the signaled ones, plays a crucial role in the “city placement” strategy. In practice, it means the scale of direct subsidization to the film production by the interested in recording city. The amount of subsidization can be symbolic or it can even cover the costs of the movie production.

The list of the city contribution in the production and its total size (estimation) includes many different positions, only signaled at this point. “Personal commitment” (free of charge or partially payable), is an important element of this list. It comes down to sending a team of employees (from municipal companies) or in the form of recruiting the extras to adjuvant works when the film is produced. Another case is engagement of the authorities themselves on the realization stage.

Among the immaterial factors, a crucial role plays the fact that the film studio can use the city brand. It is about the inclusion of the city symbols to the marketing characteristics of the film with the descriptive information, which refers to the details realization.

The issue of “hard” benefits for the city, in connection to a film recording in the place, is a new, rarely raised subject in negotiations with a crew of the film producers. It is about specific “after production” benefits for the city, like for example:

- free distribution and presentation of the film in a given city (the city where the film was recorded),
- free handover of the costumes, dummies, scenography and props, made for the production needs, to the city,
- participation of the city in financial benefits generated by a mass emission of the film (profit sharing),
- preliminary declarations of future cooperation, but also such undertakings, which are crucial for the inhabitants and people visiting the city – including tourists - like:
  - meetings with actors and directors,
  - presentations of film parts,
  - visiting the movie set,
  - open photo sessions for the inhabitants,
  - visits of the film crew at schools, universities, cinemas or other cultural institutions.

The main expectations of the city, as far as the film recording in its area is concerned, according to the essence of the “city placement”, are marketing benefits, and more precisely the promotional ones. The range of these benefits is the effect of the agreement, which is, in turn, the result of negotiations and a formal contract. Cumulative range of the promotional effect for the city is generally directly proportional to the contribution of the city to the film production – in recording a certain movie within the city, although the proper promotional programme (what, how, when, what in particular?) is a separate subject of discussion.

## **"City placement" - identification of the city in a film production**

The fact of recording movies within the city, films about different things, actor crew, detailed screenplays, the country of origin of the film studio and producers, time of emission and other realization (technical, organizational, financial) features, did not translate automatically on promotion of this city, on free or almost free presentation of its values by a cinema screening. The above mentioned promotional effect, as a specific side effect product of a film production, depends on the range, way of the subject and the recording length time of the city on "the tape" and aware recording, allowing the viewers recognize the city to some extent. The basis of these, were people, words, signs, images and the whole outdoor shots captured in film action. Their characteristic elements directly or indirectly showed a given city, its localization, country, and most of all its name.

The city identification – the places of the film production, its basics and level are based on verbal, symbolic or graphic information deliberately put in the film screenplay. Their perception allows the viewers to recognize the city name with some probability.

The degree of the city identification in the movie, along with the influence of some identifiers, can be presented on the linear scale in the form of segment, which is between the point, meaning full identification of the film realization (recognized city) and the second point, extreme one, which equals absolute lack of information about it (anonymous city). Between these two points, different identifiers (signs, graphic-image takes, verbal shots, characters, objects, outdoor scenery), which have differentiated power of identification, can be marked.

Undoubtedly, the biggest influence on full and unequivocal identification of the place (city) has the fact of including its name in the film title (audiovisual product) and appropriate annotations in its marketing programmes. Introducing characteristic, recognizable in the country and abroad, architectonical buildings, which have unique character or their special proper names, can be enumerated on further places. Introducing symbols of certain cities (family crests, logos), characteristic inhabitants (ethnic features, clothes, behaviour) or direct introduction of the geographical city name in the dialogues, strongly influences the level of recognizability of the city, in which the film action (exclusively or only partially) takes place. In some film screenplays, the names of the cities are not given deliberately or a fictional name is chosen. It happens in case of marketing protection of the city against negative effects, which may be caused by the film plot.

Considering the influence of different film characteristics on its identification of the place realization, in this case registered and presented, during the film emission, attractions of a certain city, it should be stressed that there is obvious dependency – the more city is shown in the film, the more information and images allowing to increase the level of its recognizability, the bigger marketing value of the film (and other audiovisual products) for this city, the stronger its influence on shaping "the image". That is why the city marketing services particularly care about reaching high level of its identification among the viewers after the film emission.

## **"City placement" – choosing the film city strategy**

The city attractiveness for domestic and foreign film projects is the resultant of many factors, circumstances, and influences, which have very differentiated character. In this

place, an attempt will be made to order the determinants of the city choice in order to record a film along with the offer of algorithm of proceeding in this issue.

From the point of view of the realization-producer film team, the choice of place of recording the whole film or its part, is connected to the necessity of defeating the following difficulties and barriers:

- geographical-distance barrier, means the necessity to show the distance between the native country of the film studio and the involved team of people to the destination country and detailed place of its realization.

It also concerns transport of the technical equipment, screenplay elements, costumes and props (sometimes animals) in different climate conditions,

- time barrier, which means negative influence of the whole logistic operation connected to transport of the people and equipment to the filming place for the time of the production,

- cost barrier – connected to the considerable growth of the costs of the film project in case of its realization in the places (cities) located far from the native town or country. These are the costs of the people and equipment being transported by professional, often expensive, means of transport,

- culture barrier, resulting from important differences in living and working conditions, including the ways of eating, relaxing, communication and also other rules of law, religion or social (relating to customs) life of the inhabitants, crucial to exist in a civilized world. It can generally be stated that there are two groups of factors which influence the decision of placing a given product in a film: external and internal ones. The first group is irrespective of the values considered for the localization, as they are connected to:

- top-down suggestions and determined indications, the preferences of the public (resort) authorities or central, creative unions,

- suggestions of the film studio advisers, consultants, managers and the owners,

- business connections, which are outside the film studio, including cooperation with other film studios, connections with the suppliers, film institutions, etc..

- marketing image and opinions in the film environment, concerning widely understood conditions of the film realization in different countries, regions and cities, existing formal barriers,

- detailed opinions, assessments and impressions of the realization crews (directors, scenographers, producers and others), concerning their work in a given country, region and city,

- own experiences from recording the previous movies, including contacts and cooperation with authorities, partners, goods and services suppliers and local community,

- personal contacts of the main governing bodies (decision-makers), including private and business (official) contacts.

The factors, which have internal character, have impact on the external influences. The internal ones, are strictly connected to the characteristics and resources of the target city, the proper region and country location, overlap each other and decide about the place of the “product placement”. The factors as localization determinants of the film realization or only its certain parts, refer to the specific, personal values of the city (town), crucial to the film production. Among such factors – personal determinants of „film attractiveness” some values can be distinguished: social values, organizational-

technical values, economic-financial values, infrastructural values, geographical-communication values, existence values, recreation values, safety values, sanitary values, view values, media values, prestigious (brand) values.

Enumerated, in this case, twelve detailed groups of the city characteristics, creates the general spectrum of the criteria, taken into consideration by the people (team) who make decisions about choosing the city, but first the country and region, to realize their own film plans. There are features, which have special meaning for the film crew among the above mentioned characteristics, such as: infrastructural, safety, view, media and prestigious values, which circumstances will influence and define the compatibility of the city with the requirements of the screenplay and the film director's concept.

Nobody will locate a film production in the city, which they have not heard, read about or seen. No one will also take into consideration the local government unit, which does not care about promoting itself according to the "city placement" strategy – it is not in the media, nor at specialist meetings or exhibitions, or the one, which does not exist in "the environmental circuit". Even, potentially interesting and unique cities must therefore solicit but also present, invite the creative environments representatives to declare in direct contact, document and simulate the contribution of an individual to the concept and the film realization itself.

The managers and advisers of the marketing services in the cities are aware, that the teams of the film studios have many localization possibilities at their disposal for the production of films, beginning from specially built media cities, by adjusted to the filmmakers districts and smaller parts of the cities to "live", authentic, normally functioning urban organisms.

General truth is that the cities are similar to each other, especially the ones located in the same geographical- environmental zones, cities which have similar location origins, similar functions, size and development mechanisms. But at the same time, there are no identical cities, which even have similar attractions, people, atmosphere and image. That is why, the film studios' managers have the whole set of potential localizations, which match their organizational, logistic, screenplay, financial and media requirements. Only in some cases, their decisions of choice are determined or limited, which results from the film plot, its clear and unambiguous geographical relation or access to unique resources (objects, people) and the places, where they appear.

From the point of view of the whole project connected to the production of a certain film, the decision which place to choose to record a film belongs to the crucial, strategical decisions and has an important influence on its final success. From this reason, the main problem for the filming team is such a choice of the city (place) of the film realization, thanks to which its own (artistic) values would be enriched in specific "localization pension", understood as a promotional addition for the film, resulting from a chosen place of its realization. Therefore, it is about specific strengthening of the film project from the side of the recorded city, the city which has a big promotional-media potential. In this way, a mutual flow of benefits comes to realization – the city promotes itself thanks to the film, but also the film itself is promoted thanks to its own media force.

## Conclusions - "the film in the city-the city in the film"

The "city placement" concept as a special kind of a known "product placement" concept has been used for many years. It is more and more often the subject of discussions and analyses in the local government environment, actually their organs of executive power and being the main flow of discussion, similarly to other marketing activities connected to the efficiency and effectiveness of audiovisual undertakings, where its own city or region appears, above all, the film production. Examples of some Polish and foreign villages, cities and regions, clearly revived the authorities of many settlement units interest in "getting" the film crews, and at the same time, placing their cities in certain products.

The willingness to show and expose the city or region values withstand widely understood, necessary disbursements as the condition of a success of marketing undertaking of the „city placement” type. In the account of the "profits and losses", marketing benefits, which have primitive character, are usually taken into consideration on the side of benefits. They mainly increase the degree of the place recognizability- the level of its awareness in the society, in occupational, demographical and regional groups.

Common identification of the city or region, their distinguishing and unique features as the results of repeated audiovisual products emissions, make the society want to meet them better, direct contact, participation or sensual experience. Primitive benefits bring secondary ones – generating new form of tourism. It is ultimately connected to the places of film action, objects, districts, institutions, and even people, what comes to "regular or advanced" visitations of them – organized or individual sightseeing, degustation, playing scenes, and even meetings and discussions under the motto "let's experience it again". Film tourism is more and more meaningful. It has the followers in the whole world. It is a crucial enrichment of traditional tourist offer for cities and film regions. It can be thought that in the nearest future it will be, actually its economic effects, an important factor and argument in the decision making process of the municipal authorities connected with contacting the film production.

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## City placement - innowacyjny środek promocji miast

### Streszczenie

W artykule dokonano próby szczegółowej projekcji strategii „city placement” z zaakcentowaniem głównych jej wątków, elementów składowych oraz problemów decyzyjnych zespołów realizatorów filmowych. Autor oparł się w tym względzie na diagnozie oraz analizie procesów oraz procedur decyzyjnych właściwych dla dużych polskich miast, ich organów administracyjnych, strategii promocyjnych oraz zasad współpracy z partnerami medialnymi. Zastosowane ujęcie procesowo – strukturalne w założeniu ma naświetlić główne determinanty wdrażania strategii „city placement” w marketingowej praktyce miast i regionów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** promocja miast, „city placement”, strategie marketingowe, miasto w biznesie filmowym

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