

# DMAI Destination Next Initiative

The Destination Marketing Association International's (DMAI) Destination Next initiative outlines the "Strategic Roadmap for the next generation of Global Destination Marketing." The report concludes that there are three transformational opportunities to effectively address the changing world. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) will have to move in each of these directions given that they are highly interrelated.

The three transformational opportunities are:

- Dealing with the New Marketplace
- Building and Protecting the Destination Brand
- Evolving the DMO Business Model

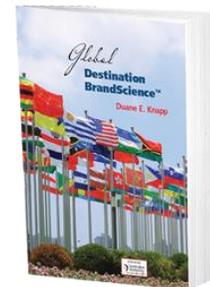
According to Michael Gehrisch, president & CEO of DMAI, "Our mission is to provide thought leadership for DMOs as they evolve in the rapidly changing global marketplace... **Building and Protecting the Destination Brand** is absolutely essential, especially as it relates to every guest's experience. DMOs are perfectly positioned to be the brand stewards for their entire community."

We will examine several key conclusions and their respective implementation opportunities related to "Protecting the Destination Brand opportunity."

## Building and Protecting the Destination Brand

Building a Genuine Destination Brand is not just a marketing or sales plan. It requires a consistent, disciplined strategy based on the proven science which is outlined in the Global Destination BrandScience™ book.

As the Destination Next Report indicates, "Destinations can no longer be marketed as a collection of hotels, restaurants, attractions, and retail to be successful in the marketplace. Destinations are now as much an emotional and intellectual experience as they are a physical one." Destinations are brands as much as Apple, Nordstrom and Starbucks – each with its own emotional triggers, perceived social equity, and promises of self-actualization. To be successful in today's global marketplace, destinations need leadership and management to not only deliver remarkable physical experiences, but to create and deliver a uniquely compelling BrandPromise® (Promise) commitment that is fulfilled at each guest touchpoint.



Every week, a destination somewhere announces a new logo, tagline or advertising message. However, there is no mention of a Promise or commitment to train the community on how to make their guests feel great. Unfortunately, most destinations do not conduct an objective Brand Assessment of their guests' perceptions, nor do they develop a Promise related to how they want their guests to feel.

Every Genuine Brand makes a Promise related to how it wants its customers to feel. A destination is only as good as its Promise, which determines how its guest's perceive their experience...in short, how they feel about a destination.

A destination without a Promise is like a person without a heart and soul.

## Opportunity for Success

### 1. Complete an Annual Brand Assessment

Every destination should conduct an annual Brand Assessment to determine its brand's emotional perception in the minds of their guests, influencers and stakeholders. **The Brand Assessment survey methodology includes 10 proprietary questions and can be completed in 60 days for a nominal investment with web based technology.**

### 2. Develop and Implement a Promise

Every destination should have a Promise that sets forth the intended experience that a guest should enjoy. A new logo or tagline does not take the place of a community-wide experiential commitment.

Developing a Promise is a collaborative initiative that brings the community together and builds pride.

The Global Destination BrandScience book outlines the process for developing a community-wide Promise. **The Promise process can be completed in 90 days and requires a modest investment that pays huge dividends.**

### 3. Enhance Your Destination's Perceived Value

Perceived Value is critical to DMO's survival. According to Destination Next, "DMOs need to develop new value-producing roles and relationships with consumers and travel professionals in today's redefined marketplace. DMOs that fail to transform their role will find themselves marginalized in the tourism ecosystem and see their communities suffer the consequences of an underperforming tourism industry."

A destination's perceived value in the minds of its stakeholders will ultimately determine its success.

**Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) have two primary groups of stakeholders: "guests" and their respective "communities".**

I. **Guests** (current and potential guests and influencers)

II. **Community** (residents, community leaders, members, funding contributors and various governmental and quasi-governmental agencies)

There are many questions that could be used to determine a DMO's perceived value. Here are two examples:

- Is the destination preferred by its guests (i.e. "one of a kind") or perceived as one of many?
- Is the DMO highly valued by its respective community influencers and leaders?

**The proprietary DMO Perceived Value™ formula utilizes the Economic Opportunity Strategy to dramatically improve DMO's Perceived Value, image and perception among community influencers. Learn how to use the Perceived Value formula to optimize community perceptions.**

#### I. Guest Perspective

Guests develop their perception of a destination's value through a subjective feeling that is the result of comparing a brand's product and service offerings with those of its competitors based on their own needs, preferences, buying behavior and characteristics. Thus, guests' perception of value constantly changes. Consequently, the brand's ability to deliver value and delight guests is deeply rooted in the Promise. A Promise determines how a destination wants its stakeholders to feel. Growth comes from serving guests better (not necessarily bigger) and concentrating on delivering the brand's distinctive competence in every experience. This is how a destination achieves the Position of Privilege.

Genuine Destination Brands make an internal Promise and they deliver on that Promise consistently, eagerly and at the guests' convenience. The power of the Promise is based on the guests' feelings about a destination and what they say about a brand to their friends and family.

Every guest is interested in getting the best value. However, brands often translate this into the **lowest** price. Superior value is not the lowest price unless guests consider all of the choices to be the same, i.e. commodities.

Perceived value in guests' minds is determined by their perception of the **time** invested in the experience, how they **feel** about the experience and then how much they **pay**.

The secret to destination brand success is to be perceived as the best value. In other words, the optimum combination of time, feelings and cost...not the lowest price.

## II. Community Perspective

Communities are consistently evaluating their DMO's relevancy. Now, more than ever, DMOs need to reconsider how their communities perceive their value as an organization.

Destinations face many challenges, including a concentrated focus on accountability for dollars spent and a laser-like attention on Return-On-Investment (ROI).

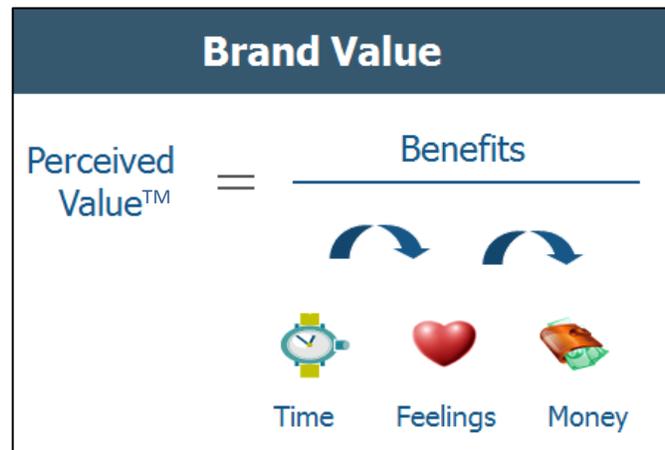
The Internet and social media have transformed the way consumers, tour operators, travel media and meeting professionals obtain information and make decisions related to destination choices as well as all variety of travel products and services.

Achieving appreciation for the tourism industry and its economic benefits requires constant communications and community education. As Bill Geist, Chief Instigator for DMOproz, advises, DMOs should "be the convener of community conversation" and "communicate early and often."

Research shows that the public supports tourism and the use of local, regional and state governments' funds to promote tourism; however, they expect a thoughtful and well understood tourism strategy.

These issues are very real; no one will argue that. But the truth is that DMOs must consistently enhance their relevancy in the minds of their constituents. Destination organizations have a unique and important role to optimize economic opportunities in their communities. However, it means refining and redefining their role and to be sure that the DMO is highly valued by its community leaders. Simply put, a successful DMO does for its community what the community cannot do for itself. However, a community's perception of the DMO will ultimately result in its success or failure.

**Are you "Destination Next" ready?** Visit [globaldestinationbrandscience.com](http://globaldestinationbrandscience.com) or email [dknapp@brandstrategy.com](mailto:dknapp@brandstrategy.com) to create your Destination Next roadmap to success.



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BrandStrategy, Inc. is the Brand Advisor for DMAI and has advised over 350 brands in 17 countries including corporations, communities, societies, professional associations, institutions, countries, world-class professionals, colleges and universities, celebrities and successful individuals who desire to optimize

their perception, image and success. The proprietary BrandPromise® science enhances hundreds of millions of consumers' experiences every day in 50 countries worldwide.

More specifically, BrandStrategy, Inc. advises leading destinations and economic development organizations, port authorities and chambers of commerce across the U.S. and worldwide in their development of a strategy to optimize economic opportunity. Duane Knapp's hands-on experience includes the successful creation of hundreds of millions of dollars of commercial real estate development across the United States including retail, office, mixed-use, manufacturing, hotels, restaurants and airport related projects.

The BrandScience™ principles are outlined in four books, The BrandPromise®, The BrandMindset®, Destination BrandScience™ and Global Destination BrandScience™, which are available online at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).