



LEEDSBID

Background

LeedsBID was launched in April 2015 and represents 1,000 businesses in the city centre. The BID's vision is to drive Leeds city centre forward to compete on a global scale and to coordinate place management for the city.

The BID's Business Plan included 26 references to terms relating to place branding and 42 to heritage-related terms. The relative prominence of these terms suggested that LeedsBID engages in heritage-led place branding.

LeedsBID believes that heritage is important to making the BID area an attractive investment alongside enhancing visitors' and residents' perceptions of the city centre.

LeedsBID's approach to place branding

The BID identified that there were a range of organisations offering some information, to some parts of the market, via various media. There was a need for someone to develop one coherent 'face' [brand] across all organisations, to be the first call for visitors looking for information and to sell Leeds with a joined up, unified brand. The BID initiated discussions with all of the organisations involved (including Leeds City Council, Leeds List, The City Talking) to get everyone on board. All the organisations now work together to create and promote unified, coherent brand.

The BID also understood that people increasingly engage in communication and seek information through digital channels. The existence of several digital sources (e.g. websites) that offered some information about some aspects of the city presented users with a cluttered landscape. LeedsBID is now a central part of a group of organisations that is developing an online portal that will provide people with a 'gateway': a comprehensive resource signposting towards all relevant information about the city for different types of visitors.

LeedsBID's use of heritage in place branding

LeedsBID holds a longstanding ambition that Leeds should differentiate itself from other northern cities. In addition to the universities and shopping, readily available elsewhere, Leeds must offer visitors more. In order to achieve this, the BID is looking to capitalise on a sense that everyone has some interest in the provenance of items and how they are manufactured. This interest extends, to some extent, to how processes have evolved over time. Meeting this consumer demand to find things out is seen by the BID as a means through

which Leeds can develop a more distinct identity.

Leeds has proud historical association with the cotton and textile trade and fashion and has produced some great designers. The BID's promotion of the city

"Place branding with heritage is about telling the story of the city, not just in traditional heritage places like museums but knitted across the whole city."

centre's retail offer aims to go beyond talking about the presence of shops and 'knit' the city's fashion and textile heritage into the retail brand. The businesses and property owners represented by the BID are interested in the history (specifically fashion history) of the city, and are supportive of the pursuit of heritage-led place branding activity through this.

LeedsBID is keen to tell the story of the city and move history out of museums to percolate through all of its activities. The BID has a close working relationship with the Civic Trust, who are on the steering group, in pursuit of this. The BID aims to use the city's history/heritage, and build it into the development of events and attractions. For example, the creation of heritage trails.

The benefits of LeedsBID's use of heritage in place branding

The BID always measures the economic impact of activities, predominantly drawing on footfall and spend data. In addition, the PR benefit of activities is equally important although sometimes less tangible. There are some tools available that seek to estimate this, such as social media impressions. LeedsBID makes use of these where relevant. Using heritage in Leeds' place branding is also considered to be valuable because it has not been done before; this avoids comparisons (both positive and negative) with previous activity.



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