



TEAM LONDON BRIDGE

Background

Businesses in the London Bridge area first voted in favour of a BID in 2005. Since then the BID has successfully sought renewal at five-yearly intervals, most recently securing its third term from 2016-2021. The BID's mission is:

'to ensure London Bridge excels as a leading place for global commerce and continues to develop as a pioneering local centre for enterprise, culture and entertainment.'

The prominence of heritage and place branding terms in the BID's 2016-21 Business Plan suggest that it is pursuing heritage-led place branding; it is making full use of its heritage assets within its place brand.

The BID considered *improving public safety, delivering high profile capital projects, and developing the identity of the BID area* as its three most important objectives.

The final two objectives are characteristic of more mature BIDs. These BIDs have often accomplished some more straightforward objectives earlier in their lifecycle and now have the experience and capacity to engage with more ambitious (and sometimes intangible) objectives.

London Bridge BID's place branding role

The BID identified that London Bridge had a range of associations, such as a structure (the bridge itself) and the railway station. This range of different perceptions has made it difficult to establish a place brand that reflects what the London Bridge area has to offer. Developing an identity that reflects this and is capable of supplanting existing perceptions requires a sophisticated and coordinated approach.

The London Bridge BID plan coordinates place branding activity while recognising that partnership working with other organisations is integral to this. The term place branding is used, but the BID is careful to make sure it is always accompanied by practical activity to avoid it being considered marketing jargon.

The BID works with organisations including Southwark Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and tourism and Destination Marketing Organisations. The BID also considers that Network Rail, Transport for London and private land owners are really important partners in developing the place brand.

The BID believes that a strong place brand is necessary for the London Bridge area to reach its full commercial

potential.

London Bridge BID's use of heritage in place branding

Within the BID boundary are notable cultural assets such as HMS Belfast, Tower Bridge, the Fashion & Textile museum, and the Victorian medicine and operating theatre museum. There is also demonstrable railway heritage, including part of the first railway in London. The BID also promotes assets just outside of its formal coverage, such as Southwark Cathedral, Tate Modern, and Borough Market.

Incorporating physical heritage into the physical elements of the place brand can be challenging. Modern developments make an important contribution to the development of London Bridge's place brand. Although reconciling approval for new developments with a desire to preserve physical heritage can present challenges, the BID believes that the area's physical heritage offers a unique edge over homogeneous new developments that appeals to businesses that are considering relocating.

The BID aims to make heritage part of the identity of the area through how it is described. The BID team delivers guided walks of the area for newly locating businesses that draw attention to its heritage.

The value of place branding activities

The BID considered quantifying the economic value of a place brand to be very difficult to accomplish because of the difficulty in isolating the place brand from the influence of other factors. Nonetheless, this is something that the BID would be interested in pursuing.



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