

3. And Nations Became Brands

Sometimes great places don't speak for themselves—they need a good ad campaign to do it for them.

Would New York be as popular without Milton Glaser's iconic "I♥NY" campaign, or Las Vegas as seductive without its ubiquitous "What happens here, stays here" hook? Probably. But in an era when advertising is as important as the product (or place) itself, who can say for sure? We asked six top design companies (that have collectively given visual identities to everything from the Bahamas to Target) to rebrand the country of their choice. Here's what they came up with.



No one wants a vacation so much as the person who has just had one.

my getaway
www.malaysia.com.my

Country: Malaysia

Rebranded by: Brett Wickens, creative director, MetaDesign, San Francisco (metadesign.com)
"I've been doing a lot of business in Asia, and some of my colleagues are from Malaysia. They're always telling me how welcoming it is, how culturally diverse. And yet I think most Americans are less familiar with Malaysia than they are with the other countries in the region. Then one of my senior designers, Jeremy Matthews, brought to my attention that Malaysia's URL country suffix is *my*. It was a real epiphany: The suffix of the Web address became a prefix to the campaign and a slogan in itself. It makes the country feel approachable, inviting, an experience you can create and make your own."



Country: Slovenia

Rebranded by: Paula Scher, partner, Pentagram, New York City

(pentagram.com)
"I've been to Slovenia twice and loved it. But most Americans don't know what or where it is, which is something I wanted to address. I thought of [legendary adman] George Lois, who once explained to me his campaign for Morocco. His challenge, as he said, was to convince a bunch of New York Jews to

go to a Muslim country. So he used this song about going off the road to Morocco, just south of Spain. When you identify Morocco as south of Spain, it no longer sounds like a Muslim country—just like when you highlight Slovenia's proximity to Italy and Austria, it makes it sound really accessible, like it has great skiing and great food, which it in fact does. In general, though, I don't think countries should have logos. Logos are for corporations."



Country: Ireland

Rebranded by: Joe Duffy, chairman, Duffy & Partners, Minneapolis (duffy.com)

"I've visited eight or nine times. I would never attempt to do an iden-

tity for any country if I hadn't been there. When we branded the Bahamas, we spent considerable time exploring the fourteen prominent islands, which really gave us ideas about how we'd reflect the culture and its people. The approach here was to break down Ireland into its counties, since each has its own arts and characteristics. So my son, Joseph—who's a designer at the company—and I worked on developing a series of icons. Each represents not only a specific county but also the main attractions Ireland holds for visitors, such as music, literature, golf, scenery, castles, dance, wildlife, and so on. Seen collectively, that collage of icons makes up Ireland itself and everything the country has to offer."

:Denmark
the happiest place on earth

Country: Denmark

Rebranded by: Jakob Trollbäck, chairman, with Paul Schlacter, designer, Trollbäck + Company, New York City (trollback.com)

"We were all sitting around brainstorming, and someone mentioned the statistic that the Danes are the happiest people in the world. It was Paul who brilliantly came up with the idea of using the emoticon. It's very appealing for a younger generation, which is clearly who any country would like to attract with their marketing. The colors, red and white, allude to the Danish flag. The design is also a good reflection of who the Danish people are—they're friendly, easy to talk to, and don't take life too seriously. Swedish people are very precise (I know: I am one), but Danish people are the Scandinavians who aren't afraid to say, 'Yeah, who cares?'"



panama
oceans together

Country: Panama

Rebranded by: Chermayeff & Geismar, New York City (chermayeffgeismar.com)

"Panama has great beaches and coasts, and it's the only country that links two oceans. We all got excited about the water element, and that's how this logo was born. I also like how the pattern of concentric lines conveys the feeling of diving into something but alludes to rippling water as well."



Country: Brazil

Rebranded by: Michael Strassburger and Robynne Raye, principals, Modern Dog Design Co., Seattle (moderndog.com)
"We kept the logo approachable: Brazilian design has a strong '70s influence, so we alluded to that in the typography. But then we juxtaposed it with a totally different slogan. We looked at tag lines for every tropical destination on earth, and they all suck—they're so interchangeable. Ours might sound offensive, but you also look at it and think, 'What's going on here?' It makes it sound like the country is going out on a limb and being honest instead of hiding behind a bland phrase."

Most expensive city to visit in 1987: Tokyo (average room, \$311 per night)
Most expensive city to visit in 2007: MOSCOW (average room, \$337 per night)