



MARKETING AND BRANDING RESEARCH

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Case Report

Enhancing the Reputation of Territorial Brands through Digital Presence: The Case of “WeCasablanca”

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this paper is to explore the importance of implementing a digital marketing approach within the framework of a territorial brand and its potential for maintaining the promises that may be tackled to improve the image of the area at the national and international levels concerning territorial beauty objectives. Casablanca in Morocco selected for the research platform for three primary reasons: firstly, we are deeply involved in the matter as we collaborate with 'Casablanca Events & Animation', a local development agency that released the pilot project "WeCasablanca" for territorial branding activities; secondly, "Wecasablanca" stands due to the fact the first African territorial sign; thirdly, it has come to be popularized throughout Africa owing to its virtual presence. Given this, as a methodology, we chose a multi-purpose tool that consists of three local marketing objectives and a methodological blend of parallel approaches: qualitative for stepping into the depths of the case count and quantitative for diagnosis. Most striking results show that the brand "Wecasablanca" has considerably improved, after the introduction of digital advertising, in brand popularity and brand image, and there are also ample, rich, and harmonious opportunities for stakeholders that must continue to take shape digitally.

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The Wecasablanca Challenge has been conceived in order to join the momentum created by the launch of major initiatives whose ambition is to propel Casablanca into the league of the very top metropolises in Africa and the Euro-Mediterranean region with the ambition of being a real Global City.

After six years of its existence, relevance evaluation must be reached on the usage of the gear related to mark popularization. Researchers, practitioners, and specialists apprehend the relevance, even the need for evaluation and size of emblem effect on territorial advertising targets: the resident, the tourist, and the investor, and principally at the inhabitant, who should play at least four roles with regards to their territory. It was an immediate target, to begin with, besides the fact that he was a valued claim for the region and was a partner in the manufacturing process of the beauty product and then an ambassador and enthusiastic lawyer who helped shape the selection of the other targets, namely the investor and the tourist.

In line with [Villemus \(2014\)](#), the post-1995 generation no longer lives with the internet but within it. Digital presence is now a fundamental dimension of everyday life and an essential lever for communication and brand development. Territorial marketing must therefore integrate digital tools to remain relevant and competitive. As [Gayet \(2014\)](#) emphasizes, digital strategies such as real-time communication, personalized engagement, and community management have replaced traditional top-down approaches. These techniques are particularly powerful in territorial contexts, as they allow cities and regions to reach diverse audiences, stimulate citizen participation, and reinforce emotional connections with places. This shift towards digital-first branding opens new opportunities for visibility, interaction, and shared value creation.

This study draws on a dual approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Stakeholders, citizens, and tourists were consulted to understand their perceptions of the WeCasablanca brand. This mixed-method framework not only enabled us to explore in depth the motivations, attitudes, and expectations of different audiences, but also to identify patterns and trends that support evidence-based recommendations. The integration of digital marketing within territorial branding is assessed here as both a theoretical construct and a practical process, offering a replicable model for other cities seeking to revitalize their image and engagement through digital tools.

Attractive Territory

The attractiveness of a territory is often linked to concepts such as competitiveness and visibility. Territorial attractiveness refers to a region's ability to enhance its image, promote its assets (such as businesses, services, skills, and culture), and draw in people (residents, investors, students, tourists, and professionals). This appeal operates on two levels: a permanent one for inhabitants and economic actors, and a temporary one for visitors ([Gayet, 2014](#)). According to [Chamard, \(2014\)](#), attractiveness must be understood alongside territorial hospitality- the capacity of a place to retain the populations it attracts. As he notes, focusing on attractiveness without considering retention is like watching a bathtub fill with the drain left open. Sustainable attractiveness, therefore, depends not only on image-building but also on the lived experience and satisfaction of those who inhabit or engage with the territory.

Territorial Marketing

Territorial marketing can be defined as the strategic process through which a region promotes its assets to attract and retain target audiences such as residents, investors, and tourists. According to [Kotler et al. \(2013\)](#), marketing is the process of creating and exchanging value to meet needs. In a territorial context, this involves designing policies and actions that reflect the identity, potential, and aspirations of a region. For [Noisette \(1996\)](#), territorial marketing is a pragmatic approach aimed at improving regional policies through multi-stakeholder collaboration. [Bouinot \(2002\)](#) adds that it mobilizes resources to enhance competitiveness and visibility, while [Meyronin \(2015\)](#) views it as a response to the question: "How can I make my territory appealing for both those who live there and those I wish to attract?" [Gayet \(2014\)](#) emphasizes that modern territorial marketing must adopt a holistic perspective, incorporating elements from sociology, culture, governance, and digital strategy.

These theoretical perspectives guide our analysis of the WeCasablanca initiative. In particular, the concepts of territorial identity, strategic positioning, and attractiveness serve as analytical lenses to interpret how digital tools shape brand perception and engagement in the case of Casablanca.

Marketing typically unfolds in four stages: market research, strategic segmentation and positioning, operational execution (marketing mix), and evaluation through audits ([Kotler & Armstrong, 2013](#)). In the context of territorial branding, this framework supports a structured process for promoting the identity and attractiveness of a city or region. These stages are also reflected in the WeCasablanca initiative, which began with a diagnostic phase, followed by strategic branding, the development of communication tools, and the implementation of outreach actions. This alignment between theory and practice allows for a more robust evaluation of the brand's effectiveness and adaptability in response to evolving stakeholder expectations.

The WeCasablanca Brand

Beyond a logo, it is instead a method to elegance that has been built: a prognosis of elegance, an elegance strategy, emblem creation, and an operational motion plan – all born out of collaborative thinking.

The "WeCasablanca" initiative goes beyond a simple visual logo; it represents a comprehensive territorial branding strategy designed through a participatory and structured process. The project was built around four key phases: diagnosing the territory's image and positioning, defining a branding strategy, creating a coherent brand identity, and launching an operational action plan. Developed by the local development agency Casablanca Events and Animation, this approach aimed to align Casablanca's urban identity with its economic, cultural, and social ambitions, through a unified and strategic communication framework.

As part of its broader development strategy, the city of Casablanca adopted an international best-practice approach to territorial branding. The "WeCasablanca" brand was launched in October 2016 with the goal of enhancing the city's image and positioning it among the most attractive and competitive metropolitan areas in Africa and the Euro-Mediterranean region. This initiative coincided with several major urban, economic, and infrastructural projects, making the brand a symbolic representation of the city's ambition to become a true global hub.

Method

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Six focus groups were conducted with local stakeholders, alongside 20 semi-structured interviews with representatives from institutions, businesses, and civil society. In addition, a quantitative survey was carried out with 1,003 residents of Casablanca using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) across the city's eight districts. A second survey targeted 700 Moroccan tourists in five cities (Marrakech, Tangier, Rabat, Agadir, and Fez) who had stayed in Casablanca for at least 48 hours over the past year. Participants were selected based on gender, age, and purpose of visit. This multi-perspective data collection aimed to evaluate perceptions of the WeCasablanca brand, its visibility, and the influence of its digital presence:

Show what makes its DNA;

Assume Casablanca's identity and liquidate its assets;

Lead population to fall in love with their metropolis once more and deliver them motives for going to visit, settle or spend money on it;

Develop a unified emblem that encompasses key areas of interest: economic growth, global influence, research and innovation, tourism, lifestyle and sports, infrastructure, and strategic initiatives;

Enhancing the city's improvement potential with the use of making it more economically and socially appealing. It is an integrated approach that kicked off with the establishment of a local development company named Casablanca Events and Animation in April 2015 to proceed with the support of a phased launch of this brand during Q4-16. It passed through four phases, including:

Project structuring;

Assessment of the country of play & prognosis of beauty;

Creation of beauty strategy and logo creation;

Operational declination & logo launch.

Case Background

The WeCasablanca brand was developed as part of the Greater Casablanca Development Strategy 2015–2020 and implemented through the Territorial Marketing and Promotion Program signed in 2014. The initiative was led by the local development agency Casablanca Events and Animation. The branding process followed four structured phases:

- project structuring,
- assessment and image diagnosis,
- brand strategy and visual identity design, and
- operational deployment and public launch. The objective was to build a unified and dynamic identity that would highlight Casablanca's assets - economic growth, international outreach, tourism, research, innovation, infrastructure, and lifestyle - while fostering a renewed sense of civic pride among residents and enhancing the city's appeal to visitors and investors.

The Vision

Casablanca is Morocco's predominant metropolis. Being a worldwide town that is below construction, it ought to be bigger, especially in the direction of Euro-Mediterranean and African markets.

Mission

Casablanca aims to increase attachment rates among its resident forces while continuously expanding its attractiveness capacity.

Brand Platform

Based on those markers of identification and objectives, a logo has been developed that is composed of:

The goal:

Casablanca is expected to be among the top 100 most attractive cities on the world stage.

Core values:

Casablanca seems to feed itself on openness/humanism, agility/range, energy/determination, and innovation/creativity as part of its DNA, which could make it grow sustainably for shared development.

Of this branded platform, one positioning has been selected:

Positioning "Casablanca:

The city where worlds converge" The underlying philosophy of this positioning is that diversity fuels the richness of the region. Casablanca is a city in which the worlds come into contact with each other because of the fact that from those encounters comes electricity, which is very strong. It creates value: social, cultural, and economic, etc.

Under this positioning comes the commitment to create, from such meetings, fantastic electricity and collective momentum. This philosophy and pledge are primarily based on identification markers: Geographical crossroads, youth, sea, the front international connection, financial locomotive, global dimension, and energetic energy pioneering slight weather multiculturalism.

The Brand's Digital Presence

The logo is also present in the digital dimension through an official website, an Instagram page, Facebook, and Twitter. Its methodology is based on dependence on a variety of digital pillars: the first is the "Casabreak" app, and the second is the community of fellows carrying its attitude and logo, shouting it through their digital platforms.

The vision of the WeCasablanca brand is to position Casablanca as a leading African and Euro-Mediterranean city, attractive for its diversity, innovation, and global connectivity.

Its mission is to strengthen residents' attachment to their city while enhancing its visibility and appeal to external audiences. This section provides essential contextual background for understanding the strategic intentions behind the brand.

The brand platform is built around a set of core values - openness, agility, determination, and creativity - which reflect Casablanca's urban identity.

Its core positioning, "The city where worlds converge," emphasizes the city's role as a geographic and cultural crossroads. While not part of the research methodology, this strategic framework is crucial for interpreting the empirical findings related to digital perception, identity-building, and citizen engagement.

The Brand's Digital Presence

The digital presence of the WeCasablanca brand is a central component of its communication strategy. The brand operates across several platforms, including an official website and active social media accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Additionally, the "Casabreak" mobile application was launched to promote the city's attractions and events in real time. The brand's digital reach is further amplified through a network of local ambassadors - citizens, influencers, and community members - who share and promote its values online. While this section is not part of the research methodology, it is included to provide a clearer understanding of the brand's outreach mechanisms. These digital tools play a key role in shaping user perceptions and engagement, which are evaluated through the empirical research presented in the next sections.

Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine how digital tools contribute to the construction, perception, and reinforcement of a territorial brand. Using the WeCasablanca initiative as a case study, we explored how digital communication strategies influence the brand's visibility, stakeholder engagement, and perceived attractiveness. This discussion interprets the main findings in light of the theoretical frameworks of territorial marketing, identity, and citizen involvement. Our goal is to highlight how these dimensions interact in shaping the success of digital territorial branding initiatives, and to extract lessons applicable to other urban territories.

We have implemented a versatile tool grounded in a mixed-method approach, combining two strategies executed concurrently: qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The goal is to propose actionable strategies and revitalize the regional brand.

To investigate the impact of digital strategies on the perception of the WeCasablanca brand, we employed a mixed-methods design. This approach allowed for triangulation between qualitative insights and quantitative validation. The qualitative phase included six focus groups and twenty semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders, including representatives from institutions, civil society, media, and the private sector. The quantitative phase involved a structured survey distributed to 1,003 Casablanca residents, stratified by age, gender, and district, using the CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) method. This design provided both depth and scale in understanding how the brand is perceived and engaged with.

We established 6 focus groups, conducted 20 semi-structured stakeholder interviews, and distributed 1,003 surveys among Casablanca residents, employing a face-to-face approach

using the CAPI method on tablets. These participants were representative of both genders across all age groups, distributed across Casablanca's eight district prefectures. Further, we can also conduct behavioral questionnaires among seven hundred Moroccan tourists, where the survey will be conducted face-to-face in the CAPI technique on tablets with a balanced distribution over five towns of the kingdom: Marrakech, Tangier, Rabat, Agadir, and Fez. The pattern of vacationers to be replied to become selected primarily based totally on the subsequent criteria: the vacationers have spent their closing one year in Casablanca, they have got an internment to live in Casablanca for the following one year, they have got spent specific motives in Casablanca for staying, and it exceeds their period of life of forty-eight HOURS.

The interviews and focus groups were analyzed through thematic content analysis. Key themes emerged around the perceived authenticity of the brand, its relevance to local identity, the effectiveness of digital channels, and the lack of offline engagement initiatives. These themes served as analytical categories that informed the interpretation of survey responses, particularly regarding emotional attachment and recognition patterns. For example, stakeholder interviews frequently emphasized the brand's digital overexposure and limited grassroots anchoring - issues that were also reflected in lower recognition scores among older residents.

Key findings from the survey: Casablanca is a city appreciated by both residents and Moroccan tourists, although its current image appears somewhat divided. In fact, over 77% of Moroccan residents and tourists express general satisfaction with their lives and experiences in Casablanca, sharing this sentiment on social media. Notably, the level of satisfaction was highest among the 'younger generation': 85% of respondents. Casablanca is now a city that people readily recommend to others, particularly on social platforms. The spontaneous enthusiasm was also more pronounced among the 'younger generation'. By cross-referencing these findings with the vertical and horizontal analysis of stakeholder interview data, a positive connection with Casablanca is evident, even among those who have moved to the city from elsewhere and feel fully integrated. Additionally, 75% of participants who contributed to this study took a look at the claim that they became privy to it at some stage in the lockdown period, since it became a lot more present, active, and toward citizens, above all through its page "Wecasanlanca".

A sense of attachment is evident in the participants' remarks. Casablanca is the nurturing figure; it represents the foundation of the family, it is the sanctuary, it is the extended family. And even though they are essential, and in particular exacting within the face of the demanding situations their town faces, the Casablancans are trustworthy to the town and do now no longer think about residing elsewhere: 48% of them categorical this on Facebook, and 80% declare that they would want to achieve this withinside the destiny if this might be of any assist in improving the beauty in their territory. In spite of everything being reprehensible from the point of view, Casablanca is the city that will be seduced through its modernity, diversity, and atmosphere, which is palpable via virtual structures rented with the help of the brand.

About the branding question, 85% of tourists can agree that Casablanca definitely has a good picture for Moroccan tourism, while nationals appear much more circumspect, with a median picture score of 58% and a rather marked generational contrast.

On logo recognition: A little-recognized concept of "territorial logo" brought together, and a low presence in thoughts of the WeCasablanca logo, combined with the citizens' 39% - on recognition alone, spontaneously.

Secondly, there could be a certified notoriety, which is very low in citizens or nearly non-existent in travelers. Once more, it would seem that the "youngest" of residents recognize the logo best—71% amongst citizens and 32% among travelers.

The recognition of a brand, significantly bolstered by digital platforms and partially through traditional mediums like bus advertisements, tram displays, and electronic billboards, is acknowledged by 37% of residents and 41% of visitors who state they can identify the emblem or understand its significance because of travelers who claim to recognize either the logo or at least what the sign means due to physical media, and more than 83% of young people recognizing the logo claim to know it due to electronic platforms. We also discovered that the impacts of the events forecasted in the development of the regional brand could be truly wonderful: 71% on the part of the citizens and 80% on the part of the tourists.

Survey results show that only 39% of residents could spontaneously recognize the WeCasablanca brand. Among tourists, recognition dropped significantly to below 20%. However, among younger respondents (ages 18–35), brand recognition was considerably higher: 71% for residents and 32% for tourists. The channels most frequently cited for brand exposure were digital platforms (Instagram, Facebook), especially among the youth segment (83%), followed by traditional media such as bus advertising and tram displays. Overall, 77% of residents and tourists expressed general satisfaction with Casablanca as a destination, yet their understanding of the brand's purpose remained limited. These findings suggest a generational gap in brand engagement and a need to diversify communication tools.

More generally, residents and social partners desire an absence of communication on the subject of the brand. It is therefore even more reasonable that residents and visitors trust in the brand's ability to achieve its objectives.

While firmly advocating for an increased merchandising of the logo with renewal and more focused interest on virtual platforms, "WeCasablanca" is a logo with very wonderful views that need to stay built. If anything, virtual is the best friend in the primary, at least, to be valued in line with professionals.

Conclusion

Research on the revitalization of territories has pointed out that communication, spreading the logo's attitude towards the target, making the logo stay with the help of the use of concerns about citizens, and growing attachment and belonging experience to the territory are simple ingredients of the recipe in order to provide the right results. This may, therefore, imply that the 'wecasablanca' logo needs all tourism operators to act as ambassadors of the logo. "WeCasablanca" must paintings in collaboration and through its actors to bloom logo visibility; above all, we have to now no longer neglect this style of social networks and influencers, most of all in the case of territorial advertising, especially of the town of Casablanca, with the stakeholders. We should enhance collaboration by having more inclusive imagination and more concerns for consultations, especially considering that more than 80% of the people in our qualitative and quantitative research say the territorial brand "Wecasablanca" has gained notoriety thanks to its presence in social media.

Moreover, belonging needs to be consolidated by deeds that feed Casablancans' pride so that the magic comes back to Casablanca. For instance, contributing to tourism promotion beyond business by ensuring safety, empowering the youth, and uniting residents under a shared perspective is made possible today thanks to digital technology.

Last but not least, due to virtual possibilities, we can involve the stakeholders fully and on time and reorient the whole advertising process toward realizing brand objectives. Having a bottom-up/endogenous governance attitude permits us to take a step again from the picture of advertising achievements so that it will stumble on the susceptible factors of the strategy, and thus become more effective in uniting the key players within the region.

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