



Saffron

Selling Lithuania smartly

A guide to the creative-strategic development
of an economic image for the country

Recommendations from Saffron Brand Consultants
March 2009

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1-10 Praed Mews, London, W2 1QY

T +44 (0)20 7087 3460 F +44 (0)20 7087 3461

Zurbano 23, 28010 Madrid

T +34 91 787 3200 F +34 91 787 3232

441 Broadway, 5th floor

New York, NY 10012 USA

T +1 917 388 3213 F +1 917 388 3413

Adeshwar Mahai, Buddha Mandir Road

Parel, Mumbai 400014

T +91 22 241 75 75 0 F +91 22 241 75 75 1

www.saffron-consultants.com

Executive summary

Lithuania's economic image is inseparable from its image as a whole.

Positioning

Lithuania is little known and understood, so its positioning needs to project a certain Lithuanian-ness.

Two themes which emerge as unusual, true and delightful are **lively and 'romantic'** and **thoughtful and reliable**.

Lithuania should not be perceived as one of the three Baltic nations but as the most attractive country for investment in Northeast Europe.

Key Messages

Within the framework of the twin themes, the most relevant general messages to convey are:

- That Lithuania is the most interesting country for investment in Northeast Europe, for its size, self-sufficiency, strong national identity, colourful history, superior infrastructure, remarkable work ethic, notable cultural creativity, adequate governance and location in between Western and Eastern Europe and Russia;
- That foreign investors are likely to find Lithuania, despite its few weaknesses, to be a comfortable, convenient and emotionally fulfilling place to spend time doing business —a place that is at once unusual and familiar;

- And therefore that many European businesses from mature markets will find more suitable business opportunities here than in any other 'New EU' country.

We recommend four techniques for using these messages in different contexts:

- In factual or comparative statements made in an engaging way (i.e. Half of the Baltic economy (50% of GDP) is in Lithuania);
- In one-line factual statements (i.e. Lithuania: 18 daily hours of sunshine in summertime);
- As bold claims expressed as questions (i.e. Lithuania: Home of the next Nokia?);
- As word trios (i.e. Lithuania: Pastoral. Industrial. Unusual).

Proposed actions

We recommend:

- An LDA-led identity development to create a unique visual style and tone of voice to be used by the LDA and other organisations to promote Lithuania;
- A communications programme orchestrated in selected, specific target countries and for specific aims in accordance with the image development strategy. We do not recommend 'corporate advertising' for Lithuania (in The Economist or on CNN, for example);
- A "Made in Lithuania" programme to help develop Lithuania's economic image through exports;

- A number of symbolic actions and other initiatives including a domestic identity and PR programme.

Evaluation of effectiveness

We recommend:

- A modest research programme to assess how perceptions of Lithuania are shifting over time and to generate ongoing PR about Lithuania's image.

Conclusion

Lithuania is a small but sound country with more strengths and opportunities, and a less obstructive past and a potentially brighter future, than many of its 'New EU' counterparts. If Lithuania integrates a cohesive, thoughtful and appropriately brave image strategy with its other programmes and policies, we believe Lithuania can attain an above-average social status and level of economic development, in the European context, in one-half to one-third the time that it would otherwise take to reach. What's more, because branding is geared to deal with emotional issues, it can be used right now as a timely and potent 'complementary medicine' to the hard, crisis-oriented actions currently being undertaken by Lithuania's government. The economic situation makes branding activity more urgently required, not less.

'People think that businesses make decisions about where to locate on purely rational grounds, but at some level there's quite an emotional pull. The places that manage to suggest they have these qualities (cool, glamorous, sexy) often win out even though maybe their taxes are little bit higher or their transport doesn't quite work. It's that kind of magic fairy dust that some places manage to sprinkle over themselves and some just don't.'

Alain de Botton,
author of *The Art of Travel* and *The Architecture of Happiness*,
in an online interview with *Monocle* magazine



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Introduction

The name of Lithuania, as we all now know, is a thousand years old. Despite the current difficulties, this remains an auspicious time in the country's entire history. The broad aim of our work is to help you make the most of this opportunity.

Our research was commissioned in autumn 2008 by the Lithuanian Development Agency. The first research trip took place in September, and a draft presentation of this report was handed over to the LDA in January 2009 (a rundown of the people we met and the publications we examined during the course of things is given in the appendix. And let us especially thank Mantas Nocius, Violeta Makauskiene and Irma Juskenaitė of the LDA right here up front).

This document is a product of a good deal of inquiry, consideration and collaboration. Our mission had three broad components.

The first was noticing: exposing ourselves to all relevant facets of the country and its people and seeing what caught our eye as being helpful to the cause; the second was synthesising: using our judgment, in collaboration with the LDA and various helpful interlocutors, to turn our observations into useful (i.e., actionable) insights; the third was creating: using our imagination to define a list of actions that, if taken, seem likely to us to bring about the most desirable development of Lithuania's image abroad, particularly in the minds of investors.

The work is meant, above all, to serve the LDA's aims as the investment promotion bureau for Lithuania. Yet we—and the LDA—hope it will be useful to a variety of Lithuania's marketers, champions and stakeholders. Likewise, we recognise that image-making efforts in Lithuania already have been underway, most notably the Lithuanian logo and the branding strategies (still in development) of the Government. This paper should be seen as referring to and sitting alongside all of these activities.

With gratitude and respect,



Wally Olins
Chairman



Jeremy Hildreth
Head of place branding

Safiron Brand Consultants

The problem of national perceptions

1



An 'economic image' is inseparable from an overall image

Our assignment pertains to developing the economic image of Lithuania. We have interpreted that to mean “the image of Lithuania, with an eye toward the country’s commercial aims, interests and endeavors.” This interpretation is fundamental and it stems from two related theses of ours:

1. That the chief shortcoming of Lithuania’s economic image is a weak image overall.
2. That to focus exclusively on ‘economic image’ and commercial considerations would be to miss entirely many of the vital components of country image (such as culture and sport) that affect commercial and investment decisions.

Our approach to ‘economic image’ thus goes well beyond ‘merely’ hard economic factors. And indeed, we have come to believe that much of what Lithuania has that would positively influence a foreigner’s investment decision—and much of what is truly different about Lithuania—actually falls into this category of soft factors.

A ‘sense of place’ of Lithuania and a sense of the mentality of Lithuanians are vital economic assets, and they are every bit as seductive as (for instance) the country’s low tax rates and every bit as important to making commercial decisions.

Moreover, these soft factors are more easily branded than the hard factors because a) they are easier to build compelling stories around, and b) they are more unique to Lithuania. As it happens, Lithuania is quite competitive on purely economic grounds. But where it is most competitive of all—where it beats everybody else hands down—is in being Lithuanian.

Indeed, no other country in the world—not Estonia, not Latvia, not Poland, not Sweden, not China—is as Lithuanian as Lithuania.

So, whether you are selling Lithuanian tourism, Lithuanian business or investment opportunities, Lithuanian real estate, Lithuanian landscape or even Lithuanian lasers, you are selling, in large part, the same Lithuania.

This is why it is so important in developing the economic image of Lithuania that you concentrate very much on characterising, promoting, strengthening, teaching and exclaiming the virtues of the nation as a whole.



A note about reckoning with perceptions

As we set about this work, it is good to realise upfront an essential truth about perceptions, which is that they cannot be erased, they can only be created. For example, if someone says to you, “Picture a hamburger,” you will picture a hamburger, involuntarily. If the person then says, “Okay, stop picturing that hamburger,” it will not remove the image in your mind. But if she says, “Right—now picture a white bowl with strawberry ice cream in it and chocolate sauce on top,” *viola* no more hamburger.

Lithuania has two tasks: to replace current unhelpful perceptions with more helpful ones and to create certain fresh perceptions where there were none before.

To give one example, you would like to *replace* the vague perceptions of Lithuania as ‘post-Soviet’, with its connotations of backwardness, ugliness, gloominess, corruption, etc., with strong perceptions of Lithuania as Northern European, e.g., culturally and technologically sophisticated, handsome, clean, fashionable, enlightened and picturesque.

At the same time, you would like to *create* perceptions of Lithuania that successfully distinguish it from Estonia and Latvia; that is, you would like people to have specific associations with Lithuania that they do not have with other countries. This is where branding comes in.

Branding as a shortcut for overcoming ignorance and inertia

The idea of branding is to capitalise on the strange logic of perceptions and, through a combination of words and actions (i.e. communications and substance), systematically create greater understanding and stronger attraction to a place in the minds of certain audiences who are all, to varying degrees, reluctant, passive and disengaged.

The process involves two parts:

- articulating a set of perceptions that, if widely held, would amount to a place being understood and appreciated and valued in the right way and for the right reasons.
- and then taking measures to teach, nurture, earn, prove, foretell, enhance and gradually bring about that desired set of perceptions.

Please note, too, that branding does not value greater awareness for its own sake. Indeed, one of the most common mistakes of marketing is to treat 'greater awareness' as a primary goal, when in fact 'greater *particular* awareness' is what matters. Saf ron's proposed strategy and action plan bear this firmly in mind.

Michael Palin on Lithuania in *New Europe*:

"Lithuania is the largest of the Baltic republics and driving across the country from the coast to the capital one senses a scale absent from its cosier neighbours to the north."

"It's not only the size of the territory that makes Lithuania different. Her history is bigger, too. Neither Latvia nor Estonia has known anything to rival the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a trading empire which stretched as far as Moscow and the Black Sea and was the last pagan state in medieval Europe."

"In 1569 the Grand Duchy joined with Poland to create the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, one of the most tolerant, civilised and secure of European power blocs, strong enough to inflict defeats on the Teutonic Knights from the west and Ivan the Terrible's army from the east, before succumbing to the relentless growth of a Russian state two centuries later."

"In 1940 the standard of living in Lithuania was higher than in Finland. After 50 years of Russian occupation the roles were completely reversed."

Lithuania's image strategy: key recommendations

2



“Please,
just tell people
we’re normal!”

The situation

In 10 years, Lithuania will probably be indistinguishable from Sweden in terms of economic development.

This was what a visiting Swede recently told one of the people we interviewed in Klaipeda, adding with a sincere wistfulness: “Enjoy the ride.”

The point is, Lithuania is on its way to becoming a standard-issue, first-world European country with the same problems and possibilities as any other. It’s really a matter of when, not if, this happens.

And although Lithuania ranks very highly in quality of life rankings already, it’s not Sweden yet. There is no shame in this, of course, but it does mean that Lithuania is still widely (if vaguely) regarded as a second-rate country, and questions like, “Can you use credit cards there?” arise with alarming frequency. (The number one refrain of our interviewees was: “Please, just tell people we’re normal!”)

In terms of economic image, the Lithuanian Government Office reports that “As many as 48% of residents of the large EU member states have no information about Lithuania’s economy and 33% have a negative opinion.”

Lithuania’s profile is low, and people do not have a lot of specific knowledge and associations with the country. Saying

“Lithuania” doesn’t conjure many images. And although the infamous ‘confusion with the Balkans’ story seems to be largely apocryphal, a great many foreigners we discussed Lithuania with could not confidently place the country, even roughly, on a map. (Amusingly and tellingly, more than one Indian, when told Lithuania was in Northern Europe, asked if it was in Sweden.)

Most of all what Lithuania lacks is an ‘open file’ in people’s minds labelled **Lithuania**. And without that open file, people have nowhere to accumulate the drips and drops of information they happen to get about Lithuania.

What we must do is help people who already are aware of Lithuania make sense of the information that they put into their file. We can help them—to invoke again the twin goals of branding—understand and be attracted to Lithuania.

The need for characterisation

Lithuania is, as we stated earlier, by far the most Lithuanian country in the world. This might sound silly, but it has profound identity and marketing ramifications. Because the most obvious thing about Lithuania is its Lithuanianness—it sticks out like a sore thumb if only you know how to see it!—characterising Lithuanianness becomes the top priority and we must bring utmost care and imagination to that task of making the best of Lithuania visible and understood.

Visible. And understood.

Another way to think about this is to ask the question:
If Lithuania is an ingredient, what does it add to the mix?

Or: What are the favours of Lithuanianness?

Just as if you don’t know what dill tastes like, you’ll never exclaim “Wow! I love this soup! It’s full of dill!”, if you can’t identify Lithuanianness your ability to value it will be impaired.

This is where themes come in.

How themes work

The job of the themes vis-à-vis the nation's economic image is to characterise Lithuania as a country, and Lithuanians as a people, desirable for investment. These themes—which almost any economic fact or feature of Lithuania will relate to, indirectly if not directly—will achieve two things above all:

1. Provide a 'key' to Lithuania, saying, in effect, "Grasp this handful of thoughts and you will be on your way to grasping so much more."
2. Be an interpretive lens to help both Lithuania's audiences and Lithuania's champions focus attention on what's most essential and interesting about Lithuania and bring some amount of clarity to the country's attractions, features and complexities.

In other words—the themes enable people to taste Lithuania in the soup.

What's more, the themes will help people put the information they find about Lithuania into their mental **Lithuania** files. They, and their sub-themes, help the drop-drop-drops of perceptual data amount to something of a helpful overall image instead of running off into the gutter of lost information.

The themes will also give you, as promoters of Lithuania, powerful guidance about what to say about Lithuania and how to say it (with words and action, with style and substance).

What are themes?

They are distillations. Essentials. They are not facts themselves, strictly speaking. They are stylised interpretations, but they are truthful and they are factually defensible.

As much as possible, the themes ought to be:

- **Essential:** close to Lithuania's heart and the nation's important truths
- **Distinctive:** not generally predominant in other countries
- **Intriguing:** serving as 'hooks' to grab people's attention and arouse their curiosity
- **Authentic:** able to be seen, felt and experienced because they are real
- **Explanatory:** offering the beginnings of a deeper understanding of the country and providing subtle explanation for Lithuania's strengths and weaknesses
- **Realistic:** setting expectations that can be met or exceeded
- **Enduring:** valid, appropriate and useful for at least a decade
- **Interrelated:** understood as collaborative, interacting forces that combine into related, derivative forces. Like red and blue make purple.

The themes themselves are a means to an end. It is only when people begin to notice the manifestations of the themes, and the way these forces combine, that they can fully appreciate Lithuania.

Two sweeping Lithuanian themes

The two themes that emerged for us, which we think are the most useful to you, are:

1. Lithuania is lively and 'romantic'
2. Lithuania is thoughtful and reliable

Where did these come from, what do they mean and what do they imply for the economic image of Lithuania? Read on.

Note: We put 'romantic' in quotes because, padlocks on Vilnius bridges aside, we do not mean the word in a hearts-and-flowers way.



The wedding locks on the Uzupis Bridge, with their keys presumably having been thrown into the river below, in accordance with tradition.

Theme 1: Lithuania is lively and 'romantic'

Live • ly *briskly alert and energetic; vigorous, animated <a lively discussion>: active, intense <takes a lively interest in politics>: brilliant, fresh <a lively wit>: imparting spirit or vivacity: stimulating: quick to rebound: resilient: responding readily to the helm <a lively boat>: full of life, movement, or incident*

Ro • man • tic *marked by the imaginative or emotional appeal of what is heroic, adventurous, remote, mysterious, or idealised: of, relating to, or having the characteristics of romanticism: of or relating to music of the 19th century characterised by an emphasis on subjective emotional qualities and freedom of form: responsive to the appeal of what is idealised, heroic, or adventurous*

Merriam-Webster

Lively and 'romantic'

Lively and 'romantic' speaks of a country that's dynamic and full of myths and stories, and of a people who are ambitious and motivated and who are also possessed of a deliciously, almost poetically, eccentric streak which is manifest throughout Lithuania's culture and history.

The language is one of the nation's most impressive oddities: Lithuanian is the oldest living Indoeuropean tongue, with a vintage and import rivaling Sanskrit. (Don't worry—most Lithuanians you'll meet in the cities speak English and possibly one or two other languages on top of that.)

Having risen to dizzying nationalistic heights as the largest country in Europe and been sunk to some terrible lows as a Nazi-occupied territory and then a Soviet republic, Lithuanians are also an adaptable and resilient—and often a brave, and sometimes a stubborn—people. As a rule, they are noticeably diligent workers and managers, and as entrepreneurs Lithuanians are real 'questers', who will go against the odds in order to make good on an idealistic vision.

Lithuanians are iconoclastic in their love of basketball and improvisational (shall we say) in their adoration of jazz. They have a knack for coming at things differently, and for rearranging reality into original forms—a fact which has manifestations in sectors as diverse as art history (like the Fluxus movement, which was started by Lithuanians) and science (where Lithuanian bioscientists just discovered a

way to cut genes using enzymes that bests the previous known methods).

There are ways in which Lithuania is sophisticated and ornate and other ways in which it is natural and simple. The latter traits often have roots in the country's fascinating, still-evident (and nearly unique) pagan origins.

Physically, there are many aspects of Lithuania that are lovely and some, even, that are downright beautiful. See the delicate, shifting sands of the Curonian spit (a UNESCO heritage site) or Vilnius' St Anne's church, which Napoleon wanted to take home to Josephine.

All together, Lithuania represents the best of modern Eastern Europe: lively, determined, inventive, imaginative, energetic and, in the most complimentary sense of the word (most of the time), a little bit wild.

Where does this theme come from, where is it exemplified and where do you see it?

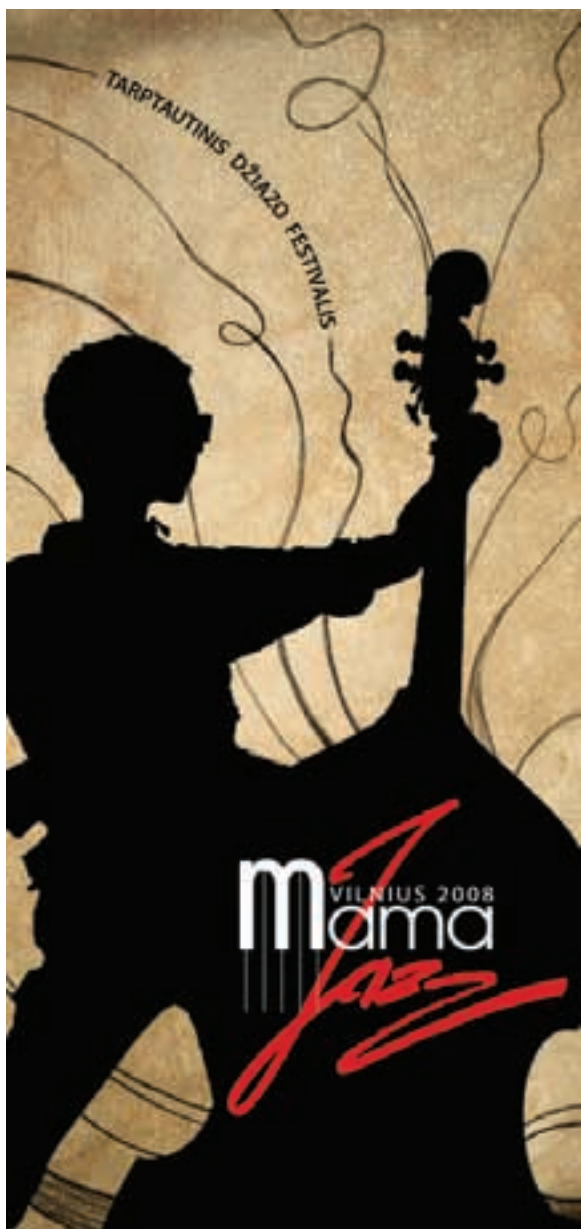
Note: unattributed quotations are from interviewees with whom we spoke during our research. As most conversations were described as of the record, we don't identify everyone by name.

“The city is like a mini-Prague with fewer stag parties, even cheaper beer and fantastic restaurants. Also great value are the ubiquitous shops selling amber from the Baltic, and the Amber Museum on Mykolo Street is free.”

The Times (of London) 29 November 2008



© courtesy of Andrew Quested



Seven Lithuanian basketball players have been Olympic medalists, including one in the controversial 1972 USSR victory over the United States.

2: Lithuania's image strategy: key recommendations

Everyone has the right to appreciate their unimportance

Everyone has the right to love and take care of the cat
A dog has the right to be a dog
Everyone has the right to be unhappy
Everyone has the right to be silent
Everyone has the right to understand
Everyone has the right to understand nothing
Everyone shall remember their name
Everyone may share what they possess
No one can share what they do not possess
Everyone is responsible for their freedom
Everyone has the right to cry
Everyone has the right to be understood
Everyone has the right to be individual
Everyone has the right to have no rights
Everyone has the right not to be afraid
Do not defeat
Do not fight back
Do not surrender

Excerpts from the Uzupis Constitution



You don't have to carry your passport along to enter the Uzupis Republic. But please respect the Republic's laws, principles and art.



The 1960s Fluxus art movement, which involved such personages as composer John Cage and artist Marcel Duchamp, was started and named by Lithuanian George Maciulas.



“In the 16th century, Bona Sforza, the queen of Poland and the Grand Duchess of Lithuania from the Medici family of Milan lived in Vilnius; thus Italians contributed to the cultural formation of Lithuania.”

Bona was a patron of Renaissance culture which, thanks to her, began to flourish in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

“You know Lithuania has the second highest per-capita consumption of good coffee in Europe, after Italy.”

“Lithuanian Special Forces are getting high marks in Zabul Province, and stories about them are filled with dangerous escapades and humor. They like to ride captured Taliban motorbikes to sneak up on and chase Taliban fighters (who are reportedly afraid of the Lithuanians) and often roll out of the gate wearing nothing but body armor and weapons. ‘Not even a t-shirt,’ an American soldier said.”

Michael Yon on pajamasmedia.com

*“In Soviet times,
Lithuanians had
the record for
travelling most
around the country,
for business and
tourism. This shows
our inclination
toward action.”*

Klaipėda
DIEMRAŠTIS TAU

“I see Lithuania as a mature civil society, as a unique land capable of bringing its neighbours on board to pursue commonly beneficial causes. And as a state inhabited by a free, open and prosperous society, which continues promoting its language and culture even amid wide-scale globalisation. As a country whose success story has been written by its people.”

Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas

Prime Minister, 2001-2006

President of the Republic of Lithuania, 1993-1998

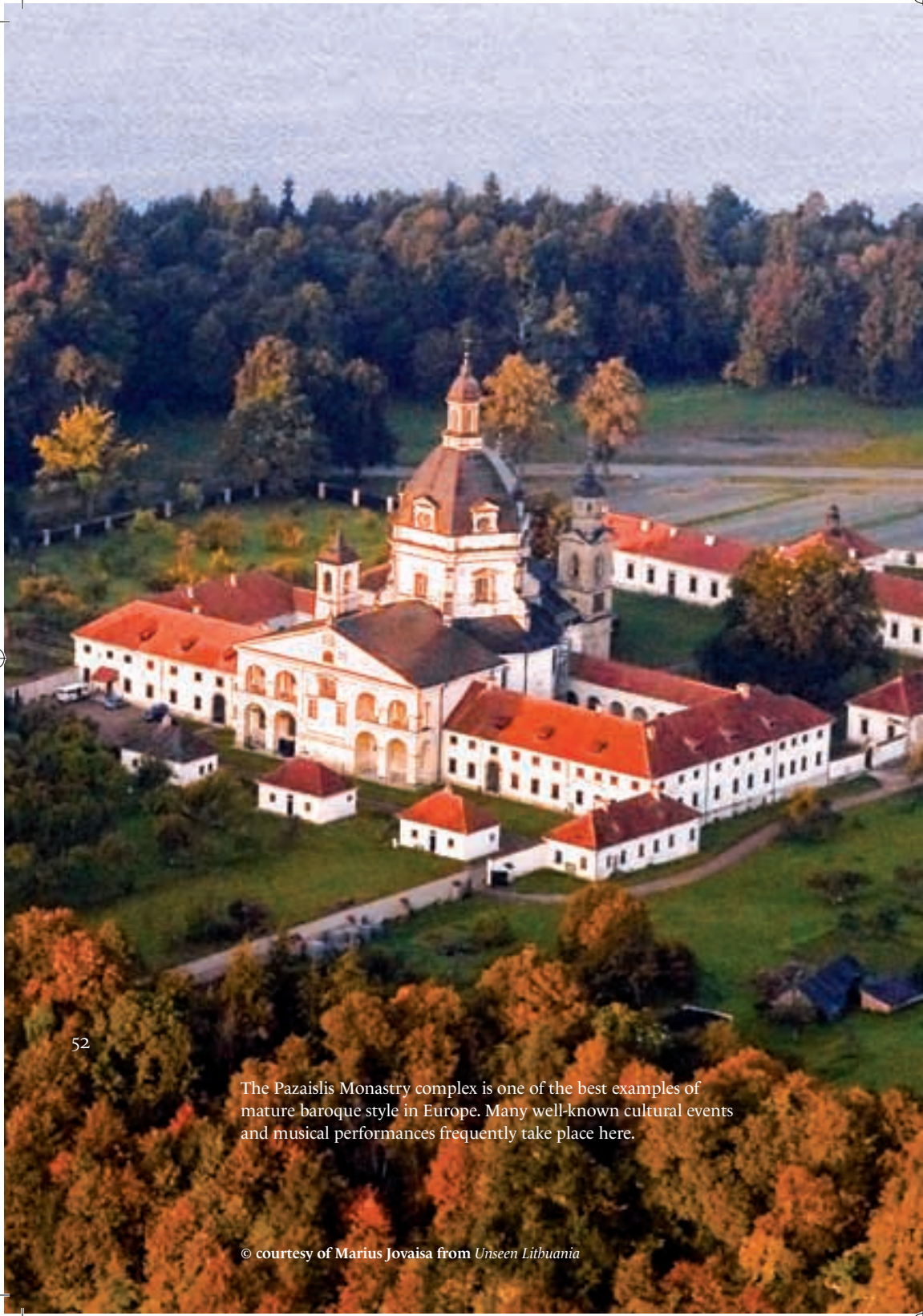


Vilnius is the European Capital of Culture.

Voted one of top 10 places to go in 2009 by *Times Online*

Trakai is a town situated between three lakes, 28 km to the west of Vilnius. On your way there you travel through the historic lands of the former Duchy of Trakai, whose centre, Old Trakai, was the capital of Lithuania in the Middle Ages.

© courtesy of Marius Jovaisa from *Unseen Lithuania*



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The Pazaislis Monastery complex is one of the best examples of mature baroque style in Europe. Many well-known cultural events and musical performances frequently take place here.

© courtesy of Marius Jovaisa from *Unseen Lithuania*



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Frescos at Vilnius University by Petras Repsys recall the works of Hieronymus Bosch.

2: Lithuania's image strategy: key recommendations



*“We were first to announce
independence from the
Soviet Union. That was
perfectly natural for us.”*

Theme 2: Thoughtful and reliable

thought • ful *absorbed in thought : meditative :
characterised by careful reasoned thinking*

re • li • able *suitable or fit to be relied on : dependable*

Merriam-Webster

Thoughtful and reliable

Lithuanians are educated and skilled, excelling in productive activities from crafts to computers (“In this country, all we really have are our hands and brains,” quipped one interviewee. “We’d better use them”).

There is also a marked note of rationality and forethought and contemplation in the Lithuanian nature (appropriately, many Christ icons in the country, called rupintojėlis, are depicted striking a pensive pose). As workers, Lithuanians have a reputation for being diligent, practical and reliable. As consumers, they’re known for frugality (despite Lithuania’s mighty resurgence, for instance, luxury retail brands have had a much harder time here than in neighbouring countries). And Lithuanians have a pride in their nation and a comfort with themselves that is far from universal in New Europe (almost everyone we talked to answered yes to the question “If you could you be born any nationality, again, would you be born Lithuanian?”).

Commercially, Lithuania has sound fiscal affairs, solid governance and a peaceful culture and society. Indeed, politically and economically, Lithuania is among the most stable, self-reliant and effective of the new EU countries, as numerous statistics and metrics from national borrowing (lower than its counterparts) to domestic manufacturing (above the EU average as a share of GDP) abundantly attest.

If you’d describe a Southern European country like Spain, Italy or Greece as relaxed, then you’d describe Lithuania as

calm. Though vibrant (it’s bigger than Dublin, Lisbon or Helsinki), Lithuania’s main city is often lauded by its fans as being ‘villagey’ (and at 40% grass and open space, Vilnius is one of the greenest capitals in Europe). It’s a pleasant and charming city with a distinctive ‘vibe’ that is at once soothing and invigorating.

Lithuania’s landscape is verdant and fertile—the country was one of the breadbaskets of the USSR—and tranquil. And while nature, and getting mixed up in it recreationally and professionally, is significant for people, Lithuania is somehow not as pastoral as, say, Latvia. (Nor are Lithuanians as passionate about saunas as the Estonians.) The high quality of the country’s infrastructure, particularly its roads, is exceptional for the region and adds ease to all manner of Lithuanian experiences.

In so many ways, in fact, Lithuania is exactly what you’d expect a Northern European nation to be: peaceful, healthy, modest and trustable—or as you might translate it for Lithuania’s case, small but sound.

Where does this theme come from, where is it exemplified and where do you see it?



“This is the capital so you can find everything here—but also a peace. You don’t have to live in a hurry. Vilnius is extremely green, lots of trees and parks. Nice old town. Riga is more developed, more cosmopolitan.”

“There’s a naturalness in the way Lithuanians talk and in the way we experience pain and love.”

“Quality of life is quite good here. Vilnius is the right sized city. Little bit bigger than Helsinki. It has this ambiance. Like a big village. 100k downtown and 400k in the suburbs.”



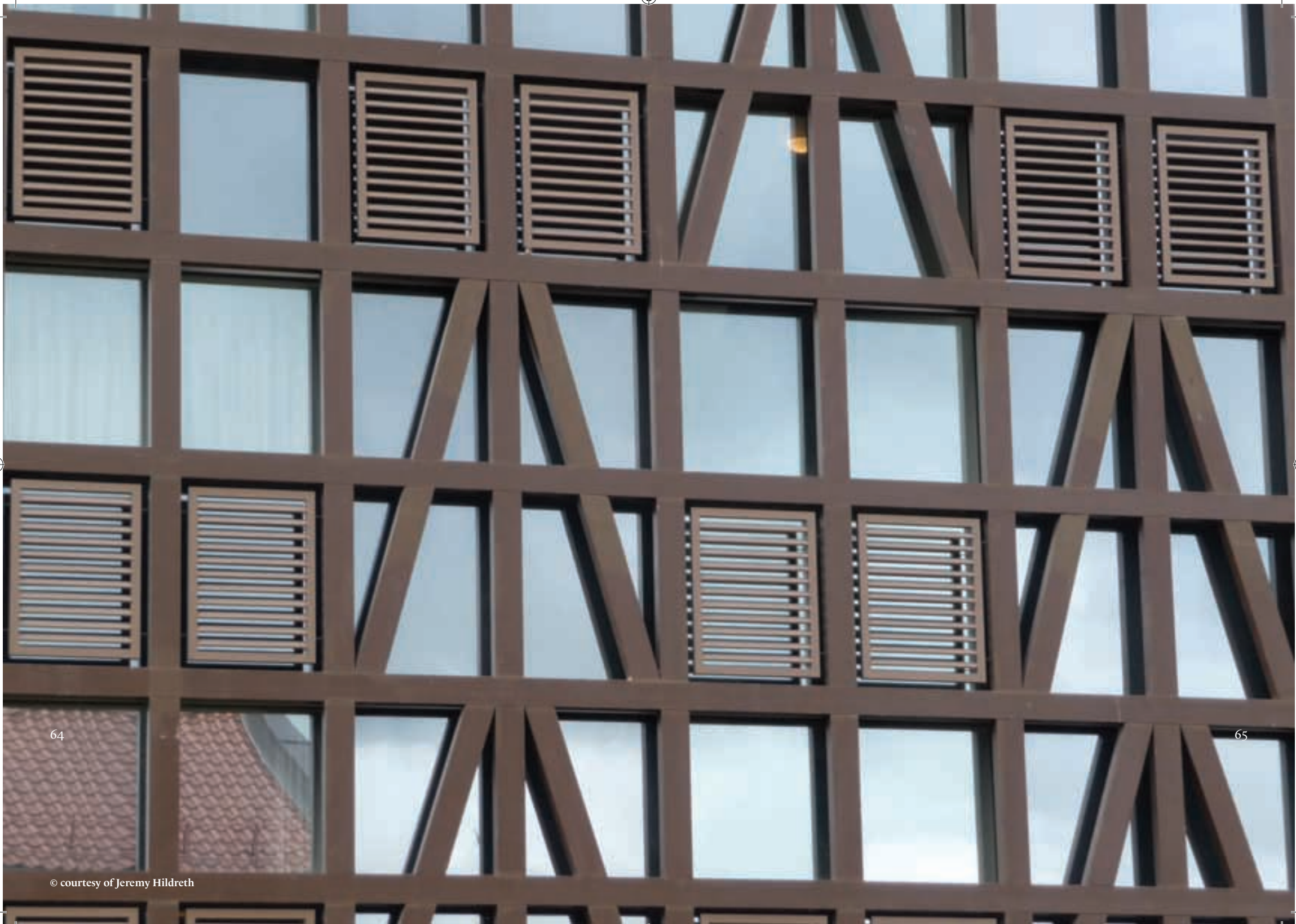


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Many companies, including IKEA, have found Lithuania a good place to manufacture such products as furniture.

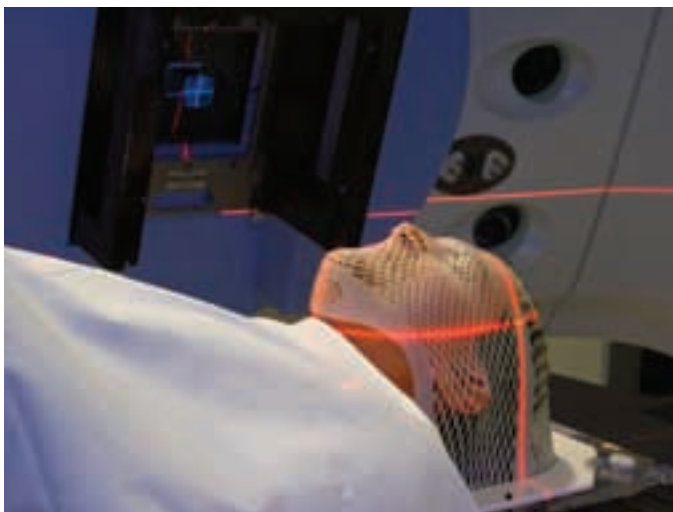


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“We are the best in the world.”

Dr Romauldas Danielius, chief
scientist at Light Conversion Ltd.



66



The oak remains an unofficial symbol, which the entire nation
seems to have agreed upon. To Lithuanians, the oak is strong and
noble, and at the same time sacred.

67



Many Christ icons in the country, called *rupintojelis*, are depicted striking a pensive pose.

Themes within the themes

You are likely, actually, to use sub-themes more often than you use the grand themes. This is because they will tie to concrete claims more directly.

In promoting Lithuania, you will want to use the positive words, obviously, in as strong a way as is credible for whatever it is you are trying to say. But we have included less positive words as well, for you will need these sometimes in explaining certain current truths about Lithuania. For instance, it is true that Lithuanians can be, at some times and in some ways, provincial or stubborn. But with all of these words in mind, you are then prepared to say, for instance, “Oh yes, we can be stubborn, but you should understand this as an extreme of a good quality which is that we are determined and ambitious.” Or, “Lithuania has a long history of tolerance that goes back hundreds of years and has many very sophisticated aspects. But even as fast as we are developing, it is not surprising that one does still encounter provincialism.”

You have to be straight with people to preserve credibility, and choosing your words carefully will help you accentuate the positive at every opportunity.

Characterising less attractive traits as versions of—as ‘the other side of the coin’ of—more attractive traits is a good way to do this.

Sub-themes

Words in brackets are variations or extremes.

Adjectives related to lively and 'romantic'

grand (epic)	sophisticated
eccentric (artsy)	inventive (improvisational)
energetic (wild)	brave
imaginative	determined (stubborn)
ambitious (self-critical)	lovely (beautiful)
Eastern European	

Adjectives related to thoughtful and reliable

tranquil/calming	fertile (verdant)
practical	diligent
peaceful/calm	healthy (whole)
modest (frugal)	skilled (educated)
stable (mature)	rational (pragmatic)
trustable	Northern European

Adjectives related to both or neither

natural	pagan
provincial	hardworking
incubating	pensive (contemplative)
comfortable	charming
tolerant	'villagey'

What these themes mean commercially

The themes and their components are the swirling forces of Lithuanian life and economic personality. As often as not, they appear not in isolation but in some blend. And just as red and blue make purple, the blend doesn't necessarily look like its ingredients, even though that's where it comes from directly.

Another insight is that the themes and their components should be viewed like notes on a piano. Playing them as chords or trills will often make the loveliest music.

At any rate, the following are some examples of statements you can make which demonstrate a) how the themes combine and b) how they may be made relevant to a business audience. They are in no particular order, and they are only representative; there are a million more permutations of the two themes and the ideas within them.

- If it's true that creativity comes from stillness of the mind in conjunction with a kind of stimulation, then what the Lithuanian Government Office suggests is absolutely correct: "Lithuania is a perfect place to generate and realise new ideas: a peaceful and tension-free [calm] environment conducive to business, with engineering potential and vast possibilities for business and science collaboration, plus a good choice of skilled labour and managerial staff."
- One reason Lithuania's such a nice place to do business is because it is a terribly nice place to be: to live in, to work in, to spend time in; it is pretty and enjoyable; it has a strong and benign sense of national identity that is exciting and interesting; it's full of people who are lively and healthy and diligent; and it has a culture that is familiar to you whether you're Russian or American or Danish.
- Lithuanian trucks move more European cargo than Latvian, Estonian and Russian trucks put together. If this doesn't dramatise Lithuania's reliability as a middleman—and its ownership of the best road and transport infrastructure in northeastern Europe—what would?
- From the Montmartre-like Uzupis to the Contemporary Arts Centre (a wonderful hang out for a casual business

lunch, by the way) to the recently opened Jonas Mekas Visual Arts Center, Lithuania's capital has an arts scene that can only be described as vibrant. You don't need Richard Florida (father of the idea of the 'creative class') to tell you this kind of situation goes hand in hand with a very creative economy.

- Even though it's a small country Lithuanians think big and bold. It's in their heritage.
- Is basketball an economic advantage? Look at it this way: as a Polish man working for a multinational professional services firm in Vilnius explains, "If the people can have so big a passion for one thing, then they can have a passion for other things. I really appreciate that. We have nothing similar in Poland."
- From European leagues to the American NBA, Lithuanian basketball players are prized sportsmen. They're known as team players who can think and play at the same time, who are both cerebral and intuitive on the court. In the workplace, Lithuanians have the same reputation.
- Whether it's playing jazz or spearheading the Fluxus avant-garde art movement, Lithuanians have a natural inclination for rearranging, for looking at things with fresh eyes, for coming at reality from an unusual angle. Why should we be surprised that Lithuanian bioscientists just invented a way of using enzymes to

cut genes three times quicker than the best previously known methods?

- Lithuanians make good employees and collaborators; as a rule, they are ambitious and very hardworking, and also are adaptable and inventive. This is nothing new. “In Soviet times, we had small and quite secret companies making highly developed electronics for the military. They were producing in Kaunas indestructible ROM memory for satellite rockets and weapons. There was nothing else like it anywhere.”
- The environment and sustainability are on the agenda here as everywhere else. But arguably, Lithuanians with their pagan origins and out-sized love of the outside are more naturally ‘in sympathy with Mother Nature’ than other cultures and economies.
- Lithuania is a particularly terrific place to realise your small and medium business ideas because it is stable and invigorating at the same time; you can think great thoughts and find the talent and boldness, at a reasonable price, to help you execute them.
- “We’re very supportive of new ideas here. We say yes, yes, yes, not no, no, no. And you can get these benefits comfortably because we’re EU.”



In other words:

Lithuania is lively and ‘romantic’.
Lithuania is calm and reliable.
Not just one.
Not just the other.
Both, together.

About how many other countries can you put your hand
on your heart and say this?

Lithuania's image strategy:
additional issues

3



The themes get to the essence of what we recommend you promote about Lithuania in order to obtain, in as short a time as possible, the economic image (and overall national image) you desire.

Nonetheless, our image strategy and action plan take account of some additional factors that are very important parts of national identity development for Lithuania.

- **Lithuanian history, nationhood and self-image**
- **Lithuania's size, location and geographic context**
- **The meaning of being 'Baltic'**
- **The idea of the 'brave nation'**

Lithuanian history, nationhood and self-image

The great American psychologist Nathaniel Branden once wrote: "Self-concept is destiny." By which he meant, people tend absolutely to act in ways that accord with how they think of themselves. Therefore how they think of themselves determines significantly where and how far they go in life. And as British politician Enoch Powell once said, the life of nations, no less than that of individuals, is lived in the mind.

So when it comes to business, what's in the national mind of Lithuanians?

On the one hand, there are some insecurities and a smallish comfort zone. Lithuanian businesses we talked to, for instance, confessed to a reluctance to operate in Scandinavia, citing in part a vague feeling of being 'out-classed' there by local businesses. Some of this comes from Lithuanians' different mindset ("It is our nature to say what we didn't do rather than what we did do," someone told us, for example) or reflexive negativity stemming from a lack of real perspective (according to the Government Office, "Lithuanian residents have a worse opinion about various aspects of the country's life than foreigners").

"I don't think we have a strong feeling of self-confidence," a journalist told us. "We have a strong feeling of pride, however, especially in our past." And filmmaker Arunas Matelis told us, "Here I see the impact of history. Just

knowing [how much your country's] been through gives a stronger sense of identity.”

Indeed, there is a case to be made—but don't say it too loudly, because Latvia and Estonia won't want to hear it—that in combination with the country's sizeable population, three viable and productive cities and big history, this strong sense of national identity makes Lithuania the only 'real' country in the Baltics.

Lithuania was once the largest country in Europe—and not because of conquest but because of diplomacy and inclusiveness. Gediminas the Grand Duke founded what amounted to the country's first free economic zone by guaranteeing free and protected living to all comers.

As one interviewee pointed out, “Vilnius is the northernmost baroque city in Europe in the last Catholic country in the east. It is a city of 14 confessions and 10 saints, and at least five ethnicities could claim it as a native city. Has never been a 'mono' city.”

There is a long history of tolerance here, especially regarding Jews (Vilna having been the Jerusalem of the north and so on). But this is not something Lithuania is currently able to get full credit for because it has not satisfactorily ironed out the reputational problems it got caught up in as a result of World War II.



Lithuania was Europe's biggest country in the 15th century. Will it be Europe's biggest opportunity in the 21st?

Just as similar issues have not just ‘gone away’ for countries like Japan, Germany, Russia and others, neither will they simply disappear for Lithuania. Resolving them is difficult, sensitive, messy and murky, and right answers and right actions are not always obvious. And it may appear to get worse before it gets better, because the process of solving it will bring strong emotions to the fore. That the Third World Litvak Congress is scheduled to be held in Vilnius, as well as the International Klezmer Festival, during the 2009 European Capital of Culture series, however, is a hopeful sign.

Lithuania's size, location and geographic context

Lithuania is a Baltic country. It is a Northern European country. And it is an Eastern European country. These are overlapping contexts without mutual exclusivity. Each context will be emphasised differently depending on the situation, but they are all valid and each has its own appeal.

Conceptually, Lithuania is also part of New Europe, which is by and large a positive connotation.

Lithuania is not the smallest of countries, but it is definitely a small country. In some ways, naturally, this smallness is a limitation. But it can also be a real strength. Said one interviewee about doing business here, “You can meet the president or prime minister if you need to. If you’re a big company. No problem.”

In any event, smallness is not the same as marginality or incompleteness. Nor does it imply that you must necessarily have a low profile. Iceland has 300,000 people, and it’s pretty famous (these days albeit not for the happiest of reasons).

Lithuania’s placement is such that it can credibly claim to be a gateway between east and west. The assertion is not unique, but it actually is rather strong—strong enough to stake a real claim on in our view.

For one, Vilnius is the closest European capital to Moscow.

You have two major transport corridors going through Lithuanian territory (north/south and east/west). And you have a deep historical link with the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, giving you a big leg up in terms of all Russian commercial relations in both directions.

Hold facts like these up in conjunction with a national character that's rational, pragmatic and inclined always to find and negotiate the best value, and you have the makings of a reliable and effective middleman.

And it goes both ways: with Lithuania, one can go west or east without barriers. Explains the Government Office: "The Eastern markets view Lithuania as an EU member with connections and knowledge of the European business culture. Eastern entrepreneurs feel comfortable and free in Lithuania because they know the country and face no language barrier or hostility towards Eastern businessmen. Lithuania may be an attractive springboard for Eastern entrepreneurs setting up or developing business in Europe."

That Lithuania already is doing a thriving logistics business further testifies to its genuine merits as a gateway.

Importantly, of all the countries in Russia's vicinity, Lithuania may be among the least likely to suffer from Russia's capriciousness. At a London Chamber of Commerce symposium on business opportunities in the Baltic states

which we attended, British ambassador to Lithuania Simon Butt remarked: "Russia has options to make life difficult in the Baltics, but at some cost to itself." Furthermore, Russia accepts the Baltics' independence and EU membership, even if it may sometimes wish they were more 'cooperative'. Also, the direct land route to Kaliningrad from Russia is through Lithuania. It is thus broadly true that Lithuania has good ties with Russia and regards this as a priority.

Lastly, geographic placement, along with migration patterns, also define the context in which Lithuania's image, economic or otherwise, is most likely to be operative. Lithuania's brand context—along an arc of decreasing intensity—is the Baltic countries and Baltic Sea region and northern Europe and Belarus and Russia and the Ukraine. And Poland and Germany. And the UK and Ireland, where many Lithuanians have gone to work and live. And maybe Italy, Spain, Greece, who like basketball and may identify with some current of 'southern-ness' in Lithuania. And finally, Americans, particularly those with Lithuanian heritage. We could be wrong, but we fail to see how places like China and India are relevant for Lithuania at the present time.

The meaning of being 'Baltic'

What should Lithuania do about being Baltic?

Our considered recommendation—and we would give the same advice to Latvia or Estonia—is to cease, as much as possible, using the word 'Baltic' in cultural contexts and begin using it only in geographic, naturalistic, commercial and occasionally political contexts.

Even then, whenever possible, the term 'pan-Baltic' is preferable as it suggests plurality rather than unity. And if there's one thing lacking in 'the Baltics' it's unity.

The three countries have less in common than one might think. It's just that an accident of history gave them an overriding common—and recent—cause which fused them into a unit in the minds of many foreigners.

It's time to change this.

The word and concept 'Baltic' might help Latvia, for whom Riga can claim to be something of a regional capital. But for Estonia and Lithuania the word obscures and de-emphasises their individuality without granting them any great strength, any great 'brand equity', in trade.

'Baltic' is not, and never will be, like 'Scandinavian' for a simple and dominant reason: Scandinavia as a brand draws

emotional power from the extent that its three nationalities have so much in common. There is no analogous emotional power to draw on in the case of the Baltic brand. The Baltic countries simply are too different from one another culturally and linguistically. They feel some kinship, but not much.

Of course Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania do share common interests, especially on energy and security. They're neighbours and they ought to behave correspondingly. Not only that, but outsiders, certainly from an economic viewpoint and sometimes from a tourist angle, tend rightfully to see the three countries as forming a region: there is a common NASDAQ OMX Baltic stock index, bulking Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian companies together for investment purposes; for market entry proposals or sales region delineations, the Baltics are typically recognised as one territory; UK Trade and Investment has one office for 'the Baltics'; and so on.

And why not? There's no problem with this. As long as 'Baltic' remains purely a geographic designation, it won't interfere with the national brand of Lithuania, its economic image or any other facet of its reputation. Nobody gets South Korea and Taiwan mixed up just because they're both 'Asian'. National and regional identities can co-exist provided the national identity is strong enough to be individuated. But that is not yet the case with Lithuania, which is why we suggest becoming more careful about the word 'Baltic'.

As an investor, you don't set up a company in 'the Baltics'; even if you have a Baltic strategy you have to choose where to put your office or factory. At this point, you will need to get to know the three as individuals, and chances are you will find one more to your liking, for soft reasons as well as hard ones.

Latvia is a big city surrounded by countryside and feels more pastoral and 'folk'. Estonia is very happily Nordic in style and self-identification. In Latvia and Estonia, 50% to 60% of national businesses are in the capital cities. Not so in Lithuania, which has three real cities and a much more geographically distributed economy.

Estonia is go-go-go. They want to be first and best in everything. Lithuanians are a little more 'slow and steady wins the race' and, many would say, a little more colourful (an Uzupis in Tallinn? Forget it!).

Lithuania's economy has grown as rapidly as those of its northern neighbours, but the lifestyle the growth fueled was different. Lithuanians bought houses and flats while Estonians and Latvians spent money on cars. "Eating out started here only about three years ago," said one Lithuanian businessman. "It was there before that in Latvia and Estonia." Altogether, "we had a chance to borrow much more than we did," a venture capitalist told us, and we have "a more diversified, less leveraged economy" that is arguably stronger and more predictable—or shall we say more calm and reliable.

Lithuanian roads are the best in the Baltics (and better than Poland's, too). And speaking of Poland, partly because of Lithuania's centuries-long tie-up with the Poles, a nobility and an intellectual class developed here which influenced the course of Lithuanian culture. The cultures of Latvia and Estonia, by contrast, descend from much more purely peasant traditions.

Lithuania's port of Klaipeda is the fastest growing in the Baltics and the leader in cargo handling. It recently overtook Riga, Ventspils and Tallinn in this regard. It is the northernmost definitely ice-free port in the Baltics and the quality of services there is said to be better than at other Baltic ports. This might be because it is Lithuania's only port and so it is well supported by the government. Interestingly, too, Klaipeda's cargo is 65% Lithuania-originated, reflecting the important fact that Lithuania's GDP share of manufacturing is higher than Latvia's and Estonia's.

Truly, Lithuania is the most self-sustaining of the three, the most fully-fledged. It has three viable cities and a population much larger than the other two, which means a bigger domestic economy and a bigger labour pool for investing companies.

Lithuania also has fewer ethnic Russians amongst its population—5 or 6% overall, versus about 30% in Latvia and 25% in Estonia, and the ones that are here are better integrated. This means Lithuania has had, and continues to have, fewer problems with Russians and with Russia, and

has almost no psychological hang-ups or complexes when it comes to dealing with Baltic Russians or Russian Russians. Estonia and Latvia are not so fortunate.

Interestingly, too, as the LDA points out: “Lithuania receives more attention from international media than the other two Baltic States. Moreover, Lithuania is more frequently mentioned in a positive context. These facts have been revealed by the latest quarterly ranking East West Global Index 200, which has so far been the only research based on the way countries are represented in media. In the East West Global Index 200 Lithuania captures the 54th place in the world rankings by strongly overtaking its neighbours Latvia (117th place) and Estonia (141st place) as well as Slovenia, Ireland, Switzerland, Japan etc.”

Finally, in addition to the differences in ‘hard economic factors’ among Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, the three Baltic countries simply have very different favours. And just as with France, Spain and Italy (three countries that are also right next to each other but who nobody accuses of being a cultural unit), most people who know all three have a personal preference, and feel more at home in one than in the others. So, find the people who like Lithuania more and then attract them to you by making it easier for them to grasp what you are about.

The Lithuanian brand will grow distinct from ‘the Baltic’ lump the more that people who deal with Lithuania (and Lithuanians themselves) can articulate what that brand is.

The themes should help this process move more quickly and purposefully than it otherwise would.

In conclusion, we think the best way to routinely describe Lithuania is as a Northeastern European country, or as being in Northeastern Europe. It is the quickest way of telling someone exactly where the country is on the map, and emotionally it falls between neutral and positive.

Northern Europe has connotations of clean, orderly, progressive, cold, natural, attractive, etc., while Eastern Europe suggests ‘New EU’, fast growth and a nation that is still a work in progress. Allowing for both sides of the coin to be communicated is desirable and reasonable. It is authentic, which is something Lithuania should be unafraid to be.

The idea of the 'brave nation'

We interpret the idea of 'Brave Lithuania' as devised and championed by the government's Commission for Country Image as an effort to distil and recontextualise (i.e., make modern) certain mythic aspects of Lithuania's past. According to the Commission, the idea is meant firstly to be used domestically (to suggest to Lithuanians that it is their birthright to be bold and courageous), and secondly to raise a particular awareness of Lithuania abroad.

The authors state: "It is extremely important that the conceptual idea has a positive effect on further development of Lithuania. The idea of a 'brave country' is likely to encourage the Lithuanians to be bolder in those areas where they lack courage."

'Brave country' speaks to (in the authors' words) a "readiness to take up challenges" and also speaks to "a liberal and innovation-intensive business environment as well as labour culture oriented towards work and results." It also suggests a tone of voice which might be used in national communications.

All of this is valid as far as it goes. And although we found few Lithuanians who said they felt they could readily recognise themselves or their country in the idea of 'brave nation', there are clearly episodes in the nation's history and elements of the national character that are fairly characterised as brave. Thus, we have made 'brave'

a component of the lively and 'romantic' theme, and it deserves to be there.

In the end, though, as you have seen, we found it necessary to transcend the 'brave nation' idea, supplementing it considerably with associations that we believe are more relevant and attractive to investors, and which are collectively more truthful and valid and 'rounded out'. Hence, the twin themes of lively and 'romantic' (which includes bravery) and thoughtful and reliable (which also includes a bit of bravery).

To paraphrase Aristotle, you are what you repeatedly do.

'Brave' isn't something you say, it's something you do. And if you do it enough, then you can say it is something you are. To carry out this work, and the action plan that follows it (published separately), would be an act of bravery. It would be the incarnation, the living proof, of Lithuania's core brand idea of 'brave nation'.

As such, we see our work, although some of the words are different, as a full and undiluted manifestation of the overall 'brave nation' strategy.

Lastly, since the 'brave nation' authors allow that "a country is a complex and diverse body. Therefore, there cannot be a single quality that would be equally effective in all areas," we trust we will receive their support for our decision.

“The way to
gain a good
reputation is
to endeavour
to be what
you desire
to appear.”

Socrates (469 BC - 399 BC)

Lithuania's image future: action plan for 2009-2011

4



Introduction to implementation: key messages and basic administrative structure for the programme

To recap the strategy, the twin themes Saf ron recommends Lithuania keep at the heart of its economic image development programme are:

1. **Lively and ‘romantic’**
2. **Thoughtful and reliable**

These themes are distillations. Essentials. They are not facts themselves, strictly speaking. They are stylised interpretations, but they are truthful and they are factually defensible. And they meet the criteria (which we laid out in an earlier section) of being:

- **Essential:** close to Lithuania’s heart and the nation’s important truths
- **Distinctive:** not generally predominant in other countries
- **Intriguing:** serving as ‘hooks’ to grab people’s attention and arouse their curiosity
- **Authentic:** able to be seen, felt and experienced because they are real
- **Explanatory:** of ering the beginnings of a deeper understanding of the country and providing subtle explanation for Lithuania’s strengths and weaknesses

- **Realistic:** setting expectations that can be met or exceeded
- **Enduring:** valid, appropriate and useful for at least a decade
- **Interrelated:** understood as collaborative, interacting forces that combine into related, derivative forces. Like red and blue make purple.

We are convinced that if Lithuania develops and earns a solid reputation for being thoughtful and reliable and lively and ‘romantic’, then you will find potential investors and buyers of your products sufficiently receptive to any specific claim you might make about Lithuania or appeal you might make for their business.

So how do you earn this reputation and develop this image?

If the preceding strategy deals with the thinking and the rationale behind the themes, then the following action plan and guidelines deal with the doing, providing a concrete, actionable process of exclaiming and demonstrating the themes—and the themes within the themes (on page 67)—to your target audiences.

The first important consideration is how you talk about Lithuania.

Messages

Alongside the themes, and integrated with them, of course, you have a factual story about Lithuania that you want people to know. Saf ron's view, which is consistent with and informed by the Ernst & Young work (advising Lithuania to strive to become 'a creative hub for the Baltic Sea region'), is that the factual story you want to convey about Lithuania is more or less this:

- that Lithuania is the most significant country of the three Baltics, for its size, self-sufficiency, strong national identity, interesting history, superior infrastructure, remarkable work ethic, notable cultural creativity, adequate governance and positioning in the midst of Western and Eastern Europe and Russia (and the 'freedom' and ease Lithuanians have in doing business in all three spheres);
- and that a European business (particularly one originating in the so-called Baltic Sea region, but in fact for many companies based in mature markets) is likely to find commercial opportunities here – indeed, in many cases, more likely than in Estonia, Latvia or Poland, or the middle European nations like Hungary and the Czech Republic (all of which are less geographically desirable);
- and (no less importantly) that the foreign managers of such an enterprise are likely to find Lithuania, despite its few weaknesses, to be a comfortable, convenient and emotionally fulfilling place to spend time doing business,

a place that is at once unusual and familiar, no matter where they're from

The challenge is, how can you say that in a way which might catch someone's attention and nudge them toward action? We do not recommend slogans or straplines unless they are very, very good (and these are not always available and cannot be forced; when the good ones come along, they feel as though they have simply materialised organically).

For the LDA (and this method is perhaps extendable to other activities as well, such as tourism) we have four recommended techniques for direct communications which you can use simultaneously, in different contexts, as appropriate:

1. factual or comparative statements made in an engaging way;
2. one-line factual statements;
3. bold claims expressed as questions;
4. word trios (used instead of a slogan or slogans).

Examples of factual or comparative statements made in an engaging way:

- With more than half a million people, Vilnius is larger than Helsinki, Dublin, Lisbon and other European capitals.
- Half of the Baltic economy (50% of GDP) is in Lithuania.
- Lithuania's port of Klaipeda is bigger than all the ports of Ireland combined.

- Lithuania: known for amber, basketball and laser technology.
- Lithuania was one of the Soviet Union's major technology centres.
- Lithuania had a higher standard of living than Finland (in 1940, before the Nazi and Soviet occupations) and the second highest quality of life in Northeastern Europe (in 2008, according to The Economist).

Examples of 'one-line' factual statements:

- Lithuania: Closest European capital to Moscow: Vilnius
- Lithuania: Population 3.5 million
- Lithuania: 18 daily hours of sunshine in summertime.
- Lithuania: Best quality roads in Northeastern Europe.
- Lithuania: Second-lowest wealth redistribution in the EU.

Examples of bold claims expressed as questions (the question mark at the end lets you say something much more provocative than if you limited yourself only to statements that were incontrovertibly true):

- Lithuania: Highest quality of life in Northeastern Europe?
- Lithuania: Most significant country in the Baltics?
- Lithuania: The most interesting country in the Baltic Sea region?
- Lithuania: Home of the next Nokia?
- Lithuania: Europe's biggest country in the 15th century; Europe's biggest opportunity in the 21st?

Examples of word trios that let you say a handful of interesting things about Lithuania in one economical breath:

- Lithuania: Freedom. Stability. Imagination.
- Lithuania: Skilled. Reliable. Inventive.
- Lithuania: Comfortable. Familiar. Lively.
- Lithuania: Charming. Changing. Trustable.
- Lithuania: Pastoral. Industrial. Unusual.
- Lithuania: Beauty. Competence. Creativity.
- Lithuania: Outdoors. Outlandish. Outperforming.

The above messages, and message 'systems', are examples of how you can combine the facts and themes you want to get across into statements for headlines, bullet points, report titles, advertising copy, etc.

Now let's briefly examine the structure of how you manage a programme to develop the economic and commercial component of the national image of Lithuania, and then we'll turn our attention to the main activities we recommend undertaking in the first three years of such a programme.

Structure and management of the image development programme

We recommend breaking down the work of the programme's first three years into five somewhat sequential (but partially overlapping) workstreams:

1. identity development (LDA led) / auditing and training
2. research and evaluation of the image
3. direct and indirect communications
4. a **Made in Lithuania** (brand export) programme
5. writing the brief for the next 3 years

Steering committee

We recommend that in order to gain the widest possible support and involvement for its branding work, the LDA create a steering committee composed of the LDA board and representatives from the Government Office, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Investors' Forum. The steering group should meet as necessary to review the work of the LDA/consultants and to approve and help actualise the initiatives undertaken.

Advisory panels

We recommend establishing advisory panels for two of the workstreams (the communications workstream and the **Made in Lithuania**, or brand export, workstream). Each panel should have six or seven people on it who have specific expertise in that area. The panels will serve as advisors to the workstreams and also as implementers who, by virtue of their

positions in the public and private sectors, can help get the work done which flows in each workstream. (For example, if there is an industry group for amber retailers, then the head of that group should sit on the advisory panel to the Made in Lithuania workstream and serve as a liaison between the LDA/consultants and his or her industry.)

Outside consultancy

We recommend that the work of the next three years be supervised and directed by a foreign consultancy in collaboration with a local creative agency. Combined, the two agencies should have the following abilities with a proven track record in all of them.

- Place branding
- Corporate branding
- National export branding
- PR (and to a lesser extent, advertising and media planning)
- Online and new media creative

As well, the consortium appointed may include certain specialists in filmmaking, music production, photography, etc. A research agency also should be part of the appointment.

There are four chief reasons for involving a non-Lithuanian company in the national reputation and branding work:

Objectivity—A healthy distance and an external perspective, particularly in cultural and political terms is essential for a better assessment of the reputation programme. Lithuania is

still a very uniform environment. This renders self-evaluation of its image difficult and potentially both distorted and distorting. It is not sufficient for insiders to 'imagine' what others think about the country. Authoritative reflection on the nuances of Lithuania's image abroad should best be carried out by outsiders. In order to be truthful, effective and conceptually unrestricted, an objective consultancy should be appointed to advise on the programme. This inevitably means somebody from abroad.

Benchmarking—Agencies outside the country are more effective at measuring branding and reputation building efforts than those on the inside. This function cannot be performed in full honesty from within the system. The self-referential nature of such activity means that comparisons with other nations could be skewed and unreliable. Objectivity is vital.

Arbitration—Yet another important function is providing a balanced view in case of conflicting opinions. There are bound to be situations which cannot be resolved internally. A clear and cool-headed appreciation of the subject is essential to long-term reputation building.

Professionalism and unique knowledge—There are currently no consultancies in Lithuania that have the necessary skill base and experience to deal with the issue of nation branding. It is a complex and multifaceted project which can only be overseen by an organisation experienced with managing such undertakings.

Activities for the first three years (2009 through 2011): five main workstreams

The Guidelines for actions for the years 2012 to 2014, specified in the second half of this section, contain many ideas that can be implemented sooner (with the benefits coming sooner, consequently) if budgets and initiative-owners can be found. But for now, we concentrate on the five core components of the 2009 through 2011 period.

Workstream 1a: identity development

Begin: immediately/anytime

Duration: about 4 months

Ideally, everything the LDA puts out should be both immediately recognisable through colour and typestyle, and impressive. The aim is to develop an appropriate, distinctive and stylish style of communications and systematically change the way Lithuania speaks about itself and gets spoken about. Moreover, if the LDA leads the way, then others will follow.

Safron recommends the following identity elements/components be developed and/or refined:

- A colour scheme
- A typeface, including possibly a national typeface which LDA owns and licenses
- A system of conveying data that has colour and personality and innate interest, and is itself clever and creative

- A photographic style (and possibly a photo library)
- Jingles or soundtracks, most likely based on jazz

Workstream 1b: audit and train others who promote Lithuania

Begin: during Workstream 1a

Duration: audit—1 month; training—ongoing through 2011

The consultants should audit everything that's being done to promote Lithuania, not only by the LDA but by others as well. The consultants should then take a view about what should be done better, what should not be done at all, and what isn't being done that should be done. The 'others' of whom we speak include:

- Embassies
- The tourism department
- Politicians
- Government
- Municipalities and regions
- The free economic zones
- The port authority
- Major Lithuanian companies
- Etc.

After the audit, any non-LDA parties who are willing to be trained or advised by the consultants on how to better present Lithuania, particularly as an investment destination, should have that opportunity. Representatives of the consultants and the LDA should make themselves available

for this purpose by setting up a coaching service for groups and enterprises that want to be more 'on brand' (and who will receive some free expert marketing advice in the process).

Workstream 2: measuring and monitoring changes and improvements in perceptions of Lithuania

Begin: simultaneously with Workstreams 1a and 1b

Duration: 1 to 2 months (then again in 2012)

The aim of a modest research programme is to assess how perceptions of Lithuania are shifting over time and also to generate ongoing PR about Lithuania's image ascendancy.

At the heart of research is a conundrum, in our view: that if you ask too much of it, it will give you nothing; but paradoxically, if you ask rather little, it can give you a lot. You must take care only to ask people questions they can answer easily, and you must accept the profound difference between finding evidence for something and proving it beyond a doubt.

Survey specifications

The survey should be carried out amongst the segment of the general population that includes a high number of business people and would-be investors (a good group, for instance, would be readers of the major business newspaper in whatever country we are talking about). A research company will know how to target this group, and will recommend either a telephone or online survey method. Probably several hundred people should be questioned in

each country, but again, a research firm will advise. The main countries we'd suggest undertaking the survey in are: Denmark, Sweden (and Norway, too, budget permitting), Germany and the UK. Russia would also be interesting, as would the Ukraine. To poll in the other Baltic countries or in Poland, a separate survey would have to be designed, although additional Scandinavian, Nordic and Continental European countries could be polled using the same survey.

Survey questions

1. In what order would you like to visit the following countries?

Latvia	Estonia
Lithuania	Poland
Slovenia	Serbia

This question is designed to reveal the relative prominence/attractiveness of Lithuania in the Baltic region and versus another New EU country in southern Europe which is further away and has a weak but weakly positive reputation, and a non-EU country with a not-so-good image.

2. What is your reaction to the following countries?

(5 = extremely positive, 4 = very positive, 3 = neutral, 2 = negative, 1 = extremely negative)

Czech Republic	Spain
Hungary	Poland
Estonia	South Korea
Romania	Estonia
Latvia	Lithuania

This question will reveal how Lithuania is perceived relative to competitor nations.

3. Lithuania either is in the EU or it isn't. How much money would you bet that it is?

(1 = 0 euros, 2 = 10 euros, 3 = 50 euros, 4 = 100 euros?)

This question will be a very interesting one to report on. The results are inherently newsworthy and interesting, and noting the change when the survey is repeated will also be interesting.

4. What do you associate with Lithuania?

[write down respondent's answer]

This is a chance to learn something interesting; it is a test of prompted awareness.

5. What mineral substance do you most closely associate with Lithuania?

Quartz	Amethyst
Amber	Diamonds

This question will reveal how well known this basic fact about Lithuania is; it is a test of prominence.

6. To what degree do the following characteristics describe a typical Lithuanian person?

Energetic, daring	Stubborn
Trustworthy	Eccentric
Thoughtful	Fashionable
Hardworking, disciplined	Educated, skilled
Eastern European	Lively
Tolerant	Scandinavian
Creative	

This question will help show whether the two themes of the strategy are getting across and, indeed, whether the strategy is working.

7. Have you ever been to Lithuania? If yes, when was the last time you were there?

In the last year
More than a year ago but less than three years ago
More than three years ago but less than seven years ago
More than seven years ago
Never

With this question, we can segment responses to the rest of the survey into those who've been to Lithuania and those who haven't.

8. Using a scale from 1 to 6, how would you rate your last visit to Lithuania?

(6 = perfect, 5 = very good, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = mediocre, 1 = disastrous)

Food, cuisine, restaurants

Local transport, including taxis

Shopping experiences

Lodging/accommodation

Culture, monuments, architecture

Nature, natural environment

Prices

Cleanliness, infrastructure

Communications (internet access, mobile signals)

Overall atmosphere

This question will be most revealing in later surveys when we can monitor changes.

9. How personally familiar are you (or have you been) with any Lithuanian person?

I have [had] a good friend (or more)

I know [have known] someone slightly

I don't think I really know any Lithuanians

Same rationale as above—helping to segment the respondents.

10. Would you go to the dentist in Lithuania?

(1 = no, not if I could help it, 2 = yes, sure, why not?)

This question will reveal the level of development people believe Lithuania to have.

11. How often do you happen to buy Lithuanian products?

Very often, often, sometimes, rarely, never, don't know

This question will start out low, presumably, but if the MADE IN LITHUANIA programme we suggest is implemented, the responses should move up the next time the survey is taken.

12. If (God forbid) you needed an artificial limb, would you rather have one that was made in China or made in Lithuania?

This question will suggest how much people are prepared to trust something made in Lithuania.

13. How about if you went to buy an Italian name-brand fashion item (shoes or a handbag, say), and noticed a tag on it saying DESIGNED IN ITALY, CRAFTED IN LITHUANIA

Would that mildly encourage you to complete the purchase, mildly discourage you from buying, or have no effect at all on your purchasing decision?

This question will reveal what effect adding Lithuanian-ness to another country's product has on consumer attraction.

14. Which of the following products or product categories would be more appealing to you when stamped MADE IN LITHUANIA than MADE IN CHINA?

(1 = more appealing as Chinese,
2 = more appealing as Lithuanian)

Food products like cheese or produce
Electronics and white goods, like a toaster or a fancy radio
Clothing or fashion items
Medical equipment
Cosmetics
Cars
Jewellery
Furniture

This question will reveal in perceptual terms where Lithuania's relative strengths might be.

15. Where do you get your information about Lithuania from? (tick all that apply)

The web
Newspapers and television
I've been there
Lithuanian friend(s) living here
Other sources
Hard to say

This question reveals what channels people think they know about Lithuania through.

16. If you were to indicate the place in setting trends in Europe, where would you place Lithuania with regard to the following areas?

(5 = far ahead of European trends, 4 = just ahead of European trends, 3 = same as other European countries, 2 = a little behind, 1 = quite a bit behind)

Film, painting, art	Literature
Music (pop and jazz)	Sports
Cities	Fashion
Nature and ecology	Business and commerce
Overall quality of life	

This question will reveal opportunities, if any, for Lithuania to exploit.

17. Which of the following statements best explain Lithuania's role in Europe?

(max 2 answers)

- A western country with an eastern face
- An Eastern Bloc country that's now in Europe
- A positive, progressive influence
- A drag

This is a blunt question, but if the answers are interesting they will make good publicity.

18. To what degree do the following characteristics accurately describe Lithuania?

(4 = considerably, 3 = modestly, 2 = mildly, 1 = hardly or not at all)

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Modern European | Religious |
| Safe | Free-market |
| Fast-changing | Interesting to visit |
| Good for business | Agrarian |
| Liberal and stable | |

The answers to this question will help paint a perceptual picture of Lithuania.

19. True or false: the inventors of Skype were Lithuanian

If it turns out a respectable percentage of respondents think Skype was invented by Lithuanians, that will make amusing publicity in the Baltics.

20. It is a fact that Lithuania, when it was part of the Soviet Union, was one of the USSR's major technology centres. If you were a CEO looking to outsource to a research lab in Lithuania, would knowing this fact make Lithuania more attractive or less attractive, or wouldn't it make a difference at all?

This question will reveal whether Lithuania's Soviet past can be used to the country's advantage in promotion.

To reiterate, research would be carried out at the beginning of the programme (and then again three years into it), and the results may be used in formulating communications tactics.

Workstream 3: direct and indirect communications

Begin: after Workstream 1a (identity development), and after the first survey of Workstream 2 (research)

Duration: 3 years

Once the identity has been developed, it can inform the two kinds of communications that matter for developing the economic image (and any other facet of national image) of Lithuania: direct and indirect.

Direct forms of communication include web sites which Lithuania (especially, here, the LDA) owns and operates, brochures and literature published by the LDA and others, advertising purchased by the LDA and others and Lithuanian booths and stands at conferences and expos.

Indirect forms of communication are PR and media relations, events and conferences (including the choice of which events and conferences you attend), plus other initiatives and activities that speak as much through actions as through words. The **Made in Lithuania** programme is an example of indirect communications, but we are treating it here as a separate workstream in the action plan.

Direct communications

We described the messages (that is, what to say) near the beginning of the action plan. Now we address briefly where to say it. Obviously you will say it on web sites you manage (and those of other agencies whom you can influence). Obviously you will say it in brochures that you publish. Additionally, we recommend considering the following placements:

- Lithuanian domestic media, where you can exclaim Lithuanian developments and assets and characterise them in the terms defined by the brand strategy (see also Idea 1 in the guidelines, ‘Kick off a domestic identity programme’).
- The floor of Vilnius airport (where there are currently WELCOME messages regarding the European Capital of Culture)
- Posters and banners at selected Scandinavian and Nordic (i.e., Baltic Sea region) airports, where the point is simply to promote a particular kind of awareness of Lithuania, not to sell something specific.
- Trade publications in which you promote something specific about Lithuania alongside telling something more general about Lithuania.

Safron does not recommend expensive ‘corporate advertising’ for Lithuania of the sort undertaken by many countries. This includes the ‘usual suspects’ of paid ads in *The Economist* or on *CNN*.

Indirect communications

Indirect communications include conferences, initiatives and PR and media relations. The major initiative Saf ron recommends for indirect communications is the **Made in Lithuania** programme described in the next section/workstream.

Saf ron recommends the LDA participate in the following conferences and trade shows:

- MIPIM
- Hannover Messe
- The World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) investment conference
- La Baule World Investment Conference
- Various place branding and investment promotion conferences, particularly those where Lithuanians would have the chance to speak or present success stories. These are then 'PR-able' (e.g., on the lithuania.lt portal, or the LDA web site, you can have an entry stating, "So and so speaks at such and such about this Lithuanian breakthrough innovation" and showing a clip of the talk). There are no regular, annual general conferences of this type of which we are aware, but at any rate, we suspect it would be more useful to send Lithuanian representatives to specific conferences relating to things Lithuania is good at or has something definite and interesting to contribute to (for instance trade shows on lasers or medical tourism).

In addition, we know that the World Forum for Direct Investment will be hosted in Vilnius in June 2009. You should see this as an opportunity for branding Lithuania and take special steps to convey the brand themes to the delegates and visitors and journalists who attend. One way to do this would be in the choice of speakers brought to the conference; in this case, somebody of moderate prominence who will naturally and authentically champion a position that supports Lithuania, and who is an inspiring speaker, is preferable to someone world famous who gives the same speech everywhere he or she goes. A venture capitalist like Steve Jurvetson (the 'Estonian' who drove Skype) comes to mind as the kind of person who'd be good to have.

During the next stage of work, the consultants can advise the LDA further on the details of conference appearances and which markets Lithuania should be promoted in (and which messages should be tailored for those markets). We know how important the web is, and we recommend that in the next stage, the consultants devise some concrete actions regarding online activity such as viral promotions, search engine optimisation work, and the simple hard labour of orchestrating bloggers and trackbacks and so forth. Online/ offline initiatives like bringing certain bloggers or journalists to Lithuania on sponsored trips should also be considered (e.g., some American who runs an outsourcing blog and who's expressed an interest in the Baltics...bring her to Lithuania and show her around).

Watch your words

Additionally, Saf ron believes there is a fundamental opportunity in taking charge of your language, as well as in attempting to influence the language that others (the press) use to speak about Lithuania.

We recommend you develop an institutional habit of checking all written communications for how well they embrace and project the two themes of this strategy. The messages exemplified in the direct communications sections may serve as guidelines here. We suggest, too, that you instil the practice of using the word Baltic only in geographic, naturalistic and certain commercial contexts.

Additionally, we think you should oversee media watchdogs who contact newspapers, magazines and blogs in order to correct factual errors in reporting or discussions of Lithuania (this is a massive undertaking, but it will pay off hugely over time, and you can use volunteers in other countries to help; Lithuanians living abroad, for instance, can monitor their local media).

Of the language others use to talk about Lithuania, the seemingly inevitable line about Lithuania being a 'breakaway Soviet republic' that shows up in newspapers and on wire stories is perhaps the most tiresome. When this appears, somebody should call the news outlet and explain that although it is a true statement, and one which Lithuania is proud of, in fact the country is now trying to leave that association behind, and suggest that next time it would be

nice if they story referred to Lithuania instead as 'a rapidly developing Northeastern European country independent since 1990 and a member of the EU since 2004'.

Workstream 4: MADE IN LITHUANIA programme

Begin: as soon as possible, either during or after

Workstream 1

Duration: 3 years

If people know products from a country, then they are likely to think of that country as relevant. Lithuania does not currently have any famous export brands or product lines, but it has some industries and crafts and products for which it could become well known abroad.

Components of a **Made in Lithuania** programme should include:

- Labeling export products clearly and cleverly as Lithuanian. (By cleverly, we mean in such a way that it teaches the consumer something about Lithuania, or otherwise turns their attention to Lithuania in a more powerful way than just a simple 'Product of Lithuania' designation would. See our recommendations on messages for examples.) This will require considerable cooperation from the private sector.
- Developing a **Made in Lithuania** mark. An example is New Zealand's fern logo, which relates perfectly to a wider visual scheme but which is tailored to the purpose of labelling goods as originating in New Zealand. We would

recommend developing at least a basic quality scheme to go with the mark so that there is some control and objectivity in when, where and how the mark is used.

- Identifying and supporting the further development of flagship Lithuanian export brands. Saf ron believes it would be in the national interest for three Lithuanian brands that are world-class or best-of-breed, even if they are niche, to be helped along on the path to international success.
- Creating distinctive takeaways, souvenirs and merchandising—amber, honey and linen are good to start with—and packaging and branding these things well. This isn't something the LDA should take long-term responsibility for, but it should supervise, direct and bankroll a prototype initiative under the creative direction of the consultants. It is simply too important for Lithuania to have some beautiful nationally branded merchandise to leave this to chance.
- FlyLAL's frequent flier programme was called 'Amber Miles'. We think more things in Lithuanian commerce should be named Amber _____ or designated in some way referring to amber. Some years down the line, amber should be one of the top handful of associations foreigners, Europeans especially, have with Lithuania.

Workstream 5: write brief for the next three years

Begin: toward the end of the 3-year period

Duration: a few weeks

The last action necessary to take, toward the end of this three-year period, is for the consultants working on the project to work with the LDA and other participating parties (including ministries) to draft an action plan for the subsequent three years, using, as appropriate at the time, the guidelines that follow as a starting point.

Lithuania's image future: guidelines for 2012-2014

5



The following recommendations cannot be too specific because we're talking about a period in the future. But they pertain to areas we are sure will be fruitful to explore if economic image development is the aim.

It is the opinion of the Government Office, expressed in the paper Strategic Marketing Concept of Lithuania's Presentation in the World (24 January 2008), that "Lithuania has long failed to provide the world with interesting news." One of the objectives of this period is to change that and to attempt to ensure, furthermore, that the interesting news supports and aligns with the image strategy.

To that end, the guidance given in this section should help Lithuania take the right kinds of symbolic actions and generally begin to manage more deliberately the impressions it is making on people, especially investors and commercial interests.

What's more, in the coming years, more and more cultural aspects of Lithuania will become 'ready for prime time', ready for the European or world stages. Therefore some actions make sense to start in a few years rather than right away. And some, like holding the European presidency, cannot be accelerated and simply must wait for their day. But a number of the activities we suggest in this section—like the domestic identity programme and promoting medical tourism—may be implemented earlier if budgets and 'owners' of the initiatives can be found.

Special note

Many of Safron's recommendations go beyond the scope of what self-evidently relates to economic image, and thus they are areas of activity which a body other than the LDA could appropriately engage (with or without the LDA's supervision). We hasten to add, however, that we do believe these recommendations would have a direct, positive bearing on the economic image of Lithuania.

Idea 1: Kick off a domestic Lithuanian identity and self-knowledge programme

Not every country could do this effectively. But Lithuania is small enough, and Lithuanians are patriotic enough, that it could really work.

Identify and train a cadre of non-diplomatic, non-political brand ambassadors. Give them the words and the understanding (facts) to discuss Lithuania with foreigners. Hire some of them—give them stipends for bringing gifts for people and so on.

Promote national identity in some way. Every Lithuanian knows that cepelinai is the national dish of Lithuania. But what is the Lithuanian cepelinai of culture, of industry, of history? Lithuanians are not as conversant in these matters as they could be. Efforts should be made to put the words

in people's mouths. Good, true, interesting stuff. The idea is to teach people how to introduce themselves—how to say what and where Lithuania is.

You could have a famous and respected Lithuanian write a 'national script' or set of bullet points for people to have in mind when they travel. And you could run ads for the general public (public service campaigns are common in Lithuania; we have seen them on TV and around Vilnius). Show the great things that are happening in Lithuania to Lithuanians. As we state in the strategy section, 'self-concept is destiny', and getting Lithuanians to understand that certain things are really happening in their country creates a pressure, an invitation, for more good things to happen. It's like the 4-minute mile: once people realise something's possible, mass achievements and changes happen quickly.

Idea 2: Promote fashion

Already, Lithuania is making something of a name for itself in fashion, and further inroads should be heavily encouraged. Fashion says all the right things about a country, and is attractive beyond its immediate sphere. Not only that, fashion promotes culture at the same time that it has relevance commercially. Saf ron thinks that fashion design making use of amber and linen in contemporary and truly stylish ways is likely, particularly early on, to have the most promotional value for Lithuania. But any Lithuanian models or designers that can become well known abroad

would be very, very helpful as their success would directly impact perceptions of Lithuania as sophisticated, stylish, fashionable, good looking, developed, normal, etc.

Idea 3: Make the most of basketball and jazz (and other music)

Basketball and jazz, though they have nothing directly to do with investing in Lithuania, can both be leveraged. In particular, they are likely candidates for things that 'open the folder' labelled **Lithuania** in people's minds (as described in the strategy) so that further information about Lithuania may accumulate.

Saf ron recommends that Lithuania seek to become a kind of European or world centre for basketball. In addition, Lithuania could perhaps become particularly good at or well known for coaching basketball, as sports coaching and managerial prowess form a concordant narrative. Basketball could also be used as a general door opener for promoting basic awareness and knowledge of Lithuania, through, for example, a 'Vilnius Globetrotters' touring stunt team (based on the American Harlem Globetrotters). And of course you will be able to use Lithuania's hosting of the European basketball championships in 2011 as a platform for your basketball ambitions and PR initiatives.

Lithuania is less famous for jazz than for basketball, but Saf ron sees this as a major opportunity for country

promotion. As jazz is a sophisticated and creative and accessible musical form, it particularly embodies the lively and 'romantic' theme. The various Lithuanian jazz festivals should be supported and promoted until they have significant mature 'pulling power' in the music world. There is a chance, too, to foster musical exchanges with other countries and to use jazz as a soundtrack for Lithuania, as when creating promotional films (even for investment). All of this should be explored and funded to the extent possible.

Saf ron recommends working with a specialist in music branding, like Paul Heck, a music producer in New York. Heck suggests a number of basic ways a country or city may not just promote itself, but also really brand itself, through music:

Music festivals—"They are great tent poles, a way to focus on a local musical culture and heritage. The main reason why Austin, TX is listed #1 in the Creative Index in the book *Rise of the Creative Class* is the South by Southwest Music Festival. SXSW has grown from humble origins to become one of the most important international rock music showcases and places to do business. As a result, Austin has grown into a full-time, year-round creative business hub with many music management and booking firms relocating there, in addition to many artists. Including a film festival component to SXSW has only added to Austin's brand value as a global destination for indie culture."

City clash—"A variation on this music festival, one that involves two cities in a kind of culture clash dialogue. There is a Paris in NYC Festival that is about to launch. It's a great idea for presenting vibrant urban French arts to new audiences: hip-hop concerts, breakdancing, graffiti—all French—but all with a debt to the NYC roots of all these art forms."

Music export—"For many years French pop music was considered a joke. But then a new generation of artists like Daft Punk, Air, Dmitri From Paris, Les Nubians and many others started to change people's perception as they made fans all over the world. One of the main reasons these artists were able to break out was the French Music Export Office, a governmental office set up to help French artists get noticed outside of France.

"And now, would you believe that Sweden has the third highest music export after the US and UK? It's not just ABBA reissues, but rather a whole new generation of great artists that have been helped by Sweden's highly organised Export Music Sweden. Other European nations have music export bureaus but none have managed to turn it into gold quite the way Sweden has."

Heck continues:

"All these kinds of ideas are great in the abstract—but what really gets done of course is dependent on working with the people and matters in hand.

“Something simple fun and cheap that a country like Lithuania should be creating are short films for YouTube featuring a prominent music ambassador walking you through the country’s points of cultural interest. The idea is to be informative, but also, hopefully entertaining.

“The beauty of music and artists is that they are coming from somewhere—and that place, their home—is usually represented in or influential on their art in some way or another. As they and their music travel the world, either virally online, or literally by touring—they are default ambassadors of their homelands. It’s an incredible resource—if Lithuania is ready to see it that way.”

Idea 4: Develop a training programme for creative and service industries

In the branding business we talk about ‘touchpoints’—the places where consumers and brand interact. Major touchpoints often include advertisements, web sites, and actually using the branded products or services.

For a place and its visitors, the natives of a place are a hugely significant touchpoint. And the people who work in hotels and restaurants are, for the traveller, arguably the most significant touchpoint of all.

This is why it is rapidly becoming best practice in ‘place branding’ to attempt to train service people in hotels and

restaurants (and taxi drivers and others) to make the best impression possible and to be able to guide visitors (and the visitor’s understanding of the place) in a helpful manner. Places such as Santa Monica, California have done this, and we have recommended it to several clients, including the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. We recommend it to Lithuania as well.

Since another major touchpoint for places is advertising of all kinds (both advertising for the place itself and the advertising of companies based in that place), it makes sense, too, to provide coaching for the creative agencies that produce these ads. Eventually, you might even have an approved roster of individuals and agencies who can counsel, on a volunteer and/or paid basis, Lithuanian companies or organisations that want to get more ‘on brand’.

Idea 5: Reach out to expatriate Lithuanians

One of the pillars of South Africa’s national branding programme has been to reach out to people who have moved away and try to lure them back. One suspects a similar initiative is likely to be even more effective for Lithuania, as the Lithuanians we have met in Lithuania and elsewhere in Europe seem, on the whole, to be fairly inclined to live in Lithuania (even if they’re not living there now).

Like other countries of the New EU, Lithuania has suffered (and continues to suffer) from a moderate brain drain. So,

first of all, you should reach out to Lithuanians who have moved abroad with subtle ways of ‘planting the seed’ of the idea of moving home. Returning expats are a real force for good. We were told: “They come back more confident. They drink less vodka. Eat less fat. They get back and they push their employers for positive reforms.”

Secondly, you should approach Lithuanians who are likely to leave. Probably you won’t be able to keep them, and maybe you shouldn’t try. But as with the Lithuanians already living abroad, you should encourage them to return sooner rather than later.

Third, amongst people of Lithuanian extraction—on the order of a million in the United States alone, apparently—who are not interested in relocating to Lithuania still will be passionate patriots who may be willingly pressed into service helping the cause of the image of Lithuania.

Finally, as a corollary, there may be ways to involve foreigners who have moved to Lithuania in the nation’s brand building efforts.

Idea 6: Develop medical tourism

Already, we understand, Lithuania is a popular place for plastic surgery because of the combination of good doctors, Western standards and low-ish prices. The economic image of Lithuania you are hoping for seems to mesh very well

with – in other words, support and be supported by—a booming business in medical tourism. We are not the first to point this out.

Lending narrative support to this argument, in January 2009, the Tory party in the UK blamed the Labour party for a shortage of hospital beds, specifically pointing out that while Britain has 389 beds per 100,000 people, little ol’ Lithuania has more than twice that (801).

Idea 7: Create a design award

Don’t make it a conference, and don’t only invite Lithuanian students/agencies/freelancers to take part. Make it international and make the jury members international as well. Include world-famous foreign designers as well as some younger, lesser-known individuals, and of course some Lithuanians. As far as we can tell, there are no significant design awards that are held in Eastern Europe on an international scale. Once it gets recognised and receives more than just a couple of hundred submissions, you can think about inviting people to attend an exhibition in Vilnius of the shortlisted items.

Idea 8: Get films made in Lithuania

As many as possible. Don’t be too picky to start with. With its unusual rural and urban landscapes, Lithuania should be

well-suited as a backdrop to period pieces, fantasy films, and the next James Bond instalment.

Idea 9: Prepare yourself for lucky breaks

Many of the most important things that affect a country's reputation—or could do so, especially on the positive side—come out of the blue. Take, for example, Skype and Estonia. Some people know that Skype was devised in Estonia. But the country did not seem to make the most of this association. Imagine if Estonia had in place an organisation that was in charge of capitalising immediately on all good news and making sure Brand Estonia got the credit? This is what we're suggesting Lithuania do.

The same body charged with getting ready to make the most of things that happen in Lithuania also should be in charge of making sure Lithuania is ready for things going on in the world. At some point, some stimulus (e.g., a movie gets made in Lithuania) or a trend (e.g., beekeeping takes the world by storm) may hit with the result that a large number of people suddenly get interested in something Lithuania has. It's this agency's job to track such phenomena and keep Lithuania in a position to take maximum advantage.

Really, this is just the Boy Scout's oath—Be prepared—applied to nation branding.

Idea 10: Orchestrate some big, positive shocking news

You don't have to just wait for something to happen, though. If you can, you should make something happen. Something big enough that you need to start thinking about what it is now. Which leads us to...

Idea 11: Take advantage of holding the European presidency

A good time to create the big, positive, shocking news would be sometime in late 2012 or early 2013—before you take the helm of European presidency in the second half of 2013.

In fact, though you have asked us to say what you might 'do with' the presidency, our view is that this is more something Lithuania should *get ready for* than to *do something with*. It is the moment at which the spotlight will be brightest on you and you want to look good.

Of course, if there were some activist effort that Lithuania could be seen to lead as president of the EU, this is worth doing. This could relate, for instance, to Jewish reconciliation, not just in Lithuania but even also elsewhere in Europe.

Conclusion: evaluating the programme's effectiveness

Ultimately, the success of any branding work will come when it makes it easier for people to say yes to Lithuania (in this case, we are focused on investors and other people with commercial interests in Lithuania, or people at the consumer or B2B levels who are faced with the option of purchasing something made in Lithuania).

Before people can say 'yes', however, they must say maybe. The overwhelming circumstantial evidence at this time suggests that Lithuania simply isn't on enough 'radar screens', and getting onto those screens—which in our professional judgment requires promoting Lithuania in ways that are not directly commercial—is the highest priority for developing the country's economic image.

Which implies that what Lithuania needs is to become part of the consideration set of an increasing number of audiences who are making an increasing variety of investment and economic decisions.

How can we tell if this is happening? How can we tell if the work of this programme is having an effect?

The research of the kind we recommend in the action plan—along with ongoing methodical analysis of news and blog coverage (a PR firm can do this for you)—can certainly reveal, in a quasi-scientific manner, the degree to which important

shifts in perception are occurring amongst target audiences and whether or not the ideas behind the strategy are getting across and sinking in.

If indeed people's views of Lithuania are changing in line with the intentions of this programme, believe us: **you will notice it.**

Appendices

6



Getting to know Lithuania: a personal note

I have a confession to make. When I first visited Lithuania in June 2003, I didn't like it.

At all.

Granted, I only spent one sleep-deprived day in the capital (and Trakai), but I found Vilnius gloomy and unattractive and I couldn't wait to get back to Riga, where I was spending the summer (working for the Latvian Institute, as a student of my then Oxford lecturer Wally Olins, on a pilot national branding project for Latvia). Even still, as an American, I figured a country that liked basketball and jazz couldn't be all bad!

As it happened, three years passed before my second trip to Lithuania (when I accompanied Wally who was giving a two-day course to the LDA). That's when I started to like the place, and wondered what I'd missed my first time round. Since then, I have visited Vilnius some 12 or 15 times, and as I have got to know Lithuania and Lithuanians, the country has become perhaps my favourite Baltic state (although I still have friends in Latvia and Estonia, and a soft spot for both those places). Certainly it is the one I know best and feel closest to.

So as a confirmed fan of Lithuania, one of my emotional interests in the project at hand was to work out how to help

others develop the same positive view of Lithuania that I have. Put another way, I wanted to use my personal involvement with Lithuania and my professional abilities as a place branding consultant to design a strategy which, over time, will invite a particular and positive image of Lithuania to emerge in the minds of investors, business people and others.

With that in mind, I'd like to thank my girlfriend Julija and all my other Lithuanian friends and compatriots (and Estonian, Latvian, Polish, Scandinavian, Nordic and Russian ones, too) for carrying me along on this journey. And Wally, as ever.



Jeremy Hildreth, Saffron Brand Consultants
Lithuania was the last Baltic country I visited and the last one I came to like. But I love it to pieces now.

Resources and bibliography: people and paper

People

A lot of people spent time with us during the project to help us come to grips with the image issues facing Lithuania and to give us ideas for how they might be dealt with. This is as complete a list as we are able to compose, and our hats are of to everybody on it.

Algirdas Mykolas Brazauskas, President of Lithuania from 1993 to 1998 and Prime Minister from 2001 to 2006

Algis Akstinas, Marketing & Product Development Director, Lithuanian Airlines

Andrius Bogdanovicius, Creditinfo

Andrius Tapinas, Journalist, Programme Director of Sport1

Arturas Zuokas, Politician, Liberal and Centre Political Group, Elder of a Parliamentary Group

Arunas Matelis, Documentary film director

Audrius Savickas, Marketing Consultant

Audronius Azubalis, Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

Barry Verbeek and his students at the Hague University's Academy of European Studies & Communication Management

Christopher Butler, Managing Partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers in Lithuania, British Chamber of Commerce

Dalia Bankauskaite, Executive Director, Vilnius – European Capital of Culture 2009

Donatas Valincius, Director, Elinta

Edgaras Leichteris, executive director, Ziniu Ekonomikos Forumas

Edita Jonikiene, Vilniaus Investijos

Eimantas Kiudulas, Director of Klaipeda Free Economic Zone

Gintaras Rimselelis, Managing Director for the Baltics and Chairman of Kraft Foods Lietuva

Ignas Staskevicius, General Director, NDX Energy

James Clarke, Managing Director of BNTP

Jane Hanel, Counselor, Lithuanian Embassy (London)

Jaunius Puvaskis, BMI

Jef Lewis, Management Information Systems Advisors and Associates

Jolanta Guzaite-Quintus and her husband Peter

Juha Mahonen, General Manager & Country Manager, Reval Hotel Lietuva

Julija Laskauskaite and friends

Kestutis Girnius, Historian

Kim Bartholdy, DSV Transport

Kristian Kaas Mortensen, 4kkm

Kristina Gontier, Marketing Director, Klaipeda State Seaport

Kristina Resitkiene, BMI

Laurynas Bucalis, Director of Government Communications Department at Office of the Government

Lina Kanapinskaite in Paris

Linas Ciapas, Sumitomo Misui Banking Corporation Europe Limited (London)

Linas Eriksonas, Consultant, Europarama

Nerijus Udrenas, Advisor, SEB Bankas

Edmundas Piesarskas, Partner, Business Consultancy EKT Group

Liudas Dapkus, Editor-in-Chief, Playboy

Margarita Ceglyte, Nestle Baltics

Marija Lebedeva, Marketing Project Manager of Klaipeda Free Economic Zone

Marius Kasperavicius, Designer, *Made in Moon* & Lecturer at Vilnius Academy of Art

Robertas Jucaitis, Designer, *Mata Hari* & Lecturer at Vilnius Academy of Art

Mindaugas Jonikas, General Director, Vilniaus Investicija

Monika Maciulyte, her father, and some of her friends in London and Vilnius

Mykolas Katkus, Managing Director at Viesuju Rysiu Parteriai, Hill & Knowlton

Nijole Kliokiene, Director of State Tourism Department

Om Prakash Mishra, Vice President of Orion Global PET

Paulius Lukauskas, P&G (London)

Paulius Senuta, CEO, Not Perfect

Peter Tutlys, DnB NORD Bankas, Director – Marketing, Brand & Communications

Raimonda Lauzikiene, Director of Klaipeda Development Agency

Rasa Jukneviene, Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania

Ricardas Zulcas, Director of Economic and Strategic Department, Municipality of Klaipeda

Richard Vidutis in Virginia, USA

Rimantas Vaitkus, CEO, RST

Robert Smoczynski, Senior Manager, Tax, Deloitte Lithuania

Rolandas Barysas, CEO and Editor-in-Chief, the Business Daily “Verslo Zinios”

Ruta Skyriene, Chairman of LDA Council, Executive Director of Investors’ Forum

Sarunas Sakalauskas, Head of Communication Co-ordination Division Government Communication Department

Simon Anholt, nation branding consultant

Vadim Major, Office Manager, DEMATIC Limited Branch “Dematic Kaunas”

Vadimas Titarenko, Chief Economist, DnB NORD Bankas

Viktoras Butkus, Fermentas

Vytautas Jokuzis, Director, ELINTA

Werner Schilli, DnB NORD Bank

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About Saffron

Consultants' biographies

Wally Olins CBE, Chairman

Wally Olins is one of the world's leading practitioners in corporate identity and branding. After Oxford he went into advertising in London. He was sent to India and his first big job was as head of what became Ogilvy and Mather in Mumbai where he lived for five years. India influenced him hugely.

He came back to London and co founded Wolf Olins. He was Chairman until 1997. Wally Olins has advised many of the world's leading organisations on identity, branding, communication and related matters. These include 3i, Akzo-Nobel, Repsol, Q8, The Portuguese Tourist Board, BT, Prudential, Renault, Volkswagen and Tata. He has acted as advisor both to McKinsey and Bain on branding and marketing. He has worked for a number of countries on national brand image including Poland and Portugal.

Wally Olins has written several books including the seminal work *Corporate Identity* and the very popular *On Brand*, which was published in 20 countries. His latest, *Wally Olins: The Brand Handbook*, was published by Thames and Hudson in 2008.

He has taught at many business schools including London Business School, Saïd Business School at Oxford, Lancaster



University, Imperial College Business School, Copenhagen Business School and Duxx University in Mexico and he holds seminars on branding and communication issues around the world.

He was awarded a CBE in 1999. He was nominated for the Prince Philip Designers Prize in 1999 and received the Royal Society of Arts' Bicentenary Medal in 2000. He was given the D&AD President's Award in 2003. He was given the Reputation Institute's first ever Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006.

Wally Olins was born in London, is married and has four children.

Jeremy Hildreth, Head of Place Branding

A native of Los Angeles, Jeremy keeps moving east.

After studying finance and real estate at The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania (bachelor of science, 1996), he did stints as a stock exchange clerk, a Wall Street economist and a CEO's ghostwriter.

It was while studying at Oxford (MBA 2003) that he fell in love with England and with branding. After working freelance with identity and design specialists Lloyd Northover and maverick digital agency AKQA, he joined Saf ron Brand Consultants full-time in May '04.

Projects for Saf ron have seen him of to an outlandish variety of locales from Bergen to Berlin, East Timor to East London, Darwin to Donostia, St Louis, Missouri to Port Louis, Mauritius. Having travelled to more than 50 countries in the last six years, he brings enormous perspective to any place branding project.

Jeremy gives talks, seminars and lectures about branding, and appears on the airwaves; recent shows include BBC News 24 (TV) and the BBC's Radio 4 f agship Today Programme.

He's written for dozens of periodicals including *Monocle*, *Design Week*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Times*, and *The New York Post* and contributes regularly to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Jeremy's book *Brand America: The Mother of All Brands* (co-authored with Simon Anholt) has been published in six languages and hailed as an ideal introduction to place branding, a discipline Jeremy is helping to pioneer.

A keen internationalist with a wretched ear for languages, he bumbles far and wide speaking only English—and apologising constantly about it.

Saffron's experience

Saf ron's principals are veterans of the profession, making Saf ron a young company big on experience. Our client list includes famous consumer brands (Coca-Cola, BMW, LVMH and Zara), telecommunications companies (Turkcell in Turkey, Connex in Romania, Yoigo in Spain and others), large financial services operations (Lloyd's of London and Capital One, in particular), entertainment groups (such as the Royal Opera House Covent Garden), airlines (Vueling in Spain) and utilities and public sector agencies (the European Patent Of ce and Thames Water, the water supplier to Southeast England).

In addition to our corporate identity work, however, we are also adepts with place branding—an emerging discipline in which Saf ron is helping to lead the way.

All together, Saf ron and its staf have been involved with image and reputation building programmes in the following places:

Cities

- London
- Rio

Regions

- Durham (England)
- Vietnam (Cat Ba peninsula)
- Denmark & Sweden (Oresund cross-border region)

Countries

- Poland
- Northern Ireland
- East Timor
- Spain
- Latvia
- Portugal

Place-making: events

- Madrid 2016 Olympic bid
- Wroclaw 2012 Expo

Place-making: property developments

- Walbrook Square (a Foster & Partners complex in the City of London)
- A soon-to-be legendary but yet-to-be announced f agship project for Abu Dhabi (in the United Arab Emirates)

1



2



3



4



5



1. Durham
2. Latvia
3. Mauritius
4. East Timor
5. Poland

Saf ron's belief in the importance of history and culture, and our understanding and sensitivity in these areas, allow us to make sense of wildly different places, and later to bring out a place's best in ways that are imaginative and strategic as well as authentic.

Selected case studies

Poland

In December 2003, the Polish Chamber of Commerce commissioned Saf ron to work on a national brand-building programme for Poland. In spite of its size, culture and influence in European history, Poland is not well known even amongst its immediate neighbours. Prejudices, misperceptions and stereotypes have built a distorted image of the country. Few outsiders can identify Polish products, Polish creative works or contemporary Poles. Few can name more than a handful of Polish cities.

Yet Poland has huge untapped potential. It has beautiful cities such as Wroclaw and Krakow. It has stunning tourist sites like the Masurian lakes and Zakopane. It has a creative tradition in theatre, film and the arts. And it has the potential to create true global businesses.

Our task was to build a brand for Poland that could help build a new perception. We spent several months getting to understand Poland. We carried out interviews with some 110 people representing various points of view both inside and outside Poland—including politicians, business leaders, journalists, scientists, sports people and young opinion leaders. We carried out detailed desk research into Poland, its history, its industry, its neighbours and so on. We travelled around the country so we could experience the best and worst of Poland.

Through a series of workshops and meetings with opinion leaders, we began to distil our thoughts down to one single core idea for Poland. The idea everyone agreed on was ‘Creative Tension’. This idea emphasised the country’s constant change and evolution, it reflected the people’s boisterousness and restlessness, and it emphasised the desire to achieve the impossible. Importantly too, ‘Creative Tension’ helps set and manage expectations.

With the idea agreed and strongly supported, we are ready to embark on a programme of implementation—expressing the idea visually, verbally and experientially. Alas, on the Polish side, the project seems to be on hold for the moment. Nevertheless, ‘Creative Tension’ is catching on and being used spontaneously, in various forms by various parties, on the strengths of its own merit.

East Timor

Timor’s violent transition from Portuguese colony to independent country (in 1999) is a fascinating story but has left the country with poor infrastructure and few of the usual attractions or amenities.

The branding challenge, therefore, was to make Timor’s incredible story and unique qualities into significant tourism assets. The project was supervised by the East Timor Development Authority and endorsed by the nation’s president and former resistance leader Xanana Gusmão.

We developed a brand story around three strong, truthful themes that are both attractive to the visitor and very close to the heart of Timorese national identity:

- A land untamed and untainted
- A home to an uncommon ethnic fusion
- A scene of momentous human triumph

Saf ron created a 'brand book' recommending a positioning for the country and explaining how to achieve it using communications and special projects. We also developed a two-day participatory 'brand experience' training course. The course attendees were mostly tour guides, but really anyone involved with visitors to the island – came away with a clearer understanding of Timor as a destination, as well as the ability to 'show of ' their island to visitors in ways that make good on the promise of the brand's three themes.

A brand for Spanish technology

Saf ron has developed a brand for Spanish technology to fit with the spectacularly successful and long-running 'image ascendancy' of Spain. Whilst overall perception of Spain has improved measurably in the past two decades, not enough notice has been taken of the proficiency of Spanish technology which is distinctive from the technology strengths of other nations and regions: the innovative signalling technique the Spanish railway developed several years ago, for instance, is now widely viewed as the state of the art and is being replicated throughout the world; and Spain is making world-class technological contributions in wind-powered

technology, defense, construction and even software.

In mid 2005, Saf ron was officially appointed by ICEX, the Spanish government's institute of external commerce, to help bring perceptions of Spanish technology into line with other perceptions of the country. The work centred around the creation of a brand mark (which could be used by trade associations and individual companies) and an idea of 'sustainable ingenuity' (expressed with the strapline 'españa: technology for life').

A stylish brand video we produced which demonstrated and characterised Spanish technology was a big hit; it was taken by the Spanish royal family on an official trip to China to dramatise for the Chinese dignitaries, with emotion and substantiated claims, the surprising but true extent of Spain's technological prowess.

Rio de Janeiro (iRio)

Since August 2007, Saf ron has been advising the nascent iRio programme, an initiative of the newly elected governor of Rio de Janeiro State to enhance Rio's image, its identity and even its reality.

A public-private joint venture, iRio is part think tank, part campaign manager and part creative director, helping coordinate other people's activities as well as developing projects and campaigns of its own. Its mission: to be both a repository and developer of Rio de Janeiro's multifaceted image abroad, in Brazil and locally.

“We want iRio to become like a movement, not a talk-shop with a logo,” says Flavio Azevedo, a former Ogilvy Brazil creative director and one of the brains behind iRio. Toward this end, Saf ron is contributing ideas and advice, both creative and strategic.

Why, many ask, would Rio de Janeiro, a place with more popular songs about it than Paris or New York, need an image enhancement programme?

When Brasilia became the capital in 1960, Rio lost its job as the nation’s capital, and with it, a lot of the stature it had had for two centuries. Soon, favelas burgeoned on the hillsides, crime surged, business moved to São Paulo and civic pride waned.

Yet the mystique, charm and singular character of Rio have endured. “We want to leverage these now,” Flavio explains, “while they’re still strong—for tourism, for investment and especially for our own self-confidence and sense of identity.”

Design will be used for promotion and to facilitate participation, and a slogan—“There’s only one Rio”—that will be the programme’s key identity element and chief brand asset. Plans are underway for commercialising the brand’s design elements so that the programme can, in a period of a few years, become self-funding.

Northern Ireland

In January 2008, Saf ron began work, with our sometimes-collaborators on UK projects *Thinkingplace*, to develop a brand for Northern Ireland tourism, including several sub brands (the walled city of Derry~Londonderry, the [Giant’s] Causeway Coastal Route, the St Patrick’s Trail and the Titanic Quarter [of Belfast]). Our client is the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

The outputs will be a brand idea, a considerable amount of design work and a number of brand books. One of the hopes is that our work will be part of a broader springboard of initiatives that helps the country move on from ‘the Troubles’ to what genuinely should be, by all accounts, a bright future, not only in tourism but in every aspect of Northern Irish life.

Work is ongoing but should be made public in the second quarter of 2009.

London

We were appointed in late 2007 by Visit London, the marketing arm of Europe’s largest city, to sort what was pretty much a mess of brands—a handful of government bodies working for the mayor of London, and all promoting London, and all using different identities. Visit London, the lead client, were using not one identity but a handful of them.

The rigorous consultation process let us really get to the heart of what London was about, and what Visit London was about on London's behalf. We developed a sense of what kinds of branding solutions might work, and—more importantly, frankly—which ones probably wouldn't.

The challenge was to find something that let London be historic and charming and also contemporary and evolving—and which avoided the clichés. The identity would support business as well as leisure tourism. It had to dress up and dress down. Like the great city itself, it had to be everything to everybody.

The solution was a typographic identity based around a core idea of Visit London as “champions” for London and drawn in red—a colour solidly associated with the city. London's quirkiness entered in the form of “factoids”, like “It rains more in Rome” and “Est. 50AD”, which are given their own line in the wordmark when the situation calls for it.

Of course Visit London puts their logo on a lot of things. But they generate words, endless informative, inside-track scribbles about London (for their press releases, for the website, for their monthly event guides) with even greater ferocity. If we were going to properly attend to Visit London's brand identity, then we had to address their language, too.

We devised two word wheels—an inner wheel (“the Circle Line”), comprised of ‘the things about which you can say “London is these above all else”’ (confident, connected, quirky,

charming, enlightened and evolving); and an outer wheel (“the M25”), featuring 16 more words (including historic, stimulating, civil, seductive, surprising) which “add flesh to the skeleton.” We encouraged Guide users, when sitting down to write copy, to choose a word from each wheel and build their story around the pairing.

Visit London, despite their house of brands being in some disarray at the project's outset, has always had their house in order in terms of getting their job done. Yet interestingly, they'd never articulated and codified what their job was. Marketing? Welcoming? Consulting? Planning? Promoting? Cheerleading? A bit of all this? Eventually we hit the nail on the head: Visit London champions London. Or as their 39-page Saf ron-produced House Style Guide puts it: “Specifically, we champion London to leisure and business visitors using reason, emotion and action. We help people see the value of a trip to London, we help them feel magnetically drawn to the place and (once they've decided to visit) we help them a) figure out what they want out of London and b) get it.”

The achievement: clarity of organisational purpose and presentation—with some personality. A review of our work in the 9 July 2008 issue of Marketing called Visit London's new identity “near perfect”.



Saffron

