

Destination Branding in Sin City: A communication case study of Las Vegas' rhetorical gamble

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Destination branding warrants more attention from rhetorical scholars than it has already received due to the economical, political and rhetorical significance of locations packaging themselves as products. The Las Vegas Convention and Visitor's Authority launched the Las Vegas branding campaign in 2000. The LVCVA struck advertising gold in 2003 with the "what happens here, stays here" slogan effectively changing the way a nation communicates about the city. Las Vegas' success should be examined to glean insights into this rhetorical strategy and into how destination brands impact place attachments. Destination branding is much more than creating spots and a slogan; it requires an understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of locations. Therefore, closer examinations of how the brand is constructed, the reception of the brand and measures of the brand's effectiveness are required. This study draws from the works of Campbell & Jamieson in advertising, Campbell & Huxman in rhetoric and Altman & Low in place attachment theory to examine the campaign's context, spots and portrayal in the media through critical discourse analysis. By revealing how a destination brand should be constructed and evaluated, other locations, including Kansas, can explore how to use this risky rhetorical strategy in a manner appropriate to their location.