

Chapter 16

Branding Ideas for the Tokyo Olympics 2020

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ABSTRACT

Tokyo successfully won the bid for the 2020 Olympic Games. When planning for mega event tourism such as the Olympics, cities reorder public spaces and arenas often with a long term vision, a legacy. This vision expresses the role of the event in achieving the desired future and goals of the hosting city. The planning process involves not only animating the city for staged spectacles; but also rebranding the city and managing how tourism is consumed - the planned and unplanned experience of consumption. Leisure motivated event tourists are seeking unique, personal and socially rewarding experiences (Getz, 2010). These experiences may be managed through the context in which people act. By altering the context, people's experience of the event changes; hence the perception of the host city and the Olympics' brand may also change. The author is therefore proposing branding directions to enhance these experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Tokyo has a historical relationship with the Olympic Games, that provides an interesting study of the changes in the city's branding direction. Tokyo was the first non-Western city to win a bid for the Olympic Games. In fact, the city had won the bid twice previously but only hosted the Games once. The city withdrew from hosting the Games in 1937, because of the breakout of the Sino-Japanese War; the Games never materialised and were later suspended due to the breakout of Second World War. Tokyo, however, was the first to host the Olympic Games in Asia in 1964. Twenty years after the Second World War, Japan was keen to rebuild its image as a peaceful and friendly nation. Through hosting the summer Olympic Games, Japan successfully rebranded itself and re-established its diplomatic position in the global arena. Winning the bid to host the summer Games for the second time in 2020 has increased Japan's soft power; a survey showed its global ranking moved up from sixth in 2012 to fifth place in 2013 (Albert, 2013). With a renewed sense of possibilities and a reinvigorated economy, Japan needs to

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show a positive image that is steadily recovering from the effects of a recent earthquake, tsunami and related nuclear plant leak disasters.

The branding of Tokyo for the Olympic Games from the 1930s to 2014 showed a progression of cultural development and changes in attitude of the nation. The graphic representation of the Games promotional materials for Tokyo Olympics 1940 revealed its military ambition before the Wars. A giant samurai standing in front of the Japanese flag and dwarfing Mount Fuji in one poster; another one showed an angular sculpture of an abstracted soldier behind the text Olympiad Tokyo 1940, and another showed an athlete shadowed by a giant samurai, both with raised arm to hail victory; the Olympic logo was discreetly displayed in a corner or on the athlete's vest. The graphic materials were similar to the style of Stenberg's constructivism, which used little colour and sometimes monotone; the portrait was austere and patriotic; the messages were about domination and victory. There was a strong sense of national pride, almost an attitude of aggression. Although the promotional materials showed very basic design skills, the message of the brand was clearly communicated. To Japan, the Games were a symbolic channel to announce to the world that a new power was rising.

In contrast, the marketing materials for the 1964 Tokyo Games were very different. Japan was ready to emerge with a new identity twenty years after being defeated in the Second World War. Post war Japan needed to expand its economy and to do so, it needed the world to regard it as a friend and not a threat. Hosting a sport mega event with intense international attention such as the Olympics gave the country an ideal platform to re-launch itself as a capitalist and democratic country. Much effort was dedicated to the design and branding of the event. The graphic design by Hara Hiromu and Kamekura Yusaku subtly deciphered a continuity of the Japanese traditional visual composition of medieval crests and the geometrical abstraction of modernism. The same approach was also articulated in the architectural design of the Olympic structures. The National Gymnasium by architect Kenzo Tange was a contemporary structure with contemporary materials and building methods, the structure's proportions were wide and flat with giant roofs. The two main spatial masses were connected by wide bridges and well defined open spaces. The spiral-shaped roofs were constructed from two giant sweeping arcs with different radii. Although it was a modernist design; it was also reminiscent of a traditional Japanese pagoda and the shape of Mount Fuji. The Japanese designers found a way to express a harmonious coexistence between past and future; nationalism and internationalism. The juxtaposition of tradition and modernity has continued to be the essence of Japanese culture and design today. The 1964 Tokyo Olympics was a spectacle and set a standard for future hosts of the Games in Asia.

Tokyo is preparing to host the summer Olympic Games for the second time in 2020. Japan is no longer a developing country as it was in 1964. Fifty years have passed and Japan has moved on substantially in both culture and economy. Tokyo has bid for the Olympic Games five times in the past and won three. It is estimated that the city will spend 5 to 6 billion US dollars for the 2020 Olympics; constructing from new twenty-two out of thirty-seven venues. The marketing strategies show an enthusiastic and optimistic attitude that focus on the future. The Tokyo 2020 bidding logo was made up of a colourful ring of Sakura flower; the slogan was 'Discover Tomorrow'; the mascot has yet to be decided but presumably it will be something similar to the ambassador mascot of the bidding stage, Doraemon the cat from future, which has a pocket full of gadgets that provides technological solutions to every problem that its owner encountered. The architecture of main stadium designed by Zaha Hadid also focuses on futuristic fantasy, although it has little reference to the regional and cultural characteristic; and has subsequently been dropped, and replaced by Kengo Kuma. The Japanese public response to hosting the 2020 Games

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