

Brand Hong Kong

Overview

Brand Hong Kong (BrandHK) is a strategic communications programme to promote Hong Kong as “Asia’s world city”.

Brand Positioning

Hong Kong’s positioning as Asia’s world city is built on a solid foundation of competitive strengths. Strategically located at the heart of Asia, Hong Kong is a cosmopolitan city offering superb global connectivity. Creativity and entrepreneurship converge in a free, secure and dynamic environment that is home to a diverse community that embraces excellence and quality living.

Core Values and Attributes

The spirit of a brand is cast in its core values. These reflect the attitudes and aspirations of Hong Kong people regarding their city.

- Free
- Enterprising
- Excellence
- Innovative
- Quality living
- Every world-class city has a personality – attributes that make it distinctive, memorable and instantly identifiable. Hong Kong’s most commonly perceived attributes are:
- Cosmopolitan
- Dynamic
- Secure
- Diverse
- Connected

Visual Identity

BrandHK’s visual identity incorporates a stylised “flying dragon” – a mythical and powerful icon that links the city’s historic past with its energetic modernity. The colourful ribbons extending from the dragon evoke versatility, diversity and dynamism.

The blue and green ribbons symbolise blue sky and a sustainable environment, while the red ribbon is a silhouette of Lion Rock – a local landmark representing the “can-do” spirit of Hong Kong people.



Brand History

The idea of “branding” Hong Kong emerged around 1997 when much attention focused on Hong Kong’s return to the Motherland. It was the ideal time to shape a visionary unique identity for Hong Kong.

The Commission on Strategic Development, a group of senior public and private sector representatives advising the Chief Executive, recommended in 2000 that: “...Hong Kong needs to promote its unique position as one of the most cosmopolitan and vibrant cities in Asia to a wide range of international audiences. A successful external promotion programme can have a significant positive impact on Hong Kong’s ability to achieve a number of key economic, social and cultural objectives.”

In short, Hong Kong needed to identify its own unique brand. To prepare for the launch of the BrandHK programme, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government commissioned a team of international communications experts to research the city’s core values and attributes and develop a strategy to position the city.

A year of extensive research and consultation was carried out among opinion leaders in Hong Kong and overseas. The findings concluded that the positioning as “Asia’s world city” best reflected the city’s unique features – Hong Kong as a natural, vital and multicultural gateway not only to and from China but also to the rest of Asia and beyond. Research at that time showed that the top five core values associated with Hong Kong were: progressive, free, stable, opportunity and high quality. The most recognisable attributes were: innovative, cosmopolitan, enterprising, leader and connected.

The challenge of designing a unique visual identity reflecting these values and attributes involved a team of international and Hong Kong-based designers. Many designs were considered and those shortlisted were rigorously tested in Hong Kong and abroad.

The survey showed that the stylised dragon incorporating the letters HK and the Chinese characters for Hong Kong – 香港 – was well received and easily understood by both local and international groups. It represented Hong Kong’s continuing link with a historical and cultural icon. A combination of modernity and antiquity, the dragon also symbolises the meeting of East and West that makes Hong Kong so special.



BrandHK was launched in May 2001 before an international audience at the Fortune Global Forum in Hong Kong. Since then, BrandHK has been the global communications platform promoting Hong Kong to different international audiences.

Brand Evolution

Hong Kong is a dynamic, modern city – multi-dimensional and always changing. Like the city it represents, BrandHK must also evolve with the times.

In 2009-10 a thorough review of BrandHK was undertaken. A key objective was to create a shared vision for Hong Kong among local people. Besides research on international perceptions, much emphasis was placed on public engagement in Hong Kong to gauge community perceptions and aspirations.

Results from over a year of consultations and research showed that the brand’s core values and attributes were generally still valid, but the local community had stronger aspirations for quality living and sustainable development. Innovation and creativity also became more important for Hong Kong to maintain its competitiveness as a world city in Asia.

Analysis of views made a clear case for retaining the dragon icon and the brand positioning which had built up considerable “brand equity” over the years. Both were well recognised in connection with Hong Kong. In particular, most agreed that the city was even more “Asia’s world city” than it was at the start of the millennium.

As a result of the review, the brand's core values and attributes were aligned to the new findings, while the visual identity was modified to include elements to make it appear more dynamic.

The revitalised BrandHK was launched in Hong Kong in March 2010 and introduced to international and mainland audiences at the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai.

Another review in 2018 with major stakeholders involved in Hong Kong's external promotions reconfirmed the validity of the positioning, values and attributes. However, it was felt that Hong Kong's value proposition as a global nexus of business, communication, transport and culture needed to be more clearly expressed. As a result a new campaign tagline – "Connect and Excel" was added to the visual identity.

As Hong Kong evolves, so too do our BrandHK campaigns. In late 2021, with global economies gearing up for post-COVID-19 recovery, a new campaign was launched - "Hong Kong. A world of opportunities" - highlighting our unique positioning as the only city in the world that offers a secure, dynamic environment for business, an exciting, cosmopolitan lifestyle and direct access to the Chinese economy. The campaign promotes Hong Kong as the best place in Asia to invest, do business and live - a global financial centre providing unrivalled access to the biggest markets of the 21st century, a cornerstone of the Greater Bay Area, a world-class tech and innovation research hub and a leading cultural and events destination.

Hard and Soft Assets

An important finding of the international perception survey was that while Hong Kong is famous for its hard assets such as skyscrapers, infrastructure and transportation network, less was known about the city's soft assets.

People outside are generally unaware of Hong Kong's many and varied appeals such as beautiful countryside, unique geography, interesting islands, rich cultural life and international sports events. The quality of key institutions – universities, the media, civic organisations and less tangible features such as the rule of law, freedom of expression and association, free flow of information, openness and diversity and our hard-working, well educated people – are all valuable soft assets.

To bridge this perception gap, an integrated marketing campaign, "Faces of Hong Kong", was launched in 2010 to add warmth to Hong Kong's image. Through print, electronic

media and online mediums, the campaign personifies different aspects of "Asia's world city" through genuine stories of people living in Hong Kong. The campaign ran until mid-2015.

In June 2015, a new BrandHK campaign – "Our Hong Kong" – was launched to reinforce Hong Kong's key strengths and soft power. The campaign rides on the Brand's core values and attributes.

In late 2018, the "Connect and Excel" campaign was launched. "Connect and Excel" defines how Hong Kong's high degree of connectivity, globally and with the Mainland of China, helps propel people and businesses to excellence in their chosen fields. The communication platform is based on Hong Kong's potential to connect to business opportunities in Mainland China and ASEAN, to trusted partners and systems, world-class professionals and talent, transport and information in a safe and cosmopolitan business and financial hub.

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Brand Management

The BrandHK Management Unit (BMU) of the Government's Information Services Department (ISD) is responsible for implementing local and international promotional activities that support Hong Kong's positioning as "Asia's world city".

The BMU handles advertising, publications, souvenirs and co-branding with major events in the city. The BMU supports publicity and promotion efforts by HKSAR Government offices around the world, especially Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs), and co-operates with media organisations, creative industries, youth groups, universities and non-government organisations (NGOs) on joint projects.

Government bureaux/departments, quasi-government organisations and NGOs engaged in international promotions of the city are all stakeholders in BrandHK. They include InvestHK, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council as well as the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, Cyberport, Hong Kong Science Park, and the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre to name a few.

The Brand has become associated with major international events held in Hong Kong, including all "M" Mark sporting events and other major sports, cultural and business events such as the Hong Kong Marathon, the International Dragon Boat Carnival, Rugby Sevens, Hong Kong Golf Open, Hong Kong Tennis Open, Formula E, the Asian Financial Forum, Entertainment Expo, and the International Film Festival.

Recent events organised abroad under the BrandHK banner include the Lord Mayor's Show in London, Hong Kong Film Festivals and Dragon Boat Festivals in Europe, North America and Asia.

The BMU works closely with the public and private sectors to ensure the Brand is used effectively and in a consistent manner.

The BrandHK visual identity is copyright protected. To apply to use it, please email BMU at brandhk@isd.gov.hk.

For more information, please visit www.brandhk.gov.hk

