



COMUNE DI BOLOGNA

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della comunicazione visiva



Call for ideas Bologna City Branding

ANNEX C RESEARCH

Bologna City Branding: the scientific research

Bologna's Town Council has assigned Urban Center Bologna, with the coordination of Professor Roberto Grandi (University of Bologna), the task of completing the Bologna City Branding project.

The project was conceived with the intention of increasing the effectiveness of Bologna's territorial marketing policy both by defining the **positioning** the city wishes to achieve on a metropolitan scale and by then identifying the most appropriate strategies to convey the narrative of this position to different audiences on a local, national and international level.

The desire for this action has translated to creating a specific identity for Bologna, one that is perceived by visitors and with which its citizens can identify.

The Bologna City Branding project, launched in October 2012, devoted the first five months to extensive research aimed at analysing perception of the current international brand image of Bologna and at identifying the traits that characterise its desired identity.

The **international image** of Bologna was analysed by:

Giving a **questionnaire** to a sample of Italian and foreign citizens who have visited and or stayed in Bologna in recent years.

Recovering data resulting from **research carried out previously** on this theme or on very similar themes such as, for example, the "Perception survey on quality of life in European cities" performed by the European Commission, the MoodWatcher surveys that measure the attachment of Bologna's people to their city, "Bologna: a project for tourism" by Econstat.

"Reputational" analysis of the presence of **Bologna on the net**, which examined (during the period December 2012 – February 2013) posts and comments made available on the internet (forums, blogs, micro-blogs, social networks, etc.) or in electronic documents (Ms Word, Ms Excel, txt, etc.).

Definition of the traits characterising the **desired identity** of Bologna ("Aspirational Brand Identity") was analysed via:

7 **Focus Groups**, between January and February 2013, led by Prof. Roberto Grandi, which saw the participation of around 90 significant witnesses from the city, representing the economical, cultural, social and institutional world.

#Caroamicotiinvito – an online contest to gather stories about the city in the words and pictures of its citizens, active from April to May 2013.

THE RESEARCH RESULTS

The Questionnaire (prepared by MoodWatcher)

The chosen sample:

Recording period: 20 November 2012 - 20 January 2013

Questionnaire administered on the internet with email invitation to participate

E-mail addresses came from lists of Italian and foreign citizens who have visited and/or stayed in Bologna in recent years.

Questionnaires completed 405, of which 250 in English and 155 in Italian

The questionnaires show that there is a good perception of the city of Bologna and many respond positively to the questions.

The following were confirmed to be among the main characteristics of Bologna:

A) Bologna is ... Art, Culture, Food.

Indicate your agreement /disagreement on a scale of 1 to 10

-There is wide availability and a good quality of artistic heritage and cultural sites (8.54)

-There is variety and quality of food, wine and restaurants (8.51)

-There is wide availability of cultural events and attractions (7.94)

-There is wide availability and good quality of transport to reach Bologna (7.80)

-There is variety and quality in shopping (7.70)

-There is wide availability of entertainment opportunities (7.44)

-There is wide availability and good quality of resources for Fairs and Conferences (7.39)

-There is a variety and quality of hotels and other accommodation (7.26)

-There is wide availability of natural resource attractions surrounding Bologna (7.07)

B) Bologna is ... Appealing, friendly, lively, expensive, busy, polluted

Indicate your agreement/disagreement on a scale of 1 to 10 regarding the following statements (1 minimum agreement, 10 maximum agreement)

-It is an appealing city (8.26)

-The people are friendly (8.06)

-It is a lively city (7.94)

-It is on a par with other European cities (7.65)

-It is a safe city (7.32)

-The tourist information in the city is satisfactory (7.19)

-The surroundings of Bologna are attractive (6.92)

-Streets and buildings are clean (6.07)

-The air is not polluted (5.49)

-There is not much traffic (4.52)

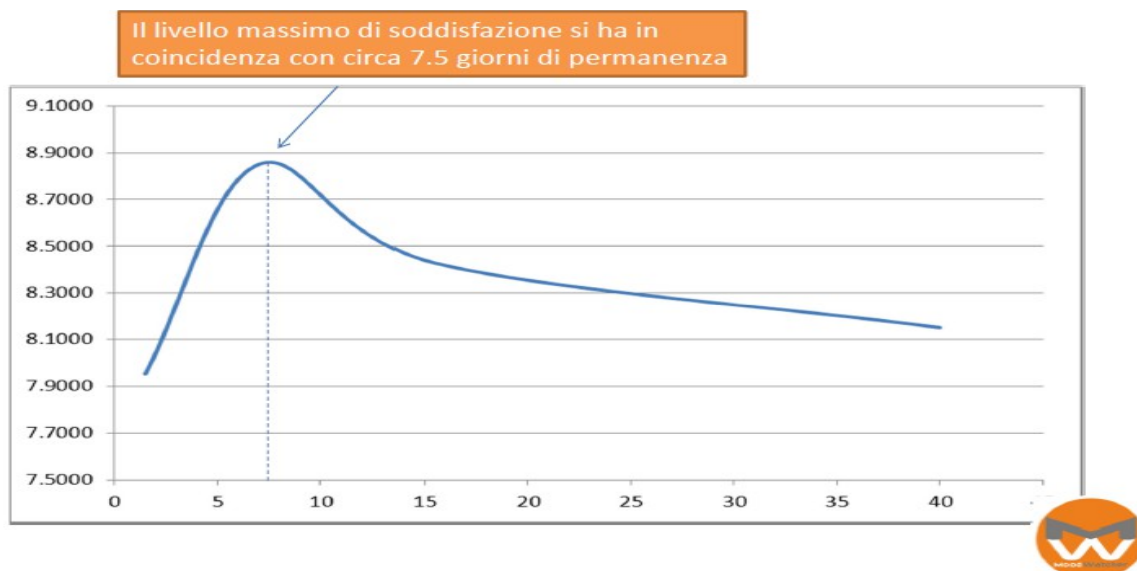
-The cost of living is not high (4.29)

C) **Bologna is ... University, youth, a people friendly city**

Do you agree with the following statements about Bologna (% of yes)

- Bologna is home to the oldest university in Europe (95.93)
- Bologna is a city that is easy to walk round (95.92)
- Bologna is a city for youngsters (89.80)
- Bologna has more than 30 Km of porticoes (83.56)
- Bologna is a city that is easy to travel around by public transport (77.84)
- Bologna is just a 1 and a half hour train ride from the sea (74.87)
- Bologna is a city that is easy to cycle around (72.82)
- Bologna is just a 1 and a half hour train ride from Milan (72.24)
- Bologna is a city with good craft products (71.84)
- Bologna is a city with hills (67.29)
- Bologna is less than a 1 hour train ride from Florence (66.76)
- Bologna is the city of spaghetti Bolognese (63.19)
- In Bologna there is an industry of innovative products (55.56)
- Bologna is famous for music (51.80)
- Bologna is the city of Ducati (46.05)
- Bologna is the city of Lamborghini (22.40)
- Bologna airport is a long way from the city (14.78)
- Bologna is the city of Fiat (13.24)
- Bologna has an underground (11.53)

One very important fact that emerges from analysis of the questionnaires concerns the correlation between the time spent in Bologna and the overall level of satisfaction. Tourists only begin to really appreciate Bologna after the third/fourth day of their stay (reaching a peak after 7 days). The *drivers* of satisfaction are events and entertainment opportunities.



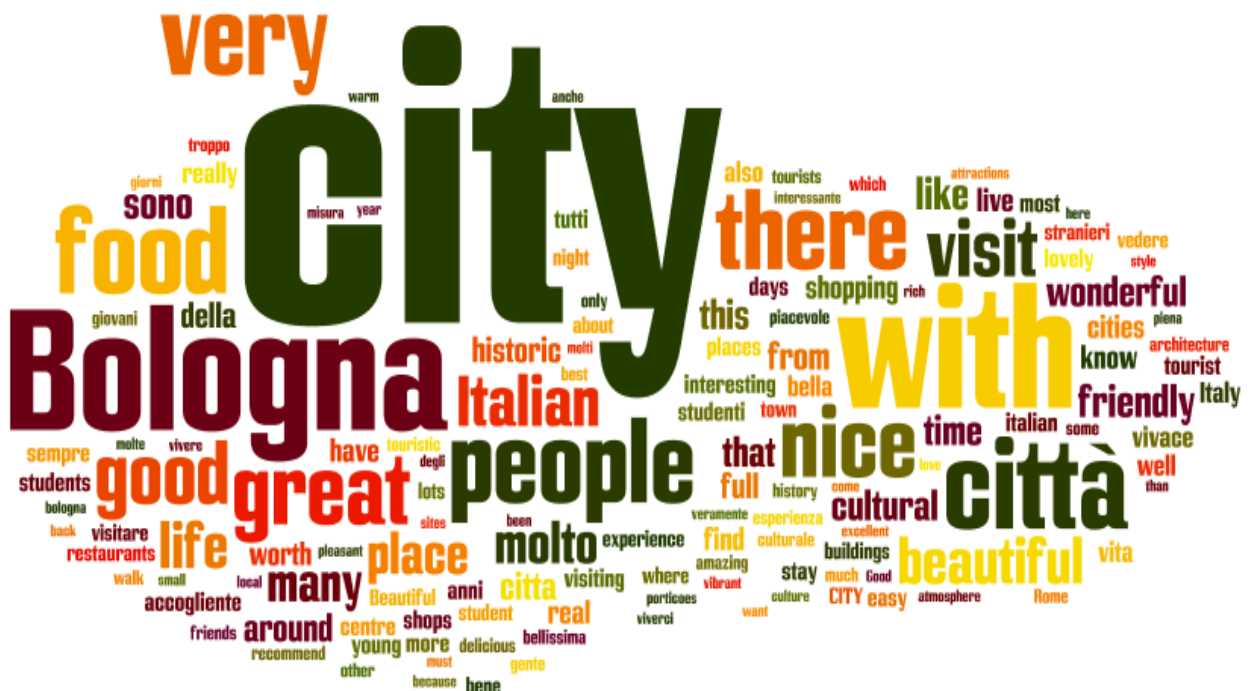
The maximum level of satisfaction coincides with around the 7.5 day of the stay (graph "Satisfaction Model = f time)

Upon analysing the qualitative data, that is, the responses to the open-ended questions, some recurrences could be traced.

“Free” mental associations for Bologna (schematic representation of the words that emerge most frequently in the responses to the open-ended question “indicate from 3 to 5 mental associations for Bologna”):



Describing your experience in Bologna to a friend: (schematic representation of the words that emerge most frequently in the responses to the open-ended question “how would you describe your experience in Bologna to a friend?”)



Reputational analysis on the net (by Synthema)

During this study, around 20,000 comments regarding Bologna, taken from forums, blogs, micro-blogs and social networks and written in English and Italian, were analysed.

The Italians mainly talk about sport (41%), marginally about work and economy (16%), very little about local politics. The most common nouns used on the Italian pages are, in actual fact, "team", "quota", "football", "work" and "problem".

Foreigners love the food and the friendliness of the people. They love to «wander» through the streets, which they find "winding" and "narrow", "crowded" and "dirty" walking under the porticoes. In the maze of its street, tourists can indulge themselves in *flânerie*, unhurried exploration, free from strict schedules. In actual fact tourists often "wander" with no set destination, without getting lost or feeling insecure. They enjoy the market: *"Fantastic mixture of winding and confusing streets", "a charming town with narrow, picturesque streets"*.

This is a city where there is a "gelato culture", with a museum actually devoted to it. Foreigners are "prompted to taste" wine as well as gelato, which they recognise as high quality, "delicious", "fresh", "traditional". They love to eat their gelato "under the porticoes", in an atmosphere that they always judge to be "friendly" and "warm". Bologna is, above all, the city of porticoes and friendliness. *"I was keen to indulge in some serious gelato tastings", "Bologna definitely has the most amazing outdoor markets and the BEST gelato!!", "and of course the gelato sounds spectacular ...", "my love affair with gelato is likely to transition into a more long-term romance"*.

Foreigners associate Bologna with music and musicians. There are many live concerts in the city's bars and clubs. *"... following the meal, a DJ set up and started playing music.", "... in addition to being an incredible University town Bologna has also been hailed as a UNESCO City of Music, and a European Capital of Culture."*

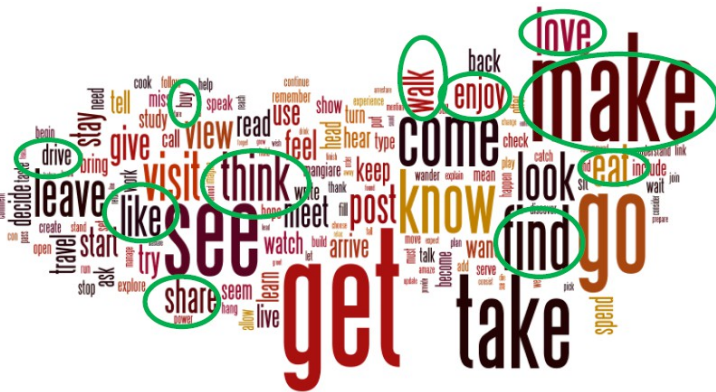
They want to promote a city that they consider to be a "hidden jewel", nestled between Europe – via the University – and Emilia-Romagna, a region with an undisputed vocation for tourism. The need to «share a secret» about the city, the porticoes and the family atmosphere *"With fantastic sights, delicious foods and very few tourists, Bologna is a hidden secret and a great example of what Italians call "the good life".", "... architectural and monumental jewels like villas, churches and monasteries are hidden there.", "... plus the hidden jewels of the countryside"*.

The Italians, like foreigners, do not directly connect the many historic companies in the area – *Furla, Lamborghini or Ducati* – to the city. Bologna lacks an explicit legitimisation to the role of motor city. In the past two months Bologna has, however, been associated with *Apple*, with its *Apple Store*, *Ferrovie dello Stato*- the national railway company- thanks to its high speed trains, or *Ryanair* with its low-cost flights.

NOUNS - *Foreigners spend «one day» in Bologna, they enjoy the food, the gelato and the friendly atmosphere. Time is a key factor.*



VERBS - *Foreigners «walk» through the streets, «enjoying» the atmosphere and «sharing» their impressions. «They find», «discover» a city that is different to how they imagined it. It is a city of doing and being able to do.*



ADJECTIVES - *Foreigners discover a city that is different to how they imagined it, or they also simply find «different» cities in the same city. Interest in «balsamic vinegar», which is purchased by tourists.*



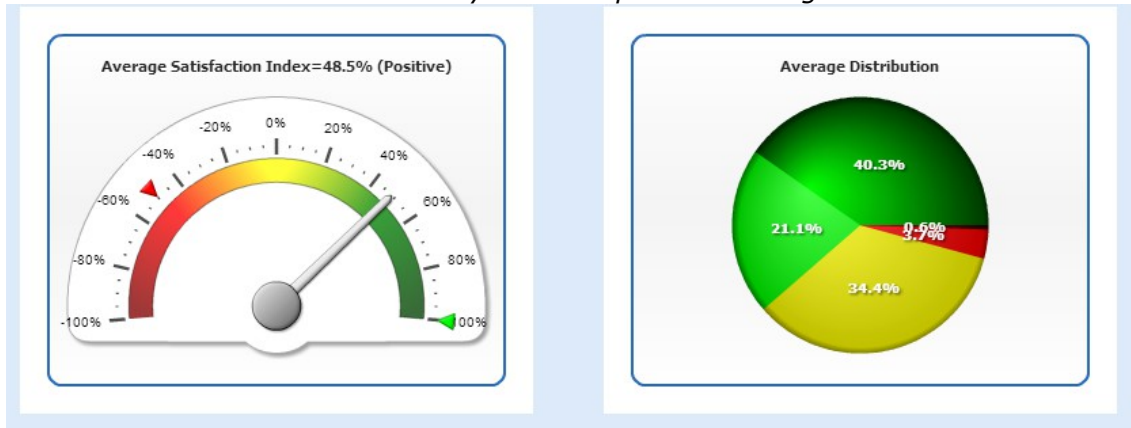
ADVERBS - *Foreigners discover that Bologna is «really» also «other».*



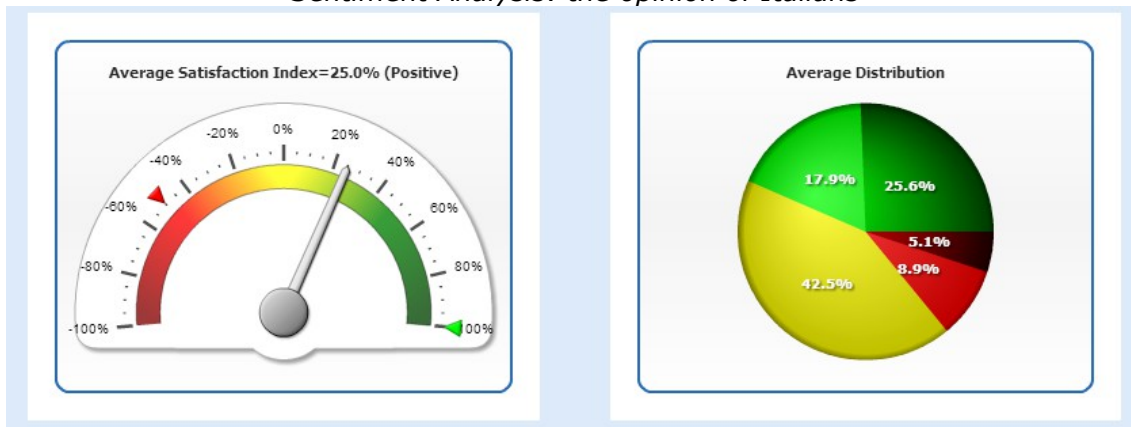
Annex C – Research

The opinion expressed by internet users about Bologna is normally positive, with more favourable polarity in the case of comments made by foreigners.

Sentiment Analysis: The opinion of foreigners



Sentiment Analysis: the opinion of Italians



Focus Group - Research on the perception of the international image of Bologna and its current positioning

Between January and February 2013, 7 Focus Groups were led by Professor Roberto Grandi; they saw the participation of around 90 significant witnesses from the city.

In each group the discussion focused on both the tangible and the intangible characteristics of the city, with some difficulty in identifying the unique and credible characteristics of Bologna that could be strong attractors in themselves.

Abstracting from specific audiences uncovered a series of characterisations of Bologna, especially on intangible elements, that gave rise to an exchange of ideas showing how these for some were positive aspects, for others aspects that were no longer so positive or even negative.

Tangible features

The tangible features of Bologna, referred to as unique, distinctive, credible and able to characterise the positioning of the city were relatively few in number and were mainly focused on the **porticoes** which appear, at the moment, to be the only tangible element in which it is worth investing as a physical sign of the city's positioning.

The porticoes can characterise the positioning of the city because:

a) they express the essence of Italy, but the length of those in Bologna also express uniqueness

("the porticoes are the DNA of Bologna");

b) they connote a public space that crosses the city and makes socialising easier, while accentuating an intangible characteristic trait of the city *("under the porticoes you can walk and talk next to other people, under cover", "the porticoes, the colours... the relationship between the city, the street and the portico is something that you can't find anywhere else");*

c) they are a memory of the past but are still used today, offering that dynamic relationship with tradition that is another characterising trait of Bologna.

The porticoes also have some negative values, more readily identified by residents and those who have lived in the city for a long time: they block the view and allow dust to collect *("after 15 years you realise that the porticoes block the light")*.

There are many other very significant tangible traits of the city but none were considered able to represent the distinguishing feature of positioning, although they are certainly the credible and highly effective players in the narrative or narratives of Bologna:

The Centrality/hub

The University

The hill

The medieval structure,

Piazza Maggiore and the Two Towers

The markets in the Centre, the shopping

The craft workshops

Other comments referred to **Bologna's waterways**, to **Sala Borsa**, to the **San Petronio sundial**, to the **tomb of San Domenico**, to the **museum** system, the industrial museums (from the industrial heritage Museum to the Ducati Museum, to the Carpigiani Gelato museum)

to the **Genius Bononiae** network, to the **"night clubs"**, to the **little window in Via Piella**, the **mercato** delle Erbe fruit and vegetable market, the **Cineteca**, or **film library**.

Intangible features

The intangible features of Bologna, referred to as unique, distinctive, credible and able to characterise the positioning of the city, unlike the tangible features, were numerous.

The intangible features that emerged and which make Bologna unique:

"Bologna, city of the young and open minded"

"Bologna, city of quality"

"Bologna, authentic, affectionate and welcoming city"

"Bologna, city of workshops, innovation, experimentation"

"Bologna, city of culture and creativity"

"Bologna, city of good food"

What the city has to offer overall, both in terms of tangible and intangible identity traits, is very significant and, at least potentially, of excellence, so much so that today every type of audience can find something to interest them.

This concept was expressed in these words, **"Bologna, an à la carte city"**, meaning a city that does not offer you set menus or predefined combinations to choose from, but multiple offerings that different types of audiences can choose from freely depending on their desires ("the secret is: "you come here and make it up as you go along, so much so that it is the tourist himself that becomes part of the story").

Although it becomes clear that the tangible and intangible traits of Bologna make the stay of a tourist or of those who intend to settle in the city for any length of time a generally positive experience, a branding policy must pinpoint the main identifying trait which, in brief, prompts in those that do not know the city the desire to visit it.

It is clear that this identifying trait, properly promoted, must be flanked by others that complement it, to build **the story of Bologna** for outsiders, but also for residents.

#Caroamicotiinvito – from 18 April to 5 May 2013

The Bologna City Branding project launched the **online contest #CaroAmicoTiInvito** to gather stories about the city in the words and pictures of its citizens, with the aim of completing the analysis on the desired identity of Bologna, starting from October 2012.

To participate in the contest contributions (text, photos and videos) could be uploaded to the address caroamicotiinvito.tumblr.com, to Twitter with the hashtag **#caroamicotiinvito** or to Facebook - on the Urban Center Bologna page. What is more, at the headquarters of Urban Center Bologna there were also postcards that could be filled out.

The contest recorded a total of around 40 posts, including stories, phrases, photos and tweets and the authors of the 5 most significant contributions, chosen by a jury coordinated by Urban Center, will enjoy the prize **a weekend as "a tourist at home: Bologna" for two people** - with the chance to visit and discover unusual places or sites that are not usually accessible.