

# PREFACE

## BY PHILIP KOTLER

**P**laces (cities, regions, countries) have always been “managed.” How else would we explain the existence of mayors, city councils, county commissioners, and regional bodies for keeping a place going and possibly growing.

But there is a difference between keeping a place going and helping a place improve the lives of its citizens and stakeholders. A mayor basically makes sure that the city continues to deliver goods and services and maintains an adequate level of earnings and opportunities for its citizens.

However, the citizens of most cities want their city to become “more” than it is at the present time. An economically depressed city wants to revive its fortunes through some kind of economic and social transformation process. A bustling metropolis, on the other hand, may have traffic congestion problems and waste disposal problems that turn off many citizens and visitors and need innovative solutions to these problems.

Christer Asplund and Jacob Ikkala offer us the new concept of place management that goes beyond the older concept of place marketing. They distinguish between place management, place development and place branding as inter-related disciplines that can be used to improve the attractiveness and viability of a place. Place management is a more active view of the responsibilities of those involved in managing and improving a place over time.

Some of the world’s great cities have benefitted from the vision of great place managers: Christopher Wren, London’s famous architect, Daniel Burnham, Chicago’s famous park designer, Napoleon Bonaparte in the case of Paris. Most cities bear the footprints of many “place managers”, who have added outstanding elements to the design of the place as it operates now.

I am excited about this book by Christer Asplund and Jacob Ikkala because it presents a picture of European cities and places as they function today, how

they were influenced by new forces emerging each decade, and what their future possibilities are in terms of their critical opportunities and threats.

Christer Asplund has a long term distinguished European consultant on place development and branding. Before meeting Christer, I had written *Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States, and Nations* (The Free Press, 1993) with co-authors Irving Rein and Don Haider. We said in the book that a place can improve its fortunes by employing a systematic methodology of analyzing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and preparing a realistic set of goals and objectives and a long term plan for achieving them, which is backed by the citizens and able to raise the money needed to successfully implement the plan.

The book *Marketing Places* dealt with US cities and regions. We decided to prepare *Marketing Places Europe* to identify the opportunities facing European cities and regions. We could think of no better co-author to invite than Christer Asplund and he agreed to join us in the project of preparing *Marketing Places Europe* (Financial Times, 1999). We believe that many European places benefited from following the book's principles and methodologies.

One example that comes to mind is that of the city of Bilbao, Spain. Bilbao had been an important and wealthy city in the 1920s as one could tell by viewing the quality of its buildings and streets. But Bilbao entered a period of decline because of changing industrial patterns and its citizens were passionate about finding some way to return Bilbao to its former glory. I was invited to give a lecture in the city hall on place marketing and several hundred enthusiastic citizens showed up hoping to get some ideas on how the citizenry could renew Bilbao. I suggested several initiatives and added that Bilbao needed some special attraction that would draw tourists in the way that the Eiffel tower became a permanent sight and symbol of Paris. It could be a great museum, or the world's tallest skyscraper, or some other distinctive feature of the Bilbao landscape. Four years later the fantastic art museum designed by Frank Gehry rose in Bilbao and started to draw hundreds and thousands of tourists to fly to Bilbao on commercial or chartered flights. Bilbao once again became mapped in the traveler's mind as a place to remember and admire.

Each decade carries new forces, problems and opportunities for places. That is why I welcome the publication of *Place Management – New Roles for Place Managers in Rebuilding European Wealth*. The book presents the most current picture (as of 2011) of the forces impinging on European cities and assembles the latest theories and practices for improving European places. It cites the impact of disruptive events on the fortunes of cities; the growing development of clusters to support and distinguish a city or region; the deepening of attraction factors; and the move from private gain to win-win gain in improving cities. The authors propose fourteen principles for guiding place management and they supply a framework of several steps for initiating and carrying out a place improvement process.



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