

Monaco means business

Most UK conference destinations would die for Monaco's glitzy, sophisticated image, but, occupying such a narrow high-end niche can be a little dangerous in a business environment characterised by increasing austerity, says **Philip Cooke**. Nevertheless, there are lessons in destination marketing for all

 The Monaco Tourist Authority, despite relatively high levels of current demand, is seeking to change the way in which conference buyers perceive the Principality. It has launched a new travel trade marketing campaign targeting organisers in France, Italy, Germany and Great Britain.

The magazine advertising campaign was launched at IMEX in Frankfurt in June and is designed to shift perceptions within Monaco's key markets, making it a 'top of mind' conference destination while not corrupting or compromising its core identity as a world class resort.

Repositioning isn't easy and it nearly always relies on the use of clever and subtle copywriting, rather than photography, to plant new ideas inside the minds of prospective customers. It's based on the idea of winning 'the battle for your mind'.

For instance, and going back a few years, Glasgow's reputation as a major international conference destination was built upon the 'Scotland with Style' campaign which replaced the city's reputation for bad

housing, poor health and industrial decline with a completely new idea that was so good it helped transform the way people thought about Scotland itself.

'Scotland with Style' was designed to attract shoppers and leisure visitors as well as conference delegates to Glasgow and it provided the foundation for the marketing of the whole city. Glasgow occupied territory that could not be copied by its great rival, Edinburgh, whose eventual response was the one-dimensional, and somehow not very exciting, 'Scotland's Elegant Capital'.

Monaco is one of the most well-known and most attractive destinations in the world and it has an identity that is strong enough to need neither explanation nor clever slogans. With no income tax, no unemployment and the most expensive real estate in the world, Monaco is, well, Monaco.

But, this is also why Monaco is not such an obvious choice as a conference destination, especially within the very strong NTIC (Les Notions Technologies de l'information et de la Communication) sector which is Europe's largest and most

important conference market.

Sandrine Camia, Director of the Monaco Tourist Board, says: "Finance, health and engineering represent 50 per cent of our MICE business and they are also the pillars of Monaco's industrial base. But, we do not think that our expertise in these sectors and our convention centre infrastructure and assets are as well known in Europe as they should be."

This is why the new campaign does not contain a single glamorous image of Monaco. Instead, it shows photographs of professional convention delegates, suited, booted and ready for work, thus enabling potential delegates to 'see themselves' and perhaps think that this promotion, and Monaco, is for them and about them.

These adverts use 'long copy' text to reach out to the medical, engineering, finance and environmental technology sectors, saying that in Monaco: 'Surgeons don't operate on blackjack tables', 'Technology doesn't only drive formula one cars', 'Bankers don't gamble in casinos' and 'Green isn't only at play in the golf club'.

Mentioning gambling, golf and F1 racing at all is a little dangerous, but Monaco has decided to address these impressions head on.

The new adverts contain nothing else about Monaco's casinos, hotels, beaches, palaces, Princes, shops and yachts. Instead, they talk about its huge financial services infrastructure, its eco-certified Grimaldi Congress Centre and many other reasons why it should be considered as a serious conference destination.

It would have been so much easier for the Monaco Tourist Board to rely on the use of glamorous images of this Mediterranean destination and that is why this campaign, which asks us to reconsider our assumptions about Monaco, deserves to succeed. 



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IN MONACO
TECHNOLOGY DOESN'T
ONLY DRIVE FORMULA 1 CARS

Monaco is home to businesses in the fields of computing, telecommunications and new technologies. They fit in quite naturally here, blending into the environment of the Principality that generates high added value, respects the planet and requires little space. Research and development activities also play a significant role in Monaco's economy stimulating innovation, the generation of wealth, and jobs. Choose Monaco and harness the expertise that will make your event a success.

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