

Can 2010 save SA from jobs bloodbath? - Part 2

 By [Dr Nikolaus Eberl](#)

8 Apr 2009

Dr Nikolaus Eberl revisits 2010 and looks at how Australia maximised the branding and marketing opportunities afforded by their hosting of the Olympic Games.

In the first part of this series, on 3 April, I wrote... “According to the recent edition of the *Sunday Times*, South Africa is heading for a jobs bloodbath, as local economists are predicting severe losses of employment in 2009, especially in the automotive and mining sectors. Commented T-Sec chief economist Mike Schussler: ‘We’re in deep trouble, and we’re definitely heading for a very deep recession. I expect a bloodbath for jobs; anywhere between 200 000 and 300 000 losses for the year.’

In light of these dire predictions, what are the prospects of 2010 turning around the fortunes of SA Inc and providing a much needed boost for consumer and investor confidence, both at home and abroad?”

The first part of this series on the “2010 Branding Legacy” provided a comparative analysis of the socio-economic benefits of the 2006 FIFA World Cup held in Germany. In a similar fashion, Australia used the 2000 Sydney Olympics as leverage for a complete re-branding proposition for the country. The ‘Brand Australia’ program was established as a four-year strategy and built around three core elements: repositioning the country by capitalizing on media, aggressively seeking convention business, and promoting pre- and post-Games touring. Accordingly, Sydney profited from the following:

- US\$6bn of worldwide media exposure as a direct result of the Games;
- US\$1.6bn in specialized travel media exposure as part of the Visiting Journalists Program, under which an average of two journalists a day were invited by the Australia Tourist Commission (ATC) between 1999 and 2001;
- US\$1.2bn in convention business for the state of New South Wales, and hosting a record 49 international conferences as one of the world's top convention destinations in the year 2000.

Massive boost

On the heels of the Sydney closing ceremony, the managing director of the ATC, John Morse, stated that the Games changed forever the way the world sees Australia and that Australia's international tourism brand had been advanced by a decade.

The ATC's four-year Olympic strategy focused on promoting Australia through an intensive media relations program. By working with the world's leading broadcasters, the ATC managed to turn the Olympics into a two-week documentary on all aspects of Australian life. For instance, the UK's leading travel show, The Holiday Program, focused its tenth anniversary program in 1999 on Australia, featuring its cities as well as its people.

Further, ATC teamed up with Visa to promote Australia and the Games in a move that turned out to be the most effective PR campaign of modern Olympics. The logo 'Australia prefers Visa' was seen all over the world in all forms of media and reached millions of people. In another partnership, US Broadcaster NBC agreed to promote Australia by linking Brand Australia with the Olympic Brand by the colors of the Olympic Rings. This made sure Australia was seen as a "vibrant, friendly, colorful, free-spirited place that offers a sophisticated lifestyle".

Steady rise in popularity

The success of Australia's tourism branding campaign was reflected in the steady rise of Brand Australia in the Nation Brand Index (NBI) over a period of five years, until it was voted the most favourite tourism destination by international audiences in the second quarter of 2005.

Says Simon Anholt, the author of the NBI: "What this tells us is that much of the world has an appetite for all things Australian. Now is the time for Australia to be producing great Australian-branded products, culture, events, services, ideas, and media as fast as it possibly can. Anything that reflects, promotes and sustains those essential and admired Australian values will sell."

With just over 400 days to go to the 2010 kick-off, is South Africa ready to emulate Australia's nation branding success and stimulate the global appetite for all things South African?

In the next part of the "2010 Brand Legacy" series, read about how Barcelona leveraged the 1992 Olympic Games to create an economic legacy that lasted almost 15 years.

ABOUT DR NIKOLAUS EBERL

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