

THE ROLE OF VISUAL IDENTITY GUIDES AND BRAND BOOKS IN COUNTRY BRANDING – HOW TO GET INSPIRATION FROM FINLAND AND ESTONIA

Arpad Ferenc Papp-Vary
Budapest Metropolitan University, Hungary
apappvary@metropolitan.hu

ABSTRACT

Country branding (also known as nation branding) is actually nothing else than the technical application of branding for countries in order to improve the reputation of the country, thus attracting more tourists and investors, improving export, etc. – in other words, resulting in greater competitiveness and more money. In the past two decades, country branding has become a hot topic: country image centres and country brand councils have been created throughout Europe and the world. Their task is the same everywhere: to position the country, distinguish it from "competitors", create a uniform brand strategy, and coordinate the various messages about the country in a certain sense. One of the important elements of this branding activity is the visual identity guide defining the logo and colours used by the country and the basic visual implementations used in most frequently used offline and online communication tools. Although visual identity guides are extremely useful, we have to admit that they mostly serve as an aid for advertising agencies designated to country branding, helping them to create country advertisements that are as consistent visually as possible. However, if we want to achieve a greater impact involving the citizens in the promotion of their country, we need more: a so-called brand book. This tool also provides guidance verbally: it tells the "story" of the country – what are its typical attributes, why is it special, what is its character, what values does it represent, what messages does it communicate, and how – more precisely, how it should communicate in order to have maximum impact. Therefore, such a publicly available brand book may also be considered a knowledge centre or a knowledge management tool. The present article provides countries with advice on this topic through an analysis of the brand books of Estonia and Finland. The two countries were selected for several reasons. First, both countries created a well-devised and complex system that is easy to use. Second, their brand building is characterized by a lot of creativity from word games to emojis. Third, their identity building has a digital focus, providing state-of-the-art solutions. Fourth, they particularly encourage citizens to "engage" in the building of the country brand.

Keywords: brand book, brand identity, country branding, nation branding

1. INTRODUCTION: THE DIMENSIONS OF BRAND IDENTITY

In the for-profit world it is well-known that the communications of products and services are regulated by various manuals, but we can also find more and more such examples in the nonprofit sector. It can be said, however, that they mostly (or primarily) focus on visual appearance, although identity may have several levels. This is also true for country branding, also known as nation branding (DINNIE 2008). There are only a few countries where they cover every aspect listed below:

- Visual identity:
In many cases the only guidance for the branding process is a so-called visual identity guide, presenting the logo, the ways it could/should be used in each (marketing) communication material and the ways it must not be used. Ideally, the material also discusses colours. In an even better scenario, it also covers images, that is, what photos the country should use in its communication. In 2005, for example, people in Taiwan could vote on the 24 images to be

used in their communications materials worldwide (LI 2006). However, the visual identity work may also involve the creation of the country's/nation's own typeface or font as the examples of Finland and Estonia show. Moreover, an identity may have many other elements, but these are still limited to visual solutions.

- **Verbal identity:**
This is often simplified to a country slogan. However, difficulties start with the question if a country slogan is enough, or separate slogans should be created for the promotion of tourism, the attraction of investments, and the facilitation of product exports – or vice versa, is a country slogan necessary at all? Sweden, for example, is getting along quite well without it. At the same time, verbal identity does not only involve a slogan, but may also include expressions to be used on a regular basis (according to the target group), or search keywords that the country would use to appear in the top hits on Google. The whole idea of storytelling, that is, the national narrative also belongs here. In many cases, verbal identity is the distinctive feature providing the basis of the whole concept: for example, the Faroe Islands did this in the case of words beginning with the prefix "UN". We also need to take in account that there are more than 1500 so-called un-words in English, and this also works the same way in German or Danish, providing plenty of options for brand wordplays: unspoiled, unexplored, unbelievable, etc. As the brand book of the Faroe Islands says, "Perhaps ordinary descriptive words just are not adequate. Or perhaps (...) the best way to describe it is by setting it apart from the rest, by applying the inherent meaning of the small, yet powerful prefix, UN." (VISIT FAROE 2014)
- **Auditive identity:**
Another aspect of identity called sonic branding is often forgotten, although it may also be important. Let us think of Beethoven's Ode to Joy as an important symbol of the European Union in addition to the flag of Europe. However, in certain cases, a short signal could identify a country.
- **Brand book:**
This is a tool combining the functions above, but most importantly it tells the country's story including its features, unique attributes, character, values, messages, and the way it communicates itself. In such *brand books* it may be useful to introduce the country brand through a well-known branding model. One of these methods is the *brand key model* encompassing nine factors: 1) root strengths, 2) competitive environment, 3) target group, 4) consumer insight, 5) benefits, 6) unique selling proposition, 7) reasons to believe, 8) values, belief, personality 9) essence / brand idea. However, you do not necessarily have to adapt to such systems, and the framework may also be something completely different.

In the following, we discuss two cases as best practices regarding brand books: the examples of Estonia and Finland. We chose them for several reasons:

- Both states developed a very thought-out, complex system which is easy to use at the same time. They give clear guidance for advertising agencies for the creation of country brand advertisements or any other kind of communication that are also easily understandable by citizens.
- They expressly encourage citizens to "get involved" in the building of the country brand, by suggesting what they should say about the country and do on their own Facebook pages to show their national identity.
- The brand building of both countries is largely characterized by creativity, from word games to emojis.

- Both Estonia and Finland have a strong digital focus, therefore they use state-of-the-art solutions.

2. ESTONIA'S IDENTITY BUILDING AS A BEST PRACTICE

Estonia's new visual identity, introduced in 2017, is both great and simple. It is actually so simple that the country has no slogan, and its logo is nothing but the blue text Estonia, though written with the country's official typeface "Aino". In addition, they created wordmarks such as visit estonia, think estonia, invest estonia, enter estonia, taste estonia, study estonia, use estonia, design estonia (Underconsideration.com 2017). These come with clean layout where the colours of the Estonian national flag (blue and white) have a key role. The icons are also very simplistic, blue on a white background. As part of the visual identity, they also provide many high quality stock photos of the country that can be downloaded free of charge. Some of them are already captioned with the messages of the Estonia brand.



Figure 1: Estonia's current logo is quite clean: it is just the name of the country with the Estonian typeface called Aino



Figure 2: Wordmarks complement the use of the "country logo"

However, it is much more than visual identity. Estonia's digital country platform, brand.estonia.ee (2017) is an excellent example of a brand book, and how to build a country brand involving local citizens, facilitating uniform communications.

As the website explains to its users:

- ”Brand Estonia helps you introduce Estonia in a way that attracts attention, creates trust and makes you proud.
- It can be used by anyone who wants to talk about Estonia: businesses, government institutions, universities, organisations, events and people.
- Here you will find the tools to introduce Estonia in a considered, clear and recognizable way. Together we will create the image of Estonia.”
- Considering the brand platform and usage, they formulate different levels: think, use, create, and see.

The think level includes character, core messages, story and verbal identity, the use of words. Let us examine these in more detail.

2.1. Character

”Actually, three words: Nordic, surprising, smart. These are the essence of Estonia. These are what we want to be and to be known for. If we understand and present Estonia’s values and advantages in the same way, our voice is stronger and more convincing. These traits are not to be shouted out as slogans. For that we have our story and our core messages — they bring out Estonia’s advantages and uniqueness. The values here are the starting point for all actions aimed at promoting Estonia. They are the essence of Estonia.”

Table 1: The character of the Estonia brand

<i>Nordic</i>	<i>Surprising</i>	<i>Smart</i>
- Pragmatic	- Different	- Innovative
- Honest	- Individualistic	- Tech-savvy
- Straightforward	- Contrasting	- Curious
- Egalitarian	- Brave	- Discontented
- Close to nature	Effect: We attract attention.	Effect: We are pioneers.
Effect: We are trustworthy.		

Source: BRAND ESTONIA (2017): URL: <https://brand.estonia.ee/>, downloaded: 27 August 2017

2.2. Core messages

”These core messages are the first things you can say about Estonia. Pick any combination of them depending on the target audience. Always use at least one of the core messages when introducing Estonia for the first time.”

Table following on the next page

Table 2: The core messages of the Estonia brand

<p>Independent minds: Estonia's biggest asset is our people. Many of them have done significant things. Some are world famous and others known only to a few. What matters is that all of them have used their minds independently and brought their vision to life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our society is not hierarchical - Everyone can live up to their potential - Easy and straightforward communication with the state
<p>Clean environment: Estonia has a lot of untouched nature and a low population density. This is very rare in today's world. We know how to care for our environment and we are proud of it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We hold fourth place in urban air quality in the world - 51% of Estonian territory is covered with forests - 40% of the territory is organic collection area - 17% of our farmland is organic - 22% of our country is wildlife preserves - From any point, the nearest marsh is always less than 10 km away.
<p>Digital society: Estonia is the first country to function as a digital service. Our citizens and e-residents can get things done fast and efficiently. A number of world-renowned technology companies were born in Estonia and the nation boasts more thriving start-up companies per capita than anywhere else in Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first country in the world to offer e-residency - The first country in the world to vote online - Three minutes to file your taxes - Most entrepreneurial country in Europe

Source: BRAND ESTONIA (2017): URL: <https://brand.estonia.ee/>, downloaded: 27 August 2017

As it can be seen, digital society is just one of three pillars here. Half of Estonia is covered with forest, and the choice of nature may serve as some kind of a counterpoint or balance with technology: "We treasure Estonia's breathtaking nature, such as the forests and marshes, just as much as our e-state solutions; in fact, you could say that we use the latter to spend more time enjoying the former", they say. And why is "independent minds" the first pillar? Probably because the commitment to eliminate the so-called homo sovieticus, a post-communist kind of personality is still strong. This way, the Estonian state supports all initiatives that facilitate the self-reliance of people and decrease their dependence on the state. This also involves determined, almost extremely market and enterprise friendly economic policies. (Atlatzo.hu 2016)

2.3. Story/History

"In Estonia, clean and untouched nature co-exists with the world's most digitally advanced society. It is a place for independent minds where bright ideas meet a can-do spirit."

2.4. Verbal identity

"The way we speak reveals the way we think. The way we talk and write about Estonia is critical, as is the tone we use and our manner of speaking."

Table following on the next page

Table 3: Characteristics of the verbal identity of the Estonia brand

Friendly: Write like you would write to a friend — be direct but polite. Don't fawn, flatter or apologise.
Unique: Focus on our uniqueness. Talk about things that catch your listeners' or readers' interest.
Content-rich: Do you have something new and informative to say to your readers? Avoid excess adjectives, don't be wordy or generic.
Down-to-earth: We always have a plan how to make our disadvantages work for us. Instead of saying how much it rains in Estonia, introduce people to mushroom picking. Also — use the word "small" only in a positive context.

Source: BRAND ESTONIA (2017): URL: <https://brand.estonia.ee/>, downloaded: 27 August 2017

Of course it is extremely important how a brand can come alive. As the "use" menu item of the abovementioned brand.estonia.ee website says: "The easiest way to make Brand Estonia work for you is to use these ready-made materials to promote Estonia. Here you will find up-to-date and professional presentations, videos, publications and our official webpage. These materials are meant for businesses, government employees, tourism professionals, journalists and anyone else wishing to introduce Estonia to the world."

Just to mention one aspect, Power Point presentations (brand.estonia.ee 2017) include examples such as:

- Need to introduce Estonia for the first time? – Here is a general overview
- e-Estonia introduction – Want to introduce e-Estonia and the world's first fully digital business environment?
- What is Brand Estonia? – Here you will find the Brand Estonia introduction
- Fun facts – 12 fun facts about Estonia
- Want to be brutally honest? – Here are 8 not so positive facts about Estonia

The "Create" menu item is even more exciting. On the one hand, a lot of quality photos about Estonia are available in visual compositions in accordance with the brand, which can be freely used for the promotion of Estonia as long as the source is indicated. In addition, the "EST" game also appears here, which is not only an abbreviation of Estonia, but also the ending of several English words, e.g. as the superlative of adjectives. This creates the opportunity for a little game highlighting the "est" suffix, be it campaigns, presentations, websites, or even souvenirs. A non-exhaustive list of such words is presented below.

Table 4: Highlighting the EST suffix in English words as a superlative form of the adjective

<i>best</i>	<i>clearest</i>	<i>finest</i>	<i>lightest</i>	<i>scariest</i>
<i>biggest</i>	<i>closest</i>	<i>funniest</i>	<i>longest</i>	<i>shortest</i>
<i>blackest</i>	<i>coldest</i>	<i>greatest</i>	<i>loveliest</i>	<i>smartest</i>
<i>boldest</i>	<i>coolest</i>	<i>happiest</i>	<i>lowest</i>	<i>strongest</i>
<i>bravest</i>	<i>cosiest</i>	<i>healthiest</i>	<i>newest</i>	<i>sweetest</i>
<i>brightest</i>	<i>dearest</i>	<i>highest</i>	<i>oldest</i>	<i>warmest</i>
<i>busiest</i>	<i>deepest</i>	<i>hippest</i>	<i>prettiest</i>	<i>weirdest</i>
<i>chillest</i>	<i>easiest</i>	<i>hottest</i>	<i>proudest</i>	<i>whitest</i>
<i>cleanest</i>	<i>fastest</i>	<i>largest</i>	<i>safest</i>	<i>wildest</i>
				<i>wisest</i>

Source: BRAND ESTONIA (2017): URL: <https://brand.estonia.ee/>, downloaded: 27 August 2017

Besides, there are English words where EST does not appear as the superlative form of the adjective. Examples include:

- forest
 - guest
 - invest
 - manifest
 - modest
- and
- festival



Figure 3: Examples of wordplays with the "est" syllable

Another "wordplay" and a part of the branding process according to the E-Stonia concept is that they ask people to create a link between positive and progressive words starting with the letter "e" and Estonia so that these e-words become synonyms for Estonia. A few examples can be seen in the table below. However, you can not only play with letter 'e' at the beginning of words: other examples reinforcing the concept of digital society and E-Estonia include "Why there's so many e letters is peer to peer?"

Table 5: E-words, that is, words starting with the letter "e" which can be linked to Estonia in a positive and progressive way (E-stonia)

- eager	- electronic	- encouraging	- especial	- expectant
- eat	- embrace	- enjoy	- even	- experience
- edifying	- eminent	- enlightened	- excellent	- experimental
- educational	- emphatic	- enter	- exciting	- explore
- effective	- empower	- entertaining	- exhilarating	- expressive
- efficient	- empowering	- enthralling	- exotic	- exquisite
- egalitarian	- enable	- enthusiastic	- expand	- extend
- electrifying	- enchanting	- e-residency	- expanding	- extensive
				- extraordinary

Source: BRAND ESTONIA (2017): URL: <https://brand.estonia.ee/>, downloaded: 27 August 2017

Last, but not least, an important part of the "Create" item is how to involve Estonians (who are otherwise active in social media) in the country branding process.

The website facilitates it by providing help to include a pebble-like image in the Facebook cover picture and the profile picture. The pebble (at least this form) its again an Estonian characteristic, which is also part of the visual identity of the Estonia brand. They encourage Estonians to make their Facebook pages unique and distinct with this pebble solution.

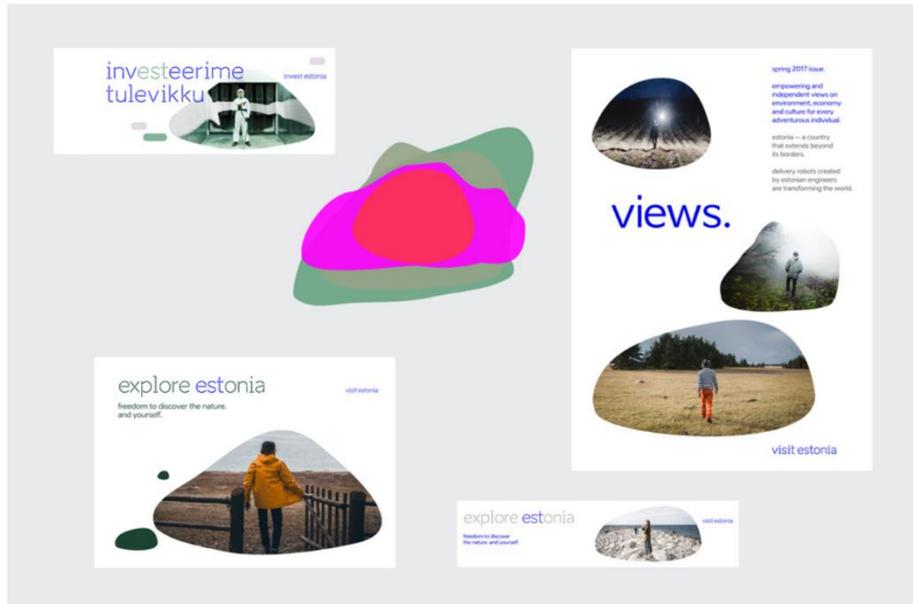


Figure 4: The use of the pebble as an Estonian characteristic in visual communication

The Design menu item of the brand.estonia.ee website provides help primarily for graphics experts and design professionals, and is closely connected to the point above. This part also determines the fundamental principle that: "The visual language of Brand Estonia is light, clean and simple. Simple as in clear, but also smart. Clean as in uncluttered with unnecessary elements and confusing typography. Light because we leave enough room around text and images; that makes them easy to read and the focus will be on the content." (Brand.estonia.ee 2017).

Two other aspects of design must also be mentioned:

- There is no central country slogan. Instead, they use wordmarks that are connected to Estonia and a specific topic. They have distinct graphic form and usage rules. The text of each mark is related to the key search terms or URL of the topic – thus making access to information easier.
- The other aspect is that the country has its own official typeface called Aino, created by Estonian Design Team and ANTON KOOVIT. From a certain point of view, this is the most wide spread and recognisable element of the brand as it communicates their ideas in various mediums. In print and on screens; in long and short texts. (*Underconsideration.com* 2017)

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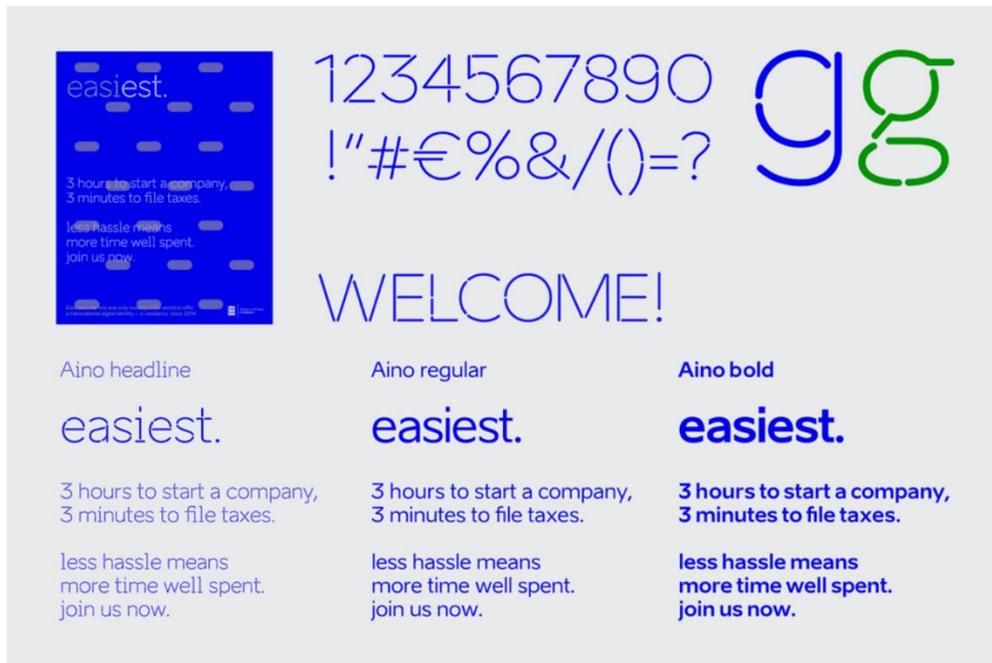


Figure 5: Estonia's own typeface, Aino

3. FINLAND'S IDENTITY BUILDING AS A BEST PRACTICE

Although Estonia's branding and identity building could be started only after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the restoration of Estonian independence in 1991, Finland had been building its brand consciously before that, even if it was not called branding. An integral part of the concept was to make Finland (considered a Baltic state originally) a Nordic country or a part of Scandinavia in a geographical and – even more importantly – a physical sense, with the Nordic countries including Iceland in addition to Scandinavia. Finland's image all around the world has always been one of the country's priorities. For this purpose they have used plenty of tools including the invitation of 20 young European journalists for a month each year to show them around Finland. The author of the present article also won one of these scholarships in 2001, and was impressed by the conscious presentation of the country: its foreign and domestic policies, tourist attractions, traditions, customs, or most advanced industries and brands. For example, a central website was already available during his visit almost twenty years ago with high quality photo and video materials that could be freely downloaded and used for the illustration of press materials. Today, thousands of business and lifestyle images of Finland are available to help the work of journalists, but the public photo database also provides the opportunity for Finnish people to share such content on their social media pages. We have already detailed the areas a brand book may cover in the case of Estonia, therefore we only focus on elements that provide new information in the case of Finland. The first unique characteristic is that Finnish identity materials use Suomi, the original name of the country in addition to the English name Finland or the country name in the language of the target country (Toolbox.finland.fi 2016).

Figure following on the next page



Figure 6: The English name of the country (or the name in the language of the target country) is always accompanied by Suomi

Just as the Estonians created their own typeface, Aino, so the Finnish have the typeface Finlandica. In the spirit of Scandinavian or Nordic cleanness the whole Finnish identity including posters are clean – they only feature a large image with the link of the general country (brand) website thisisfinland.fi, or their tourism website visitfinland.com. Besides visual identity, verbal identity is, of course, equally important or even more important considering the values it represents and communicates, and the way the country and its citizens "speak". As the brand book also available online says in this regard (Toolbox.finland.fi 2016):

"The way we talk:

- We want everybody to know that Finland is: Reliable, Quirky, Sympathetic.
- This is the tone of voice we use: Honest, Quirky, Human."

In order to present its values, Finland also uses special tools including 100 Fun Facts on Finland, a smart and witty infographic of facts you should (or should not) know about Finland.

The special elements of the identity also include emojis which symbolize characteristics typical of Finland, such as (Toolbox.finland.fi 2016):

- Sauna (The "sauna" feeling): Sauna is a holy place for Finns. This is a country with 3.2 million saunas and 5.4 million people. Finns go to the sauna naked – and often together with family. Every Finn has her/his own way of going to the sauna but one's mind and body will always be cleaned. It's a sauna state of mind.
- Reindeer (Mixed feelings): Finns love reindeer – in all forms. Reindeer are useful animals in many ways. They are cute but reindeer stew is delicious. You eat it with mashed potatoes and lingonberries.
- Nordic family (The feeling of friendly rivalry): Finland, often represented symbolically as the Maiden of Finland (based on the country's shape on the map), shares culture and a long history with the rest of the Nordic/Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. As in any family, they maintain friendly competition, and this ensures that they all stay at the top of any international ranking. Well, Nordic cooperation might also have something to do with it.
- The Original Santa (The feeling of the never-ending wait for Santa Claus): The real Santa comes from Finland. He has always lived in Korvatunturi, Lapland. Not the North Pole!

- Aurora borealis (Magic in the sky): Finland is *the* place to experience the spectacular dance of the Northern Lights. This colourful natural phenomenon is visible across the country, but you usually get the best views in Lapland, in northern Finland.
- Cross-country skiing (Skiing with feeling): Finns learn to ski and skate right after they learn to walk. Skiing offers a fun, healthy way to enjoy the magnificent Finnish nature during winter.
- The polar bear (...that never existed): Although Helsinki is a really cool city, polar bears do not roam the streets. Actually, they don't live anywhere on Finnish soil, but a large number of other arctic animal species do.
- Swan (The return of light): The majority of swans are migratory, and when Finland's national bird reappears in Finnish latitudes, it coincides with the return of spring. Maybe that's why the swan is associated with light, grace and new beginnings, as well as endurance and eternal love, since they mate for life. And the little cygnets are cute – could swans be the new cats?
- Unbreakable (The 'unbreakable' feeling): Finns are tough, almost unbreakable. Finland has produced quite a bunch of unbreakable and long-lasting items such as the old Nokia 3310 phone which is famous for being, well, unbreakable.
- Headbanger (The feeling of banging your head.): In Finland, heavy metal is mainstream. There are more heavy metal bands in Finland per capita than anywhere else.
- Iceman (The feeling of "Leave me alone. I know what I'm doing."): This typically Finnish attitude was made famous by the Iceman himself, Formula 1 driver Kimi Räikkönen. We feel he quite nicely sums it all up.
- Girl Power (The feeling of when women can.): Finland was the first country in the world to give women both the right to vote and to be elected. Finnish women are highly educated and full-time employment is the norm. The pronoun 'hän' means both she and he.
- Tom of Finland (Finnish pride): Boy, have times changed since Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen, 1920–1991) first published his homoerotic drawings in the 1950s. The artist made, and continues to make, a significant contribution to the advancement of human rights, advocating for tolerance, respect and freedom.
- Education (That first-day-of-school feeling): Approaching the schoolyard on your first day of school – you're excited but anxious, butterflies in your stomach, new backpack almost as big as you are. You're about to make new friends and learn about the world. Every Finn has the same opportunity and right to go to school, and lifelong learning is encouraged.
- Lavatanssit (The feeling of finding someone): Somewhere, maybe in the middle of nowhere, in a village or beside a lake, people find each other and dance tango and other even more mysterious dances. They get dressed up, go out, and dance the summer evenings away, moving counterclockwise around a dance pavilion as the band plays old favourites and new.
- Kalsarikännit (The feeling when you are going to get drunk home alone in your underwear – with no intention of going out.): A drink. At home. In your underwear. And there is a word for it. Kalsarikännit."

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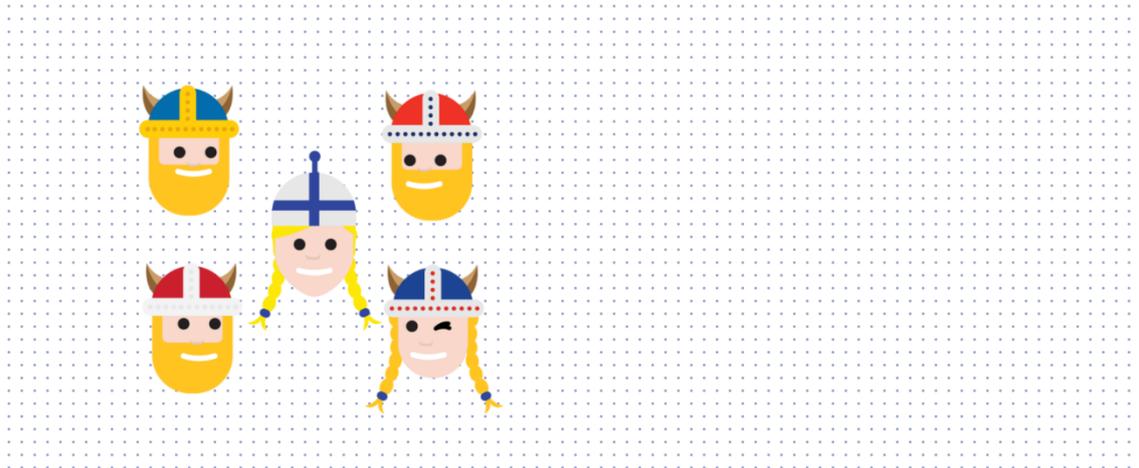


Figure 7: Emojis are unique elements of the identity: "The Nordic family" represents Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Iceland.

Finnish people usually think that the *communication* and appropriate *visualization* of information is very important: they think that there should be less text, but it should appear with a design that is as clean and simple as possible. Several roll-up displays represent Finland's place in the most important rankings, and they emphasize these in exhibitions and fairs. Infographics also highlight these and other topics or some very important fact with a clean, refined blue and white design (toolbox.finland.fi 2018b). These include Finland's world leader position in the areas below:

- Skills development at work #1: Finns have the best opportunities in Europe to develop their skills at work. (Source: European Working Conditions Survey)
- Good working hours #1: Finnish working hours are the most employee friendly, according to the European Company Survey. (Source: European Company Survey)
- Time dads spend with children #1: Finland is the only country in the developed world where dads spend more time with school-aged children than mothers. (Source: OECD)

In total, 53 graphics are available in the infographics section of Toolbox.finland.fi, 38 of which refer to some rankings – obviously ones where the Finns are the first or one of the best.

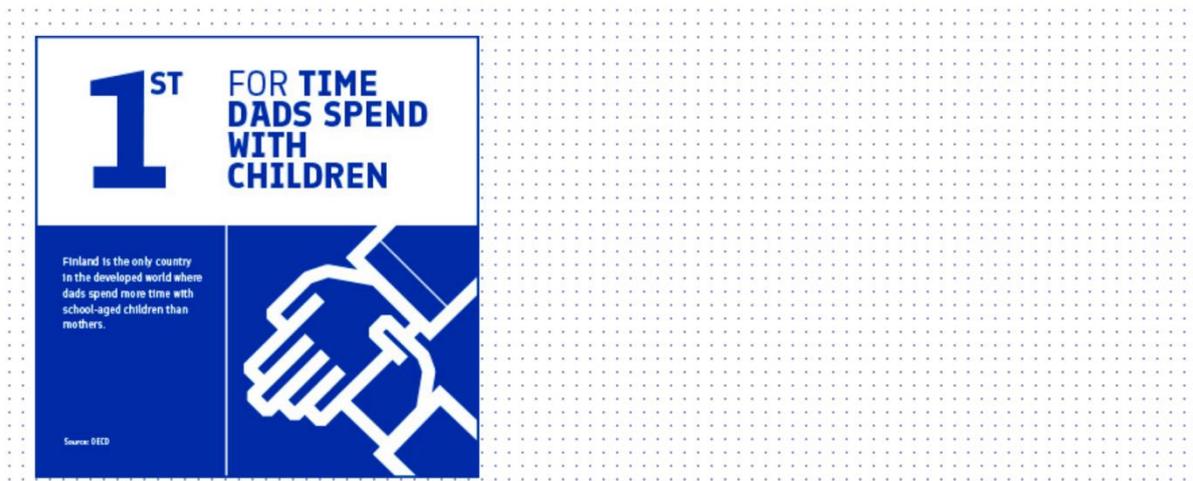


Figure 8: The country uses clean infographics with the colours of the Finnish national flag and a short piece of information – something in which Finland is a world leader or one of the best

This is Finland magazine is the country's own magazine, where readers may find articles and contents involving the identity and the brand message. The four highlighted columns of the magazine are: innovation – people – technology – fun. In addition they discuss progressive topics such as artificial intelligence. In addition to the above, the *social media portfolio* includes:

- Facebook: thisisFINLAND – things you should and you shouldn't know
- Instagram: thisisfinlandofficial
- Twitter: thisisFINLAND
- Youtube: thisisFINLANDtube

The values and style of the brand are also highlighted on these platforms in the same way – the latter is represented by a word game in the highlighted video "Proudtubefin" ("Proud to be Finn"). Although the items above are usually connected to the country brand, the same elements can be found in connection with the building of the country's tourism brand:

- Facebook: VisitFinland (I wish I was in Finland) (the official tourism slogan of the country)
- Vkontakte (the "Russian Facebook"): Visit Finland
- Weibo (Chinese social media site): Visitfinland.com
- Instagram: VisitFinland (Ourfinland)
- Twitter: VisitFinland (Ourfinland)
- Youtube: VisitFinland

The visitfinland.com website features unique solutions such as animated maps that you can scroll on to see the country's most important attractions. Besides that, the Finnish tourism organization Visit Finland (2015) has a funny handbook presenting photos that largely characterize the country (plus sign) and ones not characterizing the country at all (minus sign) as shown in the table below. As their country's brand book says, "Finland's travel branding is based on the key idea that in comparison with most other countries, Finland is the unconventional alternative to places crowded with tourists. It offers fresh and genuine experiences that really take your breath away. The main target group for brand marketing consists of open-minded people who have travelled a lot and are seeking new options."

Table 6: Characteristics not typical of the country and characteristics typical of the country, listed in Finland's tourism brand book

<i>Finland is not (-)</i>	<i>Finland is (+)</i>
Something for everyone	Something special for the ones that think they have seen it all
Noise and hassle	Peace and quiet
Packed	Spacious
Sweltering	Fresh
Superficial	Holistic
About complex cultural codes	Straightforward
For masses	For individuals
Polluted	Clean
Formal	Inventive
Artificial	Natural
Bling bling	Authentic
Dangerous and unpredictable	Safe and secure
A place to show off	A place to be yourself

Source: VISIT FINLAND (2015): Visit Finland Brand Book

https://www.visitfinland.com/app/uploads/sites/9/2015/04/VisitFinland_Brand_Book_175x220_LR_9559.pdf, download: 27 March 2017

Last but not least, it is important to point out that the Finnish make their country image building activities fully transparent mostly for locals, but also for foreigners. They also use publications such as "Building the image of Finland – Review of the country image work in 2015–2016".

- The document mentions that the objectives of their country image work are: to make Finland visible abroad (awareness-raising), highlight Finland's strengths (image-shaping), and increase the number of people choosing Finland (assistance of decision-making).
- The next chapter of the document presents Finland's position in different country image and country brand rankings. Based on these surveys, Finland's most important strengths and weaknesses, that is, other peoples' opinions about the country are defined.
- In addition, "Building the image of Finland" also focuses on the examination of Finland's representation in international media, pointing out that this in itself is not the country image (thus its much more extensive examination is needed), and the picture presented by the media does not necessarily correspond to reality.
- The third big chapter of the publication discusses how Finland is building its image, what related activities were implemented in 2015-2016, and what tools they used. The document emphasizes the importance of renewing the Finland.fi website and the emoji system mentioned above, which was hugely successful. It also stresses that Finland celebrated its 100th birthday (its century of independence) in 2017, and discusses the country branding tasks associated with the centenary.
- Last but not least, the material also presents the organizations engaged in country image building and the tasks of the renewed Finland Promotion Board.
- It is also interesting that all countries compare themselves to something. In the case of Finland it is Sweden, which they make clear in the material, adding that the history of the latter is much richer and they started working on their country image much earlier.

4. CONCLUSION: THE EXAMPLES OF ESTONIA AND FINLAND AS INSPIRATION TO CREATE THE BRAND BOOKS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

Now let us see what parts of the two case studies described above may be worthy of adaptation or, if you prefer, how to get inspired. Considering the philosophy of the identity, the following ideas may serve as important advice:

- First of all we must point out that branding does not start with graphic design, and it is not even the most important part of branding. Each nation must define, invent, or find itself. Where is the country now, and where is it going? What are its mission and vision? What are we, what would we like to become, what do we want to be known for? What values do we represent? What unique things does the country provide the world, why is its existence important, and why is it different from other nations? It is useful to cover all these topics.
- For all these reasons, it is worth considering a brand book defining these aspects instead of a visual identity guide. It can also be seen as a knowledge management tool of country information.
- This can be extended to create a "toolbox" including all the important identity elements and tools. If this brand book or toolbox is available online, it can be quickly and easily updated.
- The brand system must be made publicly available to both foreigners and the citizens of the country. It must be open to foreigners to provide access to all important information on the country, which is especially valuable for journalists. It must be available to locals because it includes nothing they should hide, and the brand can be built effectively with their involvement – if they follow the instructions or do some of the things recommended by the document, it may facilitate the formation of a more consistent image. As the Estonian material explains, a good brand book helps citizens to present their country with pride, in a way that raises awareness and builds trust.

- A publication may provide transparency for the process of country brand building, detailing the advertising and PR campaigns for that year, their results, and the spendings of the relevant state organization on these purposes. This publication may, of course, be published online.
- In connection with the abovementioned ideas, sincerity is very important, therefore it is useful to discuss what the international public opinion thinks about the country, and view our position in rankings such as the IMD World Competitiveness Rankings or The Global Competitiveness Report published by the World Economic Forum. We need to see where the Forbes, The Economist and Euromoney put us in their rankings, and how are we doing compared to other countries (especially our regional "competitors") in specific country brand indexes such as the Anholt Nation Brands Index, FutureBrand Country Brand Index, Bloom Consulting Country Brand Ranking (Tourism Edition and Trade Edition), Bloom Consulting Digital Country Index, and the Anholt Good Country Index may also be mentioned. These and other studies may help define the strengths and weaknesses of the country. We do not have to be good at everything, but if there is something we excel at, it must be communicated (sold, if you will) effectively. As the slogan of the McCann-Ericsson advertising agency says, the idea we must represent is "Truth well told".
- To achieve this objective it is important to find exciting and unique facts about the country. This can also be some kind of a "depository of values", but it should only serve as the basis for communication. The challenge is how these values can be "translated" and presented in an entertaining way, as is the case in Finland and its infographic 100 fun facts on Finland. The recipients of the message usually like to see a country that does not take itself too seriously and is able to make fun of itself. Therefore it may be worthwhile to talk about weaknesses in addition to strengths.

In terms of identity and toolset, it is worth considering the following ideas:

- Good design is simple and clean. As the Estonian and Finnish examples show, the logo should not be overcomplicated. At the same time it is worth creating the country's own typeface as it may also distinguish us.
- Progressive design demonstrates that the country is progressive as well – but only if it is well-founded.
- The brand name is always a dilemma. It could happen that it is worth using the international name and the country name in the official language of the specific nation together, in the same way as Finland uses Suomi.
- The term "small country" must be forgotten. There is a reason Estonia clearly avoids it.
- It is impossible to build a brand without creativity. It is worth considering word games similarly to Estonia's use of "est" and "e", and other tools such as the emoji system or animated maps invented by Finland.
- It is necessary to approach identity with a digital focus. The most important issue is not how a country appears in the case of a print advertisement or a citylight billboard, but how it appears on the screens of mobile phones.
- It is also necessary to consider all social media applications: the use of Facebook and Instagram has become self-evident, but Twitter may also be required because of some countries. The social media platforms of big countries such as Vkontakte of Russia or Weibo of China must also be considered.
- A large and public photo and video database is also an important part of identity. This may be helpful for foreign and local journalists when they write articles or produce materials. On the other hand, they may also be useful for citizens as they can post these images or videos on their Facebook or Instagram pages.

- The creation of several PPT or Prezi presentations about the country may be equally important.
- If the country manages to find a distinctive verbal or visual symbol, it needs to consider how it can be distributed with the help of social media, just as Estonians did through the creation of their ”pebbly” Facebook-profile.
- In this connection it should be clear that nothing may be forced – it would be propaganda, not branding. People must be involved to make them join these efforts voluntarily, make them feel they want it, and, actually, make them want it.

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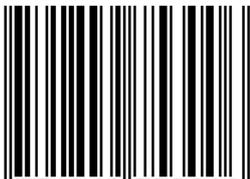
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