

Public Diplomacy and Qualitative Jump: The Case of Chile

Jaime Abarca Lucero

Jaime Abarca Lucero
Instituto Profesional
DuocUC, Viña del Mar,
Chile.

Aquest document remarca la continuïtat dels esforços econòmics per posicionar el nostre país en el món i el salt qualitatiu que representa un pla estratègic per definir la imatge d'un país. Amb aquest objectiu, es consideren alguns aspectes de la diplomàcia pública xilena, de la política exterior i dels esforços que ProChile i altres institucions han fet per tal de promoure Xile i situar-lo internacionalment.

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KEY WORDS: Public Diplomacy, Chile, Country Image, Foreign Policy, Strategic Plan - Chile.

PARAULES CLAU: diplomàcia pública, Xile, imatge del país, política exterior, pla estratègic - Xile.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Chile has the definite possibility of reaching a higher level of development and being part of the highly regarded first world. To achieve this, it must persevere in the functional continuity of its economy and public diplomacy and back up the symbolic changes generated in its initiative of country image.

This paper tries to emphasize the continuity of economical efforts and the qualitative jump represented by the symbolic aspect of public diplomacy expressed in the country image.

METHODOLOGY

Given the particular public-private consensus of the experience of Chilean public diplomacy, the initiatives pertaining to the state are adopted as a referential axis for the lineaments of foreign policy as well as for the genesis and development of a determined strategy of country image.

RESULTS

Any analysis of the communication developed by the Chilean public diplomacy requires, as a starting point, to consider the changes in the country in the course of the process of modernization of society, unfolding with notorious continuity over the last thirty years.

The current physiognomy of Chile, characterized by the opening and greater socio-economic, political and cultural complexity, is the result of a break-up of three different kinds: economic-bureaucratic (1976-1988); political-authoritarian (1988-1990); and cultural-oligarchic-conservative (since the year 2000) (Tironi, 2006).

In this context, it makes sense that the communications developed by the public diplomacy must be evaluated for the value of their performance (Arnold, 1995). This means, for their informative impact and for their translation, in the time, and for the results, viability for the public politics, in functional, symbolic and expressive terms (Tironi and Cavallo, 2004).

Functional Analysis: The Chilean Policy of Foreign Relations

Nowadays, the scenery of Chilean Public Diplomacy finds the country at a point of strategic inflection in matters of foreign

policy and development possibilities, with a definite chance of reaching a superior level of development and being part of a level considered to be that of the first world. In this sense, the invitation made in May 2007 by the OCDE (Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económico) can be interpreted as being part of the worldwide “club” of developed countries: The recognition of the role model feature from the point of view of the political and economical stability, in the Latin-American context (*La Nación*, 2007, May 16th).

From the previous, we can infer the challenge of finding more efficient ways of international insertion, and the tasks necessary to simultaneously: introduce strategies of change and consolidation; deepen the process of integrating Chile into the world; pick up the growing path that allows the country to maximize the benefits of the present high price of copper in order to convert what could be a transitory impulse into a factor of lasting development; position Chile as a valid and strong interlocutor; and cultivate and develop its leadership on a regional and international level (Foxley, A., 2006, April 4th).

Symbolic Analysis: The Change of Image

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For almost two decades and basically for political reasons, Chile was left with a negative image in the perception of the international public opinion, with the deep transformations derived from its process of modernization going almost unnoticed

In 1992, Chile participated in the Exposición Universal de Sevilla with the building of a pavilion of autochthonic material, in pine, to shelter the usual unfolding of the design products, in addition to an unprecedented and astonishing product: an Iceberg.

In the country, the initiative generated a polemic and, finally, everyone felt they had succeeded: The success of being seen (Gómez, 2007).

To the international regard, the mere idea seemed “amazing”: this iceberg, directly taken from the Antarctica, froze —literally— the stereotype of the Latin-American (associated with the tropics or Macondo), transmitting the coldness of efficiency and economic success (Ramos and Noya, 2006). This incipient, but at the same time monumental exploitation of the geo-cultural patrimony started to shed light on the development of a real country image.

With the enlargement of the “Plan Europa”, in the year 2003, the export activity of private enterprise and the Dirección de Promoción de Exportaciones (ProChile) agreed on the need to

develop a country image, which materialized in the Chilean presence in twenty European fairs and in two complementary campaigns: “Sabores de Chile” and “Chile, naturaleza que conmueve”, marketing programs to position two sectors, agro-alimentation and tourism (ProChile, 2003).

Country Brand, first stage: Design (2004 - 2005)

Since 2004, one thing that has been very important in the development of a Country Image is its consideration as a policy of state (Lavados, 2004), in which every sector got involved and worked, from the government and the opposition, to entrepreneurs and the working class. ProChile, while establishing strategic lines of management for the promotion of exports, was explicitly defining the design of the image of Brand Chile as the axis of the actions of economical and commercial positioning (Lavados, 2004), on the basis of three criteria:

1. strategic planning, that permitted a position in countries and regions of strategic interest for foreign affairs.
2. consistency, coherence and reinforcement of the communicational efforts undertaken by campaigns from different sectors, which were carried out abroad, under the brand Chile, understood as an umbrella image;
3. participation and commitment of different sectors, such as economy, government, private and collective society.

The diagnosis of the country image generated by ProChile focused on three aspects (Lavados, 2006).

- The image of Chile is better known or understood among Latin American neighbours (not necessarily cherished), but it is confusing or vague as it remains at a distance.
- The components of the image of Chile best known outside the region are its political and economical system, its stable economy and institutional trust, though limited to the audiences of the political and financial world.
- In terms of product consumption, Chile is associated with fruit, salmon and wine, but more as commodities (price, convenience, availability) than as brand products with specific benefits associated with the country of origin.

Derived from this diagnosis, the projections of ProChile when dealing with a country image consisted of unifying all the communicational efforts and/or providing a central, shared idea about the

specific actions of each industry or organization and improving the efficiency of the resources of relations and international marketing, achieving a major impact on political, commercial and cultural actions.

In August 2004, ProChile carried out the election of a consultancy to develop the strategy of Brand Chile. The specific techniques divided the work into two consecutive stages (ProChile, 2007, April 26th). The first one, an elaboration of a strategic plan to strengthen the country image, had as goals: the diagnosis of the identity (internal vision) and image (external vision) of the image of Brand Chile; the analysis of the sector and the country's initiative undertaken up to then; the identification of elements that weaken or strengthen the country image, which it aspired to project; the measurement of coordination grades among different promoting agents and the diagnosis of communicational gaps that laid the foundations of a strategy to position the image of Brand Chile.

The second stage, the proposal of a conceptual and visual development strategy of the image of Brand Chile hoped to achieve a proposal of shared identity as the basis of a communicational campaign and also: the development of a concept for the image of brand and design of the visual identity, a manual of visual usage with expansion to certain promotional materials and activities, and, finally, a strategic plan with recommendations of immediate, medium and long-term actions.

Interbrand kept the proposal to itself in November 2004, and a year later presented its proposal of Brand Chile and its new visual image under the slogan "Chile, All Ways Surprising" or "Chile sorprende, siempre" using a graphic with shades of purple, violet and ochre.

Corroborating the preliminary diagnosis of ProChile, Interbrand revealed that a fragmented image existed as a consequence of different actions that each public institution and each guild carried out independently and autonomously according to their own objectives and audiences. Chile's communication abroad focused on three main aspects: Export Chile, Tourist Chile and Investment Chile. The communicated attributes were geography, diversity, security, stability, modernity and reliability (Interbrand, 2006, November 26th).

To sum up the attributes and advantages of position that Chile offers as a tourism and investment destination in an increasingly growing world, Interbrand elaborated a matrix of three central concepts that sustain the concept "All Ways Surprising", from which the communications were designed and developed so as to

aimat three different audiences: tourists, buyers and distributors of Chilean products and investors:

1. An overwhelming geography, diverse and transparent
2. Warm, efficient and enterprising people and
3. A stable country, open to the world, with solid institutions where people keep their word.

Brand country, second stage: Implementation (2006-2007)

To empower and complement the image of brand, ProChile developed, starting in September 2006, a communicational program to position Chile in five markets (USA, France, China, Korea and Germany) (ProChile, 2007, April 26th).

The target audiences of the program were the mass media (journalists and business editors of tourism, leisure, and free time of newspapers and specialized publications in the most important areas for the Chilean exports); importers, distributors, processors and real and potential final clients (from products, raw material and parts of Chilean origin); hotels and restaurant chains, potential investors, commercial partners in the main sectors of the Chilean economy; economic, commercial and financial analysis and tourism operators, wholesalers and retailers.

The program of activities involved a relationship with the media, invitations to journalists, "Chile" events, and elaboration of promotional and back-up materials for a methodology of evaluation. This was developed by different agencies in each market: Shanghai Brainet Communications Co. in China, Grape Communications Inc. in Korea; Tango Periférico in France; Hansen Kommunikation GMBH in Germany and RF/Binder in USA (ProChile, 2007, April 26th).

Country brand, third stage: Towards the Bicentenary (2007-2010)

Now, ProChile is starting to develop a third stage of the strategic position plan for the generic promotion of Chile, whose design will be used as a guide for a long-term international campaign, co-financed between the public and private sector, in nine external markets with specific actions in potential markets and with an important internal diffusion of the brand, that will culminate with the Bicentenary and the Universal Exposition of Shanghai in 2010.

To this end, in April 2007, ProChile invited communicational agencies —both national and international— to bid for the creation of a design plan of strategic position for the promotion of

a Chile image in the 2007 period (ProChile, 2007, April 26th, b), continuing the process which began in 2004.

The public offer invited enterprises to develop a proposal of design which, in coordination with the sector's promotional initiatives, reflects a group of concrete, measurable and coherent communicational actions with the concepts and messages developed for Brand Chile. The communicational bidding guideline, on the basis of the Book of Brand (ProChile, 2007, April 26th, a), structures a matrix which connects sectors' interests and expectations (tourism, exporting, investors) with geography, people and institutions, with the objective of complementing the concept or idea that Chile surprises even in political, gender and cultural aspects (ProChile, 2007, April 26th, c).

The public, as well as the markets to which the actions are orientated, were agreed with the Private Public Technical Committee of Country Image, and given priority according to the parameters of existence of Commercial Agreements where there were tariff advantages; presence of Chilean products and services; and potential of business for the opening of new markets. In this way, the USA, Brazil, Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom, Germany, China, Japan and Korea were identified.

Besides, markets of interest such as Russia, India, Arabia, Canada, Colombia, France and Central America were identified, where specific actions will be carried out. (ProChile, 2007, April 26th, d).

The winning proposal will have a deadline of 60 days to develop the design of the position plan for Brand Chile, with two simultaneous faces, external and internal.

For the exterior, the objectives are related to exporting, tourism and investment at an external level, and the strategy will have to contain evident marketing sensorial characteristics which show in a creative way the sensations and feelings that the country evokes; to permit the generation of interest and preference for Chilean products and services, improve the interest in Chile as a tourism destination and increase the attractiveness of Chile as an investment destination.

At the same time, on a domestic level, it is expected to generate an identification and appropriation strategy of the Country Image, communicating the 'why' and the 'what for' of a Brand for Chile, producing unity surrounding a message and a unique image, and permitting institutions, associations and representatives of the public and private world and the civil society to be part of the Brand Chile, adopting it and using it in a committed way.

DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that the efforts of the Chilean public diplomacy in terms of economical politics have had a continuity of more than thirty years —supporting the sector link and the world economy—, the initiative of a country brand as an “umbrella image” is still too recent to measure the benefit to the different sector interests it covers, each one with different scenarios and levels of competition.

On the other hand, the fact that the image initiative was created subordinate to the needs of competition in global markets determines the symbolic support expressed in the campaign which was produced and implemented. Internally, the use of the campaign is a matter for discussion: Although for almost twenty years significant socio-political consensus has been reached in the country, the symbolic support must answer to the demands produced in the political field, as well as that generated by the civil society, in a wide range of interests and conflicts.

Finally, for the Chilean people, the Bicentenary (2010) represents a referential milestone: It is symbolically equivalent to the “arcade of modernity” to which the country image must respond, internally and externally.

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