



EXECUTIVE PROFILE



DAVID L. LIGHTLE

David Lightle is a leading authority on country branding. He has been at the forefront of this unique niche in international marketing and branding for nearly 25 years.

David began his career in communications as a special assistant to Taiwan's Government Spokesman. During the 1980s, he helped create and supervise international communications programs to foster a new image for the Republic of China on Taiwan. From 1989 to 1997 he served as the main architect of a 15-year campaign to create an all-new image for the Made in Taiwan label. That campaign has helped transform Taiwan's image from a maker of cheap knickknacks to a world leader in information technology and other higher end products. Along the way, David helped scores of Taiwan brand-name exporters in the creation and promotion of their own identities in global markets. The brand positioning David created for Taiwan (INNOVALUE) is still growing strong.

In 1990-91, David assisted New Zealand in an effort to help that country make the transition from export reliance on the European Market to more reliance on Asian markets. David positioned New Zealand as the "7/11 of Asia," a body of work that later provided the foundation for New Zealand's long term branding position of PURE.

In 1997, the government of Thailand called upon David to assist them with international communications before and during the economic crisis that struck Asia in the second half of that year. David devised a public relations/advertising campaign that helped keep investors on the sidelines in Thailand, unlike other countries in Asia that suffered from investor flight. TRUST THAILAND was a huge success and helped pull Thailand out of the crisis.

Also in that year, David gave troubleshooting advice to the fledgling tourism industry in Vietnam.

In 2004, David began helping position his hometown area of Dayton, Ohio USA more aggressively as the Home of the Wright Brothers. He worked closely with Visual Marketing Associates, a Dayton-based brand design firm, to create an identity for the new National Aviation Heritage Area in the Dayton region. His client is the Aviation Heritage Foundation, the management entity for the new Heritage Area. David is the architect of the Foundation's Grand Design vision for transforming the Dayton region, beyond heritage tourism, with a plan that leverages the past to create an all-new future for the region.

In December 2004, David was hired by Proexport Colombia to be the general consultant on a long term project to create a new identity for Colombia. He created the new identity COLOMBIA IS PASSION! for that country. Colombia is currently engaged in a multi-year promotional effort to communicate its new image at home and abroad. The campaign is already experiencing much success, as Colombia's doors to exports, foreign investment attraction and tourism are quickly opening, leading to an unprecedented economic boom in a country long devastated by a poor national image.

The cornerstone of David's country image practice is the lesson learned that "a positive overall image, usually product or tourism driven, can overcome the occasional bad image problem." Those countries with strong product images are normally able to deflect or absorb problems in other areas. The two great examples are Germany and Japan, who were able to overcome severe image problems at the end of World War II and go on to be world leaders in the area of product image. Thus, branding your country with a unique, strong, positive image is a proven way to spur economic development and create business opportunities for people of all walks of life in any given country.

David employs a Total Immersion model in his work. He does not have a company name card, but rather uses the card of the project he is working on. He does not maintain offices, instead opts for a cubicle in the client's offices, working side-by-side with the local project team. David lives and works in the coun-



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NATIONAL AVIATION
HERITAGE AREA
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MADE IN TAIWAN

tries where his projects are located. He learns the languages and attempts to absorb everything possible about his host country.

David also employs a proprietary method of research—The Drop Formula—in which he conducts qualitative focus group research so as to arrive at a common, unique, marketable, long-term brand positioning for the country or destination. In past cases, such as Taiwan and Colombia, the clients initially felt that coming up with a single positioning in a very diverse environment would be next to impossible. But through his intuitive Drop Formula, David was successful in finding a solution that pleased nearly every constituent.

Working for and within developing nation-states over the years, David has nurtured an in depth knowledge of macro-economics in the context of national development. He brings a two-for-one expertise in that field along with his destination branding practice.

For several years now, David has worked closely with Visual Marketing Associates, a world class design firm in Dayton, Ohio. VMA not only handles the design phase of each project, but also works with David on the early strategic thinking. In the case of Colombia, VMA teamed with a small group of Colombian designers (who acted collective as consultants) to create the identity for Colombia is Passion! VMA also worked with David to create the identity for the National Aviation Heritage Area (NAHA). Both the NAHA and Colombian logos won several national awards.

David's unique practice has received note in, among other media, the WALL STREET JOURNAL (2005), USA TODAY (1987) and in John Marriott's book SMART BRANDS.

David was born and raised in Tipp City (Tippecanoe!), a small town in Ohio, USA. He is a 1980 graduate of Dartmouth College, in Hanover, New Hampshire. David completed a double, special major in Sino-Soviet Area Studies, and was the first U.S. citizen to study in both the former Soviet Union (1978) and the People's Republic of China (1980); he also completed a year of study in Taiwan (1979), all as an undergraduate. David is fluent in Mandarin Chinese and does well with Spanish. He is 49 years old and married to Chen Ya, a native of Taiwan. They have two daughters, Kristy, 26, and Keri, 20.

And, just for fun: Dave held a 1973 Guinness Book World Record as a kid. Can you guess in what?