

Branding Israel (A)

Introduction

While sitting in his office in lower Manhattan, Boaz Mourad was thinking about what the next steps should be, now that he had the research results from his assignment, which was to help develop branding concepts for the country of Israel. Mourad, a founder of the branding research and consultancy firm Insight Research Group, was part of a team of marketing and branding experts, the Brand Israel Group, which had been working together on an in-depth strategic marketing campaign titled “Brand Israel.”

The project had been designed to understand and improve the United States (US) public’s perception of Israel – a country whose image had suffered over the years. Through numerous focus groups, Mourad and the Brand Israel Group had discovered that Americans had very narrow, and negative, perceptions of Israel. The team had come together to find ways to change these perceptions, and was now working with the Israeli Foreign Ministry to think about some branding concepts that, based on the just-concluded research, might be used to rebrand the country of Israel.

Gaining Insights

Boaz Mourad was born in Israel, but by the time he came to the US to complete a Ph.D. in psychology from Princeton University, he had lived on four continents. In 1999, after graduating from Princeton, Mourad moved to New York City and co-founded Insight Research Group. The organization quickly got off the ground and began working closely with Fortune 500 companies to help them enhance their brands by gaining a better understanding of consumer preferences and behavior. Insight’s clients included industry leaders such as Nike, Gucci, Sony, BBC, and AOL. As Insight was taking off, Mourad strengthened his ties with the Jewish community in New York City. Insight, therefore, soon began working with the United Jewish Communities, in particular as a pro bono advisor to the Israeli Foreign Ministry.¹

On September 11, 2001, Mourad and his family were forced out of their downtown New York City apartment when planes crashed into the towers of the World Trade Center. The terrorist attacks that day prompted many

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