



COMUNE DI BOLOGNA

aiap
associazione italiana design
della comunicazione visiva



Call for ideas Bologna City Branding

ANNEX A BRIEF

Bologna, the context as a briefing for the city brand.

1. The positioning of Bologna is of an experiential and humanistic nature.

We have given 'humanistic' a connotation that is not historical but absolutely contemporary, present and vital. Bologna is a contemporary city that is attentive to its authentic relationship with the visitor.

All the standard clusters that define mass tourism are of no interest to this city, as it does not aspire to become just another tourist capital, but prefers to select the quality of its visitor clusters.

2. Seeding and atmosphere: an open code

Bologna is not one of the typical Italian tourist cities; it is nothing like Florence or Venice. Since it does not make its living from mass tourism it is appreciated by visitors, who for pleasure or business, recognise a particular serendipity here. There is a tangible atmosphere that nicely reassures and relaxes, making you "feel at home". This atmosphere coexists with a vibrant world of culture, full of opportunities for entertainment, with a contemporary, internationally recognised, artistic production. All this is generated by an extremely creative and attractive economic environment that is always ready to welcome new business ideas.

So, if on the one hand we have an easy, friendly and familiar connotation, where fine cuisine always meets with high acclaim, on the other we have a university, a cultural life and a talent for business that simultaneously drive the city's entire package of history and tradition.

So we have many details, places, people and choices that sharpen the visitor's perception: a city with many youngsters, together with a population renowned for its longevity, to offer a consolidated coexistence between tradition and a strong spirit of experimentation.

This leads to the first consideration: whatever is done in Bologna is not done, as so often happens in other cities across the world, for tourists. The visitor, whoever he/she may be, notices this difference. **There is an open code in Bologna.**

Bologna is a city with a large university (the oldest in the western world), there are a lot of students.

Bologna has a large old town centre that can be easily crossed on foot or by bike.

Bologna is a city of Roman origin; its main streets follow a radial pattern with a dense network of narrow streets and alleys connecting them, it is still a liveable city, and has a much slower pace than other Italian cities of the same or larger dimensions. Bologna has always valued the presence of public areas, places to meet and exchange ideas, both outdoors such as squares, and indoors, such as the new Sala Borsa Library.

3. Tangible uniqueness...

Bologna has a great historical and artistic heritage yet to the eye does not manifest all the magnificence and monumental power of nearby cities such as Florence and Venice, which are real theme parks for international tourism. It has a monumental structure that is not vertical, to be observed with your nose in the air, if we exclude the two towers that are the symbolic totem of the city.

This leads to a second consideration: visitors arriving in Bologna find themselves faced with a completely horizontal monumentalism. A widespread monumentalism, united by kilometres and kilometres of continuity, a continuity that is like nothing else in the world, striking you immediately, because as you walk you are surrounded by endless perspective: in the perception of the visitor, Bologna is, first and foremost, represented by its historical TUBE, its PORTICOES. **This is the globally unique distinguishing element that strikes the senses of the visitor.**

A tentative description

Bologna's unique tangible element, distinctive and credible, is its porticoes, which run for more than 40 Km, linking the centre of the city to the surrounding suburbs.

These porticoes, from a physical point of view, wind through the city's "medieval" urban structure, providing access to the many architectural and urban sites: university, towers, churches, monuments, museums, libraries, markets, shopping areas, cultural districts. Bologna is, in actual fact, a city characterised not by any one excellence that plays down the others, but by a series of landmarks spread across the urban territory that are just waiting to be discovered, perhaps being reached via the porticoes.

4. ...as intangible characteristic

The porticoes are the tangible element of the city, distinctive in its uniqueness, which also expresses one of the intangible characteristics of Bologna. Firstly, the dimension of the porticoes is horizontal: while monuments characterised by their vertical nature amaze us when we encounter them, the porticoes cannot be seen in their entirety, but must be experienced, walked along. While vertical monuments mainly trigger our sense of sight, the porticoes are synaesthetic, as they stimulate a number of senses: under the porticoes you can listen to voices and sounds, at the same time dilated and muffled, you can perceive odours, such as the pleasant aromas coming from the shops, you can look at the shop windows and the magnificent courtyards, you can stop and shake hands with those you meet, thus stimulating the sense of touch too.

In Bologna people of all ages find the porticoes a natural place to walk, meet, stop and chat, regardless of their lifestyle.

The porticoes are a place of activity, not just an ancient relic to be observed from afar.

No other Italian city has such a long stretch of covered walkways, and the advantages are obvious when it rains.

Strolling under the porticoes allows the visitor to let go, to lose himself/herself but with the certainty of finding himself/herself once more.

The porticoes, rather than a functional space to help us reach our destination as quickly as possible, are a far reaching public space, where the rhythm of our stroll is punctuated by pauses to look in the shop windows, chat with those we meet, enjoy an ice cream while strolling along or sitting outside a bar. The portico is a space that is consumed constantly by

the lives of people; it is an experience that takes away the sensation of being a tourist, as you become a part of everyone's journey. The portico is a metaphor for a city that does not impose predefined routes, but lets you make a choice: when you come to Bologna you can choose the itinerary that most interests you, or the one you like most.

Walking under the porticoes there are, to the eyes of the visitor, many other signals that intrigue and "stimulate" the senses. Not only can you discover shops, bars, restaurants, churches and museums, along the porticoes, but also a rich amount of detail, where even the smallest offers a sense of discovery, of being able to create your own personal story of the city through its porticoes.

In a way, you can be a scout, gathering details until almost becoming pleasantly lost in your wanderings, with no set destination.

This leads to a third consideration: walking under Bologna's porticoes is a multisensory experience within a unique, encompassing perspective, punctuated with details that all have the same intensity in their sheer diversity.

The porticoes are the metaphor for a city that does not offer you a totem to worship, but with its openness and diversity allows you to weave your own story, to make up your own pathway of visits or of life, just walking.

The porticoes are the narrative structure of the city.

Guideline

We want to guide the visitor to discover Bologna in the most natural and instinctive way possible. Regardless of his inclinations and cultural interests, he/she must be given the opportunity to be his own guide.

We want to suggest random immersion, not a prearranged itinerary, and not even a priority choice. We do not want to be the ones to tell him/her what is important for us; we want him to discover the details that are of interest to him/her. We do not want to tell him/her about Bologna, but rather it must be he who offers us his/her personal story.

We can offer a city with a contemporary, vital, experimental image, not just history and museums. It is the contemporary Bologna that horizontally contaminates the entire historical system; there is no division between past and present. Making the visitor perceive this "horizontal atmosphere" is a deciding factor if we are not to be confused with any other city of art.

The invitation to wander and lose oneself in Bologna, a city where both human and sensorial relationships are inseparable. Walking through Bologna's porticoes is the experiential key that we can offer the visitor: a unique and multifaceted perspective of the past and the present.

Ultimately, we want people from all over the world to be tempted to come to Bologna because this is an open city, innovative and welcoming, where you can enjoy authentic experiences and emotions in keeping with your own inspirations.