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# What image do soap operas give to a country?

**The brand image is a National COOPERACTIVE ASSET. Yes!**

A modern Reboot

The PRECURSOR

The approach of COOPERACTIVE ASSETS allows us to better understand their importance for a Community. And therefore to be able to promote and enhance them in order to increase and improve the share, whether material or immaterial, that each inhabitant of the Community (As a country) receives.

An example of awareness given by this approach by COOPERACTIVE ASSETS is the brand image of a country. If we consider it as a Common Good, we can see better the impact that this COOPERACTIVE ASSET has on the daily lives of the inhabitants of the Community. Because this image determines the ECONOMIC value of the territory in which the Community is located. That the brand image of the territory be positive and the territory will be well considered.

Either for the purchase of its goods and services. Either to invest in this Territory. The brand image, (what a territory tells us), has very great importance in terms of the global economic positioning of each country. The more a territory is well considered, the more these activities (services, products) will be valued in the eyes of potential buyers. Even if they are not necessarily the cheapest items.

And by previously using the word “tells”, we put our finger on the crux of the problem. We’re going to tell a story. Often embellish it. And sometimes even invent it. Like making us believe that anyone can go to the United States to a hospital to be treated, within a minute, his sick liver without previously having sold one of his own kidneys to pay the future hospitalization bill! (See Grey’s Anatomy. Care in the USA is like the Hospital in France. No one pays according to the US Soaps! ). This is

a good Story Telling. An Art that Hollywood has mastered to the best of its ability since the 1920s (with the famous Westerns in particular[To see on this point this excellent drawing:-) ],

Westerns filmed by good directors but who try to make us think of cow-keeper adventures, with guns, as Builders of magnificent Civilization! A very beautiful scam to make us forget that in 80 years, apart from the Gold Rush, where strangely enough {and not so much because it would have ended up demonstrating the great illusion that this Gold Rush was for many} there has been little film on the subject, and the massacre of indigenous Indian tribes who, until very recently, were still big bad guys, nothing structural and innovative has happened in the Wild West of the USA. Nothing of nothing. And this until the beginning of Silicon Valley or rather Orange Valley when a son decided to join his mother who had left for California for health reasons.

Because even if currently many US soap operas are shot in Canada for tax reasons, uh artistic of course, what is being promoted is not Vancouver or Quebec. It's California or Washington State. It is always the American Way of Life, implicit or explicit, that is presented and highlighted. Hence this attraction on the minds of many people who either want to invest or come to live in the USA or California. Brand image is part of Soft Power and the USA has been organizing it for more than a century.

Thus the control or orientation of this Story Telling, mainly, first from the Cinema and now from the soap operas, especially now where viewing in streaming mode is crucial for the brand image of a Territory. And as a result, it must be organized. After defining its "History", each country must promote itself through "Opus" in the broadest sense. This does not mean that ALL of a country's productions are at the service of this objective. Artistic freedom, including of course the freedom to speak of ugly episodes in one's community, must always prevail. But each country must "produce" its own story or stories.

## But then how to talk about it?

### 01.Which production and creation actors?

Because of the potential benefits to each of the Community's members, which go beyond the financial interest of short-term profitability, Government, State, and National agencies are often in the best position to carry out these actions.

The natural carrier of these subjects would thus be France Télévision for France. And the BBC for England. And RAI for Italy. This applies to almost all countries. Excluding the USA where Private Actors are both the actors and beneficiaries of this Soft Power. They therefore naturally carry this objective, often unconsciously for some, of Story Telling for the benefit of Americans and America (First!). And for China, which can rely on the private sector (as in the technological sector) to support its government needs.

I have no ideas, information or intuitions (the author strives to talk only about elements on which he has a beginning of knowledge or experience [which means that he tackles very, very few subjects…]) for the possible carriers of these projects in other major nations such as Russia, Japan, Mexico or Brazil.

## 03. IN WHAT LANGUAGE? NATIVE or ENGLISH?

There is no ready-made answer on this point. Some countries can promote their languages by shooting directly in them. Others can use English from the beginning. It should be noted that some countries filmed in their native language without knowing that this would have an international impact (See Casa di Papel).

## 02. which content format?

Undeniably it is the format of the soap opera that is the preferred medium. With its notion of Episodes and Seasons (And also of Ends of Stories). It is the one that is in progress and in fashion all over the world (see Game of Thrones). Especially since Pilot episodes can be made at a lower cost to test the impact of a concept. However, films that have a strong impact can also be used as a reference for a series. Only the financial contributions of a well-made film (Understanding with enough resources for it to be well rendered on screen) is at a level higher than 10 Million Euros. An episode of a soap opera is for a few million.

It is necessary to make oneself the Model of Knowledge which is not to put all one's

eggs in the same basket. And to spread the risks of creation as much as possible by focusing on very different projects. But always at the service, not necessarily exclusive (a little subtlety does not harm), of this national brand image.

## 04. what type of OPUS?

It must already be confirmed that in this type of exercise, the documentary is not suitable. Not that a country's brand image does not also pass through its exhibition in documentaries. But a), this emphasis appears more visible to the viewer in a documentary. The unconscious, the secondary effect is not present by nature in this type of format. And b) documentaries are not the most watched type of Shows. They, therefore, remain fiction in the broadest sense. For various reasons (effectiveness of the subject, possible speed of production, style appreciated internationally), we recommend starting with Contemporary Police Fictions, again in the very broad sense (investigations, police interventions, burglaries, smart scams, etc.). Other subjects than Police and/or Contemporaries are possible. But they are more difficult to determine and control. It is better to progress step by step. While giving for the promotion of his/her country a tight schedule of planned evolutions.

## 5. What should we show?

### a). Known architecture

Any remarkable Architectural element already known internationally in the Territory. With the obligation to show the iconic place or places that constitute the global signature of a country. For example, the Eiffel Tower for France. Or the Trevi Fountain, the Colosseum for Italy. Note that we can mix classical representations of these icons, basically the shot, the view, the framing that everyone knows. And a new perspective, a new angle of view little or not known to the element.

## c). Remarkable natural element

Any remarkable Natural element, whether already known or not. These elements are very important for the promotion of the country. Their beauty will constitute an important enhancement of the country.

## b). interesting architecture

Any remarkable Architectural element but less known at an international level. The Trocadéro in Paris is a good example. Piazza di Popolo in Roma is another one.

## d). unorthodox architecture

Any unusual or mysterious Architectural element. For example, the castle of Tomar in Portugal, which is not yet very well known (Even in English Wikipedia!). Especially with its inner circular part which is not shown to date in the French Wikipedia article. An example of the impact of this type of place is the promotion of Croatia through some of the shoots in the Games of Thrones series.

## But also

### e). infrastructure

Infrastructure but Good quality infrastructure. Yes, even complex or modern railway bridges, viaducts or switches contribute to building a good brand image for the country.

This is a point that is often forgotten because it actually works on the unconscious of the viewer.

To understand it well, imagine watching an episode where 3/4 of the actions take place in traffic jams. What would you think of the country then? Healthy, modern, up-to-date, fast and efficient infrastructures contribute to a good brand image of the country. They must be shown and magnified.

## g). factories and production equipment

This is rarely understood, even by American scriptwriters, but showing manufacturing locations and tools, machines, is important for the country’s brand image. It will be in your interest, depending on the targeted brand image, to focus on artisanal creation or on the other side of the spectrum, on ultra-modern products. In any case, the notion of Quality must appear unconsciously on the

screen {Let us remember that all the elements that make up a brand image are shown in second-hand mode, in the background, in evocation. They are not the main subject of the filmed action. Otherwise, it is like propaganda with Soviet subtlety from the 20s [1920s for confirmation for some young readers]. They must be seen as elements that shape the “unconscious” of the viewer. They work on his perception in depth without being noticed.}

## f). Cars

Between discussions, pursuits, escapes and other adventures, it is often a place of action. What is shown as vehicles is therefore important for the country’s brand image. Between filming a country where three-quarters of the cars look like walking wrecks and a country where almost everyone drives a sports car, the picture is not the same.

As part of this exercise, the idea and ideal are to promote cars belonging to local manufacturers, if only to promote the distribution and sale of these models abroad.

This is not always the case. It is then necessary to be careful with the vehicles filmed. But you don’t have to show only big French or German sedans.

Vivid, original, smart and rare cars can also be shown.

## h). Houses



The internal decoration, the type of object, the type of household appliances, the number of rooms, their surfaces, the surface of the house, the presence of garden, swimming pool, everything is important and must be highlighted with an awareness of this importance.

## And last but maybe not least for this point

### i). Suits and Clothing

The way of dressing, which is not identical between the actors and actresses of the series, is also important. The role of the Costume Designer is already well established in Film.

But it must now also move towards an emphasis on local production or local style. Always by remaining at the service of the country's brand image and promotion.

Here, the chosen illustration could be used for France or Italy.

## j). Characters

And last but not least, the Characters shown in the series.

Their characters, their statures, their way of speaking, their way of moving, their type of beauty [Yes, because in a way everyone is beautiful, and nice too] everything contributes to giving actors and actresses a brand image of the country where the show is located.

# 6) The declinations

If the series is successful, derivatives of it may be considered. Either what are called sequences (sequel), returns in time (prequel) or parallel adventures of secondary characters (Spin-Off).

For information, not all points are covered in this article. In particular, the Knowledge Model which makes it possible to motivate, select authors in the broadest sense (scriptwriters, Show Runner, Dialogue Writer, Director) to participate as best as possible in promoting a country's brand image. A brand image that must also result from a Knowledge Model that is specific to each country because it is relative to each country.

In any case, be convinced of the importance of a country's brand image, whether it is transmitted and amplified by films or soap operas. That is what China has

understood very well. Even if the last attempt in 2018 was not successful. But this flop doesn't matter. Because we must apply the well-known maxim of Boileau: "go back to your work again (100 times!). Sooner or later this type of film promoting the Chinese Communist state will be successful.

It is also this type of promotion of the country that makes the inhabitants proud. With an increase in the pleasure felt by living in the Community, this creates Pride, belonging to a group, with sometimes an increase or rather valuation of real estate (because inflation in real estate prices is one of the possible perverse effects of this emphasis on brand image). Americans' pride in being Americans comes mainly from the constant repetition of the brand image through US movies and soap operas. Even if since the 1990s, Hollywood's rosy vision of the USA has no longer been unique and immaculate, the majority of creations carry within them a positive promotion of the USA, the American spirit and the American Way of Life.

And if you don't like the word brand image or Story Telling, replace them with tourism promotion. It will be almost the same. You will not have in mind all the possible impacts of a brand image but you will at least be aware of a certain part.



Moreover, since this works well for the USA, we will wonder about the lack of a brand image of Europe as such in this niche. Because in 3 months of the History of Europe, whether in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the 19th and 20th centuries, there have been many more events than in 80 years of cow-keeping in the West of Pecos (In French). This lack of common discourse is an anomaly, penalizing, for an organization that defines itself as a Community. Because it is not a question of promoting each country, one by one, on a subject specific to that country alone. But to consider new adventures taking place, in the same series, on several territories of Europe.

This awareness will also lead to the emergence of new professions and jobs that will be in charge of enhancing the brand image of their country by participating, helping, controlling, improving the Scenarios but also, more directly, by participating in the shots to check what is shown and in what forms (See the points listed in the section “What should we show?”).

This profession can be called the National Brand Image Catalyst.

It should be noted that if your country does not operate under the COMMONS mode and approach, you will have an even greater need and interest to implement this promotion of your country at the level of World Competition. Not thinking about it, not applying it, is a political mistake in the noble sense of the word political.

## a practical example

Finally, would you like an example of what a type of fiction can be in this context of promoting a brand image of the country?
Let’s take France at random [Chance always does things right!].
In relation to the points seen above, we will choose a series based on:



## On Police Investigations

This type of story has many advantages in promoting a conscious brand image.

## Located in Nice and its hinterland

With very nice cars and houses of the kind seen in the 80s in Miami Vice. Because there is no reason to leave the representation of luxury to American soap operas alone. (Hinterland can be seen as a broad area, up to Cassis [Sorry Marseilles  ] & Mercantour National Park.

To contrast the modern elements of the city, the old city and the surrounding nature.



## Bay of Nice and a Nice Bay!

View on the Sea Front

## Old City of Nice

View from the inland

It will also be necessary to use the Monaco context in certain intrigues (13 miles between the 2 cities!).





## With all the usual symbols of the Principality.

Plus, also the Formula 1 Grand Prix.

## As well as the notion of a border with Italy.

And his famous Riviera. Even the Cinque Terre.

Highlight luxurious elements such as yachts, cars, suits.

## A Soft Power tool

Modest and reasonable.

## While highlighting the human and solidarity aspect of the inhabitants

if possible by continuing to highlight the tools previously seen... (Yacht, Cars, Suits)

With the advantage of French life always put forward {All an Art without a doubt!}, food, sun, etc.…

### As in figure skating, all the great compulsory and expected figures will be present!

And the (positive) clichés too 

It will also be necessary to have an International name that sounds good. In this context, the author proposes,

### Be

If we prefer to place the action in the city of the Festival, we can of course use the now famous

### Yes you

## Each element shown on the screen will be important.

Everything must be thought out, designed and prepared in advance to promote this National brand image.

Links

### LINKS

Great idea concept with crumpled colorful paper and light bulb on black background

These types of actions, as well as those of Defining a brand image of a country and its main elements to be implemented, are part of the Consulting and Audit Services

of Alphapolis.

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