

converged into new products. Afterwards, some other cities incorporated the TIME concept into their place branding. How this was developed from a place management point of view is illustrated in the box below.

### **A place management case with a clear combination approach.**

**The city of Stockholm has twice made the frontpage of two of the world's most renowned weekly magazines – Newsweek and TIME. The former called Stockholm the "Internet Capital of Europe in 2000". We spoke with Ms Suzanne Liljgren, former International Director of the City of Stockholm and former Project Manager for Information and Communication Technology Inward Investment, about her experiences with place management and branding of Stockholm.**

**Q: Most place managers could only dream of making the frontpage of these magazines. What are the lessons learned from the branding of Stockholm?**

**A:** Branding of a region differs from branding in general by its complexity and the need to understand politics. If you don't understand the political environment that governs a region, you will not find the necessary support that you need to be successful. With my dual background in both the private industry and the public sector, I was able to combine the best tools and experiences from both worlds and apply them in a forceful way.

**Q: Could you give an example?**

**A:** Attracting ICT investment into the Stockholm region in mid 1990s is a good example. Stockholm at the time was not on top of the list for ICT investors. For the policy-makers of the region, the ICT industry was not a priority. Instead much effort went into the marketing and sales of Stockholm as a tourist destination. One of the first decisions was to alert the mayor to the importance of the ICT industry. The message to the mayor at the time, Mr Carl Cederschiöld, was: you are investing 3,600 SEK of taxpayers' money on each hotel receptionist in Stockholm but only 6 SEK on every engineer at telecom manufacturer Ericsson. What investment do you think will yield the best return for the future of Stockholm – attracting those that will provide more jobs for the receptionist or for the engineer? From that day on ICT was a top priority.

The second decision was to move away from an ICT inward investment strategy that called for a focus on attracting European ICT industry. That strategy proved useless since the European products were generally not competitive enough for the Swedish market. Stockholm was one of the most advanced ICT-regions in the world. One example was Microsoft who used Sweden, besides the US, for beta testing of their latest software! Another example was the internet services that developed due to the deregulation of the telecom market that took place in Sweden several years before the rest of the world.

**Q: Many regions could make claims of being unique and a must for investors but without making the frontpage of Newsweek. Why Stockholm?**

**A:** Stockholm had a unique mobile communications industry we could use to our advantage in the place management work. We also found an emerging internet clus-

ter that had been below the radar screen of the media but proved to be developing fast. The reason for this was the early deregulation of the telecom market and the fact that every operator of any size in the world came to Stockholm to learn of the mechanisms of deregulation. Together with the city decision to establish an extensive, open, dark fibre infrastructure, the market for internet services exploded.

Of course, we all know that it is not enough to have the best product in the world if it is not known to the market. We realised that the window of opportunity for Stockholm was open but would close very fast. We needed something that was newsworthy, something forcing investors to consider Stockholm before making their decision.

Branding and place management is both strategy and getting the job done. We therefore proposed to the mayor to publicise the ICT rally in Stockholm by creating a branding tool called TIME.Stockholm

**Q: What was TIME.Stockholm?**

**A:** TIME stands for Telecommunication, IT, Media and Entertainment but also for the convergence of these industries into new clusters and industries. We gathered companies, non-governmental organisations, public authorities and academic institutions – all working in the ICT industry – and asked them to join the region in a demonstration of ICT development in Stockholm. The idea was simple: during one week in June, when there were already 13 ICT events taking place in Stockholm, a joint effort called TIME.Stockholm would co-brand these and other ICT events to national and international target groups.

The response was overwhelming and four months later we opened the first TIME.Stockholm with 26 events and interest from all over the world. Two weeks after the launch of TIME.Stockholm I had calls from both New York and Australia about TIME.Stockholm. A few years later TIME.Stockholm had approximately 100 events each year.

**Q: How did all this affect the inward investment work?**

**A:** TIME.Stockholm was an important marketing effort and it was reinforced by other activities. One example was the prize-winning internet service we developed for business match making, another was the intensive sales activity we did at trade shows like COMDEX and CeBit.

**Q: What was the strategy with these meetings?**

**A:** The messages we wanted to relay were first and foremost the advanced nature of the Stockholm ICT region and the opportunities to use the region as a stepping stone into the rest of Europe. It was also important to make larger ICT companies aware of the opportunities offered in terms of setting up R&D facilities. In 2000 we had some 30 R&D facilities run by multinational ICT companies from all over the world. At the time of the Newsweek article Stockholm had positioned itself firmly as an attractive place for investment in the area of ICT.

**Q: What were the three most important lessons learned from the place management work in Stockholm?**

**A:** Successful place management is based on strong political support and a management that understands both the private and the public sectors. Strategies must be combined with actions. Do your homework and build your place management on the opportunities your region offers.