

ISRAELI

i. d. e. a. s.

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Ingenuity **D**evelopment **E**nergy **A**cademics **S**cience

Situation Analysis

“If you look at news stories written about Israel, they are almost entirely about violence and conflict. There's almost nothing positive. When you have this overwhelming amount of information, which is about one topic -- violence and conflict -- that becomes your brand. That's what you're known for.”

---David Pottruck, CEO, Red Eagle Ventures (*San Francisco equity firm*)

Nation Branding

State or nation branding is a term that is gaining prominence in the 21st century and is defined as using strategic marketing to promote a country's image, products and its attractiveness for tourism and foreign direct investment (de Vincente, 2004). The concept of nation branding implies that a country much like a specific brand behaves in a certain way and that it has specific public perceptions based upon its qualities and characteristics held by people at home and abroad. In recent years, the branding of one's country is a practice that is taking flight in countries around the world. “Almost every government in the world is now engaged in one way or another with nation branding” (Dinnie, 2009, p.5).

There are four primary dimensions of state or nation branding: 1) tourism branding, 2) public diplomacy, 3) export promotion and 4) investment promotion activities.

It is important to note that “a country’s image, like any brand image, is not immutable and can be changed by the actions of its leaders and its people. The actions of government can also be perceived by the people of another country as sensitive and respectful of their culture or arrogant and ignorant of cultural differences” (Shimp, 2010 p. 48). That is why Jeff Swystun, who is global director of Interbrand, the leading branding company in the world said, “Brands should be both inspirational and aspirational. Inspirational to the internal audience, so you are motivating them to behave along the brands values and guidelines. Aspirational so it takes you to a future point” (Shikoh, 2006).

While some countries are still becoming familiar with the notion of nation branding, others are taking the proverbial bull by the horns and looking to turn their nation into a functional brand. Recently the South Korean government, led by President Lee Myung-Bak, appointed 16 members to the Presidential Council for Nation Branding, or the PCNB. The council set forth some definite goals upon its creation, the loftiest of which was to raise the country’s national brand index (NBI) ranking of 33rd in 2010 to 15th by the year 2013. A country’s nation branding index is decided by looking at whether the media were attracted to a specific place and whether that attraction is in a positive or negative light. It is important to look at that media coverage, while keeping in mind the overall prominence of the country being analyzed. Those factors, combined with the frequency the country is mentioned in news reports or stories helps comprise its NBI (East

West Communications, 2009). To increase its index numbers, the South Korean PCNB formed five teams within the council: internal cooperation, corporate and information technology, culture and tourism, global community and overall coordination (de Jesus, 2010).

Whether merely brainstorming about nation branding ideas or planning to put them into action, it is important to keep in mind that “country branding is not about spin, neither is it about propaganda. It is about proactive and conscious (linking) of a nation’s identity so as to enhance citizenship behaviors and nationhood internally, and to compete favorably internationally. It is about the recognition that image and reputation of a country as well as the (behavior of its citizens) are critical to a nation’s strategic development” (Akotia, 2010).

Place Branding and Promotion

In some instances nations and even specific cities within them are specifically marketed as destinations or places to travel, live and do business. This practice can be done through a process called place promotion or place branding, which is specifically described as “the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographic localities or areas to a target audience, which not only involves advertising and publicity, but also encompasses flagship developments and spotlight events in the arts, media, leisure, heritage, retailing or sports industries” (Gold and Ward, 1994; Ward, 1998). “Place

branding is based on a strategic approach to reputation management, stipulating that a change of image is an ongoing, holistic, interactive and wide-scale process, requiring much more than a quick change of logo or slogan. (It) does not merely consist of attaching new labels and creating messages, but consolidates the essential characteristics of the individual identity into a *brand essence*" (Baltic Development Forum, 2010).

In 2010, the European Union partially financed the creation of an in-depth situation analysis on the Baltic Sea Region for a campaign known as the BaltMet Promo. Through the research conducted by the Baltic Development Forum, ways to promote the region through its culture, tourism and even the attractiveness of individual cities were laid out. The report had a strong economic component to it as it highlighted a number of companies with a strong presence in the region that could become a part of this promotion in some way, shape or form. Ultimately, researchers said that 2011 was an ideal year to roll out such branding efforts because the year also marked the 20th anniversary of the Baltic countries regaining their independence (Baltic Development Forum, 2010). Such a landmark year is upon the nation of Israel, as in 2011 it is set to launch two ambitious transportation projects: first, the world's first fully functional electric car grid with recharging stations throughout the country and second, the implementation of a light rail system in the country's largest city of Jerusalem.

Nation Branding and Public Diplomacy

“Although they share similar goals with regard to fostering positive perceptions of a country, nation branding and public diplomacy have until relatively recently followed separate paths. Public diplomacy could be considered a subset of nation branding along with export promotion, tourism promotion, and the attraction of inward investment” (Dinnie, 2009, p. 9). One country in particular where the notion of nation branding is omnipresent is the nation of Japan. “Japan’s nation branding, like that of any other country, comprises a combination of planned and unplanned activity” (Dinnie, 2009 p.11). In recent years, the nation launched the Japan Brand Development Assistance Program, which was created in order to encourage innovation and entrepreneurialism. As Dinnie 2009 noted, the once war-torn nation is engaging in deliberate nation branding practices as it “demonstrates its willingness to engage with external audiences and dispels the gloomy views expressed by the critics of insular Japan” (Dinnie, 2009, p.12). Japan has successfully promoted itself as a brand by specifically focusing on its culture as an aspect to draw people to visit, live and conduct business within the country, not by its military prowess that was harped on during the 1930s and ‘40s (Dinnie, 2009). Despite these efforts by the world’s third largest economy, critics are quick to point fingers at one specific reason for why the nation with more than \$5 trillion in gross domestic product still suffers from a lackluster view

internationally of its willingness to do business with other nations (Trading Economics, 2011). “Japan is nervous and afraid to stand up for itself and talk about itself,” said BBC Tokyo correspondent Chris Hogg (Dinnie, 2009). “The good stories about Japan just don’t get told.” A similar viewpoint is held by the Governor of Tokyo, Shintaro Ishihara, who once said, “We Japanese are bad at promoting ourselves” (Dinnie, 2009).

Israel’s Current Brand Image

A recent survey conducted by the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) found that nearly 30,000 respondents in 28 different countries said that “Israel was the number one country with the most negative attitudes toward it, when it came to promoting negative influence on the world” (Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, 2009). A similar survey conducted in 2010 by the BBC reported that Israel received a 19% favorable opinion, while 50% of respondents viewed the country of nearly eight million in a negative light. Sitting next to Israel at the bottom of this list are Iran (15% positive, 56% negative), Pakistan (16% positive, 51% negative) and North Korea (17% positive, 48% negative) (EU Times, 2010).

Even though the above statistics are striking, Israel does have its advocates. Texas Gov. Rick Perry once said, “Israel has a long history of growing new technology companies through partnerships that include universities, government and private investors and entrepreneurs,” (Kloosterman, 2010). The nation of 7.7 million people was named one of

only four "rising stars" in the world by FutureBrand in its 2010 Country Brand Index (nation-branding.info, 2010). Despite the country's rising star status some, like in Japan's case, point to Israel's inability to promote its economic achievements as a major downfall. "Israelis have a major issue as marketers," said University of Pennsylvania marketing professor David Reibstein. "They are phenomenal at the development of technology, but because of who they are and where they have come from, they are not very good marketers of that technology. Israel probably is not as widely known for all the things that it has developed [as it could be]. It could do a better job of [showcasing] all that it has brought to the world economy," Reibstein said. "It's been very much an individual business and entrepreneurial effort, rather than a collective effort to say, 'This is a national issue and we as a nation need to be doing something to address it.' I don't think [the latter] has been the country's approach, but it would be something that the country could do" (Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, 2009).

That gap that Reibstein is alluding to widened during the 1990s, when "two revolutions occurred simultaneously –the political revolution and the political transformation. Although Israel belongs to the list of developed states, the media revolution reached it quite late—about ten years after the transformation from newspapers to commercial multichannel television stations in Western European states. Israel still lags behind the United States and other advanced societies in its development however the nation going through its communication revolution at the same time as its political

transformation has made it a testing ground for a new sociopolitical phenomenon” (Peri, 2004, p. 3-4).

Balancing the positive with the negative was Amir Gissin, a consul general from the Israeli Consulate in Toronto, who said, “The conflict is a major part of Israel’s brand, and we are not hiding it. We believe, however, that Israel is more than the conflict, and we will continue to share information about that” (Smith, 2009). It is with this vantage point in mind that in 2008, the Israeli Consulate in Canada's largest city (Toronto) decided to launch a one-year test market for its rebranding campaign. The campaign portrayed Israel as a hub of high-tech research and development as well as a nation with a rich cultural history. It even highlighted its many beaches and resort areas throughout the country. When asked about the main reason behind launching this pilot campaign, Gissin said, “Israel’s branding process is first and foremost an internal process aimed at answering the question: Who are we as Israelis when we are at our best? The [Toronto] pilot was therefore not a PR campaign but rather an attempt to test the public opinion response to Israeli answers to this question” (Smith, 2009).

Media and Perceptions of Israel

Gissin points to what Israelis see when they look at themselves in the television screen or listen to themselves on the radio to answer the above question. “The Western media narrative is the poor Palestinians (with all

the) Israeli tanks and Israeli guns," he said. "We've been portrayed that way for years" (Smith, 2009). Perhaps it's because "recent surveys [such as the one done by the BBC in 2010] show that Israel's image in the world is worsening," (Hassman, 2008 p.5). This notion could clearly be seen by David Saranga, who works in the Israeli Consulate of New York in media and public affairs. "During my time as a spokesperson in Israel," Saranga said, "it was not difficult to see that the 400 foreign correspondents we dealt with daily were there for one reason only — to cover the conflict. Their interest was only in the political issues of the country. They were not there to write on the many positive aspects of life in Israel, only on the negative" (Russell, 2008). This problem was emphasized further in a recent talk led by Middle East expert Neil Lazarus, who noted that the media often take the political situation in Israel out of context. "I think it lacks context of the conflict," he said. "When you're talking about a one minute story, it's very difficult to explain 3,000 years of history" (Davenport, 2010). The unmistakable importance of the American media in the perception of Israel throughout the fifty states is driven home by Marvin (2010), who says, "The U.S. media play an important role in developing the American narrative of Israel and Palestine by presenting and shaping both current events and America's cultural heritage." Placing the utmost importance on the media are Krosnick and Telhami (1995), who note that the public opinion of Americans at large helps shape American foreign policy with Israel. Since the American media act as a guide for public opinion, it is safe to reason that the stories being

told about Israel on a daily basis help decide how Americans and their politicians will act toward one of its closest allies.

Israel's Economic and Industrial Status

“I don't think you can really find that combination of the past and the future in such close proximity, virtually any other place in the world. It's pretty remarkable.”

--- Warren Buffett

The above statement was made by Warren Buffet, a man who is widely considered to be the second richest person in the world. Buffett, an American businessman, has put his stamp on the holy land by purchasing his first company outside of the U.S. there. Iscar, a company based in the western Galilee region of the nation, produces metal cutting tools and was bought by the billionaire for \$4.5 billion in 2006 (Frucht, 2006). Buffet is not alone in his recent business ventures in Israel. Search engine giant Google has joined the investment and development train as well. The city of Haifa is now home to the first Google R&D (research and development) Center in the country, and the capital of Tel Aviv boasts a second Google research and development center, (Smuskowitz, 2009). In 2006, Google Israel embarked upon an ambitious experimental project called “Google Suggest”, which literally suggest topics for users to search with each keystroke they take. By 2009 the service was up and running worldwide, and as Microsoft creator Bill

Gates said on a recent visit to the country, "Innovation going on in Israel is critical to the future of the technology business" (Senor & Singer, 2009).

2009 was also an important year for the country in gaining recognition of its growing economy. In a report entitled "Playing Defense," Bank of America-Merrill Lynch highlighted the nation as a lucrative place to invest, especially in the banking and telecom industries. The report pointed to Israel's "strong currency vs. the US dollar, the resilient economic performance among other emerging markets and the strong leadership performance shown by the Bank of Israel and the Ministry of Finance in handling the economy" as reasons to invest there (Hunkar, 2010).

Highlighting this recent trend of outside investment in Israel's economy is a book by Dan Senor and Saul Singer, entitled "Start-Up Nation." As a recent review of the 300-page narrative by the Wall Street Journal said, "The greatest strength of 'Start-Up Nation' is not analysis but anecdote. The authors tell vivid stories of entrepreneurial success. In the end, it is not easy to discover why Israel, a tiny nation of immigrants torn by war, has managed to become the first technology nation. It may be enough, as this fine book does, to shine a spotlight on its success" (Glassman, 2009). "There are thousands of Israelis doing extraordinary things in business, and taking their stories to the world. There are endless conferences, submissions to international industry awards, World Wide Web and social media endeavors" (Gina, 2010). In fact "the Jewish state leads the world in medical device

patents and is a strong global player in cleantech and biotech (industries)” (www.startupnationbook.com, 2009).

Israel is home to the Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, which is part of the Ben-Gurion University in the Negev Desert. Since its creation in 1974, the institute, along with the Ben-Gurion National Solar Energy Center has continued to produce important research and developments pertinent to the nation’s independence of foreign oil and other resources (Faiman, 2011). The National Solar Energy Center is home to the world’s largest solar energy dish, and as Professor David Faiman of Ben-Gurion University put it, that dish along with other power stations in the Negev Desert could very well supply all of Israel’s energy needs some day (Cotthem, 2008). “The best place to look for a model is the country (of Israel) that has produced the most concentrated combination of innovation and entrepreneurship in the world,” said the “Start-Up Nation” authors (Senor & Singer, 2011).

Israel is also starting to gain recognition as having for the most part dodged the recent global economic downturn, described by many in the U.S. as the worst since the great depression (Willis, 2009). “Israel has stood out among other advanced economies as a place where the crisis hit softer, and may have passed quicker, than almost anywhere else,” said Senor and Singer in a 2011 CNN op-ed article. “Israel's economic growth has not been based on easy credit or a real estate boom, but on the technology-driven

productivity gains that economists believe is the key to sustained economic growth” (Senor and Singer, 2011). Statistics as details from CIA’s World Factbook back those opinion up. "The global financial crisis of 2008-09 spurred a brief recession in Israel, but the country entered the crisis with solid fundamentals - following years of prudent fiscal policy and a series of liberalizing reforms - and a resilient banking sector and the economy has shown signs of an early recovery. Following GDP growth of 4% in 2008, Israel's GDP slipped to 0.2% in 2009, but reached 3.4% in 2010, as exports rebounded. Israel's GDP rose 5% per year (before the recession) from 2004-07" (CIA The World Factbook, 2011).

This realization was evident during Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick’s recent trade mission to Israel in March, 2011. It was there that he signed a memorandum of understanding between his state and the Jewish state that the two would further explore research and development capabilities. “Both Massachusetts and Israel share a strong research and development community that is key to our clean energy leadership,” said MassCEC Executive Director Patrick Cloney. “We look forward to collaborating and partnering with Israel in clean tech research and development projects with the ultimate goal of helping clean energy enterprises achieve success faster” (Patrick, 2011). Currently there are close to 100 companies in Massachusetts with Israeli founders running them or with Israeli licensed technologies operating within them. Combined, those firms exported over \$180 million worth of goods back to Israel.

Taking an informal look at the many products and devices invented or developed in the tiny nation, it is easy to see why so many foreign companies and governments are starting to take notice of the Israeli business climate. The Pentium chip and microprocessor were originally developed in Israel along with the cell phone, which was designed and researched by scientists working for Motorola Israel. Before Instant Messenger was bought by American Online it was first created within Israeli borders as was the Pill Cam, which won the prestigious Wall Street Journal award for technological innovation (Maisel, 2011). Those more widely known technological advances as well as others in medicine, transportation security and military defenses have helped catapult 75 Israel based companies onto the NASDAQ, beating out other nations such as Brazil, France, India, China and the UK for number two on the list, with the US holding the top spot (NASDAQ, 2011).

Israel's Green Transportation Projects

“We did not decide to change the world; we decided to do something that will make the world a better place.”

--- Shai Agassi (*Founder and CEO of Better Place*)

2011 is a landmark year for Israel and technological advancements taking place there. Not only will the much anticipated electric car grid launch throughout the nation during the latter part of the year, but its largest city Jerusalem, will open service on its brand new light rail system. For one

(NIS) or new Israeli shekel, which is equivalent to \$0.25 USD, a passenger will be able to ride the entire nine mile stretch of rail that connects secular neighborhoods in Jerusalem with the largest Jewish settlement in the eastern part of the city. "The \$1.4 million project also upgraded rusty infrastructure, created bicycle lanes, added speedy bus lines with preference at traffic lights, and transformed Jerusalem's clogged downtown artery into a tree-lined pedestrian boulevard with the light rail running through it. It will also provide a less-polluting alternative for the burgeoning populations of Palestinian and ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods "(Estrin, 2011). Those who have seen test runs of the system taking place in early April describe it as "futuristic silver electric cars gliding silently past Jerusalem's old stone buildings and open air markets" (Estrin, 2011). Plans for the light rail system have been in the works since 2002, and a full launch of the project will commence in August of 2011. The initial 24 stations are expected to service around 320,000 passengers a day and will run an average of every five minutes during peak usage hours (AFP, 2010).

Just as passengers in Jerusalem are getting used to the notion of riding trains, drivers around the nation will be for the first time stopping their cars to switch out its battery and then continuing with their journey. The world's first fully functional electric car grid is set to also launch in 2011, with switch out stations to be constructed along the grid for drivers to hook their cars up to (Associated Press, 2010). The project, which is being called "powerful in the global economic system" (Bangkok Post, 2011), is headed up by Shai

Agassi, an Israeli-American who has invested close to \$700 million in his company, Better Place, to take the lead in a project that has created excitement among leaders around the world. As recently as January 2011, former President Bill Clinton said that "Israel will become the first country in the world to put 100,000 all-electric cars on the road. Not the US. Not China. (But) Israel." Agassi boasts that by 2016, Israel will be selling more electric cars than ones that run on gasoline because of the creation of the electric car grid. He said that "the only approach that gets us off dependence on oil in a way that is scalable, to run the country and the world, will be an electric car" (Bankok Post, 2011).

Agassi has said that there are two very important factors when determining whether a car will be successful on the market: convenience and cost. The Better Place CEO has projected that by 2015, one of his electric cars should be priced at about \$15,000 USD. Cost aside, Agassi knows that previous electric car models have taken up to 35 minutes to recharge. With this in mind, his company has developed battery switching stations instead of battery re-charging stations (Mak, 2011). "The battery swapping mechanism that Better Place is using is the same that Israelis use to load bombs onto F-16 fighter jets, and the driver does not have to get out of the car to do it. Under a pilot program currently underway in Tokyo, the automated battery switching process takes less than a minute" (Mak, 2011). Agassi estimates that by the end of 2011 his team will assist in a total of 56

battery recharging stations throughout the nation going live, with roughly 5,000 cars using them on a regular basis (Associated Press, 2011).

Summary

Israel has received high praise from prominent businessmen and politicians such as Warren Buffett, Bill Gates and Bill Clinton for its economic and industrial strides but has one of the worst brand images for any nation in the world, short of Iran and North Korea. Israel will be launching two monumental and energy efficient transportation projects in 2011. The electric car grid will go nationwide and will be the first of its kind among any country in the entire world. The light rail system in Jerusalem will cut down on traffic congestion and pollution in the nation's largest and most prominent city. Historically the Israeli people have a poor track record of promoting their innovation and technological advances.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to educate young Jewish business leaders to become advocates for the Israeli brand.

Target Audience

Young Influentials

In 1974, Claritas spawned an innovative new way of analyzing lifestyle segments in the US. The system, which would later be known as PRIZM or Potential Rating Index for Zip Marketers, laid out 40 different types of lifestyles that Americans lead. One of the 40 segments, which were later expanded to 62, is known as the Young Influentials (Sclove, 2002). The social group Young Influentials fall into is known as “Middleburbs” or a subset of people who share a middle-class suburban perspective. Specifically, Young Influentials are defined as “a common address for young, middle-class singles and couples who are more preoccupied with balancing work and leisure pursuits. They have recently left college dorms and are now living in apartment complexes surrounded by ball fields, health clubs and casual-dining restaurants” (Walker Art Center, 2007).

Targeting Future Young Influentials

For the purpose of demonstrating that college-aged Jewish men and women and soon- to-be Young Influentials can be turned into brand advocates of Israel, the efforts of this project will be directed toward members of the KU Jewish Business Club, who will be its pilot target audience.

The Jewish Business Club at the University of Kansas was founded during the 2010-11 academic school year and has already attracted prominent speakers such as Jewish American entrepreneur Steve Schuster, who owns and operates Rainier Company, which markets Israeli technology

to American investors. KU is not the only university with a new club formed by Jewish students with an interest or background in business. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst's Hillel launched its Jewish business club in January 2011, and Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business has had a Jewish Business Alliance for three years as of 2011. While a number of Jewish-based collegiate business clubs have sprouted up around the nation over the past few years, there are similar organizations with long-lasting roots. The well-established Jewish Business Students Association at Columbia University has been around for 20 years now and the JBSA at UCLA, which calls the university's well-established Anderson School of Management home, helps foster relationships between undergraduate/graduate students and Jewish business professionals in the greater Los Angeles area.

Jewish Business Club at KU

As the focus of this project shifts toward the Jewish Business Club at the University of Kansas, there are a number of vital facts to be known about this relatively new club. The club's mission is to "give KU students an opportunity to make connections and network with business professionals" as it says on the club's student organization information page. Currently, there are four administrative members to the group, which at times has had upwards of a dozen interested parties attend meetings. Those four administrators are President Coby Hurst-Sneh, Vice-President Michael Yodler,

Treasurer Nathan Lipsky and Adviser Scott Bronson. While he is not officially listed on the club's KU website, it is important to note that Rabbi Neal Schuster, who is the rabbinical leader for the KU Hillel, is also an adviser to the group and its administrative members (Jewish Business Club at KU, 2010). The club also has its own description on the KU Hillel website under *Additional Jewish Opportunities*.

Target Audience Summary

Ultimately the overarching goal of this newsletter would be to broaden readership from one university's Jewish Business Club to dozens around the country, giving those business minded Jewish men and women who will soon be assuming the role of a Young Influential the knowledge, skills and inspiration they need to become brand advocates for the nation of Israel.

Mission Statement and Tactics

Mission Statement: The goal of the Israeli i.d.e.a.s. program is to, through newsletters, interactive discussions and an eventual trip to Israel, turn young Jewish men and women who are interested in business and economics into advocates for Israel as a brand and as a lucrative place to conduct business.

Pilot Target Audience: Members of the KU Jewish Business Club

Tactic #1:

Israeli i.d.e.a.s Newsletter

Brief Description: Develop a web-based monthly newsletter, complete with rich media including audio, video and text interviews and narratives, highlighting the technological, industrial, economic and research-oriented strides taking place in Israel. These interviews will be conducted with men and women in the marketing and research sector in Israel as well as those in the United States who are opinion leaders in the research and development industry. This newsletter will be entitled Israeli i.d.e.a.s. and will be distributed each month of the fall and spring semester to members of the KU Jewish Business club through their e-mail addresses. Each e-mail will include the actual .pdf form of the newsletter as well as a link to its official Facebook page where past issues will be archived and accessible.

Deadline: A prototype of the newsletter will be developed during the summer of 2011. While interviews and the compilation of text will be compiled during that time, the dissemination of the newsletter will not officially begin until at least September or October of 2011, after the KU Jewish Business club has already had its first meeting of the fall semester.

Communication Requirements: The content that will be put into the newsletter will consist of one recorded video Skype interview, one audio interview over the phone or in person, which will both be embedded into the

newsletter and a text based interview/article that can either be derived from e-mail or telephone communication.

Once the newsletter is ready for dissemination, attending a meeting with members of the KU Jewish Business will be required to determine who among the group would like to receive the newsletter in e-mail form each month.

Tactic #2:

Israeli i.d.e.a.s Facebook Page

Brief Description: Create a Facebook page entitled “Israeli i.d.e.a.s” where a version of the monthly newsletter can be uploaded and will be accessible to all those who “like” the page or those who are just browsing. Archived issues of the newsletter will also be accessible there as will links to articles or news updates about Israel and its economy.

Deadline: The Israeli i.d.e.a.s. Facebook page will be launched a month in advance of the first KU Jewish Business Club meeting of the semester (August or September) to create a destination for people to go to before the dissemination of the actual newsletter.

Communication Requirements: Facebook group invites will be sent to people who are members of or like the “KU Hillel” page in order to not only promote the individual page but the newsletter as well.

Tactic #3:

Bi-Monthly Skype Session at KU Jewish Business Club Meetings

Brief Description: Once the members of the KU Jewish Business club begin receiving editions of the Israeli i.d.e.a.s. newsletter, a Skype session will be set up every other month (during regularly scheduled KU Jewish Business Club meetings), with men and women in Israel who are active in the economic, industrial, educational or research and development sectors of the country. Through interactive discussions with these leaders more than half-way around the world, members of the KU Jewish Business club will learn exactly what is taking place there through the movers and shakers who are making it happen

Deadline: The Skype sessions will begin in late fall (October/November) and continue every other month until late spring, meaning April or May. Phone calls, e-mails or Facebook messages to those interested, willing and capable of talking to the group via Skype will be contacted throughout the semester and at least three months in advance of their individual interview in order to give the speakers enough time to prepare.

Communications Requirements: A computer with the program Skype loaded onto it, an internet connection and a built in webcam will be all that is required for the interactive interview that will take place during the KU Jewish Business Club meeting.

Tactic #4:

Israeli i.d.e.a.s. Business Trip

Brief Description: The culmination of the Israeli i.d.e.a.s. program for members of the KU Jewish Business Club will be at the conclusion of one academic year, where after nearly nine months of involvement in the program (receiving the newsletter and attending Skype session discussions), they will, if they choose, be able to travel to Israel on a six day trip, where they will put their prior experiences of the program to use in meetings and discussions with opinion leaders and major players in the Israeli economy. Visits to research and development facilities as well as meetings with members of parliament or the Knesset will be arranged as well as a hands-on demonstration of the electric car grid with Israeli American businessman Shai Agassi of Better Place, who is spearheading the project.

Deadline: Ideally, this Israeli i.d.e.a.s. business trip would take place sometime during the summer of 2012. That would give all those involved and interested in attending a good 14 months' notice before embarking on their voyage.

Communication Requirements: To accomplish this trip to Israel, first and foremost communication with those who could possibly fund the trip would need to be initiated. This would include phone or Skype conversations as well as face to face meetings with people such as Kansas governor Sam

Brownback, who is a pro-Israel politician, and Steve Kalafer, a Jewish businessman in New Jersey who is often benevolent with his funds in and around the Jewish community. Once funding is made available, e-mails, letters and conversations will be held with those such as Steve Schuster of Rainier Co., who has personally had contact with those men and women the group would be interested in meeting with.

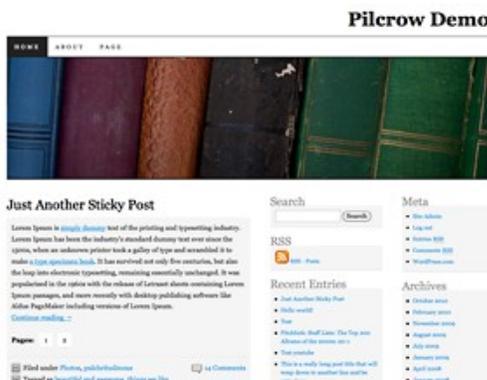
Budget: Funding for this trip would be sizeable with close to a dozen participants taking an active role in the trip. Round trip airfare on Delta from JFK International Airport in New York City to David Ben-Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv costs around \$1,400 USD. Combine that with travel expenses, food and lodging and the \$2,000 mark is fast approached. Multiply \$2,000 by about 14 students on the trip and at the most it would cost close to \$30,000 to fund this trip. It would not be out of the realm of possibility to have each student going on the trip to contribute \$500 to help defray some of the cost and make the trip more viable in some of the big contributors' eyes because the students who are going are serious enough about the trip to contribute some cash to the cause.

Methods

Web Address & Design

To begin the online newsletter phase of the project, I had to select a website that would host it. After settling on WordPress as its official host, I selected *isrealiideas.wordpress.com* as its web address. Shortly after deciding on a name, I found a design and layout that best suited the overall look and feel of the newsletter that I wanted to portray.

The design itself is called Pilcrow and has a small banner across the top with room for a photo background underneath the main content layer. A screen shot of the design can be found below.



(Pilcrow design)

Newsletter Sections

When it was created, the newsletter contained just two sections, "Home" and "About." Upon creation, I changed "About" to "Welcome" to make the newsletter more inviting. "Welcome," which states the main purpose of the newsletter, was the first section I started designing.

(Home)

<http://israeliideas.wordpress.com/>

The second section I began designing was ultimately the one that I finished last, simply because it acted as the table of contents to my newsletter. Home is relatively simple because it contains just text (in different colors and fonts) as well as hyperlinks. Listed are the five different sections of the newsletter, a brief description of each as well as the key people interviewed and quoted in each. An example of what one section of "Home" looks like is below:

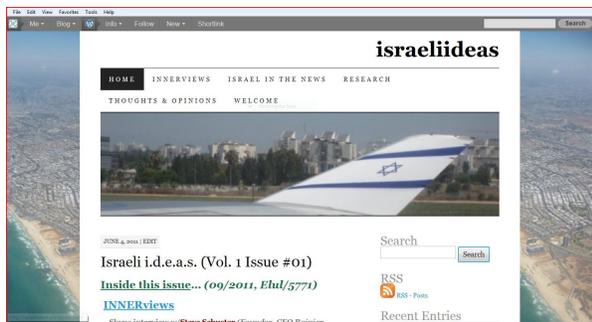
[Thoughts & Opinions](#)

– ***Recent Quotes (Rants & Raves from politicians and businessmen about Israeli technology and innovation)***

– ***Opinion, Op-ed by Hila Kadosh (Former IDF soldier and current Israeli college student)***

– ***Interactive Poll (On anticipated news coverage of nation's electric car grid launch)***

Above in the Microsoft Word document are the listings of each section. This includes the title of the newsletter as well as the month it was published. To add to the Israeli theme and appeal, I included what month the newsletter came out in according the Hebrew calendar: Elul, the sixth month of the Hebrew year.



(Welcome) _____

<http://israeliideas.wordpress.com/welcome/>

"Welcome" has three main sections. The first is a small paragraph about the central purpose of the newsletter and why it was created. The second is titled "From the editor's desk" and is generally an overarching mission statement from me as well as some key points as to what makes Israel stand out in certain areas as opposed to other countries. The final small section of "Welcome" is about me, the editor and creator. I wrote a short biography on myself and included a brief slideshow of some of my pictures from when I traveled to Israel during July of 2009 on the Taglit Birthright trip.



(INNERviews) _____

<http://israeliideas.wordpress.com/innerviews/>

"INNERviews" is the backbone of the newsletter and features three interviews with different subjects from various professional arenas, but all having to do with Israel and its success as a nation. The three interviews are as follows:

-**Ingenuity & Science** with *Steve Schuster* (Skype)

-**Development & Energy** with *Asa Shapiro* (Q&A)

-**Entrepreneur's Corner** with *Ilan Cohen* (Podcast)

As one can see, the three interviews are collected using three different forms of technology, video webcast, audio podcast and textual question and answer.

Ingenuity & Science tackles why Israelis invent and continue to research so many products and services, and as Steve Schuster (founder and CEO of Rainier Co.), puts it, "Any trade show that you go to, whether it is in consumer electronics, telecom, biotech, you name it, you are going to go there and hear a lot of Hebrew."

Development & Energy is a frank and informative sit-down with Asa Shapiro, who works as a culture engineer with the Israeli Petroleum Group. Shapiro says that the nation he calls home is "a place full of people with big brains, big guts and entrepreneurial spirit," but that no one will really recognize that fact "until we finish with the conflict."

The Entrepreneur's Corner provides a unique glimpse into the mind of an Israeli American who has nearly a half century of experience running or owning a business. Ilan Cohen, who lives in New York City and owns Elite Management, which is a real estate company, with his brother Amir, explains that serving in the military prepares young Israelis to maintain and run a successful business.

Cohen says, "Certainly the army culture there helps, because everyone serves and takes some responsibility and leadership roles at a very young age. Generally a guy or girl there doesn't go off to college until they are maybe 23 or 24 and it really brings people to a more serious place when they get out of college, where they are inclined to innovate."



(Israel in the News)

<http://israeliideas.wordpress.com/israel-in-the-news/>

"Israeli in the News" is a section that is generally a collection of links, short previews and embedded audio/video of specific stories associated with Israel and the research and technology taking place within it. The stories featured in this section are as recent as June 2011 and only as far back as 2008. They sometimes come from large news outlets, such as CBS News or NPR, but also are selected from specific places like esciencenews.com and middleeastnewswire.com. Below is an example of how one of those stories look with associated links.

"Israel to Expand Solar Energy Power"

– 6.26.11 ([ynetnews.com](http://www.ynetnews.com))

"Israel is planning an expansion of its solar-generated electricity with preparations to bring the first of more than 40 new solar plants onto the grid this summer. Arava Power is building the plants, including the NIS 100 million (\$30 million) Ketura Sun solar field in Israel's scorching Negev desert, which will begin providing electricity to some 1,000 residents this summer."

Story Link: <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4083303,00.html>

The title, the date and place of publication and a short summary of the story are included. The short summary comes either from the first few sentences of the story or a summary written below the headline. The link to the full story is accessible below that summary. The two rich media components to this section are an embedded CBS News video and a hyperlink that lets newsletter readers listen to an NPR webcast.



(On This Date) _____

<http://israeliideas.wordpress.com/on-this-date/>

This section is designed to remind newsletter readers of the specific landmarks or significant achievements in Israel's high-tech industry during the specific month the newsletter is published. For example, the first issue is slated to be published in September 2011. Therefore, there are five key dates in years ranging from 1984 to 2010, listed with a brief description of what made them stand out among other historic occurrences in the nation that month. An example of one date and explanation is listed below.

2010 – Israel joins the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development on September 19th. OECD is an organization comprising 34 countries whose main goal it is to stimulate economic progress and world trade. The OECD praised Israel’s scientific and technological progress as having “produced outstanding outcomes on a world scale.”

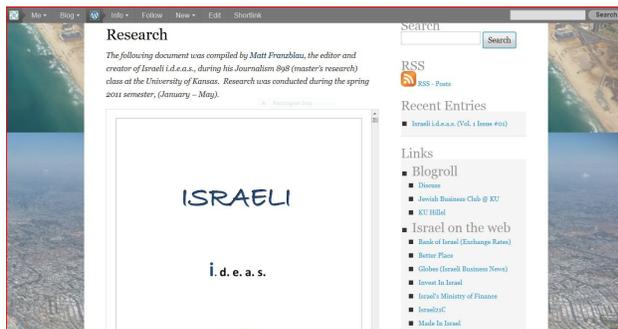
(Research) _____

<http://israeliideas.wordpress.com/research/>

This is technically the shortest section with the least amount of text, but yet the most complex. That is because there is a short explanation of what the section is about accompanied by an embedded PDF document, which contains my final draft of my Master's research from Journalism 898 during the spring 2011 semester. The small paragraph above the document reads as follows:

The following document was compiled by Matt Franzblau, the editor and creator of Israeli i.d.e.a.s., during his Journalism 898 (master’s research) class at the University of Kansas. Research was conducted during the spring 2011 semester (January – May).

The 32-page document is embedded after this paragraph using the online web program scribd.com, which enables users to embed such large documents on websites for people to leaf through, zoom in and read. There are a few options the program enables you to do, such as viewing it in full screen mode, zooming in or out, downloading it to your computer, sharing it with others or simply flipping through the pages with a click of your mouse.



(Thoughts & Opinions) _____

<http://israeliideas.wordpress.com/thoughts-opinions/>

In recent years, Israel has earned numerous compliments for the development of its economy and infrastructure. This section featured a number of quotes from prominent politicians and business executives about Israel's strides in those fields, accompanied by a brief explanation of when and where it was said. Below is an example of one of those quotes.

"I don't think you can really find that combination of the past and the future in such close proximity, virtually any other place in the world. It's pretty remarkable." – Warren Buffett

- This quote was made by American businessman, investor and billionaire Warren Buffett, who in 2006 purchased 80% of the Israeli metal works company Iscar, his largest purchase of a non-American company to date.

After the quotes, there is an opinion piece written by a former IDF soldier who is currently studying at University in Jerusalem. Hila Kadosh writes in English and in Hebrew about the Israeli mindset and what makes business men/women, researchers and entrepreneurs so driven to succeed. Below is a sampling of what Ms. Kadosh wrote.

According to Jewish beliefs, the present and future is guaranteed to its people. This survival has included many difficult periods, from exile in biblical times to the horrendous Holocaust and persecution by many around the world. These struggles have led to a myriad of questions including the following: Why does it seem that there is a divine right that the Jewish people survive? and what are the Jews' methods that enable them to survive and achieve significant success in the global society? You can answer these questions by looking within various aspects of Israeli society.

הישרדותו של העם והיחלצותו מהמצבים הקשים ביותר החל מהגלייתו בתקופת התנ"ך וכלה בשואה נוראית ורדיפתו על ידי גורמים שונים בעולם, גרם לרצון להבין אין ספור של תהיות בניהן: מה הופך את העם היהודי לשורד בחסד עליון?, ומה היא שיטת העם היהודי אשר גרמה לו לשרוד ואף להגיע להישגים משמעותיים בחברה העולמית?. ניתן לענות על שאלות אלה מאספקטים שונים המוצגים בקרב החברה הישראלית.

Finally, the page is complete with a simple poll, where newsletter readers can log their vote on what type of media coverage the nation's electric car grid will generate once officially launched this year.

The screenshot shows a webpage layout with a sidebar on the right containing navigation links: "Israel's Ministry of Finance", "Israel's C", "Made In Israel", and "Start-Up Nation". The main content area includes several text blocks: a quote by Gov. Rick Perry about Israel's history of growing technology companies; a quote by Dan Sussor & Sini Singer about Israel's concentration of innovation; and a quote from a 2009 book 'Start-Up Nation'. Below this is a section titled "Opinions..." with a sub-header "Hila Kadosh is currently a student at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and has completed her military service for the IDF (Israeli Defense Force)". A small photo of Hila Kadosh is shown next to her name. Below the photo is a paragraph in Hebrew and another in English: "Many surveys and studies that have investigated the genealogy of the Jewish people have determined that they are the only group of people who have..."

Summary & Findings

Through much of the research conducted over the past nine months, it is clear that the nation of Israel suffers from a negative perception world-wide. Recent feedback compiled by the BBC from 30,000 respondents in close to 30 countries found that Israel had the fourth worst perception among countries in the world, behind only Iran, Pakistan and North Korea (EU Times, 2010). Still there are shining examples of what the country can do economically. The nation of 7.7 million people was named one of only four rising stars by FutureBrand in its 2010 Country Brand Index (nation-branding.info, 2010). It is also the place with the most start-up companies or business per capita in the world, but there seems to be a disconnect between what the nation accomplishes economically and how the rest of the world perceives it. Below are a number of themes that continuously appeared throughout the interviews and opinions compiled during this project.

"Brainland"

As Asa Shapiro, who is a culture engineer for the Israeli Petroleum Group, said, when interviewed for this project, "It (Israel) is a place full of people with big brains, big guts and entrepreneurial spirit and that we are a small, but very smart country." In fact, the former ad agency employee even coined the term "Brainland" as a way to better explain and market his nation to his American counterparts. As to why this entrepreneurial spirit is so

strong, Steve Schuster, who is the President and CEO of Rainier Co., a public relations firm in Massachusetts, said, "It is a small country in a dangerous neighborhood and it figured out very early on from the founding of the country that it had to do a lot for itself. The people got there rising out of the ashes of World War II, came to a desert and figured out how to irrigate it, turn it green, educate everybody and create an economy." Israeli American Ilan Cohen points to another important factor as to why so many Israelis are entrepreneurs. The 70-year old, who owns a real estate business in new York City with his brother, said, "When you are 17 or 18 years old, you go to the army and face danger and because of that maybe Israelis are willing to take more risks later on in life in terms of time, energy and funds to achieve their goals."

Unfortunately though, Shapiro thinks what Americans see on television is not the Israelis successes entrepreneurially speaking, but rather the infamous religious conflict between them and the Palestinians. "I think TV land portrays it in simplistic terms, while in all reality the conflict is complicated," Shapiro said. "It cannot really, and we shouldn't expect it to, be representative in way that will encompass all of its layers. With that being said, it is not a fair coverage by any means because usually there is a tendency to over-simplify." Shapiro thinks Americans see his nation as "a desert with terrorists and all kind of religious lunatics," and that no one will see Israel for what it really is (economically speaking), "until we finish with the conflict."

The Israeli Business Mind

An Israeli business man or woman is no doubt different than someone who does business in the U.S., and this notion was verified by Schuster, who does a great deal of PR for Israeli companies. "People don't beat around the bush," Schuster said. "They will tell you if they like something, they will tell you if they don't like something and you never have to wonder how someone feels because their first concern is to communicate with you clearly

and honestly as opposed to in America, where I think people's first concern tends to not want to hurt somebody's feelings." Schuster notes that this communication primarily comes in a face-to-face setting, rather than on the phone or by the computer. "Before doing business in Israel, I had done business with many clients over the years that I have never met face-to-face and it became clear to me very quickly after doing business in Israel that I would never get to accomplish anything with them without meeting face-to-face, because there is a trust and human connection that has to be made for that business to take place." Schuster said that Israelis are often referred to as Sabras, or a prickly desert plants that are rough on the outside but sweet and tender on the inside.

The Soldier Experience

As to why many Israelis are so successful in entrepreneurial ventures and academic research, there are a number of different explanations, but one common theme keeps reoccurring during interviews and discussions for purposes of this project. Each Israeli, regardless of gender, has to serve in the nation's military for a number of years. Men serve for three, while women serve for two straight out of high school and before they enroll in college or university. It is for this reason that Cohen points to the experience and leadership skills that one gets in the military as to why they become so successful as heads of companies, states or schools. "By the age of 19 you are in command of four or five people and when you are 20, you oversee a group of 30 or 40, so you have leadership abilities and a great amount of responsibility at a young age," he said. "Realistically, how many kids in America at the age of 18 have an opportunity to do it? The only responsibility they have is to either get drunk or not to get drunk. The level of responsibilities they have to assume is small compared to the level of responsibility a young Israeli has." Further hitting home this point is Schuster, who said, "Certainly the army culture there helps, because everyone serves and takes on responsibility and leadership roles at a very young age. Generally, a guy or girl there doesn't go off to college until they are maybe 23 or 24

and it really brings people to a more serious place when they get out of college, where they are inclined to innovate.”

Education System

The final major theme that made its presence known in this project had to do with Israel’s education system. From contact with Dani Fesler, who is the headmaster at the Leo Baeck Educational Institute in Haifa to the entrepreneurial interview with Ilan Cohen, it seems that what Israelis learn inside the classroom are truly building blocks for what they will encounter in the Army and then perfect later on in life. As Cohen said, “I would attribute a large part of the success of the many start-up companies in Israel today to the government’s decision to have vocational schools in Israel.” Cohen thinks the skills learned in these vocational schools, which some Israeli children attend, pay off and potentially help save lives and preserve the future of the nation.

“For instance, a kid who goes into ninth grade can establish skills to study agriculture, carpentry and electronics,” Cohen said. “Then, when they go to the Army, those skills get taken advantage of. The Army commanders might say, ‘okay fix a tank, get on the computer and find a way to use this model to apply to the way a cannon shoots.’ So now at the age of 21 or 22 you have seven years of honing certain skills, and when you go out into the real world, people appreciate those tools and they can be used for success.”

Final Take

It is these four themes, “Brainland,” the Israeli business mind, the soldier experience and the education system, that have a profound impact and play an important role in the development of the careers of those who helped Israel become one of the go to places in the world for start-up companies and entrepreneurs. It seems that none of these skills, along with the Israelis’ willingness to take risks as well as their decision making abilities could mature the way they do inside an Israeli without applying them and putting them to

the test in the Army. Each of these characteristics is in a sense an element and the Israeli military acts as a catalyst, that bonds those elements into the perfect compound of success in the business world throughout in life.

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