

Jon M. Anzalone
168 Park Avenue
Huntington, NY 11743
917-568-5032
jon.anzalone@gmail.com

About 700 words

ROAD MAP TO A BRANDED MUMBAI

by

Jon M. Anzalone

As a former resident of New York City and a current resident of Mumbai for several months, I have been following the discussion of branding this city for improving international tourism. There is much work to be done, some very minor and some very major. These are all hurdles which must be overcome in order to establish Mumbai as the world city it deserves to be.

1) Protect and promote the city's heritage neighborhoods.

Walking through Pydhonie and Bhuleshwar, I first discovered Mumbai. The old, beautiful architecture of this area must be preserved and recognized as the heritage site which it is. [As a witness to rabid urban redevelopment, I say without hesitation that these two neighborhoods are the future of the city's progress. Provide tax incentives to buildings owners for

repairing buildings and preserving the area. This will someday be your Greenwich Village. Appreciate it as such.]

2) Despite what is stated commonly, Mumbai is not a cosmopolitan city. Do not take this the wrong way: it has the leanings of cosmopolitanism, but in the range of South Asian cultures.

[There is no Chinatown, no Little Italy, or other major recognizable world cultures which are marketed by other branded cities. There are however enclaves of Marathis, Bengalis, Goans, Malayalees, Biharis, Punjabis, etc. The Western tourist is generally ignorant of the differences between these cultures and will only see "Indian culture" until it is illuminated for them.] Mumbai's cosmopolitanism is South Asia-centric, so brand it as such and you will see an increase in interest for the variety of unique cultures that exist.

3) Add a tourist seating area in the local trains. I understand how crowded the trains already are to consider taking away more space, but they are one of the biggest and most intimidating hurdles to visitors who want to see outside of South Bombay. Use a small section of one car, keep a ticket checker in it to make sure it is being paid for, and as money flows into the city add

more trains.

4) Establish a hawker's bazaar in the tourist districts and create a general non-hawking zone there. It is impossible to walk through Colaba without being harassed to buy a drum or a giant balloon. However, if there were a designated bazaar for this kind of merchandise it would attract buyers as a destination to visit rather than chasing them away from popular areas. [If want to exploit the wallet of the Western tourist, play up and sell them exoticism of the bazaar.]

5) Enforce laws against spitting and using the streets as a bathroom. [Stop the burning of garbage on the roadside and improve municipal waste collection. Put fines levied against people who abuse the city directly into cleanup efforts.]

6) Fix the sidewalks and open manholes. [Require all barbed-wire fences to be raised to a minimum of 7 feet high. If you have an increase in tourism and there are troubles such as this, you will similarly see an increase in litigation for everyone who injures themselves in those pitfalls which we have all memorized and know how to avoid.]

7) Utilize tourist interest in Dharavi and promote the growing movement of responsible tourism by furthering the development of practical infrastructure for the people in those neighborhoods: [access to water, bathrooms, and so forth. If the slums are legalized construction they will be there forever. Use foreign interest to make life better for the people who live in them.]

[8) There is a serious and obvious problem which I will not speak of for fear of reprisal. In effect, this is two major issues: the one which I cannot speak of, and the fact that I cannot speak of it. The complexities will take time to work out, but the answer is obvious: This is the 21st century. Grow up.¹]

Mumbai deserves to be a world city and has everything it needs: entertainment, culture, history, nightlife, economy, sightseeing, and a unique flair that sets it apart from the nation. But take care of the wonderful place in which you live. To brand "I Love Mumbai", you must first love Mumbai.

1 Refers to the actions of Hindu nationalist party MNS and, to a lesser extent, Shiv Sena. These groups for riots, violence, and forced strikes as well as racist actions against North Indians, South Indians, and Muslims. This is a sensitive situation that everyone in Mumbai knows about.