

What's Your City's Claim to Fame?

Take action to define your identity and image

By Jeff Coy, ISHC

If your city has a nickname, it adds to your identity. It says something about the people who live there --- their values, what they view as important. Whether it is official or unofficial, a nickname tells a story about your city and begins to establish a brand. Your city's brand has economic value in terms of attracting visitors.

The top-ranked nicknames are The Big Apple (New York City), Sin City (Las Vegas), The Big Easy (New Orleans), Motor City (Detroit) and The Windy City (Chicago). New York also has a slogan: *the city that never sleeps*. Las Vegas, too, has a slogan: *what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas*. See how a city's personality emerges with just a nickname and a slogan?

What if a city had a song written about it or had an architectural icon? Would that inspire you to learn more about the city, visit or even live there? New York, New York is a classic song performed by Frank Sinatra and others that tells the world *if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere*. While the New York skyline has changed, the Empire State Building continues to be an architectural icon that makes up the city's image. Are you getting the picture about New York City?



Las Vegas has a song, Viva Las Vegas, performed by Elvis Presley. The famous Welcome to Las Vegas sign is an architectural icon that is recognized around the world. With a nickname, a slogan, a song and an architectural icon, are you getting the message that Las Vegas is sending to the world?

Make sure the icons for your city work well with visitors but also for the people who live in the city. The residents are the real city. The people are the most important part of a tourist destination. A city is judged by how it welcomes strangers. The nicknames, slogans, songs and icons being promoted to the world should accurately represent the people who live in the city.

The three most successful tourism campaigns of all time are made in America: *I Love New York*, *Virginia is for Lovers* and *Las Vegas' What Happens Here, Stays Here*.



City Nicknames

It's very difficult coming up with a nickname that fits your city. Be careful. It defines who you are and what you have to offer. View the list below and judge for yourself the best and the worst nicknames. Guess which city is:

America's Adventure Place --- Reno NV
America's Most Vertical City --- Jerome AZ
All America City --- Tupelo MS
Beantown --- Boston MA
Brew City --- Milwaukee WI
Birthplace of Rock 'n Roll --- Memphis TN
Cherry Capital of the World --- Traverse City MI
City of Flowers --- Seattle WA
City of Lights --- Anchorage AK
City by the Bay --- San Francisco CA
City of Roses --- Portland OR
City of Brotherly Love --- Philadelphia PA
City of Lakes --- Minneapolis MN
City of Witches --- Salem MA
City of Angels --- Los Angeles CA
Chili Pepper Capital of the World --- Hatch NM
Cold Spot of the Nation --- International Falls MN
Cowtown --- Fort Worth TX
Gateway to the West --- St Louis MO
Golf Capital of the World --- Myrtle Beach SC
Heart of Route 66 --- Kingman AZ
Home of the Giant Bowling Pin --- Tampa FL
Hotlanta --- Atlanta GA
La La Land --- Los Angeles CA
Lost Wages --- Las Vegas NV
Mad City --- Madison WI
Michigan's Little Bavaria --- Frankenmuth MI
Mile High City --- Denver CO
Mile High City --- Prescott AZ
Mini Apple --- Minneapolis MN
Mistake on the Lake --- Cleveland OH
Motown --- Detroit MI
Motor City --- Detroit MI
Music City --- Nashville TN
Nap Town --- Indianapolis IN
Rodeo Capital of the World --- Cody WY
Sin City --- Las Vegas NV
Space City USA --- Titusville FL
Spamtown USA --- Austin MN
Surf City USA --- Huntington Beach CA

The Big A --- Atlanta GA
The Big Apple --- New York City NY
The Big D --- Dallas TX
The Big Easy --- New Orleans LA
The City Different --- Santa Fe NM
The City That Was So Nice They Named It Twice --- Walla Walla WA
The City with a Mission --- San Gabriel CA
The Crescent City --- New Orleans LA
The Little Apple --- Manhattan KS
The Old Pueblo --- Tucson AZ
The Space City ---Houston TX
The Town Too Tough to Die --- Tombstone AZ
The West's Most Western Town --- Scottsdale AZ
The Windy City --- Chicago IL
Tinseltown --- Hollywood CA
Valley of the Sun --- Phoenix AZ
Sweet Onion Capital of the World --- Vidalia
Western Adventure --- Las Cruces NM

Top US City Slogans

Some cities have nicknames; others have slogans. Here is a list of city slogans --- official, unofficial, past and present. How many city slogans do you recognize? What slogans create a mental image of that city in your mind? What slogans seem to work best? Which ones miss the mark?

Always Turned On --- Atlantic City NJ
City With Sol --- San Diego CA
Cleveland Rocks! --- Cleveland OH
Experience Our Sense of Yuma --- Yuma AZ
Keep Austin Weird --- Austin TX
Live Large. Think Big --- Dallas TX
Rare. Well Done --- Omaha NE
Soul of the Southwest --- Taos NM
So Very Virginia --- Charlottesville VA
The Aliens Aren't the Only Reason to Visit --- Roswell NM
The City That Never Sleeps --- New York City NY
The Sweetest Place on Earth --- Hershey PA
There's More Than Meets the Arch --- St Louis MO
What Happens Here, Stays Here --- Las Vegas NV
Where the Trail Starts and the Buck Stops --- Independence MO

The City That Never Sleeps is a popular slogan that comes from the lyrics of the song New York New York written by John Kander and Fred Ebb and recorded by Liza Minnelli and Frank Sinatra. A no brainer, the slogan accurately describes the many stores, restaurants and eateries that are open 24 hours a day. The lyrics, "If I can make it there, I'll make it

anywhere” sums up what many New Yorkers think about their city: competition is intense but success is richly rewarded. Other lyrics stress personal responsibility in the line, “It’s up to you, New York, New York. But, there’s another song about loving New York!

I Love New York is both a logo and a song that are the basis of an advertising campaign in the 1970s to promote tourism in New York City. The advertising agency was Wells Rich Green --- hired to develop a marketing strategy. The trademarked logo created by Milton Glaser consists of the capital letter I, followed by a red heart symbol, below which are the capital letters N and Y set in a rounded slab serif typeface called American Typewriter. The icon was an immediate success and continued for years in licensed and unlicensed versions by imitators worldwide. “I Love New York” the song was written and composed by Steve Karmen as part of the advertising campaign. In 1980 Governor Hugh Carey declared it the state’s anthem. In a move that was remarkable for Karmen, who is well known for retaining the publishing rights to his songs, he gave the rights to the song to the state for free.

Virginia is for Lovers, launched in 1969, is one of the most beloved and enduring tourism ad campaigns in the country. Over 40 years old, the phrase celebrates a love of life and a passion for travel although the wink-wink appealed to younger consumers. The first ad appeared in *Bride’s Magazine*. The idea came from a creative team headed by George Woltz of Martin & Woltz Inc, a Richmond-based advertising agency. According to Martin, a \$100-a-week copywriter named Robin McLaughlin came up with the advertising concept that read, “Virginia is for history lovers.” For a beach-oriented ad, the headline would have read, “Virginia is for beach lovers and for a mountain ad, “Virginia is for mountain lovers,” and so on. Thought to be too limiting, the agency decided to drop the modifier and made it simply, “Virginia is for Lovers.” The idea was that whatever people loved most about a vacation, Virginia was the ideal destination. Today, *Virginia is for Lovers* is still the official state travel slogan as well an iconic symbol in American culture.

R&R Partners Inc created the advertising campaign slogan, *What Happens Here, Stays Here*, in 2004 for the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority. The LVCVA paid R&R Partners nearly \$325 million connecting the city with the slogan. While costly, the investment paid off. After years of declining tourism, the campaign brought Las Vegas a record-breaking 37.4 million visitors in 2004 and four consecutive years of growth. By 2007, the slogan had reached iconic status. The slogan transformed Las Vegas from an attraction for seniors and families to a place where the rich and famous go to party. Las Vegas went back to a place that would keep your secrets and let you have some forbidden fun. When the economy turned down, the city ran some new ads about hard-working people earning some well-deserved rest and relaxation, but they didn’t work. During the first two months of 2011, the number of visitors to Las Vegas fell 10% from a year earlier, according to LVCVA. They say new research showed, that even in a painful recession, consumers preferred the idea of going to Las Vegas to sample pleasures unavailable at home. Result is, the city is funding another \$7.8 million campaign using the old slogan, *What Happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas*. Touted as the best ad campaign in history, the iconic slogan was inducted into the Madison Avenue Advertising Walk of Fame in October 2011.

Looking for a jingle writer? Barry Manilow is a master at it. In his early years he began work as a commercial jingle writer. Many of the jingles he wrote he would perform in his concerts, including, *Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there* and *I am stuck on Band-Aid, 'cause Band-Aids stick on me*. His singing-only credits include Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pepsi, Dr Pepper and the famed McDonald's *You deserve a break today*. So you want to develop a logo or slogan to increase visitation to your city?

Top Songs With City Names

Nothing defines a city quite like a song. If the song becomes a hit, the song will definitely imprint a personality on the city --- one that hopefully the locals like and can live up to. Best songs about cities include New York New York, I Left My Heart in San Francisco, By the Time I Get to Phoenix and El Paso.

“When it comes to a location immortalized in song, it’s hard to beat Rosa’s Cantina from the legendary song, El Paso, by the late great Marty Robbins,” according to Bob Vernon of Tales from the Road. “*Out in the west Texas town of El Paso / I fell in love with a Mexican girl / Night-time would find me in Rosa’s Cantina / Music would play and Felina would whirl.*” www.youtube.com/watch?v=hn3JB51NH_M It’s the story of a lovely young maiden that drove a love-sick cowboy to out-shoot another man for her favors.

Is there really a Rosa’s Cantina in El Paso? Yes. Anita and Robert Zubia opened the place back in 1957 on the main thoroughfare through town. It was the inspiration for the song.



The story is so compelling that people come from around the world to have lunch and a beer at the cantina made famous by Robbin’s song. “It’s amazing,” said Oscar Lopez who bought the cantina from his relatives in 2007. “People come from all over to see this place. It is incredible how far-reaching the reputation of Rosa’s Cantina is.” Oscar can prove it. He has a guest book with signatures from as far away as Australia, Germany, France, Brazil, China and even Afghanistan. One blogger said, “I’ve

been listening to that song since I was 12 years old. I’m closing on 60 now. I know it up, down, backwards and sideways. It was the reason I went to El Paso.”

Is there any doubt that this hit song imprinted the cowboy-gunfighter image on the city of El Paso? Is there any doubt that this song increased the number of visitors to El Paso --- that it made an economic impact? Are the city leaders satisfied with the city’s branding? Has the tourism bureau adopted the image as the one they want to promote worldwide? Do the locals believe that the image accurately reflects their values? What are they doing to polish or cloud that image we have of El Paso?

How many songs about cities do you recognize? Check out this list:

Abilene --- George Hamilton IV, Sonny James
Albuquerque --- Neil Young
Amarillo by Morning --- George Strait
April in Paris --- Ella Fitzgerald
Battle of New Orleans --- Johnny Horton
By the Time I Get to Phoenix --- Glen Campbell www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUg5p3BncuQ
Chattanooga Choo Choo --- Glenn Miller
Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy --- Freddie Cannon
Chicago --- Frank Sinatra
Dallas --- The Flatlanders
Detroit City --- Bobby Bare
Do You Know the Way to San Jose --- Dionne Warwick
El Paso --- Marty Robbins
Galveston --- Glen Campbell
Houston --- Dean Martin
I Can Still Make Cheyenne --- George Strait
I Left My Heart in San Francisco --- Tony Bennett www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryF9p-nqsWw
I Love LA --- Randy Newman
I Love New York --- Madonna
It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary --- John McCormack
Jackson --- Johnny Cash & June Carter Cash
Kansas City --- Wilbert Harrison
Key Largo --- Bertie Higgins
Kokomo --- The Beach Boys
Last Train to Clarksville --- The Monkees
Leaving Las Vegas --- Sheryl Crow
Little Old Lady From Pasadena --- Jan & Dean
Lubbock or Leave It --- The Dixie Chicks
Memphis Tennessee --- Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, Johnny Rivers, Beatles
Nashville Cats --- Lovin' Spoonful
New York, New York --- Frank Sinatra www.youtube.com/watch?v=WV02nP9PLnQ
Okie from Muskogee --- Merle Haggard
O Little Town of Bethlehem --- Various
Saginaw Michigan --- Lefty Frizzell
San Antonio Rose --- Patsy Cline
Sioux City Sue --- Curly Gibbs
Surf City --- Jan & Dean
Sweet Home Chicago --- Robert Johnson
Tallahassee Lassie --- Freddie Cannon
The Girl from Ipanema --- Stan Getz & Astrud Gilberto
Tijuana Taxi --- Herb Alpert & Tijuana Brass
Twenty-Four Hours from Tulsa --- Gene Pitney
Viva Las Vegas --- Elvis Presley www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPuKoqu6kMk
Way Down Yonder in New Orleans --- Freddie Cannon
Wheeling, West Virginia --- Neal Sedaka
Wichita Lineman --- Glen Campbell www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qoymGCDYzU

Want a song for your city? Jimmy Webb wrote numerous platinum-selling classics, including Up, Up & Away, By the Time I Get to Phoenix, Wichita Lineman and Galveston. His songs have been recorded or performed by Glen Campbell, The 5th Dimension, The Supremes, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Linda Ronstadt, Carly Simon and others. Contact the Nashville Songwriters Association International. Go to www.nashvillesongwriters.com.

Top US City Icons

What about architectural icons --- like the Statue of Liberty, Gateway Arch and the Space Needle? Architectural icons communicate their locations instantly to tourists around the world. They define a city's identity and they attract visitors. Do you know where they are?



If you said, New York City, St Louis and Seattle, you just proved my point!

The Statue of Liberty was a gift to the United States from the people of France. The French financed the statue, and the Americans were to provide the site and pedestal. Fundraising for the pedestal proved difficult until publisher Joseph Pulitzer started a campaign to raise \$100,000 (\$2.3 million today) by promising to publish the name of every contributor no matter how small the amount given. Donations flooded in. The statue was erected on its pedestal in 1886. The statue rapidly became a landmark. Many immigrants who entered through New York saw it as a welcoming sign. Not very tall, the lady measures only 305 feet, but she is one powerful icon representing not only a city but a whole nation. And she speaks, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free." Typically, about 3.2 million people visit the icon every year. On October 28, 2011, the statue closed for a year of repairs and upgrades, but Liberty Island remains open.

Gateway Arch aka the St Louis Arch was completed in 1965 as a monument to the westward expansion of the United States. It started in 1933 as an idea in the head of a

local citizen. It grew into a \$30 million request from the US Congress, which President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law. The design competition ran from 1945-1948. Finally, the project broke ground in 1959 and the foundation was laid in 1961. Construction of the arch itself began in 1963 and completed in 1965. More difficult to build than a 62-story skyscraper, the arch is an inverted weighted catenary shape --- a chain that supports its own weight. The legs of the arch are bigger than the arch at the top. There is a 12-passenger elevator to the 373-foot level and a tram in each leg. Near the top of the arch, passengers exit the tram and climb a slight grade to enter the arched observation area. The observation deck can handle about 160 people at one time. Today, about 4.1 million people visit the St Louis Arch annually.

The Space Needle is a towering symbol for the City of Seattle and a major landmark for the Pacific Northwest. It was built for the 1962 World's Fair. Nearly 2.3 million people rode the elevators to the top during the fair. The tower is 605 feet high. It appears taller because it occupies a prominent position nearly one mile northwest of downtown. Hotelier Ed Carlson, president of Westin International and chairman of the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, had the idea for erecting a tower with a restaurant after a visit to see Stuttgart Tower in Germany. John Graham Jr got involved and made it a revolving restaurant similar to the tower he designed for the Ala Moana shopping center in Honolulu.

The City of Seattle did not finance the space needle, and initially no land could be found. Finally, private investors discovered a small 120x120 plot within the fairgrounds. The land sold for \$75,000. The Space Needle was privately financed by the Pentagram Corporation which consisted of Bagley Wright, contractor Howard S. Wright and others. By 1977, Howard Wright owned it 100% under the name of Space Needle Corporation. The Space Needle was finished in less than one year. Construction cost was \$4.5 million.

The top dome, consisting of 5 levels of observation deck and restaurant, was perfectly balanced so it could rotate using a 1.5 hp motor. In 2000, the SkyCity restaurant, observation deck and base retail store were renovated and the Skybeam was installed at a cost of \$21 million. In 2007, the Space Needle welcomed its 45 millionth visitor. Although it isn't one of the tallest towers in the world, the Seattle Space Needle is one of the most prominent. Over the years, it has appeared in numerous films such as *It Happened at the World's Fair* (1962), *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) and TV shows *Fraser* and *Grey's Anatomy*. About 1.3 million people visit the Space Needle annually.

Cities around the world compete with each other to attract their share of the world tourist market. Like any product, cities must grab your attention, attract your interest and build your desire to take action --- to experience the excitement of visiting a new destination.

What could a nickname, slogan, song or architectural icon do for your city?

[See City Branding, Part 2, Observation Towers Worldwide](#)
[See City Branding, Part 3, Observation Towers in the USA](#)



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