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## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE COMPANY REPUTATION**

**ABSTRACT.** Since there's a race for customers on the market of the consumer goods, cities of the 21st century compete for the inhabitants, tourists, investors and companies. In this competition the image and good reputation of the city, their conscious framing is one of the biggest feats of arms. The economy of the dynamically developing city, Győr is based after several system changes on the automobile industry. Its main leg is the important international company with headquarter in Győr since 1993, the Audi Hungaria Zrt. (AH).

As results of the research analysing the marketing communicational print and film tools of the company and the city, the author tried to figure out, how the AH and the city interact in their corporate communication, in their reputation.

**JEL Classification:** M39

**Keywords:** reputation, stakeholder, headquarter, impact assessment, marketing communication tools.

### **Introduction and objectives**

Since there's a race for customers on the market of the consumer goods, cities of the 21st century compete for the inhabitants, tourists, investors and international companies. In this competition a huge scale of city marketing tools are available, the image and good reputation of the city, their conscious framing are one of the biggest feats of arms. The economy of the dynamically developing city, Győr experienced several system changes, it had transformed from a commercial city to an industrial one, and nowadays it has been transited to a dynamically developing centre.

Today Győr is the sixth biggest city in Hungary, home of more than 130.000 inhabitants. It is centre of the Kisalföld region, the county seat of Győr-Moson-Sopron County. It is an episcopal seat, a city rich at history. Győr is the third richest city on monuments in Hungary, home of the Champions League winner women handball team of Győri Audi ETO KC and a University city. These are undoubted facts about the city, which declares its present now, in the second decade of the years 2000 curiously according to the slogan „Future is being built in Győr!” The economy of the dynamically developing city is based – after several model changes – on the car manufacturing industry. Its main leg is the Audi Hungaria Zrt. (AH), other important counterforts are the suppliers connecting organically to this. Therefore no wonder, that the present of the city, the economic prosperity have their mark not only in the economic index numbers, but in the image face of the city and in the identity of its inhabitants as well (Jakab, 2014a). The blooming economical background

has its positive effects on the to 0 converging unemployment rates, on weekdays fully booked accommodation facilities, but on the other hand it generates growing needs for new, qualified workforce, on weekends and in periods with lower business intensity the demand on behalf leisure tourists. To attract young, high-educated inhabitants, the strong reputation of the AH should appear in the city's reputation. But, are there any tourists willing to visit a destination with a strong industrial reputation? In order to attract leisure tourists, how should the city balance being Hungary's third richest settlement on monuments and being the Hungarian citadel of car manufacturing?

Nowadays in Hungary there are more and more cities focusing on managing their reputation, but we can't find another city like Győr, who is working so closely with their stakeholders in order to build and maintain more positive reputation.

*The research objectives* are therefore to analyse the reputation of the biggest investor of the city, AH and the city itself. The research is based on literature and content analysis of promotional materials as research methods.

*The target of the research* was to find the answer to the question as follows: What kind of effects has the dynamically developing car manufacturer AH – headquartered in Győr, led by the German premium category company – on the reputation and image of the city of Győr based on the analysed marketing communication tools. The research was conducted as part of a wide-range-analysis<sup>1</sup> where the synergic effects were identified through literature and content analysis, expert interviews and questionnaire surveys among three stakeholder groups.

*Tasks of the study are:*

1. To interpret the main company and city reputation definitions and research methods;
2. To analyse selected marketing communication tools of the city and the company;
3. To assume the opinions about the city-AH-cooperation and draw conclusions in order to strengthen the common reputation building process.

The research has practical value – it contributes with useful information to evaluate the current reputation of Győr and AH, highlights fields of importance within it and draws suggestions for further steps of cooperation. Examining the international and Hungarian literature, the authors have not found any examples of research that would have been carried out in this area in relation to companies and their headquarter cities. The main focus of reputation analysis is the country-of-origin (COO) effect, how perceptions about a country impact the evaluation of the country's products or brands (Newburry, 2012), what can also be called as the made-in marketing or made-in label effect (Papp-Váry, 2014). Kang and Yang (2010) linked the country-of-origin effect not only to country reputation but also to the overall corporate reputation of a country, but cities have still not been examined.

## **1. Reputation definitions, measurement methods**

### **1.1. Corporate reputation and how we can measure it**

According to Péter Szeles – former president of the Hungarian Public Relations Association – in many people's point of view reputation is equal to publicity, brand value or even the image. In various non-academic writings these academic categories are often interchanged or used for the same phenomenon. Reputation is influenced by the actions of the company and it is formed about the company itself among its stakeholders (Szeles, 2010), summarizing it is the combination of opinions and impressions of various people in general (Roper, Fill, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> carried out by the author Pétra Jakab.

In this interpretation corporate reputation, which is based on the impression, opinion of the stakeholders, can be interpreted similar to the reputation of a city. However, it is a broader category than a product's reputation, because not only the customers of a company belong to its stakeholders, but *inter alia* the suppliers, competitors, partners from the education, public sector as well (Roper, Fill, 2012). Charles Fombrun (professor at the New York University and president of the Reputation Institute) defines the conception of the corporate reputation as „a general imagination, made up by the voters of a company, furthermore the clear perception of that, how much the facilities of a company can meet the expectations of its stakeholders” (Fombrun, 1996).

The definition of Fombrun gives a good summary of the various definitions of corporate reputation. According to this, corporate reputation is the collective representation of activities and outcomes of the company in the past, which describes the capability of the company to give its various stakeholders a valuable outcome. It measures, how the relative opinion about the company among the staff (internal) and the stakeholders (external) is.

About the reputation, three categories often come to be mentioned: these are the identity, brand and the image. The corporate identity is interpreted in our study in corporate context. While the identity is formed by the company, the image is formed by the community, the stakeholders, and the public. In its forming the company can play only an indirect role. The image is a certain picture formed in the individuals, members of the stakeholder groups. If it is positive, it is the basic condition of the trust, the good reputation. The development of the positive image means accordingly the reputation. It is often used as the synonym of the image. Therefore it must be pointed out, that differentiation between image and reputation is needed and useful, if only we take the fact in consideration, that image can change fast, even by the effect of the commercials, while more time and efforts are needed to build up reputation both in an internal and external point of view (Konczosné, 2013a).

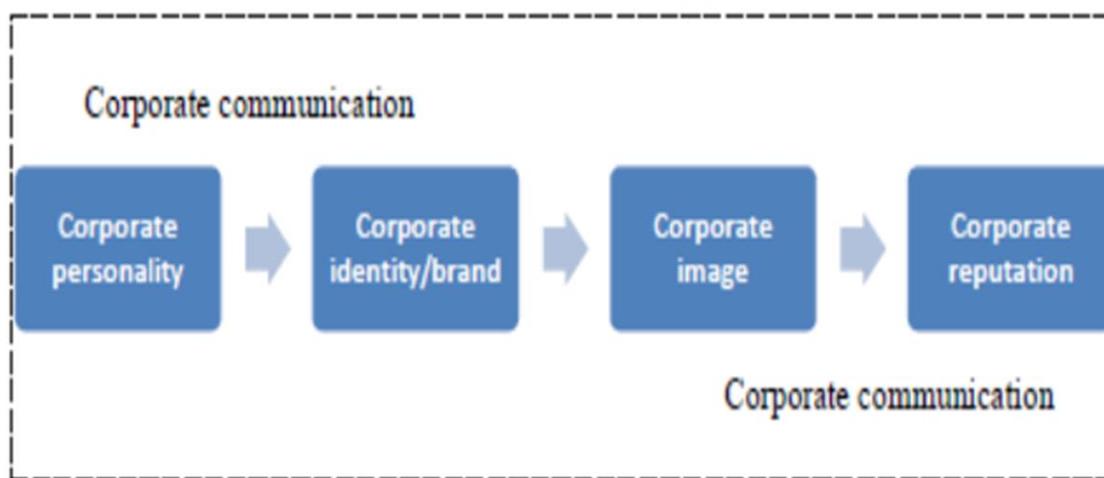


Fig. 1. Building blocks of the corporate reputation

Source: Roper-Fill, 2012, p. 35.

On *Fig. 1* there are the building blocks of corporate reputation. Corporate communication is the tool, which helps the process how corporate reputation is made up. Corporate personality is often called the character of a company and determines the corporate culture – how the company act like – and strategy. Corporate identity or the brand is the way how the company shows and views itself and wants to represent a picture viewed by others, its internal and external partners. It can be a combination of colour schemes, designs, words,

etc. Next step in the process is the corporate image, how the stakeholders see the company, what is the mental picture that springs up at the mention of the firm's name. While personality and identity are massive, image is fluid and can change from positive to negative to neutral. Corporate reputation is based on the opinion and view of all stakeholders and incorporates all building blocks of the process. Corporate communication enables the process to run and connects the building blocks to each other (Konczosné, 2013b).

How can we measure the value a company's reputation? Which factors do we have to take in consideration? The measurement of corporate reputation does not have a generally accepted, uniform method. In the followings there are the short demonstration of the generally known ones, especially highlighted the method, which had been chosen in theory for the study in Győr.

The reputation ranking „Most admired companies” of the Fortune magazine had been till 1997 the unique reputation ranking and concentrated only on US American companies till 2008. The ranking is based on the 0-10 evaluation of nine attributions regarding the reputation.

Charles Fombrun developed a method in 1999, the Reputation Quotient, which was the first complex method to measure reputation. The respondents were consumers, employees, investors, who rated the companies on a 7 point Likert scale according to 20 characteristics in six dimensions.

The improved version of the RQ is the RepTrak Model and the Global Pulse Study, which were established by the Reputation Institute in 2006. The 23 most important indicators are assigned to seven basic motivators as a result of qualitative and quantitative research methods. RepTrak™ model highlights the connection between the emotional (feeling, esteem, trust, admire) and the rational (product/service, innovation, workplace, governance, citizenship, leadership, performance) dimensions. Reputation Institute has become the world's leading reputation-based research advisory firm, founded by Dr. Charles Fombrun and Dr. Cees van Riel in 1997. Reputation Institute's RepTrak®Research is the world's largest and highest quality normative reputation benchmark database.

## ***1.2. City reputation and how it can be measured***

Not only the companies, but countries, regions, cities, organisations and persons as well do their best for their good reputation (Konczosné, 2012), so in Győr, too, the colleagues of the City Marketing and Event Management Department, a special department of the Mayor's Office deal with the communication, PR activities and marketing of the city.

The city image and communication activities, as building blocks of the reputation, focus on many target groups, stakeholders, among others the investors. Responding the questions regarding the headquarter choice of a company is very important for the town councillors, because they can create the supply and image of their city according the preferences of the big investor companies (Cséfalvay, 1994; Jakab, 2011). Other important stakeholder group are the inhabitants, who can gain their experiences, impressions regarding the city from a special point of view. They need a special approach different from the extern stakeholders. Main goal is to build up and strengthen local identity. The image of a city is assigned not only by its natural and built environment, monuments, cultural life, festivals, economy power, institutions, but mainly the people, who fill all these with content. Their satisfaction is important, because a happy, harmonious city attract more likely tourists, as they take part in cultural, out-door activities better at a pleasurable destination. Third target group of the city marketing are the tourists. I. a. the statistical data realized at the commercial accommodations can show the popularity of a given city as a tourist destination.

Summarized, as in the case of companies, countries and cities also have their own reputation, and this has an impact on their economies. Places with a good reputation welcome more tourists, increase exports, improve their public diplomacy, attract FDI, foreign knowledge & talent. According the above mentioned the good reputation of a city strongly correlates with an increase in the supportive behaviours shown towards the city, such as visiting the city, living or working in the city, or deciding to invest in the city (Reputation Institute, 2015).

City reputations can be measured in a similar way to those of people or companies. This survey is based on the dimensions of the RepTrak model considering the possible expansion of the research. The models of the Reputation Institute are capable to measure not only corporate reputation, but the reputation of cities, countries as well. So they can ensure an adequate international base to set up a model of Győr in the future.

According to the RepTrak model “the overall reputation of a city is an emotional perception constructed through direct experience, its own communication, the perspectives of third parties and generally accepted stereotypes” (Reputation Institute, 2015). In this method three main dimensions explain a city’s reputation: quality of life (appealing environment), quality of institutions (effective administration), and level of development (advanced economy). 100 cities with the largest population, largest GDP and enjoying the highest amount of tourism were selected to be examined with online interviews by the G8 countries’ general public. Similar to the corporate model the emotional reputation (City RepTrak®Pulse) was measured by the admiration, esteem, trust and good feeling generated by one city relative to others. Hard data were also involved by measuring the rational reputation (City RepTrak®Index). Hard attributes got scores, which were multiplied by the weight.

As Győr is not part of the measurement, the results are not relevant in the study. On the other hand, there were some correlations important to highlight. It turned out that a city’s reputation is in great part determined by the country’s reputation and is strongly related to its familiarity.

## **2. Research – methodology, results and discussion**

### **2.1. Method and pattern**

In order to get an insight into how reputation of the city and the company is connected, there are various research methods to use, because this context hasn’t been analysed yet. In this research, the authors concentrate on the link between the building blocks of reputation, on the corporate communication of the AH and the city. Among communicational materials the main representing ones were chosen to analyse.

Table 1. Analysed communication material

	Communicational material	AH	City of Győr
1.	ATL: print	annual report 2015	“image” brochure 2015
2.	ATL: film	official image film	official image film
3.	BTL: visitor centre	AH Visitor Centre	Visitor Centre – Tourinform Office Győr

*Source:* the author’s summary.

Content analysis as a research tool is used to determine the presence of each other’s appellation (in form of photos, names etc.) in different types of occurrences (see *Tab. 1*) to

draw conclusions which are not declared or translated into words in the texts, but are inferable from the context. On the one hand, the manifest content of the communication is analysed detachedly (Berelson, 1952), on the other hand, there are conclusions to draw from the context (Krippendorff, 1995). This research method can be used to analyse recorded, fixed communications, applicable sources are for example books, journals, websites, poems, newspapers, lyrics, paintings, speeches, letters, texts of online advertisements, therefore it fits to analyse the most marketing communication tools (Babbie, 2001, 2003). We can answer the classic communications questions: Who, What, Whom to, Why, How and What effect with?

The duration of the research is not relevant in this case, but the population from the sample was taken is relevant. Communicational tools from the company and the city published after 2011 are the basis of the research. In March 2011 the city of Győr was guest of honour at the national tourism fair in Budapest. At that time the new design manual of the city was launched, together with a new slogan. by Széchenyi István University (local university of Győr), Audi Hungaria and the Municipality of the City of Győr have begun to use the slogan as representatives of the three dimensions of the Triple Helix model. This event was the beginning of the declared marketing communication cooperation between the main actors.

The authors made content analysis between 2011 and 2015, published PR and marketing communications materials, used systematic sampling layered by publication and category (*Tab. 1*).

The looking, surfacing content encoding and the manifest – e.g. number of occurrences of a particular word, its synonyms, displaying of images and symbols in non-text contents – are quite close to the application of standardized questionnaires. After data processing, numerical results were obtained – e.g. the frequency of certain words. After the content analysis of the manifest, the coding of latent, hidden content was made. With the combination of the methods we can see the meaning of the content reliably and accurately.

The advantage of content analysis is that it allows the analysis of cases during a longer period. The researcher has no opportunity to intervene, so he can not affect the subject of the analysis.

## **2.2. Analysis**

### **ATL: print materials.**

#### **AH annual report 2015<sup>2</sup>.**

Responsible Publisher: Audi Hungaria Zrt.

Target group: all stakeholders of the AH.

Length: 87 pages.

The annual report of the AH is launched every year to inform about the actual results of the company. In the edition Focus Audi Hungaria in 2015 there are 14 topics, among these 7 to deal with production and the factory itself. Others highlight the importance of social responsibility, educational cooperation, local and regional social actions and activities – Engines made in Győr in the world, The most important happenings during the year, The world in our cars, Future-oriented educational cooperation, TT Birthplace Tour – at parties in the Audi Hungaria, Roundtable workshop: The power of communities, CR: Corporate responsibility. The topic “Engines made in Győr in the world” highlights the top quality of the local products being proud of the origin – Győr. Countries are used to be given as origins on products, and to highlight the city-of-origin means to be proud of the headquarter in the city. Among the seven presented car owners there is a couple of Győr working for the company

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<sup>2</sup> <http://audihungaria2015-hu.audiportal.hu/>

itself, who pointed out the importance having a car with a self-made-engine. Also a local company-owner presented his car highlighting the proud feeling to drive a luxury car with a local-made “heart”.

In the topic “The most important happenings during the year” from 19 news 12 have connection with the headquarter city’s society, education, tourism or culture. AH prefers to highlight its sponsoring activity (signing a sponsorship contract with the Philharmonic Orchestra, giving further cars to the Ballet Ensemble and the Police, supporting the Formula Student university race competition in Győr, organizing a volunteer day and donation before Christmas time for colleagues). Among the news two were tourism-related too, welcoming the 50.000 visitor in the AH Visitor Centre and hosting a new event, the TT Birthplace Tour in Győr.

In the report the name of the city Győr is mentioned 65 times, the mayor of the city appears on 4 photos in it. The common slogan used by the Municipality, the AH, the SZE local university and additionally the Audi ETO Handball Club is proclaimed by Peter Kössler, Chairman of the Board of Management.

#### **“Image” brochure 2015 - Győr<sup>3</sup>.**

Responsible Publisher: Municipality of the City of Győr.

Target group: all stakeholders of the city, mainly tourists.

Length: 23 pages.

The image brochure of the city of Győr is the main print information about the city. It was launched in 2011 in Hungarian, German, English, Russian and Chinese, but was updated last in 2015. There are 11 topics creating a global representation of the city: Famous citizens of Győr, The city of rivers, Hungary’s 3<sup>rd</sup> richest city in monuments, The city of culture, The city of children, The sporty city, The innovative city, The city of meetings, Legends and true stories of Győr, Information about twin cities, General information. Each topic contains also related a “Did you know” part, so does the innovation. This short story is about the famous German Audi brand and the Hungarian headquarter situated in Győr. The style of these sentences transmits pride because of the high-quality company and the produced cars and engines.

In the report the name of the AH is mentioned 7 times. The common slogan used by the Municipality, the AH, the SZE local university and additionally the Audi ETO Handball Club can be seen in the brochure as well.

#### **ATL: official image films.**

#### **AH image film<sup>4</sup>.**

The 3:08 minutes long company’s image film was made in 2013. The introductory part (1:13 minutes long) starts with a sentence: There is a place in the world, where... Scenes are shown about handball, football, ballet, university life, all sponsored by the AH. This part ends with the statement: The name of this city is Győr. Scenes are shown about the inhabitants, places of interest, monuments, festivals, vivid city social life. The main body of the film presenting the company starts with the sentence: In this city works the Audi Hungaria Zrt. This part contains statements, missions, goals of the company and its colleagues.

If we take the parts of the film in consideration, it can be clearly seen, that main focus is both on the headquarter city and on the company.

<sup>3</sup> [http://turizmus.gyor.hu/data/files/turizmus/imazs\\_en.pdf](http://turizmus.gyor.hu/data/files/turizmus/imazs_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Audi Hungaria Zrt. Image film (2013). Corporate communication and governmental affairs.

Tab. 2. Structure of the AH image film

Parts of the film	Length (minutes)	Content
introduction	1:13	scenes about institutions from Győr
Győr	0:13	pictures about the city and local people
AH	1:42	company and colleagues

*Source:* the author's summary.

### **City of Győr image film<sup>5</sup>.**

The 3:12 minutes long city image film was made in 2013. The introductory part (1:25 minutes long) starts with the sentence: "There is a country in the heart of Europe, Hungary." and deals with placing the city in Europe, considering culture, gastronomy, history, geography, social aspects and sport. The main part starts with the statement: In this country there is a city, there are many stories about. The name of that city is Győr. The statement is followed by the outstanding characteristics of Győr regarding the atmosphere (rivers), monuments, culture, children, sport and innovation. This part is made up of scenes showing the plant, production, cars and colleagues of AH, representing the industry and innovation of Győr as the main company.

Tab. 3. Structure of the city's image film

Parts of the film	Length (minutes)	Content
introduction	1:25	scenes about Hungary
Győr in general	0:20	pictures about the city and local people
The city of rivers	0:07	river life of Győr
Hungary's 3 <sup>rd</sup> richest city on monuments	0:10	famous monuments
The city of culture	0:16	festivals, cultural institutes
The city of the children	0:08	Győrköcfestival, happy children
The sporty city	0:20	sport clubs
The innovative city	0:15	main company of Győr: AH representing the industry and innovation
closing part	0:10	slogan

*Source:* the author's summary.

The film maker of both image films was the same company on purpose. AH and the Municipality are sharing marketing material, films, photos for free with each other.

### **BTL: Visitor Centres.**

#### **Audi Hungaria Visitor Centre.**

Audi Hungaria is not only one of the most defining companies in the Győr region, it is also a popular destination among visitors. The Audi Hungaria Visitor Centre makes it happen providing in addition to the classical factory tours an overview of engine production and vehicle production. Visitors can participate in a variety of theme tours. Year by year, the company has drawn more and more visitors to Győr both from Hungary and abroad. Since the Visitor Centre was first opened in 2010, a total of 58,000 visitors have gained an insight into the world of Audi Hungaria. The tourism attraction was so popular, that the factory decided to expand it in April 2015. The size of the Visitor Centre building has been doubled to cover an

<sup>5</sup> Győr, Municipality of the City (2013). Image film. City marketing and event management department.

area of 500 square metres. The new centre awaits visitors with three presentation rooms, a shop and a café corner. After their tour of the factory, guests can buy various items in the Audi Hungaria Shop or enjoy a cup of coffee or tea in the pleasant atmosphere of the Audi Hungaria Café. The factory tours help bring Audi Hungaria and also its headquarter city, Győr closer to people, make them feel enthusiastic about the products and the brand. Factory tours contribute significantly to reinforce the four-ring brand's positive image.

#### Győr-related contents:

- Every factory tour begins with a film being analogue to the image film of the AH in its structure. It starts with general information about the headquarter city.
- In the Visitor Centre there is a Győr-blotter containing information about free-time and cultural activities in the city and in the surroundings.
- There are also leaflets – image brochure – for tourist available.

#### **Visitor Centre - Tourinform Office Győr.**

The Visitor Centre was opened in 2012 situating in the heart of Győr, located on the walking street. It offers a wide variety of services for visitors such as an interactive exhibition, ticket sales for events, storage lockers, a conference room up to 30 people and on the ground floor a gift shop selling high-quality souvenirs of Hungary, Győr and its surrounding region. The Tourinform office has the main goal to give information to locals and tourists and to promote the city.

#### On the wall installation– AH (thematic wall-part, film)

The Tourinform Győr office is on the first floor where there are brochures and information for tourists and locals. Informational material is available in Hungarian, English and German. You can buy tickets for concerts, opera and theatre plays, festivals, exhibitions, sports and other events.

#### AH-related contents:

- tourists can buy tickets to the Audi Visitor Centre in advance.
- in the interactive exhibition the AH represents industry and innovation of the city. It has an own wall surface with bilingual information, pictures and films as well presenting the company.
- in the Tourinform office there is a big 3D-puzzle and an Audi picture on it.
- in the shop there are Audi souvenirs in a separate vitrine represented and sold.

## Conclusions

According to the Reputation Institute's definition the overall reputation is an emotional perception constructed through direct experience, its own communication, the perspectives of third parties and generally accepted stereotypes. Corporate reputation is based on the opinion and view of all stakeholders and incorporates all building blocks of the process. Corporate communication connects the building blocks to each other enabling the process to run. The research examined the communicational tools of both the city and the company, in order to see, how they support each other in their reputation building process.

## Generalization of the results

Tab. 4. Results of the analysis

Communicational material	AH	Cross reference compared to the content	City of Győr	Cross reference compared to the content
1. ATL: print	annual report 2015	very high	“image” brochure 2015	low, compared with other companies very high
2. ATL: film	official image film	very high	official image film	high, compared with other companies very high
3. BTL: visitor centre	AH Visitor Centre	high	Visitor Centre – Tourinform Office Győr	high

Source: the author's summary.

Based on the executed research, the following *conclusions were drawn*:

1. Both the city of Győr and the AH bring corporate communication in prominence in order to manage their positive reputation.

2. The city and the AH focus on representing themselves highlighting each other. In the 1<sup>st</sup> analysed communication material, the AH annual report 2015 the company the top quality of local products and the city of origin were pointed out, while corporate responsibility plays an important role in the life of the factory as shown in the report. In the image brochure of Győr among the colourful faces of the city economy and innovation has been very outstanding and determinative and as a single company the AH was represented in the brochure. Working with the same film making partner means also a close cooperation, because the characteristics of visual effects, thematic pictures and scenes are similar to each other creating a feeling of collaboration and interaction. The partners represent each other in the visitor centres, too, so tourist and local people meet the installation, information material right on the spot. With this method people connect the two actors and they will be part of each other's image.

Based on the conducted research, the following *proposals were formulated*:

Both the city and the company have a positive reputation, what is admitted by each other. Making efforts to strengthen each other's reputation is the right way to continue in the corporate communication and other PR and marketing tools as well.

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