

# US tourism ads entice foreign tourists

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The federal government's "Brand USA" campaign to attract international tourists could also have a positive effect on viewer attitudes toward the United States, according to a new study recently published online in *American Behavioral Scientist* by researchers from Southern Methodist University and Oklahoma State University-Tulsa.

The article, "Strategic Uses of Mediated Public Diplomacy: International Reaction to U.S. Tourism Advertising," is the latest in a series of international studies in which Professor Alice Kendrick of SMU and Professor Jami Fullerton of OSU-Tulsa have observed a phenomenon they call the Bleedover Effect of tourism [advertising](#).

"Results have shown that people who see tourism promotion feel more favorably about the advertised country, even if they never intend to visit," said Kendrick. "In the Brand USA study, the commercial appeared to do double-duty for government and industry – both in terms of the intended effect of piquing interest in travel to the U.S. and as a catalyst for goodwill."

"Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, researchers have tried to understand whether strategic use of global media might improve perceptions of the United States," said Fullerton. "In this study, we not only investigated whether the Land of Dreams commercial increased desire to travel to the United States, but also if Australians expressed more positive views about America after seeing it."

Kendrick is professor of advertising at the Temerlin Advertising Institute at SMU's Meadows School of the Arts and Fullerton is professor and the Peggy Welch Chair in Strategic Communications at OSU-Tulsa.

The Travel Promotion Act of 2009 established The Corporation for Travel Promotion, a public-private partnership that was later dubbed Brand USA. The bill created a multi-million dollar global marketing effort to promote the U.S. as a travel destination, including the "Land of Dreams" television commercial, which served as the stimulus for an online experimental study of Australian adults.

Fullerton and Kendrick have examined mediated public diplomacy for several years, beginning with studies that culminated in a book about the controversial 2002 State Department's post-Sept. 11 advertising campaign to predominantly Muslim countries. In *Advertising's War on Terrorism: The Story of the Shared Values Initiative*, the authors presented their own studies as well as State Department documents that suggested that government-sponsored advertising could improve attitudes toward America.

**More information:** [abs.sagepub.com/content/early/...  
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Provided by Southern Methodist University

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