

# UNBOXING ISRAEL:

## TIKUN OLAM OR GETTING THINGS DONE

BY ALEX ELGIN PHOTOS BY UNBOXING ISRAEL: OR KAPLAN, AMIR MENAHEM

“It’s a challenge widely faced by those working with the young Jewish community in America: the next generation does not connect to Israel in the same way that their parents did. And with travel out of the question right now, the challenge grows even greater.”<sup>1</sup>

On August 13th I attend the “Unboxing Israel 2020 Summit” hosted by Vibe Israel USA. This event was held virtually, attracting world-wide participation, for us to discover the new toolbox created to assist us in telling Israel’s story. I also had the opportunity to speak with Vibe Israel USA President and CEO Becca Hurowitz who organized this summit. Unboxing Israel. What is it? What do you think?

Is it a branding slogan taken from YouTube or a new way of thinking about how Jewish communal and educational professionals engage the Jewish population with Israel in a way that is authentic and relevant to them?

The answer is both. Unboxing is essentially filming yourself opening boxes of toys or gadgets, uploading it to YouTube<sup>2</sup> and by filming yourself in action you create a narrative that people can understand and follow again and again. By doing so you create a digital community, a community of your followers.

Vibe Israel<sup>3</sup> is a not-for-profit organization focused on energizing and inspiring the next generation about Israel by harnessing the power of social media and using country branding strategies to reach audiences that no-one else is tapping into, thereby changing hearts and minds about Israel.

So how do you Brand the country? How do you unbox its treasure box of cultural marvels that tap into people’s hearts? And most importantly how do you create this good vibe and influence that can help engage the community in a way that talks to people’s minds?

It is interesting to reflect on the understanding we draw from our thousand-year-old Jewish philosophy: to celebrate the Life itself. Being In an “Israeli Box” means

before anything else we Feel Alive.

Vibe Israel built a toolkit to help us understand how we can compete for attention, just like a commercial brand. A Brand of feeling alive and able to compete on the world stage through Jewish identity and traditions. The Amplifier effect is what we are searching for, our communal “sound of Jewish voices” to connect people and communities to share our story.

The latest research on the next generation’s perception of Israel finds that the “living together” mode is a way of connecting people around the world. Interestingly enough, this sense of togetherness just increased during our lockdown period and our telling of the Israeli story became a necessity in creating the new normal global Jewish identity.

A presentation of Israel’s compelling story can have the power to engage the next generation—generation Z<sup>4</sup>, while preserving and reinforcing tights to Israel for X’s and Y’s.

Vibe Israel’s vast experience, resources, and professional guidance is told by the world’s leading branding agency. Vibe Academy<sup>5</sup> teaches you how to tell Israel’s story.

During these last months we all learned to participate virtually, and our interactive engagement tested out new ways of building new knowledge. In that regard Vibe Israel brings to the table digital assets—“Unboxing Israel” and “Search Israel” are resources to energize and inspire our discussions about Israel.

An interesting tool in their box is Vibe Live! This is a virtual Israel experience developed by Vibe Israel especially for Jewish organizations wishing to maintain the next gen’s connection to Israel when trips to Israel cannot take place.

But frankly speaking, talking to your



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audience, or creating a virtual experience is a huge challenge for educational professionals. “We have to adopt those tools to the local context to make it really work. Our tools are high level ideas, that everybody can plug in” mentioned Becca Hurowitz during a brief telephone call we had during a follow-up to the event week.

A possible solution from Vibe Israel: Working with digital influencers<sup>6</sup>, followed by a live “Ask Me Anything”<sup>7</sup> this format could provide a taste of “Know How” and begin the process of engaging not only in real (offline world), but digitally (online).

“The next generation of North American Jews don’t necessarily realize that Israel shares their values, and it’s our job to make sure we are telling Israel’s story from all angles, well beyond the conflict or religion. We want the next generation to choose to engage with Israel, not because they have to, but because they want to. And in a time when international travel isn’t in the cards, the best way to do this is virtually” said Vibe Israel USA CEO Becca Hurowitz. “We hope this summit will help Jewish professionals in their quest to energize and inspire the next generation about Israel—and by extension, connect young Jews to their Jewish identities.”

Unboxing Israel—what do you find inside? What narrative and images do you feel tells the “Good story”?

Is it about Israeli Hutzpa, Start Up Nation, or simply the Optimistic Nation of Dreamers and Doers?

Or is all the above with, of course, your voice. Your voice is the most important since you hear it inside your Jewish heart. It is that voice that can help us to build togetherness and Unbox Israel. It is that voice that drives Tikun Olam, through its own out of box

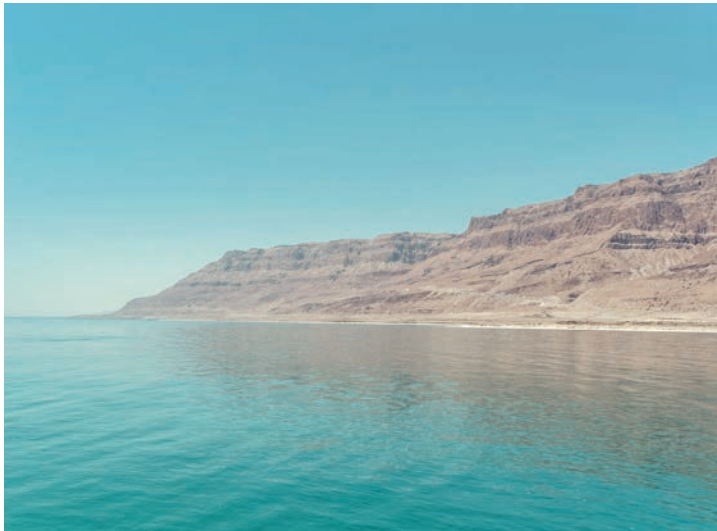




Hummus Table. Photo: Amir Menahem



Jaffa Flea Market. Photo: Amir Menahem



The Dead Sea. Photo: Or Kaplan



Sabich Toast. Photo: Amir Menahem



Tel-Aviv Bar. Photo: Or Kaplan



Jerusalem's Old City. Photo: Or Kaplan

Israeli thinking. It's you and your friends that tell the real-life story of how to celebrate the Life. We can all participate to Unbox Israel for the world, and brand its "Good Name" of a Nation of dreamers that know how to make things get Done.

Let us start first with a good Vibe and friendly chat! Please visit Unboxing Israel [unboxingisrael.vibeisrael.com](https://www.vibeisrael.com) for online tools to help you tell Israel's story and you can contact me, Alex Elgin [alex.elgin@gmail.com](mailto:alex.elgin@gmail.com) to begin our conversation, looking forward to hearing from you! Shana tova tikateyvu! 🍀

- 1 Introductory words to Vibe Israel USA's Unboxing Israel 2020 Summit, held virtually on August 13
- 2 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unboxing>
- 3 <https://www.vibeisrael.com>—Vibe Israel is a not-for-profit organization energizing and inspiring the next generation about Israel.
- 4 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation\\_Z](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_Z)
- 5 <https://www.vibeisrael.com/programs/academy>
- 6 A digital influencer is someone who has influence over his or her followers and influencer marketing identifies these individuals in order to reach potential buyers.
- 7 Part of Vibe Israel's Vibe Tours program