



the art of
BRANDING
a community

INTRODUCTION

- Tourism is an economic development activity.
- The goal is to import more cash into your community than you export.
- Tourism is the fastest growing and one of the top three industries in 49 of 50 states and in every Canadian province.
- Tourism diversifies the local economy.
- Tourism creates jobs and business opportunities: entry level and entrepreneurs. It is the number one industry for small businesses.
- Tourism promotes new business development, particularly in well-branded communities.
- The industry boosts community pride.
- Tourism is your front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts. Anyone contemplating a new business or a move to your community will first arrive as a visitor.
- The number one reason for travel is to visit friends and family.
- The number one activity of visitors is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting.
- Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors.
- If you can't get passers-by to stop, you'll have a tough time becoming the destination.

The three primary reasons for travel are:

1. Visiting friends and family. If you do nothing, you will have tourism. But when friends and family come to visit, is the dining room table a concierge desk? Do your residents know what you have to offer and where it's located?
2. Business travel. This includes corporate travel, conventions, conferences and meetings, educational

travel (colleges, universities) and the like. If you do nothing, you will still have tourism from this segment as well. But do your front-line employees do a good job of providing these visitors with things to do in their down time?

3. The leisure traveler. This group spends the most amount of money and travels to you specifically for things that cater to them that they cannot get closer to home. Every true "destination community" caters to this group of travelers.

The three phases of tourism are:

1. Getting passers-by to stop. If you can not get them to stop, you won't become a destination community. What do you have that will get people to stop?
2. Becoming the hub for area attractions and activities. Becoming a hub makes you the overnight destination. Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors. But during the day, you may have to send them "out" to area attractions.
3. Becoming the destination. This is the best of all worlds. People come, stay with you, and spend all their time in your community - and that is where they spend nearly all of their money. The ultimate goal of any tourism program is to work towards becoming "the destination."

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- The baby boom generation accounts for 80 percent of all travel spending. This generation (born between 1946 and 1964) includes 85 million residents.

- There are 350,000 Americans turning 50 every month. And this trend will continue for another seven years. The oldest boomers turned 60 in 2006.
- Boomers control 70 percent of North America's wealth.
- They are becoming the "inheritance boom" - the boom generation will inherit \$10.4 trillion from their parents, the greatest transfer of wealth in history. Where are they spending the money? Second homes and travel.
- Boomers want quality and are in their peak earning years. They want things that are truly unique and exciting.
- Currencies embraced: Time, comfort, easy access. The mindset: Emphasis on youth, self absorption (what is in it for me).
- "Downshifting" is a trend where itineraries, entire trips are planned or all-inclusive resorts are booked.
- The peak travel months for empty-nesters is April, May, September and October. What to do? Extend your seasons. Get out of the "summer vacation" mode. Those days are gone.
- The boomers mantra, "We may be aging, but we are NOT growing old."

Top boomer travel trends:

- Culinary tourism and education
- Artists in action, learning various forms of art
- Gardening is the fastest growing hobby: education is huge, tours of gardens, arboretums, beautiful homes
- Open air markets: farm fresh, arts and crafts, entertainment
- Experiential-based activities, albeit cushy adventure
- Genealogy is another fast-growing hobby

- Web-enabled boomers use the internet 94 percent of the time in planning trips.
- 70 percent of all regional trips are now planned less than three weeks before departure.
- Echo Boomers (kids of the baby boom generation born between 1977 and 1985) are driving places like Las Vegas. They like gathering places, entertainment, excitement, nightlife.
- There are 80 million echo-boomers, nearly as numerous as their folks.
- Hot tourism trends include “culinary adventure,” learning experiences, artists in action, event tourism, public markets, cultural experiences.
- Music and entertainment are major draws for echo-boomers.
- Echo boomers want extreme adventure. Rock climbing is the fastest growing sport among this age group. Extreme biking is also popular.



THE FIVE C'S OF TOURISM ARE:

Convenience: Easy to find information, easy to plan, easy to get to.

Control: Control and flexibility with itineraries, places to stay, etc.

Comfort: The top 15 percent of lodging facilities command 80 percent of the market. That's why comfortable beds are such a big selling point.

Cost: Because of the internet, pricing is transparent. Travelers expect the very best at a bargain basement price.

Connection: More than ever before, travelers are looking to connect with their roots, each other, family, and the environment.

WHY BRANDING?

Your brand is a marketing tool, and the goal is to bring more cash into the community. As a resident, there are times you spend your earned income outside the community. This is commonly referred to as “leakage,” and every community has it. The most successful communities import more cash than they export, usually through tourism. Competition is fierce, as every community is trying to import new cash. But to become a destination, you must offer something the visitor cannot get closer to home; something that helps you stand out from all other competing communities. This is where branding comes into play. It is the art of differentiation.

1 Marketing overkill

The average person is exposed to 3,000 marketing messages a day – far more than the mind can absorb, so we filter out everything not specifically appealing to us. “We have something for everyone” doesn’t work any longer. “We want something that appeals to us.” The days of generic marketing are over.

2 Abundant choices

Our purchasing choices have multiplied. Every year another 2,000 communities in North America are diversifying into tourism. With so many options available, the only way to stand out from the crowd is to specialize. This is the age of niche marketing.

In order to be successful, you must be worth a special trip, and that means being different or the best. What sets you apart from your competition? Why

should I travel to your community, if I can enjoy the same things closer to home?

The specialists have the biggest successes:

- The Limited: Upscale clothing for working women
- The Gap: Casual clothing for the young at heart
- Victoria’s Secret: Famous undergarments
- Foot Locker: Athletic shoes
- Branson, MO - The music theater capital of the world
- Las Vegas, NV - The adult entertainment playground
- Nashville, TN - The country music capital of the world
- Memphis, TN - Home of Elvis Presley and Graceland
- Orlando, FL - Kids and family (DisneyWorld)
- Williamsburg, VA - Colonial America
- Victoria, BC - The world’s garden city

3 Repositioning may be necessary

If perceptions of your community are negative, you may need to develop a repositioning program. Frequently that starts with curb appeal – the visual impressions of the community or business. If visitors expect one thing and see something else, it changes their perceptions, repositioning your community in their minds.

4 Specific marketing

Avoid the following words and phrases in your marketing efforts:

- Discover
- Explore

- We have it all
- Something for everyone
- Best kept secret
- The four-season destination
- Outdoor recreation
- Center of it all
- Historic downtown
- So much to see and do
- Experience
- Gateway

There are 425 counties in the 11 Western states. Almost every one promotes “outdoor recreation,” which can mean almost anything. Just about everyone can find recreation close to home. Three hundred and eighty of these communities promote outdoor recreation as the primary draw. How far would you travel for generic outdoor recreation? You wouldn’t. You travel for a specific type of recreation, something that caters to you. We do not go places where there is something for everyone. We go places where there is something for me. None of the words listed above are a brand.

Because communities are so generic in their marketing, is it any wonder that 97 percent of all community-based advertising is ineffective?

The more variations you attach to a brand, the more the customer loses focus. Gradually, the brand comes to mean nothing at all. The specialist, however, can focus on one thing, one message. This focus enables the community to put a sharp point on the marketing effort that quickly drives it into the mind.

Take a look at the following opening paragraph to a typical Visitor’s Guide. Could it fit your community? “Discover the wide open spaces, gracious people, and picturesque landscapes that characterize [insert

your town here]. Each season holds the promise of a new adventure and an incredible memory. Come join us in [your town] and discover the scenic and recreational opportunities that await you.”

To succeed you must jettison the generic. Welcome to the “Era of the Brand”; the art of setting yourself apart from everyone else.

WHAT IS A BRAND?

A brand is specific and experiential:

- **Las Vegas, Nevada** - America’s Adult Playground exults, “What happens here, stays here”
- **Ashland, Oregon** - Home of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival with 460,000 annual visitors, who stay an average of six nights
- **Oatman, Arizona** - Home of wild burros and Western shoot-outs on Main Street with a population of 200 that hosts 500,000 visitors a year
- **Mt. Airy, N. Carolina** - Calls itself Mayberry, USA and allows visitors to get arrested by a Barney Fife impersonator
- **Asheville, N. Carolina** -Where fine culture meets counter culture in an “Unscripted” funky arts and entertainment town

5 A brand is a perception

This is the most important, most talked about, and most misunderstood rule in the tourism and downtown redevelopment industry. A brand is what people think of you - NOT what you say you are. It is a perception.

In a society that is information rich and time poor, people value feeling more than information. A brand is the “feeling” a potential visitor has about you. When someone mentions Disneyland, what is the perception (the feeling) that comes to mind? Your brand should evoke emotion or an image. When you hear the words Napa County and then Napa Valley, which one brings an image to your mind? A picture of what it is like there?

WHAT IS NOT A BRAND?

6 Logos and slogans are not a brand.

They are just tools used to promote the brand. They are exclamation points on your key message. Do you go to Disneyland or Disneyworld because its slogan is “The Happiest Place on Earth”? No, you go there because of your perception of Disneyworld and what you know or have heard about it. The slogan simply reinforces what you have come to believe is true about a trip to Orlando or Anaheim.

7 These are NOT brands

- **Historic downtowns** (brands are activity-based)
- **Slogans and logos** (they just reinforce and promote the brand)
- **Geography** (unless you are the Grand Canyon or are totally matchless)
- **Gateway** (something you pass through to go somewhere else)
- **Unique** (the most overused word in tourism that has come to mean nothing at all)
- **Fruits and vegetables** are not a brand. They are part of the ambiance, but not a sustainable brand. Have you ever gone anywhere because they were the capital of a fruit or vegetable?

- Scenic vistas are not a brand. They are part of the ambiance.

8 Icons are not brands

An icon is the photo opportunity that (hopefully) reinforces your brand. How far would you travel to see the world’s biggest lava lamp (Soap Lake, Washington), Gas Kan (Gas, Kansas), Catsup Bottle (Collinsville, Ohio), or the world’s biggest garden hoe (Dog River, Saskatchewan)? Would you go to Seattle to see the Space Needle, then head back home? Of course not. The primary lure, or another reason such as visiting friends and family, would bring you to Seattle, and the Space Needle would be a must-see diversion while visiting the city.

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL BRAND?

9 Be worthy of a standing ovation

You have two choices: You can be different, or you can be the best. If you are the best at something, people will skip over the same activity closer to home to experience the best. Think skiing and Vail, Colorado or Whistler Resort in British Columbia.

The challenge with being the best is that people are always gunning for you, trying to topple you off your throne. Being different is a much better road to travel, if you can come up with something totally unique to you.

10 Branding requires third-party endorsements

Being the best in your category cannot be self-proclaimed. Brands are built around word of mouth and perceptions, not advertising. Advertising is used to maintain your position, once you own the brand. Just like a slogan, advertising reinforces the brand.

Self-proclaimed brands are rarely effective unless you have a bottomless pocketbook and you can saturate the market with your brand message until people come to believe it.

Use third-party quotes appearing in guide books and magazine articles to elevate your status as being the best.

- **Okanogan County, Washington:** “Rocky Mountain powder in the Northwest? Go ahead, pinch yourself, you’re in the Methow Valley.” -Gorp.com
- **Door County, Wisconsin** “One of the top ten vacation destinations in North America.” -Money Magazine
- **Kootenay Rockies, British Columbia:** “The hot springs capital of the Rockies.” - British Columbia Magazine

11 Find your niche

- **Leavenworth, Washington:** Washington’s Bavarian Village
- **Battle Creek, Michigan:** The competitive biking capital of the midwest
- **Carson City, Nevada:** Home of the famous “Divine Nine” (golf)

Be known for something:

- **Hershey, Pennsylvania** - Chocolate
- **Gettysburg, Pennsylvania** - Civil War
- **Lancaster, Pennsylvania** - Amish, Pennsylvania Dutch
- **Washington, DC** - Government
- **Salem, Massachusetts** - The 1692 witch trials
- **Tombstone, Arizona** - Shootout at the OK Corral

This applies to businesses as much (if not more so) than communities:

- **Stew Leonards groceries:** Farm fresh produce and dairy
- **The Ventana Inn, CA:** “No kids, be kids”
- **Westin Hotels:** Heavenly beds (they now sell them)

What are you known for?

- What sets you apart from everyone else?
- What do you have that I can’t get closer to home?
- What makes you worth a special trip and an extended stay?

12 Everyone must be on the same page

A brand must have continuity with everyone contributing. Once you get local organizations on board, the process becomes fun. You must define the roles, and everyone plays a role. This is not a top-down effort.

13 Product development never ends

You can never rest on your laurels. Product development *must* be a major part of your branding effort.

Branson, Missouri, the “Music Theater Capital of the World” now has 49 theaters, and this town of just 6,500 residents hosts some 7.5 million visitors annually. The more you have to offer in your brand, the further people will come and the longer they will stay.

In Victoria, British Columbia, “The World’s Garden City,” the beautification budget is \$4.5 million annually. One million is spent annually to make it even better (capital projects). The city hangs more than 1,000 baskets a year. It has the highest ratio of parkland per capita of any city in North America.

14 Promote the primary lure

Always promote the primary lure, not the diversions. Diversions are things I can do closer to home, and not what brings me to your town. However, I will do them while visiting you. Diversions include golf, shopping and dining, visiting local museums, attending community events, recreational activities, visiting historic downtowns, etc.

15 The lure can not succeed without diversions

The average overnight visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet spends just four to six hours with the primary lure. Visitors then will spend eight to ten hours a day with diversionary activities. 80 percent of all visitor spending takes place with diversions.

16 It is tough to maintain your position

People are always gunning for number one. Wine has become the most oversaturated tourism branding effort in North America, yet Napa Valley still “owns”

the title “Wine Capital of America.” However, Napa has to always work hard to maintain its position as dozens of other “wine countries” have entered the fray.

17 **A brand does not have to be sexy**

A brand doesn’t have to be sexy to be effective. Take the case of Bullhead City, Arizona. It can’t compete with its neighbor, Laughlin, Nevada just across the Colorado River. What Bullhead City has, that Laughlin does not have is a Wal-Mart. So, “For all your personal needs, head to Bullhead City, just across the bridge.” When visitors head to Bullhead City for toothpaste or other personal items, those visitors see restaurants, antique shops, river tours, and the like. Wal-Mart may not be sexy, but in this case, it is the primary lure.

BRANDING GONE BAD

18 **Politics is the killer of a branding effort**

Once you have the brand determined, then bring the public on board. It takes a village to develop the brand, but only a pioneer and champions to determine the brand.

19 **Just say no to focus groups**

Never use a focus group to decide on a brand. Ask your customers, because they are better at telling it like it is.

Washington State - “Say WA” campaign

- Died after only six months and wasted \$400,000

- No buy-in from the industry or even local residents and businesses
- It was the sixth slogan in just ten years

20 **Don’t sell it until you can deliver**

Resist the urge to market the brand until you can deliver on the promise. Hawthorne, Nevada was so gung ho on their brand as “America’s Patriotic Home” that the community rented and posted billboards along major interstates promoting the brand. The problem? The community had little to show for it. A brand must be obvious to everyone who lives there and visits. If it is an empty shell, people won’t come back, and they will tell people there was nothing to do or see in your town that supported the effort.

21 **Don’t copy others**

Kellogg, Idaho worked hard to develop a Bavarian or Alpine theme for its downtown, but its primary market includes Vancouver, BC, Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR – a population base of approximately seven million people. The problem? Leavenworth, Washington, “Washington’s Bavarian Village,” is far closer and already complete. So why drive to Kellogg?

Never copy another brand unless you are in an entirely different market. Leavenworth got the Bavarian idea from Solvang, California, a Danish town along the central California coast, located in an entirely different market.

HOW TO BUILD A BRAND

22 **The five major steps to branding**

- Determine the brand (who are we?)
- Create the icon (the photo opportunity)
- Create the activities and facilities that will reinforce and grow the brand experience
- Create the identity and key marketing messages (logo and slogan)
- Develop the publicity machine (brand building)

Notice that the logo and slogan were number four on the list. Most communities put this first, and most of their efforts fail because they can’t deliver on the promise: they don’t have the icon, the facilities, and the experiences that cement a brand position.

See The 25 steps to branding a community on the next page.

23 The 25 steps to branding a community

Here are the individual steps, in order:

1. Get professional help
2. Determine your primary and secondary markets
3. Inventory your activities (attractions)
4. Inventory similar activities in your major and secondary markets
5. Educate the community about branding
6. Ask the community. What is our brand or what should it be?
7. Run the ideas through the feasibility test
 - Is this something the primary and secondary markets can't get (or do) closer to home?
 - That no one else in the market is already working on?
 - Will it extend our seasons?
 - Can it be developed to a nine-month plus season?
 - Is it experiential?
 - If it were in a community 150 miles away, would you go there for it?
 - How much money will it take to develop and "own" the brand?
 - Where will the money come from? And how long will it take to see a return on investment?
 - Can the community buy into it over time? You will never get everyone to agree. Not many cities could easily buy into becoming the next Las Vegas, or Sin City. While the public doesn't decide on the brand, they are important to developing it and telling the world.
 - Will and can the private sector invest in the brand?
 - How wide an audience will it attract?
 - Is the brand expandable? Does it have legs? Can you attach "brand extensions" to it? For instance, you may decide to become the mountain biking capital - can you add street biking? A velodrome? BMX courses? Cyclo-cross? Then can you add cross-participation sports like rock climbing?
 - Do we have those who will tirelessly champion the cause? (Every branding effort requires pioneers)
 - Can we make it obvious and pervasive throughout the community?
8. Once you have the idea that passes the feasibility test, develop the brand perceptions and vision statement
9. Create the key marketing messages
10. Develop identity concepts
11. Work to obtain public buy-in (Note: everyone will not buy in)
12. Test identities and slogans with customers, not locals. If you are going for a team sports brand, then test the key messages and logos with sports organizations - the "customers" you hope to attract.
13. Develop a niche-market plan, and then an expansion plan (in sports you might start with softball, then expand to soccer, then basketball, etc.)
14. Develop the "Graphics System:"
 - Gateways
 - Wayfinding system
 - Monument signs
 - Interpretive signs and displays
 - Information kiosks
 - Pole banners
 - Streetscapes, plaza areas, façade improvements
 - Naming of downtown districts, other facilities to reinforce the brand
 - Marketing materials
 - Crosswalks
15. Create the product development plan
16. Define the roles of local organizations
17. Get the brand champions and pioneers on board
(Your Brand Development Committee)
18. Incorporate the brand into the fabric of the community
19. Sell the community (do not ask for permission, sell them)
20. Keep the focus narrow
21. Recruit and promote specific supporting businesses
22. "Rearrange the furniture" - the business mix to develop the critical mass
23. Implement the PR program
24. Review and revisit the plan every year or two so the brand does not stray
25. Never give up

24 Brand feasibility is what counts

To succeed you must promote businesses and attractions that support and help the brand grow. If culinary tourism is your primary lure, you must promote the dining experiences that deliver on the promise (Sorry Arby's, you are the diversion, not the lure).

This is why creating a successful brand is never a public process. Feasibility is what determines a successful brand, not sentiment, not memberships, not political clout, and not trying to make everyone happy. This is a critical distinction that separates emotion from the fact. This is about revenues - importing cash into the community or business.

25 Education is imperative

Educate locals on the difference between the lure (what you have that no one else has, and makes you worth a special trip), the diversions (secondary activities once the visitor is there), the icon (the photo opportunity, but not the reason to go there), amenities (supporting infrastructure like parking, visitor information, restrooms, etc.), and ambiance (scenic vistas, historic downtowns, beautification, etc.) Historic downtowns are not a draw, they are part of the ambiance. What is in the buildings creates the draw. Eventually, everyone needs to be a spokesperson for the brand. Support is imperative to maintaining a strong, successful brand.

26 Start small. Narrow your focus

It is far better to be a big fish in a small pond (then increase the size of the pond), than to be a small fish in a big pond. You wouldn't be noticed.

Narrow your focus. Then narrow it some more. Take the case of Kellogg, Idaho where visitors will find hundreds of miles of pristine biking trails. Unfortunately, there are thousands of places with hundreds of miles of pristine biking trails. But there is no place in North America where you will find the "Route of the Hiawatha," a 15-mile trail that passes through ten tunnels and over seven high trestles, and is best known for the Taft Tunnel, which burrows 1.66 miles under the Idaho/Montana state line. This trail has no competitors and is a national attraction drawing visitors from all over North America. While there, visitors shop, dine, visit historic Wallace, participate in other recreational activities, visit nearby Coeur d'Alene, and other bike trails. Narrow your focus and then narrow it some more.

27 Branding requires a pioneer

Every branding effort requires a tireless pioneer. Who is your pioneer? Who will work with the pioneer (or pioneers) to champion the cause? Pioneers are those that invest in the brand. Ninety-five percent of the time the pioneers are from the private sector, not the public sector. (See Point #28)

28 Branding is a bottom-up exercise

Branding is very, very rarely a top-down effort. The business community must take the lead. The local government is there to assist, wherever possible.

29 Create the "Brand Development Committee"

1. Develop a small "brand development committee."

This small group should include both public and private sector stakeholders who want to make something happen for the community and who will not let politics kill the effort. Typically this committee should have no more than seven or so "players."

2. This committee would act as a steering committee in hiring outside expertise to develop the Action Plan. Select your consulting firm using a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ), as opposed to a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Hire the best, then negotiate the fees and scope of work. If you can't reach an agreement, go to number two on your list of finalists. Hire a team that understands what it takes to develop a community or downtown brand. Don't get hung up on the sex appeal of logos and slogans. These are merely a minor part of the branding effort, not the brand itself.

3. You will work with your Brand Development Consultant through the process - educating locals as to what branding is, requesting ideas and options from the public. Then, the consultant team will take these ideas and will run them through the feasibility analysis, as described earlier. Once a brand emerges, the Action Plan will be developed. It should include:

- The overall brand and any sub-brands
- Product development that will grow and support the brand
- Roles of various local organizations
- Private investment roles and supporting businesses
- Funding of every recommendation
- Benchmarks and timelines
- Brand identities, sub-brand identities, graphic standards, brand style guide, wayfinding and gateway design, key marketing messages, and slogans.

- Public relations plan (brands are built through PR, not advertising)
- Community-outreach planning

4. During this process the “brand development committee” may change to a new group or additional members that will be champions for the brand. If the brand revolves around team sports, the champions would be those that are professionals in the sports industry: coaches, sporting organizations, sports retailers and businesses, sports marketing organizations, etc. This brings credibility and private investment to the branding effort and gives the brand a voice in the community. This group will be charged with promoting the brand locally, getting buy-in from the community, and overseeing implementation of the action plan.

5. Locals should not make the final decision on the logo(s), slogans and key marketing messages. You will never reach a consensus using public input, which usually results in a watered down, generic brand and messages. Instead, the “customers” are used to decide the outcome of this effort.

For instance, Battle Creek, Michigan is beginning the work of becoming the “Competitive Sports Capital of the Midwest.” They will start with competitive biking as the initial brand (The Competitive Biking Capital of the Midwest). You have to “earn” a brand. In this case, logos, slogans, and key marketing messages were designed, but the final four options were sent to customers – competitive biking organizations, race organizers, sports marketing professionals, and event planners – people they want to attract to Battle Creek. They were sent the various options (no group meetings or focus groups - they were tested individually) and asked, “Which would most appeal to you as a destination?” This is marketing, so why not ask the

customers to make the final decision? This also takes the politics out of the process.

6. Once the brand has been set and a draft plan developed, the committee and consulting team need to “sell” it to local leaders, and participating organizations. Make sure that whoever you hire has some top-notch sales ability. They will be your initial voice in promoting the brand.

7. Let your local leaders, particularly elected leaders, take ownership of the brand. It is okay if it is their idea - ownership is not an issue; getting something done is. Do whatever it takes to make things happen. There may end up being revisions to the draft plan as a result, but that may be necessary to get total buy-in for the final plan.

NOTE: Cities or counties are often the lead organization in getting the plan developed. Once it has been developed, it’s not up to the governing agency to implement it. They are the conduit in developing the plan, which will be handed over to the business community and other local organizations for implementation. The city, after that point, acts in a supporting role, particularly when it comes to infrastructure or publicly-owned facilities that need to be developed or enhanced in order to capture a successful brand.

8. The Brand Champions will stay involved for years. Branding is a process and not a one-time event. It needs to be nurtured, promoted, and grown. Members may come and go, but all need to be active in the process, not just in advisory roles. Typically this committee would be independent of any organization, but sometimes may be a committee of the city (or county), or work under a destination marketing organization, downtown (Main Street), or Chamber of

Commerce. The consulting firm would determine this as part of their process.

30 Branding often requires recruitment

Recruit supporting businesses that can help the brand grow and cement your position so you own it. The Route of the Hiawatha could not succeed without supporting businesses - hotels, restaurants, bike rentals, tour operators, bike repair shops, and transportation to and from the trail.

31 Start with a plan

Every community should create a community (or downtown) Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan. This is not a strategic plan, which offers general strategies, goals, and objectives. This is a to-do list for just about every local organization. Everyone participates in the branding process. Start with a plan that will help define the roles for each organization. This way people are pulling in the same direction. That makes it fun. Each key organization should have a member sitting on the Brand Development Committee. Each has a to-do list, and every time they meet the discussion revolves around “how are you doing on your list?”

32 Yes, you can develop sub-brands

Chevrolet doesn’t run ads stating “Buy a Chevy. We have cars for everyone.” Instead they market the Geo Metro to a specific audience, the Suburban to a different audience, and the Corvette to yet another niche audience.

THE BRAND MESSAGE: SLOGANS AND LOGOS

33 Four rules to creating a great slogan

A slogan is simply an exclamation point on your key message. It is not the brand; it just reinforces it. The following was adapted by an article written by Kim T. Gordon, author of *Bringing Home the Business*.

Finish the following phrase:
“You’re in good hands with...”

If you immediately recognized this motto as belonging to Allstate Insurance, then all the marketing muscle and millions of dollars the company has invested in the slogan are paying off by firmly establishing its brand name.

Now try to identify the company that uses this phrase: “It’s everywhere you want to be.”

Did you instantly think of Visa, or did you wonder whether the slogan might belong to MasterCard?

To win the name game in the marketing world, you must make sure your prospects and customers do more than recall your slogan – they have to associate it with your community, not your competitor’s. To make sure your slogan or tag line hits home, follow these four tips:

1. Evoke your key benefit

Great slogans not only are built around a brand’s core promise—they also establish an exclusive connection in customer’s minds. You and your marketing staff or advertising agency must create a slogan

that evokes your key benefits and reflects the unique experience your community (or business) delivers.

For example, back when Burger King introduced its “Have it your way” slogan in 1974, the company was battling the cookie-cutter image of assembly-line fast-food burger restaurants. It positioned itself as the chain where burgers were made to order and focused on diner’s ability to customize their burgers by asking counter staff to “hold the pickle, hold the lettuce.” Burger King’s focus on that flexibility was directly reflected in this memorable slogan.

2. Test with prospects and customers

Qualitative research is essential before putting your marketing resources squarely behind a newly developed slogan. It is important to speak to potential customers, as well as existing ones to avoid skewing the outcome. If you only query your current customers, you may never figure out how to appeal to those who never considered your previous marketing messages compelling. Phone surveys and customer focus groups can be used to test proposed slogans. They can also uncover or verify information about the benefits your prospects and customers expect to realize when they use your product or service.

3. Include your community name

Evidence suggests slogans fare better when it comes to customer recall, if they incorporate the company or product name. Wolf Group New York, an ad agency with such clients as Häagen-Dazs and Miracle-Gro, tested consumer recognition of 19 tag lines that were part of successful, long-running advertising campaigns backed by hundreds of millions of dollars. Each of the top-five brands in the survey included the product or advertiser’s name, while none of the bottom ten did. For example, Visa’s slogan, “It’s everywhere you want to be,” was familiar to 70 percent of respondents, but only 15 percent could correctly

identify who the advertiser was. On the other hand, the tag line “Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there,” experienced practically universal recognition.

4. Stick with it

Never adopt a new slogan as a quick fix or as part of a temporary campaign. Success requires committing to a slogan or tag line for several years, perhaps even decades, and incorporating it into all your marketing materials as a part of the company logo. If you want to protect your business’s marketing investment in the new slogan, you should consider trademarking it. At the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office Web site, you can fill out a trademark application, search the trademark database and research general information about trademarks.

Whatever you do, just remember that a great slogan is like a partner in a happy marriage—it will share your company’s name and be your marketing partner for many years to come. So please consider your options carefully.

34 Notes about brand identities (your logo)

Use one simple graphic. Don’t try to be all things to all people. Pictures, instead of graphics, are too hard to identify as a “brand mark.” The most overused community identities include mountains, water, trees and sun. Just about every community has these. So what makes you special?

Develop a Branding Style Guide so that you have continuity in all your marketing materials even from other local organizations. Everyone should adopt the brand and design standards. What would happen to Coca Cola, if every bottling plant developed its own Coke cans and bottles? It would be a dead company.

Your logo should look good in full color, two colors, in black and white, on signs, banners, and when reduced to about 3/4" in the corner of an ad or on a business card.

The simpler the logo, the better it looks on “logo gear” - things you sell to promote the brand and have it promote itself. Also, can the logo be stitched on shirts and jackets?

The most memorable logos are the simplest logos. Do you know what Nike’s logo looks like? The “swoosh” is one of the world’s most recognized brand marks. It is not, by the way, a picture of a tennis shoe.

THE FINAL WORD

It takes a village to create a successful brand, but it starts with just one person, one event, one business. Remember that branding takes time; you can not build a brand overnight.

LOCAL POLITICS IS THE KILLER OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY.

Visitors spend more money on diversions than the primary draw, which is often a “loss leader.” Trying to please everyone is a recipe for an ineffective branding and marketing program.

Finally, implementation of nearly every rule outlined in the book The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism should take place after the brand has been developed. Your wayfinding signage, gateways, visitor information kiosks, downtowns, business mix, critical mass, marketing materials, should all reflect the brand. Build the foundation first, and that will foster a successful branding effort.

35 Suggested reading

While these books are geared more to products than communities, they will provide you with clear insights as to what it takes to develop a winning brand.

- The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding by Al Ries and Laura Ries
- The Brand Gap by Marty Neumeier
- The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell
- Positioning: The Battle For Your Mind by Al Ries and Jack Trout

Perhaps Marty Neumeier summed it up best in The Brand Gap when he provided the five keys to a successful brand:

Differentiate

Collaborate

Innovate

Validate

Cultivate



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We invite you to review the Destination Development
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