



CITY OF PORT ALBERNI

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER REPORT

TO: Ken Watson, City Manager
Davina Hartwell, City Clerk

FROM: Pat Deakin, Economic Development Manager

DATE: August 6th, 2015

SUBJECT: INTERIM REPORT ON REBRANDING
This is for information only; no decisions are required

Note: This has been called, variously, a branding initiative, a rebranding initiative and an image makeover. Each of these is correct to a degree. 'Port Alberni' is our 'brand'. The image or perception of Port Alberni is positive in some circles outside the community, i.e. with those who love to fish for sport, those who are involved in sports tournaments, those who have bought lumber from our mills, those who have experienced our generosity and others. Unfortunately many people from outside the community have a negative image of Port Alberni or no awareness of us at all. This initiative aims to address that.

Goal of Work

- Brand the City for 'Economic Development Purposes'
- Economic Development Purposes include:
 - attraction of young individuals and young families (Millennials) who are entrepreneurial by nature and outdoors oriented
 - investment attraction
 - changing or updating the image of Port Alberni

Note: In order to make our city more attractive to potential new investors, businesses and residents in our target audience and more competitive with other communities trying to do the same, we intend, with citizen input, to capture that part of our 'essence' that evokes positive feelings and attention.

What is a Brand?

- "A **brand** is a name, term, design, symbol or other feature that distinguishes one seller's product from those of others. **Brands** are used in business, marketing, and advertising." Wikipedia
- It's the perception people have of us when we say we are from Port Alberni
- "It's what Google says you are, not what you say"

*As noted previously, Port Alberni is the brand and no name change is contemplated. The work is really about getting a consistent message out in a way that enhances the City's image for investment, business, resident and visitor attraction purposes.



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Why is the Work Being Done?

- Our population is ageing, young people are leaving and our population is not growing
- School facilities are being rationalized
- Investment in City facilities and infrastructure is increasingly difficult
- City and Alberni Valley not often portrayed positively in media
- Relatively speaking, our entrepreneurial culture is not strong

Who is the target market?

Our target market is young people and young families 25 to 45 years of age who are entrepreneurially-minded, family oriented, adventurous, enjoy an active lifestyle, desire an opportunity to contribute to growth, well-educated and skilled professionals or tradespeople.

Generalities About Our Target Market (Millennials)

- Born between 1980 and 2000
- Larger Cohort than Baby-Boomers
- 1st Digital Natives (> video games, IM/Chat, download music/video, social media)
- Social & Connected (> communication via text messaging, social media, IM, blogging)
- Less Money to Spend
- Encumbered with Debt (student loans)
- Different Priorities (putting off marriage & home ownership)
- Access > important than ownership
- Looking for products w/ max convenience at lowest cost
- Strong Brand not enough to lock in sale
- Turning to social media for purchasing decisions
- Buy online
- Quality key but Price > important than other generations
- > Focus on wellness

Process

- The Economic Development Manager (EDM) selected a small team of individuals mostly within the target demographic who had no affiliation to a 'would be' brand
- EDM spoke with a few consultants to get started on the project
 - David Reeves of Unleash Culture
 - Chris Neary of Frank Strategies
 - Lanie McMullin, keynote speaker at 2015 BC EDA Conference
- The team has learned something about branding by watching a branding webinar and the Squamish Rebranding team presentation to their Council
- The team has interviewed professionals involved in the field
 - Carol Vincent, Redbird Communications



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- Laura Tetzlaff, Integrated Marketing & Business Development Solutions
- Roger Brooks, Roger Brooks International
- The team interviewed a Huu-ay-aht staff member about their experience in branding for economic development purposes
- The team interviewed three local people from our target demographic
 - Conan Reis, Agog Labs
 - Layne Woodfin, Stem-Shock
 - Brooke Madley, Sun-Peaks Events Coordinator in winter; Port Alberni summer resident
- The team conducted a survey for community input
 - The survey had 9 questions
 - We advertised the survey via many means
 - Alberni Valley Chamber newsletter
 - Char's Landing distribution list
 - Heart of Vancouver Facebook Page
 - Transition Town distribution list
 - Alberni.ca
 - Media: AV Times, AV News, Ha-shilth-sa, PEAK Radio, Shaw Cable
 - Notes in Quality Foods grocery bags
 - Handouts available at Starlight Movie Night, Out Town
 - City's website, Facebook and Twitter
 - Team members put 'signature line' in emails
 - Posters at several coffee shops and grocery stores
 - We provided a few opportunities for those without a computer to respond
 - Hard copies of the survey were left at Echo Centre and City Hall with an invitation to fill them in and drop them off or phone their answers in
 - A computer was set up at the Sunset Market and Sproat Lake Regatta Show & Shine
 - In total we received 943 responses

Highlights of Survey

1. About 67% of the respondents lived within the City boundaries
2. 41% of the respondents were in our target demographic age group
3. 60% of all respondents were female
4. Top 5 places that locals took visitors or activities that locals did with visitors were:
 - Harbour Quay/Victoria Quay
 - Sproat Lake
 - Stamp Falls
 - Hiking
 - McLean Mill



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5. Top 5 places that locals hang out on weekends or evenings were:
 - Sproat Lake
 - Harbour Quay
 - Hiking Trails
 - Beaches (Qualicum, Canal, Parksville)
 - Out of town

6. Our greatest assets identified by respondents are:
 - Water (fresh, salt, lakes, rivers)
 - Harbour Quay
 - Fishing
 - Hiking Trails
 - Natural beauty & outdoor activities

7. Our biggest challenges identified by respondents are:
 - Infrastructure (poor roads, no curb appeal, empty/run-down buildings)
 - Drugs & crime
 - Business & jobs (lack of growth, lack of development, not attracting enough quality jobs)
 - Lack of shopping, restaurants, activities
 - Timber/mill town perception
 - Attitude of not wanting change

8. Respondents identified the following as what could or should be done to get people to spend more time and money here:
 - Work on infrastructure and revitalization (i.e. clean up city, orchestrate business mix)
 - More shopping and restaurants
 - More tourism attractions, events, activities
 - Recruit more businesses
 - Develop the waterfront
 - More marketing and advertising

9. Respondents provided many ideas about what Port Alberni should be known for as setting it apart from every other place on Vancouver Island; these are still being analyzed but the branding 'direction' would seem to be water-oriented

Next Steps

- Complete the analysis of the survey
- Complete our exploration of approaches and messages that are attracting Millennials
- Conclude consultations with professionals in the field
- Create a final report with an implementation plan and recommend it to Council for consideration