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matters

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CITY OF VERNON

SETTLEMENT & IMMIGRATION MARKETING STRATEGY

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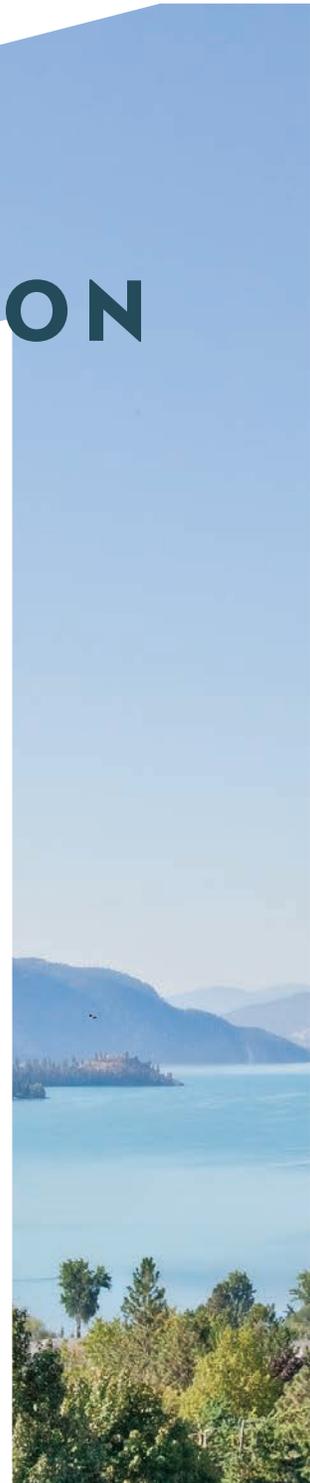
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INTRODUCTION

‘City marketing enables a new level of quality within the local development policy in terms of comprehensiveness, creativity and flexibility. New resources in the form of ideas, capital and local knowledge are mobilised for local policy. In this way city marketing enables a strategic approach to public planning in collaboration with the private sector.’



We are currently witnessing an unprecedented level of competition between communities for attracting investment and people. This has led communities to invest heavily in the development of Marketing and Branding strategies. At the heart of these strategies should be the adaption of efforts to best fit the cities' circumstances and needs. Consequently, city managers, economic developers and planners need to be engaged in how these techniques can help drive their communities forward. The city's image is a central item here. Every possible asset of the city should be enhanced to improve people's perception of the city (this includes residents but also potential residents and visitors).

While the need for such strategic marketing efforts has been brought to the forefront of community leaders, and many are undertaking these initiatives aggressively, it is important to appreciate the common pitfalls associated with these efforts. First, the challenge for city marketers is to remain cognizant of why the community is undertaking marketing and branding in the first place. The focus of the efforts is clearly to benefit the city's own residents and businesses. This does not imply that residents and business are the target markets, rather it stresses the fact that all activities (whether economic, cultural, social, tourist or any other development of the city) are done to the benefit of the city's residents and to improve their quality of life. Secondly, community marketers are faced with a multitude of target audiences and stakeholder groups. A fundamental downside of ineffective marketing is trying to be all things to all people. Thirdly, there exists a long-standing problem for marketing professionals: in the term marketing is widely used but seldom correctly understood. Often marketing and promotion are used synonymously. Even if marketing is correctly understood as a term, to adapt product and service marketing approaches while recognizing the peculiarities of effectively and efficiently creating strategic city marketing efforts is another task entirely.

Longer-term strategies that attempt to plan too far in the future often result in projections that are not sufficiently accurate to the future time period when it arrives. Some strategists have responded by focusing to a greater degree on short-term planning and tactical issues rather than traditional longer-term oriented planning. Effective strategy requires a balance of the short and long term. Urban Matters believes that during periods of intense environmental change, traditional approaches have less value, and therefore, there is a need to develop highly sensitive environmental monitoring systems that are capable of identifying trends, opportunities and threats at an early stage. Use of such monitoring systems will assist the City of Vernon in effectively adjusting its structure, culture and managerial mindset in a manner that allows the community to responding quickly and intelligently to the changing environment.

1.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Strategic marketing planning is an effective tool for community development as it provides a thoughtful basis from which a community can be purposeful and forthright in its efforts. For the City of Vernon, this strategic process allows the City to build upon its past and present success and further differentiate itself from other communities. This effort is part of a much larger initiative that included almost two years of significant community research and strategy development.

The problem statement to be addresses is:

How to effectively position and promote the City of Vernon in order to successfully attract newcomers?

In respect to this assignment, the Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC) specified the following objectives:

- identify critical branding strengths and weaknesses related to being a welcoming community;
- analyze the local context in relation to labour market needs, investment opportunities and the recent immigrant lens on the community;
- provide an overview of the City of Vernon's unique selling proposition as it relates to the attraction of newcomers;
- identify community branding strategy for the City of Vernon; and
- Identify marketing goals, objectives and high-level tactics to position the City of Vernon as an attractive and desirable community to move to.

1.2 APPROACH

The strategic marketing plan builds on the momentum of several community initiatives such as the Settlement Strategy and past Economic Development and Tourism marketing and branding initiatives. It takes what has been learned and leverages it into objectives and strategies that optimize marketing efforts, while providing the necessary research and context to maximize efficiency and integration within constraints of limited resources. This strategic marketing plan

has been designed to assist LIPC and community stakeholders in addressing each of the areas noted above.

This strategy adheres to the proven and sound Principles of city marketing principles:

- Incremental Strategy – add to what is already planned
- Support (synergies) with existing branding strategy... play, stay, and live... make it yours!
- Alignment with existing community strategies such as the city's economic development and tourism strategies.
- Enough political interest to be taken seriously and maintained on a long-term basis.
- Secure support (financial and human) to have impact breaking through the threshold of noise created by competition and combat existing communication stimuli overload.
- A clear awareness of target audiences.
- Knowledge of the original perception of the image of quality on which the different target groups are based.
- Coordination among the different stakeholders



CURRENT SITUATION

The essential foundation for identifying appropriate marketing and branding strategies depend on efforts to fully understand what the community represents today; what it aspires to be tomorrow; and how it can best achieve these aspirations in an increasingly complex and competitive marketplace.

The purpose of a situational review is to describe and assess the current situation or environment and possible future trends of particular aspects of the community. It is premised on an examination of three elements 1) labour and skill needs 2) investment opportunities and 3) the lens

of recent immigrants onto the community. These insights, in turn, provide guidance in the effort to articulate the strategy that is realistic, pragmatic and focused on unearthing opportunities and needs that the community wants addressed. Further, a proper situational analysis will, by implication, suggest development objectives and provide a framework for identifying and evaluating key opportunities.

In order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the key issues pertaining to the City of Vernon, Urban Matters, working closely with the LIPC, undertook research investigations as well as an analysis of both the internal and external environment in which the associated strategies will be applied. A high-level summary of findings are below with an in-depth analyses provided in the City of Vernon Settlement Strategy and City of Vernon Labour & Investment Report.

2.1 ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

- The majority of new population growth in British Columbia is largely the result of immigration
- By 2025, an additional 1 million people will be living in British Columbia.
- The proportion of the population that is of working age (ages 15 to 64) within the province is shrinking. The North Okanagan region has an older than average population when compared to the Province and thus labour force/talent challenges going forward are even more significant.
- The current unemployment rate is slightly above the provincial average; the population is older relative to B.C. as a whole; and the labour force participation rate is lower than the provincial participation rate (55.8% vs. 68.5% BC).

2.2 WORKFORCE TALENT/NEEDS

- Currently, there are concerns about an industry-wide skills gap brought on by mismatches in B.C.'s service-based industries, which make up three-quarters of the provincial economy.
- On a regular basis, industrial and technological change will demand different and more advanced skills of employees. Workers will need to be able to learn and adapt to new job opportunities, innovate, and build businesses that can manage in a totally different economic milieu.

- Within the Thompson-Okanagan, the key occupations expected to grow the fastest, in relative terms, over the next ten years include: optometrists, chiropractors and other health diagnosing and treating professionals; nursing; managers in health care; assisting occupations in support of health services; physicians, dentists and veterinarians.

2.3 INVESTMENT & ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Three main factors that drive firms/individual entrepreneurs to invest: (1) markets, (2) resources, (3) and efficiency.

2.3.1 CHALLENGES

- Limited resources by the community to engage in inbound investment marketing and attraction;
- Limited domestic investment market;
- Limited clusters and absence of key sectors of concentration;
- Heavily dependent on small business and while this might represent an opportunity to scale up, it may also be evidence of a lack of resident technical, managerial and financial capacity to achieve that end;
- Significant unemployment and low employment participation rate; and
- Significant numbers of local small businesses are or will be going through major succession in the next five (5) years but many are not prepared for succession.

2.3.2 OPPORTUNITIES

- Affordable workforce;
- Several resident world-class businesses as “models”;
- Educational/development facilities and capacities;
- High quality of life defined by the characteristics of raising a family in a safe community;
- Approximately 30%-40% commercial vacancy rate in downtown area;
- Diverse social and cultural make-up representing new business

opportunities for both external and internal entrepreneurs; and

- Substantive number and sophistication of resident business services, advisors and lenders

2.4 IMMIGRANT PERCEPTIONS/LENS

Recent immigrants were heavily engaged and proved to be an essential lens on the community throughout the Settlement Strategy creation. Below is a high-level overview of the findings.

2.4.1 GENERAL FINDINGS

- City of Vernon is a second port of entry into Canada.
- First port of entry are typically larger urban centres in Western Canada
- Social inclusion was a key element in their decision to relocate. Making the connections with family and cultural organizations are an important factor in their decision making.
- Many expressed that, inasmuch as the City of Vernon residents are very friendly, it was challenging to make deep connections and social inclusion.
- Many recent immigrants expressed that they have family and friends who have moved away from Vernon due to economic reasons such as employment and cost of housing.

2.4.2 DIFFICULTIES IMMIGRANTS

FACE ARRIVING TO CANADA:

1. Finding an adequate job;
2. Linguistic and cultural adaptations;
3. Canadian weather;
4. Social supports and interactions; and
5. The recognition of credentials and experiences

2.4.3 IMMIGRANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Transition support is required as immigrants get approval for professional training.
- There should be a process for credentials to be approved prior to moving to Canada. Alternatively, there should be a process of recognition as soon as they arrive.
- There would be value in an “Immigration” category for chamber awards to raise profile.
- Support should be provided to other cultures to establish a network of newcomer/immigrant support.
- Vernon should have more multicultural events to encourage different cultural associations/clubs and individuals to support each other.
- Should be short to medium term housing designated for new immigrants while they get established.
- Provide information to new immigrants regarding housing assistance programs
- More events planned with targeted demographic cohorts within the community to raise awareness and increase exposure to different cultures may promote more open acceptance and changing opinions/racial biases.
- There are several agencies that are providing services to immigrants. Many times the immigrant is forced to visit a multitude of agencies for their needs,. There may be value in a more amalgamative approach to service delivery.
- Better coordination between services is important
- Greater focus and efforts expended in organizing and hosting multicultural events.
- Canada Day is a great day to celebrate our multicultural society
- Current list of religious organizations and contacts required for all new immigrants.
- Religious groups could take more proactive approach in reaching out to new immigrants



MARKETING STRATEGY

“Competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing to perform activities differently or to perform different activities than rivals to deliver a unique mix of value.”
– Michael Porter



Today's business environment is complex. Community leaders and managers need to develop a strategy that is effective, flexible, implementable, sustainable and timely with few resources. This proposed marketing strategy is the culmination of a comprehensive analysis of the environment in which the City of Vernon competes. It considers the community's internal strengths and weaknesses, and makes recommendations that provide meaningful advantage.

Respecting that the marketing and branding of the City of Vernon is undertaken by countless organizations and stakeholders, it is imperative that the marketing strategy for labour, investment and newcomer attraction does not supersede any other community strategies, but in fact creates synergies and supports them.

The basis of a sound marketing strategy creation is the reflection of the competitive environment and the community's vision and its competitive capabilities, market position, and best opportunities. There are countless variations in the competitive strategies that a community can employ, mainly because each community's strategic approach entails custom-designed actions to fit its own circumstances.

3.1 TARGET MARKET SEGMENTS

“There is no such thing as a Mass Mind. The Mass Audience is made up of individuals, and good advertising is written always from one person to another. When it is aimed at millions, it rarely moves anyone.”

As mentioned earlier, many community marketing efforts suffer in effectiveness due to the lack of developing with and committing to newcomers. It is common to try and satisfy a wide range of different needs in an effort to be 'inclusive' and 'open'. with a strong concern towards not discriminating. Especially when it comes to targeted attraction of specific newcomers. Urban Matters fully appreciates this challenge and will approach the target segmentation not based on ethnicity but rather on the motivation that the city has a vested interest in attracting newcomers to the City of Vernon and the stages of migration and immigration.

Through the Settlement Strategy creation the LIPC had indicated that there are two types of newcomers in which they would like to focus their efforts on:

ECONOMIC MIGRANTS – those who want and are willing to relocate to the City of Vernon for economic reasons such as employment and investment.

FAMILY MIGRANTS – those who want to relocate to the City of Vernon to join their family and relatives.

While this targeting provides marketers within the community some direction, it is still a very large and wide target for focusing efforts. In an effort to better define how and where marketers should focus their efforts, the following additional characteristics should be applied to define the target and apply a geographic filter.

FAMILY AGE – While the Okanagan Valley and City of Vernon are very attractive locations for soon-to-be or recent retirees, it is being suggested that efforts on further attracting this demographic be limited. This will occur naturally, regardless of efforts. Rather, the needs of the community are to attract a skilled workforce and investment.

TRANSITION TOURIST TO NEWCOMERS – significant evidence shows that many of the people that settle to Vernon start as tourists to the region and then “fall in love” with the community and make a permanent move.

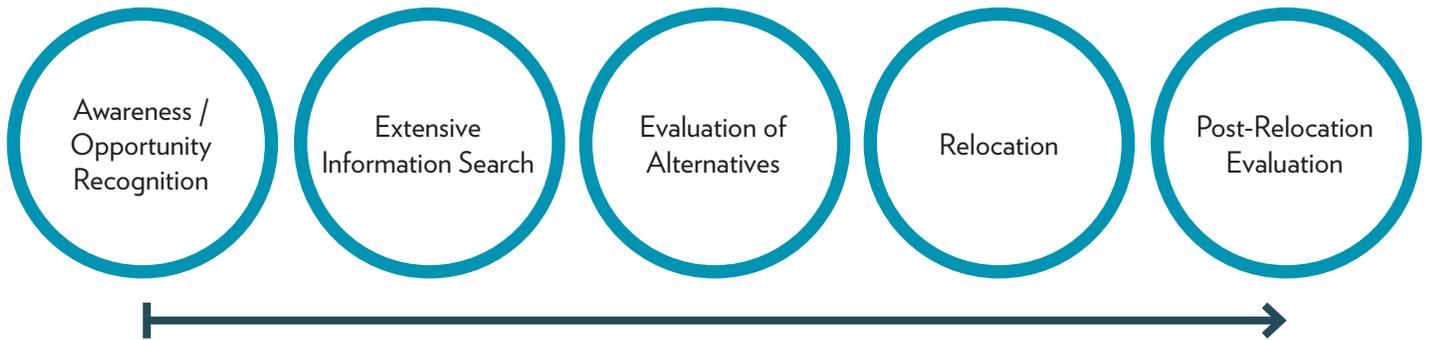
FOCUS ON WESTERN CANADA CITIES – With many of the immigrant and migrant newcomers to the community coming from other Western-Canadian Cities, it would be effective to focus efforts on these locations.

3.2 THE TRUTH ABOUT THE DECISION MAKING OF NEWCOMERS

We believe that a solid understanding of a target market is critical to future marketing success. In order to effectively develop a strategic approach to marketing the City of Vernon as a community for newcomers to relocate, it is of critical importance to fully understand newcomer’s decision making processes.

A newcomer’s decision-making process as it applies to relocating is considered to have high involvement from the entire family. This is

largely because newcomers carry higher levels of risk because of their characteristics of opportunity cost and the often-intangible characteristics of liveability. The processes in which a newcomer makes a decision are as follows:



This model implies that newcomers (whether its skilled labour, investors or residents) pass through all stages in every relocation circumstance. As previously noted, given the importance and risk of such a decision, it is argued that potential newcomers will not only pass through all stages but will do so as a family unit, deliberately and with a mixed degrees of decisions criteria. In this context the model is very useful for making marketing decisions as it forces the community to consider the whole process rather than just the decision; when it may be too late for a community to influence the choice.

3.2.1 STEP 1 - AWARENESS/ OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION

The relocation process starts with opportunity recognition. At this stage, the potential newcomer recognizes a need or opportunity (e.g. the cost of living and job opportunities in the City of Vernon are favourable) or responds to a marketing stimulus (e.g. newcomer attends a tradeshow and is now educated that the City of Vernon offers valuable and attractive livability characteristics). Often newcomers are made aware of the City of Vernon through two channels: 1) as tourist and 2) through family and relatives. Based on these realities, it is important to build stronger synergies between these two touch points and converting the tourist into an investor/skilled worker/resident of the community.

3.2.2 STEP 2 - EXTENSIVE INFORMATION SEARCH

Once a potential newcomer is stimulated, they then need to decide how much information is required. At this point, the potential newcomer will collect relevant information from several communities. In fact, some newcomers have mentioned “I interviewed several employers in different communities before deciding where my family was going to locate”. Research has also shown that potential newcomers will be largely self-directed. In that they will do the research on their own and will more than that, do it without engaging local government or newcomer agencies. The challenge for all communities is to provide the information in the format the audience wants and how to uniquely position the community.

The research conducted that supports this concept includes:

1. If a potential newcomer has an existing relationship with a local (often via family connections), they will start their information search with them.
2. If a potential immigrant does not have a relationship with a local, they will start their information search with online information gathering (community profiles, Google image searches/Google earth, tourism promotional tools).

Potential newcomers obtain information from numerous types of sources. It is being suggested that the City of Vernon not only incorporate these activities into existing and planned marketing efforts but also align their messaging with this objective:

- Leverage the City of Vernon’s Tourism brand elements in the development of a destination-oriented HR marketing campaign to be launched in strategic Canadian and international markets
- Develop promotional tools and/or presentations that can be utilized by major employers and professional travelers.
- Coordinate participation in future Canadian and international job fairs such that the destination flag is carried and employers with jobs and housing to offer have their interests represented - particularly smaller employers lacking the resources to participate in national/international recruitment fairs.

The usefulness and influence of these sources of information will vary by service and by the type of immigrant you are seeking. Research suggests that immigrants value and respect personal sources more than commercial sources (the influence of “word of mouth”). It is critical that a past visitor or existing resident bases much of the value

of the engagement based on 1) outcome and 2) their post relocation evaluation. All too often communities forget about the immigrant once they relocate.

3.2.3 STEP 3 - EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

In the evaluation stage, the potential immigrant must choose between alternative communities. The question that the City of Vernon needs to answer and stay cognitive of is what drives the decision?

An important determinant of the extent of evaluation is whether the potential newcomer feels “involved” in the community. Involvement means the degree of perceived relevance and personal importance that accompanies the choice. Where relocating is “highly involving”, the immigrant is likely to carry out extensive evaluation.

Research has shown that many potential newcomers will utilize the same 17 characteristics of the Welcoming Communities as presented in the Settlement Strategy.

1. Economic Opportunities (Employment and/or Investment)
2. Fostering of Social Capital
3. Affordable /Suitable Housing
4. Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community
5. Presence of Newcomer-Serving Agencies that can Successfully Meet the Needs of Newcomers
6. Links between Main Actors Working toward Welcoming Communities
7. Municipal Features and Services Sensitive to the Presence and Needs of Newcomers
8. Educational
9. Accessible /Suitable Health Care
10. Available /Accessible Public Transit
11. Presence of Diverse Religious Organizations
12. Social Engagement Opportunities
13. Political Participation Opportunities
14. Positive Relationships Police and Justice
15. Safety
16. Opportunities for Public Space & Recreation Facilities
17. Favourable Media Coverage and Representation

The City of Vernon can attract and retain population by promoting the benefits of living and working in a smaller City (e.g., employment opportunities, investment opportunities, commute time to work, lower living expenses, opportunities for public space & recreation facilities, safe neighborhoods and access to community health and recreation services etc.). As we know, these aspects are not necessarily unique to Vernon, and therefore, determining a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is difficult for the city itself. Given that the communities within the Okanagan Valley have many similarities, focusing on some form of differentiation through employment opportunities with major employers (e.g. Kal Tire, TOLKO Industries etc.) can further assist in the ability to draw economic immigrants to the community.

OFTEN COMMUNITIES DO NOT UNDERSTAND NOR GIVE CREDENCE TO THE NEWCOMER EVALUATION PROCESS. The failure to provide a potential newcomer either in advance or during the process the appropriate answers to their inquiries provides insights to the question ‘given our community attractiveness why would anyone choose a different community?’

It must also be recognized that the kind of information that the community needs to provide potential immigrants in different situations or for different types of immigrants (e.g. employment seeking, activity seeking, family related relocation, etc.). In high-involvement decisions such as relocating, the community needs to provide a good deal of information about the positive consequences of immigrating to the community. The community representatives may need to stress the important attributes of the community’s livability and the advantages compared with the competition.

3.2.4 STEP 4 – RELOCATION

The potential newcomer may develop a predisposition to relocating (matching motives and evaluative criteria with community attributes will assist with educating the immigrant that the City of Vernon is the best choice). The leaders within the community need to stay cognitive that the potential newcomer is not void of risk in deciding which community to relocate to and build tactics in the immigrant’s process that mitigate these risks. Relocating clearly carries a high level of risk.

3.2.5 STEP 5 - POST-RELOCATION EVALUATION - COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

The final stage is the post-relocation evaluation of the decision. This is where the efforts related to retention of the recent newcomer occurs. It is common for newcomers to experience concerns after making a relocation decision. This arises from a concept that is known as “cognitive dissonance”. It is common for a newcomer, after deciding to relocate that has a high perceived risk (emotionally and/or financially), to second guess their decision.

To manage the post-relocation stage, it is the job of the community and support systems to persuade the immigrant that the relocation will satisfy their needs. Then after having made the move, the immigrant should be encouraged that they have made the right decision.

In short, community leaders and front-end staff need to be entrepreneurial and actively look for opportunities to re-confirm immigrants’ decision. This confirmation will feed the ever important tactic of word of mouth promotion. An important principle to remember is that people tend to cluster together; newcomers of similar cultural heritage tend to cluster as well. They talk to others about their circumstance and, if nurtured, can become your best future community promoters or by contrast a person that negates your entire marketing and attraction efforts.

3.3 MARKETING OPPORTUNITY & ISSUES ANALYSIS

Strategic marketing planning should be rooted in the community’s strengths and opportunities and be cognizant of weaknesses and threats. While it is important to be aware and celebrate the many opportunities and strengths within the community, strategic planning is not just about a community’s future. Current critical organizational issues also need to be strategic in terms of their immediate and long-term impacts and must be solved in harmony with the organization’s strategy.

Based on in-depth analysis of the City of Vernon newcomer related issues, the following are the identified critical issues in which the City needs to address in order to become a healthy organization.

3.3.1 CRITICAL MARKETING

CHALLENGES:

Through the analysis conducted, there were several marketing challenges unearthed. While some of the challenges stated are more related to personal perceptions rather than reality; nonetheless, they are realities in the minds of the people and they need to be addressed. Some of the challenges identified include:

- Fragmented marketing and promotional efforts throughout the community.
- Great place to live ... if you can find employment.
- Sunshine tax – a market phenomenon that occurs in places with a temperate climate where salaries are often lower and costs of living are higher than the national average,
- Limited employment and investment opportunities.
- Declining economic circumstance.
- Not as attractive as other communities within the Okanagan Valley.
- Community while friendly is less open to outsiders.

3.3.2 CRITICAL OPPORTUNITIES:

With all challenges, comes opportunities in every community. Some of the opportunities uncovered by our analysis include:

- Family oriented
- Secure and safe
- Great outdoor amenities (lakes, mountains, parks, etc.)
- Supports active lifestyles (ski, bike, hike, swim, parks, fields, etc.)
- Friendly – community members are very friendly and pleasant.
- Committed citizens supporting community causes.

3.4 THE REALITIES OF BRANDING

A strong brand is particularly important in order to competitively position a community in the market place. As competition increases, so do the benefits of a community's strategic brand. It is increasingly important to strategically emphasize new thinking and innovation to distance your community from the more traditional areas of practice.

Branding is not static. From time to time, rebranding must take place to address changes in the community and the environment in which it applies it.

Brand matters to the public, employees, competitors and brand matters to success. Why then do so few communities have a strong brand? The predominant reasons include:

- A lack of belief in the importance of strategic branding;
- A lack of commitment to the strategic branding process;
- A belief that a strategic brand identity exists when it does not;
- A lack of understanding of brand strategy and how it forms an essential aspect of the marketing strategy;
- Perceived lack of time to undertake the strategic branding process in a comprehensive manner;
- Lack of agreement as to what the brand should be;
- Inability to commit the resources required to “get it right”;
- Perception that brands are not as important in ‘our industry’; and,
- Creating a strategic brand is difficult.

The issue that the City of Vernon needs to remain aware of is that newcomers’ perception is their reality. The job of the strategic branding process is to align the desired perception that the community is trying to achieve, based on the analysis of the marketplace and the gaps that exist, with the newcomers.

Many elements of the City of Vernon’s identity and livability characteristics are true and of considerable benefit to many newcomers. This, however, may not form the basis for which to differentiate the community from competitors as they too have the ability to make similar assertions.

The challenge lies within finding a sustainable competitive advantage that is based on a unique and sustainable offering. The strongest brands that newcomers identify and respond with identify the key attributes of the community while provoking emotion within them. In an increasingly competitive labour market, attracting and retaining talent has become a prime concern of many communities. Communities need to understand the range of factors that influence an immigrant’s career decision-making and the role of community branding in attracting human capital that best fits and contributes to the strategic aims of the City of Vernon.

There should be serious importance assigned to the City of Vernon’s branding to create a strong, genuine and lasting community brand. Whilst communities have used marketing techniques and branding practices in the past, there is a need to expand their activities to differentiate themselves and make them attractive from an immigrant’s perspective.

3.5 IMAGERY

Branding and image are two important components of an effective newcomer attraction strategy. Defining the methods through which a community can maximize their brand awareness with economic immigrants is a necessity to community economic development and sustainability.

Whether a community wants to or not, it needs to acknowledge that emotions always play a significant role in the decisions newcomers make. At a macro level, the role of branding and image are important in attracting the human capital that is required to contribute to the strategic aims and overall performance of the community's ability to attract newcomers. Not only does branding provide a community with the necessary framework to simplify and focus priorities; it is inevitably central to improving recruitment, retention and commitment of immigrants.

Big cities have big budgets with staff that specialize in all the different functional areas, which makes designing and activating a strategy that creates a unique position in the marketplace a simpler task than for small cities. One crucial element of building a brand, no matter the size of the community, is imagery. A brand's photography is essential for its activation, as it allows a community to differentiate itself from competitors, by connecting and building brand equity.

It is recommended that the imagery that the City of Vernon utilizes for the marketing efforts ensures it further embraces and encapsulates the existing brand of:

PLAY, STAY, AND LIVE... MAKE IT YOURS!

It is being proposed that the City of Vernon work with professional and creative photographer(s) to create a library of images that can be utilized through the numerous marketing efforts. The type of photography best suited to the "Make it yours!" is Point of View (POV). This ensures that the audience is placed into the action or experience in which the City of Vernon wants to portray.

While the City of Vernon and surrounding areas have some of the most amazing views and natural assets anywhere in the world, it is critical that the brand provoke emotion in the audience by making a personal connection with the experience of living in the City of Vernon. Some suggestions regarding types of photography:

- Friendly Community
- Families
- Outdoor Activities (hiking, biking, swimming, skiing)

- Culture Aspects of Vernon (Boutique Dining, Performing Arts Centre, Etc..)
- Access to good Education (Elementary, Secondary and Post Secondary)



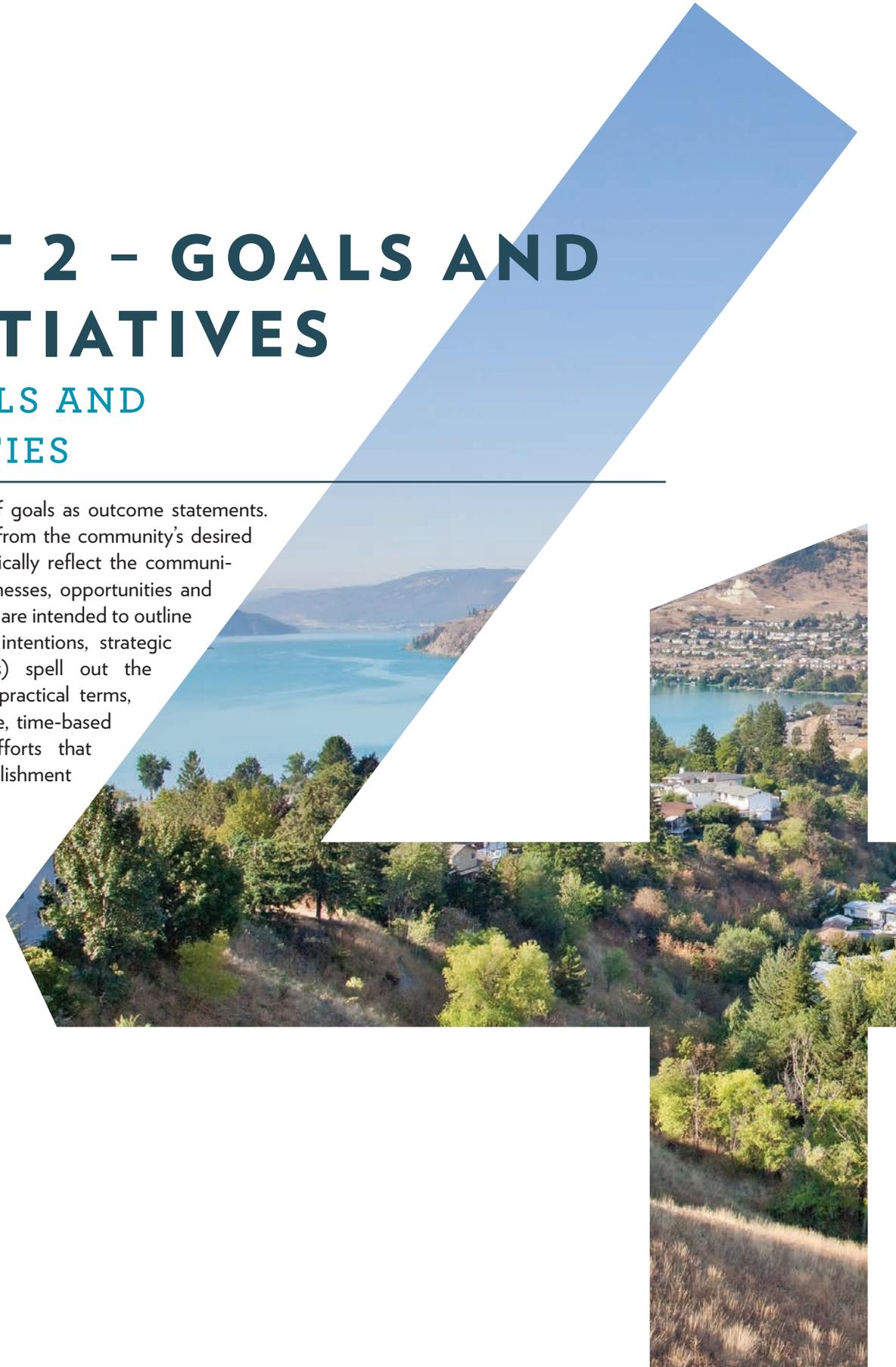
Emotion is deeply woven into human decision-making. Marketing functions of communities have a tremendous opportunity to use images in branding. It provides the opportunity to create a tangible connection within an intangible process. This is so powerfully important that it warrants careful strategic consideration.

Clearly, the promotion of the community is significant. Promotional materials need to be well-developed and convey strong messaging that will resonate with potential economic and family motivated newcomers. Evidently, they should be prominently displayed and should draw attention to the region's features (e.g. low unemployment rate, health care and education facilities, low crime rate and affordable lifestyle, etc.).

PART 2 – GOALS AND INITIATIVES

4.1 GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

It is best to think of goals as outcome statements. They flow logically from the community's desired direction and realistically reflect the community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. While goals are intended to outline broad themes and intentions, strategic initiatives (activities) spell out the details of each. In practical terms, initiatives are precise, time-based and measurable efforts that support the accomplishment of a goal.



The successful attraction and retention of newcomers is often a key component of a community's economic development strategy. Federal and provincial governments play a role and have a responsibility in regards to immigration, but each community can and must play an important role in the attraction, welcoming, integration, and overall retaining of economic newcomers to the area.

A significant role of communities in regards to immigration is to be able to create and sustain a welcoming place where people want to play, stay, and live. Newcomer attraction is about the people, and that is important to keep in mind. As such, attracting and retaining newcomers is a necessity for most communities, including Vernon, due to three main factors:

1. The demand for highly skilled, adaptable workers due to knowledge economy and rapid technological change;
2. An aging workforce and increasing dependency ratio; and
3. A growing reliance on immigration and migration as a source of population, skills and labour force growth.

In moving forward, there are three broad goals proposed for the City of Vernon's labour attraction marketing strategy. These goals have been derived from a consensus of expressed ideas, opinions and inputs, and are logically premised and supportable. These goals and associated tasks adopt a market orientation strategy that focuses on strategic alignment of the City of Vernon with the external environment in which it competes. Communities that align their market offerings with respect to the target segment, achieve higher performance.

MARKETING GOALS

1. Promotion of a positive and supportive “welcoming” community.
2. Increase awareness of investment and employment opportunities within the City of Vernon.
3. Enhance existing brand of the City of Vernon.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Develop a coordinated approach to address the destination’s labour attraction and retention needs.
- Attract appropriately skilled (talented) workers that will enhance existing and futures businesses needs.
- Create and awareness and understanding as to the true investment and employment opportunities offered within the City

ACTIONS

1. Leverage the City of Vernon’s Tourism brand elements in the development of a destination-oriented HR marketing campaign to be launched in strategic Canadian and international markets by further fostering and building relationships of entities that (Federal, Provincial and Private Sector) that are already participating in such markets.
2. Create branding protocols and tools to support community organizations (NGO and Private Sector) to assist them with their attraction efforts.
3. Enhance promotional efforts to better facilitate the relocation process (align with decision making process) of potential newcomers.
4. Form an HR marketing committee with representatives from all sectors of the City of Vernon’s tourism economy to ensure there is a consistent message developed/positioned in the marketplace regarding employment and lifestyle opportunities in Vernon.
5. Build a comprehensive website with all the resources job seekers require to make an informed decision about living and working in the destination (e.g. cost of living, housing options, recreational programs, support for newcomers, etc.).
6. Build a relationship with post-secondary institutions (Okanagan College and UBC-O) so the City of Vernon-oriented messaging is entrenched in the curriculum and in the minds of students.
7. Create opportunities to present to these students on an annual basis so your destination brand and the work/lifestyle opportunities you have to offer are clear.
8. Create an awareness and understanding as to the true investment and employment opportunities offered within the City. Create Investment Opportunity Profiles.
9. Partner with other relevant community, regional, provincial, and federal organizations to extend City of Vernon’s promotional reach
10. Incorporate Social Media into marketing efforts with focuses on labour and investment attraction initiatives.
11. Develop promotional tools to assist with converting tourist to residents (bridge the divided at tourism operations) with a “if you enjoy being a tourist here... imagine living here!” campaign.
12. Coordinate participation in future Canadian and international job fairs such that the destination flag is carried and employers with jobs and housing to offer have their interests represented - particularly smaller employers

EVALUATE AND ADJUST

Recognizing that strategic planning is an iterative process it is critical that the culture of the City of Vernon supports and fosters continuous evaluation and adjustment of the proposed plan. Evaluating the overall failure or success of marketing efforts can be difficult particularly in understanding which tactic led to what result. The purpose of evaluation is to track the measurable aspects of the tactics used and progress toward overall objectives and goals.

Even a marketing effort that is perceived to fail and not fully accomplish its tangible goal can result in lasting positive impressions. If the community of Vernon's identity has been communicated correctly, the community is on the right path in its marketing efforts. Positive results will continue to build over time in the minds of pro-



spective immigrants, reinforcing the community's identity and making it more likely that subsequent marketing efforts will be able to turn potential immigrants into lifelong and contributing residents.

5.1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following are suggested key performance indicators to evaluate the success of this initiative on an ongoing basis. Once the first set of indicators has been gathered, they will be established as benchmarks for ongoing measurement and goal setting. Common Marketing

5.1.1 COMMON MARKETING

- Number of website visitors
- Number of files downloaded
- Number of times all videos viewed
- Significant keyword(s) rank
- Number of link-backs
- Number of target email campaigns sent
- Number of website form inquiries
- Number of articles in media or internet
- Number of partner meetings/events

5.1.2 METRICS WITH THE CITY OF VERNON

- Number of business visits completed
- Number of surveys completed
- Number of business briefs sent
- Number of business events held/participated
- Number of schools visited
- Number of public/resident events participated

5.1.3 CANADA AND THE WORLD

- Number of tradeshow participated/exhibited
- Number of new leads generated from shows
- Number of location enquiries

5.1.4 GOAL ATTAINMENT

- Number of new businesses started
- Number of people employed
- Number of businesses operating
- Number of business expansions
- Number of new business locations
- Number of new workplaces created
- Increase in tax base (over previous year)

EVALUATE AND ADJUST

The importance of developing newcomer strategic marketing plans for the enhancement of the community's future health and increasing competitiveness has become progressively better understood. Less understood is how to manage effective implementation of such initiatives.

It is imperative that the community of Vernon employs a focus differentiation strategy while trading on the existing brand recognition of the community and tourism and performing aggressive "on the offensive" tactics. This stance by the community will provide distance between Vernon and its Okanagan Valley competitors.

The focus of this engagement piece was on the marketing function of the City of Vernon, and its objective was to answer the question: "How does the City of Vernon, as a very healthy and beautiful



city, strengthen and elevate its market position in order to attract economic immigrants?” The leadership at the City of Vernon recognizes that achieving this market elevation requires tremendous discipline and commitment by the entire organization. The settlement strategy in its entirety performed a critical assessment of the present situation of the community, identified critical issues and made recommendations on how to address the issues.

