

Book

9



Bring the Brand to Life

'Bring the Brand to Life', is the ninth in a series of e-Books from **Bill Baker** of **Total Destination Marketing**. It provides valuable insight for leaders who are considering launching a branding initiative for their community.

Bring the Brand to Life

It's now time to create your brand toolkit by designing the visual and verbal identity systems, and then to effectively deploy the brand language and look in communications.

In a nutshell, this involves aligning with the brand and carefully synchronizing all messages, content and channels. By communicating in this way, you will expose customers to multiple, frequent and consistent brand messages. Add to this the memorable experiences the brand will be known for and the foundations of the brand have been set.

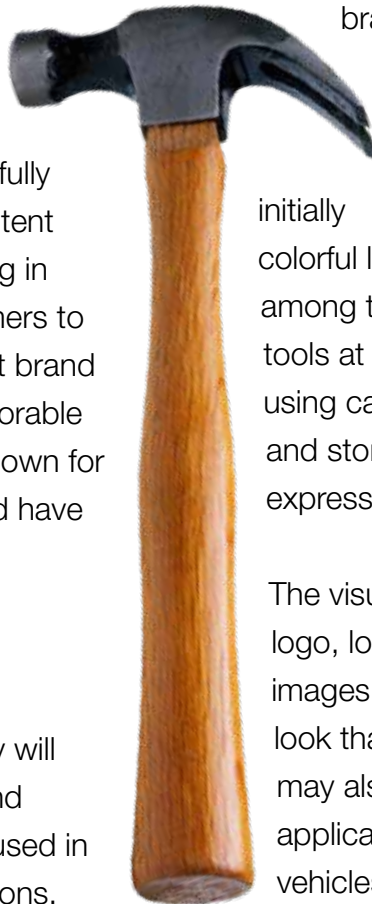
Crafting the Brand Voice and Look

The verbal and the visual identity will play pivotal roles in building brand recognition and respect. When used in advertising, websites, presentations, signage and other applications they convey the character and positive

associations to project a compelling place to visit.

The city's verbal identity or brand language includes the name, tagline, copy style, brand stories, and words make the brand distinctive, enticing, and informative. It's not uncommon for the power of words to be initially overlooked in favor of the colorful lure of the logo, yet words are among the most potent and affordable tools at your disposal. By consistently using carefully crafted words, phrases and stories you can cost-effectively express the brand.

The visual identity system includes the logo, logotype, fonts, color palette, images, symbols, and the distinguishing look that characterizes the brand. These may also include the designs for special applications such as office interiors, vehicles, uniforms, merchandise, street banners, signage, trade show booths, and more.



Action Point:

The visual and verbal identity are essential to accurately and consistently expressing the brand.

Deploying the Identity

Just as the term “talking points” has found its way into our vocabulary to describe the words, phrases, and sentences that politicians use to get their messages across to constituents, each city also needs its own talking points or key messages. Key words enable us to verbally communicate the brand in ways that consistently project the brand for specific target audiences.

This helps keep all staff, partners, and stakeholders “on message” when speaking or writing about the city. These words and phrases should form the core messages in all appropriate brochures, websites, speeches, and presentations. The brand’s key words may differ from the key words used in search engine optimization which relate more to the terms that people use when searching for specific information.

When the brand messages are consistently, correctly and creatively communicated to the right target audiences at the right time, they should trigger the desired emotions, connect with customers, and enhance the brand image.

Every person conveying brand messages must always ask the question, “Have I correctly and creatively reinforced the brand in this decision or activity?”. This applies to every opportunity to reflect and reinforce the brand, whether selecting an image and video, choosing the color of carpet for a trade show booth, or proofing copy for a publication or website.

The brand manager must maintain a vigilant eye on all deployment of the brand. While innovation and creativity are essential for a vibrant brand.

Action Point:

Managing the brand involves much more than the technical oversight of logo and colors. It calls for close attention using copy, language and stories that are inspired

by the brand strategy at every critical touchpoint with customers.

How Has Digital Changed Branding?



The Digital Age has created a hyper-connected world in which traditional and digital media converge and prospective customers are bombarded with a dizzying array of choices, media channels and information. This presents new challenges for place marketers. Customers are always online, sometimes multi-screening with devices that interact with each other. Mobile devices provide consumers with the 24/7 ability to source information (web), navigate (GPS), be entertained and learn (video), communicate (text), compare (Yelp), meet (Foursquare), brag (Facebook and Instagram) and review (TripAdvisor) while wandering through a museum, walking a forest trail or driving an historic route. Not to mention the power to enhance the

storytelling and ability to bring a place to life through place-based solutions.

The days of one-way push advertising interrupting people are gone. The old command and control method of brand management is no longer appropriate. Cities must be flexible and should guide and shape their brand while responding to the real-time reactions of customers. Strictly relying on the enforcement of brand guidelines will no longer work.

Action Point:

The new philosophy for place marketers must be, “Control what you can, influence what you can’t.”

New Rules of Marketing

The fundamentals of branding haven’t changed, but marketing as we have known it is largely obsolete. The most profound changes arising from the Digital Age is the influence on how we communicate, buy, work, relax, learn, consume and react.

This shift has a direct influence on the perceptions, preferences and loyalty toward places. Then there is user-generated content which enables customers to thoroughly compare options, rate experiences, post images, and make comments to assist others. This leaves no room for hype and boosterism. It means that a city's experiences and benefits must always meet or exceed what has been promised. The days of a destination simply pumping out advertising and PR releases to influence consumer preferences are over.

Savvy destination marketing organizations must tap social and mobile networks, smart



phones and tablets, GPS apps, e-commerce and booking engines, Google maps, user-generated-content, kiosks, crowdsourcing and the opportunity to economically reach consumers globally.

Websites can now deploy video, text, audio, photos and real time comments from customers. They also provide bookings, navigation, maps, destination information, product reviews, trip planning advice, and a “showroom” for local tourism products – and these are available 24/7 and almost anywhere.

Action Point:

The places that adapt to the new rules and use their brand flexibly as their beacon and rallying point to unite partners and engage customers will thrive and build meaningful brands.

Fine-tune Messages to Audiences

Consumers acquire information through a multitude of channels and it's important to adopt the principles of content marketing to connect with them at the right time and

place with an integrated, multi-channel approach. Content marketing provides the opportunity to build credibility and trust by turning visitors into audience members, then audience members to potential visitors, and potential visitors into actual visitors.

Content can be presented in many forms (blogs, video, podcasts, webinars, brochures, etc.) and be distributed through a variety of new and traditional channels, including social media, SEO, sponsored content, and more. However, the content must be fresh, new, interesting, and add value to the volume of information pouring over the Internet. These are important tools for embedding relevant content that will attract, engage and convert your best customers. The objective is to generate synergy across all media channels and the actions of partners.



Action Point:

Content marketing and personas set the tone, style and delivery strategies to ensure that content is relevant, timely and compelling for target audiences.

Are You Listening In?

User-generated reviews, comments and opinions can determine your city's online reputation. The importance of user-

generated content created through myriad website and blogs make it a critical medium to actively monitor. This feedback may include Online Travel Agents websites (such as Booking.com and Expedia), meta search sites (such as TripAdvisor), Google+ pages, Twitter, YouTube, testimonials on websites, comments on blogs or Facebook.

Consideration should be given to:

- What types of negative comments do you ignore?
- What types of comments warrant a response?

- How do staff pass these comments to partners when necessary?
- What processes are needed for real-time social media crisis monitoring?

Action Point:

Develop a plan for how to respond to comments. Effectively responding to them can amplify the positive and limit the impact of negative comments.

Success Stories

Tukwila WA

Tukwila is a small city, just south of Seattle. It has entered a new era that is characterized by the increased expansion of retail, restaurants and family entertainment, as well as housing in the popular Southcenter District of the City. The Tukwila Brand Strategy was revealed following extensive consumer research, analysis and consultation. A comprehensive outreach strategy engaged residents, business and community leaders and external customers through interviews, workshops, online and telephone research.

The brand provides a unifying framework through which the City of Tukwila, Seattle Southside and partners can present Tukwila in a consistent and compelling voice as an attractive place to visit, live, work and grow business.

The research revealed that Tukwila offers the greatest concentration of affordable shopping, along with abundant dining, family fun, sports, and opportunities for experiential entertainment in the Northwest. The city also has representation from cultures from around the world and is the hub of multi-culturalism in the Seattle area.



How Can We Help?

When you're ready to start your brand planning and design, we can introduce you to techniques specifically designed to meet the special needs for branding and marketing cities and regions.

Free Consultation: Take advantage of a no-charge consultation with a destination branding expert to discuss your community branding challenges and needs.

To get started, send us an email at: billb@destinationbranding.com

TDM's One-Day Branding Retreat is the ideal way to kick-start your branding journey through an intensive day that features interactive presentations, brand workshops and discussions.

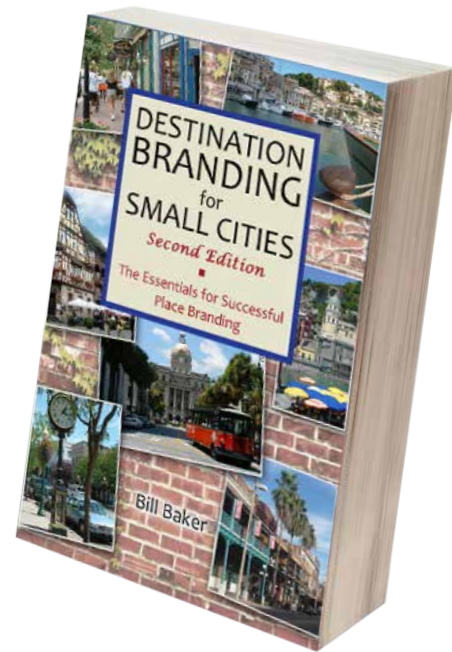
TDM's Brand Discovery Lab is an intensive 4 to 6-week program that is custom-designed for communities wanting to fast track their brand.

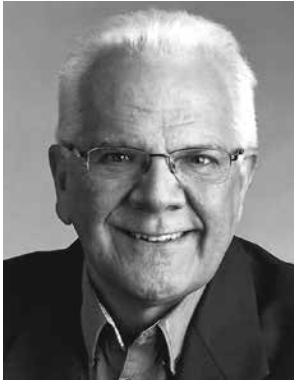
TDM's Destination Branding Strategy follows our proven 7A Destination Branding process. It involves extensive qualitative and quantitative research to enable solutions deeply grounded in thorough research in your operating and competitive environments.

Destination Branding for Small Cities

If you liked this e-Book, you'll love our comprehensive book, Destination Branding for Small Cities. This best-selling book cuts through the theory, advertising-speak and jargon to simplify and clarify the practice of branding places improved tourism, economic development, placemaking and urban design. It provides real world examples, as well as affordable, proven tools, templates and checklists to help breathe life into small city branding and marketing.

Available at
amazon.com





Bill Baker is Chief Strategist for Total Destination Marketing, and is recognized internationally as an author, speaker and for his extensive work in creating brand strategies for places of all sizes, from nations to small cities.

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Todd Mayfield is a Principal and the Group Creative Director for Axia Creative. Axia is an industry leader in the design of brand identity, wayfinding and visual communications for destinations throughout the US and Canada.



Both Bill and Todd serve on the international expert panel for the Place Brand Observer which is a library of research, case studies, lively expert interviews and reflections on latest trends, ideas and opportunities. We invite you to visit and explore placebrandobserver.com.





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