

# COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING



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# PREFACE

**Global economic change, rapid urbanization of the developing world and rising instability are defining realities of the 21st century.** They cast cities and local governments into critical roles as facilitators and enablers of economic growth, prosperity and poverty reduction. But local governments face challenges and need support in building their capacity to assume a strategic and active role in local economic development (LED).

Since 2010, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities—International (FCMI) has developed a range of programming to support LED capacity building in over 20 countries. Working in collaboration with member municipalities, overseas partners and LED experts, we have provided training and developed practical tools and resources to equip local leaders, municipal staff and community stakeholders with some of the knowledge they need.

**This LED learning module and toolkit focuses on community branding and marketing—an important part of any LED strategy.** The curriculum highlights the methodology and processes necessary to identify, articulate and launch a community brand. Developed in collaboration with overseas partners, the curriculum is based on best practices and the real-life experience of Canadian and other communities worldwide. It has now been taught and implemented in numerous partner cities.

This learning module and toolkit provides a self-guided learning experience using PowerPoint presentations, international and Canadian case studies, video footage and other resources. We encourage you to work through the content at your own pace, using whatever elements are applicable to your needs. Keep in mind that community branding and marketing is only a part of, and must be soundly rooted in, a comprehensive LED strategy.

This LED learning module and toolkit will evolve and grow as our range of resources expands. If your community has a relevant case study or best practice, please pass it along by contacting us at [fcminternational@fcm.ca](mailto:fcminternational@fcm.ca).

To access the range of FCM International's resources on local economic development, please visit: <http://www.fcm.ca/home/programs/international/resources/local-economic-development.htm>

## LED DEFINED

In March 2011, five hundred representatives of local governments, their ministries and associations, non-governmental organizations, academic and research institutions, development partners and the private sector from 51 countries met in Cardiff, Wales, for the sixth biennial conference of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum. These stakeholders came together to emphasize the important role that local governments play in fostering economic prosperity.

In issuing the Cardiff Consensus, participants defined **LED as: “...a process which brings together different partners in a local area to work together and harness local resources for sustainable economic growth.”** The Consensus affirms that there is no single model for pursuing LED; much depends on local realities, objectives and resources. There are nonetheless a number of developmental stages, strategies and processes that local governments and their partners should consider when designing and implementing an integrated approach to LED.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The development of this resource has been an iterative and collaborative process. Much of the content has evolved as a result of the contributions of a number of Canadian municipalities, overseas development partners, and individual experts who have shared their learning, insights, expertise and examples of good practices in community branding and marketing.

For supporting the development of this guide, FCMI would like to thank:

Sue Cass, partner at One World Inc.—lead writer for this learning module

Kadie Ward, Founder, Build Strong Cities Corp.—strategic advisor on community branding and marketing

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING: A TOOL FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....	6
2.0	IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY TO EMBARK ON A BRANDING AND MARKETING PROCESS?.....	7
3.0	A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING.....	12
4.0	ESTABLISHING YOUR LEADERSHIP GROUP .....	13
5.0	GETTING STARTED .....	15
6.0	MARKET RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS.....	17
7.0	CREATING A BRAND IDENTITY.....	20
8.0	DEFINING YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY AND PLAN.....	24
9.0	MARKETING IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERING CAMPAIGNS.....	26
10.0	MEASURING SUCCESS.....	29
11.0	CLOSING REMARKS.....	30
12.0	OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES .....	31

# 1.0 COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING: A TOOL FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Successful local economic development (LED) begins with a shared vision for the future of your community and a sound strategic plan to realize that vision. Defining the identity of your community and its unique brand, and promoting that brand identity to investors and others, is an essential component of an LED strategy.

Community branding and marketing is more than a compelling logo, good promotional sales pitch, new website and communication materials. It is a synergistic process of engagement and partnership building. The ultimate outcome is to develop broad ownership of the brand identity within your community. Key stakeholders need to be committed to supporting it and to implement the various elements of your LED plan. A well-executed community branding and marketing exercise can be a vital and empowering process of local democratization, active citizenship and participation.

Think about your community's brand in terms of its "inward" and "outward" dimensions. Its inward side is the civic engagement and sense of pride that can arise from shared values and identity. Efforts by community leaders to strengthen or define their community's brand can lead to deeper citizen engagement and mobilization of socioeconomic actors. Looking outward, your community's brand is about how your community is perceived. This perception can be shaped by what you communicate, and how you communicate about what your community has to offer. As such, your brand can be a powerful tool to attract investments, companies and tourism.

In the sections that follow, you will be introduced to the stages and steps of a community branding and marketing strategy for LED. Included are numerous examples of good practice, along with useful references and resources.

## 2.0 IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY TO EMBARK ON A BRANDING AND MARKETING PROCESS?

### 2.1 BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING

The benefits of a branding and marketing process to enhance your LED efforts and your community's competitive advantage include:

- Putting your community on the global, regional and national map
- Increasing a sense of local identity, well-being and pride
- Attracting new businesses, industries, investments and high profile events
- Drawing in new populations and a diversity of skills and talents
- Increasing tourism
- Developing and maintaining a clear and consistent sense of community identity and messaging for the outside world
- Supporting coherent local development efforts overall as physical, social, economic and cultural sectors come together to deliver your community's brand promise

Each community will confront its own challenges in undertaking the process. But each can also draw on unique strengths and potential—and learn from the innovative ways other cities and municipalities have managed their challenges.

### 2.2 SOME DEFINITIONS

**“Community Brand” (or “Place Brand”, or “City Brand”):** A community brand is a clear and consistent vision and message that conveys what a community represents (i.e., what a community stands for, and the values it holds). Your brand is central to your marketing endeavors. It directly addresses the needs of specific target audiences.

**“Marketing”** is the process of creating, distributing, promoting and pricing ideas, goods and services to satisfy exchange relationships with customers and develop and maintain favorable relationships with stakeholders.

**“Community Marketing” (or “Place Marketing, or “City Marketing”):** Effective community marketing presents the relevant and unique assets and experiences that your community can offer customers and visitors, and that differentiate you from neighboring communities and competitors in the wider marketplace. It supports and helps ensure maximum impact of your overall LED efforts.

## 2.3 IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY?

Before starting to develop a community branding and marketing strategy, there are a few important questions you should consider. These questions relate to some of the main challenges that can be encountered along the way:

**At the senior local government level, is there *strong leadership and political support* to guide, monitor and inject energy into a community branding and marketing process? Is the leadership also *willing to integrate the brand* within its overall strategic planning and operations?**

Simply developing a new slogan or logo will not create a new community identity. Community branding gets to the heart of the shifting perceptions of local government staff, council members, citizens, organizations, businesses and other target audiences. Your local government executive team is key to drive what MUST be a highly collaborative and well-coordinated interdepartmental and cross-sectorial exercise. More than approve the process and the end product, the executive team must believe in and promote the value of the brand. And it needs to exemplify the type of collaboration your community needs.

**Is there *commitment of local government leaders to sharing leadership and control* in the community branding and marketing process with a wider range of stakeholders and interests? Is there *capacity and will to undertake a true partnership approach* throughout its design and implementation?**

City Hall alone can't make a community brand come alive and drive the marketing that will bring new prosperity to your community. The success of a community branding and marketing endeavour can be ensured ONLY through broad stakeholder engagement and ownership of the brand. Community leaders need to see the value and potential economic returns that can come from engaging in the process, sharing responsibility for implementation of the marketing plan and building the kinds of cross-sectorial partnerships that will enable your community to carry through on its brand promise.

To become "champions," leaders must share control and leadership in defining the strategies for giving life to the brand. Local government officials must put in place policies and guidelines informed by sound stakeholder and partnership-building principles. They must recognize the synergistic value of building and strengthening collaborative relationships grounded in trust. These relationships will be built through meaningful and transparent engagement processes to inform decision-making and actions at each stage of strategy development and implementation. The aim should be co-production, co-delivery and co-responsibility for the brand and the marketing strategy.



**Is there *commitment to invest the necessary time, energy and resources (human and financial) to see the strategy through?***

Designing and implementing a community branding and marketing strategy requires dedicated time and resources. Important front-end work must be undertaken to define the scope of the undertaking and identify the range of processes, tools, technologies and expertise that will be needed. Any gaps in resources or local government budget should be identified, along with how these gaps can be addressed. Keep in mind that new opportunities for co-financing and resourcing will likely emerge if shared leadership and collaboration remain at the core of the exercise.

**Is there *openness to exploring innovative ways of working, including taking maximum advantage of new technologies and the full range of communication and engagement tools available?***

Face-to-face engagements are critical to build trusting relationships and collaborative partnerships between local government and community stakeholders. Personal interactions help communicate, market and demonstrate your brand promise. But new communication and web-based technologies can greatly enhance efforts to reach target audiences within and beyond your immediate region. Your community will greatly benefit from openness to experimentation and working in new ways.

**Is there a *commitment to timely, action-based implementation and continuity over time?***

The marketing and branding process needs to be guided by clear benchmarks and effective monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Overall, the exercise should be an ongoing reflection on practice, calculated and timely follow-up actions, and clear lines of accountability.

## RESOURCES

For guiding principles, you can check Eurocities' [A Shared Vision on Community Branding in Europe](#), p. 9-10.

## 2.4 TAKING STOCK

This section gives you the opportunity to reflect on the questions and issues raised, and whether your community is ready to embark on a branding and marketing process.

**What may be some of the key challenges to undertaking this process?**

**What are the existing assets and resources that can be used—or the initial processes that could be undertaken—to begin to address these challenges?**

**What are some initial steps that can be taken to enhance readiness?**

# WORKSHEET

You may find it useful to jot down some initial thoughts about your community's readiness.

READINESS CONSIDERATIONS	KEY CHALLENGES – CURRENT OR POTENTIAL	ASSETS/RESOURCES TO DRAW ON, OR PROCESSES WE COULD UNDERTAKE	INITIAL STEPS TO ENHANCE READINESS
Upper level political support, strategic vision and leadership			
Commitment to share leadership and take a true partnership approach			
Allocation of time, energy and resources in the process			
Openness to innovation and experimentation			
Action-based implementation and continuity			
Other?			

To probe deeper into your community's readiness, start with an exploratory session to gather input on these issues and questions. Hold a workshop with key leaders, representatives drawn from city council and various municipal offices along with a core of informed external stakeholders. This kind of event provides an exciting and informative kick-off to a community branding and marketing endeavour to support your LED program.

## 3.0 A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO COMMUNITY BRANDING AND MARKETING

Developing your community brand and a successful marketing strategy is as much about process as product. The process is one of active engagement with a full range of stakeholders to explore and come to a collective understanding of your community's rich diversity and attributes.

Good process design and implementation is essential. Done well, the processes for developing your community brand and marketing strategy will engage key stakeholders within your community to inform, influence and take ownership of your brand identity, along with the plan for marketing it.

*"To become what you are, you must know what you are. [T]his means listening. It means being a good study of history. It means deciphering the language of your streets and the stories they tell, responding to collective will instead of special interest, and leveraging partnerships to reinforce shared ownership. [This means doing the] hard work of self-examination, building consensus, defining goals, and demonstrating commitment through meaningful actions".<sup>1</sup>*

There are a number of stages—and within each, a series of steps—to consider as you develop your community branding and marketing strategy:

1. Establish your leadership group
2. Get started
3. Conduct market research and analysis
4. Create a brand identity
5. Define the marketing strategy and plan
6. Implement the strategy, measure progress and follow through

<sup>1</sup> Doyan, Scott. *Defining the City: On Being and Becoming*. Guest editorial in Terrain.org; A Journal of the Built and Natural Environments, at <http://www.terrain.org/columns/28/guest.htm>

## 4.0 ESTABLISHING YOUR LEADERSHIP GROUP

### KEY COMPETENCIES, SUCCESS FACTORS, RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Terms of reference for the leadership group and clear criteria for membership
- Diversity of membership; i.e., representative of the community (gender, ethnicity, affiliations) and capable of working well together
- Getting key influencers onboard
- Commitment and dedicated time of members

### POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Participation for the wrong reasons (e.g., to pursue contrary personal or political agendas)
- Ensuring sufficient time and resources (e.g., for recruitment and meetings)

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Your branding and marketing endeavour will need to be driven by a strong core leadership and management group. In most cases, the group will have two components: a small, strategic and visionary “brand leadership team” or “brand advisory board” allied with an operational “brand development team”. The brand development team will likely be composed mainly, or uniquely, of local government staff. Together these teams will guide and coordinate the overall branding and marketing process, while assuring alignment with the community’s overall strategic priorities.

An important first step is to identify and engage the key internal and community stakeholders who will partner in the leadership team. Important criteria in determining representation include:

- Diversity of perspectives
- Strong individual leadership qualities
- Genuine interest and commitment to seeing the process through
- Ability to support strategic connections between key local government departments, as well as between the local government and the community

### RESOURCES

Durham Tourism provides a good example of a [Terms of Reference for a branding and marketing leadership team](#). In this case, the team is responsible for a strategic segment of Durham’s local economic development effort.

This [case study](#) of the City of Regina, Saskatchewan’s methodology for developing and marketing its place-brand underscores the importance of a strong leadership team in guiding an engaging and innovative process.

Given the group's strategic role, representation should be drawn from city council and senior management of key departments (e.g., planning, communications, tourism, economic development), as well as from community and regional leadership, including the private sector, other levels of government, state and public institutions, and community-based organizations. Ensuring gender balance, ethnic diversity where relevant, and generational representation (e.g., youth), should also be an important consideration.

## WORKSHEET

You may find it useful to note initial thoughts about a potential future branding and marketing leadership group in your context.

<b>IMPORTANT INTERNAL MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>IMPORTANT EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE OPERATING STRUCTURE</b>	<b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b>

## 5.0 GETTING STARTED

### KEY COMPETENCIES, SUCCESS FACTORS, RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Secure the commitment and time of brand leadership team members
- Keep up the momentum with regular and strategically timed meetings
- Identify champions to sustain momentum

### POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Insufficient resources to provide external expertise if needed
- Sectorial leaders' capacity to work as a collaborative team

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With a leadership group in place the focus shifts to building member engagement, interest and enthusiasm for the brand and marketing strategy project. The group will need to come to a shared understanding of what the process entails, and its importance to your community's overall planning for economic development and revitalization. As your first-line branding and marketing champions, they must buy-in from the onset and take ownership and co-responsibility for the process and the outcomes. It's about building a confident, strong and collaborative team!

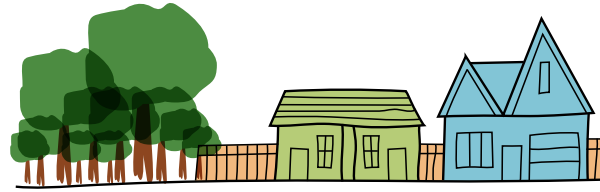
Keep in mind that “failing to plan is planning to fail.” Your group needs to play a critical management role in the planning and implementation of the undertaking. Members will oversee the process through the various stages to ensure that clear objectives, benchmarks and monitoring systems are in place. It may be helpful to draw on external expertise to assist early, and at strategic points, in the process. Outside professionals can provide training about branding, help facilitate meetings and activities, and help draw on the knowledge and experiences of others who have undertaken this process. In the sections that follow, we outline the various stages to develop and implement a community branding and marketing strategy.

### RESOURCES

For an overview of community branding and how to introduce it to your local government leaders, see Kadie Ward's [workshop agenda](#) and presentation: “[City Branding for Local Economic Development: Day 1](#)” held in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, in November 2013.

At the 2012 FCMI Local Economic Develop Forum —Strengthening Local Governments' Role in LED— Mayor Pat Fiacco shared Regina's inspirational story of some of the great returns that can come from developing a strong community brand and marketing strategy. This [video](#) of his presentation may be useful to share in early meetings with your leadership group and in follow-up meetings with other stakeholders.

## GOOD PRACTICES



MLED partner Krivyi Rih, Ukraine, is one of the cities where FCMI collaborators have worked. Andriy Nagorny, Director of Kryvyi Rih Development Institution, described their branding process in FCMI's [LED Exchange](#).

In the process of developing their Life-Long City Brand and marketing strategy, Krivyi Rih municipal representatives partnered with FCM member, City of Regina, which shared its Infinite Horizons rebranding and marketing experience. The partnership gained some notable media profile in [Canada](#) and [Ukraine](#).



## GOOD PRACTICES



FCMI's approach to facilitating municipal partnering and knowledge exchanges has added real value in recent years. For example, expert training and facilitation services in branding and marketing have been offered through the MLED, MPED and CARILED programs. These have often included participation of Canadian and international municipal representatives who have shared their lessons learned and expertise.

Kadie Ward, community branding and marketing specialist, developed and delivered a number of training workshops and provided consultation advice to various international FCM partners. You can learn more about Kadie and her work through an [interview](#) conducted for FCMI's LED Exchange newsletter.

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Embedded in the sections that follow you will find several links to PowerPoint presentations from training workshops, as well as good practice stories, resources and case studies that have been shared by FCM members and international partners.

We welcome your stories, case studies and resources too!

Contact us at [fcminternational@fcm.ca](mailto:fcminternational@fcm.ca)



# 6.0 MARKET RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

## KEY COMPETENCIES, SUCCESS FACTORS, RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Research and analysis capacity
- Depth of research to assess what your community truly represents, and the investment potential it can offer
- Sustained engagement of key community stakeholders

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Budget constraints
- Elected leaders, stakeholders and community planners wanting immediate results

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Development of a systematic approach for effective market research and analysis is a vital first task for the leadership group. This stage lays a critical foundation for future work and decision making in the creation of a brand identity and its marketing strategy. Good research provides valuable context, including the diverse attributes of your community, its citizens and target audiences.

A market research and analysis includes the following steps:

- Examining the existing community image:** Every community has some sort of image or is branded in some way, whether explicitly acknowledged or not. What is that image? Is it one you can build on as a positive foundation?
- Identifying and defining the problem/goal:** A clear definition of the problem, stated as a question, will help guide development of your market research questions, objectives and strategy. Here is an example of a problem statement:

*“How can our community overcome an image that is dated and somewhat negative in order to reposition us as a favourable investment and living destination?”*

c. **Setting the research objectives:** These objectives should be stated as questions to be answered. Include the type of data you will need, and where you will get this data from. For example:  
*“To collect citizens’ perceptions of our community and identify favorable elements that could be better profiled and leveraged.”*

d. **Research design:** In addressing your main research objectives, your community branding and marketing research design should address these basic questions:

**Who** will gather the data?

**What** type of data do we need?

**When** will we gather it?

**Where** will we collect or source the data?

**How** will we gather it (i.e., what tools, techniques, technologies will be used)?

Remember that your design must respond to your research objectives, but also be realistic given the available time, data sources, and resources.

e. **Data collection:** Depending on your research design, a number of types of marketing research can be undertaken using different data collection techniques and tools. These types include:

- *Exploratory/qualitative research:* Often a good starting point to gather general insights that can help narrow the scope of your research objectives (e.g., using open-ended exploratory questions such as *Why is investment in our community declining?*) Consider techniques such as key informant interviews, focus groups and Internet searches.
- *Descriptive/quantitative research:* This type of research describes quantifiable characteristics of your community. It answers such questions as: *What are the current numbers of skilled construction trades people in our region?* Techniques such as statistical data collection and quantitative surveys may be used.
- *Causal research:* This is an investigation to determine the effect of one variable on another, or to draw a correlation between two things (e.g., what happen to X when Y does...). Causal research can help build theories or hypotheses using techniques such as causal mapping and computerized coding of data.

## RESOURCES

For an outline of these steps see Kadie Ward's workshop presentation: [“City Branding for Local Economic Development: Day 2” held in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, in November 2013.](#)



Experience has shown that data collection takes 25 to 50% of the total four to six months or more that you will invest in market research. But investing this time is extremely important not only to provide essential information to guide your community's brand development, but also to begin engaging a range of stakeholders in the process.

- f. Analysis:** Having gathered your information, it must be carefully studied and analyzed. This stage is generally not as difficult as it may seem. The analysis is usually an ongoing and iterative process for the research team as data is gathered—documenting key highlights and consistencies while balancing qualitative and quantitative data.

The diversity of membership within your brand leadership team is critical to enhance the quality of your analysis and support a rich understanding of the reality of your community.

With this useful information at hand, your community is ready to move on to the exciting stage of forming your brand identity.

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## GOOD PRACTICES



As part of its LED market research, Golden, British Columbia—Kicking Horse Country—undertook an economic base analysis to better understand the unique opportunities to differentiate its brand and identify potential target audiences for marketing initiatives.

# 7.0 CREATING A BRAND IDENTITY

## KEY COMPETENCIES, SUCCESS FACTORS, RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Broad and genuine stakeholder engagement
- Well-designed engagement plan and strategy, using suitable methodologies and tools
- Ability to use market research and analysis to find unique opportunities to set your community brand apart
- Adequate allocation of resources
- Openness to change and see your community differently

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Capacity to design and implement a variety of strategies to engage and reach out
- Formulating a clear, concise and simple brand
- Being too aspirational (i.e., maintaining an unrealistic brand image)
- Remaining committed to the brand and integrating it in overall community development and LED initiatives

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What makes your community unique? What can it offer to potential investors, tourists and others that other communities cannot? What are your citizens proud of in the place they call home? These are some of the questions that a clear brand identity needs to address.

It is important to recognize that a community or place brand is different from a product brand. A factor that differentiates these two ideas is the process that is undertaken to define them. The community branding process is often more complex, because of the nature and extent of stakeholder involvement.



The brand identity formation falls directly from all the research and analysis done in the previous stage of your branding exercise. Typically an ad agency or the City's Director of Communication will study the research to determine how the brand should be formed. Several samples should be provided and the brand leadership group will make decisions on the direction, based on the analysis.

An effective community brand is also frequently supported by a positioning statement—a compelling message that conveys clearly your brand promise and your community's key offering to position it in the market. For example: *“Edmonton offers Canada's best combination of thriving economy and vibrant quality of life”*; or from Wolfville, Nova Scotia: *“The place, people, and perspective that make business flourish”*. Once a niche is defined for your community, an attractive logo or visual identifier can also be developed along with other supportive messaging.

A solid community brand identity is authentic, realistic and resonates for the citizens of your community and external target audiences. Your brand is an organizing principle and should be part of your decision-making tools. It will help guide the development of your community's marketing strategy by providing consistency in the ideas, messages and visual tools used to communicate the identity and the economic advantages your community has to offer.

A well-defined stakeholder engagement strategy needs to drive the process of community branding. Therefore it should be recognized that “place branding takes time and must involve a well-organized, programmatic approach and long-term buy-in from public and private stakeholders and from the community”. Again, there must be the political will to adequately resource the process.

The creation of your brand identity is the stage where engagement is critical to build strong cross-sectorial partnerships with diverse stakeholders. There needs to be strong leadership to support the engagement plan. Use strategies to solicit broad input and to generate real dialogue with the full range of stakeholders. This is essential to your success. Key stakeholders should be engaged so that they become your community's brand champions. These champions will do more than help shape the brand. They will also help develop a shared vision and collective ownership of the brand, generate enthusiasm for it and promote the brand to secure the engagement of others.

## RESOURCES

To consider the implications of creative brand development and see how you can initiate a discussion with your leadership team, see Kadie Ward's workshop presentation: [“City Branding for Local Economic Development: Day 3” held in Bien Hoa, Vietnam](#), in November 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Alan, Malcolm S. *Place Branding*. Presentation at The Seventh International Conference on Urban Planning and Environment. Bangkok, January 2006, at: [http://medinge.org/journal/wp-content/uploads/2007/08/place-branding\\_allan.pdf](http://medinge.org/journal/wp-content/uploads/2007/08/place-branding_allan.pdf). p.5

In identifying and mapping key stakeholders, [Malcolm Alan](#) identifies the sectors where stakeholder representation and engagement are needed:

- Private sector (including producers, developers, investors and other employers)
- Culture and education groups (including arts, heritage, schools and other training institutions)
- The public (including individuals, community groups and associations)
- Tourism
- Governments (e.g., relevant departments and multiple levels)

Depending on factors such as time and resources available, as well as culture and language, various tools and techniques may be used to facilitate engagement among stakeholders, including:

- Interviews (e.g., face-to-face, phone, teleconference)
- Focus groups (e.g., with representatives from a segment of your target stakeholders)
- Working groups (e.g., issue-focussed, hands-on or interactive mapping processes)
- Questionnaires and surveys (hard copy or web-based)
- Town meetings
- Conferences or group forums (e.g., visioning, future search, group mapping processes)

What matters is that the engagement is genuine and builds trust, demonstrated through the commitment of leadership to follow-up. The processes used must be grounded in solid principles of public engagement. You must balance diverse and representative perspectives to create a shared vision and ownership of the community brand and the marketing and wider engagement that will follow. The engagement should inspire your audiences, and the relations and partnerships forged through it provide a strong foundation for future collaboration.

## RESOURCES

A messaging matrix can be a powerful tool to support the creation of marketing material that is meaningful and relevant. The matrix aligns each of your city's key values with the audience you want to communicate with, providing staff and champions with a custom made concise set of phrases that get to the heart of what your community is all about.

To learn how to develop your messaging matrix, watch this instructional video developed by Kadie Ward of [Build Strong Cities](#).



## GOOD PRACTICES



City officials, members of the community and local businesses in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine worked together to develop a marketing and investment strategy. To develop an appropriate logo and brand for their city, the working group thoroughly studied various approaches to investment promotion among Ukrainian and Canadian municipalities. Its members came to the conclusion that a marketing strategy would only be successful when it reflected how Dnipropetrovsk dwellers saw their own city. Read about how the process engaged [local citizens](#) and [city officials](#).

In British Columbia, the Golden Area Initiatives—Community Economic Development Services used a creative and fun scenario-planning activity to engage community stakeholders in building their vision for the region's brand identity and economic future. The activity was called "The Futures Game". A future-action planning workshop also helped refine this vision and inform the region's marketing strategy for attracting investment.

The Durham region in Ontario launched a project called "[The Art of Transition](#)"—a series of highly successful forums and activities where "...innovative thinkers from every facet of the economy are invited to connect and brainstorm new ideas, foster partnerships and welcome new opportunities for transitioning Durham Region into a new, creative economy".

Fred Morley, Executive VP and Chief Economist for the Greater Halifax Partnership in Nova Scotia, shared some of his city's inspirational story at the 2012 FCMI Local Economic Development Forum, "*Strengthening Local Governments Role in LED*". Morley spoke about the principles and practices his city developed to build wide scale public-private engagement and partnership in, and ownership and management of, Halifax's re-branding and LED initiatives through its Partnership Pyramid model and Halifax Connector Program. See a [video and PowerPoint](#) of his presentation.

## GOOD PRACTICES



As part of the development of its city marketing strategy in 2012, the city of Edmonton, Alberta, developed the greater Edmonton message map. Based on the city's brand, [the map informed a positioning statement and asset mapping process](#) that helped define Edmonton's marketing messaging. Edmonton's Economic Development Corporation then undertook a collaborative process to develop a full-scale plan for internal and external marketing and communications activities.

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Through cooperation with FCM's MLED Project in Ukraine, the City of Kryvyi Rih now has its own brand, one that reflects the way its residents view the city. Not long ago, the logo they developed became the basis for a series of branding products for the city. Andriy Nahorniy, working group member and Director of the City Development Institute of Kryvyi Rih, explains: "In our marketing strategy, there are two key elements: positioning the city and communicating to attract investment. And we are working in two different directions at the same time: presenting the city at the national and international level and attracting new people and new businesses". [Read the full story](#).

Another powerful illustration of how to create a strong brand identity can be found in the case study on the [City of Regina](#).

# 8.0 DEFINING YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY AND PLAN

## KEY COMPETENCIES, SUCCESS FACTORS, RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Ability to use market research and analysis effectively to make decisions and devise action plans
- Openness to new ideas and to look beyond traditional methods of marketing
- Transparency and continued stakeholder engagement

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Helping elected officials and city planners (who often expect immediate results), as well as other stakeholders understand the value of investing time and resources
- Sustaining momentum and keeping key stakeholders involved throughout the planning process

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With a solid community brand defined, evolving your community's brand marketing strategy and plan involves putting the brand to work. Your brand is a strategic message about what your community has to offer to target audiences. Your brand marketing strategy sets your targets, and your plan details how you will go about promoting your community, differentiating it and communicating its assets and unique value to your audiences. In developing your strategy and plan, your target audiences always need to be the central focus.

Community brand marketing for LED is typically concerned with:

- Attracting business and investment
- Attracting or retaining talent and skilled workers
- Attracting and developing tourism

## RESOURCES

In 2013, through FCM's Caribbean Local Economic Development (CARILED) Program, a series of missions to several partner communities were conducted to provide support in place analysis, branding and the development of business and marketing plans. The mission reports summarize the main activities undertaken, key outcomes, observations and next step recommendations generated for:

- Business and Marketing Plan: [Belize's BLT Park Renovation Program](#)
- Business and Marketing Plan: [Trinidad/Tobago's Point Fortune Borough](#)
- Business and Marketing Plan: [Trinidad/Tobago's Croisse Renaissance Project](#)



Key brand marketing principles should be defined to guide decisions about the right actions, programs, investments and communications to be undertaken to attract different target audiences. These principles include:

- **Understand your target audience.** Who is looking for what you can provide? What are their needs and interests?
- **Identify your assets.** What are the physical, cultural, human and economic assets, strengths and potentials that can attract your audience? Some typical assets include location and transportation infrastructure, workforce, cost of doing business (including advantageous tax and regulatory systems), research capacity and quality of life.
- **Profile your competitors.** Who are they and how do they compare?
- **Define your competitive advantage.** What differentiates your community from those competitors?

Your brand marketing strategy and implementation plan need to be rigorous and robust, outlining costing, scheduling, communications, programs, campaigns and other profile raising activities. They need to be integrated with your overall LED efforts and include a system for brand management and the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. They should be planned with a vision for 10 years or more. Because community branding and marketing involves changing or building new perceptions about your community, the strategy and plan will market internally (i.e., to target audiences within municipal departments and the community) and externally (i.e., to reach the identified target audiences beyond your community). Internal and external marketing are discussed further in Section 9.

Strategy robustness and implementation success is best ensured through continued participation and input from those who helped define the brand and who have a role in implementing the plan and building wider brand ownership and recognition. These stakeholders can provide important perspective and analysis in working through the various marketing principles.

Depending on the size and complexity of your community, the process of defining your marketing strategy can take four to six months or more. Leadership is typically provided by a brand management team. Various processes should be used to deepen the engagement of key stakeholders and enable them to work effectively in partnership and help give shape to the strategy and plan.



In a 2013 workshop with FCM Ukraine partners, Kerri King, Tourism Manager for the Regional Municipality of Durham demonstrated through the example of Winnipeg, Manitoba, how a community can market its brand and assets to attract tourism. Have a look at her PowerPoint presentations on [Growing Tourism](#) and on [Marketing and Promotion Trends](#). For an example of how sport can be leveraged to develop tourism, see her presentation "[Sport Durham: Play in the Region](#)".

## 9.0 MARKETING IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERING CAMPAIGNS

### KEY COMPETENCIES, SUCCESS FACTORS, RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Clear strategies for internal and external marketing, valuing both
- Broad mobilization and support of community partners and brand champions
- Openness to testing different technologies and marketing approaches
- Making sure to inject some fun into the process
- Community buy-in and support over time (fulfilling the brand promise)

### POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Ensuring adequate budget and capacity to implement
- Securing appropriate expertise
- Keeping the process manageable while building and sustaining momentum
- Keeping process focused to ensure highest possible return on investment

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Often when we think of marketing, the focus is on reaching target audiences beyond your community, such as the new businesses, investors or tourists you hope to attract. But in community brand marketing, and in conducting the various forms of campaigning to promote your community, it is important to focus both internally (on your community's population) and externally (on the regional, national and international target audiences identified in your marketing plan).

Internal brand marketing aims at generating the community-wide involvement that helps deliver your brand promise. Your municipal office and staff are at the core of internal marketing efforts. Staff will likely manage much of the brand marketing communications. They play a key role given their regular and direct contact with members of the community.

As a unique stakeholder group and key actors and partners in the implementation of your community's LED marketing plan, city staff must show ownership of the brand and the core values embedded within it. Their attitudes and behaviour in dealing with internal and external target audiences need to reflect the key

brand messages. Building the interest and commitment of city staff as ambassadors of your community's brand identity requires keeping them informed and engaged with brand development and implementation. Effective communications with and among city staff, as well as their training on brand-related matters, are important success factors. A crucial motivational factor will be the example set by municipal leadership. Their interest in and promotion of the brand validates the role of municipal staff in your branding endeavours. Also important: be sure to integrate some fun in getting your city staff excited and onboard!

The next level of internal marketing is about generating enthusiasm in and participation by the community. The focus is on implementing strategies and processes to: nurture and expand engagement of industry champions; build brand recognition and pride; enhance partnerships, cross-promotional and collaborative activities; and garner media support and coverage. Remember: your diverse citizens are the primary communicators of your community's brand—and its key investment attractors—with your brand champions and key influencers strongly in the lead.

To support internal and external efforts, the first output of the marketing implementation plan is generally a community brand manual or toolkit. This manual should be easy to access and user friendly so that community partners and brand champions can use and promote the community brand. The toolkit identifies a wide range of communication media and activities for addressing different audiences. It is a comprehensive package of core messages, mottos, descriptors, facts and statistics, along with visual supports, including logos and other visual brand elements.

Customers are always the focus of marketing. In the global economy, customers shop actively and intelligently. If they are to buy-in to your community brand, you need to reach them and they need to clearly and easily see what you have to offer. To do that, a range of communication media need to be identified, developed and used effectively to ensure a strong and consistent message. This is at the heart of effective brand management.

Lastly, online strategies and platforms can play a major role in promoting your community brand. New technologies and social marketing strategies offer a wealth of options for reaching your target audiences and telling your community's story. Don't hesitate to harness these forces to support your community's promotion and development!

## RESOURCES

To learn how to develop your community campaigns, watch this comprehensive instructional video developed by Kadie Ward of [Build Strong Cities](#). The video covers the following topics:

1. Principles and marketing environment
2. Marketing plan (starts at 11m00)
3. Advertising campaign and types of ads (starts at 15m45)
4. Steps in designing a campaign (starts at 28m58)
5. Advertising platforms (starts at 36m19)
6. Good ad structure (starts at 43m21)
7. Executing and evaluating the campaign (starts at 49m31)



## GOOD PRACTICES



London, Ontario's launch of its "Canada's London" campaign is a good example of how partnering with media assisted in both internal and external marketing to raise profile of the city's new brand identity.

An attractive and easy to navigate website is an important face of a community and a medium for marketing your brand to various audiences. The city of Regina's website is a good example. The city of Lyon, France also has a particularly attractive website targeting specific audiences.

As part of a total rebranding, Hamilton, Ontario, produced an award-winning video to promote its "Ambitious City" identity. London, Ontario also produced several inspiring videos, including as part of its Today Tonight in London Canada and Love London Canada 2013 campaigns.

Worried about having sufficient budget to market your community brand? Hamilton's bi-annual "Sew Hungry" food-truck event made smart use of low-cost social media to promote the city's "Ambitious City" brand, bolster the local economy, build awareness and secure wide participation in a fun event.

One form of online marketing that is gaining popularity is to share stories and have citizens give a human face to the vibrancy of a community and its assets by voicing the benefits of investing, living, working and visiting. One example is an online video platform that has been developed by the city of Edmonton, Alberta.

## RESOURCES

For an example of a marketing toolkit, see Birmingham, England.

# 10.0 MEASURING SUCCESS

## KEY COMPETENCIES, SUCCESS FACTORS, RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Integrating a clear monitoring and evaluation framework into the branding and marketing strategy and plan
- Keeping the process manageable and ensuring it is completed
- Using data to inform ongoing marketing efforts
- Readiness to change and adapt the strategy if necessary

## POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- Gathering the data from diverse sources in the community
- Capacity to sustain implementation over the long term
- Failure by local government leadership to prioritise monitoring activities

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The importance of monitoring and evaluating the success of your community branding and marketing efforts must not be underestimated. As part of developing your marketing strategy and action plan, your community partners can help you develop baselines to measure success outcomes that can be used across sectors and industries.

In developing your monitoring and evaluation framework it will be important to take a long term view. It is the sustained long term outcomes in relation to your overall LED strategy that are most important. You should probably gather the data about what has changed, what economic and quality of life progress has been made as a result of your new place brand identity and marketing efforts. The numbers matter, but so do the stories of your municipal staff, your citizens, and those of the investors and new partners that decide to make your community home—stories that may have great value in future marketing efforts.

Although the focus is long term, tracking and measuring short-term outcomes related to the reach of your marketing strategies—such as tracking web-hits and media coverage, conducting pre- and post-campaign surveys—can also provide valuable and exciting information. Whether positive or negative, this information must be analyzed to draw lessons for future planning and decision-making.

Capturing and communicating successes will help fire the enthusiasm and engagement of community stakeholders and partners.

## 11.0 CLOSING REMARKS

We hope that you have found this learning module useful. In supporting the work of FCM members and partners around the world, we welcome your suggestions of any relevant references, case studies, models and tools that you think may be helpful to include in the module.

**Please forward your suggestions to [fcminternational@fcm.ca](mailto:fcminternational@fcm.ca).**

## 12.0 OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

### ON COMMUNITY BRANDING AND BRAND MANAGEMENT

Ashworth, Gregory and Mihalis Kavaratzis (eds). *Towards Effective Place Brand Management; Branding European Cities and Regions*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, Cheltenham, UK, 2010.

Anholt, Simon. *Competitive Identity: The New Brand Management for Nations, Cities and Regions*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, 2007.

Anholt, Simon. *Some Important Distinctions in Place Branding*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY, 2004.

Eurocities. [A Shared Vision on Community Branding in Europe](#). Brussels, 2010.

[European Institute for Brand Management](#).

Palgrave's [Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy](#).

### ON COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. [Local Government Participatory Practices Manual: A Toolkit to Support Public Participation in Municipal Decision Making](#). 2007.

Morris, Jonathan and Farid Baddache. [Back to Basics: How to Make Stakeholder Engagement Meaningful for Your Company](#). BSR International, 2012.

### SELECTED CASE STUDIES AND LESSONS LEARNED

City of Amsterdam. [The Making of... the city marketing of Amsterdam](#). Amsterdam, 2004.

Paschou, Eleni and Theodore Metaxas. [Branding of Stockholm](#). University of Thessaly, Department of Planning and Regional Development and Department of Economics, 2013.

