

Play to win!

**MARKETING®
DEPARTMENT**

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY MARKETING

There is a formula!

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7 aspects of successful communities

Our agency has been branding communities, regions and downtowns for more than 15 years. Additionally, we have studied over 100 successful mid-and-small sized downtowns in America, searching for the most common dominators.

This economic development work is important to us because downtowns represent a community's economic health, public-private sector partnerships, local quality of life and community pride. This work has allowed us to identify 7 aspects that all successful downtown marketing strategies share.

Investments in infrastructure.

Cities that invest in downtown infrastructure attract healthy businesses that meet the needs of the community and generate tax revenue that gives taxpayers an ROI.

An organized team of stakeholders who are working together to execute a plan.

Cities with vibrant downtowns, even those with modest budgets, commit a small portion of their budget to pay someone to lead stakeholders to execute projects and plans. The ROI on this budget item is tenfold. Most downtown business owners, while busy, would like to pitch in and make their downtowns a better place, but are often left feeling defeated because of lackluster,

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poorly marketed events, blight, poor branding, lack of energy in marketing, etc. Downtown businesses are looking for leadership and are much more likely to be engaged with an energized plan and brand.

Clean downtowns with updated storefronts.

DDAs and city councils have a responsibility to make sure that downtowns look welcoming and include a mix of businesses that meets the demands of community members and visitors. This is challenging for these community leaders because they don't have control of business owners' ability or resources to maintain attractive storefronts. Programs like DDA façade grants and free marketing consulting can be helpful, but the real key is a strong business attraction plan that attracts the right business – and right business owners.

A business and residential attraction plan.

So, by now the word “plan” has appeared five times. Plans provide strategic direction for prioritized budgets and time. Most importantly, they provide stakeholders with visions and energized focus. Most city master plans, like any strategic plan, do a good job of laying out priorities and strategies for transportation, facilities, services, housing, land use, etc., but small cities often lack the financial and human resource to really execute on opportunities. This is why partnerships and strong relationships with other cities and local, regional and state economic development groups are so important. Every city planning commission and DDA should be engaged with these groups, include them in the planning process and and leverage them to attract businesses and residents.

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Regular and irregular events

Events accomplish three things. First, they build sales for downtown retailers the day of the event and attract new customers into their stores. Second, events attract new people to downtown who can discover new stores and experiences. Third, events energize communities and downtown brands. Downtowns with a full calendar and a great mix of events make the downtown business owners and the city look proactive.

A strong, relevant brand.

Just like any organization that provides an experience, every downtown should have a strong brand that is consistently executed on everything from advertising to way-finding signage. A good branding process engages the community and downtown business owners alike.

What is branding?

Branding is building an experience that makes people want to buy something from you. Your brand is your reputation – what people think about you.

So, as you think about your brand, consider what are some of the areas of the visitor experience that are most important?

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Strong Partnerships.

Successful downtowns have strong relationships and partnerships with other cities and private sector businesses. For an example, downtowns are critical when a local manufacturer is recruiting a new vice president. The downtown is often where a job candidate is given the greatest impression of the community.

How can your downtown do a better job to help those companies recruit talent? Every community is unique. Every answer is unique.



Call us direct to understand how we can help your downtown and the businesses there thrive!

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