



Rural Marketing & Communications on a Shoestring Budget

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There's No Excuse!

- Today, more than ever before, organizations have more tools at their disposal that allow them to reach their audiences at little-to-no cost
- Organizations are limited only by their ability to imagine, conceive, plan and execute
- You must decide what you can do in-house; what you can automate; and what should be outsourced
- If you don't track and measure your efforts - and adjust as necessary – you are wasting your time, your target's time, and what little money you have.
- With the proliferation of digital and social technologies, you can look as “big” as you want to look.

Know What You Have to Offer

- What is your product?
- Do you have a clear view of your assets?
 - “Woe is me”
 - “We will never be like...”
- Are you thinking regionally?
- Research – what can you demonstrate, prove?
- What are you hiding under the rug?
- Rifle vs. shotgun approach – get focused!
- Think like business...not like government
- Understand your competition, but don't be intimidated by it. Effectively set yourself apart!

Know Your Audience(s)

- Who benefits from what you have to offer?
 - “Everyone will want what we have here...”
 - Someone wants what you have
- Who can make or influence decisions about locating in your area?
- Know your local businesses; their needs and opportunities
- Speak to targeted audiences in their own language
- How can you find these elusive critters?

What is your unique story?

- Each community, region has something that sets it apart from others – FIND IT!
 - A laundry-list of assets is not a story
 - Sometimes it may not be a business asset or characteristic, but it must appeal to business
 - Once you find it – let it permeate all that you do
- Articulate your benefits clearly
- How can you connect with your audiences in a meaningful way?
- Who or what best communicates your story?
 - Get others on board
 - Visually tell your story

Marketing Intelligence – Data is Your Friend

- Effectively use your own data to promote your compelling points.
 - How familiar are you with existing studies made in your area?
- Use data and guided fact-finding to gain insight into what businesses think
 - Note: Business decisions don't happen by accident and few happen overnight
- If you are not reading, viewing, or in some way following business news each day, you are getting left behind
- Pick a card...any card
- Key inexpensive sources of data, studies, business intel and useful gossip

Beyond Advertising

- If you are going to pay for it – make it count!
 - Unless you are an expert – get help
 - Advertising and other promotions should communicate a benefit or solution
 - Most economic development ads look the same
- Advertising will never bring you a project
 - No amount advertising can take the place of relationship building and professional sales activities – but it can effectively create awareness
- Think of ways to get you, your organization in front of your key audiences to tell your story
- Have you considered doing this?

If a Picture is Worth a 1000 Words – What's 1000 Words Worth?

- Individuals will always believe what they read in editorial form or that which is positioned as “news” far more than advertising
 - This is why well-crafted communications as a strategy is worth its weight in gold
- Working effectively with local, state and national media
- Getting published – publishing yourself
- Effective positioning you and your organization through social media
- Other low-cost, high-return strategies

“Nothing’s New Under the Sun”

- Either be incredibly creative and original – or leverage old ideas in a new way
- Launch tried and true tactics from a new platform
- You really can teach an old dog new tricks
- Millions of amazing ideas – you only need one or two good ones!

Q&A • Idea Sharing!

Thank You!



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