University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Heartland Center for Leadership Development—Materials | Heartland Center for Leadership Development

3-2008

Branding Your Community

Milan Wall
Heartland Center for Leadership Development, mwall@heartlandcenter.info

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/heartlandmatls

Part of the Adult and Continuing Education Commons, Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Communication Commons, Community-Based Learning Commons, Community-Based Research Commons, Leadership Studies Commons, Other Education Commons, Place and Environment Commons, Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons, Rural Sociology Commons, and the Work, Economy and Organizations Commons

Wall, Milan, "Branding Your Community" (2008). *Heartland Center for Leadership Development—Materials*. 25.
https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/heartlandmatls/25

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Heartland Center for Leadership Development—Materials by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Branding Your Community

Presented to:

South Dakota Horizons

March 25-27, 2008

Armour, Philip and Conde
South Dakota

Presented by:

Milan Wall, Co-Director

Heartland Center for Leadership Development

Heartland Center for Leadership Development

Copyright © 2008 Heartland Center for Leadership Development
Except where otherwise noted, these materials have been developed by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development. For permission to duplicate or use these materials, contact:

Heartland Center for Leadership Development
Phone: 402-474-7667 Fax: 402-474-7672
http://www.heartlandcenter.info
650 J Street Suite 305-C Lincoln, NE 68508

About the Heartland Center

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development is an independent, nonprofit organization developing local leadership that responds to the challenges of the future. Heartland Center activities focus on training, facilitation and evaluation for community capacity building programs nationwide. Programs and publications stress the critical role played by local leadership as communities and organizations work towards sustainable development. Each year the Center serves approximately 2,500 leaders from 300 communities in the United States and Canada.

The Heartland Center was founded by a group of Great Plains leaders during the agricultural crisis in the mid-1980s. Early on, the Center's co-directors, Dr. Vicki Luther and Milan Wall, earned national recognition for their landmark research, publication and curriculum, Clues to Rural Community Survival, examining the characteristics communities need to compete in a changing world.

Although the Heartland Center is a small organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska, it enjoys a national reputation for putting people first—whether it is collaborating with multiple partners on national initiatives, or working one on one with rural leaders in tiny isolated towns. This emphasis on developing personal capacity and commitment is at the core of all Heartland Center programs.

Milan Wall

Milan Wall, Co-Director and a founder of the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, is a management and communications expert with more than 30 years experience in dealing with the critical issues facing American society and culture. Milan has been a newspaper reporter and editorial columnist, a university lecturer and a speaker at regional and national conferences on such topics as educational leadership, economic development, and uses of technology in education. Before he helped found the Heartland Center, he was executive vice president of the University of Mid America, a multi-state consortium that was recognized internationally for its imaginative approaches to adult education.

Mr. Wall served on the Lincoln Board of Education for eight years and for two terms on the United Way Board of Directors, where he chaired the Evaluation Committee. He is currently treasurer of the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association.

With Dr. Vicki Luther, he is co-author of a number of publications on leadership and community development, including The Entrepreneurial Community: A Strategic Leadership Approach to Community Survival, Clues to Rural Community Survival, and Eight Challenges Facing Community Leaders. Previously, he served as editor of the Nebraska School Leader, which won three national awards for excellence among state publications on education during his tenure. In 1993, Mr. Wall was honored with the Award of Excellence, the distinguished alumni recognition of the University of Nebraska Lincoln Teachers College.

Branding Your Community

Table of Contents

Connections: Using a Brand Creation Approach to Community Identity 7

Case Study: Superior, Nebraska 11

Mapping Community Assets: An Overview 16

SOAR Analysis 20

About Appreciative Inquiry 22

The Marketing Process: Attention, Attraction and Action 24

Marketing Your Community 25

Back Home Ideas 30

Tips for Creating Community Brands 35

Workshop Evaluation 37

Connections: Using a Brand Creation Approach to Community Identity

Origins of the Branding Concept

Even far back in the middle ages when artists and artisans began to form guilds or associations together, many hallmarks or identifying symbols were used as a signatures by artisans to lay claim to the result of his or her work. Another important, and American reference, comes from the days before fences divided up the frontier and cattle owners found a way to mark and identify their own cattle by branding them with a personalized symbol. Even today, many purebred horses are carefully inspected and only a few approved for a brand which then insures the quality of a particular breed. That brand, a symbol of the breed, is only applied to those animals that pass a careful quality inspection.

In these ways, a brand has become an assurance of quality. Over time, some brands actually come to mean certain products themselves. For example, can you think of facial tissue or gelatin without thinking of Kleenex or Jell-O? In these cases, the brand became synonymous with the product. When you say that something is the "Rolls Royce version," you make a reference to a brand that stands for the ultimate in quality.

Branding as Part of Advertising

Today, the concept of a brand has come to mean a very important part of public relations, advertising and marketing. In these worlds, a brand is a claim to territory and is very carefully devised, presented and managed. It has become the most important means for attracting the attention of a potential customer or buyer and instilling in that customer/buyer a loyalty for return interaction.

Many specialists in brand creation view a brand as a promise of what will be delivered by a product. It represents the essence of the business. The brand really is the connection that is created with the consumer to make it possible to differentiate among products and so persuade us to buy. You can imagine how important the decisions are that go into creating a brand since it is the frontline contact with the market. Brands are intended to serve as an emotional connection to a product.

Image Versus Brand

It's important to be clear about the difference between a brand and an image. A brand is carefully constructed and managed. It is applied consistently in all types of marketing settings and, in a sense, policed to protect the integrity of the meaning embedded in the brand identity. A brand is the focused essence of the business.

An image, however, is much more fluid and in many cases, not controlled or created at all but simply evolved over time. Consider for a moment, the difference between the Exxon brand and the image of that corporation. The brand, with logo and mascot, stood for high quality fuel that would improve the performance of your car. Remember putting that tiger in your tank? The corporate image, however, suffered when the Exxon Valdez struck a reef off of the Alaskan coast and spilled nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil in Prince William Sound.

Image is the bigger picture and subject to many variables, both internal and external. A brand is very focused, purposeful and controlled.

Applying Brand Creation to Community Identity

Every community projects a certain image, positive or negative. This image is made up of reputation, historical references, current events and the perceptions of the people who live in the community or deal with it in some external fashion. A community image is really made up from the accumulated perceptions of residents and visitors over time.

Every time people visit your town, they take away a community image as part of their experience. How do outsiders see your community? What do they recall after a visit? What do they say about their time in your community? This is part of the way that an external community image is developed. Other factors involved in an external image include:

- History, especially oral history or stories that are told about the town
- Media coverage of current or recent events
- Reputation of local government and individual officials that are known outside the community
- Reputations of major employers
- Status of institutions such as school, newspapers and churches

Many of these factors also influence the internal image of your community—that is, how the insider residents think and feel about where they live. This image, too, is highly charged with personal experiences.

But how do we create a brand for our community? And why should we go the trouble of creating one and using it?

Since we know that a community image already exists (whether we like it or not!), creating a community brand is one strategy for gaining some control over how others see our town. A brand is one excellent way to communicate with the market of visitors, businesses and others that are interested in our community. Remember it is the brand that forges the emotional connection between consumer and product. In the case of the community, a brand is the emotional connection between the community itself and the people who live, work and visit there.

A community brand is the promise we make to the people who live in our town and to those how visit and do business with us. It represents a promise of quality, services, caring and justice that characterize the very best places to live—in other words, it is based on solid community values.

Strategic Planning and Brand Creation

Within the marketing literature that focuses on the creation of brands, there is strong agreement that some type of strategic planning process is very useful in building the foundation for brand creation. This is because it's absolutely vital that before a business develops a brand, the following strategic questions can be answered:

What kind of business are we in?

What are our core values?

What are the rules that we'll never break?

What is special about our business?

Our products?

What is our niche market?

What makes us different from other businesses?

What do we know about the future trends?

What are our strategic goals?

What do we really want to happen?

What strategic action must be taken to create the future we prefer?

In much the same way, a community leadership group must be able to understand and communicate core values, what's special about the town, what "products" or services are provided, what that preferred future might look like and how to get there.

This type of strategic planning is fundamental to creating a brand. In fact, you might consider that a brand for a community is one offshoot of a solid strategic planning process. There are many different approaches to strategic planning but most focus on a few questions about identity and values, goals and the future.

Making the Best Use of a Community Brand

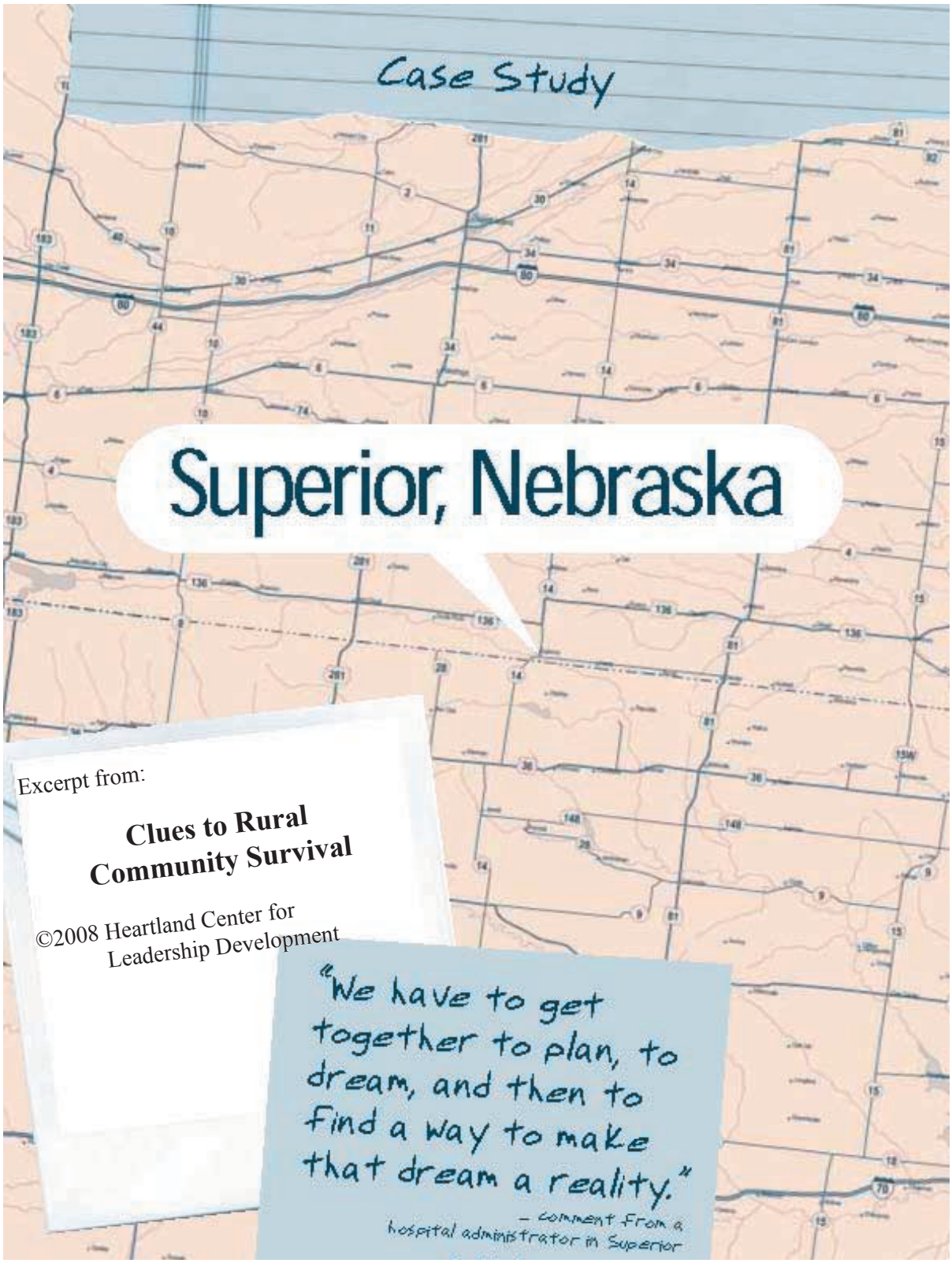
What would make up a community brand? Certainly a well designed and colorful logo, a slogan, a consistent and recognizable use of color, words and symbols in all promotional materials are all parts of a community brand. A community brand can be used to promote a town event, to create consumer loyalty and encourage folks to shop locally, or attract new businesses and families.

Another vital part of using a brand in the community setting is maintaining the consistency and predictable use over time so that the brand itself becomes recognizable.

Consider the vacation town of Las Vegas: Clearly identifiable assets like the gaming and entertainment world, the desert landscape and the party atmosphere of this town are part of the Las Vegas brand. The slogan: "What happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas." That slogan represents a clever and catching way to underscore the value of a brand.

Another example is the much smaller town of Saratoga, Wyoming. At first glance, it's hard to see what this small, isolated ranching town might want to incorporate into a community brand. Saratoga has few visitors except for the anglers who want to fly fish in the river that runs through downtown. Saratoga has created a brand that stands for great fishing, good accommodations and friendly local people. Their logo includes fly fishing and their motto is, "Saratoga, where the fish jump downtown." This town wants to make it's fishing visitors so loyal that they will come back year after year to fish the blue ribbon waters downtown and that's why their brand stands for this special experience.

The best use of a community brand is to make connections by succinctly representing the community values and special features. Remember, it's a promise that is made to the customer about the type of quality experience that is provided.


Case Study
Superior, Nebraska
Excerpt from:
Clues to Rural Community Survival
©2008 Heartland Center for Leadership Development
"We have to get together to plan, to dream, and then to find a way to make that dream a reality."
– comment from a hospital administrator in Superior

Superior, Nebraska

There are theories about the Great Plains of the North American continent that suggest the entire region, from Canada down to Texas, should be given back to the buffalo. The people of Superior, Nebraska, (population 2,055) are not paying much attention to what outsiders say about their community's chances for survival. They are "grabbing the buffalo by the horns" and taking charge of their own destiny.

What they are doing is learning how to work together, getting more people involved in local leadership and setting priorities for new projects under the guidance of a core of volunteers who want their small town to keep up with changing times.

Superior is located in south-central Nebraska, very near the Kansas border. It's 60 miles from an interstate highway, and 50 miles from the nearest large town of 23,000 people.

Some see the location as a handicap. They blame their remoteness, in part, for economic setbacks—the closing of two manufacturing plants that were the area's leading employers hit the community hard.

Superior is stubbornly self-sufficient. The town has an active retail community and all the main street storefronts are filled.

Others see their location as a plus. Superior is stubbornly self-sufficient. The town has an active retail community and all the main street storefronts are filled. A modern medical center serves a population base of 8,000 in Nebraska and Kansas. A well-kept golf course provides recreation for the area, and a large reservoir and recreation area, just over the Kansas border, brings people into Superior to shop.

There's a high level of local loyalty and pride, as evidenced by the presence of two banks and two savings and loans, as well an up-to-date grocery store.

In response to the staggering loss of manufacturing jobs, and capitalizing on the unique atmosphere of the community, the people of Superior rallied around a new focus for community development. They've staked out a claim to the title "Victorian Capital of Nebraska," exploiting the presence in town of a number of lovely Victorian-style homes. The theme is reinforced with the "Victorian Festival Honoring Lady Vestey," paying homage to a turn-of-the-century native who rose to a position of prominence and wealth as one of the first female executives in the meat-packing industry after she moved to Chicago. Later, she married into English nobility, but she never forgot her hometown of Superior.

This unique celebration is held annually in the spring. Since its inception in the early 1990's, the event has grown stronger and stronger. The entire community gets involved and the town's limited hotel space is booked nearly a year-and-a-half in advance. By the month of January, all the rooms in a 40-mile radius will be reserved.

The festival idea resulted from the community's efforts to write a strategic plan. It has been important for the town's leaders to learn to think strategically if Superior is to prosper, says a hospital administrator. "We have to get together to plan, to dream, and then to find a way to make that dream a reality."

It has been important for the town's leaders to learn to think strategically if Superior is to prosper.

The hospital itself is one of Nebraska's rural healthcare success stories. From its own strategic planning, the hospital has cautiously but successfully expanded, making Superior a regional center for CAT scans and other new health care technologies. They added a new emergency room, and then built another addition. The building is going "full force," according to a city official.

Like so many other towns on the Plains, however, this one was in an economic bind during the farm crisis of the mid-1980s. Here, though, the trauma was made worse by other economic setbacks. First, a World War II-vintage cement plant was closed, and 150 well-paid workers were laid off. A year later, a large meat-packer in a nearby community also closed, putting another 150 out of work. At about the same time, J.C. Penney closed the Superior store, and the community lost its largest local retailer. More recently, a cheese plant, where 170 employees produced mozzarella for the nation's pizzas, closed its doors.

Many communities would simply throw in the towel after such a series of disasters. But that's not Superior's style. In fact, some leaders believe the cement plant's closing may have had some positive impacts. Several said wages and benefits at the plant were "artificially high" for the area, creating a false sense of security for the local economy. Its closing served as a wake-up call that prepared the area for the other closings.

Many communities would simply throw in the towel after such a series of disasters. But that's not Superior's style.

While the economic base hasn't changed drastically since Superior was founded in 1872, there's lots of interesting economic activity, much of it related in some way to global economic transformation.

For example, AGREX, a subsidiary of Mitsubishi, operates a space-age elevator here, and it exports abroad about 25% of the grain it ships, mainly via unit trains to Mexico. As the northernmost point on what was formerly the Santa Fe Railroad, Superior can transport locally grown products quickly and efficiently into the Southwest, Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico. The Farmers Co-op has more than tripled its business volume in recent years. It now ships grain from the area directly to Mexico and the West Coast. And the cheese plant that closed down re-opened, employing 10 people in the processing of a special type of parmesan cheese.

A local graphics business, who's custom-designed T-shirts promote the Victorian homes tour, is expanding his market. Using the latest computer graphics software, the company is now supplying a mail order house in Nevada. "You have to have a product you can sell outside," he said.

Many residents agree that businesses and communities must change and adapt if they're going to survive. "Our town is doing business differently today," says a local veterinarian. He is typical of area business owners who are trying hard to stay at the cutting edge of their specialty. His large-animal practice serves about 1,000 farmers, and he and his partners saw their business increase 17% in one recent year. The entire operation is heavily computerized, and they've started a newsletter to keep clients up-to-date on innovative practices and treatments. "If you don't change the way you think, your business will decline," he says.

The two banks have learned that lesson, as well. Both the Farmers State Bank and Security National bought branches in smaller towns in Nebraska and over the border in Kansas. The Farmers State Bank also expanded into residential loans throughout Nebraska and has loan representatives in several larger towns as far as 200 miles away.

"If you don't change the way you think, your business will decline," he says.

The local newspaper publisher figured he'd have to lay off at least two employees when the cement plant went under and he lost a large commercial customer. "Then I read an article in The Wall Street Journal about single fellas staying on the job in the country, while women had to go to the city to find work." His entrepreneurial response is a newsletter called "Country Connections," which matches up men and women who are looking for partners and want to stay in or return to rural areas. Its national circulation of 1,700 has saved the two jobs that were threatened, and the town has received lots of publicity, generated by features about the newsletter on CBS and National Public Radio and in The New York Times.

He says the newspaper and other businesses that are flourishing have had to learn to change with the times. "You can't compete with Wal-Mart. You've got to find a niche that stores such as Wal-Mart can't fill," he says. "If you sing a tale of woe, after a while everyone will believe it."

The town's strategic planning effort, called START, for the acronym of the state economic development program that fostered it, had a lot to do with changing local attitudes and developing new leadership. A series of leadership seminars designed to get more people active in community affairs has paid off. Besides the Victorian Festival, the strategic plan led to construction of a trolley for tours of Victorian homes, a new track and field at the school, renovation of the band shell, and several city park improvements. A downtown hotel was remodeled, using $1 million in grant money, and turned into a combination community/senior center with 14 affordable apartments. A new library was built.

"You can't compete with Wal-Mart. You've got to find a niche that stores such as Wal-Mart can't fill,"

Other business successes include Aunt Flossie's Cupboard, and a variety store downtown that sells culinary treats. The local phone company renovated an older building, and implement and outdoor power stores are thriving. The Good Samaritan Home recently completed 12 assisted-living units, to accommodate an ever growing elderly population.

People in Superior have made the choice to live here because of what the community has to offer. One community leader points to a number of young people, originally from Superior, who have moved back to town to start their own businesses or work at the family business. "There really are quite a few young people coming in, and that's what the town really needs," she says.

A new floral business that recently opened downtown, and it's thriving. A winery that started making wine in 2004 and offers a small tasting room, really got going in 2005 with a facility for weddings and other special events. They have employed scientists and viticulturists to help them choose the best tasting grapes to grow in the Midwest. Vineyards are catching on as an alternative agricultural product that rural communities all across America are beginning to grow. Making a local wine helps give communities a brand name as well.

A local financial advisor, who moved here a few years ago, chose Superior from among 200 towns where he could have relocated. He likes the "tremendous community spirit" and he believes people here are "willing to take a chance." Another community leader noted that young, married people in their 20's and 30's are moving back to the community, which is always a good sign that something is going right.

A local financial advisor, who moved here a few years ago, chose Superior from among 200 towns where he could have relocated.

And then there's one of the town's physicians. She had grown up and raised a family here, and then she decided to change careers. Nine years later she returned and started a family medical practice—filling a void that had existed since the early '80s when the town lost all its physicians. Now the clinic has a staff of three doctors and two physician's assistants.

Not everything's okay in Superior, though. There still aren't enough things for kids to do, or enough jobs to keep them after high school or bring them back after college. The need for more loyalty to local businesses is heard here, too. Some people still hope that one of those mythical clean, light industries will come to town, create 100 high-paying jobs, and stay forever. The main street businesses downtown also need more revitalization and unification, notes one civic leader. Housing is also a problem. If a large business started in Superior and 40 living units were needed, there wouldn't be enough housing for them.

But there's still an undeniable enthusiasm that folks say just wasn't here a few years back. From an economic stand-point, Superior is trying to learn how to keep up with the highly volatile, increasingly global economy that every town, large or small, must face. Looking up and down Main Street, one local banker talks about how the face of retail has changed and is still changing. He points to stores that have opened—and closed—in recent years, and to storefront renovations that often accompany a retail expansion.

"We're just a microcosm of what's going on in the larger economy."

"Retailers have to change or go out of business," he says. "It's the same in every part of our economy here." He pauses and then reflects: "We're just a microcosm of what's going on in the larger economy."

Mapping Community Assets: An Overview

Too often, communities are encouraged to focus first on their deficiencies, such as needs, issues, or problems, rather than on their assets, those tangible and intangible resources that can be built upon to strengthen the community over time.

The notion of mapping community assets gained prominence when, in 1993, Northwestern University published Building Communities from the Inside Out, by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. Based on their work in Chicago area neighborhoods, they argued that communities are literally filled with assets and, yet, only a few are systematically utilized for community building.

Assets, as defined by Kretzmann and McKnight, fall into three major categories:

- Capacities or gifts of individuals, including such basic skills as typing or mowing lawns and extending into skills requiring more training or experience such as sales or employee supervision.
- Strengths of voluntary associations, such as civic clubs, parent teacher groups and block clubs.
- Resources of formal institutions, including schools, churches, government offices and health care centers.

To this list of assets, you might also add physical and monetary resources. Kretzmann and McKnight, and others who have adapted their work since 1993, suggest that communities, especially smaller or impoverished ones, can make more progress if they build from an asset base rather than focusing initially on their deficiencies. Their notion is that assets should be mapped, that is, listed and analyzed to determine how to mobilize them for community action.

Mapping community assets can also take the form of a graphic representation of the assets using symbols or designs to offer a picture of the community. An asset map is intended to show the presence of assets but not necessarily the location of each; rather, the term mapping refers to the process of identifying, analyzing and representing rather than a depiction of the physical location of assets.

The Heartland Center's Approach

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development has adapted the model of asset mapping to include an important first step. While using asset mapping as part of strategic planning in both rural communities and in organizations, the Center staff found that the identification of significant local issues provided a very necessary focus to the asset mapping approach. For this purpose, it's useful to think of an issue as a somewhat general topic rather than a specific problem. Consider a community group that has agreed that one important local issue is the development of low-income housing. If the community group employs asset mapping as a tool, they'll seek out resources available to the community that could be applied to this issue.

Identifying a significant issue targets the asset mapping and makes using the collected information immediately useful.

Mapping Individual Assets

One way to think about individual assets is to list the kinds of individual gifts that are useful for community building. These might include office skills (keyboard or accounting); caring and healing skills (child care or elder care); construction skills (painting or drywalling), and so forth. Kretzmann and McKnight's categories also include maintenance, transportation, equipment operation, food service, music, security, sales, and supervision.

To this list might be added other skill areas, such as professional/technical, entertainment, and communication and leadership, as suggested in 1995 in Community Resources and Community Opportunities, a paper prepared for the Nebraska Rural Development Commission by Buzz Kalkowski. Beyond these individual assets, Kretzmann and McKnight added two other major categories, which they called community skills (scouts, PTA's and the like) and enterprising skills (how to start and run a business). In another related approach, John C. Allen of the Western Regional Rural

Development Center includes economic assets, defined as "those dollars generated by local and regional economic activities."

Voluntary Associations

Voluntary associations, such as service clubs and church groups, often provide the most important opportunity for community residents to try out their leadership skills, learn how the community functions, and engage in local democracy on a small scale. Some researchers, notably Robert Putnam of Harvard University, have popularized this aspect of community under the heading social capital, meaning the social or civic network of interactions that helps a community function as a community, rather than just a collection of individuals.

The community map of associations includes many categories, including interest groups, age groups, support groups, neighborhood clubs, sports leagues, and on and on. Many communities, even the smallest, have several of these groups. They may be connected to a community institution, such as a church, or national society, such as the Lions or Optimists. More often they are strictly local, often with a long-standing tradition and focus of activity.

Communities are encouraged to list all these groups, then to analyze them by mapping (listing) key assets of each that might be used in building community. Such assets include:

- Who belongs
- Mission or purpose
- Recent programs or projects
- Funding sources
- Key strengths

These assets can be recorded along with such basic information as the current officers, phone numbers, mailing information and, if relevant, location of offices or meeting place.

Formal Institutions

A community's formal institutions often constitute the location or ownership of a community's key physical and financial resources, in addition to the work force, the equipment and other higher cost assets that are also useful for community building. Except for the assets owned by individuals, most of the "public" land, buildings, and other tangible community resources probably are owned by the formal institutions.

Such institutions might include:

- Schools and Colleges
- Banks and Credit Unions
- Hospitals and Clinics
- Places of Worship
- Police and Fire Stations
- Social Service Agencies
- Government Offices
- News Media

As with associations, asset mapping includes processes to list the resources of each of these institutions paying special attention to those that might be used in community building:

- Facilities and equipment
- Staff expertise
- Financial capability
- Managers and employees

The Impact of Asset Mapping

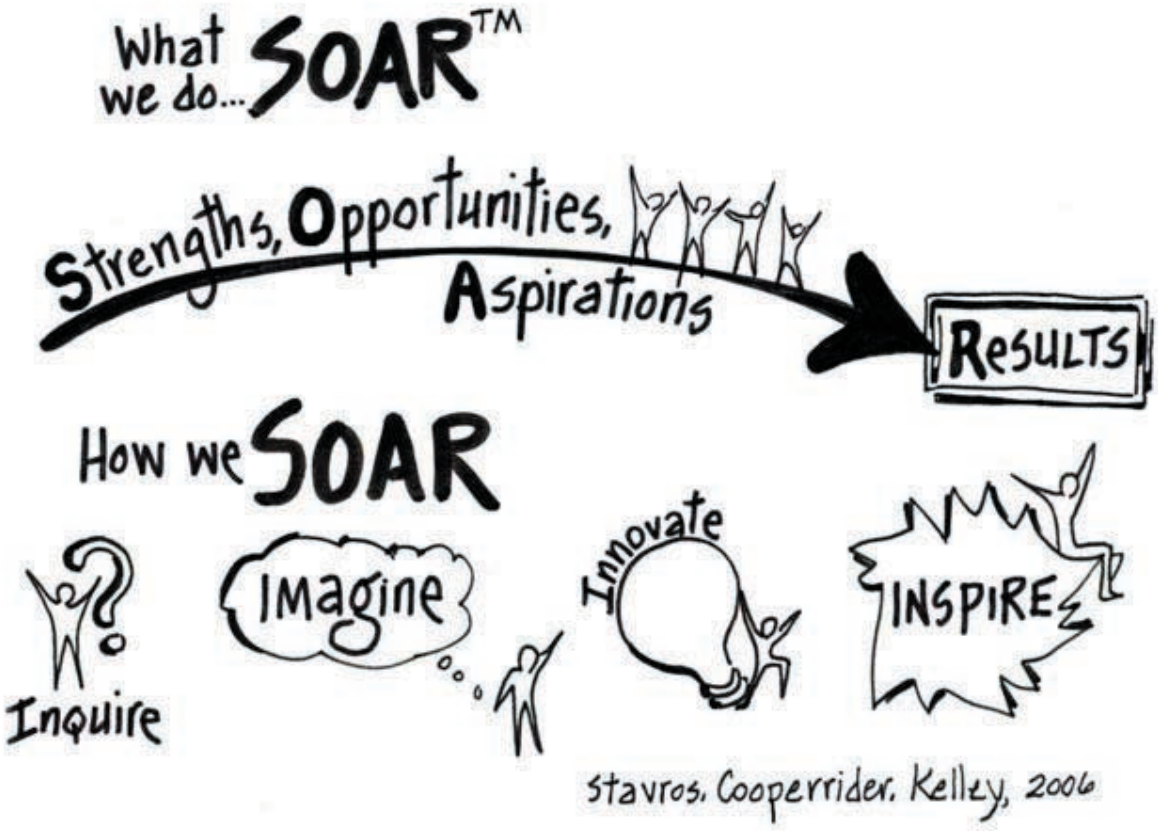
Asset mapping is an intriguing approach to getting organized for community improvement efforts. The resulting information can be used by the community in a variety of ways. But don't underestimate the impact of asset mapping on individuals and on the community at large.

The Heartland Center's experience indicates that the process of asset mapping has several very important results:

- Expanded knowledge about the community
- Increased self-esteem among the individuals who are interviewed

- New pool of volunteers to recruit for community projects
- Changing image of the community over time
- Improved motivation among community activists
- New combinations of resources targeted at community improvement
- Development of long-term strategies for individual and organization involvement.

Each of these impacts is significant. When considered together, they prove the point that asset mapping can play an important role in community improvement efforts.



SOAR Analysis

The SOAR analysis is an appreciative approach that replaces the old paradigm of SWOT. SOAR focuses on the positive aspect of organizational development and community assessment looking at Strengths and Opportunities to create shared Aspirations and measurable Results. SOAR helps agencies, organizations, and communities...

1. Reach for a vision
2. Serve its mission
3. Achieve its goals and objectives by reaching for measurable results
4. Creating a strategy (the how) to deliver on its mission and goals/objectives while reaching for that vision.
5. Implement a tactical plan

SOAR

Strengths

What are our greatest assets?

Opportunities

What are the best possible market opportunities?

Aspirations

What is our preferred future?

Results

What are the measurable results?

Combining Appreciative Inquiry with SOAR creates a strength-based approach to accelerating strategic planning sessions in organizations and communities. The how-to is by doing an Inquiry (or Discover), then Imagine (Dream) the most preferred future, followed by Innovate (Design) and Inspire (Deliver) into one action.

About Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is one of the newer tools for community development that is seen as an alternative to needs assessment or traditional problem solving, which oftentimes focuses overly on what the community does not have rather than what it has. Appreciative Inquiry, therefore, offers an alternative to a deficit or problem-oriented approach to planning.

Issues or concerns are not ignored, rather they are considered in the context of what the community has achieved historically and what lessons can be derived from those successes. Once those lessons are synthesized, they can be used to drive future priorities for strategic action. Those actions are undertaken in alignment with a long-range view of the community's desired future, represented by a statement of shared vision or values.

A vision, basically a statement of values projected as a future reality, can articulate where a community wants to go and what it desires. Effective communities, therefore, identify their values and generate a shared vision of the ideal future of their community. They follow this visioning with a specific action plan and implementation strategy.

Typically, Appreciative Inquiry follows a step-by-step approach that adheres to these guidelines:

Step 1: Discover or Investigate

In this step, planning participants share stories of community successes or achievements that people can appreciate as real and practical high points in the community's history or experience. From those stories, participants are challenged to derive the lessons that are represented: What was happening that led to the success? Who was involved? Who provided leadership? What was done to celebrate that achievement?

Step 2: Dream or Imagine

In this step, participants review or create a statement of values, vision or mission to project the community in an ideal or preferred state. This step answers the question, "What type of community do we want to be?" The statement reflects the participants' fondest hopes for what might be possible, if the community imagines itself as offering residents an opportunity to enjoy community prosperity and significant quality of life.

Step 3: Design or Innovate

In this step, participants are challenged to reflect on the organizational structures and capacities that will be necessary to make the dream into reality. What type of organizational realignment or restructuring might be required to move from vision into action? Participants consider whether they have the resources, or assets, to move from where they are to where they want to be.

Step 4: Deliver or Implement

In this step, attention turns toward answering how to put the wheels in motion to get priorities accomplished, answering the question, "Who needs to do what by when?"

Assignments are made or accepted by the individuals, volunteer groups or agencies that are in the right position to get things done.

In sum, fully functioning communities are capable of making great strides if they follow simple, common sense approaches to projecting possibilities, setting priorities and following through with responsibilities and time lines. Appreciative Inquiry follows a positive approach to do just that.

The Marketing Process: Attention, Attraction and Action

Among the many ways to consider marketing activities and the application of a brand that's been created for a community are these three steps in a process that every consumer works through:

ATTENTION

ATTRACTION

ACTION

Attention simply means that the marketing activity must grab the attention of the audience. In the case of a community, the audience might be a tourist or a hunter or even a business owner looking for a potential site. How will your marketing effort get attention? A banner with bright colors on Main Street gets attention; a radio commercial with a recognizable voice does the same, as do posters of children's art or an eye-catching sale sign. So, first get the attention of your target.

Attraction is the next step after attention has been secured. The first step is useless if the attraction isn't immediate. A potential customer walking past a sale sign in a store might give his attention, but if the articles aren't interesting or the display not inviting, he won't be attracted to stop and explore. The same holds true of community marketing efforts. The second step in the process, that of establishing attraction, implies that some knowledge of the audience or market has been put to work to feature dimensions that will, in fact, be attractive. Know your market is the mainstay of making the second step in the process successful. For example, marketing a community special event means that you must know what will attract different groups like high school students or young families.

The last step in this process is ***Action.*** This is the result of steps one and two and, of course, the action is the desired end result of the marketing effort. If you are marketing that special community event, you'll want a web site that gets a visitor's attention, information selected to be attractive to niches in the market audience, and something that will move the visitor to action—actually coming to you community for the event. In many cases, cost or a specially featured benefit is the tool that is used to generate the desired action.

Consider this example of a community marketing effort. A school wants to get more adults involved in school programs with the ultimate goal of securing favorable votes on a future bond issue. One of the big issues is the need for renovation in the grade school buildings, so a marketing plan is developed with the goal of getting support.

The first part of the campaign is a series of public service ads on the local radio show that feature children's voices asking questions like: "Why can't we use the playground equipment? Isn't it supposed to be safe?" This is the way to get the attention of community members.

The second part is to hold a series of entertainment evenings in the school buildings that are designed around a large number of children's performances in music, gymnastics and art. This is intended to be attractive to parents and extended families since they will see their own children performing.

The last part is to include tours of the problem areas in the buildings during the intermission and after the performance and recruit members of a task force and to get signatures to support the future bond issue. This is the opportunity to take an action that caps the marketing process.

Marketing Your Community

"What is Marketing?

Many people in our society think "advertising" or "sales" when they hear the word "marketing." But marketing is much more than just sales and advertising. Communities that confuse the two will make the same mistakes that many businesses make when they forget that selling a service or product is only one step in the marketing process. The typical response to the question: "What is Marketing?" includes words such as

Advertising

Promotion

Publicity

Sales

What's Left Out?

A lot is left out of the definition of marketing when those are the only words that are used, and communities, like businesses, need to think about the entire range of considerations that define marketing in its comprehensive sense. Those considerations for communities include the following:

Key Marketing Considerations for Communities

Creating a Marketing Niche

Developing Your Uniqueness

Identifying Key Audiences

Using the Best Methods Making Sure It's Working

The Marketing Mix

Each of these elements must be part of any effective marketing plan. In a business context, these elements are called the Marketing Mix and are defined as:

Product

Price

Place

Promotion

Creating a Marketing Niche

Keeping the marketing mix in mind, small towns need to position themselves for success, much the way thriving small businesses do. Communities can find the right marketing niche, if they are realistic about local strengths and weaknesses and knowledgeable about current issues and future trends that affect them. The process begins by taking a close and honest look at your community.

To do product definition in the community setting to think through the best marketing niche for your town, you need to start by defining your current position in the marketplace.

Sometimes communities find it difficult to translate the business language of marketing into the community setting. But it's really not that difficult. Think about your community's product line as the current array of available services or attractions offered through both the public and the private sectors. What do people like about your town? What don't they like?

Then consider whether your answers are the best answers for your town's future survival. Take into account those current issues and future trends that are likely to change the product mix that helps define your marketplace niche.

We live in a fast-changing world. Your community will be affected by a combination of current issues and evolving trends, including, for example, the globalization of the economy and the decreasing political representation of rural people.

These changing realities may force you to change the mix of products that define your community and that shape the marketplace niche that your community can occupy.

Possible Examples of a Community's "Product Line"

- ***Recreational opportunities***
- ***Programs for seniors***
- ***Retail variety***
- ***Main street appearance***

Developing Your Community's Uniqueness

Defining your current place in the marketplace is only the first step in developing a marketing strategy for your community. The next step is to decide whether you are positioned competitively in order to survive in what has become a volatile economic environment.

If the niche you are in is not the one you should be in, then it's time to change. In other words, if your community is not positioned for success, community leaders bear responsibility for figuring out what should be done differently.

Leaders should not do this alone. Rather, leaders should get citizens involved through a community participation process.

To think about your current marketing niche, and whether it will be satisfactory in the future, you should answer the key question in marketing, and that question is often stated as:

What business are we in?

In the community context, a good way to ask this question is:

What is our community known for?

One community may be known as a Retirement Center, another as a bedroom community. Another may be known as Retail/Trade Center. Sometimes a town's image is not what it might prefer. Some communities are known for their community conflicts, for example. Others are known by their images as" withering" or "dying" towns.

In Superior, Nebraska (population 2500), community leaders set tourism as a major goal, and the town capitalized on its many well kept Victorian-style homes. The city declared itself the "Victorian Capital of Nebraska," and it began an annual festival celebrating its architecture and heritage. The Victorian emphasis brought business to several local entrepreneurs, among them a graphics company and a porcelain doll manufacturer.

Many towns parade a positive image, but one that is not really unique. For example, a favorite small town slogan is: A small town full of friendly people. That marketing message may appear on the town sign at the highway, or on a community billboard on Main Street, or perhaps across the top of the weekly newspaper's front page.

This is a positive message, but virtually every small town thinks of itself as a place where people are friendly. In other words, it does not really position the community uniquely in its regional trade area.

Principles and Methods of Marketing Communities

Options for marketing communities should include the full range of methods that make sense for small towns in their marketing niche. The most important point to remember is that using only one communications vehicle, one time, is not sufficient, no matter how good that advertising message may have been.

For any significant community economic development effort to succeed, you need continued understanding and support from the community at large, as well as the enthusiasm and hard work of those people involved.

Too often, community leaders fool themselves into thinking that a project advertised once is a project advertised forever. Similarly, they often continue using the same advertising vehicles over and over again, without knowing what really works.

Unfortunately, we are competing with our message against dozens, perhaps hundreds, of other messages that are bombarding the same target audiences that we hope to reach. Those competitors include not only the direct competition, such as the new discount mall on the interstate highway, but also the everyday demands of work and family.

Your success as a marketer, at this stage of the process, will depend on how creative you are and how many channels of communication you can use to get your message out.

Oakridge, Oregon (population 3,120), had been proud of its policy of refusing outside grants for city projects when, in 1989, the town's economic base collapsed. That was the year owners closed the Bald Knob

lumber mill, and 600 workers were suddenly out of jobs. “When the mill closed, everyone realized that the world had changed,” says Wes Mare, then Oakridge City Manager. From a marketing perspective, Oakridge had to reposition itself immediately if it were to have any hope of surviving.

Instead of remaining isolated, the town decided a priority was to form partnerships, and community leaders quickly became experts at tapping into the resource base represented by county, state and federal agencies, higher education and private sector development organizations.

Among the results to date: Major infrastructure improvements to sewer and water systems, highway and park land projects, an annual community clean-up know as Junk Amnesty Days, federal grants to replace polluting wood-burning stoves, a cultural exchange program with a Japanese rural development organization, and an ambitious plan to turn the old mill into an industrial park.

Tips for Making Your Message Effective

1. ***Use all available channels***

   Most communities have many advertising channels that are essentially free: the community bulletin board, the electronic message board at the bank, the window space at the grocery for a poster or flyer, the cable TV scroll, the utility bill envelope.

2. ***Use volunteers for word-of-mouth support***

   Economic development project leaders may overlook the fact that the volunteers who serve on the task force or community committee are personally transmitting some message about the project. They may need some help in what to say and how to say it, especially if this project is complex or long-term.

3. ***Emphasize benefits to the community***

   No doubt your volunteers will become good at explaining what the project is, but they may need coaching in how to emphasize the “benefits” of a particular project. Benefits are the most compelling advertising elements in any marketing campaign.

4. ***Remember good advertising principles***

   When you produce a flyer or a video, use good advertising principles: Keep the message uncluttered and focused; make it compelling and powerful; don’t get complicated or lengthy. Decide what you want the target audience to do as a result of your message, and then decide how to design the message to get that result.

5. ***Make use of the news media***

   Become an expert in using the local and regional news media. Develop relationships with key people who can help market your community in the future

Powerful and effective flyers use headlines to make the major points, and supporting points are made in clear and concise statements. Verbs used are active. Graphics support the main message. Picture a billboard and follow it as an example.

News releases must be short and to the point. Make them no longer than two pages. One page is better. Provide a contact name for follow-up questions. Newsletters can be designed and written for easy reading

of major points through use of bold facing and simple graphic elements now available inexpensively on personal computers. If you don't have someone on staff to help with graphic design or news writing, find a creative volunteer in the community and get that person's help the first time or two.

Make Sure Your Message is Getting Through

How do you know whether your marketing strategy is working? Only a systematic approach to evaluation of your success (or failure) will tell. And a systematic approach should begin with a statement of intended results, in the same way that an economic development project begins with a statement of goals.

It may be self-evident, but it's worth repeating: We can't tell whether we succeeded unless we have defined what success means. Further, we need some way to measure progress, even if those measures are informal or qualitative.

At a minimum, community boards need to hold an annual retreat to evaluate the work plan for the year and to set goals for the next. More ambitiously, each project or initiative should be evaluated from a marketing perspective to determine whether the end user was satisfied with the result.

For example, the community that set a goal of increasing attendance at an annual fall festival can easily tell whether its marketing strategy worked: Did we attract more people this year or not? A high school marketing class could ask a random sample of festival participants how they learned about the festival, to measure the impact of various advertising and promotion strategies.

In Cheney, Kansas (population 2,000), a day care center was established to retain young families who work long hours in the aircraft industry in nearby Wichita. The center opens at 5:30 am. and closes as 6:30 p.m. to serve commuters. Maximum capacity of 100 infants, toddlers and school-age children was reached in just over one year.

After the day care center's success, Cheney held its first town hall meeting in more than 50 years to set other community development priorities. A measure of marketing success was attendance of more than 200 people at the town hall meeting.

Customer Satisfaction and Institutional Responsiveness

Marketers in the business sector talk a lot about "satisfaction analysis" when they get to the evaluation question. They want to know whether the customer is satisfied with their product or service. And they want to know how their products compete—on a satisfaction scale—against other similar products or services.

Satisfaction is often discussed, in tandem, with analysis of "institutional responsiveness" to consumer demands and changing marketplace conditions. When competition is keen, the more responsive institutions are the best survivors; the least responsive are the institutions that lose market "share."

Communities need hard-nosed analysis of the same kind, based on data wherever possible. Many times the data are already available through the State Data Center, other government agencies, or colleges and universities and their libraries or electronic databases.

Only a continuous process of planning, acting and evaluating will tell you whether you are on the road to success.

Back Home Ideas

The success of your team and your community plan will, in large part, hinge on the buy-in you get from other leaders and from community residents back home. Included are ideas to help you achieve the following goals:

Inform your community and other leaders about project ideas and initiatives.

Involve other leaders and community residents in executing your plan.

Inspire your community to support your plan and help make it successful.

This material divided into three sections:

Briefing key community leaders outside your team.

Getting information on your community plan out to the public.

Hosting/supporting events or special projects.

The ideas in these sections can help you gain community support and improve your chances of successfully executing your community plan.

Briefing Key Community Leaders Outside Your Team

Successful community projects always underscore buy-in and support from other leaders throughout your community. Local legislators and council members, business owners, school officials, nonprofit providers all have a vested interest in the success of your community plan. They can play key roles in executing the plan and acting as ambassadors to ensure the plan's success. Here are some ideas you can use to inform and involve other community leaders.

Host a "Power" Breakfast or Luncheon

One effective way of informing and involving leaders in your community is to host a "power" breakfast or luncheon at a local restaurant, civic club or place of business. As you know, community leaders typically have very busy schedules, often including family activities in the evening. The power breakfast or lunch maximizes available time while offering you a chance to brief other leaders and, if you so desire, get feedback from them on your community plan.

You might consider using the opportunity to provide a brief outline of your objectives and plan. Ask leaders if they can be counted on to offer assistance as various leadership tasks become necessary in carrying out your community plan. Encourage them to be good ambassadors and spread the word about the plan to others in the community.

Attend Neighborhood, Town or City Council Meetings

One good way of spreading the word to other leaders and ensuring that it's in the public record is to get on the agenda for the next neighborhood, town or city council meeting. Giving the heads-up to local leg-

islators will help to involve local decision-makers in the process and give them a stake in the outcome of your plan. It's also a good way to spread the word to residents in your community, since press coverage of such meetings is often routine.

Network on the Street

Sometimes the best support you can get is generated via word of mouth. When you run into other leaders on the street, tell them about your community plan. Explain to them the benefits of the plan and how it will strengthen your community. If they want to know how they can help, ask them to spread the word and support your project and plans publicly.

Provide Regular and Timely Updates to Other Leaders

A regular and steady stream of information is vital to gaining and holding the support of other local leaders. One excellent way to keep the lines of communication open is to create a mailing or e-mail list of the leadership base in your community. Then send periodic letters or emails updating leaders on progress benchmarks and milestones. These messages do not have to be epics. They can be short and to the point, touching on the progress and milestones of your plan.

Newsletters or e-newsletters allow you to get into more depth on issues vital to your community plan. You can also include photos, as well as special features, such as bios of your team and other local leaders. Whether you want to print hardcopy newsletters or send them directly through e-mail, out-of-the-box software (available at media stores) can be easy to use, often including pre-designed templates that are effective in putting together attractive newsletters.

Getting Information on Your Community Plan Out to the Public

Public support for your planning effort can inform and inspire another level of support. When the whole community is behind your efforts, you stand a much better chance of succeeding. Here are some ways to inform the public of your team effort and your community plan.

Provide a Press Release to Local Media

Local media often rely on press releases to write news stories about issues important to their readership. To get the word out to the public, considering writing and sending a press release to media in your local area anytime something newsworthy happens with respect to your team or plan. In addition to publicizing the formation of your team and the initial development of your plan, you might also publicize large funding commitments, ground-breakings, ribbon cuttings -- anything that shows progress you are making toward accomplishing your plan.

Think of a press release as the news story you would love to see in print. Begin with a catchy headline that puts your news in a nutshell. Then lead with the basics: who, what, when, where, how, why. Include quotes from key individuals—the more known, the better involved—in the story. Provide additional, in-depth detail that includes the specifics of your news. Finally, end with some "boilerplate" (basic background information) about your team, your plan and any projects underway.

Send the release to editors of newspapers or other local publications. You can find their names on the editorial page of the paper. Also send the release to news directors of local radio and television stations. You may have to call the main number from the phone book and ask for the news director or news editor. If

an important event is coming up, make sure you send the release ahead of time, so that media can decide whether they want to send a journalist or photographer to cover the event in person. Or you can send a shorter version of the release, a "media advisory," to entice the media into coming. Then make sure they have the full press release on the day of the event.

There's a high degree of trust implicit in press releases, so make sure you've got the facts straight, names spelled correctly, titles identified appropriately and quotes approved by those who provided them.

Appear on Local Television or Radio Programs

The local television and radio media are frequently willing to cover a newsworthy event or initiative that interests their viewers. Often they look specifically for news that has a "feel good" element to it, using it to balance all the "bad news" that typically makes headlines. Your press release, sent directly to the news or assignment editor, should give the decision-maker all the information needed to determine if your story is newsworthy. Don't hesitate to follow up with a phone call before 3 p.m. (when things get busier in the newsrooms), just to be certain your story has been considered.

In addition to local news programs, which cover particularly newsworthy milestones or events, most TV and radio stations produce weekly or even daily programs of local interest, called public affairs programming. These are generally longer segments, and you may be asked to come to the studio to tape the segment.

Call the main number of the TV or radio station and ask for the public affairs director. Send a letter describing the project and what your plan hopes to achieve for your community. Include newspaper clippings of previous coverage. List the members of your team in the letter. Most important, request that the station include your project or plan in an upcoming program and provide telephone and e-mail contact information for at least two of the team members. Again, don't hesitate to follow up by phone.

Whether it's television or radio, your local media may be interested in featuring news about the formation of your team and the initial development of your plan. Later on, they may also be interested in talking with you about the progress you've made as a team toward accomplishing the goals set forth in your plan.

Write Op-ed Pieces or Letters to the Editor

Another good way to get your plan out to the general public is to write "op-ed" ("opposite the editorial") pieces or letters to the editor. Op-ed pieces are typically opinion articles written by someone who has specific knowledge and expertise on the issue at hand.

Given that persons on your team are becoming experts on community issues, you may be able to convince an editor to publish such an article with the byline of one of your team members. Op-ed pieces tend to carry a lot of weight, are taken seriously by readers and allow you more space in which to state your points than the standard letter to the editor.

Letters to the editor, however, are also a good shortcut way of getting information out to the public. Typically editors like to publish letters that address a controversial subject. They are also willing to publish letters that signify progress and positive news for the community, especially if they address an existing problem. Letters that are short and to the point have a better chance of being published than rambling, detail-laden letters.

Include Your Info on Existing Community Web Sites

Many communities maintain their own Web sites that cover information about local government services, news and events, or other issues of interest to residents. Consider submitting information regarding your team and plan to be posted on your community's site and any other related sites such as the public schools or library.

Hosting/Supporting Events or Special Projects

Sometimes simply informing the public is not enough. In most instances, you want to actually involve your community in your efforts. Following are some suggestions to inspire and involve your community in your planning and projects. Remember to send a press release or media advisory before your events to let people know about your event or project. Another way to get the word out includes posting information on community bulletin boards (fliers) or in church bulletins and school newsletters.

Encourage Participation in an Essay Contest

The future of a community lies with its children. That's why an essay contest involving students is such a compelling idea. Try targeting grades 6-8 and make sure there's a deadline. Simple prizes such as a U.S. Savings Bonds can be good motivation. Winning essays can be posted on web sites or printed in local papers.

Hold a School Assembly to Discuss Projects and Award Your Essay Contest Winner

Another good way to involve even more children is to hold a school assembly that addresses the project or plan in easy-to-understand terms. Your team members can discuss their roles and the goals of your community plan, perhaps even asking students for feedback or ideas about how they envision their community in the future.

You might also hold a school assembly to present the award to the winner of the Community Essay Contest from your school. This would be especially appropriate if most or all of the children in the 6-8 grades of your school were eligible to participate.

Design an Art Contest for Children or Other Age Groups

In addition to the Essay Contest, you might consider designing and holding an art contest that features a community theme. This would be particularly good for children not included in the essay contest, if it encompasses only certain targeted grades. Artwork from such a contest could serve as an excellent visual reminder of the importance of community revitalization and the part children and their families can play in it. Winning entries can be displayed in school hallways and on Web sites, and may be picked up by the local media for publication.

Sponsor a Pancake Breakfast/Spaghetti Supper

Everybody has to eat, and what better way to spread the word on your community plan or project than to celebrate it over a pancake breakfast or spaghetti supper held in a community space? Use the event to provide information, to introduce your team and to discuss your community plan. Make sure you invite local elected officials to such an event.

Have a Booth at the Local Fair

Fairs are excellent places to inform and inspire community residents in a fun setting. Consider hosting a booth staffed with members of your team, ready to discuss your plan for bettering the community. The informal setting of a town fair can also give you an opportunity to network with other community leaders.

Coordinate a Clean-up Day

Giving community residents of all ages a specific role in helping to better the neighborhood can make them feel a part of the effort and will likely maximize their support. A clean-up day for your community would be an ideal way for residents to be a part of the plan and feel like they were making a difference. Such an event would engender a sense of renewal that's wholly compatible with the community development process.

Organize a Plant-a-Tree Event

A good way to engage the community and demonstrate a long-term commitment to planning would be to organize a plant-a-tree event. Trees planted in a public place, perhaps marked with a plaque, will remind residents on a continuous basis that your community is being nurtured and is growing.

Trees may be planted from seed, as saplings or as young trees. A local nursery can facilitate delivery of any of these, or there are a number of Web sites selling seeds and saplings at reasonable prices (check out The GreenWorld Project at www.greenworldproject.net). Invite everyone in the community to participate. Consider a plant-a-tree event to mark the beginning of your community's growth cycle.

This material was adapted, with permission, from a publication of the Federal Home Loan Bank-Pittsburgh's Corporate Communications Department. You may duplicate all or parts of it for any nonprofit use. For more information on the Bank's community revitalization project, Blueprint Communities, check out "http://www.blueprintcommunities.com" www.blueprint-communities.com

The Heartland Center has partnered with the Bank in the development and delivery of this training curriculum for community teams through the state of Pennsylvania.

Tips for Creating Community Brands

Be Honest

Based on real values, your community brand should proclaim what's true and important for others to know about your town. It's not a vision of the future—it's what you really have to offer right now.

Focus on Benefits

You must identify strengths and assets in order to decide what your community brand stands for. Your products (i.e., community services and advantages) stand behind the brand.

Get Others Engaged in the Creation

The greater the involvement in identifying those values and assets the more authentic the brand will be. Involvement also means greater ownership and pride in the brand for the community and great understanding of the concept itself.

Keep it Simple

A brand encapsulates a lot of ideas about your community but when that brand is expressed through a logo or a slogan or in a media contact, it has to be simple to be memorable.

Build Recognition

Using the brand expressions (the logo, the slogan) consistently is the way to build recognition. The most powerful brands are the ones that really focus and stay on the message.

Manage and Make Improvements

Make sure that the brand stays consistent over time and that it is used thoroughly. Don't let the message change but use feedback to check on the impact of the brand to see if improvements are needed.

Exceed Your Brand Promise

If the brand is your promise as to what to expect in your community, a great motivator is to try to exceed those expectations and constantly improve.

Workshop Evaluation

Session: Branding Your Community

Date: _____

Please circle the number that best corresponds to your opinion.

	Poor				**Excellent**
1. How would you rate the usefulness of the session materials? *Comments:*	1	2	3	4	5
2. How would you rate the effectiveness of the presentations? *Comments:*	1	2	3	4	5

3. One thing I'd like to change about this session would be…

4. One thing I learned at this session was…

5. As a result of this session, I plan to …