

Update on the Image, Brand and Reputation Strategy

Recommendation:

That the July 4, 2017, Communications and Engagement report CR_4813, be received for information.

Report Summary

This information report provides an overview of Edmonton's place brand, implementation results from the Image, Reputation and Marketing Program and next steps for Edmonton's Image, Brand and Reputation Strategy.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the March 9, 2015, Community Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration work with Edmonton Economic Development Corporation to provide a report with an update and plan for the Image, Brand and Reputation Strategy, including budget and timeline.

Report**Edmonton's place brand**What is a city brand?

A city brand is not an expensive new logo and a slogan. However, this is what most cities purchase when they decide to rebrand themselves. A city brand is a story. A story that explains what makes a city special. It cannot be purchased or manufactured. It can only be uncovered. Cities such as Glasgow and Barcelona have chosen to focus on how people and residents are an integral part of the brand story.

A city brand should invite policy-makers and citizens to reinforce what makes their city special with action. It is the core of economic development, of tourism, of talent attraction and retention, of municipal government policy. Just as important: it is an invitation for citizens to become involved, to become ambassadors.

Over time, a carefully executed brand strategy can influence and enhance a city's reputation.

Edmonton's brand story

In 2012, Edmonton leaders gathered at the Shaw Conference Centre to help build an

economic development plan, which became *The Way We Prosper*. What they said matched market research studies showing that Edmonton had an image and reputation problem. Past efforts by the City of Edmonton, the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation and citizens had not created an effective Edmonton brand. The precise quotation from the session was, “We just don’t have a story to tell.” Participants at the session understood the importance of confidently expressing Edmonton’s essence and differentiating it from other competing cities.

A series of individual interviews began immediately, to uncover the story. Rather than beginning with an advertising campaign, a volunteer committee came together to test what was heard in the research and consultation phase. They held conversations with thousands of people, and came to realize that, as a city, Edmonton is:

- Inventive
- Open
- Courageous
- Cooperative

These four points became the brand attributes, and have been the foundation of continued work on Edmonton’s brand and reputation.

In a single sentence, **Edmonton’s brand promise is: “If you have the courage to take an idea to reality, to build, to make something, Edmonton is your city.”**

Edmonton’s brand strategy

Administration and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation are using a cumulative phased approach to both brand and reputation building. The results of the previous phases are detailed in the following section:

The current phase of the strategy, “External Brand & Reputation Campaigns”, is based on the following strategic framework:

<i>The Way We Prosper</i> (2013 – 2023)	A Confident and Progressive Global Image
2-Year Objective: (2017-2019)	Position Edmonton as one of the exciting cities to watch in the Northern Hemisphere
Goal 1:	Amplify the Edmonton place brand through positioning the city as an entrepreneurial thought/solution leader among mid-sized cities.

- Goal 2: Foster and disseminate a consistent flow of projects, events and stories that reinforce the Edmonton brand promise.
- Goal 3: Differentiate the Edmonton advantage from competing cities and develop awareness that positively influences decision makers.
- Goal 4: Align Edmonton's economic development ecosystem players to an external strategy which envelop the big seven economic drivers (investment, business, tourists/visitors, major events, meetings/conventions, talents/students, and direct flights) and collectively reinforce Edmonton's brand and reputation.

The goal of the 2017-2019 timeframe is to start positioning Edmonton as one of the exciting cities to watch in the northern hemisphere. This phase needs to be completed by the end of 2019 for Edmonton to appear consistently on national and international rankings beginning in 2020.

Consistent appearance on national and international rankings begins to deliver on *The Way We Prosper* Goal 1 "A Confident and Progressive Global Image." It is a major milestone on a 10-year journey of building a global brand. Post 2020-2022 the strategy shifts focus to improving the position on rankings, which is where a new strategy will need to be created to sustain a city with a global brand and reputation.

Results from Image, Brand and Reputation Program

Progress to Date

Make Something Edmonton was a cooperative initiative between Administration and Edmonton Economic Development Corporation that brought to life the individual stories of Edmontonians, which collectively is the story of the city. Over 2000 brand-building and city-building projects, from Light the Bridge to Open Pianos, engaged thousands of Edmontonians and provided Edmontonians, influencers and media with the language, stories and tools to speak positively about the city. By the end of 2014, Edmonton had a remarkable and marketable story, showcased in a brand guide called "The World Needs More Edmonton," (Attachment 1) a platform that provides Edmontonians with the language and tools to communicate the Edmonton story publicly. Of note, Make Something Edmonton won "the best expression of brand identity" in the world at the City / Nation / Place Forum in London, England, in November, 2016.

By reaching two percent of Edmontonians in this early 2014 campaign, a critical point of momentum was achieved and the focus shifted from grassroots Edmontonians to key influencers – business, community, institutional and government leaders. Organizations such as ATB, Stantec, Edmonton International Airport, Bioware, Oilers

Entertainment Group and others undertook Brand Ambassador workshops inside their organizations and began adopting the Edmonton Brand as part of their organizational marketing and messaging campaigns in 2015. The goal was to build shared pride and ownership of the Edmonton brand and achieve maximum leverage on marketing dollars spent by Edmonton-based firms.

With a solid story, brand guide, local engagement and influencer adoption in place, Edmonton Economic Development Corporation's Tourism division launched the first expression of Edmonton's consumer brand through its Edmonton Original campaign in 2014, valued at \$6 million by leveraging industry funding.

Recently, Edmonton Economic Development Corporation launched an integrated Meetings and Convention brand ("All In") platform which builds on the Edmonton brand, as well as its first expression of Edmonton's Economic brand ("Invest Edmonton Region"). Both platforms are first steps in providing coordinated marketing for the region's conferences & conventions and investment & trade activities. As regional economic development becomes a reality, these web, collateral and communications assets will accelerate the adoption of the Edmonton Metro Region brand.

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation Investment to Date

Since 2014, Edmonton Economic Development Corporation has received \$1.5 million per year as part of the \$2 million the City allocated to the Image, Brand and Reputation Strategy. Edmonton Economic Development Corporation has leveraged City funding 1:1 from industry partners each year to implement the Brand and Reputation Strategy as designed. This combined City and industry funding allowed Edmonton Economic Development Corporation to dedicate personnel, build lasting marketing and technology platforms and execute internal and external market campaigns. A breakdown of the expenses categories is as follows:

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation Brand & Reputation Annual Expenditures '000 (2013-2017)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (YTD)	Total
Personnel Costs (FTE Expenditures)	\$178	\$464	\$467	\$445	\$99	\$1,653
Marketing Platforms (Assets)	\$487	\$1,759	\$614	\$210	\$82	\$3,152
Marketing Campaigns & Projects	\$229	\$420	\$426	\$398	\$61	\$1,534
Total Edmonton Economic Development Corporation Expenditure	\$894	\$2,643	\$1,507	\$1,053	\$242	\$6,339
Leveraged Funding (Partners)	\$716	\$1,406	\$2,992	\$2,382	\$315	\$7,811
Total Brand & Reputation Expenditures	\$1,610	\$4,049	\$4,499	\$3,435	\$557	\$14,150

City of Edmonton Investment to Date (See Attachment 2)

The City of Edmonton, in partnership with Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, has advanced Edmonton's national and international positioning by engaging Edmontonians in a number of marketing activities. Initiatives are centred around two streams of efforts:

- Major events and conferences
- Community relations

Results are seen in economic impact generated, national and international awards and rankings received, and participation or attendance by Edmontonians and visitors to the specific activities. A breakdown of the expense categories is as follows:

City of Edmonton Image, Brand and Reputation Strategy Annual Expenditures '000 (2013-2017)	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (YTD)	Total
Personnel Costs (FTE Expenditures)	-	\$263	\$501	\$506	\$144	\$1,413
External Services	\$818	\$113	\$58	\$111	-	\$1,100
Total Expenditures	\$818	\$375	\$560	\$617	\$144	\$2,514

Next Steps

- Equipping stakeholders

Brand consistency, in Edmonton Metro Region, means working cooperatively with partners in the private sector, the post-secondary sector, in arts and culture, with social entrepreneurs, and with other municipalities to bring the Edmonton brand story to life. This can only happen if the City demonstrates for them how it is a shared asset — one that is compelling and woven into all that the City does — that Administration is able to assist in packaging on their behalf.

Communications and Engagement is developing a narrative framework that will assist City Administration in how it communicates the contributions of City programs, initiatives and services to Edmonton and Edmontonians. This framework will put these stories in context of the Edmonton brand. It could also be shared with external stakeholders for their use, to unite all of the city's stakeholders, from government to business, and most importantly, the residents themselves. A successful brand resonates with residents, provides common language and inspires civic pride.

- New measurement tools

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation has evaluated real-time brand and reputation measurement and reporting tools, and is piloting these in the second half of 2017. Reporting will provide objective analysis of key brand metrics, and timely data on campaign effectiveness and on perceptions of Edmonton's image and reputation within discrete geographic markets.

Administration conducted market research through the Insight Community (April Mixed Topic Survey Part 2 conducted April 18 - 25, 2017) in order to better understand the vocabulary Edmontonians use to describe Edmonton. The results are detailed in Attachment 3.

The results of this survey will be used to help inform an ongoing image, brand and reputation survey to be conducted on a regular basis.

- New City of Edmonton structure

Administration's new Communications and Engagement Department comprises four branches, including a Marketing Branch. This branch will ensure citizens, stakeholders and staff are familiar with the City's brand, and will build trust in the City.

By late 2017, the Marketing Branch will be resourced to develop comprehensive and integrated marketing strategies for the City of Edmonton, including brand and reputation strategies.

A new integrated approach to marketing and communications positions Administration to deliver high quality reputation building strategies for the City as a corporation, and to support the city as a place for Edmontonians to build the best possible life, tourists to experience authentic Edmonton, new graduates and workers to have career options in a diversity of sectors, and investors to achieve a high return on investment.

Combined, this new structure and approach allows for functional integration between Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, Administration and other external organizations.

- Leveraging new tools and technologies

Administration is exploring new and emerging technologies that allow those residing outside the city's geographic boundaries to visually experience the physical beauty of Edmonton year round.

Integrating real-time and virtual environments with traditional brand building approaches will allow additional promotional and branding opportunities within a digital environment.

Policy

City Policy C593 — Public Engagement Policy

City Policy C420 — Corporate Communications Policy

Public Engagement

Make Something Edmonton has been a robust multi-year effort to connect and engage with Edmontonians. No additional public engagement has been specifically undertaken for this report.

Metrics, Targets and Outcomes

Metrics	Targets	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Surveyed citizens report they would recommend Edmonton as a good place to live, visit and work (2016): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 79% live; ○ 67%% visit; ○ 70% work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2017 Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 82% live; ○ 72%% visit; ○ 82% work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The way citizens perceive and talk about Edmonton is a primary measure of the city's success.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National perception of Edmonton Study (Longwoods) difference in the percentage of residents and non-residents who agree in their perception of key attributes(2013): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ place with a great future; ○ great place to raise a family; ○ an exciting/vibrant place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 9% future; ■ 2% family; ■ 19% exciting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next Longwoods study (2018): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 7% future; ○ 0% family; ○ 17% exciting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2008 Edmonton was found to have a wider gap than most cities between the lived experience of the city and what others assumed it is like. National communication efforts are aimed at narrowing the gap.

Attachments

1. The World Needs More Edmonton
2. Collaborations between the City of Edmonton and Make Something Edmonton/Edmonton Economic Development Corporation since 2015
3. Insight Community Results

Others Reviewing this Report

- T. Burge, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- D. Jones, Deputy City Manager, City Operations
- G. Klassen, Deputy City Manager, Sustainable Development
- A. Laughlin, Deputy City Manager, Integrated Infrastructure Services

- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services