



Branding Baraga County for Economic Development and Tourism

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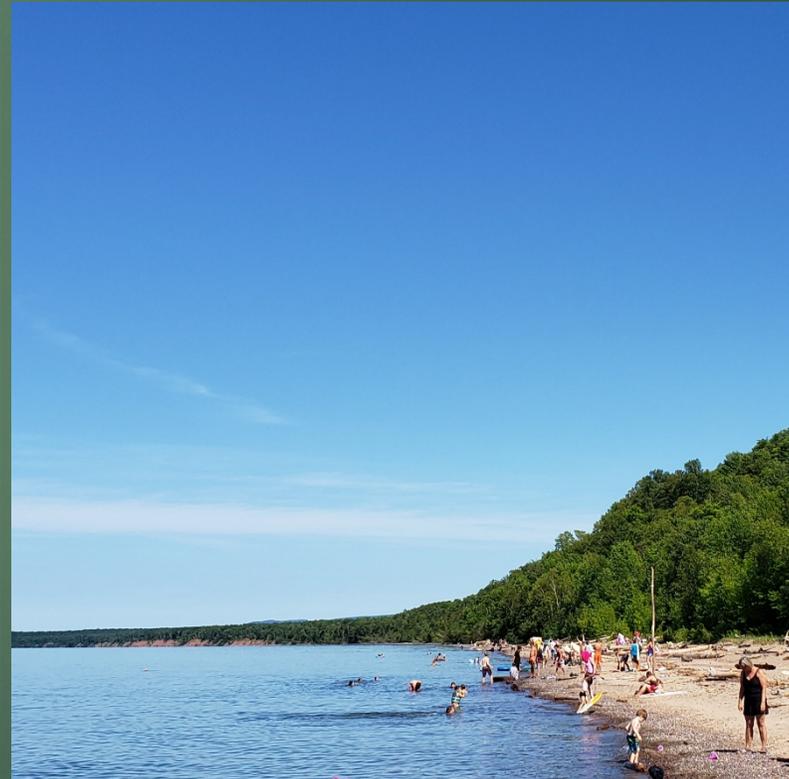
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Problematic Definition



vs.



Community Branding vs. Community Marketing

▶ Community Branding (Phase I)

- ▶ The enduring essence of a community, including its reputation and the thoughts, values, feelings and expectations that form a compelling promise enabling people to choose that community over another.
- ▶ What makes a community special.

▶ Community Marketing (Phase II)

- ▶ The activities, institutions and processes involved in creating, communicating and delivering value in a manner that propels a community towards its goals
- ▶ The strategy and tactics used to 'sell' a community.

Identifying Target Market



▶ Geographic

- ▶ Segmenting based on proximity to community, or location within community
 - ▶ *Consumers living within 5 miles of downtown*
 - ▶ *Residents within the school district*
 - ▶ *Local businesses searching for expansion space*

▶ Behavioral

- ▶ Segmenting based on attitude, knowledge, usage rate, loyalty
 - ▶ *Frequent restaurant patrons*
 - ▶ *Green Bay Packer season ticket holders*
 - ▶ *Visitors and tourists who vacation by car*

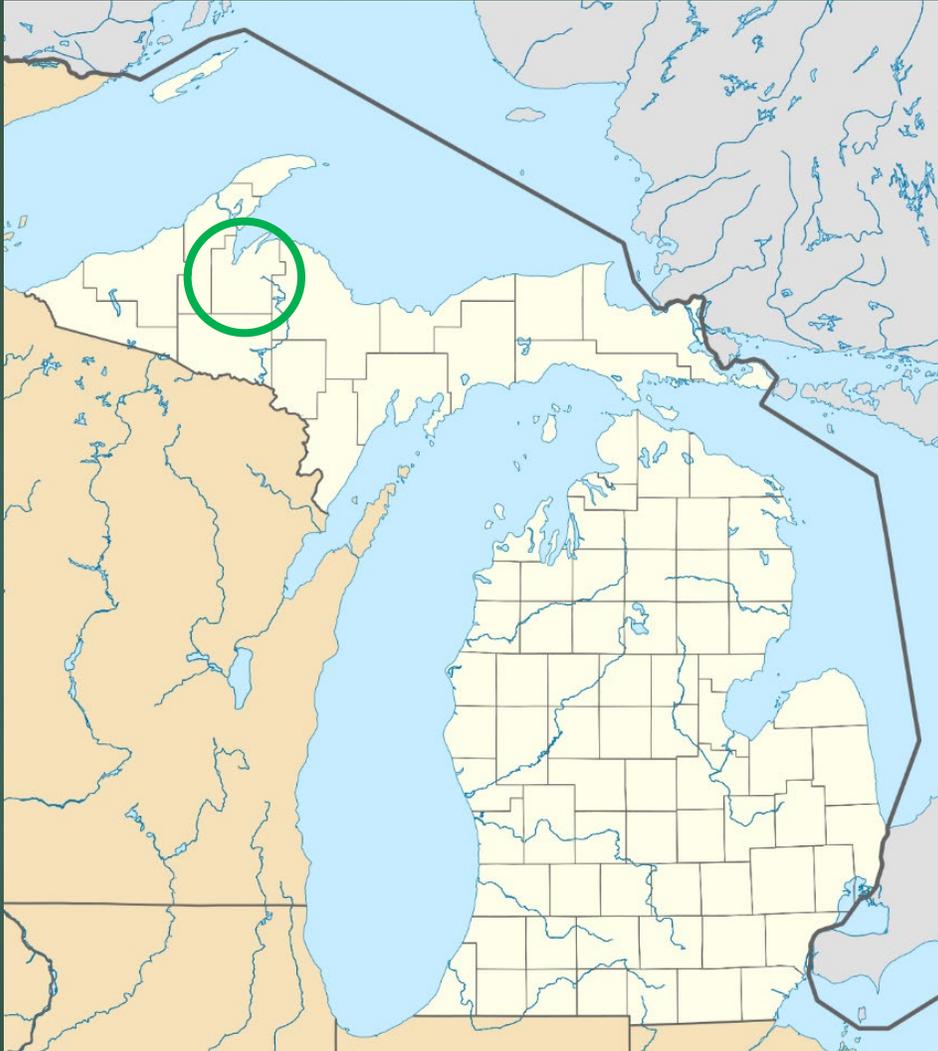
▶ Lifestyle/Psychographic

- ▶ Segmenting based on a particular stage in life or lifestyle choice
 - ▶ *Millennials looking to purchase a first home*
 - ▶ *Suburbanites with teenagers*
 - ▶ *Retirees with second homes in Northern Wisconsin*

▶ Demographic

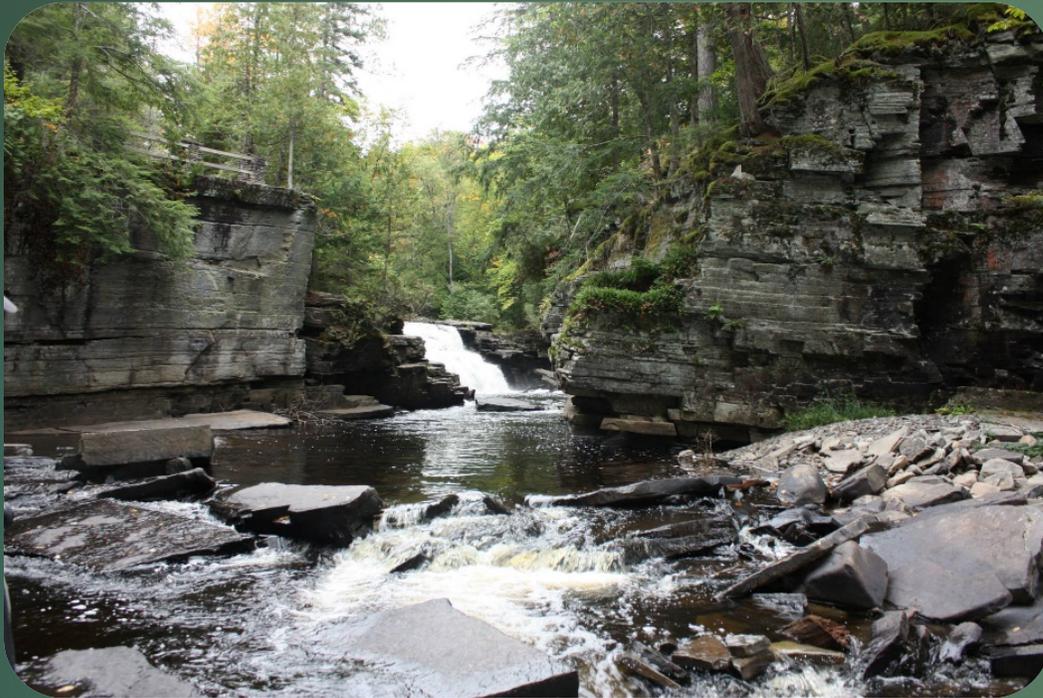
- ▶ Segmenting based on quantifiable characteristics within a larger population
 - ▶ *Upper income women ages 45 to 60 with professional jobs*
 - ▶ *Teenage boys 14 to 18 living with their parents*
 - ▶ *Men earning between \$50k and \$75k with children at home*

Baraga County



- ▶ Aging population
- ▶ Economic stagnation
 - ▶ 7% Unemployment, 75th of 83 counties
- ▶ Lack of infrastructure for “conventional” economic development

We Have Assets



- ▶ Exceptional outdoor recreation assets, very similar to Munising, Marquette, Copper Country, but undeveloped
- ▶ Strategic Location between Marquette and the Copper Country
- ▶ Low Cost of Living
- ▶ Strong Amenities (by UP standards)
 - ▶ Broadband
 - ▶ Medical Care
 - ▶ Schools
 - ▶ Higher Education
- ▶ **Question: How do we draw travelers off US41?**

Why are we doing this?

- ▶ **Economic Development** is the overriding goal. We want to sell ourselves as a place to live, work, and do business.
- ▶ **Entrepreneurship**: We are a great place to live, and a great place to start a business or work remotely.
- ▶ **Quality of Life**: We have all the recreation options of far more expensive places to live, if you can choose your place of work, consider Baraga County.
- ▶ **Tourism**: Create a name for ourselves so that when people come to our area for recreation, they will stop here, instead of just passing through.
- ▶ **Overall, a unified county brand and marketing campaign will help keep Baraga County competitive in the 21st Century economy.**

Aspirational!

Emerging:
Opportunity to
grow in outdoor rec
post-COVID-19?

Key Partners

- ▶ Baraga County
- ▶ Baraga County Chamber of Commerce
- ▶ MSU Extension
- ▶ Western UP Planning and Development Region/Regional Prosperity Initiative
- ▶ Village of L'Anse, Townships of L'Anse, Arvon, Baraga
- ▶ Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
- ▶ Baraga County Economic Development Corporation
- ▶ Weyerhaeuser
- ▶ Eagle Mine
- ▶ Many more stakeholders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors have been involved in the process in an advisory role.

Our Goals



- ▶ An open, transparent process that will create a strong, unified brand that will promote **all of** Baraga County.
- ▶ Community branding and marketing is a vital aspect of community and economic development. Experts in the field are increasingly recognizing the need for communities to craft a vibrant and sustainable image that both enhances community pride of place and offers an attractive environment to current and prospective businesses.
- ▶ We believe that a cohesive brand will help us leverage our tremendous outdoor assets into tourism spending that will support both existing hospitality and tourism-based businesses and create demand for new ones.

Project Timeline

- ▶ May 2018: Meeting with large stakeholders group to discuss the project. Agree to move forward and establish Branding Work Group
- ▶ Summer-Fall 2018: Work Group researches community branding strategies and prepares an RFP for branding firms
- ▶ Winter 2018-19: RFP circulated, proposals collected
- ▶ February 2019: Interviews held, Platypus Advertising and Design Selected
- ▶ March 22, 2019: Baraga County Leadership Summit
- ▶ April – September 2019: Platypus conducts branding study, shares results with community
- ▶ First Half of 2020: Platypus develops go-to-market strategy.
 - ▶ On hold due to COVID-19

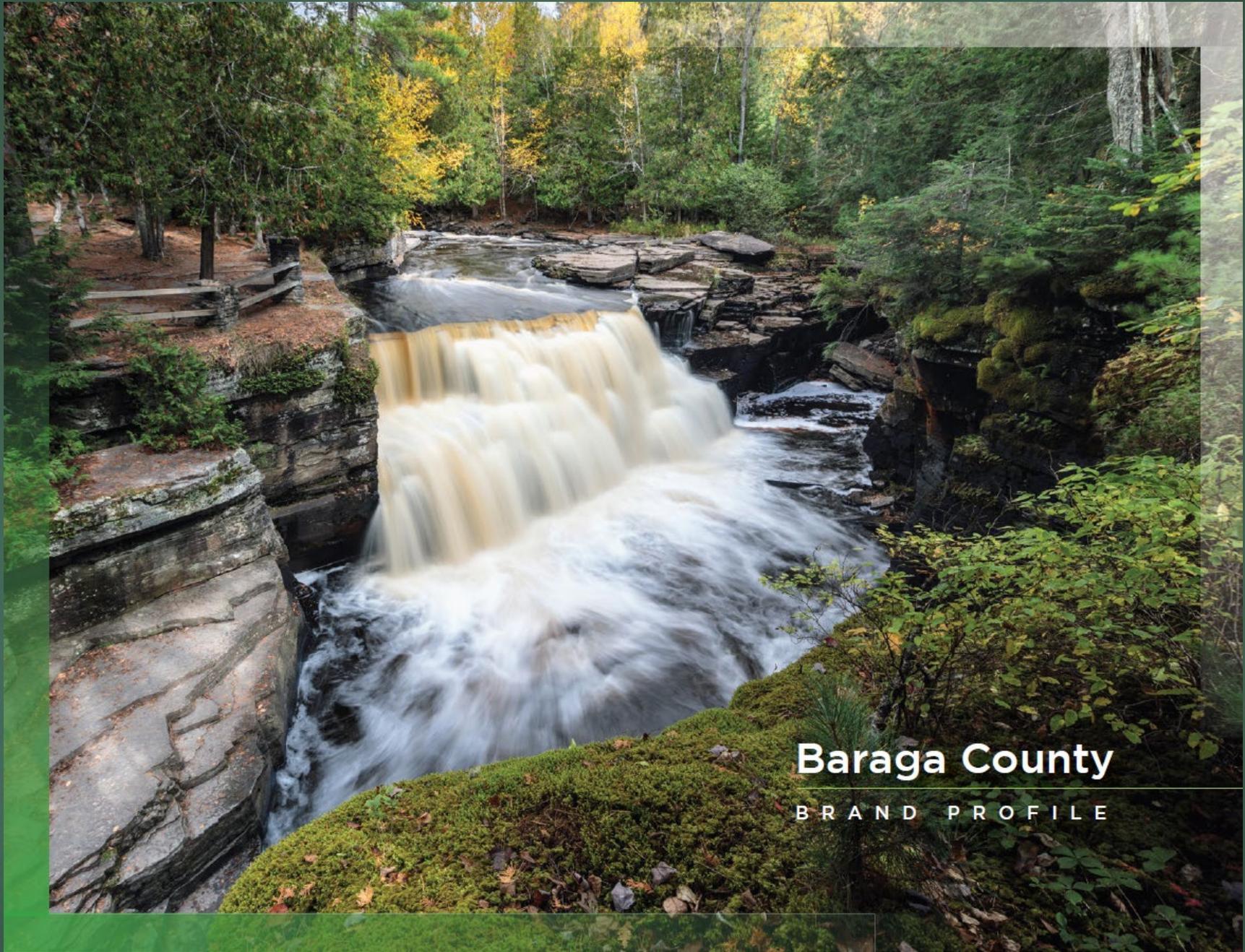
Professional Help

Why we needed a contractor:

- ▶ Community Branding and Marketing are highly specialized skills.
- ▶ Professional help with ensure that our branding process is as complete and effective as it can be.

Platypus Advertising and Design

- ▶ Pewaukee, Wisconsin
- ▶ Other Tourism-focused Clients:
 - ▶ Bayfield, Wisconsin
 - ▶ Fox Wisconsin Heritage Parkway
 - ▶ Noah's Ark Waterpark
- ▶ One of the project leads has a vacation home in the area.
 - ▶ He "gets" the northwoods.
 - ▶ Reduces travel costs to us.



Baraga County

BRAND PROFILE

core brand promise

Baraga County is a land of opportunity. With its spectacular scenery and abundance of trail and water activities for all seasons, it offers visitors a unique opportunity to explore this unspoiled, outdoor haven. And, with today's affordable real estate, a business-friendly public sector and minimal competition, businesses can take advantage of the **tremendous opportunity** to leverage the natural tourism assets available by providing the amenities that travelers and outdoor enthusiasts seek.

What's next

TOP 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the completion of the first phase of your brand journey. Congratulations! Although, most of these recommendations have come to light throughout this report, we thought it would be helpful to review some of the key recommendations to guide activities and the next phase of the branding process.

1. Clean the house. Presentation is everything! In order to sell Baraga County to both visitors and potential businesses you must have an inviting appearance at every touch point. Things that might seem insignificant, such as signage and landscaping play an important role in forming perceptions among visitors. If you want Baraga County to be perceived as an inviting place that visitors would at the very least want to come back to, and in some scenarios, consider it as the next home for their new business, then it needs to look as good as it can upon their first visit. Both public and private entities need to create an environment that makes visitors say, "I want to be there."

2. Improved wayfinding signage. Consistent informative and attractive signage must guide visitors around the County to the attractions they desire. Remember, most potential business owners will first look at Baraga County through the eyes of a visitor. They need to see the potential tourism value of the area before they decide to invest.

3. Create downtown events. 80% of all visitor spending takes place doing complementary activities. Additionally, the average visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet spends just four to six hours with the primary activity that drew them there. The remaining eight to ten hours are spent doing complementary activities. Without these secondary activities, visitors simply leave after the primary activity, greatly reducing the benefit of increased visitor spending. This creates an opportunity for you to develop activities and events in your downtown areas that will create a desire for people to want to

stay. Festivals, arts and craft fairs, concerts in the parks or at the marina, additional farmer's markets. Anything that people will want to spend time doing and then get a bite to eat. These will draw daytrippers from other nearby destinations and provide another reason to "pull off the highway."

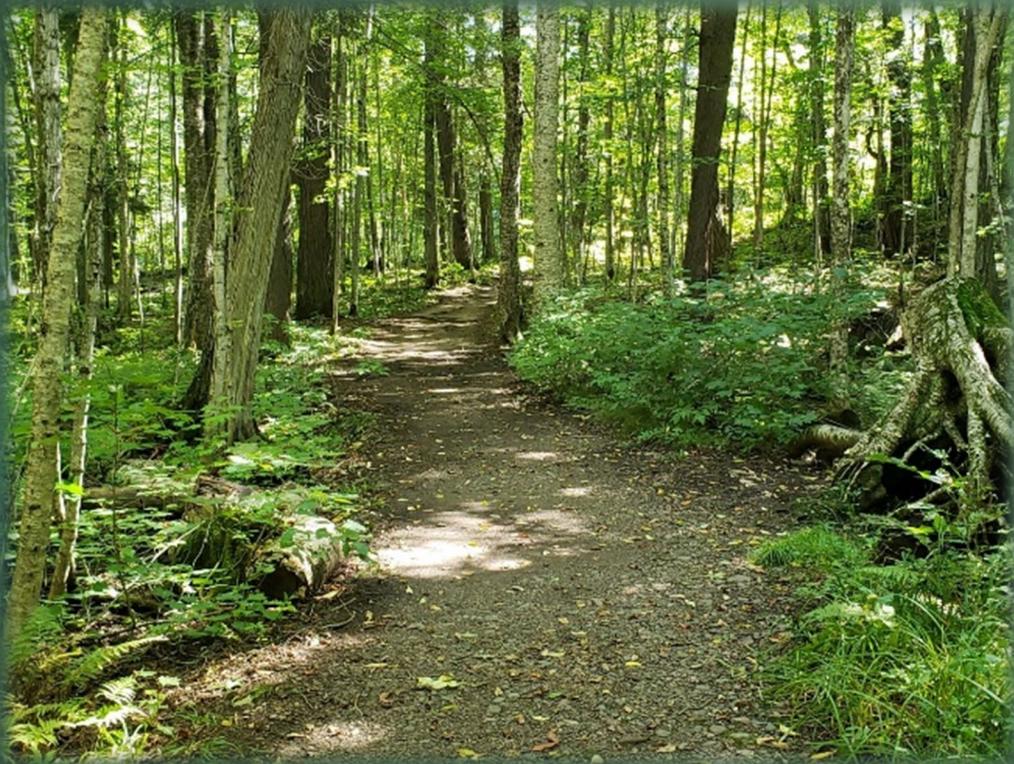
4. Sell Baraga County to itself! During this process we discovered a great deal of apathy and feelings of hopelessness within the community. For your target audience to believe in your brand, your citizens need to believe it, embrace it and live it. They must be ambassadors, salespeople and customers of the businesses that are in their own community. This is not something that will happen overnight. These initiatives take time and require persistence and patience. Along the way there will be many naysayers. In healthy environments this is common, in areas that have experienced some issues that resistance will only be intensified. The worst thing would be to allow that resistance to diminish the efforts and belief in the future. If the program is not sustained, it will be viewed as a "flavor of the day" and weaken any chance for success. To assist with your efforts, Platypus' public relations team could develop a campaign to sell the brand promise to Baraga County residents first.

5. Communicate the Brand! In phase 2 of this process you should develop a go-to-market strategy for getting the brand in front of the target audiences. Your website and social media need to speak from one voice. Your imagery should be inviting, and your story should be compelling. This phase should also include a marketing plan with needed materials and programs to foster business development as well as attracting visitors. There are many other nuggets, suggestions and ideas within the preceding pages that can be further developed in the second phase's marketing plan. These five recommendations should act as the foundation to build upon and successfully launch your new brand.

Next steps

- ▶ Establish Community Action Group
 - ▶ Grassroots implementation of report recommendations
 - ▶ Community Cleanup
 - ▶ Generate Excitement in the County
 - ▶ Ongoing Fundraising
 - ▶ Tell the story of our brand promise
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- ▶ Phase II: Marketing

Discussion



- ▶ What is your community brand?
Or, what does your community think its brand is?
- ▶ How might a new branding process support development in your community?

Thank you! Questions

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