



Proposal to Fayetteville & Cumberland County, NC
For Brand Development Services
June 22, 2018

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COVER LETTER

June 22, 2018

Robert Van Geons
President & CEO
Fayetteville Cumberland County EDC
201 Hay St. Ste. 401 A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Mr. Van Geons,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your RFP for the City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County. We would consider it an honor to work with you.

After learning about your situation, we believe North Star is the ideal partner to help the Fayetteville Cumberland Collaborative Branding Committee (FCCBC) achieve its marketing goals. As a leader in destination and place branding, all of our work is focused on helping communities identify their competitive strengths and leverage those strengths strategically, creatively, and tactically for the purposes of increasing resident recruitment, community pride, visitation, and economic viability. Our philosophy is simple: ***Your brand should connect the soul of your community to the heart of your consumers.*** The BrandPrint process we use to realize that philosophy is much more complex, as it has been refined and perfected over the past 18 years through partnerships with over 250 communities in 44 states.

Through our BrandPrint, North Star will develop a shared brand platform for Fayetteville & Cumberland County. We will discover the area's optimum positioning, the best use of resources to leverage your equity in the brand, and the ideal creative messages to positively influence residents, visitors, and businesses. In addition, we will provide guidance for you to coordinate and deploy the brand across the city, the county, and among your key partners.

I would love to talk more with you regarding how North Star can help the FCCBC promote the area. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this proposal. Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Only the best,



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INTRODUCTION

THE FAYETTEVILLE-CUMBERLAND COUNTY SITUATION

The Cape Fear River winds through Fayetteville and Cumberland County; its waters bisecting North Carolina's fifth-largest city and county. However, such a division is a rarity for the county and its seat of government, as the two have shared a rich history, proud character, and—at least for three months in 1784—a shared eponym in the Marquis de Lafayette. Since the time of the latter's revolutionary war heroics, Fayetteville/Cumberland County established itself as a pivotal center in the Sandhills of southeastern NC: as legend goes, Fayetteville was the only city named after Lafayette that the Frenchman visited on his tour of the nascent country. In the two centuries that followed, Fayetteville and Cumberland County hosted the state legislature when it ratified the U.S. Constitution and created the first state university in the country; they witnessed Civil War battles and Vietnam War deployments; and they set the stage for Presidents Bush and Obama to address the nation in the midst of conflicts in the Middle East.

The area's proud military heritage continues today with the presence of Fort Bragg and a populace that values and honors the contributions of the armed forces. Fort Bragg serves as both a military base and an economic engine for Fayetteville and Cumberland County: it draws the business of defense contractors as well as a steady workforce of skilled, educated servicemembers. Fittingly, the community gives back to the troops by commemorating their courage in local museums and providing support to soldiers and their families. Ultimately, it is the talented people associated with Fort Bragg, not the installation itself, that make the difference for your community.

As the city and county continue to attract new residents, businesses, and visitors, leaders are keen to seek an identity capable of encompassing the diverse offerings and opportunities in the area and marketing them to a diversity of audiences. By creating the Fayetteville Cumberland Collaborative Branding Committee (FCCBC), they display the spirit of cooperation that prevails in the region, one that will prove invaluable to the success of an ambitious branding initiative. Given the importance of Fayetteville and Cumberland County to the state and the nation, the area deserves a recognizable brand that evokes the promise of a revitalized downtown, the idyllic North Carolina countryside, the creativity of local artists and problem solvers, and the benefits of a robust economy. United behind the foundation of an authentic, compelling brand strategy that all partners can share and shape for their respective markets, Fayetteville/Cumberland County will take on the future with gusto, just as it has throughout its history.

EXPERIENCE: THE ADVANTAGE OF A SPECIALIST

Over the last two decades North Star Destination Strategies has partnered with more than 250 communities coast to coast, helping them become more competitive. Bottom line . . . communities are our passion. And we've got the success stories to prove that passion. We're closely familiar with North Carolina through projects in **Hickory**, **Catawba County** and **Mitchell County** as well as with cities with a strong military presence, like Killeen, Texas and **Jacksonville, North Carolina**. Nationally, North Star has collaborated on high-level initiatives with the states of Florida and Mississippi, with well-known cities such as Providence, Rhode Island and Jacksonville, Florida, and with smaller communities like Dandridge, Tennessee and Petersburg, Alaska. All that varied expertise is important for the FCCBC because you want a firm with the chops, credentials, and

gravitas to manage your branding project. Our portfolio of work and record of problem-solving prove that we don't have a stock solution. Beyond a deep understanding of the tourism, economic development and relocation/workforce attraction markets, the advantage of our specialization is that our process—which a generalist agency cannot replicate—helps us obtain precisely the right insights to create the unique community brand you need to influence your audiences. Despite the size and import of the initiatives we work on, North Star is a small company, and our same blue-ribbon team works on every project.

While your focus is a foundational brand strategy, North Star also offers integrated marketing activation services such as advertising program management, media planning and buying, PR & social media management and digital marketing/website development. Our core focus will be the creation of the Fayetteville/Cumberland County overarching brand, but we wanted the FCCBC to be aware of these capabilities for potential future needs and the insight they give us as we shape your brand.

PROCESS: HOW A STRATEGY-FIRST APPROACH UNITES YOUR COMMITTEE

Our process combines a proven approach with customized creativity and out-of-the-box thinking specific to your situation. It begins with detailed research and expert-driven strategy development, then it builds vivid brands in the real world through award-winning visual identity design and an action plan implementable by your team within your budget and timeline.

With the array of organizations represented in the FCCBC, this phased approach will prove especially advantageous: research and strategy will be paramount to reaching consensus concerning the direction of the brand well before any decisions about creative elements are made. We find that the strongest connections between a community and its brand are made when everyone understands and supports the ideas that underlie the eventual logo and strapline. Thus, **our process and guidance is centered first on creating understanding and buy-in to a DNA and strategic platform.** This critical, foundational asset will outlive any campaign because it is the underlying truth and driving force of your community. With consensus on it, the creative decisions that follow will be relatively simple for your committee. Time and time again, we have learned that strategy unites, inspires compliance, and ultimately changes behavior.

RELEVANT CASE STUDIES

The following are short summaries of work with past clients who welcomed us into their communities (for in-depth case studies, please see the Appendix):

- **Columbus, Indiana**

Although magnitudes smaller in terms of population, Columbus frequently finds itself in the same conversation as New York, Chicago, and San Francisco when it comes to architectural achievement. Residents were well aware – and proud – of their city buildings, but they saw little impact in their daily lives. Columbus’ branding process required that residents change this perspective: They had to recognize how the standard of excellence set by their lived environment inspired them to greatness in all aspects of life. For almost 10 years now, Columbus has been a shining example of community-wide brand adoption, winning *Area Development Magazine’s* #1 Leading Locator for corporate relocation and expansion for all United States MSAs in 2012 and 2014.

- **Quincy & Adams County, IL**

Quincy is a shining star in Adams County, Illinois. Historic and beautiful, the city and county work hard to be great: Quincy houses a renowned arts program, excellent healthcare, beautiful parks, and strong schools; it also serves as a transportation hub, with an airport, rail system, and port on the Mississippi River. But part of being great is knowing you can be even better. City leaders recognized that various public sector organizations in Quincy weren’t working as a team, in large part because they all had different ideas about what made the city special. Indeed, though Quincy and Adams had some name recognition, few people could identify what exactly set the two apart from the rest. Our branding initiative focused on building consensus around the timely opportunities to market the area’s Mormon history, arts and architecture, and the economic possibilities of port and riverfront development. Like Quincy, the initiative was “Right on Q”—with everyone finally on the same page, Quincy City Council recently passed the Quincy NEXT plan to guide the area’s economic growth and prosperity.

- **Jacksonville, Florida**

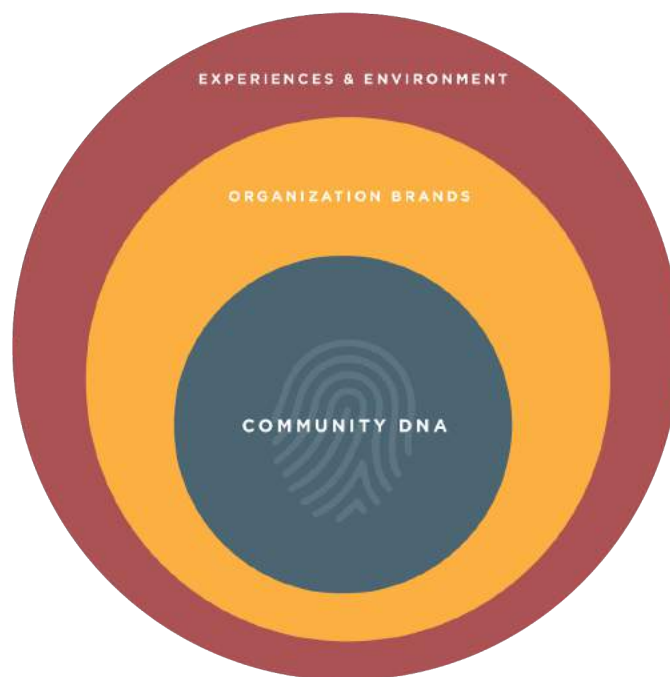
Just as Fayetteville may find itself competing for a higher share of the economic growth that Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, and The Triad experience, Jacksonville was often playing catch up with its larger in-state peers Miami, Tampa, and Orlando. As a port and navy city, the region offered significant labor and logistics advantages and a beautiful waterscape – none of which were fully understood. Leading a widely inclusive and in-depth process, North Star convened leaders from all across a seven-county region of Northeast Florida and led research and strategy to ultimately shape a DNA statement and vision now coming to life in the region’s “JAXUSA” marketing program. The program is centered on the award-winning jaxusa.org website (Florida Economic Development Council best website) and a robust digital marketing and PR campaign. The results have been outstanding. Recently, *Time* magazine named Jacksonville as the #2 most up-and-coming city in America. *Money* magazine ranked Jacksonville as #7 best city for job seekers. *Global Trade* named Jacksonville a top global city. *ZipRecruiter* named Jacksonville #9 hottest city for tech jobs and *Forbes* named Jacksonville the #2 city to invest in housing, the #5 fastest growing city, and the #12 best city for young professionals.

METHODOLOGY

PHILOSOPHY & APPROACH

North Star will not “create” the Fayetteville & Cumberland County brand. It already exists in the very DNA of the community. Rather we will uncover the brand and bring it to life in ways that have meaning for all your constituencies.

Uncovering a unique DNA is essential to the success of all the marketing and community-building efforts that follow. Just as an individual's DNA determines everything from how that person looks to how that person acts (as well as their health and vibrancy), your DNA should be the foundational touchstone for everything from marketing to infrastructure to policy. As such, the heart of any truly impactful brand is a research-driven and authentic DNA Definition.



Once identified, this DNA Definition can drive consistent and powerful communications, focus brand development, shape experiences, impact your built environment, and more. Because the DNA is central to the identity of Fayetteville & Cumberland County, it has the capacity to drive the brand for all your partner agencies, initiatives, and campaigns.

Think of it this way: All the players in your branding initiative are like the sections in an orchestra—different instruments, different sounds, even different sheet music. Your DNA is the score that brings the diverse contributions of all these sections together into something harmonious and meaningful.

RESEARCH

1. STAKEHOLDER EDUCATION

One of the most valuable skills North Star brings to the branding table is an understanding of how to best navigate the political waters that surround such a project. We know when projects can derail, how to maneuver difficult political situations, and who to include in the process. With this in mind, we have developed strategies for sidestepping potential problems and keeping your branding initiative on course.

Early understanding is critical to the smooth implementation of a community brand. Educating your residents, businesses, and stakeholders on the purpose, process, and possibility of a brand early is the first step in achieving buy-in from these important audiences. In addition, specific attention must be given to your steering committee to ensure the people leading this initiative share a common vision for the purpose, desired outcomes, and accomplishments of this project. North Star has created an array of educational tools designed to increase understanding of and support for the Fayetteville and Cumberland County branding initiative. To that end, we provide:

Educational Presentation: Live PowerPoint presentation (during the in-market trip) to your steering committee as well as private and public sector stakeholder groups (determined and assembled by you) for purposes of educating and furthering buy-in of community branding. This is not a canned presentation. We will collaborate with the FCCBC to determine who your audiences are and what you want to convey. Then we craft the presentation to meet those goals. This presentation can also be given in a public 'town hall' forum, to engage the community in the process and to gather initial feedback from the public regarding opportunities to rebrand.

Educational PowerPoint: We provide the FCCBC with a copy of the community branding PowerPoint presentation. This gives you the ability to carry on the education and engagement via additional presentations, distribution to interested parties or placement on community websites. We're also happy to train your stakeholders while we're in-market on making the presentation or answering questions.

Educational Site / Brand Story Site: This site serves as an online tool to direct traffic of Fayetteville and Cumberland County residents and stakeholders interested in learning more about the project, getting involved in the research stage, or becoming a champion after the launch of the new brand. (Here is an example of a live educational site for Elk Grove, CA: <https://www.brandelkgrove.com/>).

RESEARCH

2. ASSETS, PERCEPTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES RESEARCH

North Star has identified the following research studies to help achieve the FCCBC's goals. This compiled body of data points us in the direction we need to go to craft your stories. You will notice both qualitative and quantitative studies included in this recommended matrix. North Star strongly advocates a mixed method approach to research because it will tell you not just

“How, When, What and Where” but also “Why”. Only through mixed methodology can your community obtain a true picture of where your brands are now, why, where they should be, and how your preferred identities can best be accomplished.

Situation Analysis: This establishes the current lay of the land from the perspective of your critical partners. We administer an online questionnaire to each internal group or organization. We then meet with each group during the in-market to more fully understand your primary objectives, general history, political landscape, resources, competitors, etc.

Research, Planning, Communications and Media Audit: We conduct a comprehensive review of any relevant research and planning documents: this includes community outreach and planning meetings, surveys, intercept surveys, and district-to-district and committee volunteer discussions. In addition, we review and analyze existing marketing materials, branding, logos, and messaging from public and private sector partners as well as recent press related to Fayetteville and Cumberland County.

Familiarization Tour: A tour of Fayetteville and Cumberland County commercial sites, businesses, housing developments, community center(s), retailers, restaurants, parks, military sites, museums, arts centers, etc.

Key Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups: Some of our most valuable pieces of insight for the purposes of defining your DNA and crafting your creative work come from these intensive one-on-one interviews and focus groups. With the assistance of the FCCBC, we want to identify and speak to key stakeholders about Fayetteville and Cumberland County (including city and county government staff, military officers, real estate developers, park officials, board members, business community members, school officials, nonprofit and civic organizations, tour operators, museum curators, etc.). We also want to talk to articulate individuals who are passionate about the city (artists, historians, coaches, ministers, matriarchs, patriarchs, and more). We know you want us to talk to everyone, so we continue the conversations via phone once we get back to the office. Because we can react to the information they give us with original questions, these interviews often lead us down exciting discovery paths not revealed by quantitative surveys.

Vision Survey: This open-ended, right-brained survey challenges stakeholders to provide deeper comments and opinions. We administer the survey digitally to the list you provide, guaranteeing all your valuable stakeholders are able to participate. This tool dovetails beautifully with the qualitative interviews because it extends your participant universe and allows you to layer trending opinions with in-depth perspectives.

Online Community Survey & Brand Barometer: Giving residents a forum for sharing is important. We use some of the themes identified in the vision surveys to craft a quantitative survey posted online for community-wide participation. The brand barometer, conducted as a part of the community survey, measures the strength of Fayetteville and Cumberland County's resident advocacy relative to the rest of the United States as a place to live, work, and play. In other words, how likely your residents are to advocate the city and/or the county for starting a business or planning a visit. We promote this survey using traditional and social media. Fascinating similarities and differences between leadership perspectives and resident perspectives are often revealed.

Influencer Perception Study: North Star conducts qualitative, in-depth phone interviews with professionals outside Fayetteville and Cumberland County to uncover contextual perspectives. In collaboration with the FCCBC, we compile a list of 50 identified potential interviewees from a target pool of elected officials, site selectors, relocation executives, meeting planners, tour operators, regional and state level executives in economic development and tourism, or other external external influences you identify.

Quantitative Perception Study: This survey is conducted using a statistically significant random sampling of consumers and non-consumers in outside markets using research panels. Data will be cross-tabulated in a number of ways to reveal the most insightful patterns between consumer and non-consumer groups. For instance, perceptions and attitudes for those who have visited Fayetteville and Cumberland County will be compared and contrasted to those who have not visited and are reporting perceptions purely on reputation. This study measures:

- Overall awareness and perceptions of Fayetteville and Cumberland County.
- Overall awareness and perceptions of the competition.
- Measurements of Fayetteville and Cumberland County's delivery of quality of life indicators.
- Consumer experiences with Fayetteville and Cumberland County.
- Attitudes regarding Fayetteville and Cumberland County's strengths and weaknesses.
- Consumer opinions regarding what needs to be added or taken away.
- Changes in consumer perceptions of Fayetteville and Cumberland County after visiting.
- Patterns of visitation activities associated with consumers' primary purpose of visitation.

Competitive Positioning Review: A brand message and marketing strategy analysis to evaluate Fayetteville and Cumberland County's position relative to the competition in the state and in the region.

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

3. INSIGHTS & STRATEGY

Our insights come from asking a number of thought-provoking questions: What brand “story” does the research tell? What emotional attachments can the brand hold? What are Fayetteville/Cumberland County's core values? How does the brand fit into the consumer's lifestyle? How can the brand best be used to elicit the FCCBC's desired emotional/behavioral responses? How do Fayetteville and Cumberland County stand apart from competitors? It is from these insights that we determine the overall positioning of the brand.

These insight questions are compiled in a succinct storyline that leads directly to the Fayetteville/Cumberland County strategic brand platform (DNA Definition). These platforms are the **critical touch point for all branded activity moving forward**. For maximum brand impact, all efforts, thoughts, communications and actions should literally and symbolically support their essence.

Situation Brief & Insight Development: We get our sharpest research and strategic minds together at one time to review all of the research findings. Data on its face has limited value, but the connections between data points open up understanding and opportunity. The entire North Star team weaves together these connections into a compelling set of insights that start to tell the Fayetteville/Cumberland County story.

DNA Definition: Based on those insights, this guiding statement for the management and development of your brand is created. This definition should serve as the touch point for all Fayetteville and Cumberland County activity moving forward. Many of our communities reference their DNA Definition when making decisions about everything from policy to infrastructure

improvement to promotions.

Included in your DNA definition is:

<i>Target audience:</i>	<i>For whom Fayetteville and Cumberland County have the most appeal.</i>
<i>Frame of reference:</i>	<i>Geographic context of Fayetteville and Cumberland County.</i>
<i>Point of difference:</i>	<i>What makes Fayetteville and Cumberland County special.</i>
<i>Benefit:</i>	<i>Why it should matter to the consumer.</i>

Here is an actual example of how this construct guided our client Fargo, North Dakota and led to their “North of Normal” brand positioning:

<i>Target audience:</i>	<i>For cool hunters everywhere, Fargo-Moorhead</i>
<i>Frame of reference:</i>	<i>an emerging epicenter and powerhouse of young, highly educated talent</i>
<i>Point of difference:</i>	<i>is a gust of fresh air across the Great Plains</i>
<i>Benefit:</i>	<i>creating a dynamic energy and crafting a connection with each guest.</i>

“Research and Strategy” Presentation: This represents a critical juncture in the project. We prepare a comprehensive review of all relevant research, insights, and recommended DNA Definition. A preview of this presentation is shared with key branding committee members for purposes of editing and fine-tuning. The collaboratively perfected presentation is then made in person at a larger stakeholder meeting. DNA Definition approval is required before proceeding to brand creation.

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

4. CREATIVITY

In this stage, all insight and strategy are transformed into tangible creative products that embody Fayetteville and Cumberland County. An in-depth creative brief and a creative workshop guide this work. Straplines, logos, color, and messaging (with graphic standards) are created. Additional deliverables will be developed to express the new brand identity in the context of its future use.

Creative Workshop: A collaborative, interactive meeting between the North Star team and the FCCBC creative team that explores the roles of different creative elements and identifies creative preferences. Our goal is to most effectively hone in on the type of work you want without limiting the creative thinking of our writers, graphic designers and art directors. This meeting is always lots of fun for everyone involved.

Straplines & Rationale (5): A strapline is not the be-all and end-all for your brand. But it is the start of the story. Depending on how safe or edgy you want to be, the Fayetteville and Cumberland County strapline can capture people’s attention immediately and pique their curiosity or they can serve as a solid, hard-working tool that starts the job of positioning Fayetteville and Cumberland County in the minds of consumers. North Star will provide a minimum of five different straplines, along with rationales for the strengths of each line. We also conduct preliminary trademark and Google searches to ensure the availability of each line. This is a critical step and one often overlooked by

many professionals. But there is nothing more frustrating than getting to the end of the project with a strapline that is not available to you.

Logos (5): We will present a minimum of five logo options that represent a variety of concepts. We will provide a round of revisions to your selected logo. We further design this logo with and without the state name and with and without the strapline in vertical and horizontal lockups, representing all the different ways you will use it.

Color Palettes (2): We start by developing logos in black and white to reduce color bias. But once your decision is made, we open the possibilities visually by allowing you to select between two very different palettes. This is a key decision in how your visual brand identity will “feel” since color evokes emotion.

Looks (2): We craft two entirely different visual looks that allow you to choose how your brand messaging will be conveyed in terms of headlines, photography style, special graphic elements, or detailing and copy points. We will also provide two rounds of revisions for the Look of your choice to ensure it reflects your exacting standards. The creative committee will select one look, and it will be applied to all subsequent deliverables.

Brand Narrative: Your DNA Definition is the core of what makes Fayetteville and Cumberland County special. The narrative takes that core and describes it in artistic and compelling language for connecting emotionally with your different consumers. The narrative defines your personality and Fayetteville and Cumberland County tone of voice. It can be woven into ad copy, placed on websites, integrated into speeches, and distributed to businesses to use in their own communications about the place they call home. The more it is used, the more widely your message is dispersed. As an example, here is the brand narrative North Star wrote for Mississippi:

You're rumbling down a dirt road in search of that crossroads where a legendary bluesman was born. There's something about it, the cotton in the fields, the dust from the road caught in a shaft of sun, the adventure you've begun, searching for the roots of a song that speaks to you.

You're headed South. And it feels true.

Sitting down at a roadside table to a heaping plate of roasted corn and steaming crawfish, you can hardly take it all in. The coastal breeze in the cypress trees, spice tingling on tongue tip and lips, the gracious smiles and laughter of the people – it's good and rich and real.

You're traveling South. And it feels true.

You're following in the footsteps of giants. People who took up the cause of this nation. You marvel at their sacrifice, their strength and the power of a voice that still rolls through this land. You want to breathe it all into your soul as you follow their trail, their march, their bus ride, and their triumph.

You're moving South. And it feels true.

There's no other place that embodies the heart and soul of the true South in all its rich and varied expressions – in culture and cuisine, music and folk art musings, history and horticulture, the rolling river and the towering magnolia. It's Mississippi. Say it out loud. Mississippi. It rings true.

It's a musical incantation that raises eyebrows, inspires mouthwatering grins of anticipation and understanding nods of reverence.

Mississippi.

Find Your True South.

Graphic Standards Guide: This guide contains all necessary information for using your logo, color palette, typefaces, language, narrative and other key elements to ensure consistency across all mediums and from any organization. We provide digital and printed versions of this guide as well as InDesign files so you can edit as necessary.

Messaging Matrix/Library: inspired by the Fayetteville/Cumberland County DNA, strapline and brand narrative, North Star will develop an array of up to (10) message platforms for a variety of markets and/or targets (e.g. tourism, economic development, arts & culture—or—millennials, veterans, tech workers, etc.). This ensures that all partners in the process can carry the shared brand idea, but with customization for their particular marketplace needs.

Custom Deliverables (up to 8 depending on depth and complexity of chosen items): To assist in the communication of the final brand concept, we will work with you in identifying a list of up to 8 custom deliverables that target your specific goals. This is a powerful addition as it brings the logo and design to life through elements in the real world. The creative work provided is for design purposes. The production of associated materials remains outside of this scope. Examples include:

Website and Social Media Design | Templates (Annual Reports, Presentations, Email, etc.) | Business Cards | Letterhead | Envelopes | Brochures | Co-branding | Interior and Exterior Signage | Newsletters | Print and Electronic Advertising | Event Promotion Materials |

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

5. ACTION PLAN

Following your brand's development, North Star maps a must-do strategic action and communications plan. This plan comprises the fundamental action steps that ensure the brand gains traction and maintains momentum. Many of these tasks involve setting up the organization and cooperation that will propel your brand forward. Our goal, and yours, is to make sure that the Fayetteville and Cumberland County brand is the guiding principle for your future, not just a logo and line on your letterhead.

Communication & Delivery: With an eye to the FCCBC's goals and target audiences, we will consider how available marketing tactics and tools fit the desired effect and breadth of the brand rollout and subsequently provide recommendations for incorporating the new brand into your stakeholders' communications efforts.

Brand Action Ideas (up to 10): High-impact, custom ideas designed to raise the profile of the new Fayetteville and Cumberland County brand and bring it to life in every corner of your community. Custom ideas can fall into the following categories:

- **Policy** (laws or measures that support the brand strategy.)
- **SEO** (strategies to increase the visibility of your brand's digital elements via best practices online.)
- **Economic Development** (marketing, communications, training, outreach, resources, etc...all specifically related to economic development.)
- **Private Sector** (ideas and tools to engage businesses and private sector organizations.)
- **Sports** (tournaments, events, youth sports, etc.)
- **Events** (any organized activity that ties back to the brand ranging in scope from festivals to health

fairs to career counseling to community clean-up days.)

- **Festivals** (repackage existing events/festivals or develop new ones that connect to your brand strategy.)
- **Arts** (public art campaigns, partnerships with art organizations, art contests, artists-in-residence programs.)
- **Environmental Applications** (look at your community as if it were a canvas.)
- **Awards** (civic awards, organizational awards, etc.)
- **Education** (programs in schools, small business/entrepreneur mentoring, education for front-line hospitality staff, etc.)
- **Health** (community health programs, school-based health initiatives, business-based health initiatives, hospital and health care agency partnerships.)
- **Tourism** (marketing, communications, training, products, packaging, merchandise, etc . . . all specifically related to tourism.)
- **Master Planning** (design and development of infrastructure and support systems consistent with the brand strategy)

Final Presentation: This hour-long, online presentation takes participants quickly through the high points of the branding research and strategy and then does a thorough exploration of the foundational creative development (line, narrative, logo, look, and color palette) and the steps of the action plan. Each step is illustrated using the custom deliverable designs.

BRAND EVALUATION

6. EVALUATION & RESULTS TRACKING

Evaluation yields new information, which may lead to the beginning of a new planning cycle. Information can be gathered from concept pre-testing, campaign impact in the marketplace, and tracking studies to measure a brand's performance over time.

Ideally, evaluation answers two basic questions: have responses to the brand among target audiences changed in the way the BrandPrint intended? And have these changes resulted in action that will achieve the desired objectives of the brand?

The research studies in this plan are designed to produce benchmarks and results that can be used for comparison with future studies. Additionally, our almost 20 years of branding experience have shown that true success can be seen in the spread of excitement, inspiration, and innovation surrounding your brand among residents and stakeholders. Lastly, we are always available to answer questions and help with later branding riddles. We have maintained an ongoing personal and business relationship with most of our clients, some for more than a decade.

12-Month Follow Up: We follow up after a year of your brand implementation to discuss the successes you have enjoyed and hurdles that you are working to overcome. We provide suggestions and direction for next steps in your continual brand integration.

Brand Barometer: Getting the talk right on the street is the most important thing a community

can do to bolster its development efforts. Word of mouth has always been important: in this post-digital world, it is essential. With the benchmark included in your brand study, the Brand Barometer becomes a simple and inexpensive way to track your results and validate your success in word of mouth advertising and resident advocacy. We strongly recommend a Brand Barometer measurement every year to track the progress of the community. North Star keeps a running annual average, allowing you to compare your community to the nation over time. This current national sampling mitigates swings in the economy and gives you the truest look at advocacy for Fayetteville and Cumberland County.

Quantitative Perception Study: You will have gained an in-depth understanding of the brand perceptions of the community among consumers as part of this effort. You will also have an excellent benchmark. You will be able to easily assess the changes in your reputation in the minds of outsiders, business leaders, visitors, and potential visitors. This will be one of the most effective quantifiable measures of the impact of your branding efforts.

Getting started call Week 1

Research & Brand Development

Education & Research

Situation analysis	Weeks 1 – 2
Research and planning audit	Weeks 1 – 2
Communication and media audit	Weeks 1 – 2
Educational microsite	Weeks 2 – 3
Vision survey	Weeks 3 – 4
In-Market (fam tour, focus groups, presentations, interviews)	TBD
Online community survey & brand barometer	Weeks 6 – 10
Quantitative consumer perception survey	Weeks 9 – 11
Qualitative (influencer) perception survey	Weeks 9 – 12
Competitive positioning review	Weeks 10 – 12

Insights

Situation brief & insight development	Weeks 12 – 13
DNA definition development	Weeks 14 – 15
Understanding and insights presentation and strategy approval	Week 16

Creativity

Creative brief development (internal)	Week 16
Creative workshop*	Week 16
Foundational creative development/presentations	Weeks 17 – 24
Custom deliverable development	Weeks 24 – 28

Brand Implementation

Action

Action plan development	Weeks 25 – 28
Final presentation (online/WebEx)	Week 29
Final report development	Week 29

Evaluation & Results Tracking

12-month follow up	1 year after implementation
Brand barometer	TBD
Quantitative perception study	TBD

Proposed Timeline

29 Weeks

Timeline is dependent upon an efficient client approval process, which requires that data and feedback from client is received at key milestones. If the client approval and consensus process takes longer than 29 weeks (7 months), North Star will invoice any remaining contracted amount at that time and reserves the right to propose project extension fees at a blended hourly rate.

KEY PERSONNEL

DON MCEACHERN **Founder & CEO**

Don McEachern has been growing research based brands for more than 20 years. His experience includes working for multinational advertising agencies as well as nationally recognized creative boutiques. During his time in the ad world, McEachern put his stamp on some of the world's most famous brands including Goldkist, Hawaiian Tropic, Suntory Bottled Water Group, Trump Plaza, Panasonic and Lanier Worldwide. For his efforts he received numerous awards, including a prestigious national Effie for marketing effectiveness and a Clio for excellent creativity.

15 years ago, McEachern struck out on his own. With a dream and a dollar, he launched North Star Destination Strategies, specializing in brand marketing and research for places. More than 200 nationwide cities later, McEachern has become the recognized expert in the exploding field of place branding and destination research. With a process that combines education, research, strategy, creativity and action, he has helped create unique and effective brands for the states of Mississippi and Florida; major downtowns including New Orleans and Memphis and big-name cities like Jacksonville, Florida; Dayton, Ohio and Providence, Rhode Island. That same process and passion has also been applied to small cities that will soon be household names such as Petersburg, Alaska, Sebastopol, California and Warrensburg, Missouri.

McEachern is also a sought-after speaker on the topic of research and place branding. He has spoken at national, regional and local conferences; served as keynote speaker, panel moderator, session leader and break-out facilitator. He has helped CVBs, mayors, city councils, governors, city managers, economic development organizations and chambers.

McEachern lives on a horse farm in Nashville, Tennessee, where he rides horses, paddles kayaks and plays tennis with his children. As of yet, no member of his family has been branded.

WILL KETCHUM

President

Communities are *everything* – spirit, pride, livelihoods, ambitions, friendships, recreation, and most of all, home. With that point of view, Will is as passionate about community and place branding as they come.

From our Jacksonville office, he manages North Star operations and is always close to clients and our work. He's advised *Fortune* 1000 companies, major metros and rural counties on marketing and brand strategy over his 30 years in the agency business and has a particular focus in community economic development. He has led a community-wide visioning process to create a competitive global identity for Jacksonville which involved a wide array of city leaders, stakeholder groups and sponsors.

Will's never seen a trail he didn't want to take – whether its traveling to solve branding challenges in amazing client communities, or traveling for fun with his family. Beyond summer vacations, North Carolina is a special place to Will as he spent two years there completing his MBA in Marketing at UNC-Chapel Hill after undergraduate studies at Vanderbilt University.

PATRICK GOLDEN

Executive Creative Director

With his background in history, passion for architecture, and love of a good story, Patrick loves learning about the place he hasn't been, a town off the beaten path, or the true heart of a city.

Combine these qualities with his love of strategy and design, and he is ready to distill all of this into design mark, logos, straplines and narratives that are as authentic as the places they represent. And he's got the awards to show it - dozens of Addys and an Effie for marketing effectiveness. Patrick has even painted the art on our walls and designed our offices spaces. He's a true Renaissance creative man.

Being mistaken for a local is the greatest compliment you can pay Patrick. He always has a bag packed, a camera in his hand and a sketchbook in his backpack, ready to rack-up as many miles and experiences as possible.

ED BARLOW

Senior Vice President, Director of Strategic Planning

Ed loves a good riddle. Ever since being the fastest to find the toaster in the tree in his pediatric dentist's waiting room, he has been solving marketing and operational challenges with creative and strategic instincts. Along the way he has collected a cum laude business degree in Hospitality Administration from Florida State University and a Master's degree in Creative Writing and English Literature from Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Most recently, Ed gained valuable experience on both the client and agency sides of the branding relationship as an ADDY-award-winning Director of Marketing and Communications for the parent corporation to a group of national facility services companies serving transportation, travel, aviation, retail, healthcare, and hospitality industries. He has also worked as Senior Copywriter and Marketing Strategist for a branding design firm in Nashville specializing in persuasive content for Music Row, corporate, and nonprofit clients. His success can be traced to intense curiosity, ability to listen intently, and all those questions that lead to solving any riddle.

Ed caters to North Star clients with creativity, effective communication and customer service. His insights and instincts lead clients to a broad, inclusive approach to successful community place branding for the long-term. He has led successful community place branding initiatives for Iowa's Creative Corridor; Lima/Allen County, Ohio; Lauderdale Lakes, Florida; Brookings, South Dakota; Jamestown, New York; Helena- West Helena, Arkansas; Downtown New Orleans, Louisiana; State of Mississippi; State of Florida; Goshen, Indiana and Tehachapi, California.

After living off the grid for several years in Taos, New Mexico, enjoying hiking, mountain biking, and discovering some artistic talent, Ed returned to his native Tennessee. Back home he launched 2 eds design, a small enterprise with Ed Sr. specializing in creating home furnishings and custom artwork in wood and metal.

GINNY WALTHOUR

Senior Account Director & PR Director

The love of travel and experiencing different cultures and places are some of Ginny's core passions. From studying in Spain and surviving the Running of the Bulls in Pamplona to working for *USA Today* International in London, she thrives on understanding and learning about new people and places.

Relatable to different types of clients and cultures, that's her strength. Her easy-going nature and expert listening skills allows client to feel at ease. Having worked in both the private and public sectors, she understands the different ways in which organizations operate and can navigate through any challenge. As a mother of two, her globe-trotting ways have decreased some, and you will now more likely find her cheering on her girls at their soccer games or out on the boat on Jacksonville's St. Johns River. And she would not have it any other way.

ANITA CARTER

Creative Services Director

Driven by avid curiosity—be it learning the origin of a word or phrase or everything there is to know about a place, Anita is an explorer at heart. The need to know how things work and what "makes people tick" led her to a Psychology degree with a focus in marketing. From being on the team that developed some big consumer brands like the Cadillac Escalade to overseeing an international spa skincare brand and developing place brands in her home state of Florida, the desire to know what is going on "behind the curtain" has proven a truly valuable asset.

At North Star, Anita gets involved at every level digging into research to help develop sound strategic foundations and bringing those ideas to life through big ideas, expressive writing and creative expressions. When she's not busy figuring things out, Anita is exploring the world with many of her adventures taking her to wine growing regions, a passion she shares with her husband. And she is a trained massage therapist too but she only pulls that trick out of the bag in emergencies.

ROBERTO MUÑOZ

Account & Research Manager

Writing, marketing, research—all done with careful accuracy and quick wit: Roberto is North Star's five-tool player for the placemaking game thanks to his endless energy and versatile skill set. After a stint at a downtown Nashville marketing agency, Roberto joined North Star as a supportive teammate with a penchant for finding the right words—and numbers—to tell a community's story in vivid detail. Whether working on business development or a research presentation, he always looks to learn about unique towns and cities nationwide and about the character and voice that sets them apart.

A University of Chicago grad, Roberto returned to Music City to spend time with family and begin a career in advertising. If he's not poring over commas and decimal points, he's likely catching a minor league ballgame in Nashville's Germantown or making a seasonal pilgrimage to Wrigley Field in Chicago's North Side.

REFERENCES

The following are past clients that have firsthand experience with our BrandPrint. You can view testimonial videos and council responses to our work here:

http://northstarideas.com/testimonials_branding

Hickory, North Carolina

Ms. Mandy Pitts Hildebrand
CEO
Hickory Metro CVB
828.322.1335
mandy@hickorymetro.com

Catawba County, North Carolina

Mr. Mick Berry
County Manager
Catawba County Government
828.465.8201
mberry@catawbacountync.gov

Gallatin, Tennessee

Mr. James Fenton
Executive Director
Gallatin, TN Economic Development Agency
615.451.5940
james.fenton@gallatin-tn.gov

Quincy, Illinois

Mr. Marcel Wagner
President
Great River Economic Development Found.
217.223.4313
wagnerm@gredf.org

Lima-Allen County, Ohio

Mr. Jed Metzger
President & CEO
Lima-Allen County Chamber of Commerce
412.222.6045
jmetzger@limachamber.com

Jacksonville, Florida

Mr. Jerry Mallot
President & CEO
JAXUSA Partnership
(904) 366-6654
jmallot@jaxusa.org

INVESTMENT

Partnering with the City of Fayetteville and Cumberland County is not a responsibility we take lightly. As such, if it becomes necessary, we are interested in collaborating with community leaders and stakeholders to create an even more custom scope of work for perfecting this important initiative.

Education, Research, Insights & Strategy	\$44,000
Creativity	\$44,000
Action Plan	\$17,000
 PROJECT TOTAL	 \$105,000

This cost proposal has been calculated with consideration to third party costs associated with the research and North Star's blended hourly rate of \$175/hr. Travel & miscellaneous are additional (pass through basis).

COLUMBUS



CHALLENGE

Form vs. function. Although modest in population at 38,000, Columbus, Indiana is ranked a surprising fifth in the U.S. for architecturally significant cities putting it in the same company as New York City, San Francisco, Chicago and Miami. Research showed that residents are well aware – and proud – of Columbus' architectural status. But many don't see the connection between an interesting building and the things that matter most in their lives including jobs, safety, children and education. So how can a city with a reputation for design excellence optimize that advantage and still create a brand that's "of the people."

INSIGHT

More than just a pretty building. North Star's research revealed that Columbus' architecture is not just significant, it's memorable! Dazzling modern design combined with exemplary building standards turn common structures like schools, city hall, bridges and fire stations into functional works of art people won't soon forget.

Research also showed that the outstanding architecture of Columbus is not just about the buildings, it's about applying a standard of excellence to the everyday in a way that inspires greatness in all you do. Ultimately, Columbus doesn't just do buildings better, it strives to do everything better. And that's a connection hardworking residents can feel good about.

BRAND STRATEGY

Position Columbus as a place where there's an environment of excellence, which creates an uncommon atmosphere that inspires you to shape your world.

RESULTS & CLIENT KUDOS

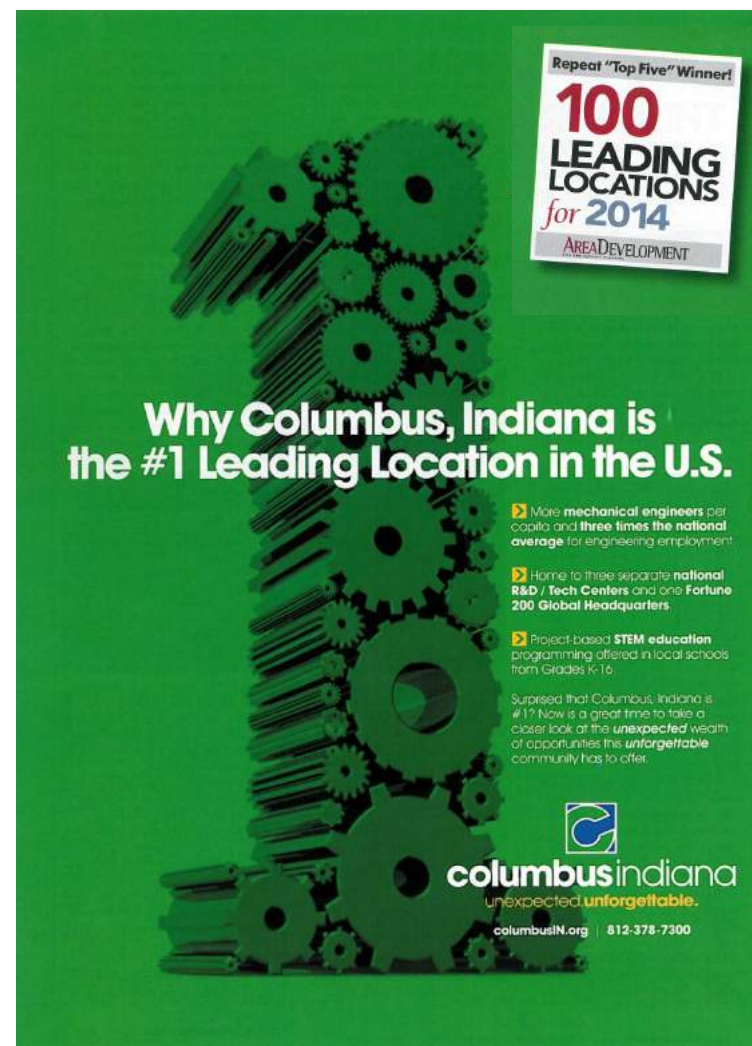
- ▶ Columbus ranked #1 for Area Development's 2012 Leading Locations List
- ▶ In 2011 Columbus experienced: a 19.2% growth in tour sales income, the website had 172,799 visitors, and Columbus enjoyed a 18.5% increase in innkeeper's tax collections
- ▶ Columbus Visitors Center was named National Association of Sports Commissions' Member of the Year in 2008
- ▶ Columbus was recognized as one of America's Top 100 best places to live and launch a business by Fortune Small Business magazine in April 2008 issue
- ▶ 2008 National Geographic Traveler ranked Columbus 11th out of 109 of the globe's most historic destinations – higher than any other U.S. city – calling it the "jewel in the region" which boasts "world-class mid-century modern architecture."

"More than a tagline or an ad campaign, this brand creates our own unique identity. It also lets us tie marketing and business together in a cohesive package."

– Fred L. Armstrong; Mayor, Columbus, IN

"The best part of the program for us was the research that substantiated the ultimate differentiation."

– Rick Johnson, President Johnson Ventures; Columbus private-sector branding partner



unexpected. unforgettable.
COLUMBUS
INDIANA

QUINCY & ADAMS COUNTY



KEY CHALLENGE

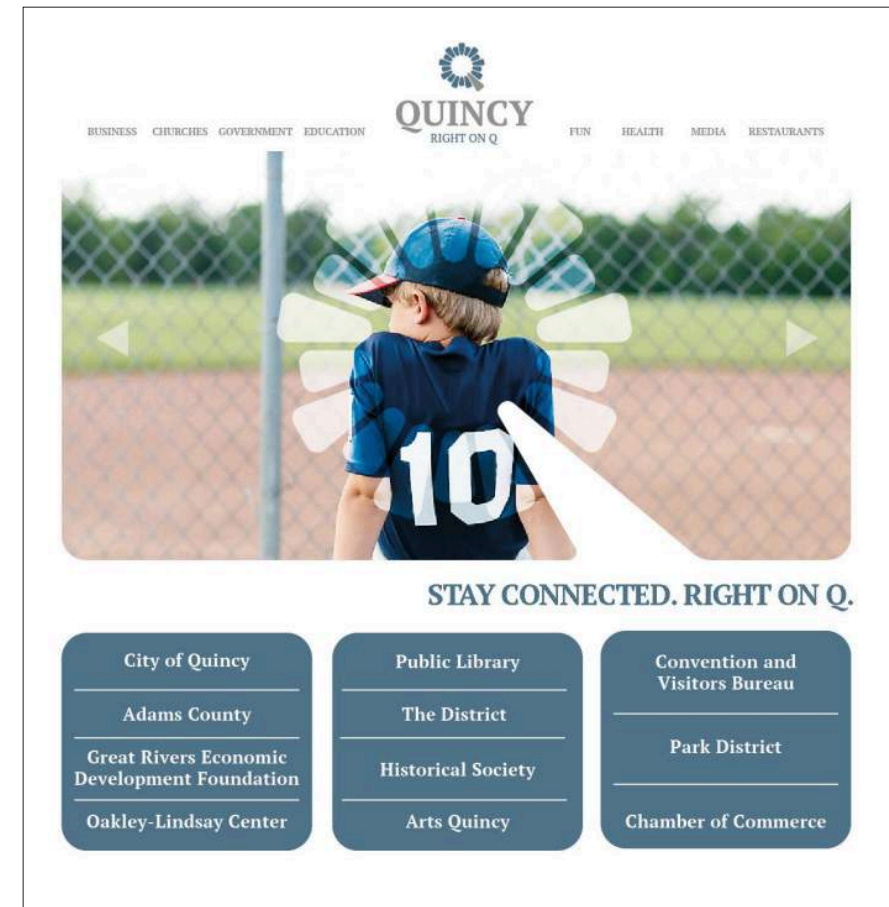
Quincy is one of the shining stars in Illinois. Historic, beautiful and growing in a time when many cities of similar size in the state are struggling. But part of being great is knowing you can be even better. City leaders recognized that various public sector organizations in Quincy weren't working as a team, in large part because they all had different ideas about what made the city special. The first step in getting everyone on the same page was a branding initiative to identify exactly what that is.

CRITICAL INSIGHT

Take a trip to Quincy and you'll be surprised by the number of visiting Mormons. Talk to those visitors and you'll be touched by the tears that well up as they pay tribute to Quincy, describing how the community protected their forefathers fleeing religious persecution and death in the 1800s. For them Quincy is not a vacation, it's a pilgrimage of gratitude. And that is just one example of Quincy's almost 200 year history of caring --and acting on that compassion-- in a way that saves lives, changes lives and lifts lives. Quincy is rich with resources and assets, but going the extra mile is what makes the city magnificent.

CREATIVITY

Quincy's graphic identity leverages the unique letter that leads the city's name. The line, "Right on Q" conveys that Quincy is the right choice. When people or businesses or organizations need help or support of any kind, Quincy is there . . . Right on Q. The logo brings the Q to life in a monogram that uses the city's historic architecture as inspiration. It is an abstract representation of various historic elements from windows to doors to bridges. Stones circle the Q, while the keystone serves as the leg. The look that extends the graphic identity into the community uses a watermark of the logo to contain the subjects of photography. The leg of the Q is used as a spotlight for emphasis and the headline structure is easy to use and reinforces the strapline.



Right on Q
QUINCY & ADAMS COUNTY
ILLINOIS

JACKSONVILLE



KEY CHALLENGE:

As the "shadow city" in the nation's third largest state, Jacksonville fights hard to compete for a share of the economic growth that its better known in-state peers Miami, Tampa, and Orlando are also vying for. As a port and navy city, the Northeast Florida region (branded as JAXUSA) offered significant labor and logistics advantages and a beautiful waterscape – none of which were fully understood before North Star began its work. History proved that if Jacksonville could get to a site selection short list, they had good odds of winning - the key challenge was overcoming vague awareness to get on more short lists. The city asked itself, "what can we stand for in the marketplace?"

CRITICAL INSIGHT:

Jacksonville is a water mecca. And while many great cities are near oceans or rivers, Jacksonville's combination of Atlantic ocean beaches, intracoastal waterways, preserves and the beautiful St. Johns river is a rare combination. While they hadn't leveraged it fully before, the waterscape defined and inspired everything about the region. Leading a widely inclusive and in-depth process, North Star convened leaders from all across a seven-county region of Northeast Florida and led research and strategy to ultimately shape a DNA statement—*inspired by our waterways*—and vision—to *be the water life center of America*—now coming to life in the region's JAXUSA branding and marketing program.

BRAND STRATEGY & RESULTS:

Jacksonville has reshaped their story around a long-standing truth: the water literally defines their economic, tourism and lifestyle promise. The brand and digital marketing program share the story of how the waterscape influences so many benefits of a Jacksonville location. The program is centered on the award-winning jaxusa.org website (Florida Economic Development Council best website) and a robust digital marketing and PR campaign. The results have been outstanding. Recently, *Time* magazine named Jacksonville as the #2 most up-and-coming city in America. *Money* magazine ranked Jacksonville as #7 best city for job seekers. *Global Trade* named Jacksonville a top global city. *ZipRecruiter* named Jacksonville #9 hottest city for tech jobs and *Forbes* named Jacksonville the #2 city to invest in housing, the #5 fastest growing city, and the #12 best city for young professionals.



JACKSONVILLE
FLORIDA

PROVIDENCE

PROVIDENCE



CHALLENGE

Big shoes for a brand to fill. Sometimes a city's challenge is simply living up to the expectations its heritage has set. Such was the case with Providence, RI. Founded as a place for religious freedom, Providence was first referred to as a lively experiment. Today, the experiment has proved to be more than successful and continues in spirit. The city's very essence is openness . . . to experimentation, improvisation, self-expression and independence. In fact, original thinking is the mantra of Providence. Whether you're talking industry, art, education or lifestyle the people of this tiny – but oh so dynamic – capital city don't want to be pigeonholed into a solitary way of thinking.

INSIGHT

North Star research found that just as original thinking and flexibility are watchwords of the Providence spirit, so must they be cornerstones of the Providence brand. The key was to provide a brand armature in which original thinking can flourish and be realized. And, because Providence is one of the top 25 art destinations in the country and home to some of the most revered institutions of higher learning, it was also critical that the brand armature involve and engage the city's best creative minds on an ongoing basis.

BRAND STRATEGY

North Star recommended a strategy that establishes Providence as a vibrant northeastern city where original thinking is expansive and every experience is personal. The creative approach uses the Providence "P" as a framework for an infinite number of themes designed to reflect the essence of the city. That idea, coupled with the line, The Creative Capital, lets the Providence brand grow and change.

RESULTS & CLIENT KUDOS

- Travel + Leisure Magazine has named Providence one of America's favorite cities.
- In 2010, REBRAND named Providence as one of their Winning Brands
- In just 10 weeks, the new site, www.providencethecreativecapital.com, received visitors from 29 countries and 44 states – key metrics, since the main audiences are outside of Providence and Rhode Island

"We have enjoyed every step of the branding process with North Star. I had always hoped that we would end up with something that offered the permanence that a brand requires along with the flexibility that would allow for creativity and fun. North Star helped us accomplish these twin goals with great success..."

"Whenever I give the brand presentation, I am met with great enthusiasm and interest in the brand across all constituencies. People can't wait to find ways to use the brand within their own environment."

– Kibbe Reilly, Project Manager for the Providence Brand Team.



the creative capital

PROVIDENCE
RHODE ISLAND

MITCHELL COUNTY



KEY CHALLENGE:

Peek-a-boo... Nestled in a venerable stretch of North Carolina's Appalachians, Mitchell County is a hidden gem off of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The county gets its strongest geographic point of reference from the surrounding mountains, even sharing a name with the tallest among them. Yet, those who are in-the-know about Mitchell County are true seekers who found their way on their own, in spite of the county's struggles to communicate its charm to new residents and visitors. The parkway simply doesn't bring the traffic it once did, so much of the county awaits discovery.

CRITICAL INSIGHT:

Mitchell County is off the beaten path, made for explorers and adventurers. All kinds of treasures lie hidden throughout the county: beautiful views, world-class dining and artistry, creative entrepreneurs. The county's abundance of natural resources, history, culture, and opportunity means that what the county doesn't have, it makes. Local artisans turn glass and metal into striking works using methods passed down through generations; farmers grow acres upon acres of Christmas trees to bring joy to families each year; meanwhile, global companies mine the county's high-purity quartz, a necessary component for the microchips and fiber-optic cable that enable modern technology. And this dedication to highly specialized crafts and professions can only thrive in a peaceful, tranquil, and secluded setting: the slower pace of life in Mitchell County allows residents the focus they need to create and to follow their passion. And it allows visitors that same focus to relax and reset before returning home.

BRAND STRATEGY:

Purity is central to the culture and environment of Mitchell County: from its quartz to its people, the county feels real and pristine, a far cry from nearby (and far-off) metro areas. The line "Seek +Find" aims to capture the breathless sense of adventure associated with pursuing an idyllic lifestyle within the gem of the scenic North Carolina mountains. Layered and familiar, the line remains open to the individual's quest to find peace and quiet, adventure, culture, history, economic opportunity, and more—any of those are possible in Mitchell. Its natural complement is a strong, bold graphic mark: the county logo features three broad lines to form an iconic "M" for Mitchell County and for the three primary mountains of the region. The mark is modern, progressive, compelling, and dynamic. Finally, a strong color palette uses Mitchell County's natural resources as its inspiration: grounded in dark red, green and orange, but balanced with tones of yellow and bright green that pop and add youth and energy.



Seek + Find

MITCHELL COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

HICKORY



KEY CHALLENGE:

Don't rest on your laurels. Sometimes the essence of a community's image shifts with the economic or cultural tides. In order to maintain reputation relevancy, the community's brand representation needs to change accordingly. Such was the case with Hickory, NC. Stakeholders describe the city as the "former furniture capital of the world." But industry changes resulted in lost jobs and the city's connection to furniture became tenuous. Hickory leaders turned to North Star Destination Strategies to answer the question, "Who are we NOW?"

CRITICAL INSIGHT:

Like the tree, the Hickory is best characterized as strong, tough and lovely. There is an inherent skill, quality and artistry in the things the city and residents do to continually make Hickory a better place. This collective spirit of craftsmanship is what makes Hickory so special and unique. Other communities might be as tough or strong and may cooperate well, but none has the combination of these attributes that Hickory does. And none has the craftsmanship attitude to take that raw material and make it into a high-quality community. These are descriptors consistent with a furniture reputation.

BRAND STRATEGY:

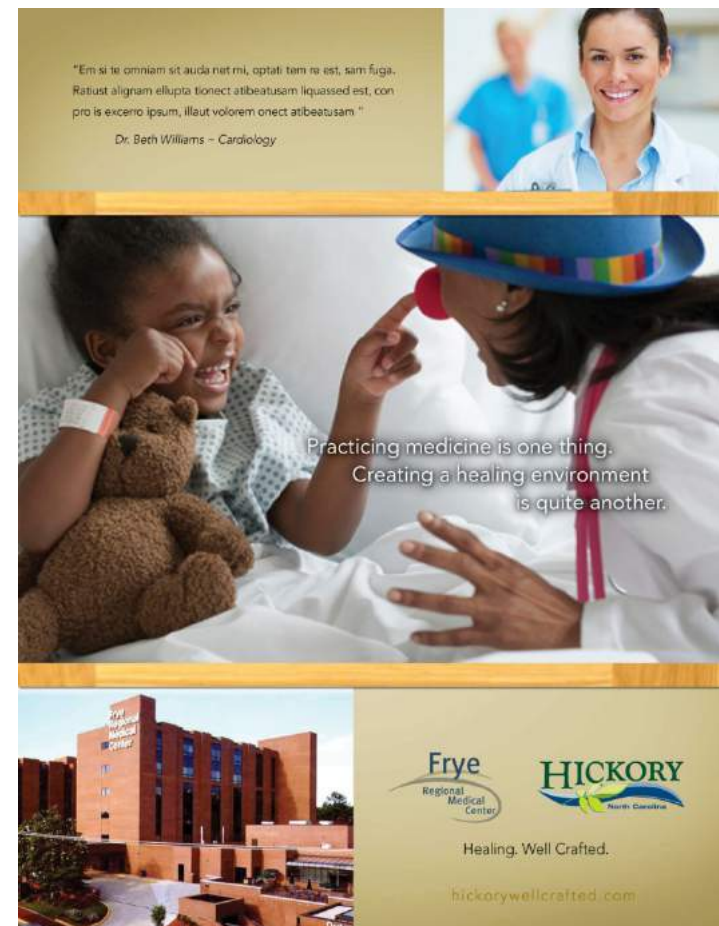
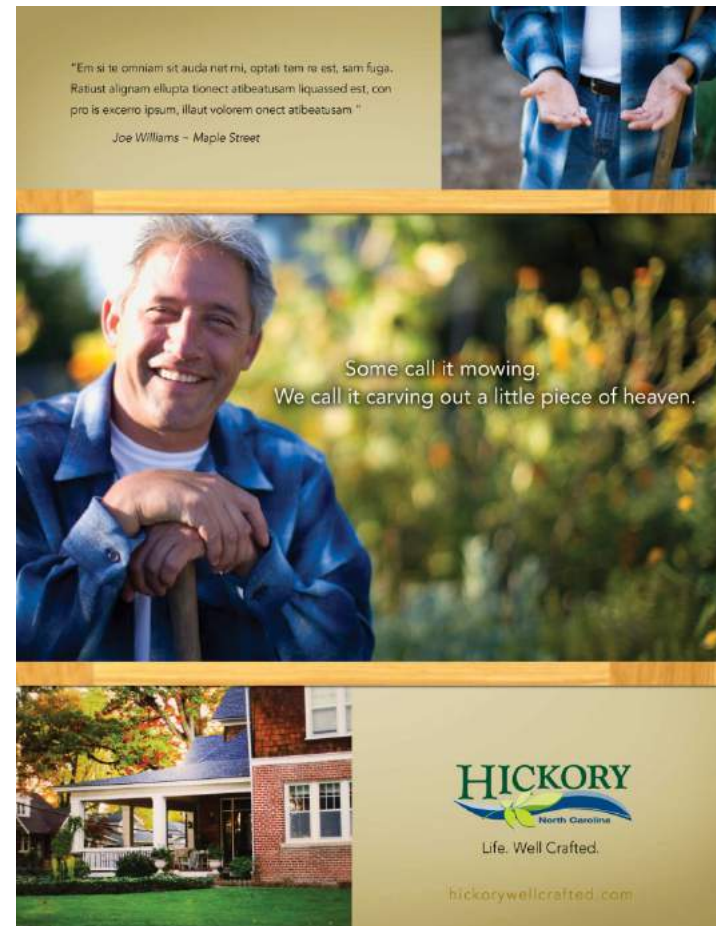
North Star recommended targeting makers and doers with a position based on the city's collective spirit of craftsmanship, which strengthens any endeavor with detail, artistry and quality.

Because Hickory had so much equity in its existing logo, leaders chose to retain it with refinements. A new strapline, "Life. Well-Crafted" celebrates the city's dedication to detail, quality and artistry. The ability to insert different ideas in place of "Life" makes this line infinitely flexible, which is mandatory for a communitywide brand. Visuals profile "craftspeople" using their tools – whether a spade, a medical laser or an espresso machine – as they work at their craft. Warm, natural colors of blues, greens and browns play off the city's combination of strength and beauty.

RESULTS & CLIENT KUDOS:

"The two key components of North Star's BrandPrint process that is helping us really move the initiative forward are the thorough research and the deep involvement of key business leaders via the City's Business Development Committee. The result has been high profile, passionate community leaders telling the Hickory story from an indisputable foundation based in the solid research. We also really enjoyed the North Star staff; they made the process comfortable for everyone."

– Mick Berry, City Manager, City of Hickory



life. well crafted.

HICKORY NORTH CAROLINA

FRANKFORT



KEY CHALLENGE:

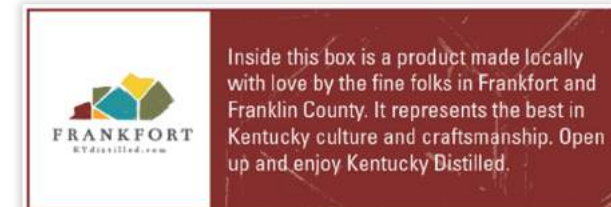
Rising above the politics... For Frankfort, being Kentucky's capital carries a strong reputation that is not always positive. People blame government for many things they don't like; Change takes place daily in the capitol, but outsiders describe the process as slow and difficult; Because legislators and lobbyists are only in the city temporarily, the resident base is always in flux. Frankfort is so synonymous with politics that people don't take the time to discover the city's many other charms. The city's new brand had to be able to strike a balance: recognizing Frankfort's critical role as Kentucky's state capital in a framework that downplays the gridlock and uplifts the city's many, many positives.

CRITICAL INSIGHT:

Frankfort is small but spirited. Its heritage, drive, and resilience – not to mention its accomplishments – belie its small size. Yes, important decisions are made here. But more importantly, the city reflects the character of Kentucky with its assets – not just the Capitol building but also bluegrass, the Kentucky River, Daniel Boone, Kentucky State University and more. It is located between the Cardinals and the Wildcats, between Keeneland and Churchill Downs; It chronicles the Kentucky journey at the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History and supports Kentucky artisans at the Completely Kentucky arts and crafts center. In short, Frankfort is the equivalent of a bottle of small batch bourbon – perfectly aged for best taste.

BRAND STRATEGY:

The auspicious realization that Frankfort represents the very essence of the state brought about the powerful "Kentucky Distilled" line. Short, clever, and intellectual, the line uses Kentucky's hottest industry as a hook and lays claim to the Kentucky connection the way only its capital city can. It allows for serious messaging but also presents opportunities for fun – like a play on an immortal quote by Abraham Lincoln or Snapchat location filters that let residents share their city pride. Fittingly, the city's new logo mark distills the state of Kentucky into component shapes that form a subtle KY in the negative space. Contrast between the modern design and a traditional typeface, along with a slight distressing of the colors, speaks to Frankfort's dual role as a torchbearer and historic center.



Kentucky Distilled
FRANKFORT
KENTUCKY

FARGO



KEY CHALLENGE:

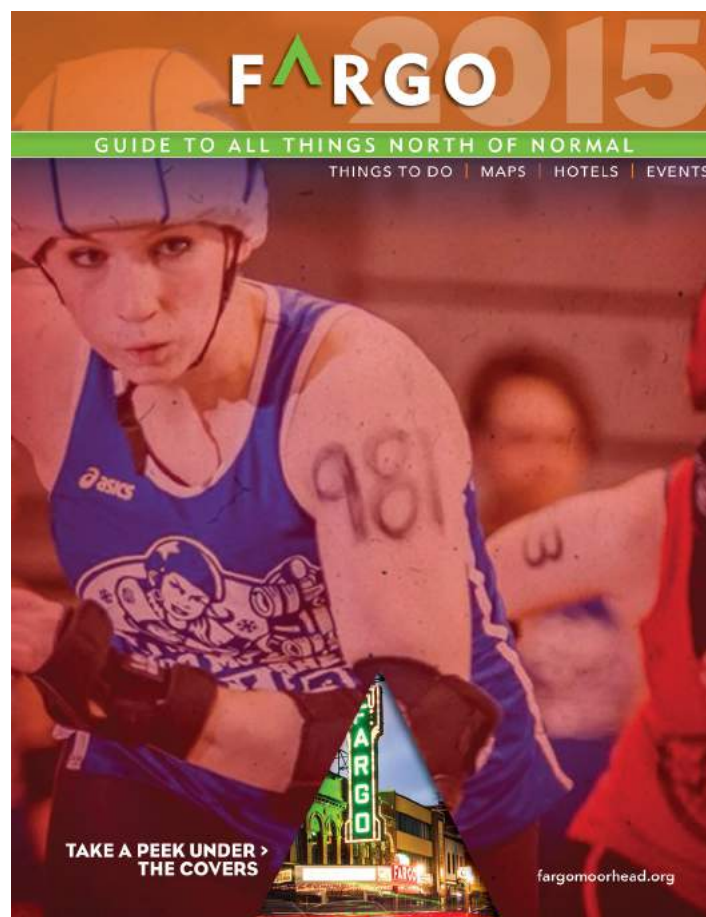
Few tourism destinations have received as much acclaimed exposure in the movies and television as Fargo, North Dakota. And while Fargo does have some of the quirky optimism and interest of the movies and shows by the same name . . . it is so much more. In fact, over the last decade Fargo has acquired a kind of under the radar cool that can only happen when a small prairie town has a thriving, edgy arts district. And when the Misfit Conference chooses to make your city one of its host towns. And when the “oh so particular” cool seekers nationwide start whispering your name as one of the places to be. The challenge: How to capture this cool in a way that doesn’t end up destroying it.

CRITICAL INSIGHT:

Fargo’s vibe is completely uncontrived. It comes from being absolutely itself and anything but normal. . . Quirky and one-of-a-kind. Creative and kooky. Misfit and maverick. Even more conventional pursuits like shopping and sports feel completely different when experienced through the prism of Fargo’s unique light. Contrast all this attitude with Fargo’s location in typically conservative and conventional North Dakota and you’ve got something pretty special.

BRAND STRATEGY:

Fargo is located north of the vast majority of the nation. And Fargo is certainly not normal. So the strapline “North of Normal” serves double duty as a geographic identifier and an attitudinal definer. A simple arrow takes the place of the “A” in Fargo and points north while its placement . . . out of line with the rest of the word . . . let’s you know that Fargo is anything but mainstream. Creative work uses bright interesting colors and compelling color screens to grab the viewer’s attention. Unique headlines are paid off by an unexpected twist in the photography making Fargo’s tourism messaging at once intellectual and hilarious. Unexpected twists are carried through in merchandise, guerilla marketing and infrastructure.



north of normal.
FARGO
NORTH DAKOTA

DOWNTOWN NEW ORLEANS

DOWN TOWN NOLA

CHALLENGE

The sun after the storm . . . Large scale natural disasters are so all encompassing, they can come to define a place. How then can a city move beyond the reputation of disaster victim to an identity grounded in prosperity? Consider the case of New Orleans. Ravaged by hurricane Katrina more than five years ago, the city suffered an exodus. But after a lot of hard work, the Downtown is open for business and ready for prosperity. What Katrina destroyed is being replaced with some of the world's best facilities. Despite that, the national conversation about New Orleans is still focused on Mardi Gras and recovery. Seeking to attract Industries of the Mind, the Downtown Development District (DDD) needed to change the collective subject, focusing instead on progress, innovation, opportunity and success.

INSIGHT

North Star research found that New Orleans is at once a place with an internationally renowned, authentic and inspiring framework that is also a clean slate. The city has become a productive, prolific laboratory for ideas and reform across many sectors, public and private. Headlines have been earned with advances in education practices, improved housing and even alternative energy. But that story is not coordinated or frequent enough. Research regularly revealed a deficit in marketing and promotion.

BRAND STRATEGY

North Star recommended targeting Industries of the Mind with a strategy that positions Downtown New Orleans as a collage of distinct communities and opportunities whose absolute cultural authenticity makes it a muse (source of intelligence and inspiration for creativity) that fires the imagination and energizes you to shape a prosperous future – yours and the city.

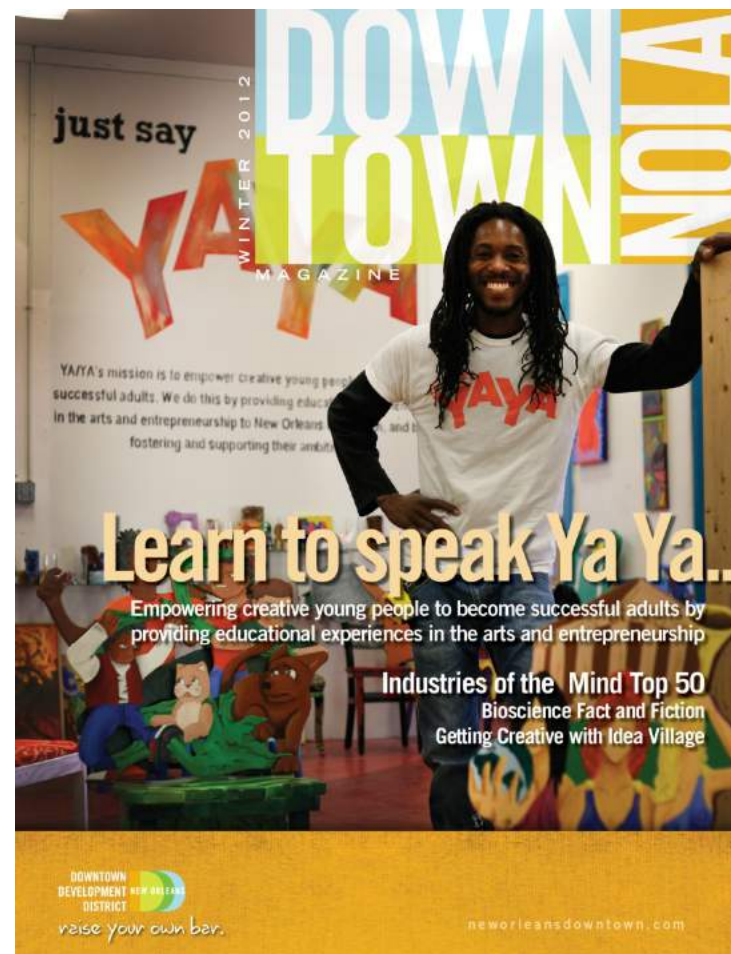
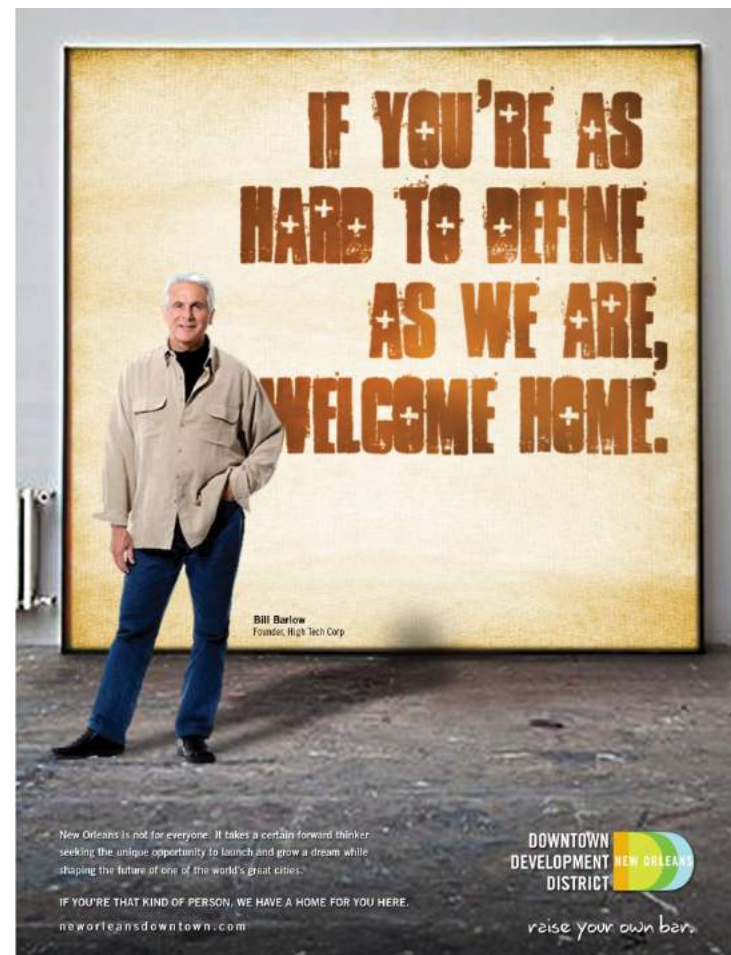
RESULTS & KUDOS

The results of their efforts are evident in their most recent accolades:

- Number 1 city and large metro area for information jobs in the U.S.
- Number 1 brain magnet in America
- 2nd Best Big City for Jobs
- MarketWatch's "Best Cities to Do Business" survey ranked New Orleans "Most Improved" metro in the U.S.; New Orleans moved up 44 positions in the ranks

“The branding process for us was so important, because we have such a great brand to begin with. Any successful community brand has to be authentic, and the brand that North Star uncovered really is. The process solidified that we always were the things that our new brand presents, but now we are communicating it more efficiently and effectively than we ever have before. Since the brand roll-out we’ve had over 4 billion dollars in investment and the accolades keep rolling in, and that is due in some part to the way that people all over the world are perceiving us today. “

– Kurt Weigle, President/CEO, New Orleans Downtown Development District



raise your own bar

DOWN TOWN NEW ORLEANS LOUISIANA

COLUMBUS



KEY CHALLENGE:

Sleepy Southern Town. Columbus, Georgia is in the midst of a renaissance. Over 200,000 citizens enjoy world class facilities, Fortune 500 businesses, and an exceptional cultural product – yet are still perceived as a small southern town.

CRITICAL INSIGHT:

Business prospects and visitors alike spoke of their experience in the amenity filled, urban setting of uptown Columbus as one that was serene, relaxing and had an outdoor feeling. A hand shake still meant something in Columbus.

BRAND STRATEGY:

For those who appreciate true Southern charm, Columbus is a growing city in South Georgia located on the Chattahoochee River where gracious hospitality and natural beauty are the backdrop for an amenity-filled urban setting, so you feel relaxed, peaceful and enriched.

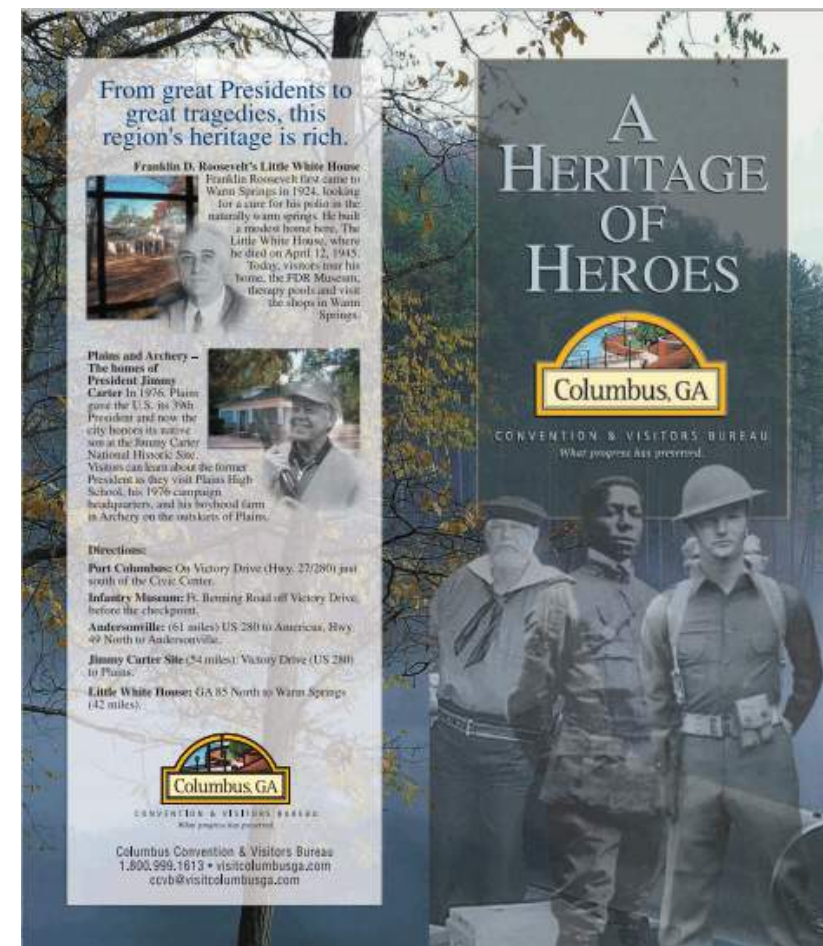
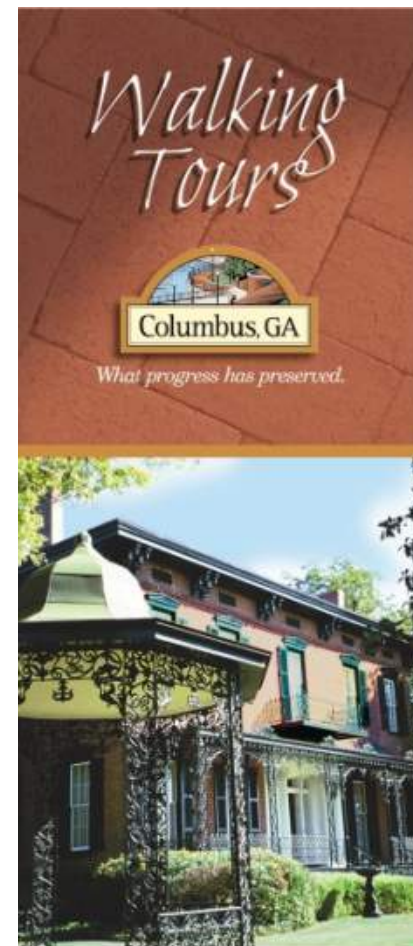
CLIENT KUDOS:

"This is not only a brand we can live with, it is a brand that I can see this community prosper with."

– Frank Brown, President, Columbus State University

"It is really a pretty profound statement. We got here because we preserved the right things and improved others.", When I saw the brand, I said, 'That's why I decided to live here. That's why I decided to stay here.'"

– Laura Lowe, Marketing Director, River Center for the Performing Arts



what progress has preserved

COLUMBUS

GEORGIA

78 CORRIDOR



KEY CHALLENGE

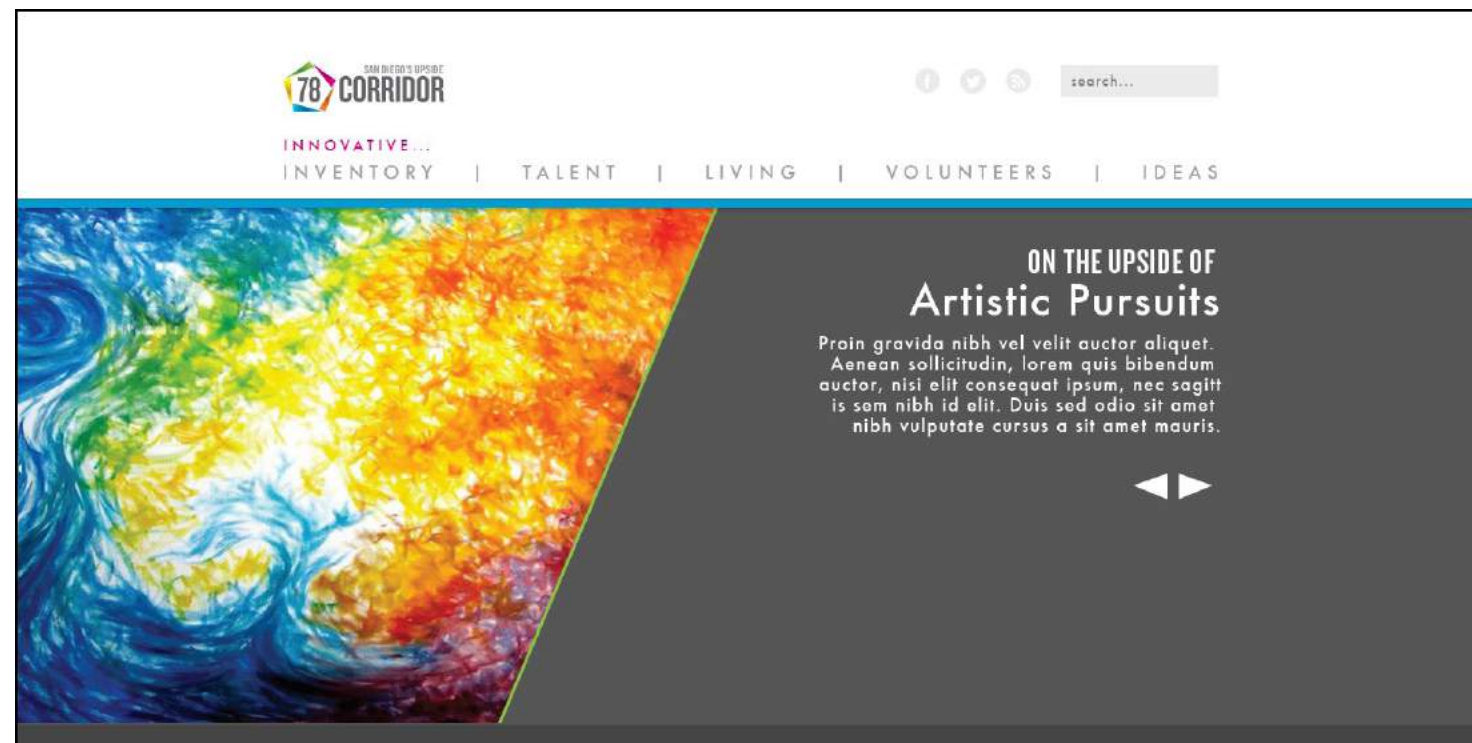
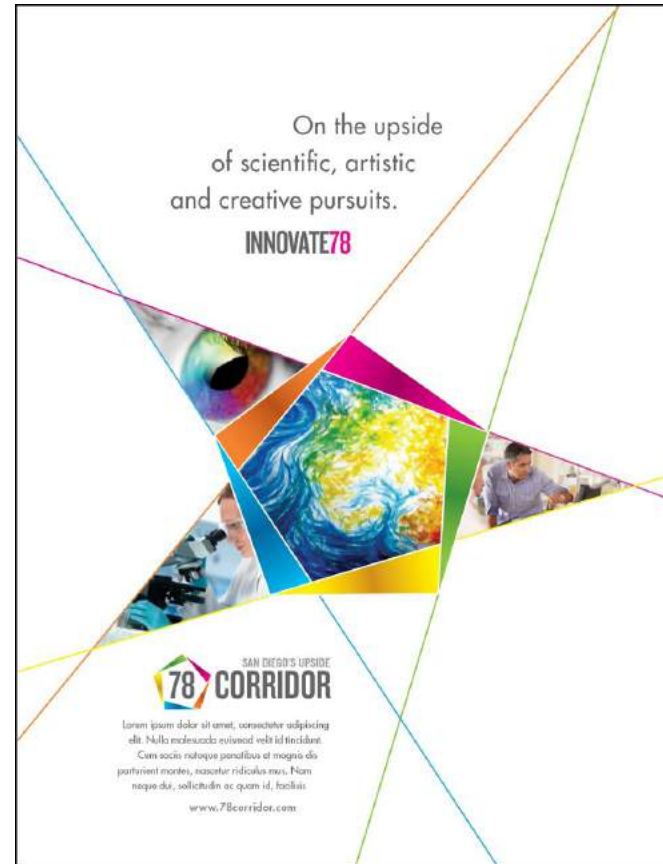
North County was an economic development region looking to transform from five independent small cities located in a naturally beautiful, less-developed corridor of Southern California to a powerhouse economic development region capable of attracting creative entrepreneurs, red-hot start-ups and big name businesses. Cumulatively, the five cities in the region had everything they needed to go head-to-head with competitors in terms of creativity, educational opportunities and quality of life plus additional advantages for business growth and development that come with the region's physical space and natural beauty.

The challenge was multi-pronged: package the primary assets of the five cities with a look and message that is beneficial to all involved and compelling in a crowded marketplace; pinpoint the region geographically for those unfamiliar with its location; establish a relationship with nearby and well-known San Diego in a way that leverages all the ways North County is like the famous city but presents a platform for promoting advantages it has over the city.

BRAND STRATEGY

Changing the name from North County to the 78 Corridor helped pinpoint the region geographically within Southern California by connecting it with the well-known transportation corridor that runs through the area. The change also expanded the breadth of the region to the degree that over time, additional cities located along the 78 corridor could come on board. The strapline "San Diego's Upside" is extraordinarily hardworking, both reinforcing the region's geographic position above San Diego as well as establishing the idea that the 78 Corridor offers all the well-known benefits of the San Diego area without some of the well-known drawbacks including high price and overdevelopment.

The campaign "Innovate 78" gave all the players in the 78 Corridor a rally cry for rolling out the region's brand, identifying the region's innovators and areas of innovation and reaching out to other innovators outside the region. Finally, the brightly colored geometric graphic identity is designed around a five-sided pentagon, where each side and a different color represents one of the cities in the 78 Corridor. This approach promotes the strength of the region but also allows for identification and promotion of the region's individual parts.



san diego's upside
78 CORRIDOR
CALIFORNIA