

# Economic Development Marketing Plan

RESEACH SUMMARY

August 28, 2015

# Where are we?

- **April 2015:** Economic Development Communications Strategy Report by Lisa Gosselin
  - Incorporated primary research with diverse stakeholders
  - Documented past economic development marketing efforts
  - Presented draft audience profiles, strategies and tactics
- **May 2015:** S.138 Appropriation to “develop an economic development marketing program”
  - Provides \$200,000 in general funds for planning and implementation
- **June 2015:** ACCD Working Group formed
  - Weekly meetings under the direction of the CMO, with team members from DED, VDTM and *Vermont Life*
  - **TASK:** Analyze Lisa’s plan and determine next steps

# Key Findings

- We need to convince ourselves before we try to convince others.
- Our primary focus should be on attracting young talent to fill open jobs. Without that, we won't be able to attract new businesses.
- Our best prospects for new residents and employees are those who already have an affinity for Vermont.
- Any marketing of businesses and jobs should include the recreational opportunities and the quality of life here.
- Businesses don't move here. People do.

# What and How

## GOAL

Convince target audiences that Vermont is a great place to live, to work, to build or start a business, and to invest in

## STRATEGY

Successful Vermonters are the best advocates for Vermont. We need to change the conversation by telling our 'Why Vermont' stories.

# What and How

- Who are we trying to reach?  
What do we want them to do?
  - **RESULT:** Target audiences and desired outcomes
- What benefits do we have to offer?  
What barriers (perceived or real) do we need to address?
  - **RESULT:** Key message
- How do we deliver our message?
  - **RESULT:** Tactics, specific to each audience

# Target Audiences

## PRIMARY

- **Business Owners**  
CEOs and small business owners
  - Internal
  - Out-of-state
- **Influencers**  
Investors, B2B organizations (chambers, RDCs), elected officials, media, guidance counselors
- **Young Professionals**  
early to mid-career, ages 25-40
  - Internal
  - Out-of-state

## SECONDARY

- **Visitors**  
tourists, second-home owners, Vermont college alumni, parents of Vermont college students, conference attendees
- **Entrepreneurs**  
start-ups, less than 5-years in business
  - Internal
  - Out-of-state
- **Students**
  - **College**  
Temporary residents, ages 19-25
  - **High School**  
Vermont residents, ages 15-18

# Business Owners

## VT STRENGTHS

Access, small is good

Workforce, educated and motivated

Existing industry clusters

Proximity to markets

Quality of life

Brand equity, quality, socially responsible

## KEY MESSAGES

- We have room for you to grow; stand out as a big fish in a small pond
- Don't get lost in the crowd, your business is important to us, access to gov't officials
- We are responsive and nimble to business needs; your business is important to us
- We are small so you can affect change, make a difference
- We will work hard for you:
  - Gov't officials care about your business
  - Highly educated workforce has 'Yankee' work ethic
  - State resources are available for workforce training
- Unique opportunity for international presence (Quebec to US, US to Montreal)
- 80 million people are within a 5-hour drive

# INTERNAL Business Owners

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Create a network of  
'Vermont Business  
Ambassadors'

Vermont businesses stay  
here and grow here

Vermont businesses  
advocate to vendors to  
expand/relocate to Vermont

## TACTICS

- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - Modern VDTM look and feel; flushes out 'live, work, play' connections, depth of content still lives on DED website
- Develop a video library of CEO success stories, testimonials
  - Available to share on thinkvermont.com and DED websites
- Create new outreach materials for DED team
  - Professional leave-behind print collateral
  - Customizable by sector, incentive, phase of business
- Direct mail campaign (handwritten letter by Governor or Pat)
  - Message: "We're glad you are here, thank you, help us share your/our story, be a VT business ambassador"
- Crowd-source 'Why Vermont' video vignettes
  - Construct StoryCorps-style booth at 2016 Vermont Business Expo

# EXTERNAL Business Owners

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Out-of-state businesses  
expand to Vermont

## TACTICS

- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - Platform for quality-of-life 'soft-sell' plus video testimonials, incentives, relocation resources, editorial from *Vermont Life*
  - Includes lead generation incentive (digital subscription to *Vermont Life*) for info requests via online forms
- Paid digital ad campaign
  - Use snippets of Vermont CEO success stories, push to new website
- Develop 'fam' trips based on VDTM model
  - For business journalists, site selectors and recruiters
  - Itineraries to combine business and tourism theme (Tech and Taps)
- Create new outreach materials for DED team
  - Customizable by sector, incentive, phase of business
- Paid advertising in site selector publications, annual guides

# Influencers

## VT STRENGTHS

Brand equity, quality,  
socially responsible

Creative, innovative culture

Access, small is good

Quality of life

Workforce, educated and  
motivated

Proximity to markets

## KEY MESSAGES

- Vermont IS good for business, this is how I have succeeded (fill in the blank)
- Why Vermont: you fill in the blank

# Influencers

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Change the conversation,  
“Vermont IS good for  
business”

Create climate for  
continued economic  
development marketing  
funding

## TACTICS

- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - One-stop resource of all ‘Why Vermont’ content
- Paid TV ad campaign
  - Use snippets of Vermont CEO success stories, new messaging to combat ‘NY State envy,’ limited local VT media buy
- Create PR calendar and increase PR capacity of DED
  - Monthly schedule to provide editorial content to Vermont Business Magazine, quarterly Op-Eds, improve consistency of DED newsletter
  - Create @WhyVermont twitter campaign (like @ThisIsVT), new voice from business community each week
  - Content ideas from ‘100 Innovations Made in VT’ and/or new business ventures from UVM Innovations
  - Paid editorial support by *Vermont Life* writers and/or staff?
- Survey influencers to curate additional ‘Why Vermont’ content

# Young Professionals

## VT STRENGTHS

Quality of life

Good schools

Access, small is good

Creative, innovative culture

Brand equity, socially responsible

Healthy, active culture

## KEY MESSAGES

- You can make a difference in VT, room to grow
- Advance your career quickly, stand out as a big fish in a small pond
- Redefine your idea of success, ability to grow here, not all about salary
- Vermont is a safe, clean place to raise your kids
- We have a small class sizes and the lowest teacher to student ratios in the US
- Your kids can walk to school, you can walk to work
- In Vermont, you can know your neighbors, be easily involved in the community
- Vermont is the second healthiest state, recognized "most livable" communities
- Lower cost of living compared to other East / West Coast metro areas

# INTERNAL Young Professionals

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Increase awareness of job opportunities

Vermont millennials stay here and raise a family here

## TACTICS

- Develop a video library of YP success stories, testimonials
  - Crowd-source 'Why Vermont' videos with Ski Vermont prize incentive
- Sponsor networking event at Young Professional conference
  - Happy hour with Vermont beer / spirits companies as co-sponsors
  - Invite our new Vermont Business Ambassadors, recruiters?
- Coordinate monthly/quarterly networking meet-ups
  - Cocktails with creatives model, with Vermont Business Ambassadors
- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - New home for Great Jobs in Vermont, include meet-ups on event calendar
- Paid sponsorships
  - TechJam, *Seven Days* Stuck in VT, sponsored posts on LinkedIn
  - Support development of new TechJam event in Southern Vermont, open to advanced manufacturers

# EXTERNAL Young Professionals

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Increase awareness of job opportunities

Out-of-state millennials move here and raise a family in Vermont

## TACTICS

- Create professional 'Why Vermont' millennials video
  - Profile Vermont role models (Jake Carpenter, Mary Powell, Grace Potter, etc.) and successful Vermont YPs
  - Partner with VT colleges, businesses to distribute with recruitment info
- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - New home for Great Jobs in Vermont, platform for quality-of-life 'soft-sell' plus relocation resources, editorial from *Vermont Life*
  - Includes lead generation incentive (digital subscription to *Vermont Life*)
- Paid digital ad campaign
  - New creative or use snippets of Why Vermont video, push to website
- VDTM / Vermont consumer brand partnership
  - Possibly Long Trail, include sticker on all six-packs with Enter to Win (Ski Vermont trade) for lead generation
- Paid "Vermont is Hiring" print co-op advertising
  - Example is VDTM *Boston Herald* 6-page media buy, advertorial content plus paid ads from Vermont employers to offset cost

# Visitors

## VT STRENGTHS

Quality of life

Established affinity

Creative, innovative culture

Healthy, active culture

## KEY MESSAGES

- Outdoor recreation is at your back door, easy and convenient
- Don't live just for the weekend; you can ski/bike/kayak every day. Get away, every day.
- Your kids can walk to school, you can walk to work
- Our downtowns are full of independent stores, culture and activity
- You may be surprised at the high-quality, high-paying jobs we have in Vermont

# Visitors

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Out-of-staters with an affinity already move to Vermont

Casual visitors purchase a second home in Vermont

## TACTICS

- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - Look and feel from VermontVacation, flushes out 'live, work, play' connections, editorial from *Vermont Life*
  - Includes lead generation incentive (digital subscription to *Vermont Life*) for info requests via online forms
- Remarketing campaign to past VDTM leads
  - Survey last three years of individuals who requested information
  - Opt-in for future communications, WhyVermont monthly e-blasts
- Develop new WhyVermont monthly newsletter
  - Use VDTM consumer newsletter look and feel, Great Jobs in Vermont content, editorial from *Vermont Life*
- Paid and/or partnered advertising and editorial
  - *Vermont Life*, *Ski Vermont*, Burlington airport, welcome centers
  - Submit editorial content to *Ski Vermont*, resort magazines, Vermont college alumni magazines
- With VDTM, sponsor events with high out-of-state visitation
  - Wanderlust, Discover Jazz, VT City Marathon for opt-in/lead gen

# Entrepreneurs

## VT STRENGTHS

Access, small is good

Business ecosystem of support

Existing industry clusters

Access to capital, financing

Proximity to markets

Quality of life

Creative, innovative culture

Brand equity, quality, socially responsible

## KEY MESSAGES

- We have a complete ecosystem of entrepreneurial support
- You are not on your own, your business is important to us
- We are a national leader in start-up activity (Kaufman index)
- We have the largest community of socially-responsible businesses; VBSR is largest socially responsible organization in US
- Start-ups start here
- Long tradition of innovation, free thinking
- Creativity is welcomed, we embrace individuality

# Entrepreneurs

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Out-of-state businesses expand to Vermont

Vermont businesses stay here and grow here

Create a network of 'Vermont Business Ambassadors'

## TACTICS

*Segment of Business Owners, similar tactics, tweaked messaging*

- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - Modern VDTM look and feel; flushes out 'live, work, play' connections, depth of content still lives on DED website
- Create regional financing events
  - Matchmaker and/or networking, present options, ecosystem of support
- Paid sponsorships (Road Pitch, TechJam)
- Develop networks (maker spaces, BCA, VT Tech Alliance, SBDC)

# Students

## VT STRENGTHS

Quality of life

Access, small is good

Creative, innovative culture

Healthy, active culture

Family is here

## KEY MESSAGES

- You may be surprised at the high-quality, high-paying jobs we have in Vermont
- A great career opportunity is available in your home town, state
- If you love Vermont, you don't need to leave to find a great job, career
- Redefine your idea of success, ability to grow here, not all about salary
- Get in on the ground floor of a fast growing company
- Vermont has room to grow, a place to define yourself
- You can make a difference in VT, room to grow

# Students

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

Stay here, get a job after graduation

Increase awareness of job opportunities and skills required

Increase awareness of local companies, career paths

Increase awareness of scholarships, technical training opportunities

## TACTICS

- New ThinkVermont.com portal website
  - Great Jobs in Vermont content, platform for crowd-sourced YP videos, promotional millennials video
- Direct mail to incoming Vermont college students
  - Join existing annual VDTM / VSAC mailing with new collateral