

Grand Rapids, Minnesota BrandMAP™



GRAND RAPIDS

IT'S IN MINNESOTA'S NATURE

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OUTLINE OF OBJECTIVES

Objective I

Develop an organizational structure for implementing, promoting and developing the brand within the Grand Rapids region.

Objective II

Establish the brand as a priority for the City of Grand Rapids and city employees.

Objective III

Establish partnerships with the private sector to move the brand into the community.

Objective IV

Instill the Grand Rapids brand into the communications of the City of Grand Rapids and its organizations.

Objective V

Integrate the brand into the culture, psyche and sightlines of the community.

Objective VI

Involve Grand Rapids residents in the brand experience.

Objective VII

Use the brand to nurture and grow Grand Rapids' vibrant arts opportunities.

Objective VIII

Develop community events that support and grow the brand.

Objective IX

Attract and retain businesses using the brand as a rallying cry.

Objective X

Attract creative individuals who would like to make Grand Rapids their home.

Objective XI

Create a more inviting downtown Grand Rapids.

Objective XII

Increase tourism with brand-based initiatives.

Objective XIII

Attract and retain college students with the brand.

LIST OF TACTICS

The tactics listed below are based on the research conducted for this study. Each tactic is described in detail in the sections to follow. Tactics are organized according to the BrandMAP objective they serve to meet.

Objective I

Develop the tools and organizational structure necessary for implementing, promoting and developing the brand within the Grand Rapids area.

1. Create and fill a Brand Manager position
2. Develop a brand presentation and toolkit
3. Assemble a Brand Management Team (BMT) composed of former brand drivers, City department heads and administrators, as needed
4. Hold ongoing meetings with the BMT
5. Train the Grand Rapids BMT to speak on the brand
6. Assemble an ad hoc brand idea incubator board
7. Share a grant writer to assist in the search for funds
8. Create a media plan for communicating about the brand and brand-related activities.

Objective II

Establish the brand as a priority for the City of Grand Rapids and city employees.

1. Work with Grand Rapids BMT to develop employee brand presentation
2. Meet with City department heads
3. Hold “It’s in Minnesota’s Nature” meetings with City employees
4. Develop a branded award or recognition program for employees
5. Use the brand for special City initiatives
6. Roll-out branded ID materials for City employees (cards, stationery and letterhead)
7. Use the brand to rev up employee recruitment and retention messages
8. Make the brand visible in employee spaces
9. Communicate regularly with City employees
10. Customize the brand for City departments as needed
11. Identify city-owned infrastructure opportunities for the brand
12. Identify and prioritize current city programs where the brand can easily be integrated.

Objective III

Establish partnerships with the private sector to move the brand into the community.

1. Meet one-on-one with business stakeholders
2. Meet one-on-one with regional organizations
3. Spearhead the development of a Market Grand Rapids Partnership
4. Work with Market Grand Rapids Partnership to fund and prioritize brand initiatives.

Objective IV

Instill the Grand Rapids brand into the communications of the City of Grand Rapids and its organizations.

1. Build the resident and employee e-mail database
2. E-mail residents the electronic newsletter and implement an electronic annual report
3. Add the brand to other City of Grand Rapids publications
4. Enter the world of millennial communications
5. Develop a branded citywide web portal.

Objective V

Integrate the brand into the culture, psyche and sightlines of the community.

1. Create branded merchandise/promotional items
2. Showcase the City to shoppers in a branded kiosk at Central Square Mall
3. Establish downtown Grand Rapids as the brand showcase
4. Incorporate the brand into your upcoming wayfinding signage improvements for prominent roadways
5. Incorporate the brand into signage for prominent attractions and iconic locations
6. Build a "Play in Minnesota's Nature" playground.

Objective VI

Involve Grand Rapids and Itasca County residents in the brand experience.

1. Host a brand roll-out meeting for residents
2. Launch the brand with an event called It's in Minnesota's Nature . . . to Celebrate!
3. Reveal your assets with a branded Geocache Treasure Hunt
4. Entice residents and visitors with a "Charm! It's in Minnesota's Nature" Charm Trail
5. Work through the schools to get children involved
6. Certify Grand Rapids as an Official Wildlife Habitat Community
7. Read, think and discuss brand-related topics, books
8. Provide branded promotional items for use in recreational programs
9. Take the brand onto the courts and the fields.

Objective VII

Use the brand to nurture and grow Grand Rapids' vibrant arts opportunities.

1. Create and promote an official Public Art Program
2. Work on creating an art "district" and differentiating it with signage
3. Create the perfect marriage of culture and nature to make Grand Rapids a truly unique location
4. Bring your own WaterFire to Grand Rapids.

Objective VIII

Develop community events that support and grow the brand.

1. Repackage existing events (when appropriate) with the brand in mind
2. Develop your own unique Grand Rapids version of the Chautauqua Institution
3. Sponsor an It's in Minnesota's Nature Run/Walk along the Edge of The Wilderness Scenic Byway
4. Host a snowshoe race.

Objective IX

Attract and retain businesses using the brand as a rallying cry.

1. Hold a brand roll-out meeting for businesses
2. Provide economic development personnel from the City, IEDC and the Chamber with branded recruitment tools
3. Brand small business assistance materials
4. Brand City/Chamber/IEDC ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings and construction sites
5. Use the brand to woo important economic development prospects
6. Convene an agritourism summit
7. Improve the vitality of neighborhood retail through improving storefronts
8. Provide exceptional services and amenities for smaller businesses
9. Entice potential entrepreneurs with a "Work! Play! It's in Minnesota's Nature" weekend
10. Host a conference for industries associated with paper, forestry and mining
11. Brand City of Grand Rapids, Chamber and IEDC publications
12. Establish the region as a friendly leader in green business practices.

Objective X

Attract creative individuals who would like to make Grand Rapids their home.

1. Begin to formally research the creative class initiative
2. Use the brand in a creative class initiative
3. Reach out to creative individuals across the region
4. Establish an artist-in-residence program
5. Offer tax incentives for artistic endeavors
6. Bring the creative class into Grand Rapids with creative being spaces
7. Extend the creative class initiative into you schools in unique ways.

Objective XI

Create a more inviting downtown Grand Rapids.

1. Consider a placemaking initiative
2. Be creative in dressing up problem areas and finding unique ways to display the brand or brand affiliated images
3. Extend artistic improvements to other kinds of structures as well
4. Integrate branded art into downtown fixtures
5. Program regular events that bring people outside.

Objective XII

Increase tourism with brand-based initiatives.

1. Create a branded Visitors Center reflective of the best of Minnesota's Nature
2. Give visitors the technology to tour
3. Map out their visit
4. Put together packages for locals and visitors
5. Wow visitors in hotel rooms with branded goodies
6. Help visitors make memories
7. Bring people together with reunions and gatherings of all kinds
8. Maximize return on business travelers
9. Offer artistic touches for business meetings
10. Educate and involve locals about tourism benefits
11. Find your niche(s) with FAM tours
12. Create photo-trek itineraries
13. Grow your agritourism market
14. Differentiate your resort product
15. Cultivate a more upscale tourist clientele
16. Promote Minnesota's Nature "Staycations"
17. Reach your target audience in Minneapolis/St. Paul and Duluth while they're on the move
18. Further develop mining tourism destinations and activities.

Objective XIII

Attract and retain college students with the brand.

1. Establish a relationship with students when they arrive on campus for their freshman year
2. Familiarize students with the assets of Grand Rapids and Itasca County
3. Entice students out into the community with discounts
4. Create a collegiate version of the popular Blandin Community Leadership Program
5. Host special events that bring students from all area schools to Grand Rapids and the Itasca area
6. Provide extra support to graduating entrepreneurs
7. Reconnect with students their senior year
8. Offer financial incentives for those who want to stay
9. Enable graduates to imagine a bright future in Grand Rapids and Itasca County through post-graduate "Imagine Yourself in Minnesota's Nature" fellowships.