

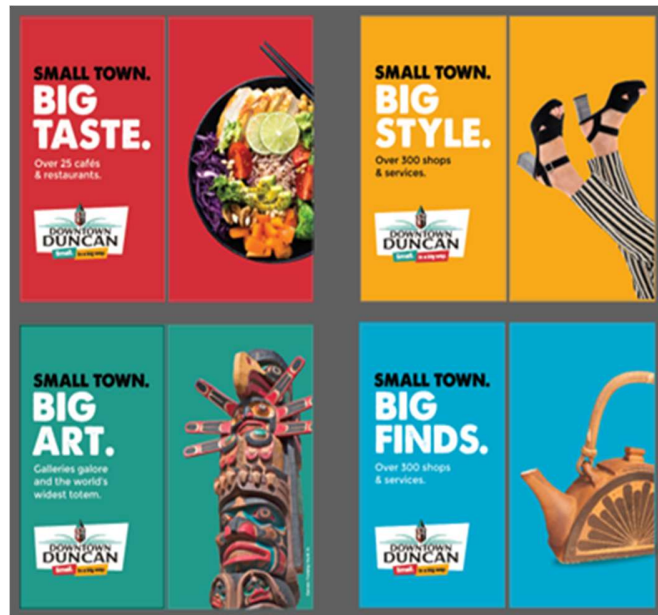


City of Duncan
TOURISM MARKETING PLAN
March 4, 2016
Amended: July 18, 2022

OVERVIEW

The City of Duncan is informally “the heart of the Cowichan Valley” and the area’s main commercial centre. In 2016 the City rebranded itself and maintains an identity in a region that is a haven for foodies, outdoor enthusiasts, and day-trippers from the Island and elsewhere. The current tagline for Duncan is “The City of Totems” and “Small Town. Big _____.”.

The Cowichan Valley is well-branded and represented in the market as a diverse destination offering many attractions and services. Visitor numbers to the Valley as a whole have increased in the last decade



The Cowichan region includes the smaller towns of Chemainus, Ladysmith, and Cowichan Bay; however, Duncan is the only business centre. The City of Duncan itself, not the regional district, is less than one square mile and includes a four-block downtown core with its marketing and brand established in partnership with the Downtown Duncan Business Improvement Association (DDBIA).

Stakeholders in the region, including the Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce, the Cowichan Regional Visitor Centre, the Tourism Cowichan Society, and Cowichan Valley Economic Development are marketing in their own ways and often with their own brands, objectives, and budgets.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

1. Increase the number of people who get off the highway and visit downtown Duncan
2. Increase the number of people who make Duncan a destination
3. Increase revenue for businesses in Duncan proper
4. Unify the voices and brands of the region’s current marketing efforts

KEY ISSUES

The following have been identified as significant issues that have materially influenced the marketing strategies recommended:

- Visitors through Duncan often do not get off the highway.
- The perception of Duncan over the years is not positive.
- The interested parties are fragmented, and each has its own objectives.
- People see Duncan as the businesses along the highway.
- The City needs to link stakeholders for support and continuity of marketing efforts.
- Lack of online social media presence.
- The marketing budget is very small for the task at hand (competitive municipalities spend \$4 - \$10 per capita on Economic Development and Tourism – Nanaimo spends \$2.2 million)

MARKETING STRATEGIES

To follow are the overarching strategies proposed to achieve the marketing objectives. We note that without an increase in marketing spend, this will be difficult:

1. BRAND STRATEGY

It is essential to create a brand positioning strategy that will resonate with the key target market stakeholders and facilitate top-of-mind awareness and brand connection.

The following is a brand blueprint (brand blueprinting is a method of strategic inquiry designed to illuminate the strategic link between the product and its consumer). It is recommended as the guiding strategy for the development and maintenance of the Duncan brand. The blueprint guides all future marketing and communications initiatives.

It is also important to note that a brand is much more than a logo and tagline. It must be embraced culturally by an organization and should guide how the employees greet customers, community relations, all communications both internal and external and the types of products and services an organization promotes. Every point of contact is an opportunity to build the brand. And at the end of the day, it is brand equity that determines price elasticity and what you can charge. It is a sum of money that shows up as “goodwill” on the balance sheet when evaluating a business – it is your only sustainable competitive advantage in business.

BRAND BLUEPRINT

The following brand blueprint continues to focus on and guide the City brand:

<p>PRODUCT INTERROGATION The City of Duncan is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrally located on the Island • Small and easy to navigate - walkable • Friendly • Affordable • A cultural discovery – festivals, arts, market • Charming and eclectic • Kid-friendly • Local, small business • Diverse in its offering – sports, culture, outdoor recreation • Easy to get to • Environmentally friendly • Fun 	<p>CONSUMER INTERROGATION The Duncan visitor is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the Island • From the Lower Mainland to worldwide • Interested in the arts and culture • Likes new things and adventure • Appreciates good food and drink • Values local • Is environmentally conscious • Appreciates a deal • Likes to be “in the know”
<p>ESSENCE OF PRODUCT Conveniently located on the south island’s major transport route, the City of Duncan is a small place with an abundance of great things to see and do.</p>	<p>ESSENCE OF CONSUMER Islanders and BC residents/visitors looking for a unique stop that is accessible and offers a variety of unique services and experiences in one, easy-to-navigate space.</p>
<p>STRATEGIC HINGE: Duncan has more to do and see per square foot than any other city.</p>	

2. CREATIVE STRATEGY

The following creative strategy will be used to guide all brand and tactical advertising and communications materials.

Creative Objective:

(What do we want the consumer to think, feel or do?)

- Get people to stop – get off the highway
- Think twice about Duncan; see it as a cool place to visit – discover the heart of the Cowichan Valley

Consumer Benefit:

(Why should they do it?)

- Easy to get to – located between Victoria and Nanaimo
- Small – easy to navigate
- Undiscovered
- Friendly
- Affordable
- Different – charming, eclectic
- Diverse
- Quiet
- Cultural

Support points:

(Why should they believe us?)

- Saturday market – one of the largest on the Island and operates year-round
- Access by road, bus, air (through Victoria or Nanaimo), and ferry (through Victoria or Nanaimo)
- Within 20 minutes of downtown: ice arena, aquatic centre, lawn bowling, tennis courts, sports fields, splash park, bowling, skate park, cob oven, 40 totems, museums
- Cowichan Theatre largest in the region
- Six golf courses
- 300+ independently owned shops and services
- 45 minutes in either direction from Victoria or Nanaimo
- Ongoing year-round events: <https://www.downtownduncan.ca/events>
- Several festivals including Summer Festival, Island Folk Festival, Aboriginal Festival of Film and Art, Cowichan Exhibition, 39 Days of July (longest-running music festival)
- 40 totems in the downtown core
- Local craft breweries and wineries

Tone and Manner:

(How do we wish to be perceived?)

- Big, bold, engaging – “we want to be part of that”
 1. Maintain logo
 2. Maintain positioning line (taglines)

3. BRANDING

The consistent and unifying brand is one of the City's biggest assets. To continue to meet the objectives, Duncan needs to continue to be recognizable, engaging, and flexible with the brand identity and tagline that continues to work across various mediums and is used in several ways by the City's numerous stakeholders. We will continue to create the right visual elements and use them consistently to bolster the City of Duncan brand achieving our marketing objectives.

Recognizing that all brands start on the inside and work out, we will continue to cover the area with "brand touchpoints" so that the businesses and citizens fully understand and embrace the brand. Moreover, it is imperative that the "internal experience" matches the "external promise" for the brand to continue to resonate and be absorbed by its intended audiences.

4. STAKEHOLDER STRATEGY

To be truly effective you need to align all available resources to a common goal and common (or at least mutually supportive) brand(s). To do so we will continue to:

- Develop a co-op advertising program that encourages others to use the Duncan brand materials.
- Hold quarterly meetings to ensure that all activities (promotions, products, and services) work synergistically toward a unified strategy.
- Identify roles and responsibilities to leverage all funding coming into the area.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA

A great brand will build pride of place and generate buzz and conversation. There is no better medium to facilitate this than social media.

The City of Duncan needs to have an ongoing and well-maintained social media program. This would include:

- Hire or partner with an organization to do social media advertisements
- Facebook and/or Instagram with paid posts to push out the Duncan brand
- Content posts 5-7 times weekly
- Monitoring and engagement with followers
- Videos

Estimated cost: \$3,000

- Contesting – photo and story sharing
- Online and programmatic advertising targeting mobile devices within geographic proximity

6. SIGNAGE

Continue to create strong and emotionally engaging signage that gets attention and provides emotional traction for the brand – people want to deal with businesses, organizations, and municipalities that have a “likable personality.” Components should include, but not be limited to:

- Billboards north and south of Duncan (design 2022, fabrication and installation 2023)
- Banners (all) replaced throughout the City (design 2022, fabrication and installation 2023)
Highway banners (Silver bridge – Alexander Street)– within the municipal boundary
- Window decals for stores
- Street/sidewalk decals

Estimated costs: \$20,000

7. COLLATERAL

Supporting and fulfillment pieces should be developed that:

1. Increase the amount that consumers spend on each visit – encouraging them to see all that Duncan has to offer, and
2. Increase the frequency of visits -- encouraging consumers to return at a future date for more great experiences.

Some suggestions include:

- Couponing – work with retailers to bring people back
- Incentives to shop at multiple businesses
- Contesting
- Retailer giveaways



Work with DDBIA on existing programs

Estimated costs: \$1,500 + production

CONSIDERED BUT NOT RECOMMENDED DUE TO BUDGET

If there were an increase in budget, we would recommend:

- Newspaper advertising in Victoria and Nanaimo
- Magazine advertising in Douglas and Boulevard in Victoria
- Television advertising
- A new website

Estimated costs would vary depending upon the publication, frequency of the ads, size, etc.