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Tatiana D. Grant

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COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RE-
IMAGING CAMPAIGNS OF ANCHORAGE, ATLANTA, CAMDEN, DETROIT AND
GREENSBORO

By

Tatiana D. Grant

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

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Honors Advisor (Print Name and have signed)

Department Head (Print Name and have signed)

(Honors Director (Print Name and have signed)

Introduction

Motown, the Motor City, booming downtown...all used to be associated with the city of Detroit. The city used to have retailers such as Hudson's and Montgomery Wards and be a destination city. As a partial result of the 1969 riots of Detroit, many fled the city and closed their businesses in hopes of happier lives in suburbs. The shift in populations has had many effects on Detroit but most apparent was with the economic deterrent it caused.

Since then until the year 2000, Detroit has been trying to broaden its horizons, make itself a destination city, and draw residents to the city while gaining new ones. These efforts are commonly seen with economic development programs and a push for a positive public image.

The retransformation of an urban city, specifically Detroit, requires strategic planning, time, support, economic development programs and efforts to improve its image. Economic development brings in businesses, potential residents and income. The improvement of these economic developments allows the city's image to improve and public relations campaigns to be formed.

According to the 2000 census, The City of Detroit spreads across over 130 miles, has over 25 zip codes and approximately 951,300 residents. In 2005, Detroit lost its ranking as the 10th largest city as it lost 12,274 residents in one year (Gray 2005). While many variables contribute to the city's population decreasing at an alarming rate, this type of exodus has occurred in other cities in the past and why Detroit must improve its image and economic development opportunities.

Review of Literature

Cities, large and small, which create opportunities for economic growth begin with their downtown area. According to Rypkema the key to success in the 21st century is having a downtown area (Rypkema, 2003). The author states that a downtown should have buildings with symbolic meaning and be the center of public gatherings. These buildings include government, religious and diverse cultural buildings, all of which need to represent the city's diversity (Rypkema, 10-12).

Detroit, specifically, has to improve its economic globalization as well as be local and specify what goals it is trying to attain. Rypkema states, "If you don't have at least some firms doing business internationally from your downtown, you have a local economy in decline" (Rypkema 2003, 12). The issue of real estate and rent prices also needs to be diverse. The article states that a rent spread of up to 500% is not unusual. Downtowns should have both the most expensive and some of the cheapest rates (Rypkema, 2003).

After establishing the importance of a downtown, planning and development are the next key steps. Robertson (1999) asserts that specific information should be considered in developing a downtown. It begins with the significance of the oldest buildings and also includes where many community events and celebrations take place. Economically, the downtown should seek to maintain the community's tax base and protect past public investments. The article then listed nine guiding principles to develop the downtown.

- *Develop a vision for the downtown:* The community, as a whole needs to create a long-term vision for their downtown.
- *Balance public and private commitment:* Need to combine local governments that are dedicated to downtown improvements with an active downtown association.
- *Be patient:* Need to have a sense of small improvements over an extended period.
- *Do not suburbanize the downtown:* Downtowns should not try to compete with suburban-style structures; they are not successful and often damage fabric.
- *Emphasize historic preservation:* Need to preserve historic character that makes the downtown distinctive compared with other environments.
- *Do not overemphasize parking:* Parking spaces will not bring people downtown. Although the amount, type, use, and location of parking should be taken into consideration for projects.
- *Make better use of upper floors:* Many main, downtown streets contain too much vacant or underused space above street level that could be converted into offices or apartments. The more valuable the buildings, the more affordable housing can be in the community.
- *Develop design guidelines:* Need to make sure that new and redeveloped older buildings integrate with the character and fabric of downtown.
- *Strive for a multifunctional downtown:* There needs to be varied types of activities - shopping, services, work, government, culture, the arts, recreation, entertainment, dining, housing, and tourism (Robertson, 41-43).

One avenue Detroit has taken to create economic opportunities is through hosting sports events. Detroiters as well as other residents are typical sports fans, largely because of the city's winning teams. Dating back to the NBA Detroit Pistons' days of being "Bad Boys" to the Detroit Red Wings and once again, back to the Detroit Pistons, fans love to support the teams in style. The Detroit Tigers and Lions (next to each other) now have new, state-of-the-art homes. Although Detroit did not fund their creation, local businesses reap the benefits.

What is key in the cases of these facilities is the fact that public expenditures were not used, but private funds were sought. Research suggests that using public money to build sports facilities does not have any benefits (Chapin, 2004). Chapin explains that sports facilities offer opportunities to catalyze redevelopment (developing vacant land, reusing underutilizing buildings and establishing a new district image). Further he states, "Economists argue that these projects simply redirect spending from one activity to another, producing only a very small increase in economic activity and that any jobs they create are low paying, service sector jobs" (Chapin, 193).

Once businesses and corporations begin to re-connect with the city, then the image campaigns can begin in full force. Public relations and communications practitioners need to then push and emphasize the projects and developments going on in the city. Camden, New Jersey, a city very similar to Detroit, created and implemented this type of campaign.

According to Lois Teer, Camden experienced many hardships after urban riots in 1969 and 1971 (2005); The city's population dropped from 125,000 – 85,000 and residents and businesses sold or abandoned their belongings to vandals. Michel Marroitt

of the *Philadelphia Daily News* described the city as "...the ultimate public relations challenge" (15 Oct. 1986). The Camden Neighborhood Promotion Campaign began.

Camden's campaign consisted of advertising in daily newspapers, bumper stickers that read "Camden, New Jersey...Look Before You Laugh", brochures, PSAs and billboards. Essentially, wherever anyone went, there were positive messages of the city. Messaging is key to changing the image and connotations associated with Detroit.

The city of Atlanta, Georgia is another city whose image has changed over the years due to the hard work of developers, public relations professionals and the mayor. Atlanta's image began changing because of the 1996 Olympic Games. There were urban redevelopment initiatives leading up to this event, as is with Detroit. Now, almost 10 years later, the city is working on revamping its image once again. On October 10, 2005, the "Brand Atlanta" campaign launched highlighting the "O's" associated with Atlanta; that is, opportunity, optimism and openness. According to Leon Stafford of the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, the mayor, who is also chairing the campaign and the Atlanta Committee for Progress, created Brand Atlanta.

Atlanta's key essentials to this campaign include (1) the partnership of both public and private officials that oversee the city's positioning; (2) the fact that the city is beginning with a local campaign; (3) that their initial goals are clearly defined; and (4) that they want to attract convention and tourism business. "O's" represent the city, and it is not just "feel-good" phrasing. Atlanta's government fundraising efforts included \$2 million in seed funding and they are planning to spend \$4.5 million to present the city as a destination city (about.com, 2005).

Messaging can also originate from the community, as was the case in Greensboro, North Carolina. Conway (2004) describes the city's the community campaign. A local study determined that the citizens had problems with education, opportunity and diversity. The Chamber of Commerce hired a public relations firm with a budget of \$1 million (three years), of which \$250,000 was designated for the first six months Conway, 2004).

The campaign used both print and broadcast advertising with the tagline "Greensboro – A Great Place to connect" and billboards. The campaign also called for focus groups of volunteers, community activists, and chamber members to give feedback about what they liked about the city. The campaign was spearheaded with an event downtown, where attendees received a brochure that included volunteer opportunities while they watched a promotional video.

Economic development and image building campaigns are fundamental for any city looking to create opportunities for its, businesses and citizens. For larger, urban cities, the development of a downtown area while maintaining originality are key. When creating a more desirable image, these efforts need to begin locally and then be pushed outside. Image efforts begin with positioning and key messages that are concrete and credible.

Although there are many factors that go into the success of a city's image building, this case study will explore and recommend what Detroit can do based on the campaigns of the cities of Anchorage , Alaska, Camden, New Jersey, Greensboro, North Carolina and Atlanta, Georgia. Economic growth, local initiatives, and methods used to get local and national support and attention will be evaluated. The "ROPE" model

(Hendrix 2004) will also be applied to evaluate each campaign and its effectiveness. Ideally, this study will assist the city of Detroit's communications and economic development departments and public relations firms with future campaigns and projects.

Methodology

A comparative analysis will be conducted based on various image building and economic campaigns of the cities of Anchorage, Alaska; Atlanta, Georgia; Camden, New Jersey; and Greensboro, North Carolina. In comparing these cities, the following factors will be evaluated: (1) size, (2) demographics, (3) reasons for the image campaign, (4) campaign objectives and (5) overall impact. Commonalities in the campaign strategies will also be examined.

In comparing the cities to one another, various primary and secondary research sources were analyzed. For Anchorage, an article was obtained from *PR News* as well as the campaign report created by Development Counselors International (DCI). DCI was hired as the public relations firm from the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation. Atlanta's information analyzed articles features in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, as well as the press releases and "brochure work" of the Brand Atlanta Campaign. There were numerous news articles written as well as press releases and a campaign calendar of events posted on the Web site.

Camden was a unique situation. The campaign took place almost 20 years ago. Resources available were very limited. The information used for the analysis was obtained from *PR News*, as well as an interview with Lois Teer, who was responsible for the campaign.

Detroit's information came from the Detroit Metro Conventions Bureau, executive director, and Jim Townsend. He furnished press releases and information about events that were relevant to the "Get in the Game Campaign." Press releases, community relations initiatives and event information were also obtained from the Detroit Super Bowl XL Host Committee.

Greensboro's campaign is still available online. The Web site includes press releases and articles about local business owners.

To compare the five cities, it is necessary to look at their size, and then who or what they were targeting to improve their image. The city slogan is also key; some cities used a very business approach while others chose to humor. Each city campaign targeted by encouraging and attracting non-residents to their city as a great place to live, work, learn and play.

Issues that will be explored are the issues of developing the downtown or not? Large cities such as Detroit have much more to build up than its downtown; however, many cities began with their downtown. Local community involvement and the extensiveness of it will also be evaluated.

Key factors in Detroit to be considered are a city's size. When cities are large, it can be either easier or harder to bring it back when in trouble. This is because their scope is larger than just the downtown area. Larger cities, especially urban one's tend to have additional needs that set precedent over an image campaign. If ignoring these needs and making changes that improve the image, many residents can become upset and feel neglected. Additionally, having a large city can also make things easier because there is a larger number of businesses and a tax base.

The “ROPE” model will be explored as a method of assessing various campaign stages including the Research that was conducted, Objectives/Programs that were recommended, Planning and Evaluation that was conducted. The following chart describes each of Hendrix’s stages.

ROPE Model – Research, Objectives, Programming, Evaluation

I. Research	II. Objectives	III. Programming	IV. Evaluation
A. Client/Organization: background data about your client or organization--its personnel, financial status, reputation, past and present PR practices, PR strengths and weaknesses, opportunities	A. Impact Objectives: 1. informational objectives: message exposure, comprehension, retention 2. attitudinal objectives: formation of new attitudes, reinforcement of existing attitudes, changes in existing attitudes 3. behavioral objectives: creation of new behavior; reinforcement of existing behavior; change in existing behavior	Planning and execution of: A. Theme and messages	A. Impact Objectives: 1. informational objectives: measured by publicity placement, surveys 2. attitudinal objectives: measured by attitude surveys 3. behavioral objectives: measured by surveys and observation of behaviors

Hendrix’s model is a “staple” of public relations campaign management, and is especially needed as a blueprint for the design and implementation of image campaigns. The Rope model is has a “work-in-progress” path. By following the steps a pr team can improve its decisions and actions. This model also creates constant professional development.

In addition, city leadership or the public image of the mayor also has to be taken into consideration. For example, residents as well as potential investors do not see Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick's actions and administration as reflective of a city that is on the right path. It is hoped that this comparative analysis will answer the following questions:

- 1) What types of development are needed to rebuild a city's image?
- 2) What communication methods and strategies should be employed to design and execute an image campaign (e.g. community outreach, corporate outreach, economic development, etc.)

Results and Analysis

There are many similarities and differences in the cities of Anchorage, Atlanta, Camden, Greensboro and Detroit. These range from population to demographics to economic situations. One common denominator among all of the cities is the need (for one reason or another) for an image campaign.

In the cases of Anchorage, Atlanta, Camden, Greensboro and Detroit the lack of economic development fueled their campaigns.

Anchorage, Alaska

In 2003, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) hired a New York City –based PR firm, Development Counselors International, to kick off a strategy “Putting Anchorage on the World’s Investors Map.” Reasons and results are presented below:

Primary Objectives

- Generate national/international media coverage for Anchorage business climate

- *Business Week, New York Times*
- Generate trade press coverage within AEDC's target industries
- *Air Cargo World, Logistics Management, Inbound Logistics*

Program

- **Survey two key audiences to determine how Anchorage is perceived currently**
 - Site Selection Consultants
 - National and Trade Media
- **Develop a “Public Relations Blueprint” Outlining Media Strategy, Targets Spokespeople, etc.**

Development Counselors International Recommendations and First Year Activities

- Comprehensive public relations program
- Visits to national site selection consultants
- Limited advertising in target industry publications
- Trade show attendance

First Step in PR Program:

Upfront Research

- Identified top 25 businesses in Anchorage
- Developed background - AEDC's target industries
- Aggressive direct mail, phone follow up to key targets
 - Air Cargo/Logistics
 - High Technology/Telecom
 - Light Manufacturing/Assembly

Next Step ... Getting the Word Out Early

- DCI sent emails to Media VIP contacts; lots of early interest
 - Began arranging interviews for AEDC spokespeople with media
 - Set up meetings with site selection consultants in Chicago
- Articles Resulting from Press Trip...

Next Steps ... 2004-2005

- At least one group press trip per year
- Two tours to major markets each year
 - New York, D.C. markets next
- Individual media visits
 - 4-5 per year
- Foreign media activity
 - At least two visits/meetings per year

Campaign Projections/ Anticipated Results

- A measurable shift in how Anchorage is perceived by key audiences
- Increase in visits to web site; prospect inquiries
- Ultimately, new jobs and investment in Anchorage!

Atlanta, Georgia

Atlanta has gone through multiple marketing campaigns aimed at businesses and tourists.

This time its “Brand Atlanta/ ‘O’ campaign” will spend \$4.5 million to create an image that will encourage people and businesses to move there. Its campaign slogan of “O” stands for Opportunity, Optimism and Openness. Reasons and results are presented below:

Primary Objectives

- To sell Atlanta first to the locals before it expands its Brand Atlanta campaign
- Atlantans will become ambassadors of the larger Brand Atlanta scheduled to kickoff in 2006
- Brand Atlanta is spending \$4.5 million to improve its appeal and attract billions of dollars in tourism conventions and businesses

Program

- Closed door meeting for corporate leaders who are backing the campaign
- New logo un-veiling that stands for Opportunity, Optimism and Openness
- Receiving set-up meetings with site selection consultants in Chicago

Campaign Projections/ Anticipated Results

- A measurable shift in how Atlanta is perceived by key audiences
- Increase in visits to web site; prospect inquiries
- Ultimately, new jobs and investment in Atlanta

Camden, New Jersey

Camden's decline began after urban riots in 1969 and 1971. Residents fled as well as businesses closed up. Due to its proximity to downtown Philadelphia and the city's waterfront location, the image campaign targeted non-residents and was aimed at bringing them into the city as landowners. Reasons and results are presented below:

Primary Objectives

- Lure middle class buyers to economically depressed Camden
- Target successful Philadelphia and empty nesters
- Sell 2000 abandoned homes
- Increase city population from 85,000 back to 125,000
- Attract new business by showing close proximity to downtown Philadelphia

Program

- News conference kicked off the campaign on October 12, 1982
- Advertisements run in Philadelphia Inquirer, two weeklies in Philadelphia's Society Hill
- Bumper stickers "Camden, New Jersey...Look Before You Laugh"
- Brochure created to emphasize the City's academic environment-Rutgers University, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and Glassboro State College Camden campuses.
- Proximity to Philadelphia, New York and Washington highlighted
- T shirts incorporate the campaigns historic townhouse logo and proclaim CAMDEN lives

Detroit, Michigan

Detroit also known as Motown and the Motor City has been seeing a decline in its once Metropolis image since the late 1960s. As a result, the city, especially its downtown, lost residents, business and of course its positive image. After many years of an image of arson, poverty, "Bad Boys" and a corrupt government, individuals decided to step up to the plate and begin improving the city.

Approximately five years ago, the city, state, local governments, Canada and visitors bureau came together to place a bid for the 2006 NFL Super Bowl. After

obtaining the Super Bowl many economic development projects, construction and “buzz” were created for the city. Many wondered how a city with so many problems and such a bad image could overcome their obstacles. Detroit began with building up its downtown area, not only for the Super Bowl but also for the city as a destination city. Reasons and results are presented below:

Why Market?

- Manufacturing/automotive capital of the world
- Newly-built sports and business venues
- Under-tapped market with many opportunities

Primary Objectives

- **Generate local/ national media coverage for Detroit business climate:**
 - *Crain's Detroit, WJBK Fox 2, WDIV Local 4, WXYZ 7, Detroit News, Detroit Free Press, Black Enterprise*
- **Generate trade press coverage within Detroit's target industries:**
 - *Industry Week, Advanced Manufacturing Magazine*

Program

- **High-profile Sports Events**
 - -MLB All-Star Game
 - -2006 Super Bowl
 - -2009 NACAA Final 4
- **Economic Development**
 - -Campus Marti's / Compuware
 - -Restaurants/Nightlife
 - -Housing Developments
 - -Cleaning city
- **Develop a “Public Relations Blueprint” Outlining Media Strategy, Targets Spokespeople, etc.**
- **New industries**
 - -Restaurants
 - -Retail
 - -Housing (lofts)
- **Developed Background – Detroit's Target Industries**

- Manufacturing

Greensboro, North Carolina

In the late 1990s Greensboro had morphed from a manufacturing to a service and technology based economy, so community leaders decided to refine their message. In early 2002 they brought in the Quixote Group, a Greensboro-based strategic marketing and PR firm specializing in relationship marketing, brand building and market research to develop the campaign. Reasons and results are presented below:

Why Market?

- After 40 years, city had morphed from manufacturing to service and technology based economy
- Community leaders wanted to refine their message
- Image campaign was imperative to put back on the map

Primary Objectives

- Define and Differentiate the City by featuring a new tagline “Greensboro- A Great Place to Connect” with new “G” logo on advertisements
- Greensboro based strategic marketing and PR firm Quixote Group hired to implement: Three-year budget of \$1million was approved.

Program

- PR team ran focus groups to identify community strengths and feedback about what people liked about living in Greensboro
- PR team sent notices via e-mail to volunteers, community activists and chamber members to participate
- Quixote announced the focus groups in the Greensboro News & Record and flyers were distributed at city events
- Launch event featured an African-American, Native-American and Latino-American dances
- Mayor Keith Holliday and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce gave speeches plugging Greensboro

Campaign Projections/ Anticipated Results

- CBS, Fox and NBC affiliates all ran stories on the launch event and features appeared in the Greensboro News & Record, Carolina Peacemaker and the Business Journal (North Carolina version)
- Campaign is now deploying several PR tools to maintain the momentum
- “Connections” a local TV program will focus on city’s economic development
- New web portal to provide Internet users with information and links about Greensboro was created
- Annual surveys to identify changes and evaluate effectiveness of Greensboro Connects outreach initiatives

Comparison of Development Factors and Campaign Messages Across Cities

City	Population	Down-own Area	Rebuilding Image\$\$	Campaign Slogan	Target Market Business
Anchorage, Alaska	260,300	Yes	Three year 1.8 million	AlaskaB4UDIE	Business
Atlanta, Georgia	415,000	Yes	4.5 million	"O" Optimism, Opportunity, Openness	Tourism, Conventions, Business
Camden, New Jersey	85,000	Yes	\$40,000	Look Before You Laugh	Homes, Business
Detroit, Michigan	951,100	Yes		Get in the Game	Business, Conventions, Tourism
Greensboro, North Carolina	250,000	Yes	Three year 1.0 million	Greensboro Connects	Business

A comparative analysis of all of these cities shows that the result of economic development and growth was approached with some similarities and dissimilarities. The city’s population, development of a downtown, slogan and target market were key factors in the image campaign efforts. To compare the five cities, it is necessary to look at their

size, and then who or what they were targeting to improve their image. In addition, the slogan is also key; some cities used a strictly business approach while others chose to use humor. All of the campaigns had a common strategy to target non-residents and businesses – and to communicate the message that their city is a great place to live, work, learn and play.

Demographically, Camden, New Jersey; Atlanta, Georgia; and Detroit, Michigan are the cities most similar. All are urban, minority populated cities that have had hardships.

Another similarity with all of the cities was that they centered their campaigns on the development, businesses and opportunities in their downtowns. There is a correlation between a city's success and its downtown. The focus was to build up the downtown area. According to Rypkema (Winter 2003), the key to success in the 21st century is having a downtown area. As stated earlier, a downtown should have buildings with symbolic meaning and be the center of public gatherings. These buildings include government, religious and diverse cultural buildings, all of which need to represent the city's diversity (Rypkema, 10-12).

When deciding on whom to target, residentially or non-residentially, Detroit has looked to sell themselves to non-residents first. This method of selling themselves has been almost solely focused around the sports industry. Detroit hosted the 2004 PGA Tour, 2005 MLB All-Star Game and will host the 2006 NFL Super Bowl and 2009 NCAA Final Four Finals. These events bring in many out-of-state visitors and high-profile business executives, which can create economic opportunities for the city.

The city's professional sports venues have also changed locations and been remodeled with these reasons in mind. Chapin (2004) states that using public expenditures to build sports facilities creates little economic activity and low paying jobs. However, in Detroit, both football and baseball facilities, Ford Field and Comerica Park, were funded by private entities.

Atlanta wants to sell its new branding to local residents first. They feel they can create brand ambassadors of their Atlantans to encourage incremental increases in visitors and new residents and attract new business. Stafford asserts that Atlanta's will need to validate the city's tagline of "opportunity, optimism, and openness" to its residents. That appears to be key in their local campaign.

Across all the cities, campaign funding and length of the projects varied from one year to three years. The dollars spent also varied from \$40,000 to \$4.5 million. For almost all of the cities, except for Atlanta, outside organizations launched the image campaigns. In Anchorage, the campaign was done by the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation; in Camden, the University of New Jersey and neighborhood association conducted the campaign ; and in Greensboro, the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce undertook these efforts. Through browsing the web and personal observation, Detroit's campaign seems to be a "very joint" effort of the state, city of Detroit, Super Bowl XL Host Committee, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation, Detroit Metro Conventions, and Visitors Bureau among others. Some cities sought both private and public funding.

Local leaders played a pivotal role in the campaigns. Unlike Detroit, whose mayor is at the forefront of image rebuilding, the mayor of Camden was resistant to its

campaign. Lois Teer, who worked on the Camden campaign, stated in her interview that she thought she received resistance because it made the mayor seem as if he was not doing his job. It gave the viewpoint of why did someone else have to come in to make the city better? Through the missing paperwork and resistance, her team was able to get the job accomplished. Conway states that in Greensboro the mayor and chairman of the chamber of commerce gave speeches “plugging” Greensboro at its launch (2003, 2).

All of the campaigns sought and are seeking media coverage and community functions and events to launch the campaigns. Press coverage was essential to their campaigns with write-ups in local newspapers, national publications including *Crain's* and the *New York Times*. Through reading the write ups and interviewing individuals that worked on these campaigns, news stories were key to changing the city's images.

Future Studies

Ideally, future studies will have more information than what was available for Atlanta and Detroit. Both are in the process of their campaigns and so information was limited. For Detroit, so many different organizations were involved because the majority of the campaigns have been such large-scale events, that obtaining information and receiving contacts was very difficult. Therefore, maybe focusing on one campaign (either by the Host Committee or Metro Conventions Bureau) will make a more concise study.

If doing again, I recommend looking at cities that are most similar demographically. Lois Teer, who worked in Camden, New Jersey, explained that the campaign was a success but maintaining its impact was not. Now, over 20 years later, blocks that were newly developed, are torn down and now house businesses. The

neighborhoods became depilated after no upkeep. Another study could include going back and looking at how well/long these cities, (espeicaly urban cities) can maintain their positive image and economic growth. would perhaps be an interesting city. She stated that she may have “thought too much.” She followed up by saying after her team had done all the work and attracted new, wealthier residents, that the old residents did not know how to sweep their streets and maintain the progress. Perhaps a type of “home ownership/neighborhood pride” campaign needs to be included in these imaging campaigns. It should be mentioned that Greensboro’s campaign was successful and has expanded. The “brand” Web site is still running and features local business owners making a difference as well as many additional resources for residents.

I also encourage looking at cities that are a bit smaller or that are easily accessible. For instance, I have been trying to contact the actual city of Detroit office since August. December 9 was when they finally responded to my phone calls and emails and all I received was a referral. I was fortunate enough to have contacts at the Detroit Metro Convention Bureau, and I work for the Host Committee. If not for them, I would still be waiting on information from the city. Therefore, if studying a city whose offices are known to be very unresponsive, one needs to have much patience.

Final Thoughts

My observations from all of these campaigns are that there are steps that may be applied to any branding strategy. Start with clear objectives in mind. What is the ultimate goal? Is it to attract tourists, businesses and residents? The public relations practioner implementing the campaign should know the “ins and outs” of the city and do in-depth research into its needs and possible solutions. After clearly researching the problem,

clear and realistic objectives should then be set from its inception. They should encompass downtown development (if not already done), media coverage, economic development, community outreach, and eventually reach a broader area beyond the downtown region.

When planning events and programs, there should be constant cost-benefit evaluations. If something requires more funds than it can/will bring in, it will need to be re-evaluated. When evaluating, many different factors need to be taken into consideration. This should include the amount and types of media coverage that was generated; economic and business development, activity that resulted from the campaign and how so; what relationships were built (sponsors, businesses, media, etc); and were any new programs created. Bernhardt's summary (2005) of the Brand Atlanta Campaign describes nine lessons that I believe can be used for any city's re-imaging campaign.

They are:

1. Start with clear objectives
2. Base the branding strategy and campaign on research and key facts
3. Clearly define the target markets
4. Start with internal marketing
5. Have a clear positioning strategy and make sure that it is authentic
6. There is a difference between a positioning strategy and a tag line
7. It is important to have a totally integrated brand campaign, not just an ad campaign
8. Establish metrics to measure the campaign's effectiveness
9. Successful branding efforts require a long term commitment

All 10 lessons are parallel to the traditional ROPE model in public relations programming. I have also learned from these image campaigns that a PR professional has the added task of reaching and influencing those whose opinions influence end users. This means it is often necessary to build an “influencer map” in order to determine how to identify and reach influencers. PR professionals will have to come up with more and more creativity as they lead municipal image campaigns.

My research into these image campaigns will help me in the future with my goal of working on urban planning and economic development.

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