

City of Quesnel Communications Plan

Draft five
January 4, 2017

BACKGROUND/ SITUATION ANALYSIS

Today

Quesnel is a community dependent primarily on the forest industry and its mills. The apprehension around potential mill closures is forcing us to think, plan and act differently. It is strongly believed that “There is so much more to Quesnel than people think.” Quesnel is a community largely undiscovered, and hence unknown or misunderstood.

Our challenge

To define Quesnel to facilitate understanding across the 4 pillars of live, work, invest and visit.
To create a future-focused brand that stimulates economic diversity beyond the status quo of our primary economic driver.
To create a differentiating brand that inspires locals and prospects, young and old alike.

Our future

Community growth and prosperity is the goal, but not at the expense of our heritage, our natural environment, and the lifestyle it offers. We want a resourceful, sustainable, diverse, well-integrated and thriving city that promotes growth by complimenting our natural surroundings, and allowing the people of Quesnel to enjoy a balanced lifestyle.

Our opportunity

Develop a brand and related actions that shift apprehension towards anticipation as we fulfill opportunities that guarantee sustainability.

TARGET AUDIENCES

To craft our brand, we need to understand what our key audiences need and want from the City of Quesnel.

Internal

Local residents
Part-time workers/residents
Business owners

External

Tourists
Prospective residents
Potential businesses

These six audiences share a number of different needs that can be grouped into four categories:

- **Community** and fulfillment
- **Accessibility**, choices and lifestyle
- **Exploration**, opportunity and progress
- **Adaptability** and sustainability

THE BRAND

Brand attributes – how we want to be described

In response to the shared audience needs, four brand attributes have been identified:

- Trailblazing** First Nations settled where the Fraser and Quesnel rivers meet, and ever since these forks have supported and nurtured a trailblazing spirit. From the Dakelh/Carrier people developing the Grease Trail for trade, to Simon Fraser and Jules-Maurice Quesnel coming down the river, to gold rush prospectors staking their claims, and a forest industry reinventing itself, this is a place to explore nature and to explore your own hopes and dreams. This is a place where entrepreneurs and business leaders, individuals and families, students and seniors make their future happen.
- Sustainable** Sustainable isn't easy. It takes vision and hard work. It takes a commitment to the land and to the community. Our sustainability is rooted in First Nation history of deep connection to the land. It is fostered through ongoing rehabilitation of that natural land base, and proliferated through meaningful social innovation across generations. Quesnel is a place that has the perspective, the versatility and the tenacity to thrive through transition and ensure our ongoing success.
- Accessible** In Quesnel, everything is close. Work to home. Home to nature. Possibility to opportunity. Your life, not just your house, is affordable. Affording you both time and means to reap reward and recreation. This is a place that is self-reliant and remarkably approachable. A community that is not just open, but eye-opening. Where commitment to the land and community heralds a willingness to make opportunities accessible to all.
- Fun** Safe, caring and kind, of course. Family and community centered. Passionate and accepting. This is a place that is connected to the lakes and the land, even when we are at home and at work. We invest in the facilities and the community spirit to make play a touchstone in our lives.

Brand purpose – why does the brand do what it does

In Quesnel we believe that only a well-balanced life is worth living.

We relish the balance between...

Work and life	Tradition and innovation
City and nature	History and future
Energy and calm	Giving and accepting
Forest and rivers	Community and individual
Lake and land	Family and friends
Local and global	Young and old
New and old	Small and big

Quesnel is an open community that both respects the old, and invites the new. People and ways. Quesnel balances a small town culture with bigger city ambitions. And we recognize that this balance enables life in Quesnel to be deeply fulfilling.

Life is enriched through diverse and intrinsic connections to family, community and the land - all natural opportunities that offer meaningful balance to enrich our lives.

Natural opportunities that are equally connected to the land around us, as they are obvious and integral to the lives we lead. Therefore Quesnel exists to

Enrich life through a balance of natural opportunity.

Brand promise – what unique, defining end-benefit that our brand delivers

The Forks in Quesnel is not just the intersection of the Fraser and Quesnel rivers, but the intersection of community and possibility. The possibilities offered by nature are fulfilled by the ingenuity of our community. And therefore possibilities convert into real opportunities.

We have land that is valuable, available and, importantly, affordable. This land, whether for commercial, industrial or personal use, enables opportunities for our community to realize their potential and thrive.

The opportunity of owning and connecting with land, coupled with our pioneering spirit of ingenuity, enables opportunities to live a self-reliant, self-sufficient and sustainable life.

And this viability is continually reinforced through industrial and social innovation, as we reinvent our forestry industry and fuel our diverse community.

Quesnel offers the opportunity to feel secure and to thrive - where you can both afford and grow your own business, home, food, family and community.

Quesnel promises to enable opportunities for a thriving community.

Brand spirit – the tangible, visceral spirit that runs through everything we do

Everything we do is informed and inspired by our natural resources and surroundings. We recognize and respect that we are nourished by nature, fuelled by courage.

From the gold pan days, to the forest industry of today, we respect our natural resources as the foundation for our economy. Our trailblazing spirit is the foundation for innovating, diversifying and growing a sustainable future for all.

We cherish and enjoy our lakes, trails, and runs. Whether canoeing, skiing, hiking, biking, fishing, all seasons and days are filled with fun. A way of life that doesn't shy away from contributing and supporting a community with real substance and strength.

In short, our spirit is one of being

Naturally Courageous

Brand Promise
To enable
opportunities for a
thriving community

The brand in one paragraph

The City of Quesnel exists to enrich life through natural opportunity, and therefore promises to enable opportunities for a thriving community. In everything we do, we are naturally courageous, and as a result we will be described as trailblazing, sustainable, accessible and fun.

GOALS

What, generally, the communications are trying to achieve. Sorted into three categories with an identified priority:

Live

Current and new residents

Build community.
Remain convinced that Quesnel is a viable place to live and work – across generations.
Increase awareness of and support for the brand purpose, brand attributes, brand promise and brand spirit.
Strengthen advocacy for Quesnel.

Work/ Invest

Current and new businesses

Support access to municipal services, initiatives and incentives.
Increase awareness of and support for the brand purpose, brand attributes, brand promise and brand spirit.
Strengthen advocacy for Quesnel.

Play

Visitors

Increase awareness of Quesnel.
Increase desirability of visiting Quesnel over all four seasons.
Encourage visitors to become residents.

STRATEGIES

Five strategies are recommended:

1. Build brand foundations
2. Launch the brand
3. Enhance social media communications
4. Ongoing brand building
5. Long term brand building

TACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The tactics outlined in this section were developed based on the community engagement and are presented for consideration to Council. The ideas represent a range of investments from low cost to significant investment. Council is encouraged to approve ideas that align with budget priorities and to use these ideas as a launching pad for other initiatives.

Strategy 1: Build brand foundations

Brand champion(s)

Assign a brand champion to lead all brand-related marketing

- To ensure that the brand is delivered consistently across platforms – visually and verbally
- To oversee all brand development
- To review all social media and websites and ensure it is brand aligned
- To oversee partnership relationships (e.g. Chamber of Commerce)
- To integrate the brand with economic development activities

Implement branding across all City communications

- Develop new template for communications: municipal announcements, rec centre programming, Council Minutes and Agendas, application forms, etc.
- Post template on internal web site
- Embed the brand into the new website, particularly the visual language, brand promise and brand spirit
- An evolutionary approach is recommended. Launch the brand with a few key elements rebranded (internal templates, website, gateway signage) and gradually introduce the others over the course of 12 – 18 months.

Strategy 2: Launch the brand

Launch event – logo unveiling

Invite the community to the unveiling of the new identity:

- Tell the brand story before revealing the logo (to provide the strategic context)
- Include local media and key stakeholders, open to everyone
- Film the event and post to the website

Launch initiatives

This is designed to demonstrate that the brand is more than a logo, that it represents real change:

- Launch one new community initiative under each pillar: live, work, invest and visit. Council to brainstorm initiatives
- Launch accessibility initiatives
- Update the trails guide
- Install solar panels
- Hold a Dragon's Den style event for youth to pitch ideas to improve a trailblazing, sustainable, accessible, fun life in Quesnel. Offer \$5,000 of funding to support the winning pitch

Symbolic actions

A symbolic action is an important and effective tool to telegraph the change embodied in a new brand. It is designed to be a meaningful initiative that will grab the attention of the community and visitors.

A number of potential symbolic actions representing brand-driven change in Quesnel that could be considered include:

- Install new gateway signage with new identity north and south of the City.
- Repaint the gold pan (remove Gold Pan City text)
- Illuminate the bridges in the brand colours
- Develop a co-op program for high school students
- Create (professionally) celebratory video of the naturally courageous community.
- Start a countdown to the branch launch. Use physical counters in town and digital counters on the webpage and social media accounts.
- Throw an impromptu, family-oriented street party on Reid Street.
- Other actions that fit both Council's Strategic Plan and the Brand Strategy should be considered here.

Website enhancements

Create a series of short, professional videos profiling the benefits of living, working and visiting Quesnel:

- Target to non-residents
- Keep the video's short and focused on one topic
- Include testimonials and invitations from residents for people to come
- Obviously – brand aligned messages

Strategy 3: Enhance social media communications

Social media

Use three social media channels in very targeted ways. Assign one coordinator to be in charge of all social media accounts.

Facebook

Facebook is the most powerful social media and social networking site out there. It allows the City of Quesnel to cost effectively reach residents, potential residents and visitors. It is important to focus content in Facebook to the correct audience. Posting business information to residents can dissuade residents from remaining engaged. And vice versa.

- Focus Facebook posts on current and new residents. Make community-related announcements. Promote and celebrate community events.

- Grow followers through quality of content, limiting quantity of content and linking to other community organizations.

Instagram

Instagram has very high engagement and is popular with younger audiences, such as young families. It allows Quesnel to tell short visual stories about the activities and events in the communities. It is important to use hash tags well with each post, including

#quesnel
#quesnelbc
#quesnellife
#(whatever activity)

- Currently, Instagram images under #quesnel or #quesnelbc are primarily of people, landscapes (and lots of dogs). Flesh out #Quesnel with more active images of people engaged in life in Quesnel. Bring to life the spirit of “Naturally Courageous” through large and small moments alike.
- Post or like images that represent the spirit of Quesnel: naturally courageous. (There is an excellent image of a man holding a fileted fish. This speaks volumes about the natural opportunity in Quesnel.)
- Focus on images that will appeal to visitors and residents.
- Additional images of the town itself need to be included. Commission high quality photography of the town in all four seasons.
- Cross-promote images on Facebook.

Twitter

Twitter is best used as a concise, curation of community news with embedded links for further details. It should be focused on businesses and minimize the amount of social information (which belongs on Facebook).

- Continue to support the City of Quesnel twitter account:
 - Use to make announcements and link to more detailed information on the website.
 - Include business and community information. Not targeted at visitors.
 - Connect to other Quesnel stakeholders on twitter: Fire Chief, Chamber, Tourism, councillors.
 - Promote to local businesses.
 - Twitter needs to be timely, so do not establish an account unless you can sustain posting.

Build connections to Tourism Quesnel

- Tourism Quesnel should become more “on brand” with the new visual language and tone of voice.
- The Tourism Quesnel website should include four-season promotional content (video, photo and text).
- The Tourism Quesnel Facebook page requires greater discipline in posting frequency and focus on visitor activities and experiences. An Instagram account for Tourism Quesnel should also be established and maintained.
- Facebook and Instagram content should be liked and reposted by the City of Quesnel Facebook page.
- Continue to work with Destination BC to ensure up-to-date and inspiring content is presented on the DBC website (<https://www.hellobc.com/default.aspx?CC=CA>).
- Twitter should not be a priority for Tourism Quesnel until Facebook and Instagram accounts are frequently updated and well maintained.

Strategy 4: Ongoing brand building

Speaking

Embed brand messages into formal and informal speaking opportunities for the Mayor, Council and City administration:

- Tell stories and give examples of opportunities to enrich life through natural opportunity.
- Tell stories of how Quesnel enables opportunities for a thriving community.

Partner advertising

- Work with local businesses to promote Quesnel on their website through the use of the Quesnel logo and/or common text describing the community. Key partners would include the Chamber of Commerce, realtors, SkyFest, Troll Resort, Billy Barker Days – any company or organization that will attract non-residents to their on-line presence.

Native advertising

Native advertising is a form of paid media where the ad content follows the natural form and function of the user experience in which it is placed. For example, an article promoting snowmobiling in Quesnel could be placed in a blog about snowmobiling.

- Develop a native advertising campaign to promote Quesnel in both summer and winter.
- Place invest/work messages in relevant business blogs and online BC business magazines.
- Hire a social agency to design and place the native advertising campaign.

Work with local media to promote and share brand-aligned stories.

These are stories that resonate with any aspect of the brand model:

- Stories can relate to the brand promise, spirit, purpose or any of the attributes.

Blogger campaign

- Identify influential bloggers and Instagram posters. (Hire a PR agency to identify key influencers with a large number of relevant followers.)
- Invite them (incentivize them) to visit Quesnel in summer and winter and post about their experiences.
- Work with Destination BC or the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast tourism region to develop the campaign.

Outdoor advertising

- Purchase outdoor advertising (billboards), on the Highway 1/ Highway 5/ Highway 97 from Vancouver to Quesnel. Promote being able to live a more fulfilling life in Quesnel.

Strategy 5: Long term brand building

Change policies

In small towns, community development is economic development. Building the capacity of the community will produce economic outcomes. The brand provides an organizing principle for community development. Specific actions might include:

- Tax restructuring. E.g., Tax breaks for tech companies

- Policies that protect the landscape and help preserve recreation opportunities in summer and winter
- Use the multi-stakeholder Tourism and Marketing committee, including council, businesses, associations and average citizens, to discuss brand-driven community development opportunities.

Small towns with the most dramatic community and economic development outcomes tend to be proactive and future-oriented. They embrace change and assume risk.

6-month brand review

Conduct a review after six months to evaluate the implementation of brand across all channels. Involve Will in the evaluation.

Brand alignment resident survey

Survey business and residents about how well Quesnel is living the brand:

- If we want to be ((accessible)), how are we doing? How might we do it better?

Events

Develop a regional event to promote visitation and celebrate winter and/or summer life in Quesnel. Soccer is an obvious place to start. Explore opportunities with other sports.

STORMY LAKE CONSULTING

Strategy 1: Build brand foundations	Priority	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	Q1 2018
Brand champion	1	█					
Implement branding in all communications	1	█	█				
Strategy 2: Launch the brand							
Launch event – logo unveiling	1		█				
Launch initiatives			█				
Symbolic actions			█				
Website enhancements	1		█				
Strategy 3: Enhance social media communications							
Social media	2		█	█	█	█	█
Build connections to Tourism Quesnel	2			█	█	█	█
Strategy 4: Ongoing brand building							
Speaking	1		█	█	█	█	█
Partner advertising	3			█	█	█	█
Native advertising	3				█	█	█
Work with local media	2				█	█	█
Blogger campaign	3						█
Outdoor advertising							█
Strategy 5: Long term brand building							
Change policies	1		█				
6-month brand review	1			█			
Brand alignment resident survey	2					█	
Events	3			█	█	█	█

