BRANDING IMPORTANCE IN MUNICIPALITIES:

REBRANDING THE CITY OF SAN MARCOS,TEXAS

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the people who have believed in me and supported me throughout my graduate education: my husband, Matthew, who helped me stay sane while managing work, school and life; my sister, Casey, who has been my constant cheerleader; my parents, Bill and Cathy, who instilled a strong work ethic and will to succeed; and my friends, mentors, and colleagues from the MFA program who made this an amazing and unforgettable journey.

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ABSTRACT

The global population is continually growing with increasing numbers of families moving into metropolitan areas both large and small. As populations increase and uninhabited land decreases, competition between cities becomes more aggressive in order to attract potential investment and to increase population size. In this competitive dynamic, a strong brand presence is critical. And as a result of this, an increased need for city branding has developed.

In July of 2009, the city council of San Marcos began work on a project to rebrand the city. The goal of the rebrand was to increase investment and development within the city, attract more tourism, and to create a consistent brand identity and messaging platform. The city released a request for proposals to design agencies that identified the goals of the rebrand as needing to develop a unique and consistent identity for the city in order to successfully attract inward investment to the city.

Through the research, process, design, and implementation outlined in this thesis, a new brand identity for the city of San Marcos, Texas is created. The new city brand and identity is an example of consistent brand implementation across multiple marketing mediums including marketing materials, environmental signage, promotional items, and online sites. The brand messaging is implemented through several tactics to increase brand awareness and to attract the target investment groups. This rebranding project additionally supports the need for small municipalities to implement city branding strategies in order to attract its target investment groups. The thesis is followed by a

brand process book outlining the process of the new brand creation and its implementation.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This body of research explores the rebranding project for the city of San Marcos, Texas and addresses the need for small municipitalities to implement city branding strategies in order to attract stakeholders. Teemu Moilanen and Seppo Rainisto, place branding experts from Finland, describe the goals of these strategies as: to attract companies and investments, promote growth in the tourist industry, strengthen the local citizens' identity, and attract potential new residents (2009, p. 1). The following thesis outlines the preliminary research, methods, outcomes, and deliverables from the rebranding project for San Marcos, Texas.

Statement Of The Problem

The global population is continually growing. Keith Dinnie, an academic scholar and author of *City branding: Theory and cases*, reports that in 1925, 25% of the world's population lived in cities, and that by 2025, that number will be closer to 75%. As populations increase and unihabited land decreases, competition between cities becomes more aggressive in order to attract potential investment and to increase population size. In this competitive dynamic, brand reputation is critical (2011, p. 15).

The United States Census Bureau reports that from 2010 to 2012 the population of the state of Texas increased by 3.6%; more than double that of the national average of 1.7% ("State and county quickfacts: Texas," 2013). Michael Evamy, a renowned copywriter who writes for many well-respected brands and businessses in Europe (i.e., B&W Loudspeakers, Burberry, and National Railway) states, "we're living through a pandemic of place branding…Thriving in a world of international city-on-city

competition, urban regeneration and unprecedented growths in travel, tourism, and relocation" (2012, p. 59). Because of the rapid growth within the state of Texas and the increase of competition between cities, an increased need for city branding has developed.

In July of 2009, the city council of San Marcos began work on a project to rebrand the city. The city released a request for proposals for branding services to design agencies that identified the goals of the rebrand as needing to "clarify San Marcos' unique identity and develop consistent, clear and positive messages as a way to help the City and community organizations engage in successful recruitment and marketing of San Marcos, Texas" ("Request for proposals," 2009). The following project outlines a rebranding project conducted for the city of San Marcos in response to the request for proposals.

Defining Brand Identity

A brand is defined as "an impression percieved in a client's mind of a product or a service. It is the sum of all tangible and intangible elements, which makes the selection unique" (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009, p. 6). Alina Wheeler, author of *Designing brand identity*, defines brand identity as the promise that any product, corporation, or entity promises to uphold and deliver upon and will reside in the mindset of all individuals who interact with the brand. A brand identity typically consists minimally of a logo, basic implementation, and a slogan (e.g., tagline). However, a complete brand identity also includes many touch points that act to promote and strengthen the brand. These touchpoints include but are not limited to: printed collateral and digital marketing

materials, user experience (both web-based and social media) advertising, environmental graphics, direct marketing, and an online presense (2006, p. 4).

City Branding

Brand identity is historically used to promote a corporation or a product. G. J. Ashworth, a professor at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, and Dr. Mihalis Kavaratzis, a lecturer at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom, stated that cities cannot be marketed in the same fashion as products or businesses. Due to this restriction, a unique type of branding is required (2009, p. 525). In a world with hundreds of cities and a total population well over one million, competition between cities grow as each one strives to be the most appealing (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009, p. 3). In order for cities to differentiate themselves from others, the practice of place branding is needed.

María Isabel Míguez González, a faculty member of Universidade de Vigo, defined place branding as a mode to create value between a geographical area and an individual by building a comprehensive image of the economic, social, and historical aspects of the place to create a positive image of the location (2011, pp. 297-298). Veronika Koller, a senior lecturer of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University stated that city branding follows these same guidelines, but demonstrates a shift from "material to semiotic cognitive production" (2008, p. 431). This notion is further supported by Jørgen Stigel and Søren Frimann, professors of Communication and Informatics at Aalborg University, who observed that a city is similar to a person in that it has a unique identity and a set of personal values that are held dear (2006, p. 248).

The ultimate goal of city branding is to create "preference and loyalty to the city among the various segments which cities serve" (Dinnie, 2011, p. 9). Milton Glaser, one

of the most celebrated graphic designers in the United States, designed the iconic brand of New York City, New York (see illustration section, p. 49). This brand identity encapsulated the unique sense of the city and is an early example of place branding as defined today. The design was immediately implemented across a multitude of marketing materials and functioned to attract non-locals to a city that previously held a reputation of bankruptcy and crime. The logo still generates $30 million every year for the state of New York from mechandise sales (Evamy, 2012).

The goal of rebranding the city of San Marcos was to deliver a consistent message through promotion of the brand to three target audiences: residents, business investors, and tourists. Through the development of successful city branding, San Marcos will differentiate itself and stand out in a cluttered marketplace full of competition. Successful implementation will result in increased revenues from tourism, attract investments from businesses, and propogate and retain a qualified workforce (Koller, 2008).

San Marcos, Texas

San Marcos, Texas is a small city located in the central Texas hill country and is one of the oldest continually inhabited areas of the Northern hemisphere. The city is located on Interstate Highway 35 between two larger metropolitan areas: San Antonio and Austin ("Historic Downtown," 2014). In 2012, the United States Census Bureau released an article stating that Austin, San Antonio and San Marcos are three of the fastest-growing cities in the nation, and that San Marcos has "the highest rate of growth among all U.S. cities and towns with at least 50,000 people" ("Texas cities lead nation," 2013). Due to rapid growth in San Marcos as well as the surrounding cities of Austin and

San Antonio, the immediate need for strong city branding is very timely in order to continue growth in the city and attract the target audiences.

Population. The United States Census Bureau reports that in 2012 , San Marcos had an estimated population of 50,001 residents. Of that population, the majority were females, ages 20-24, and of Latino ethnicity. There were also a total of 18,169 housing units within the city limits of which over 50% were renter-occupied with an average number of 2.31 individuals living in each household ("State and County Quickfacts: San Marcos," 2013) (see illustration section, pp. 51-52).

Economy. The economy of San Marcos is primarily supported through education, retail business, and tourism. These three areas of the economy are stimulated primarily by Texas State University, Premium Outlets, Tanger Outlets, the Edward's Aquifer, and Spring Lake at Aquarena Springs with support of the local tourist industry ("Community Demographics," 2009).

Education. San Marcos' population continues to grow largely due to Texas State University and the large student population it generates. Enrollment for the Fall 2011 semester at Texas State University reported 34,113 students ("Texas State," 2011). To supplement the large student work force, the majority of job options in San Marcos are part-time positions in fields of retail and service industry. Historically, these job options are not considered as long-term career opportunities that will persuade college students to become permanent residents after graduation, or attract new residents to move to the city.

Employment. The largest employers and manufacturers in the city were Texas State University with 2,780 employees, Premium Outlets with 2,100 employees, Tanger

Outlets with 1,540 employees, the San Marcos Independent School District with 1,114 employees, Hunter Industries with 650 employees, HEB Distribution Center with 578 employees, Philips with 333 employees, and C-FAN with 319 employees ("Community demographics," 2009).

Target Audience For Rebrand

City branding cannot effectively appeal to every audience in the exact same way, nor can it be expected to attract all consumers equally. Sucessful city branding initiatives are directed at a group of defined audiences, communicate varying messages to each group, and remain true to the brand identity as a whole.

In order to attract investment to San Marcos, a unified brand identity and message will be developed to appeal to the three defined target audiences of investment groups: residents, business investors, and tourists. Dinnie (2011) writes that the challenge for any city brand is to determine how to develop a "strong umbrella brand that is coherent across a range of different areas of activity with different target audiences, whilst at the same time enabling sector-specific brand communication to be created" (p. 5). In an interview regarding the rebranding project of San Marcos, Mayor Susan Narvaiz stated that "every group in San Marcos has their own tagline" (Mester, 2009, para. 7). This demonstrates how the city attempts to appeal to every target audience without having one strong overarching brand identity present.

Residents. The first target investment group the rebrand of the city of San Marcos will attract are residents. Dinnie (2011) writes that "residents embody a city's local culture, own and operate local businesses, and represent the personality of the place" (p. 14). Stephen Green, a lecturer of design at Brunel University, explains that the

brand of a city is a collaborative design that involves "many heterogeneous stakeholders who must collaborate in order to achieve a sucessful outcome" (2005, p. 277).

As stated previously, the population of San Marcos is predominantly comprised of college-aged students between the ages of 20-24. This age group is significantly younger than the state average and contributes to the city's student population being significantly higher than the state average ("San Marcos, Texas" 2013). Most commonly, college-aged students rent property, live with roommates, and hold jobs in the service industry or retail sales jobs. This demographic does not contribute to growth of single family homes or corporate business development, and is generally regarded to be uninvolved in the local community. Due to the current lack of corporate or large business employment, the majority of college-aged students move away from San Marcos after graduation. Thus, the city is not able to take advantage of the majority of educated Texas State University graduates for its workforce.

The rebrand of San Marcos will focus on attracting young families, working professionals, and graduates of Texas State University. This will encourage businesses to establish a residence in the city. This demographic will additionally stimulate the economy by investing in real estate, regularly purchase home supplies from local businesses, and help strengthen the community with more active participation and involvement.

Business Investors. The second target investment group the rebrand of the city of San Marcos will attract are business investors. Dinne (2011) states that "investment creates jobs, expands the tax base, helps manage budgets and credit ratings, and funds education, infrastructure, and services" (p. 18).

As stated previously, the business landscape in San Marcos is predominantly focused on education, retail, and manufacturing (see illustration section, p. 53). These industries provide opportunities to the local work force and maintain the unemployment level at 5.6% which is below the 6.7% Texas State level ("San Marcos, Texas" 2013). However, this does not provide many opportunities for long-term career paths or employee advancement.

The rebrand of San Marcos will focus on attracting more professional, scientific, and technical industries. Bringing these types of industries will stimulate the economy by attracting business professionals to the area, create long-term career path jobs, and entice graduating college students to stay in the community due to more diverse and readily available job opportunities.

Tourists. The third target investment group the rebrand of the city of San Marcos will attract are tourists. The Webster Dictionary defines tourism as "traveling for pleasure and the economic activities related to it" (Morehead & Morehead, 1995). It involves traveling in search of images and experiences that are not found at home (Dinnie, 2011, p. 28). Tourism brings income into a city from external sources it otherwise would not have access to. It not only brings new consumers into a city, it promotes increased spending within the city, creates jobs in leisure and hospitality, and helps a city differentiate itself from others.

The San Marcos department of tourism focuses on the many natural areas of the city and the easily accessible San Marcos River ("Attractions," 2014). This focus is geared toward attracting tourists intested in outdoor activities, as well as providing year-round areas of recreational activities for local residents.

Tourism in a city is commonly thought of as an activity that a visitor will participate in while being guest of the city. However, tourism can also be used to introduce a place to a consumer. By providing a pleasing tourist experience to an individual, that experience will resonate after the visit is over, and hopefully later persuade that individual to become a permanent resident.

The rebrand of San Marcos will focus on attracting more families and leisure and hospitality businesses to the area. Attracting these types of tourist groups will aid the economy by introducing the city to prospective residents looking for affordable real estate and a community focused on education, as well as business investors looking to capitalize on a growing tourist industry.

Current Brand Identity

City branding initiatives often adopt and implement only a few pieces of brand identity and messaging. Many times this is due to budgetary restraints, a lack of dedicated resources, and minimal knowledge of the importance of brand identity. The brand pieces implemented typically include a logo, tagline, and a few pieces of promotional material. Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) believes that in order to create a sucessful city brand, the identity must be a continuous process that interacts with all marketing efforts. Wayne Curtis, a contributing editor for *Preservation Magazine*, agrees it is not enough for a city to simply have a brand that sits upon historical information; it also needs a strategy of implementation (2006).

The previous brand identity of San Marcos included several logo variations, inconsistent marketing materials, and assorted signage that all lack visual consistency

between them. This creates a conflicting and unsuccessful distribution of brand messaging to the target audience (see illustration section, pp. 59-61).

Liping Cai, William Gartner, and Ana Munar, editors of *Tourism Branding: Communities in Action*, writes that for a brand to be sucessful and raise positive awareness, it needs to be consistent in the eyes of the consumer. Inconsistent branding leads to incoherent and fragmented marketing which relays an unclear message to the consumer (2009, p. 31)

Goal Of The New Identity

In order to meet the goals of attracting residents, investors, and tourists, the new brand identity will demonstrate differentiation from surrounding cities, display a consistent marketing message to build a positive image aimed at the target audiences, and gain market share by increasing economic growth and urban development.

Case Studies Of Similar Brands And Successful Implementation

City branding is becoming one of the primary functions of city management. Cities of all sizes use multiple methods in order to raise awareness and promote themselves to their target audiences (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009, p. 520). For smaller municipitalities that are typically limited on resources and funds, city branding is vital for them to predominently positition themselves in the competitive marketplace.

To better understand commonalities in city branding among cities, a comparison study is created to research branding strategies and outline the success of the rebrand. This comparison study proves commonalities in the primary target audiences of city branding through differentiation, increasing awareness, and overcoming negative perceptions.

McKinney, Texas. Differentiation and awareness are key ingredients to a successful brand identity. McKinney, Texas is located on the outskirts of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, one of the largest cities in Texas. McKinney struggled to compete with such a large city in attracting residents and business investors. As a result of this, the city launched a new branding campaign that focused on differentiation with the help of North Star Branding, an advertising agency specializing in city branding. Through the city branding campaign, McKinney marketed its close proximity to Dallas, but focused on its ample green space as an opportunity for residential spaces and business investment. The tagline, "Unique by Nature" (see illustration section, p. 49) identifies the city as an alternative to Dallas, providing a natural surrounding that cannot be found in the large metroplex.

Results of city branding can be difficult to quantify due to a lack of understanding of the role of city branding, a diverse and complex stakeholder group, and the difficulty of delivering quantifiable results (Green, 2005, p. 279). In the case of McKinney, the city rated the success of the rebrand with quantitative data reporting an increase in hotel/motel tax of 22%, an increase in city sales tax of 17%, and an overall population growth of 120% ("Results," 2006). This data indicates the rebranding of McKinney, Texas was sucessful in attracting residents and business investments.

Wallongong, New South Wales, Australia. Overcoming a negative brand image is a challenge for city branding. Consumers are often influenced by media sources and can form a negative perception of a place without ever physically visiting. Wollongong, in New South Wales, was the subject of many negative stories reported by the local media. Dinne (2011) explains that the negative publicity the city received from

the media regarding crime, heavy industry, and pollution detracted potential investors from the city. In order to reverse the negative imagery, Wallongong rebranded itself as a "city of innovation" based on its historic achievements in steel production (see illustration section, p. 49). The rebrand campaign included extensive advertising, media, and public relation campaigns to communicate the new image to the public (Dinnie, p. 214).

The Wollongong rebranding campaign redefined the negative public image of the city. The success of the campaign was not measured by quantitative data as the success of McKinney was, but instead by an image study conducted before and after the rebrand by the Illawarra Regional Information Service. The study found that the number of people who felt that Wollongong offered "beautiful, unspoiled natural attractions" had increased from 49% pre-branding, to 73% post-brand implementation (Dinnie, p. 219). This data provided evidence that the rebranding of Wollongong was sucessful in changing negative perceptions about itself and communicating a positive perception through the media.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

For any design assignment, many different research strategies are available and can be utilized in order to achieve one final design solution. Sam Jacob, a columnist for *Art Review*, descibes these methodologies of design as "conceived of as an ecology; the design process breeds a host of solutions; and each of these is tested within the conceptual environment" (2012, p. 60). In the following study, the five phases of preliminary research chosen for the San Marcos rebranding project include: city research, photographic documentation, an existing brand audit, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), and zag analysis.

Phase One: City Research

San Marcos, Texas is defined by its chamber of commerce as a "thriving city that welcomes new employers and has the resources to help new and expanding businesses succeed" ("Community demographics," 2009). The city has a population density of 2,746 per square mile and an average commute time of 20.5 minutes which makes it attractive for all target segments. Additionally, the city's crime rate over the last 10 years has been below that of the U.S. average by 10% ("San Marcos, Texas" 2013).

For potential residents of the city, career opportunities are found both within and outside the city limits. Within the city, the top employers are Texas State University with 2,780 employees, Premium Outlets with 2,100 employees, Tanger Factory Outlet Center with 1,540 employees, and the San Marcos Independent School District with 1,114 employees ("Community demographics," 2009). Addionally, the city is located 30 miles south of Austin, Texas on Interstate Highway 35. Austin is saturated with many diverse

tech career opportunites that are attractive to college graduates. San Marcos' close proximity to Austin provides a short work communte to one of the largest growing cities in the state.

For business investors, San Marcos has a very competitive utility and property tax rate for not only residential, but also commercial and industrial industries. Additionally, for businesses that requires importing and exporting of parts and products, the Union Pacific Railroad service in San Marcos averages 20 trains entering and exiting the city every day ("Community demographics," 2009).

For tourists, San Marcos offers an array of outdoor activities. The city is home to one of the nation's largest wooden playscapes, as well as nine city parks and Wonder World Caverns which provides a guided tour underneath the surface of the city. The San Marcos River provides many activities including tubing, fishing, canoeing, and scuba diving. Additionally, the Premium Outlets and Tanger Outlets offer year-round shopping to both residents and visitors of the city.

Phase Two: Photographic Documentation

Phase two of the preliminary research is the photographic documentation of the city of San Marcos. This documentation includes a collection of photographs from the city and surrounding areas (see illustration section, p. 54-58). The collection of these photographs will aid in the formation of a visual representation of the city that will be incorporated into the final brand identity.

The primary areas of photographic research are local flora and fauna, industry, and recreation. Many consistent themes become evident as a result of the photographic documentation. These photographs show an abundance of plants and animals that live in

and around the San Marcos River. Through these visual representations, consistent themes appear in the construct of basic organic shapes, as well as a color palette of earth tones including muted blues, greens, and greys.

Findings from the photographic documentation direct the visual formation of the San Marcos brand and identity that is later used in the final logo design. By constructing elements based on the organic shapes and colors found in nature, the viewer subconsciously identifies with these constructs and in turn relates the identity of San Marcos to the concept of nature. John Rossiter and Steve Bellman, two notable authors on marketing and communication, call this sort of attachment emotional branding. They state, "emotional branding is defined here as the consumer's attachment of a strong, specific, usage-relevant emotion–such as Bonding, Companionship, or Love–to the brand" (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012, p. 291).

Phase Three: Existing Brand Audit

Phase three of the preliminary research is an audit of the existing brand. This strategy helps to identify the existing successes and failures of the current brand.

Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) writes, "too often cities adopt only a part of the branding process, namely the development of a catchy slogan and/or the design of a new logo to be attached in promotional material" (p. 522). A survey of the existing brand of San Marcos uncoveres a lack of continuity and cohesiveness (see illustration section, pp. 59-61). There are multiple executions of the city's logo, as well as many inconsistent uses of the logo in the city's media and print collateral, which fail to successfully communicate a single brand identity. Marty Neumier, a noted author of brand and advertising books, states in *ZAG: The #1 strategy of high-performace brands* that the

average consumer is subjected to over 3,000 marketing messages every day. Inconsistent branding causes confusion as well as heightened skepticism in the reliability or credibility of the brand (Neumier, 2007, p. 7). Kevin Roberts, CEO Worldwide of Saatchi & Saatchi, a global advertising agency headquartered in New York, states that, "brands were developed to create differences for products that were in danger of becoming as hard to tell apart as chunks of gravel" (Roberts, 2005, p. 30).

To successfully implement awareness of the new brand identity for the city, a consistent approach in the distribution of the brand needs to be formulated and maintained. Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) believes that successful branding cannot be obtained by inconsistent marketing messages, but instead needs to be "thought of as a complete and continuous process interlinked with all other marketing efforts" (p. 522).

Phase Four: SWOT Analysis

Phase four of the preliminary research involves setting up a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis technique is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project or business venture (see illustration section, pp. 63-64). The strengths and weaknesses are typically defined internally by the organization, and the opportunities and threats are external factors. By evaluating these categories, a plan of action can be formed that will be implemented in order to position the brand favorably in the marketplace.

Strengths. The strengths of a city include any factors that position it as valuable above its competition. By evaluating the strengths of San Marcos, many elements are identified as positive attributes for the city.

The first strength identified is the easily accessible natural areas in and around the city. Nearby cities of Austin and San Antonio are very densly populated and do not have vast areas of nature that are easily accessible to all residents. In San Marcos, many geographical areas, including the San Marcos River and the surrounding Hill Country, are readily accessible. These are identified as strengths that San Marcos owns which help to differentiate itself from nearby cities. In addition to this strength, these accessible areas are promoted by an abundance of recreational activities in and around the city. The river affords many water activities and the local greenbelt provides many appealing areas ideal for hiking, biking and camping.

The second strength found is the city's low population density. In Austin and San Antonio, larger populations results in a higher crime rate, higher property taxes, and longer driving work commute times due to traffic. This strength differentiates San Marcos and provides light traffic levels, less crime, and relatively inexpensive cost of land for commercial or residential investment.

The third strength is the close proximity of the city to two large metropolitan areas of Texas: Austin and San Antonio. This close distance and short travel time allows residents to have convenient access to the benefits of larger cities while retaining residence in a smaller city, as well as provides local business investors an extended market for which to promote business and gain clientele.

Weaknesses. Weaknesses of a city include factors that make the city vulnerable to competition. By evaluating the weaknesses of the city, many factors are found that may cause negative perceptions of the city. Deborah Peel and M. Greg Lloyd, chairs of Architecture and Planning at the University of Dundee, writes that if a city's brand has a

negative image, this will adversely affect goals of economic development and attracting external investments. In order for a city to obtain economic performance and growth, the brand must overcome any perceived negative image (Peel & Lloyd, 2008, p. 509).

The first weaknesses of the city is the lack of large professional corporations in San Marcos. The Premium Outlets Mall are one of the largest suppliers of job positions in San Marcos. However, the jobs offer primarily hourly salaries in retail or fast food that do not offer long-term career paths or many opportunities for professional development.

The second weakness of the city is the inconsistent manner in which its brand identity and messaging is delivered to consumers. The brand exhibits an inconsistent execution across many marketing platforms. This can cause confusion and doubts to consumers in regard to the brand. This is a common weakness in cities and is typically caused by a limitation of resources. Dinne (2011) describes a common problem that city branding faces as a combination of "overstretched and inadequate facilities, as well as limited financial resources" (p. 93).

The third weakness of the city is a lack of awareness in the marketplace. Areavibes ("Find the best," 2014), a website that rates the top places to live in United States, lists areas based on cost of living, crime rates, tax rates, and many other factors. The site identifies the top 100 places to live in Texas and San Marcos does not populate as an option, though Buda and Wimberley, two nearby citys, are identified in the list. Because of San Marcos' small size and limited resources to market itself to consumers, increasing awareness is difficult. This is a common weakness among small citys due to small marketing budgets.

Opportunities. Opportunities of a city are typically areas where improvement can be gained to better compete in the marketplace. The largest opportunites for San Marcos are more community involvement from residents and college students, more outward promotion of the brand, and more direct marketing of the benefits of investing in San Marcos.

The first opportunity is to promote the college-aged population of the city in order to attract business investments. Dinnie (2011) discusses how Toronto, Canada sucessfully promotes itself as an attractive city for investors. The primary reason is that it has a large population of working-age individuals, as well as a very well-educated population. This is due to the large universities and student populations it produces (p. 22). San Marcos is similar to Toronto with a large population of working-age, well-educated students of Texas State.

The second opportunity is the low utility and property tax rate in the city. By actively promoting this benefit, the city can attract both potential residents and business investments when looking for a destination to relocate to.

A third opportunity is to increase involvement in the natural areas of the city. Initiating community involvement and local programs to promote these areas will help to build awareness of the natural geographical areas of the city, and promote more tourism opportunities.

Threats. Threats to a city are external factors that could potentially become obstacles for sucessfully attracting consumers. Dinnie (2011) discusses that cities are becoming the primary differentiator between different geographical regions. Competition to position themselves as the optimal choice for prospective residents, tourists, and

investors will only intensify as they focus on how to effectively convey their brand and significant benefits of it (p. xiii).

The first threat is the growing competition of other citys in near proximity to San Marcos. These citys have similar goals to attract residents, business investors, and tourists. Austin, Texas is a short drive north of San Marcos and has a many more employment opportunites for college graduates that want to go into the scientific or technology fields. San Antonio, Texas is south of San Marcos and has a rich cultural heritage that stimulates a booming tourism business. Buda and Wimberley, as previously discussed, are smaller citys that share many of San Marcos' strengths, but are increasing their awareness in areas of online advertising and marketing.

The second threat is the large student population that migrates annually out of the city in search of better job opportunities. There are no incentive to keep these students as residents after they graduate, so they choose relocate to another city. As students continue to move away from San Marcos after graduation, the city will struggle to attract businesses to relocate to San Marcos due to lack of an educated, working-aged population.

Phase Five: Zag Analysis

Phase five of the preliminary research is zag analysis. Marty Neumeier (2007) defines zag as the radical differentiation that is the number one strategy of high-performance brands. We no longer live in a world of simply faster, but rather a world of more clutter. A sucessful brand needs to be able to cut through the clutter and be memorable to the viewer (Neumeier, 2007, p. 26-27). When there are too many conflicting identities and messages for one brand in the marketplace, it creates confusion

and doubt for the consumer. Creating a consistent identity and messaging for a brand helps to solidify its awareness to the consumer as well as differentiate itself from its competitors.

Zag analysis, as defined by Neumeier, consists of a series of 17 questions that are asked about the existing brand. The answers to these questions serve to identify and formulate tactics to differentiate a brand in a competitive market (see illustration section, pp. 65-66). The findings from the zag analysis questions for the city of San Marcos connotes three major themes of differentiation that the city should promote: a strong tie to nature, a small town experience, and the presence of a large university system.

A Strong Tie To Nature. San Marcos can differentiate itself by promoting its strong involvement with nature and embracing a positive green living stance. This was accomplished by promoting the San Marcos River and the many outdoor activites it affords. This will help the city position itself to the target investment group of tourists. The ease of accessing outdoor activities will attract individuals looking for optimal vacation or excursion areas.

A Small Town Experience. Because of the small size of San Marcos, residents are fortunate to enjoy a low population density and resulting shorter average commute time. In addition, property, utility, and tax rates in the city are lower than average, as is the crime rate. With the added benefit of being close to larger metropolitan areas for individuals who need to commute to work in a larger city, or just desire the offerings of a larger city without the hassles of living in one, this can help to attract the target investment group of residents to the city.

A Larger University System. As stated previously, the total population count of the city is 50,001 with a student population of 34,113, and 2,780 employees of the University. The student population is more than half the entire city population and the University employs almost 6% of the population. In addition, every year the university graduates a large group of young working-aged individuals that are qualified to enter the work force. This is an attribute that many other similar surrounding citys do not offer. By promoting this asset to the target investment group of businesses, the city can effectively recruit businesses to relocate or expand into the city to take advantage of the eligible working population.

CHAPTER III

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As city populations continue to grow, there becomes an increased competition between cities to attract stakeholders, which are defined as investors (i.e., business owners), residents and tourists. In order for San Marcos to effectively attract these target investment groups regardless of growing competition, it needs to effectively communicate its brand identity and messaging to the target audiences. The findings of the preliminary research discussed in the previous chapter help to identify the existing problem areas within the city and the negative effect these areas have on attracting the target investment groups.

The SWOT analysis indicated the primary weaknesses of the city are: a lack of large professional corporations, inconsistent brand identity and messaging, and a lack of awareness in the marketplace. Additionally, the SWOT analysis indicated the primary threats to the city are: growing competition of other citys in near proximity to San Marcos and the large student population that migrates annually out of the city in search of better job opportunities.

By studying the weaknesses and threats identified, it is evident that the current inconsistent brand and messaging for the city is causing a lack of awareness in the marketplace to its target audiences. Because of this lack of awareness, the growing competition from nearby cities receive the majority of attention from the target audiences when they are searching for potential relocation. This lack of aknowledgement in the city is evident each year when the University graduates a group of young, working-aged professionals who leave the city in search of better career opportunities and larger

corporations to work for. This exodus negatively impacts the city's attempts to attract larger corporations and businesses.

The SWOT analysis also indicated the primary strengths of the city as: having easily accessible natural areas, a low population density, and a close proximity to other larger metropolitan areas. Additionally, the SWOT analysis indicated the primary opportunities for the city are: increased promotion of the college-aged population of the city to attract business investments, increased promotion of the low utility and property tax rate in the city, and more community involvement in the natural areas of the city.

By taking the current strengths, and combining them with the current opportunities, the city can begin working to more effectively attract its target audiences. More outward promotion of the easily accessible natural areas will attract more tourists to the area and increase awareness of the city outside of its geographical boundaries. The low population density of the city combined with the low utility and property tax rates will attract residents to the area who are seeking relocation. Finally, the city's close proximity to larger metropolitan areas as well as its yearly graduating class of young professionals can help to attract larger corporations from Austin and San Antonio to expand and build additional locations in San Marcos with employment positions filled by the large population of working-aged individuals and recent graduates.

The zag analysis identified the primary areas of differentiation that the city should focus on is to increase its awareness in the competitive market of city branding. In order to begin effectively marketing the city, a consistent brand identity and message needs to be developed to promote the city and begin increasing awareness in the marketplace. The main areas of differentiation the city should focus on for its new brand

identity are: its strong tie to nature, its small town experience, and its large university system.

The problems and opportinities identified by the SWOT and zag analysis will help to build an effective brand identity and successful marketing solution to increase awareness in the marketplace and to attract the target investment groups.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS

The outcomes of the preliminary research result in consistent themes that are identified and extended into a complete brand identity. The next two phases are methods and outcomes.

In the methods phase, the different strategies used are basic word listing, hand sketching, and formation of a final design solution. Mike McAuley, a senior lecturer and director of illustration at the Massey University School of Design, states the key conceptual thinking skill in successful illustration is in the translation of the written word to a visual design, or rather the ability to interpret written text (McAuley, 2010, p. 112). By beginning with word listing, the written word begins to change form and shift to a final design outcome, or illustration.

Word List

A word list is a collection of words or phrases that represent specific topics (see illustration section, pp. 68-69). Once the list is complete, identification of key words that best connote the desired message of the brand are chosen. Additionally, relevent words originating from the wordlist were incorporated into the new SM tagline (i.e., slogan). The next step of the process involves taking these words and forming simple graphical representations of the words into iconography.

Icons

Icons are defined through an explanation of semiotics. João F. D. Figueiredo and Denis A. Coelho, from the Technological Industrial Design program of Universidade da Beira Interior in Portugal, writes that by human nature, we assign a symbolic connotation

to objects beyond their preceived explicit meaning. Thus, the product of design is not always methodical, but rather intuitive (Figueiredo & Coelho, 2010, p. 334). Humans see common shapes and symbols and make automatic connections to different meanings and feelings based on this predisposition. These signs can be as straightforward as Morse code or as simple as a swift facial expression. Sean Hall, the leader of Contextual studies at the Goldsmith University of London, explains "signing is vital to human existence because it underlies all forms of communication" (Hall, 2007, p. 5).

From the results of the word list, an icon study is developed. This study includes taking various words that accurately represent the intended message of the brand, and then studying existing iconic representations of those words through logo usage. One of the strengths identified by the SWOT analysis was the many easily accessible natural areas in San Marcos. Due to this, the following specific words are chosen: river, nature, mall, and university. The findings illustrate many common themes focusing on shape formation and color combinations. These themes are explored further with conceptual sketches and roughs (see illustration section, pp. 70-73).

Sketches And Roughs

The outcomes of the word list and results of the icon study are followed by the development of initial sketches and then roughs of iconographic treatments that will be used for the new identity of San Marcos.

These initial sketches and roughs are vital to the process of design as they allow for exploration of different variations on multiple themes (see illustration section, pp. 74-77). Ron Dulaney Jr., an assistant professor of Interior Design at West Virginia University, and Francis Lyn, a coordinator for the School of Architecture at Florida

Atlantic University, writes that “hand drawing, particularly free-hand sketching, is highly valued and practiced among both academics and practicioners” (Dulaney & Lyn, 2010, p. 285). Through this process the final logo design and identity is created.

CHAPTER V

OUTCOMES

In the outcomes phase, the results of the previously described methods formulated a new brand and identity for San Marcos. The outcomes included many attributes of the new logo and brand identity including a color and type palette, an icon suite, taglines, and a grid system for future deliverables to follow. Rob Wallace, a global design and brand strategy consultant stated, "visual language is far more eloquent than verbal communication" (Wallace, 2008, para. 18). Dinne (2011) expanded on this by advising that, "in order to develop a strong brand, policy makers need to identify a clear set of brand attributes that the city possesses and which can form the basis for engendering positive perception of the city across multiple audiences" (p. 5). By creating a suite of brand images, messaging, and standards to follow when communicating the brand, the city will be able to effectively communicate a consistent brand message across all platforms.

New Logo And Brand Identity

A trademark and logo are defined as a "patented name or visual mark attached to [a] product" (Morehead & Morehead, 1995). The logo is the external face of any company or product and serves to represent the product and all that it stands for. In order to be successful, the logo needs to be recognizeable, as well as memorable. Jay Doblin, known internationally for trademark design, stated that a successful logo can be an enormously valuable business asset and can create a following of individuals who become promoters of the brand (Doblin, 1967, p. 180).

Leslie Savan, an author of graphic design literature, in discussing a proposed graphic system to be implemented on an international level stated that "symbol signs are simple silhouetted pictures that act as signs: a knife and fork will mean restaurant, a question mark, an information booth" (Savan, 1976, p. 258). Wallace (2008) described that humans respond to preset levels of visual hierarchy in communications: color, shape, numbers, and words. While the color and shapes of the logo were designed to symbolize icons of nature and growth, the typeface served to communicate a friendly and approachable personality (see illustration section, pp. 79-80).

As discussed previously from the findings of the SWOT and zag analysis, the city of San Marcos had a very strong tie to nature and a strong relationship with the university. To communicate these assets, a typeface execution was needed that was both organic and inviting, but also modern and sophisticated. Thus, the resulting colors and typeface chosen for the primary brand identity were green and blue, and Gotham Rounded.

Color

Color is defined as, "any of the hues of the rainbow and any tint or shade made by mixing those hues" (Morehead & Morehead, 1995, p. 141). Jim Krause, an author on color theory, wrote that color is not a singular form but rather the creation by many elements that result in our perception of it. When color is used in branding an identity or logo, the primary function is to evoke a feeling or perception from the viewer. Color and combinations of colors can persuade, arouse, challenge, and inspire the viewer. Though all individuals may interpret different thoughts or feelings in reaction to a color, there is a common majority who share the same reaction (Krause, 2002, p. 8).

"Color is used to evoke emotion, express personality, and stimulate brand association" (Wheeler, 2006, p. 110) In an empirical study by Niki Hynes, a lecturer at the University or Strathclyde in Glasgow, a relationship was found between color meaning and logo design that contributes to building a consistent corporate image. "Logos add value by stakeholders seeing and remembering the logo (i.e., recognition) but to be effective, the logo must serve as a signature of he company, by cleary linking the shape, design or color to the organization it represents" (Hynes, 2008, p. 545). The results of the study showed that the color green had a common association to the following words: stability, contemplative, prestigious, security, dynamic, and growth. The results of the study also showed that the color blue had a common association to the following words: dependable, warm, protective, stability, reliable, and trustworthy.

The results from Hynes' research, as well as from the icon study from the San Marcos preliminary research, concluded the color selection of green and blue for the new San Marcos logo. The colors were chosen to visually to express a city of stability, growth, dependability, and reliability. Alvin Lustig, a teacher and lecturer of typography at Yale University, stated that "design is related in some way to the world, the society that creates it… People will respond most warmly and directly to those designs which express their feelings and their tastes" (Lustig, 1954, p. 106).

In addition to the primary colors of the logo, a secondary color palette was created as a second color resource for alternative marketing materials that support the brand identity of San Marcos. The primary color palette consisted of the green and blue from the logo, and the secondary palette consisted of a wide range of earth tones and natural hues (see illustration section, pp. 81-82).

Typography

Typography is defined as "the art or work of setting type in the style of printed matter" (Morehead & Morehead, 1995). In disciplines of graphic design and brand identity, typography is used to create a unique perception of a brand or company. In our everyday lives, we are continually surrounded by type and typograpic systems. These systems are used to direct, instruct, engage, and persuade the audience. Charlotte Rivers, a freelance writer of graphic design, wrote that "type's central function is to communicate a message in such a way that firstly, the intellectual content is understood, and secondly, it is given a unique voice" (Rivers, 2005, p. 7).

The goal of the new brand identity as defined by the SWOT and zag analysis was to attract the city's target investment groups by promoting its desireable assets and by differentiating itself from its competition. The typeface chosen for the San Marcos logo was Gotham Rounded. Gotham Rounded is part of the Gotham type family designed by Johnathan Hoefler and Tobias Frere-Jones in 2000. Gotham was originally inspired by signs on buildings and was designed as a workmanlike alphabet. Gotham Rounded is an extension of Gotham that retains the more technical design, though has a more friendly and amusing aspect to it ("Gotham rounded," 2013). This typeface offered many varying cuts that could be applied across different mediums in marketing materials. It also appropriately conveyed the differentiators of the zag analysis and suits the logotype of San Marcos by conveying a friendly attitude that is supported by the small town experience, but also retaining a modern and high-tech feel that appealed to the desire to attract larger corporations to the city. This typeface was used in the logotype for San

Marcos as well as the additional marketing and promotional materials that were created (see illustration section, pp. 83-84).

Chalk Duster Regular was chosen as a secondary typeface to work in conjunction with Gotham Rounded. Texas State University students comprised over half of the population of the city, and Texas State University and San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District were two of the largest employers in the city. To address this in the brand identity, the typeface Chalk Duster Regular was chosen. Chalk Duster Regular acted as a supporting typeface to be used in marketing materials. The typeface was published by Apple Computer Inc. in 2008. This hand-written font mimiced the look of chalk on a chalkboard which is a common symbol for education (see illustration section, p. 84).

Icon Suite

One of the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis was an inconsistency in brand messaging. To create a consistent theme of iconographic information, an icon suite was developed to support cohesiveness and brand consistency across all platforms. The icon suite for San Marcos was based on the forms and typography used in the new logo. The icons were used to indicate different areas of activities on marketing materials (see illustration section, pp. 85-86).

Taglines

Debra Traverso, a faculty member at Harvard University, wrote that "a tagline is a slogan, clarifier, mantra, company statement or guiding principle that describes, synopsizes or helps create an interest" (Traverso, 2000. p. 147). Taglines are used to evoke a feeling, thought, or response from the audience. To appeal to the consumer, it

must be “valid, believable, simple, appealing, and distinctive” (Peel & Lloyd, 2008, p. 509). The tagline can be as simple as one word, or more complex as a phrase or sentence structure, but ultimately must give a brief summation of values that the brand emphasizes in regard to the consumer (Stigel & Frimann, 2006, p. 251). For the San Marcos indentity, a combination of taglines were chosen.

In order to effectively speak to the different target audiences (i.e., residents, business investors, and tourists), a combination of taglines were chosen to convey different messages when speaking to diverse audiences, but to also coexist under the brand umbrella. To accomplish this, the taglines followed a fill-in-the-blank format. By doing so, the tagline could be altered to effectively communicate to its target audience (see illustration section, pp. 87-88).

The branding strategies and methodologies discussed were used to create a single and identifiable brand identity for San Marcos. The logo, color and type palette, icon suite and taglines became the visual foundation of the San Marcos brand. “Look and feel is the visual language that makes a system proprietary and immediately recognizable” (Wheeler, 2006, p. 68). By keeping one consistent look and feel for the brand of San Marcos, the consumers who interact with the brand would have a higher recall on the brand messaging and view it as authentic and reliable.

Grid System

A grid system creates a field of regularity that permits viewers to anticipate where to locate information. An effective grid system is defined by its ability to achieve coherency in organizing a layout so that the viewer can easily follow and understand what is showed in a timely and predictable manner. The grid system is the logical

juncture of horizontal and vertical divisions acting as guides for locating that information. This system is used throughout the printed marketing materials to create a visual continuity (see illustration section, pp. 89-90).

A successfull grid design needs to achieve coherency in organizing a space so that the viewer can easily follow and understand what is shown in a timely and predictable manner. Timothy Samara, a graphic designer and educator based in New York City, stated that "the grid renders the elements it controls into a neutral spatial field of regularity that permits accessibility" (Samara, 2002, p. 9). The grid system applied to the new logo for San Marcos contained simple, organic shapes and typography. The logo consisted of two shapes that are circular on three sides and had a 90 degree angle protruding from the fourth. These organic shapes mimiced two elements from nature that defined San Marcos: a leaf and a water droplet. The shape on the left was two thirds the height and width of the shape to the right of it. The baseline of the text sat directly on the vertical center height of the logo. This grid layout upheld a visual continuity in the logo as well as implemented a standard layout formula for additional marketing.

CHAPTER VI

DELIVERABLES

From the previous SWOT analysis, three of the weaknesses of the current brand were identified as a minimal presense of professional corporations, an inconsistent promotion of brand identity due to a limitation of resources, and a lack of general awareness of the city. The deliverables of the San Marcos rebrand will strive to eliminate these weaknesses.

Corporate Marketing Materials

Corporate branding is a way of managing consumer expectations. It begins by generating expectations to an audience, and then ensuring that they are met (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009, p. 528). To uphold these expectations, the brand needs consistent delivery on every communication. To do so, there must be alignment and consistency of all marketing materials and messages. City branding can be approached the same way.

The business card design for San Marcos provided all city employees with one standard form of business identification to be used in face-to-face communications. The busines card incorporated the set grid system previously discussed and the primary colors and type palette of the logo (see illustration section, p. 93).

For external communications, the same grid and color format was used for the stationary set. The front of the letterhead provided ample white space for any size or length of communication. The back of the letterhead is fully colored in the shade of green from the logo. The envelope and stamp provided for postal communications followed the design of the letterhead with a clear white front and fully collored flap on the back side.

All paper products were designed to be environmentally sustainable and created from recycled materials (see illustration section, pp. 92-95).

Web-Based Consumer Communications

In the last decade there has been a powerful emergence of web-based applications, online media, and social interaction. The need for any city to own a presence online is apparent. Dinnie (2011) stated, "websites are the primary, the most popular, and nowadays obligatory tool in branding places" (p. 84). Consumers are faced with an endless number of options when making a purchasing decision, and commonly use the Internet to gather information on these options and evaluate the choices. Deborah Kania, author of *Branding.com*, discussed the ease and accessibility of the Internet and how it provides an effective platform for consumers to base their decisions upon (Kania, 2001, p. 219-220). Michael A. Stelzner, author of the 2011 Social Media Industry Marketing Report, reported that the majority of small business owners state that social media is important to their business and that almost 90% report increased exposure of their business as a result of social media (p. 11).

Often times, small municipitalities struggle to choose effective marketing tactics due to a limitation of financial resources and facilities. One benefit of using social media as a marketing tactic lies in the minimal cost of using it. Most cities have an existing website that contains information regarding the city, economy, tourism, and many other areas of information. Social media sites can be set up quickly, managed cost-efficiently and used in conjuction with the existing websites the city may already have operational.

Website. One of the major weaknesses of San Marcos defined by the SWOT analysis was the lack of awareness in the marketplace. Veronika Koller (2008) stated

that, “city branding is the local expression of a global trend which sees cities throughout the world in increasing competition with each other to generate revenues from tourism, to secure investment and to attract and retain a qualified workforce” (p. 432). To compete on the global level, the brand also needed a stronger and more consistent presense on the web and in social media. This would allow for consumers to gather information on the city from all areas of the globe, as well as utilize social media devices like Twitter and Facebook. This would allow for more consumer participation and user-generated content to promote the brand.

More consistent and outward promotion of the brand will help increase awareness in the market. Dinnie (2011) identified the two primary functions of a city’s website as the “promotion and communication of the brand values, identity and personality; and second, the creation of online communities associated with the brand” (p. 82). Kania (2012) supported this by stating that the information on the website not only represents the brand, but how it is communicated, becomes the brand (p. 220). Kania believed the keys to web brand loyalty were: an easy-to-use navigation, fast response time, a feeling of familiarity with the site, and displaying only relevant and accurate information. These elements will work simultaneously to communicate the brand messages, and create a brand loyalty to the website” (2012, p. 212).

The new website design for San Marcos allowed for all target audiences to quickly and easily access information and material specific to their interests. The primary links at the top of the home page quickly directed consumers to appropriate areas of the site to avoid having to sort through information that does not relate to their needs (see illustration section, p. 97).

Social Media. Joel Comm, the author of Twitter Power, wrote that in regard to social media sites, a simplistic view is that each site is a list of people. However, these lists are specific in nature and the types of people that are members (Comm, 2009, p. 5). In June of 2013, Facebook reported 1.15 billion users of which over 50% are aged 18-34 ("Facebook statistics," 2013). This indicated the majority of Facebook members are college-aged individuals. By using social media sites, San Marcos could actively communicate to the community, particularly the large student population. This addresses one of the opportunites from SWOT to promote the college-aged population. This would attract businesses to relocate to the area to take advantage of the young, educated workforce.

Twitter. The simplest way to define Twitter is as a micro-blogging tool. Through Twitter people connect with others, swap stories and advice, network, and converse with each other. Twitter should not be thought of as a direct sales tool, but instead a means to create dialog and friendships with users. Since consumers are more likely to do business with a brand or product they know and trust, Twitter provides that connection and works to strengthen the bond between the product and the consumer (Comm, 2009, p. xix).

An examination of the current Twitter feed for San Marcos (https://twitter.com/CityofSanMarcos) showed the account is utilized on an irregular schedule. Tweets were posted anywhere from one to five times a day, to five to six days a week. The content of the postings lacked personality or authenticity. This form of posting did not promote active engagement from the followers.

As an extension of the brand identity, the city's account was revised in the following ways: a standard tweet schedule of three to four tweets per day was set up for every day of the week, and each specific day of the week would feature content from a different department within the city to actively engage the followers to respond to the tweets. Additionally, postings were written in a genuine tone of voice, and all tweets received by followers were immediately followed up on (see illustration section, p. 98). The zag analysis identified the small town experience of San Marcos as one of its primary differentiators. This Twitter schedule and protocol would aid in supporting that differentiator by connoting a genuine sentiment to its followers that would not be expected in a much larger city.

As a way to increase Twitter followers, once a week a re-tweet contest would be held on the city of San Marcos Twitter account. This contest instructed followers to re-tweet content from the city's twitter feed and as a result those who re-tweeted would be entered into a drawing. The winner of the weekly drawing would win a prize from a local San Marcos business or attraction. This tactic would encourage engagement from the community, and also widen the spread of city information to followers outside of the city who otherwise may not be familiar with it.

Britt Klontz, a digital content strategist at an online marketing company, wrote about a successful Twitter campaign that Monterey County, California implemented. In order to attract new visitors to the city, Monterey County ran a Twitter contest asking residents to share what they feel the most endearing qualities of the community are. The gathered photographs and commentary from residents appeared in the twitter feeds of residents, and in turn the feeds of their followers who may not have been familiar with

Monterey County. This provided a cost effective and simple tactic to spread the Monterey County brand beyond the city's geographical borders (Klontz, 2013).

Facebook. Justin Levy, a Director of Business Development, Marketing, and Client Relations of a new media marketing agency, stated that corporate and city brands continue to benefit from integrating their marketing into social networks. It allows them to humanize themselves (Levy, 2010, p. 3). Because of this, it is becoming more common for cities to have Facebook pages. Often times though, larger cities struggle to keep the humanized feeling to their Facebook page. Due to the large amount of content posted and the frequency, many times individual user comments are either ignored or answered to with a pre-scripted responce. Facebook pages that continue to be successful and keep their following must continually engage their audience. An example of a successful Facebook page is that of the actor Vin Deisel (https://www.facebook.com/VinDiesel).

Vin Diesel utilized his Facebook page sucessfully by remainging actively engaged and retaining his humanism. By consistenly posting a few times a day, or every other day, he retained an active following. Additionally, by sharing different behind-the-scenes photos of himself on movie sets, his social community was encouraged to return to view the new and exciting content. Perhaps the most important factor that makes Vin's Diesel's page so sucessful is that he was actually the one posting the content (Levy, p. 168).

Because of San Marcos' small size and initial following on Facebook, the city can have a more engaging and humanistic connection with the audience. The new Facebook page focused on generating conversations with its followers, providing

information and increasing awareness of the city, and increasing its following (see illustration section, p. 99).

Direct Mail Promotion

Another marketing tactic aimed at increasing awareness is direct mail marketing. Direct mail is a traditional format for spreading a brand message directly to consumers. However, the cost of print and postage can make direct mail a cost prohibitive tactic for small cities with limited financial resources. The direct mail campaign component of the San Marcos rebrand would gather funding from both the city and local businesses, therefore reducing costs and increasing effectiveness. The city benefited from this tactic by communicating the brand message in an authentic medium. The local businesses benefited from specific advertising and promotion of themselves. The direct mail program was targeted at the three investment groups the city is working to attract (see illustration section, pp. 100-103).

Environmental Graphics

Environmental graphics used in city branding helped the city to identify and differentiate itself from other cities or areas. This was an important aspect of wayfinding. Craig Berger, author of *Wayfinding: Designing and Implementing Graphic Navigational Systems*, stated that wayfinding is "the act of finding your way to a destination…and by extension, is the art of helping people find their way" (Berger, 2009, p. 6).

The current signage system of San Marcos was a mix of generic street and highway signage that was used across the state of Texas, as well as multiple designs of street banners throughout the city. There was no consistency in the signage, which caused difficulty for individuals to navigate through the city.

The environmental graphics designed for the rebrand of San Marcos adhered to the color palette and typography associated with the brand identity and messaging. The street banners implemented full color imagery of the city, a stylized logo adaptation, and the city taglines. The different versions of the street banners utilized imagery and taglines that speak to the target investment groups (see illustration section, p. 105). The street directional signage was created specifically for the city and uses the icons to visually depict the type of activity the wayfinding sign was directing to. Visitors using a map of the city would be able to correlate different areas with different activity types (see illustration section, p. 106).

Promotional Items

Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2009) described how branding is an ongoing process that links all marketing efforts. These efforts include city events, promotional activites, and materials (p. 522). Promotional items provide ongoing positive reinforcement for the brand. For city officials or employees, wearing apparel that promotes the brand helps to create awareness in or outside of the community.

The shirts and baseball caps for San Marcos were screen-printed on durable pre-shrunk cotton incorporating the new San Marcos logo. One shirt and cap was provided to every city official and employee free of charge upon initial hiring. Additional shirts and caps could be purchased at city hall, or online through the city website. Coffee mugs were embelished with the city logo and utilize the brand color palette. The coffee mugs would be available for purchase at every local coffee shop in the city, as well as online through the city website. The reuseable shopping bags had the city logo screen-printed on them and were available in multiple color options. These bags were available for

purchase at all grocery stores and retail locations within the city limits. Promoting use of reuseable shopping bags cuts down on the production of paper and plastic bags that require costly recycling efforts (see illustration section, pp. 108-112).

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Through the research, process, design, and implementation outlined in this thesis, a new brand identity for the city of San Marcos, Texas was created. The new city brand and identity is an example of consistent brand implementation across multiple marketing mediums including marketing materials, environmental signage, promotional items, and online sites. The brand messaging is implemented through several tactics to increase brand awareness and to attract the target investment groups.

This rebranding project additionlly explains the need for small municipitalities to implement city branding strategies in order to attract its target investment groups. As proven in the comparison study to McKinney, Texas and Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia, through differentiation, awareness, and by overcoming negative perceptions of the city, improvement in local economy and public perception can be achieved. The following process book outlines the process of the new brand's creation and implementation.

ILLUSTRATION

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

SAN MARCOS, TX

PROJECT OVERVIEW

San Marcos, Texas is a small town in the Central Texas Hill Country and is one of the oldest continually inhabited areas of the Northern hemisphere. The city is located on Interstate Highway 35 between two larger metropolitan areas: San Antonio and Austin.

The current brand identity of San Marcos includes several logo representations, a website, and various marketing materials. These pieces of the brand identity lack a consistency both visually and in regard to the brand messaging. This lack of consistency creates an inconsistent and unsuccessful distribution of brand messaging to San Marcos' target audiences (residents, business investors, and tourists).

City officials aspire to develop clear, positive, and consistent messaging to aid the city and community in successful recruitment and marketing of San Marcos, Texas.

This project will outline the preliminary research, methods, outcomes, and deliverable items from rebranding the city of San Marcos, Texas. The rebranding will also address the growing need for small municipalities to implement city branding strategies in order to increase awareness and attract investment from their target audience.

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

SAN MARCOS, TX

CITY BRANDING - EXAMPLES

CITY BRANDING - EXAMPLES

Texas:
McKinney, Texas

National:
New York, New York

National:
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Global:
Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia

Global:
Dundee, North East Scotland

Liverpool, England

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

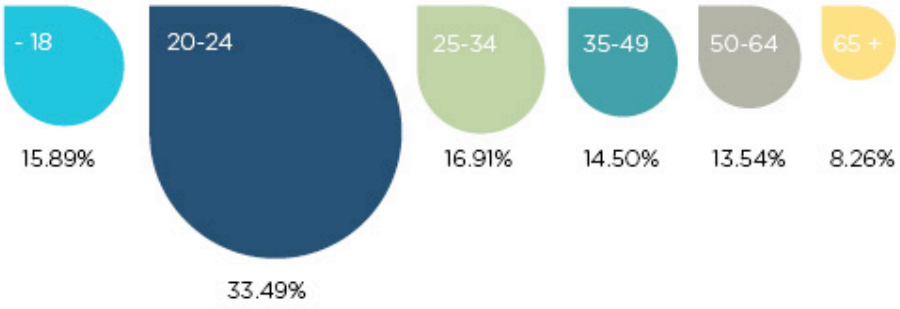
SAN MARCOS, TX

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

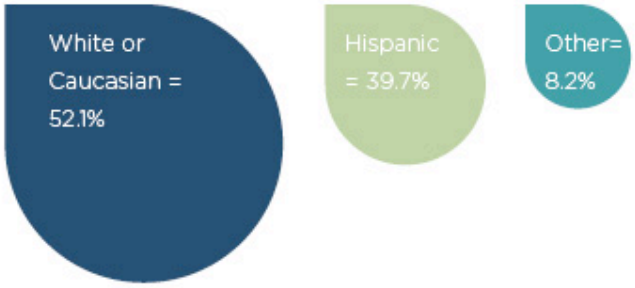
SAN MARCOS, TX: TOTAL POPULATION 50,001

Population: By Sex

Population: By Age

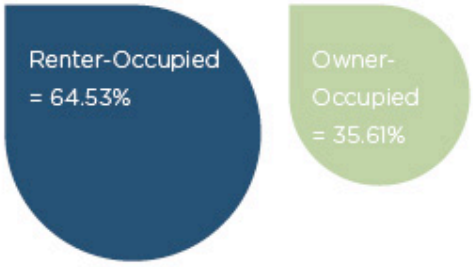


Population: By Ethnicity



SAN MARCOS, TX: HOUSEHOLDS & EDUCATION

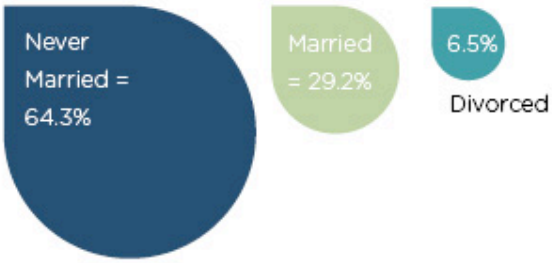
Households: 18,169



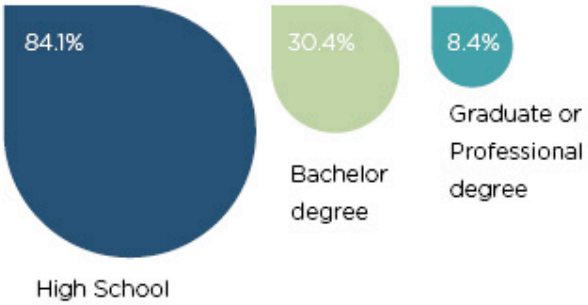
Households: Tenants

2.3 Per Household

Households: Relationships



Education Levels: Minimum Completed



REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX CITY RESEARCH

SAN MARCOS, TX: EMPLOYMENT

Major Employers (200+ employees):

Texas State University	2,780
Premium Outlets	2,100
Tanger Outlets	1,540
San Marcos CISD	1,114
Hays County	850
Hunter Industries	650
Central Texas Medical Center	650
HEB Distribution Center	578
City of San Marcos	517
Telenetwork Partners, LTD	500
Wal-Mart Super Center	435
Grande Communications	350
Philips	333
C-FAN	319
San Marcos Treatment Center	280
Community Action, Inc.	242
Chartwells	241
McCoy's Corporation	230
Thermon	217

Major Manufacturers (200+ employed):

Hunter Industries	650
Philips	333
C-FAN	319
Thermon Manufacturing	217

PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

The photographic documentation of San Marcos includes a collection of photographs from the town and surrounding area that are used to visually represent the city and aid in the formation of a new logo identity. The primary areas of photographic research include the local area flora and fauna, industry, and recreation. The collection of these photographs aids in the formation of a visual representation of the city that is incorporated in the final brand and identity solution.

FLORA

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

FAUNA

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

INDUSTRY

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

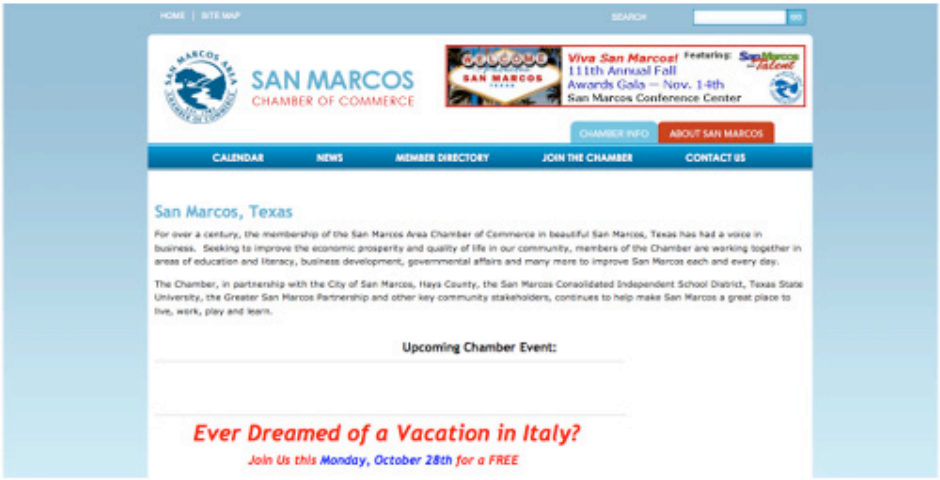
RECREATION

EXISTING BRAND AUDIT

The existing brand of San Marcos, Texas lacks consistency and cohesiveness within the brand identity and messaging. There are multiple executions of different logo variations and inconsistent collateral items that do not successfully communicate one unified brand.

EXISTING BRAND AUDIT

EXISTING BRAND AUDIT



EXISTING BRAND AUDIT QUESTIONS

1. Who are you?
2. What do you do? (12 words or less)
3. What's your vision?
4. What wave are you riding?
5. Who shares the brandscape?
6. What makes you the only? ("Our brand is the only _____ that _____.")
7. What should you add or subtract?
8. Who loves you?
9. Who is the enemy?
10. What do they call you?
11. How do you explain yourself?
12. How do you spread the word?
13. How do people engage with you?
14. What do they experience?
15. How do you earn their loyalty?
16. How do you extend your success?
17. How do you protect your portfolio?

SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or business venture.

SWOT ANALYSIS

S — STRENGTHS

- natural geographic aesthetic
- recreational activities
- low population density & commute time
- close proximity to Austin and San Antonio
- low cost of land & low tax rate

W — WEAKNESSES

- lack of large corporate enterprises which results in mininal job opportunities outside of retail and service industries
- inconsistent brand identity and messaging
- limitation of resources

O — OPPORTUNTITIES

- more active relationship with the University and Outlet Mall
- educated work-force
- low tax rate can attract investors
- more involvement in natural areas

T — THREATS

- Nearby towns to San Marcos that are competitive destinations (Austin & San Antonio)
- yearly exodus of college students hurts the local business market

ZAG

ZAG IS defined by Marty Neumeier as radical differentiation as being the number one strategy of high-performance brands. We no longer live in a world of simply faster, but rather a world of more clutter. A successful brand needs to be able to cut through the clutter and be memorable to the viewer. To define a brand's ZAG, there are 17 questions that are typically asked.

ZAG: 17 QUESTIONS

1. Who are you?
   - small town
   - San Marcos River
2. What do you do?
   - Premium and Tanger Outlets
   - Texas State University
3. What's your vision?
   - attract investment
4. What wave are you riding?
   - nature and positive green living
   - river and outdoor activities
5. Who shares this brandscape?
   - New Braunfels • Wimberley
   - Kyle • Buda
6. What makes you the "only"?
   - Premium and Tanger Outlets
   - Texas State University
   - San Marcos River
   - Aquarena center
7. What should you add or subtract?
   - + consistent branding message
   - - competing brand messages
8. Who loves you?
   - natives
   - tourists
9. Who's the enemy?
   - lack of awareness
   - nearby cities
10. What do they call you?
    - A Texas Natural
11. How do you explain yourself?
    - a great place to live
12. How do you spread the word?
    - marketing collateral
    - environmental media
13. How do people engage with you?
    - the mall • the university • the river
14. What do they experience?
    - tourism center
    - environmental signage
15. How do you earn their loyalty?
    - full event schedule
    - empower residents
16. How do you extend your success?
    - growth = rewards
17. How do you protect your portfolio?
    - make San Marcos the place to call home
    - local resources and vendor involvement

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

SAN MARCOS, TX

METHODS

WORD LIST

A word list is a collection of words or phrases that represent specific topics. Once the list is complete, identification of key words that best connote the desired message of the brand are chosen. The next step of the process involves taking these words and forming simple graphical representations of the words into iconography.

WORD LIST

RIVER

water
blue
tubing
fish
texas rice
salamander
canoe
swimming
aquifer
swimsuits
snorkel
inner tubes
bathing suit
fish
wet
never a dry moment
towel
sun
sunglasses

UNIVERSITY

bobcats
old main
student
back pack
maroon
gold
education
grad cap
apple
pen
pencil
paper
desk
A+
teachers
black boards
chalk
halls
sewell park

MALL

shopping
bags
money
clothing
shoes
money
store fronts

NATURE

clear
water
endangered
species
cave
river
algae
rocks
fish
salamander

ICON STUDY

Resulting from the word list, an icon study is developed. This study includes taking various words that accurately represent the intended message of the brand, and studying existing iconic representations of those words through logo usage.

ICON STUDY: RIVER

LUCIDA

QALCHEK

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA ALLIANCE

CLARKSVILLE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

WATER QUALITY FORUM

MOBIUS

RIVERFRONT

RIVER SPACE

RIVERWOOD

LAKESIDE FINANCIAL GROUP

bridge partners

ICON STUDY: NATURE

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX ICON STUDY

ICON STUDY: MALL & UNIVERSITY

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX ICON STUDY

SKETCHES, ROUGHS & REVISIONS

The outcomes of the word list and results of the icon study are followed by the development of initial sketches and then roughs of iconographic treatments that can be used for the new identity of San Marcos. These initial sketches and roughs are vital to the process of design as they allow for exploration of many variations on multiple themes.

SKETCHES

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX

SKETCHES, ROUGHS & REVISIONS

ROUGHS

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX SKETCHES, ROUGHS & REVISIONS

REVISIONS

san
marcos
never a dry
moment

san
marcos

san marcos

San
marcos

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

SAN MARCOS, TX

OUTCOMES

FINAL LOGO

This final logo incorporates elements indicative of nature and water, using neutral earth tones to further establish the identity of San Marcos. The city name is written in all lower case letters to connote a friendly and approachable attitude.

FINAL LOGO

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX

FINAL LOGO

COLOR PALETTE

The final color selection for the new San Marcos logo is green and blue. These colors visually represent the strong natural elements of the town. Additionally, these colors are symbolic of stability, growth, dependability, and reliability.

The complete color palette consists of the primary green and blue from the logo, as well as a secondary palette that consists of similar hues of colors that are found in nature. This secondary color palette will serve as identifiers for different areas of the brand message, as well as promote the visual aesthetic of the marketing materials.

COLOR PALETTE

RIVER

STANDARD
PMS C: 534
PMS U: 540
CMYK: 100-80-30-5
RGB: 23-74-124
WEB: 174A7C

PASTEL
PMS C: 537
PMS U: 537
CMYK: 22-12-3-0
RGB: 195-208-228
WEB: C3D0E4

MOSS

STANDARD
PMS C: 577
PMS U: 578
CMYK: 24-0-46-10
RGB: 180-204-149
WEB: B4CC95

PASTEL
PMS C: 580
PMS U: 580
CMYK: 12-0-26-0
RGB: 219-232-196
WEB: DBE8C4

SKY

STANDARD
PMS C: 631
PMS U: 631
CMYK: 67-0-12-2
RGB: 38-188-215
WEB: 26BCD7

PASTEL
PMS C: 628
PMS U: 628
CMYK: 19-0-6-0
RGB: 203-234-237
WEB: CBEAED

AQUA

STANDARD
PMS C: 5483
PMS U: 5493
CMYK: 62-0-21-31
RGB: 56-147-155
WEB: 38939B

PASTEL
PMS C: 552
PMS U: 552
CMYK: 15-0-0-9
RGB: 194-219-232
WEB: C2DBE8

CAVE

STANDARD
PMS C: 415
PMS U: 415
CMYK: 0-0-12-41
RGB: 166-166-153
WEB: A6A699

PASTEL
PMS C: 420
PMS U: 420
CMYK: 0-0-0-15
RGB: 220-221-222
WEB: DCDDDE

SUN

STANDARD
PMS C: 128
PMS U: 113
CMYK: 0-11-65-0
RGB: 255-222-117
WEB: FFDE75

PASTEL
PMS C: 1205
PMS U: 1205
CMYK: 0-5-31-0
RGB: 255-238-187
WEB: FFEEBB

TYPE PALETTE

The typeface chosen for the San Marcos logo is Gotham Rounded. Gotham Rounded is part of the Gotham type family designed by Johnathan Hoefler and Tobias Frere-Jones in 2000. This typeface offers many different cuts that can be applied across different mediums in marketing materials. This typeface accurately suits the logotype of San Marcos by providing an approachable feel to the logo, as well as displaying the city name in all lower case to further connote the friendly feel of the town. This typeface is used in the logotype for San Marcos as well as the additional marketing and promotional materials that are created.

To address the educational component of the San Marcos identity, Chalk Duster Regular is chosen as a supporting typeface. Chalk Duster Regular was published by Apple Computer Inc. in 2008. This hand-written font mimics the look of chalk on a chalkboard which is a common symbol of education. This typeface is used as a secondary type palette for use in the city tagline and street signage.

TYPE PALETTE

GOTHAM ROUNDED LIGHT
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GOTHAM ROUNDED BOOK
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GOTHAM ROUNDED MEDIUM
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GOTHAM ROUNDED BOLD
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GOTHAM ROUNDED LIGHT ITALIC
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GOTHAM ROUNDED BOOK ITALIC
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GOTHAM ROUNDED MEDIUM ITALIC
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

GOTHAM ROUNDED BOLD ITALIC
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

Chalk Duster Regular
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
1234567890

ICON SUITE

To create a consistent theme of iconographic information, an icon suite is developed to support brand consistency across all areas. The icon suite for San Marcos is based on the forms and typography used in the logo. The icons are used to indicate different areas of activity in the city.

ICON SUITE

San Marcos

To be used when space does not allow for the full logo treatment

Family Friendly

Indicates areas and events that are appropriate to families and individuals of all ages.

Retail Shopping

Indicates areas and activities that appeal to individuals looking to shop.

University

Indicates areas and events that are sponsored or held by Texas State University-San Marcos.

Outdoor

Indicates areas and events involve recreational and outdoor activities.

Events

Indicates city-wide holidays or events in San Marcos.

TAGLINES

Taglines are used to evoke a feeling, thought, or response from the audience. Taglines can be as simple as a word, or more complex as a phrase or sentence structure. For the San Marcos identity, a combination of taglines are chosen. To appeal to the different target investment groups of San Marcos, the taglines are constructed in a fill-in-the-blank format. By this construction, the tagline secondarily serves as a user-based interaction that will be expanded on in web and social media applications.

TAGLINES

Home Is Where You tube

Home Is Where You shop

Home Is Where You learn

Home Is Where You play

Home Is San Marcos

GRID SYSTEM

Setting up a grid system creates a field of regularity that permits viewers to anticipate where to locate information they seek because the logical junctures of horizontal and vertical divisions act as guides for locating that information. This system is utilized over multiple pieces to create a visual continuity.

GRID SYSTEM

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN

SAN MARCOS, TX

DELIVERABLES

CORPORATE MARKETING MATERIAL

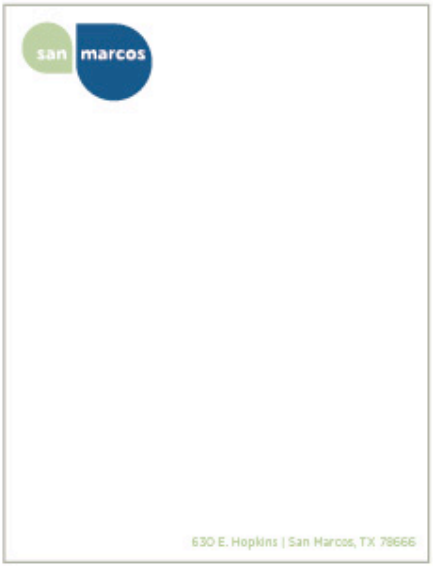
In order to communicate the brand identity in a consistent manner, there will be further alignment and consistency of all marketing materials and messages.

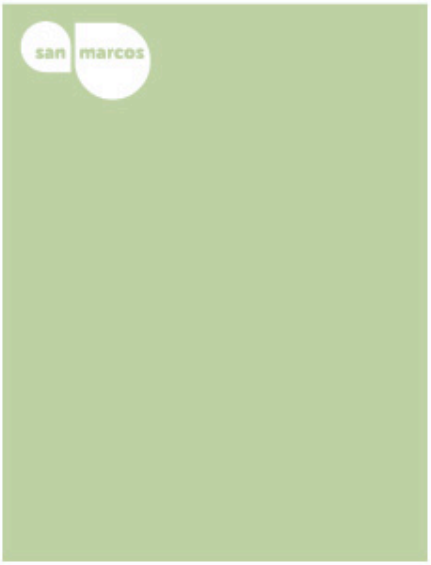
BUSINESS CARD

Grid system application on business cards:

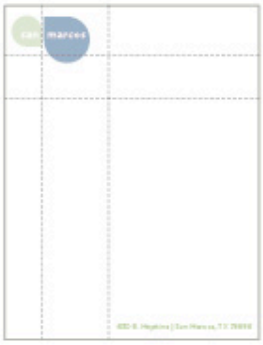
REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX CORPORATE MARKETING MATERIAL

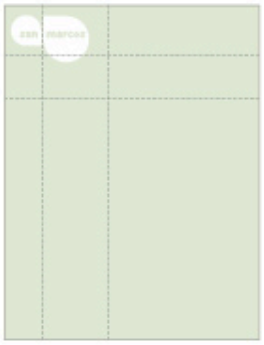
LETTERHEAD





Grid system application on letterhead:





ENVELOPE & STAMP

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX CORPORATE MARKETING MATERIAL

WEB-BASED CONSUMER COMMUNICATIONS

With the emergence of web-based applications, online media, and social interaction, the need for the city of San Marcos to own a presence online is apparent. An online presence allows consumers to easily access information about the city.

Social sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest will allow individuals to actively follow the latest news of the city, and interact with that news through posting their own commentary.

Finally, Groupon coupons are used to stimulate interest in local businesses around the area.

WEBSITE

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX WEB-BASED CONSUMER COMMUNICATIONS

TWITTER

SAMPLE TWEETS:

Don't miss out on all the fun. We'll be rallying the troops for the annual river clean up. ***#river #SMTX***

Do you know the secret to getting the BEST deals at the outlet malls? ***#undercovershopping #SMTX***

Mayor here - I'd like to personally thank everyone for making San Marcos the best community out there. ***#lovethistown #LivingSMTX***

FACEBOOK

SAMPLE POSTS:

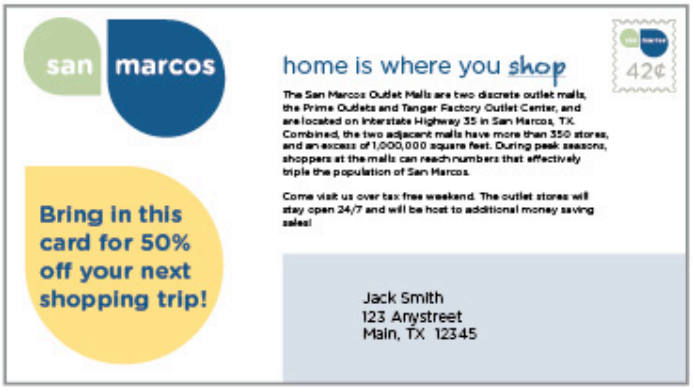
What will your favorite activity to do in San Marcos be once the weather warms up a bit?

What movie should we show next weekend at the Movie in the Park event? Post your requests to be entered into a drawing. The winner will not only choose the movie, but will receive 2 free passes to Wonder World!

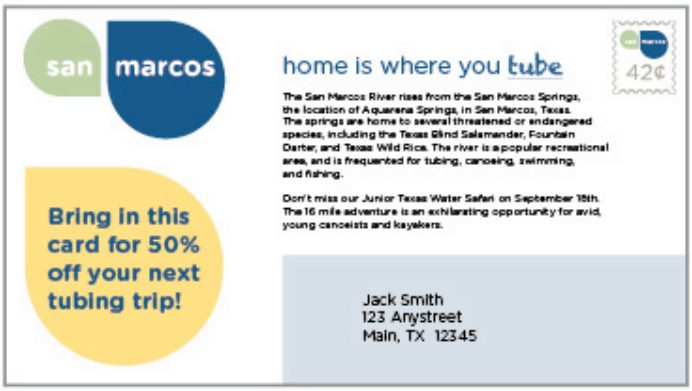
DIRECT MAIL PROMOTION

City officials and the chamber of commerce in San Marcos can utilize direct mail marketing to communicate their message and attract inward investment.

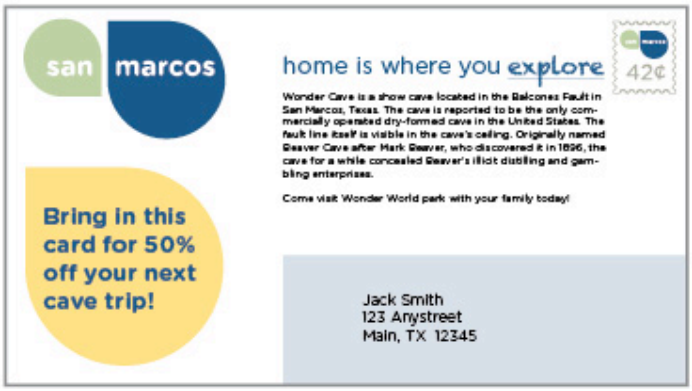
DIRECT MAIL #1 - BUSINESS INVESTMENT



DIRECT MAIL #2 - RESIDENTIAL



DIRECT MAIL #3 - TOURISM



ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS

The environmental graphics in the city adhere to the new color palette and type scheme. With the wayfinding material displayed in a consistent manner, both visitors and residents will be aware of their location and wayfinding of the town.

STREET BANNERS

STREET SIGNAGE

REBRANDING CAMPAIGN | SAN MARCOS, TX ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS

VEHICLE GRAPHICS

PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

The following promotional items are branded with the new logo and color scheme. These items perform in multiple ways. They can be distributed at events and city functions to promote the city name. They also serve as environmental signage when worn or used in public by consumers.

T-SHIRTS

HATS

COFFEE MUGS

BAGS

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