



Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association

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Final Report of Branding Workshop
***“Branding the Oregon Coast as an Ideal Place
For Lifestyle Entrepreneurs/Knowledge Workers”***
Hallmark Resort, Newport, Oregon
May 29, 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Findings of the Branding Workshop

1. Today, because of broadband communications (high speed Internet), people can live and work from almost anywhere in the world. As a result, on the Oregon Coast, we have an unprecedented opportunity to diversify our economy by attracting “*lifestyle entrepreneurs*” or “knowledge workers” to our region.
2. In recent years, a number of lifestyle entrepreneurs have moved to the Oregon Coast. They came here first as tourists, or, in effect, by “accident” because they knew someone on the coast or through some other serendipitous circumstance.
3. Lifestyle entrepreneurs who have moved to the Oregon Coast report that “back home” the Oregon Coast is hardly on anyone’s radar screen as a place to live and work. These entrepreneurs believe almost any effort to market the Oregon Coast as a place to visit and potentially live would yield results.
4. Currently, for the most part, *tourism promotion* efforts and *business development* efforts on the Oregon Coast are *not* integrated. That’s a lost opportunity. Communities on the Oregon Coast can partner in a *region-wide* marketing/branding effort to attract lifestyle entrepreneurs in collaboration with the State of Oregon (the Brand Oregon/Travel Oregon programs). The branding/marketing campaign can build upon the “Come for a Week, Stay Forever” message from *Brand Oregon*. A marketing campaign should be highly selective. The idea is to approach certain demographic groups (age, income, education levels) in certain places like the San Francisco Bay Area (e.g., the Silicon Valley) and the Portland-Metro area.
5. A core feature of this promotional campaign is an *upscale tourism* message. The focus should be on “*experiences*” (things to do) rather than just beautiful scenery (the Oregon Coast, like many other places, has great scenery). This marketing effort must be carried out in partnership with *existing entities/networks* in coastal communities. Key partners include: Oregon Coast Visitors Association (OCVA), the lodging associations, Chambers of Commerce, the Rotary Clubs, the restaurant community, economic development professionals (local, state, federal and Tribal), and, local governments. Again, we would seek to enhance the coordination of tourism promotion/business development because, “Today’s

tourist is tomorrow's local entrepreneur.” OCVA's “The Peoples' Coast” marketing/branding program for the Oregon Coast can easily be adapted and spun off to attract lifestyle entrepreneurs.

6. The proposed branding/marketing effort would *not* seek to replace any local marketing efforts. On the contrary, local and sub-regional marketing/branding efforts would serve as the bedrock of this coastwide effort. Through this marketing campaign, lifestyle entrepreneurs from outside the region would be directed to web sites hosted by organizations at the local level. And, again, the focus is on “experiences” (things to do) and vibrant communities with interesting people doing interesting things; people enjoying a great quality of life in our region.
7. During the Branding Workshop on May 29, 2009 and during many discussions leading to the Branding Workshop, many key partners signaled a strong interest in this opportunity. In addition, the staff at the Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD), including Todd Davidson from Travel Oregon, signaled a strong interest in this effort.

NEXT STEPS: Taking the Final Steps to Implementation

We are proposing an ambitious timetable—let's try to have a pilot project/field trial going in the fall of 2010. The pace of progress, of course, depends entirely upon the participation and enthusiasm of local partners and the State of Oregon. We want the branding-marketing program to be coastwide. But, early on, we will need a few coastal communities to help us spearhead the effort.

So, here are proposed implementation steps:

1. Circulate this report to local governments and key partners on the Oregon Coast. Ask for feedback on the content of the messaging and the implementation strategies.
2. Digest that feedback. Refine the messaging and implementation strategy. Follow up with Travel Oregon/Brand Oregon and assemble a team to hold initial brainstorming sessions with Wieden & Kennedy staff. Ask Travel Oregon to authorize Wieden & Kennedy to prepare draft-advertising materials. Circulate draft materials from Wieden & Kennedy to key partners on the Oregon Coast. Gather feedback, re-engage our colleagues at Travel Oregon, adjust the advertising materials.
3. Throughout the process, keep the conversation going with the Gorge Technology Alliance (GTA) to explore opportunities to work across regional lines (the Columbia River Gorge/the Oregon Coast) to pool resources, leverage synergies, and implement a branding program to maximize exposure for both regions.
4. Plan a reconnaissance mission to the Silicon Valley in the late spring of 2010. The main purpose would be: (a) seek feedback from target audiences on draft marketing materials, (b) develop cost-data for a targeted marketing pilot program. We would identify San Francisco Bay Area partners/venues to launch a branding/marketing pilot program.

5. On a parallel track, engage leaders in the Portland-Metro region. Do the same kind of fact finding—get feedback on the branding/marketing campaign, seek partners from that region. Build partnerships with the Oregon Entrepreneurs Network (OEN), the Software Developers Association (SDAO), and other like-minded organizations in Oregon which network with technology people and entrepreneurs in general.
6. Prepare a budget for a Silicon Valley pilot marketing project. Build a program to launch a pilot program there in the fall of 2010 at select venues/markets to field test the program.
7. In addition to traditional marketing/branding methods (advertisements, brochures, web sites) stand up a “social media” marketing campaign through Facebook and Twitter and other Internet-based vehicles. A growing number of people, especially technical-inclined people/young people communicate or use social media as a primary source of information.