

TARANAKI

How do you help a large, divergent stakeholder group develop a powerful regional brand?

Spectacular and wild, Taranaki has become one of our most cosmopolitan and high-growth regional economies.

A comprehensive stakeholder facilitation process was required to define and harness the story it has to sell.

Facilitation is essential: We helped four councils, a number of iwi, the business community and many other key stakeholders follow a common process and easily agree on a unifying brand and strategy to promote Taranaki and focus local identity. The outcome has seen the unified working of many diverse groups in Taranaki and has assisted the Taranaki region in upholding its economic growth status which is still the fastest growing region in New Zealand.



The Challenge

Wild and geographically spectacular, Taranaki is a remarkable region with a rich and colourful past. Today, as well as being one of our fastest growing regional economies it offers a truly cosmopolitan lifestyle. In many ways it is 'the best of heartland New Zealand coming of age'.

While most New Zealand 'place' brands are tourism focused, DNA and Venture Taranaki Trust had agreed the need to create a multi-purpose marketing and communications platform to support business growth, the expanding tourism sector, drive immigration and focus the region's strong but 'undefined' local sense of identity.

Previous Taranaki 'advertising' campaigns had met with a mixed response and there was little understanding locally around the difference between this approach and developing a long term, multi-functional brand. Due to this and the political nature of the project it was as essential to ensure community buy-in to the brand as it was to capture Taranaki's unique offer in a compelling way.

The Solution

A structured and inclusive process was required. A large project stakeholder group was assembled including Venture Taranaki Trust, four Councils, Tangata Whenua, the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, community groups, sports bodies, local media and key individuals. Many in this group doubted a successful outcome could be achieved.

A planning meeting was held and a transparent project framework agreed. DNA then facilitated in-depth workshops and Hui with groups of up to 65 people. These sessions were used to explore, develop and sign off the brand strategy. Follow-on sessions were then held with the combined group to approve the conceptual work.

The Result

This approach created a positive and inclusive environment. It provided a forum for debate and allowed input from a broad cross section of the community. The brand strategy and creative expression (allowing for co-branding by businesses, councils, sports teams, schools etc) received strong buy-in. The result is a brand that truly represents the magical 'mix' that makes Taranaki so unique.

Launched in late 2005 the brand generated national media coverage and positive community response. Today Venture Taranaki and local councils use it across a wide range of promotional and communications applications. Local businesses are also co-branding. Perhaps best of all, the brand's promise (Taranaki - like no other) has gradually become part of the local vernacular. It's heard in conversations, applied to advertising by local businesses and seen on banners at sports games. The Taranaki Herald's 2009 New Year editorial was even written as a substantiation of the 'like no other' sentiment.

Stakeholder Quote

Congratulations on a job done superbly!

In my capacity as a trainer, facilitator, motivational speaker and researcher I have never experienced the level of care and attention to detail as I experienced with your team. As a consequence of your collective intelligence, experience, perseverance and expertise you have shifted paradigms at a number of levels amongst key stakeholders. The effect of these paradigm shifts will have a significant effect on the future shape of our region and how we can communicate, and interact with each other.

No reira kia koutou katoa - He nui te mihi, he nui te aroha ki a koutou katoa. Nau mai, hoki mai koutou ki Taranaki. Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.

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