

# Best Practice

## Community Branding

### CONTACT

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### THE PRACTICE

The Town of Eston's Economic Development Committee wanted to give the community a new brand – something to be excited about, something that made the community more attractive and more marketable. The rebranding project developed a highly marketable and successful brand over the course of two years. There was a huge amount of community excitement and involvement as local residents took part in a contest to develop the town's new slogan: Golden Fields and Harvest Moons.

### THE PROCESS

The Economic Development Committee – spearheaded by the Economic Development Officer, Jonathan Meyer – wanted to rebrand the community. The economic development function is jointly shared between the RM of Snipe Lake and the Town of Eston. The town provides administrative support, the EDO is a contract position, and the committee is made up of volunteers and appointed members from the RM and the town. Board members were involved in every step of the journey toward the birth of the new brand

They decided to host a community-wide slogan contest with a prize of \$500 Eston Dollars. The contest received 125 entries. The committee spent several hours reviewing the entries to narrow it down to the best five. Those entries were then put to a community vote. Then the committee hosted an event where the top five entries were invited to see who won the community vote. Each slogan was placed on an artist's stand and covered. One by one the entrants were eliminated until the winner was revealed, to wild cheers from the crowd. At the unveiling, the economic development committee sponsored a BBQ and the press attended.

The committee hired a Saskatoon firm (Hard Pressed, which is owned by a former resident of Eston) to design the new logo. They settled on two logos – a business logo and a main logo. From there came a new flag, clothing line, stationery and business cards, vehicle decals, town signs, and a redesigned website including social media integration. The EDC sponsored a community photo contest to gather photos for the new website.

### THE RESULTS

The Town of Eston's rebranding developed a highly marketable and successful brand for the community. The whole community branding process bonded the community (rural and urban) together for a common goal. The project generated a lot of community excitement, involvement, and pride. The new brand is proudly Eston created and owned as it was developed through local talent rather than contracting out the work to a professional firm.

The clothing line almost completely sold out when it went on sale at the Christmas tradeshow, and is worn proudly around town, and even on folks in other communities like Saskatoon.

The new website is very popular with many dedicated Twitter followers. The website has the added advantage of keeping the community connected through social media and providing another communication tool with the public.

The new brand will form the basis for a community festival and upcoming brochure.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- Building a community brand is a full-time project that takes a lot of time and energy. If you want community buy-in and involvement it takes more time and energy, but it is well worth the effort.
- If you want to shorten the period to a year, and avoid gaps in the project, you will need one full-time person dedicated to the community rebranding process.