

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: **MILLENNIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN**

BACKGROUND:

In working toward the goal of developing a brand communications plan, the City Council refined its focus to a more specific marketing campaign specifically targeting young adults transitioning to families and encouraging them to relocate to Ames. The geographic market was defined as those currently living along the I-35 corridor between Ames and Des Moines. Following a competitive bidding process, the City's Public Relations Officer began working with marketing consultants ZLR Ignition on the first phase of a millennial marketing campaign. After completing interviews, focus groups, a communications audit, and data analysis, ZLR Ignition is proposing that the next phase be a 12-month marketing campaign to capitalize on community strengths identified by the research as important to this demographic.

ZLR recommends focusing the campaign around the concept: "Ames is a city where millennials can build an active and fulfilled life in a community rich with abundant opportunities to belong, participate, and grow." This includes positioning Ames as an attractive place by increasing awareness of Ames' unique brand advantages:

- Ames is a city with a small-town feel (safe, welcoming, nourishing, comfortable, family-friendly, values-based)
- Ames offers big-city living (outdoor activities, strong education, restaurants, downtown cultural district, ISU performing arts, cultural and Big 12 athletic events)
- Ames is a city full of opportunity (jobs, outdoor activities, social activities, volunteer/participation opportunities, entertainment)

These three areas overlap to communicate that Ames offers abundant activities, a fulfilled lifestyle, and a strong sense of community.

The attached marketing plan proposed by ZLR Ignition would develop a series of content packages which align with campaign messages and tell community stories. The proposed campaign would focus on digital and social channels – website and social media – to publish and communicate the campaign messages; and the plan includes outdoor, social and digital paid media to create awareness with the target audience. The plan also includes analysis of the digital metrics to determine campaign effectiveness.

The City Council initially budgeted \$200,000 from the general fund to address the goal of developing a Brand Communication Plan. That amount was reflected in the FY2015 adjusted budget. That funding has been carried over in the Public Relations budget. A total of \$55,000 was previously allocated for the first phase of the millennial marketing plan with ZLR Ignition. Therefore, \$145,000 is still available from that budget for the marketing campaign.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Authorize City staff to enter into a consulting agreement for the attached millennial marketing campaign with ZLR Ignition, of Des Moines, Iowa, in an amount not to exceed \$145,000.
2. Direct staff to work with ZLR to modify the consulting agreement,
3. Do not approve entering into a consulting agreement.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

A millennial marketing campaign will complement the City's ongoing efforts to promote Ames as an ideal community to work, live, raise a family, retire, and enjoy. Through the use of data, ZLR has developed a strategic, sustainable approach to reach out to a frequently targeted demographic. This campaign has the potential to support many other ongoing workforce recruitment campaigns throughout the community, as well as to generate a favorable impression of Ames beyond the desired demographic.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1 as described above.



The City of Ames Campaign Launch Plan

The purpose of this campaign is to reach the target audience – millennials – with Ames’ unique advantages:

“Ames is a city where millennials can build an active and fulfilled life in a community rich with abundant opportunities to belong, participate, and grow.”

Ames owns this unique advantage because our research shows Ames wins in these three areas:

- **HEART:** A city with a small-town feel (safe, welcoming, nourishing, comfortable, family-friendly, values-based)
- **MIND:** A city offering big-city living (outdoor activities, strong education, restaurants, downtown cultural district, ISU performing arts, cultural and Big 12 athletic events.)
- **SOUL:** A city full of opportunity (jobs, outdoor activities, social activities, volunteer/participation opportunities, entertainment)

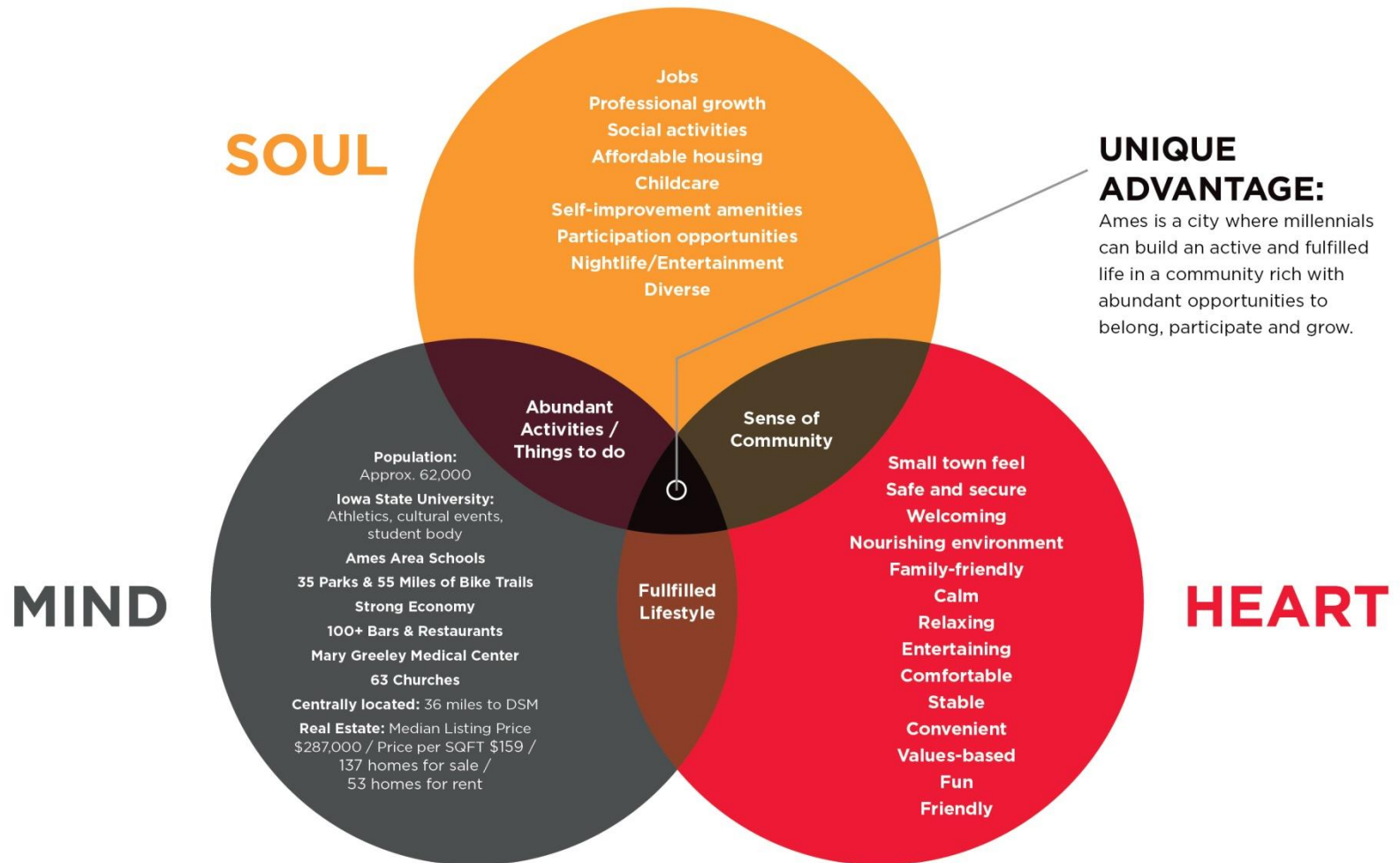
These three areas overlap to say Ames offers:

- ABUNDANT ACTIVITIES
- FULFILLED LIFESTYLE
- A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Moving forward with this campaign, all facets of communications produced and distributed by the City of Ames will convey the experiences and emotions of an active, entertaining and fun city.



The City of Ames Campaign Launch Plan





The City of Ames Campaign Launch Plan

Objectives:

- Brand and position Ames as an attractive place to live for young adults transitioning to families currently living along the I-35 corridor between Ames and Des Moines
- Increase awareness of Ames unique brand advantages specific to the target audience
- Increase brand communications portraying the community's unique brand advantages

Strategies:

- Develop content packages which align with campaign messages and tells the community stories
- Use digital and social channels – website and social media – to publish and communicate the campaign messages and community stories (content)
- Use outdoor, social and digital paid media to promote the campaign and create awareness with the target audience

Audiences:

- External Core: Young professional transitioning to families living along the I-35 corridor between Ames and Des Moines
- External Secondary: Chambers, Local Businesses, Residents, Media Partners, Corporate Partners, Planners, Visitors, ISU Students
- Internal: Staff, City Council

Measurement:

- Increased local and state-wide media coverage of the community's stories
- Increased social media engagement by current and prospective residents
- Increased web traffic by current and prospective residents
- Residents and the target audience living within the I-35 corridor between Ames and Des Moines will be familiar with the campaign and relate it back to the campaign messages



The City of Ames Campaign Launch Plan

Content Marketing Strategy:

- **Develop a content package (2) which aligns with the campaign messages and tells the community stories.**

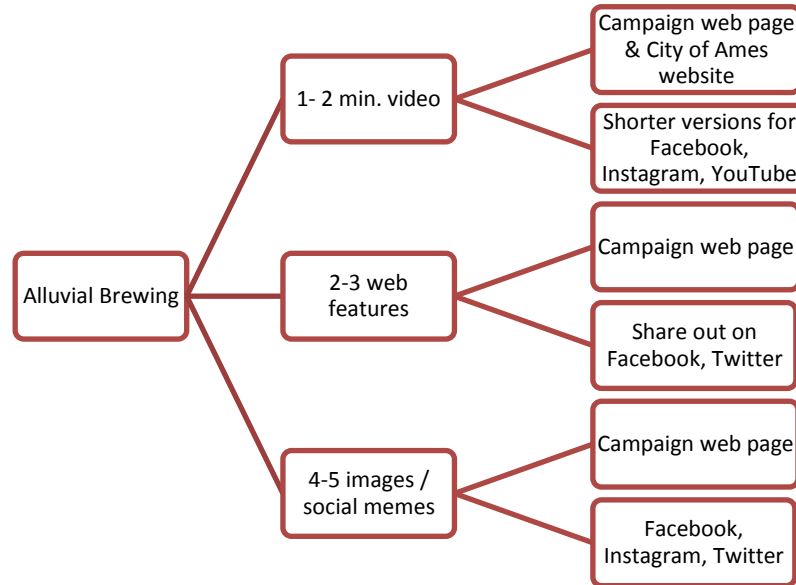
Tactics:

1. Build and establish target audience personas based on 2016 research - this content tool allows us to tap into more than just demographics, but his or her interests, what other media they consume and what type of content will elicit action and engagement.
2. Develop a comprehensive editorial calendar noting major events throughout the city, seasonal happenings and when it's best to share pieces of the individual content bundles. An editorial calendar also helps identify ways to curate and share out other engaging content.
3. Using the brand construct and key messages build/develop multimedia content bundles (videos, images, web stories and social media assets) that can be published across various digital channels throughout the year as noted on an editorial calendar.
 - a. A few topic examples below:
 - i. Cool career, cool place: an afternoon game of ping pong at Workiva
 - ii. Foodie: an afternoon sampling or yoga + craft brew day at Alluvial Brewing Company or the secret's in the honey at Great Plains Pizza & Dough Co.
 - iii. Arts & Culture: behind-the-scenes with Chris Ford during the Maximum Ames Music Festival (9/15-9/16)
 - iv. Residential Living: Love where you live spotlighting the ISU Research Park expansion



The City of Ames Campaign Launch Plan

Example publishing road map:



Digital and Social Media Strategy:

- **Use digital and social channels – website and social media - to publish and communicate the campaign messages and community stories**

Tactics:

- Build online hub for campaign – landing page within the City of Ames’ current website. This section will house campaign elements and content and also incorporate more “see yourself living and working in Ames” messaging.
- Establish 1-2 core social media channels for campaign and implement hashtag (#AlwaysAmes). Depending on goals of current City of Ames social channels, we can either incorporate campaign content/elements on current accounts, or establish channels specifically for this effort. At the very least, we recommend developing an Instagram account to showcase the lifestyle available throughout the Ames area.
- Use both the website and the social media to attract target audiences as content hub and the city’s calling card



The City of Ames Campaign Launch Plan

Paid Media Strategy:

- **Use outdoor, digital and social paid media to promote the campaign and create awareness with the target audience**

Tactics:

- Outdoor – billboard along I-35 corridor between Ames and Des Moines
- Digital – Display ads, remarketing, Geo-targeted digital banner ads
- Social - Facebook and Twitter ads

Media Tactics

Outdoor:

- To capitalize on those within the target audience traveling to Ames whether it be for work or for fun, outdoor media will be used along frequently, heavily traveled roads
- An outdoor billboard will be used on I-35 between Ames and Des Moines

Google Network Display Ads:

- To best generate awareness of the message with the target audience, banner ads will run on a variety of high-profile websites that the audience is frequenting
 - Ads will be targeted within Des Moines and Ames
 - Ads will target those ages 25-40 in order to reach those young professionals
 - Ads will run on news and entertainment websites such as kcci.com as well as websites such youtube.com to ensure reach of the audience
 - All banner ads will direct browsers to the website
 - ZLRIGNITION will monitor campaign and report back metrics quarterly
- Cost - \$39,600 for over 19,800,000 million targeted ad impressions



The City of Ames

Campaign Launch Plan

Remarketing:

- Remarketing campaigns target those users who have visited the website either directly or through advertising
- Code is placed on all pages of the site. Users who visited the website are tagged and followed by banner ads for 30 days from their visit
- Once the code is on the site anyone who visits will be remarketed to
- Banner ads appear to these users as they browse other websites within the Google network of sites to keep Ames top of mind
- Banner ads will be shown to users up to seven times per day as they browse other websites
- All ads will direct the audience to website for more info

Cost - \$5,100 for 5,100 clicks to the site (only pay when someone clicks on your ad)

Facebook Ads:

- Run pay per click ads to the target audience of profiles of those ages 25-40 in Des Moines and Ames areas
- Reach the thousands of people browsing their Facebook news feed each day by targeting profiles of those in the target audience. We will target ads by geography as well age. Facebook offers lots of opportunities for targeting with the rich amount of data available.
- You will only pay when people click on the ad and are taken to the website. Those that don't click on the ad are still seeing the advertisement and those impressions are still being obtained at no charge.

Estimate \$10,325 for 10,325 clicks for 12 months

Twitter Ads:

- Run pay per click ads on Twitter in Des Moines and Ames. You can target your followers or other people with certain interests or keywords in their tweets
- Reach people on Twitter to increase Twitter followers, get traffic to the website or boost tweets
- You will only pay when people click on the ad. Those that don't click on the ad are still seeing the advertisement and those impressions are still being obtained at no charge.

Estimate \$10,325 for 10,325 clicks for 12 months



The City of Ames Campaign Launch Plan

Timeline

Campaign	Timeline	Detail
Phase 1	4-6 weeks	Finalize and build campaign components: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• creative elements• content bundle (#1)• web page• social media
Phase 2	6-7 weeks	Campaign launches/LIVE (recommend Jan. 2017): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• paid media placements• content marketing implemented• social media campaign activated
Phase 3	10-12 months	Measure, monitor and optimize: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• digital channels – web page & social• paid digital media Content bundle (#2) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• create and implement new content



**The City of Ames
Campaign Launch Plan**

Budget Previously Approved:

Ignition Day	\$ 4,500
Communications Audit	\$ 4,500
Research	\$ 32,000
Brand Construct	\$ 4,000
Brand Launch	<u>\$ 10,000</u>
TOTAL	\$ 55,000

Proposed Budget:

Agency Services

Account/Project Management	\$ 9,375
Media Management	\$ 11,875
Creative Services	\$ 9,900
Content Marketing/Social Media	<u>\$ 24,500</u>
Total Agency Services	\$ 55,650

Paid Media Services

Outdoor (Billboard)	\$ 24,000
Online	<u>\$ 65,350</u>

Total Paid Media **\$ 89,350**

TOTAL **\$145,000**

GRAND TOTAL **\$200,000**