

## Your To-do List & Summary of the first 20 weeks

Over the past 20 weeks you've received a "to do" item from me each week, and here's a recap of that list. Go ahead and print a copy and checkmark the ones you are doing or will be doing over the next few months.

### 1. AVOID GENERIC WORDS AND PHRASES

Avoid the words and phrases just about everyone else uses that do not set you apart from anyone else. If you did not receive a copy of the "Words & Phrases To Avoid" poster, you can [download it for free here](#).

### 2. SEARCH ENGINE FOCUS: EXPERIENCES

Make sure your experiences and activities show up in search engine results. If you are a fishing destination, when I Google "Fishing" and your state or province, do you show up on the first page of search results? People are looking for activities first, and the approximate location second.

### 3. MARKET YOUR UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

Find that one thing that really differentiates you. Last week I talked about how the Kootenay Rockies' communities in British Columbia weren't putting their unique selling proposition out front: A series of incredible hot springs. Have you found your point of differentiation?

### 4. GET IN THE BRANDING GAME

Educate your locals about branding: Brands are not about logos, slogans, and being all things to all people. If you haven't done this, you should. In my Video Library there are two must-see videos, "The Art of Branding" and "The Branding Step By Step Process." Set up a breakfast, lunch or dinner meeting and show these. It's a fantastic way to get everyone on the same page pulling in the same direction.

### 5. AVOID THE THREE KILLERS OF BRANDING

As you find your unique selling proposition, or brand, just remember that there are only three killers of that branding effort: 1) Local politics, 2) Lack of champions, and 3) Lack of money (public and private). Have you found your niche and the champions who will push it forward? With dedicated champions, you can overcome the other obstacles.

### 6. ALLOCATE YOUR MARKETING DOLLARS: DIGITAL FIRST

How are you spending your marketing dollars? Forty-five percent of your marketing should be invested in digital marketing: your website, frequent updates, improved content, e-newsletters, video, social media, pay-per-click and search engine optimization (making sure your experiences are on the first page of search results). Are you there yet?

## 7. HELLO ACTIVITIES GUIDE, GOODBY VISITORS GUIDE

Have you converted your Visitors Guide to an Activities Guide? And are you focusing on activities – things to see and do as opposed to lists of local businesses and activities? Are you thinking like a travel writer?

## 8. READ THE BOOK & PASS IT ALONG

I hope you'll pick up a book on branding. I provided a list of five that I personally thought were excellent. If not, get either "The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding" or "Positioning: The Battle For Your Mind." They are both easy reads and very enlightening. I promise you, they are worth the read.

## 9. AVOID THE MUNDANE AND THE USUAL

How are your marketing efforts coming along? Are you avoiding the desire to be all things to all people? Are you promoting experiences before your location? Are you avoiding the use of mundane, generic and boring text (the same stuff everyone else says)?

## 10. TELL ME WHY BEFORE WHAT, WHERE OR WHO

In your marketing are you concentrating on telling me WHY I should visit you? Or invest in your downtown? Always answer the question "why" before you list WHAT you have, WHERE you are located, or WHO you are. "What happens here stays here," is the WHY people go to Las Vegas.

## 11. CREATE A STRONG CALL TO ACTION

Does your advertising create a call to action? "You deserve a break today, so get up and get away – to McDonald's" is both the reason and the call to action: "You deserve a break TODAY..." All of your marketing should include a call to action, i.e. "What are you celebrating this week?"

## 12. WHO YOU ARE GOES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE AD, GUIDE, BROCHURE

Are you following the seven principles of a print ad? Remember that your logo should be at the BOTTOM of the page or ad, not at the top. Experience first, a photo or graphic that sells it and is unique to you, then the body text to close the sale, and then end with "by the way, we're so and so, located in central Kentucky."

## 13. TOP 3" OF YOUR RACK BROCHURE: YELLOW & ATTENTION GETTING

What do the top 3" of your brochures look like? Are you selling the experience first? Are you using yellow on a contrasting background? The first rule of marketing is to get noticed!

## 14. CREATE THE "BEST OF" BROCHURE

Are you promoting your "anchor tenants" – Your "Best Of" restaurants, retail shops, attractions and complementary activities? Don't let politics kill this effort! Use the criteria I provided to get

politics out of the way. To win you MUST promote your “best ofs.” Everyone else will benefit. Really!

#### 15. DISTRIBUTE YOUR "BEST OF" GUIDE

Once you’ve created your “Best Of” guide, make sure you send me a copy! AND make sure you’re giving them to your lodging facilities and providing them at your primary attractions and at your visitor center.

#### 16. SEND A BEST OF GUIDE TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD

Did you send a “Best Of” guide to each household in your community? I provided an example of a card you could send with it. Remember: Locals first, visitors follow – they go where you go.

#### 17. TELL THEM ONCE, TWICE, THEN AGAIN AND AGAIN

Have you found your best media outlets to advertise in? Remember to pick a few, and then run your advertising in them over and over and over and over until it sticks in the minds of those readers. Repetition gets results.

#### 18. YOUR MARKETING MATERIALS: ONLINE FOR VIEWING & DOWNLOAD

Are you providing your Activities Guide, Best Of guide and other marketing materials on your website and/or in apps? For both viewing and download? If so, you can start reducing how many you actually print, and then invest that money in additional online content: videos, professional photography, writing itineraries.

#### 19. GET DOWN TO JUST THREE PRIMARY MARKETING PIECES

Are you narrowing your arsenal of printed materials down to just three? Your Activities Guide, your Best Of guide and itineraries?

If you do these things you will be one of the few organizations that doesn’t waste 97% of their marketing dollars, and as a result, you’ll see your local and visitor spending increase.