



## Reposition city in minds of region, state, nation & world

### What's working

#### **We have a strong foundation for cooperative action.**

- The More to Life campaign has become the foundation for the future. It's a treasure chest of resources.
- Ten years ago, the notion of marketing Saint Paul and Minneapolis together would have been met with violent negative reaction; that's no longer true.
- Companies realize that the issue of recruiting high achievers is a shared challenge. Big employers understand they have a huge strategic interest in helping change perceptions about this region.
- There's a sense of civic duty on the part of the private sector here. The private sector stepped up to help during the Republican National Convention; they didn't have to be prodded. You don't see that in many cities.
- The City is willing to commit resources to get things done. For the Republican National Convention,

the City served as a facilitator and provided public services. The public side doesn't work as well in other cities.

#### **Minneapolis has marketable resources and a strong image.**

- Downtown is clean, safe and very presentable.
- The Republican National Convention put us on the map with the news media. The media party on the river was next to magical. The majority of convention coverage presented a smart city image and a world-class city.
- Our handling of the bridge collapse showed the world that we're a city that can get things done.
- Minneapolis is rising above its peer set as we talk about national challenges. Mayor Rybak's visibility is one of the reasons that Minneapolis is a city that gets noticed.

### What isn't working

#### **Minnesota is still perceived as flyover land.**

- People on the coasts still have the impression that we're not sophisticated.
- Our research found that people who have never visited here believe there's no reason to come here.

#### **We don't believe in ourselves.**

- With all the corporate headquarters located here, we should have a global mindset. Instead, we still think we're just a step beyond a regional flour milling center. Minneapolis is so past that but our self-perception hasn't caught up with our reality.
- Residents don't see promoting their state as their job.
- People from outstate Minnesota don't always believe that our downtown is safe. We have positioned ourselves better nationally than within our own state.

#### **Winter, winter, winter ...**

- The locals are our own worst enemies. Minnesotans head south for the winter and the prevailing sentiment they project is that winter here is unbearable.
- We don't take advantage of winter the way Aspen does. No one thinks about Aspen and says, "Oh it's cold there; I don't want to go there." But they say that about Minneapolis.

#### **Our two-city status causes identity confusion and competition.**

- For us, there's a distinction between Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Nationally, however, we're the same place. When you spin a globe, we're just one dot.
- We're a two-headed monster: two counties, two cities. That makes everything more complicated.
- With two of everything, we compete for the same events. Tourism promotion is more effective when funding and focus are consolidated, but there's still infighting.
- It's hard to grasp how the same marketing strategy can work for two destinations — Minneapolis and Saint Paul. There's confusion about what we're ultimately marketing.

#### **We don't have a convener to facilitate arts or sports marketing.**

- We have the assets to be an arts destination, but we don't market that. We don't have a cultural arts convener.
- We have sports resources, but there's no entity whose daily job is to promote professional and amateur events. Most things happen in an ad hoc way rather than with intention.

#### **We don't have the financial resources to do global marketing.**

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### What should be done next

#### **Embrace winter.**

- Showcase our winter events and beautiful scenery. Promote the pond hockey tournament, show pictures of sunlight sparkling off of the snow. Take advantage of winter the way Aspen does. Market our beautiful winter assets to Sunbelt residents who would come north for Christmas or a winter experience.
- Make it clear that nothing shuts down here because of snow or cold.

#### **Focus on ways to recruit people to move here — not just visit here.**

- Market the job opportunities that our Fortune 500 companies offer.
- Host job fairs.
- Promote high technology and medical companies — anything that speaks to economic growth.
- Generate national interest by showing why this region has the characteristics that will position us to come out of this recession stronger. People will move here if they believe there are lots of employers here who are doing well.
- Take advantage of the perception that Minneapolis is a place where things get done.
- Get the people who have made a conscious choice to move here to be our institutional voice. Use these people as recruiting ambassadors.

#### **Create ambassadors and market ourselves purposefully.**

- Find a way to make vacationers from southern states into evangelists on behalf of our great summers.
- Minneapolis needs to decide on its identity and market this image purposefully.

- Recognize the differences between Minneapolis and Saint Paul and don't be timid about marketing ourselves differently.
- Do a better job of defining our audiences: Minnesota, the region, the world.
- Use our Sister City tie-ins for tourism and business development purposes.
- Change the perception that we're all Norwegians and Swedes. Promote our diversity with enthusiasm.

#### **Collaborate when it makes sense.**

- Do joint marketing projects with Saint Paul and Bloomington when it makes sense to market the region. Nothing should stop Minneapolis from using regional assets such as the Mall of America and Fortune 500 companies.
- Let the business community do its recruiting as a region while allowing Saint Paul and Minneapolis to promote their different identities. We should run with our differences.

#### **Create an enabling body or convener to market events.**

- Create an enabling body or quasi-government entity whose daily job is to look for opportunities to market the arts, sports and special events.
- The City should emulate how Indianapolis promotes sports events or Chicago promotes tourism. There's a desire on both the public and private sector sides to accomplish a common marketing goal — we just need a convener. The leadership has to come from the public side.

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*“Minneapolis needs to get comfortable with a different peer set. We need to stop comparing ourselves to St. Louis or Kansas City and start identifying ourselves with a cosmopolitan European or Asian city.”*

*- Public relations professional*

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