

CITY OF FARMERS BRANCH

Ampersand Campaign

Marketing Communication Plan
Executive Summary–2.14.17



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SITUATION

In April 2016, PYRO Agency was contracted by the City of Farmers Branch (COFB) to recommend a new brand strategy and marketing tactics for the City.

As a vibrant, dynamic DFW bedroom community with plenty to offer prospective residents, tourists, and businesses, the City's marketing team believes that it lags its competitors when it comes to creating appeal through its external marketing efforts. While it believes that it has made tremendous strides over the years to increase the efficacy of these efforts, leadership still recognizes a lack of a cohesive strategy to effectively deploy its brand/message and to connect the many community assets, services, and overall attractiveness of the community for businesses, residents, and visitors to external markets.

PYRO has developed this plan to help draw new residents, businesses, and tourists to the area, as well as to provide a brand platform for continuously improving the quality of life for its residents. Its working goals are to reimage the COFB to maximize its appeal, provide the framework for visually and verbally unifying the messaging across all departments, and to establish efficient and measurable tactics for achieving the goals within the City's budget.

BRAND & MARKETING AUDIT

To achieve its mission, we conducted a brand and marketing audit to uncover insights and patterns beneficial to the development of the new brand strategy. The scope of the audit included assessing the COFB's current/historic messaging, reviewing competitor messaging in relation to our own, and reviewing historical research to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current marketing messages.

We also conducted extensive one-on-one interviews with a cross-section of City leadership and hoteliers to gain a broad perspective on the challenges and opportunities for a new brand strategy.

Additionally, Farmers Branch residents were asked to provide their insights into what made the COFB special using the City's email list. Of the 10,000 invitations to participate that were sent out, 934 responded to the brief survey.

Finally, the agency referenced its many secondary research sources to illuminate the needs and desires of its target audience. These included: IconoCulture and Simmons to uncover relevant macro trends that can influence the new brand strategy.

The salient findings influencing our recommendations are as follows:

- The target audience as defined by the City (Adults 25-44 – young, educated, and upwardly mobile) in fact spans two different generations of Americans. While each have unique characteristics (for example, Gen Xers being individualistic, entrepreneurial, and brand-conscious vs. Gen Yers who tend to be team-oriented and less brand-conscious, among other things), they do share in common a love to learn, explore, engage, and make contributions to their neighborhoods and the world at large. This common thread is something that we built on.
- Key target audience macro trends considered within the strategy development include: A desire to approximate luxury without paying too much for it (scaling back without upending their lifestyle); taking pride in living a balanced, unplugged, fulfilled, smart life; quality, not quantity, of life, being a priority; and unlocking individual purpose and fulfillment by

experiencing, not collecting things, and doing so with a community of like-minded individuals.

- The City's observed strengths that can be leveraged include: Proximity to downtown Dallas (close enough to quickly and easily access all that the Metroplex has to offer, yet far enough away to escape from the hustle and bustle); small-town feel; exceptional city services and value for the tax dollar; and a variety of engaging settings to entertain residents and visitors – from the many parks and trails to recreation facilities, etc. Participants in our resident survey amplified these findings and further characterized the COFB as a friendly, beautiful (i.e., plenty of parks), safe, and quiet city surrounded by big-city amenities (including the City's own signature events and celebrations).
- The City's perceived weaknesses to overcome include: The perception of being an older, sleepy part of Dallas without much excitement; dated imagery (initially driven by a city name that harkens to the past, not the future); lack of a fun, youthful image; and the perception of inadequate access to dining, nightlife, and other entertainment amenities that residents and visitors would find compelling. Participants in our resident survey reinforced these observations and further characterized the City as not being perceived as always changing and growing for the better or being fertile territory for building a great life.
- Opportunities for further enhancing the perception of the COFB's brand offerings include expanding our signature events offering and highlighting the connectedness inside the community.

THE NEW BRAND STRATEGY

Following the brand and marketing audit, a select brand team of City leadership met with PYRO in June 2016 to brainstorm ways to improve the City's overall message using the learning from the audit as its guide. This was a two-day workshop where the group refined the City's "brand promise" consisting of: A brand vision (i.e., our City's highest calling), brand positioning (i.e., our target audience, competitive set, and most compelling benefit), brand personality (i.e., the human characteristics that help us stand out from the competition), and brand affiliation (i.e., the type of individuals the City hopes will strongly advocate for it). The recommendations made for each element of the brand promise are as follows:

CITY OF FARMERS BRANCH BRAND PROMISE:

- Brand Vision: Nurturing a connected community.
- Brand Positioning: To people who want to be surrounded by nature in the heart of the city, Farmers Branch is the way of life that inspires a sense of community in a variety of engaging settings.
- Brand Personality: Vibrant. Creative.
- Brand Affiliation: Family-friendly, passionate, and community-focused.

Through enforcement of this new brand promise, the City's marketing leadership will achieve conviction about what the COFB brand stands for. That conviction can drive the various departments to strive for consistency in all communications and guide the City's growth and direction. Essentially it is a "blueprint" for developing all future marketing communications.

In addition to a new brand strategy, a key conclusion coming out of the workshop was that the City must elevate its execution and style of the promotional materials and communications and, specifically, make its art direction intentional to stand out from the clutter. While the City has been generally moving in the right direction in this regard, its marketing materials continue to be somewhat dated, not iconic, and simply lack a "WOW" factor to the creative.

THE CAMPAIGN IDEA

Following the brand strategy development, PYRO conceptualized and presented four campaign alternatives based on the new strategy, from which the “&” concept was chosen.

The essence of the campaign is that Farmers Branch provides endless potential as a great place to live, work, and play. It is captured through an endless stream of ways it lives up to this promise via a simple visual icon – an ampersand. The campaign is brought to life by immersing the “&” icon into any/all social, cultural, and business communications externally promoting the City. The “&” represents endless opportunities that can be found in the City of Farmers Branch.

See Exhibit #1 accompanying this document for samples of the creative executions.

Also visit discoverfarmersbranch.com to see the new website when launched following City approval.

2017 MARKETING COMMUNICATION PLAN

PYRO has developed a communication plan based on the available budget of \$170,000.

COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES:

The communication objectives are as follows:

- Position and differentiate the City
 - Launch new brand campaign via media plan
 - Launch new website
- Increase business expansion, retention, and relocation to COFB
 - Bring the new brand strategy to life in the sales support materials
- Increase visits to and around the COFB
 - Room nights in Farmers Branch hotels
 - Attendance at destination events: Date Night, Bluegrass, Liberty Fest presents Stars & Strings, Christmas Tour of Lights, Farmers Market
 - Visitation and interest in the Farmers Branch Historical Park
- Increase residential expansion and retention
 - Interest and participation in the Demo/Rebuild program
- Increase the satisfaction with COFB community living
 - Create positive buzz about Farmers Branch
 - Communicate and reinforce all aspects of the new Farmers Branch brand strategy (i.e., inspiring a sense of community in a variety of engaging settings; communicating with vibrant and creative marketing materials)

TARGET AUDIENCE FOCUS:

- Tourism
 - DFW-area residents seeking fun weekend activities
 - North Texans within a 20-mile radius looking for a fun and affordable weekend getaway
 - Business meeting and association event planners
 - Sporting event planners in baseball, softball, soccer, basketball, and hockey
 - Wedding planners and brides in the Dallas area

- Influencers in the news media and blogging community
- Residential Development
 - Dallas-area homebuyers, Adults 25-44; qualified buyers purchasing home median price of \$186K
 - Dallas-area real estate agents working with local and out-of-town homebuyers
 - Influencers in the news media and blogging community
 - Current COFB residents potentially looking to upgrade their home
- Economic Development
 - Dallas-area businesses that might potentially relocate down the road
 - Site selection consultants within the brokerage company
 - Corporate retail site selectors
 - Influencers in the news media
 - Current COFB companies; 150 largest employers

RECOMMENDED MEDIA MIX:

See Exhibit #2 accompanying this document for the 2017 Media Flowchart.

The recommended media mix achieves 16,362,316 total impressions with the following average percentage of impressions by emphasis:

• Events & Celebrations	48%
• Brand Reimaging	23%
• Demo/Rebuild	18%
• Historical Park	8%
• Tourism	3%
• Total	100%

Note: The recommended paid marketing in this plan is in addition to paid marketing that the City is already doing. See Exhibit #4 for a list of additional paid marketing

Print Advertising:

The 2017 effort includes three insertions in *Texas Monthly*: two insertions focusing on the brand reimage and one to promote the historical park. The call to action will be to visit discoverfarmersbranch.com to learn more. The ads will appear in the following issues:

- August – DFW/Fall Travel
- October – Great Getaways/Travel
- December – Made in Texas/Travel

Digital Display:

Our digital efforts focus on the brand reimaging, the Demo/Rebuild program, and weddings. Each effort will include a variety of display banner sizes (i.e., 160x600, 728x90, 300x250, 300x600) and appear on interest and geo-targeted sites (targeting people within a 15-mile radius around the COFB). Sites include DallasObserver.com, DMagazine.com, Homes.com, Thrillist.com, GuideLive.com, ESPN.com, Zillow.com, Yelp.com, CNET.com, HuffingtonPost.com, and TechCrunch.com. Note, however, that we are more focused on who is receiving the ads rather than what sites they are on. There are thousands of potential sites that we can show up on based on where the target is going.

The call to action will be to “visit discoverfarmersbranch.com to learn more” and will be directly measured by click-through rates to the website and overall engagement with the brand (i.e., their time spent on the site). The ads will appear during the following timeframes:

- March to May
- July to August
- September to December

Email Marketing:

An email marketing program will be implemented to increase residential expansion and retention. The effort includes 120K emails sent to prospective homebuyers (list size = 27,529) and local real estate agents (list size = 4,754). The call to action will be to “click here to learn more” and we will measure click-through rates at discoverfarmersbranch.com and cost per action to download or register to receive more information.

The emails are scheduled in May, July, and October.

Social:

Social media marketing to our current followers will be an important part of the 2017 initiative. Central to the brand reimaging will be a “re-skin” of all social marketing elements to incorporate the “&” concept. Sites affected include:

City	Farmers Market
• Facebook	• Instagram
• Twitter	
• Instagram	Historical Park
	• Facebook
Special Events	• Pinterest
• Instagram	• Instagram

Paid Social:

We are also including a yearlong paid social component to extend the reach of these efforts. Separate ads will be developed for the brand reimaging, the Historical Park, and key City celebrations and events throughout the year (approximately 49). Ad units will include 47x140 ads; text 500 characters,

heading 25 characters max. The call to action will be to “click here” to learn more and we will measure click-through rates and cost per action at discoverfarmersbranch.com and the increase in the number of people following us on the various social media platforms.

Large “&” model – To help seed the campaign idea, the budget includes funds for a 9-foot sculpture of the “&” to bring to events and celebrations. As people love to document trips and activities on social media, the iconic “&” will give them a branded backdrop to do so and tag the City.

Paid Search:

Paid search will be an integral part of our 2017 plan as it directly targets those who self-identify as prospects by virtue of their searches. The advantage of paid search campaigns is that the City gets the benefit of the impressions while only paying for those prospects that click on an ad. For that reason, paid search is a cost-effective use of the marketing dollars for the COFB.

Sample keywords for each segment are below:

TOURISM:

- romantic date ideas
- market place dallas
- texas music festivals
- best chili in dallas
- good date ideas
- farmers branch tour of lights
- farmers branch lights
- things to do in texas this weekend
- texas fest
- dallas date night
- farmers branch events
- creative date ideas
- dallas date
- dfw christmas lights
- xmas lights
- night market
- things to do in dallas
- texas vacations
- fun things to do in dallas
- things to do in dallas this weekend
- what to do in dallas
- events in dallas
- dallas attractions
- dallas events today
- free things to do in dallas
- dallas travel
- dallas things to do
- things to do
- dallas events this weekend
- events in dallas this weekend

- things to do in dallas tonight
- stuff to do in dallas
- fun places to go in dallas

- things to do in texas
- things to do in dallas texas
- things to do in dallas with kids

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:

- homes for sale
- cfbisd
- houses for sale in dallas tx
- farmers branch
- homes for sale in dallas tx
- dallas housing
- carrollton farmers branch isd
- home improvement
- farmers branch tx
- dallas homes for sale
- private schools in dallas
- guide live dallas
- home remodeling
- remodeling
- dallas neighborhoods
- best places to live in texas
- dallas private schools
- cfbisd calendar
- farmers branch texas
- homes for sale in farmers branch tx
- best cities to live in texas
- cheapest places to live
- safest cities in texas
- farmers branch isd
- dallas suburbs
- home remodeling contractors
- montessori schools in dallas
- cool places in dallas
- affordable housing dallas
- best places to live in dallas

- best schools in dallas
- academy ft worth
- private schools dallas
- school districts in dfw
- private high schools in dallas
- suburbs of dallas
- apartments in farmers branch tx
- neighborhoods in dallas
- top private schools in dallas
- dallas montessori schools
- best schools in dfw
- best private schools in texas
- safe neighborhoods in dallas
- homes for rent in farmers branch tx
- home improvement grants
- where to live in dallas
- neighborhoods of dallas
- small towns near dallas
- housing grants
- best places to live in dfw
- best small towns to live in texas
- best places to retire in texas
- home repair grants
- grants for housing
- grants for home improvement
- first home buyer texas
- texas first home buyer program
- texas first home buyer
- texas home buying programs
- remodeling in dallas

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- farmers branch
- city of farmers branch
- enterprise dallas
- texas corporation search
- dallas entrepreneur center
- business for sale dallas
- tedc
- companies headquartered in dallas
- dallas business for sale
- starting a business in texas
- dallas development
- companies in dallas
- texas business license
- how to start a business in texas
- what is a dba
- enterprise dallas texas
- enterprise in dallas
- texas enterprise fund
- enterprise in dallas tx
- economic development in texas

SPECIAL EVENTS:

- things to do in dallas
- dallas farmers market
- concerts in dallas
- dallas events
- fun things to do in dallas
- things to do in dallas this weekend
- farmers branch
- dallas concerts
- what to do in dallas
- farmers market dallas
- events in dallas
- christmas lights
- farmers market
- chili
- free things to do in dallas
- dallas attractions
- things to do in dallas today
- vitruvian lights
- dallas things to do
- fresh market dallas
- stuff to do in dallas
- things to do in dallas
- fun places to go in dallas
- things to do in dallas texas
- attractions in dallas tx
- date ideas
- christmas lights dallas
- farmers market near me
- festivals in dallas
- upcoming concerts in dallas
- farmers branch historical park
- top things to do in dallas
- what to do in dallas this weekend
- activities in dallas
- places to go in dallas
- romantic things to do in dallas
- festival of lights
- highland park christmas lights
- dallas this weekend
- visit dallas
- things to do in dfw
- date night

- dallas christmas lights
- dallas festivals
- farmers branch texas
- dallas date ideas
- fun date ideas
- things to do in dallas
- christmas lights near me
- christmas lights in dallas
- festivals in texas
- bluegrass
- farmers branch park
- things to do in dfw this weekend
- things to do this weekend in dallas
- top 10 things to do in dallas
- fun places in dallas
- fun activities in dallas
- fun things to do in dallas at night
- music festivals in texas
- christmas tree lights
- bluegrass festival
- texas festivals
- bluegrass fest

MEDIA MIX CONSIDERED, BUT NOT RECOMMENDED:

While these may play a role in future marketing efforts, all were not recommended due to budgetary reasons:

- Television (broadcast/cable)
- Radio
- Outdoor
- Online Video
- Online Audio
- Native Advertising

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs):

Since no baseline currently exists, we're considering 2017 the baseline for metrics moving forward. Campaign performance will be reported on a quarterly basis and address the following KPIs:

- Impressions – Cumulative number of times our targets are exposed to the message. The 2017 plan proposed achieves 16,362,316 total impressions.
- Click-through rate (CTR) – Percentage of users who clicked vs. number of total users who view a page or ad. We estimate a performance consistent or better than industry averages for display, from 0.05% to 0.10%.
- Open rate – How many people open (or view) a particular email campaign vs. total number of emails sent out. We estimate a range consistent with industry averages for open rates, from 15% to 20%.
- Cost per action (CPA) – Average cost of qualified actions. We estimate a performance consistent or better than industry averages for open rates, from \$5 to \$10.
- Time on website – Average time spent on website. We estimate a performance consistent or better than average time spent on the old website, from 1:30 to 2:00 minutes.
- Website bounce rate – Number of visitors who enter the site and then leave. We estimate a performance consistent with or better than average bounce rates, less than 40% to 50%.

ADDITIONAL BRAND STRATEGY ACTIVATION PLANS

Development of a compelling brand strategy does not, in and of itself, guarantee success. What does is a concerted effort to activate the brand strategy through “rituals” that serve to strengthen and reinforce advocacy. In our view, rituals should manifest across four key areas of the City’s marketing communications:

- Promotional ideas to position and differentiate the brand
- Customer service methods that can amplify the City’s “way of life”
- Cultural behaviors – both internal and external – that determine how the City conducts its affairs
- Celebrations and Events

LAUNCHING THE CAMPAIGN TO THE COMMUNITY:

Coinciding with the official launch of discoverfarmersbranch.com we recommend doing residential and business community outreach to introduce and explain the new brand strategy and “&” concept. This could entail:

- Dedicated e-blast announcing the campaign
- Spotlights in the Branch Review and Branch Bulletin
- Citywide selfie contest with the ampersand sculpture
- Recreation center information tables/fact sheets
- Static cling decals of the “&” concept for use in retail windows and to give away to residents

ACTIVATION AT EVENTS:

Integrate an ampersand display at all destination events, Farmers Market, tournaments and other destination-gear events in the community.

- Branded booth staffed with tourism ambassador to promote the City
- Ampersand sculpture for picture opportunities (website and hashtag)
- Give-a-way items including the campaign url and hashtag

ACTIVATION AT FARMERS BRANCH HOTELS:

- Coordinate with hotels to offer Stay & Play packages for Date Night, Bluegrass, and Stars & Stings (will be displayed on all event material and website)
- Ampersand countertop display with cards at hotels with web address and hash tag
- Tent cards with seasonal activity in hotel rooms that are branded with the new campaign

PRIORITIES FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN 2017

Should incremental marketing dollars become available during 2017, these are additional needs related to building out the campaign elements:

- Photography (Brand and Editorial) – PYRO reviewed more than 10,000 existing images in marketing’s archives and created a list of 2,200 that it believes fit the new brand strategy and thus can be used in communication materials. Of those, 107 photographs have been color-corrected for consistency and are currently in use in the new website, the Visitors Guide, and the Facilities Guide. For cost reasons, all of the brand ads (with the “&”) currently use stock imagery. They work fine, but the more effective approach would be to shoot our own imagery as funds become available. In addition to new brand images, the City needs funding to capture more images during key celebrations and events.
- Brand Video – The agency believes that all departments could benefit from a short film that brings to life the new strategy.

MARKETING MATERIALS UPDATES

During 2018, there are many collateral pieces across the departments that we recommend updating to integrate the brand campaign elements. The priority items include:

- Economic Development: Business Retention Collateral; Prospective Business Collateral
- Communications: Branch Review; Branch E-News
- Tourism: Welcome flyers/banners
- Parks & Recreation: Seasonal banners for light poles
- Historical Park: Weddings Brochure

2018 AND BEYOND

MEDIA MIX EXPANSION

The agency has provided a “to task” media plan for 2018 and beyond.

See Exhibit #4 accompanying this document for the media flowchart and details.

Notable additions to the media mix being used in 2017 include:

- Continuation of same tactics as in 2017, but with greater frequency.
- Addition of Native Advertising – In its simplest form, this is advertising that is designed to mimic the news environment in which it appears. There are many formats: content-recommendation widgets, social in-stream, and sponsored/ promoted content. Depending on the format and the type of content, the agency believes that it can work for both brand awareness (i.e., the current sense of community in engaging settings) and direct response objectives (i.e., sign up to learn how to take advantage of the Demo/Rebuild incentives).
- Addition of Pre-Roll Video Advertising – A pre-roll promotion ad plays before content that a web browser selects. When viewers click a link or load our video, they do so with intention and active engagement – and before their chosen video plays, that attention is focused on whatever message occupies the player. The agency has noted the need for a brand video in the priorities for additional funding, and that video would be edited to create the pre-roll ad(s).

FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

In July 2016, PYRO led a team of City “brainstormers” to generate a comprehensive list of ways to activate the new brand strategy in the areas above.

A few of the key recommendations coming out of the brainstorming include:

- Expanding “Date Night in the Park” – This event reinforces the new brand strategy well and for that reason the agency encouraged the City to secure a trademark on the name “Date Night in the Park.” This would give Farmers Branch exclusivity to the concept. The agency further recommends doubling the number of Date Nights to four per year.
- Reinvent key Signature Events to better align with the new brand strategy. For example, Stars & Strings is really not a unique concept and the makeup of the event should be reevaluated as it is geared more toward an older audience rather than the Adult 25-44 target. In addition, despite Bloomin’ Bluegrass being extremely successful, the agency feels that by broadening the range of musical acts it can appeal to a wider demo.
- The agency also recommends introducing 1-2 new signature events within three years, assuming there is adequate staffing and budget to do so. Among the many concepts that were developed in our July brainstorming, we believe these four make the most sense:
 - TexasFest: Featuring all things Texas including the state’s best beer, wine and musical acts.
 - Tiny House Tour of Homes: Bringing together the best designs from this nationwide movement of tiny houses on wheels.
 - Vintage Market and Design Days: Building on the popularity of the vintage style of decorating as seen in the hit TV show, *Fixer Upper*.
 - Nature Preserve Outdoor Festival & 5K: Adding an eco-tourist event to also highlight the beautiful John F. Burke trails, upland forests, and wetlands area.

- Introduce new City-sponsored neighborhood community-building events to create a more connected community, such as:
 - Farm-to-Table Community Dinners or Brunch introduced to the Farmers Market: Featuring a large gathering table and great conversation
 - Mobile Taste & Tunes – rotate the event to different neighborhood parks