

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPER'S COMPLETE **GUIDE TO** **MARKETING & SEO STRATEGIES**

BY GOLDEN SHOVEL AGENCY



In the late 1300s, Geoffrey Chaucer wrote *Canterbury Tales*. The book tells the story of a group of people on a pilgrimage, sharing their stories along the way. Chaucer used this journey as a way to introduce readers to the 24 characters and their stories. He wanted to show that even though journeys can be difficult, they can also be transformative and eye-opening.

To make it more relatable, Chaucer used storytelling to help readers feel like they were on the journey themselves.

He created vivid and memorable characters. In the end, Chaucer offered a destination: Closure.

This Guide to Marketing & SEO Strategies will help your organization tell stories similar to Chaucer's approach. In the guide, we break down the marketing and SEO process into smaller, achievable steps and give you a clear goal to work towards. It will take a lot of work to implement your strategies. But it is not impossible.

NOT ANOTHER MARKETING STRATEGY!

Why does the world need another guide to marketing and SEO? Because economic development strategic plans are not like others. They are critical to the success and growth of communities.

Economic development organizations (EDOs) often struggle with consistency and execution regarding strategic marketing. Planning and research can provide clarity for organizations to meet future objectives, but a lack of political will, resources, and momentum can often hinder success. Investing time and effort into a strategic marketing plan can result in success fueled by passion, excitement, and self-reflection.

A strategic plan is essential for any organization seeking long-term success. It provides direction, focus, and a framework for decision-making. Without a strategic marketing plan, EDOs risk a lack of direction, wasted resources, and missed opportunities for growth and success. Therefore, this economic development-specific guide to marketing and SEO will provide valuable insights and practical steps to help organizations create effective marketing strategies, which are essential to achieving sustainable growth and success over time.

In addition, SEO is critical to any marketing strategy in today's digital age. By incorporating SEO best practices, EDOs can optimize their website content to increase visibility and attract potential businesses and workforce.

"If you are going to have a story, have a big story or none at all." -Joseph Campbell

GETTING STARTED

This guide is designed specifically for economic developers and will cover various topics related to developing a successful marketing and SEO strategy. Economic development relies on strong strategies to attract and retain both businesses and workforce, ultimately leading to economic growth.

Ron Kresha, COO & CFO & Audrey Anderson, Director of Marketing & Communications

WHAT IS STRATEGIC MARKETING & HOW DOES IT FIT INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

In today's ever-changing market, economic development is crucial for regions to grow and thrive. Economic development promotes a region's economic well-being by creating jobs, generating revenue, and fostering a positive business environment. However, economic development success often depends on an organization's ability to create and execute an effective strategic marketing plan.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC MARKETING?

Strategic marketing is creating a comprehensive plan that aligns with an organization's overall strategy to achieve specific objectives. It involves:

1. Identifying the target audience & understanding the competition.
2. Developing a unique value proposition (UVP).
3. Creating a marketing mix that effectively communicates your message.

This long-term process requires a deep understanding of the market and the organization's goals.

HOW DOES STRATEGIC MARKETING FIT INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

A successful marketing strategy for economic development attracts new businesses and talent and retains existing ones. Strategic marketing plans promote the unique advantages of a region and attract investment, talent, and tourism. By creating and executing an effective strategic marketing plan, economic developers can achieve their economic development goals and drive regional growth.

IDENTIFYING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE & UNDERSTANDING THE COMPETITION

Identifying the target audience is the first step in the marketing process. The target audience is the individuals or businesses most likely to be interested in your community. The target audience may include business owners, entrepreneurs, investors, tourists, or talent.

It is also important to consider your community's industries and available land/buildings. For example, if your city has a heavy focus on manufacturing, it is critical to communicate with the decision-makers working in the manufacturing industry. Similarly, if you have industrial parks specifically supporting aerospace, target the movers and shakers in the aerospace industry. After identifying the audience, you must understand the tactics used by other communities.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC MARKETING & HOW DOES IT FIT INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Economic developers need to understand what their region's competitors offer and how they promote themselves. By analyzing the competition, you can identify gaps in the market and develop a unique value proposition differentiating your region from the competition.

DEVELOPING A UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

The UVP is a critical component of a strategic marketing plan. It is the promise the organization makes to its target audience, and it should communicate the benefits they will receive by choosing this community over others. For economic developers, the UVP may include the region's quality of life, business-friendly environment, access to talent, and infrastructure.

Developing a UVP in marketing requires a deep understanding of the target audience, their needs, and the competitive landscape. Here are some steps you can take to develop a UVP:

1. **Determine your ideal audience and their demographics.** This will help you craft a message that resonates with them.
2. **Identify the needs and pain points of your audience through research.** This aids in determining the benefits and solutions your community can offer.
3. **Create a keyword strategy.** Determine the keywords and phrases that your target audience is searching for when looking for information related to your community or target industry.
4. **Research your competition.** Analyze your competitors and their offerings to determine what makes their community unique. Look for gaps in the market and areas where you can differentiate yourself.
5. **Determine your unique value.** Based on your research, determine how your community stands out. What benefits do you offer that no one else does?
6. **Craft your UVP.** Once you have identified your unique value, craft your UVP statement. It should be clear, concise, and communicate the benefits you offer to your target audience. Make sure it's easy to understand and memorable.
7. **Test your UVP.** Test your UVP on your target audience and community stakeholders to see how they respond. Ask for feedback and make adjustments as needed.
8. **Incorporate your UVP into your marketing strategy.** Once you have a UVP that resonates with your ideal audience, incorporate it into your marketing strategy. Use it in your messaging, branding, and content to differentiate yourself from the competition and attract people who value what you offer.