

BLUEPRINT BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC ROLLOUT CAMPAIGN

Blueprint Birmingham was a new five-year Economic Development Strategy created for the Birmingham, Alabama metropolitan area, supported by the Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA) and facilitated by Market Street Services. The public rollout of the strategy was supported by a comprehensive campaign inclusive of:

- ✓ television advertisements
- ✓ full-page advertisements in local and regional newspapers
- ✓ billboards along the region's primary interstates and highways
- ✓ a public launch event held at a new public park in downtown Birmingham
- ✓ a website providing information on the process and the strategy
- ✓ video testimonials from residents, workers, and business owners

The various elements of the campaign were developed by the BBA's marketing and communications staff with considerable assistance provided pro-bono from a local marketing, advertising, and digital media firms, Big Communications and Six Foot Five.

Website

The BBA launched a website – www.bhamisopen.com – that went live on the day of the public rollout event (9/23/10). The website was used to inform residents, businesses, key implementation partners, and the community at-large about the outcomes of the strategic planning process. It also serves as an internal marketing campaign that sought to galvanize support. The website included video testimonials from predominantly small business owners regarding the potential impact of Blueprint Birmingham and their "openness" and commitment to new ideas contained within the strategy. Video testimonials can be viewed here:

<http://www.bhamisopen.com/people.php>

Television Advertisements

Television ads stating that "Birmingham was closed to new ideas" ran on local television stations for five days prior to the launch event. One of the primary obstacles to effective implementation identified during the strategic planning process was pervasive pessimism and a culture in Birmingham that was averse to change. The "open" and "closed" theme played off these issues.

The "I'm Open" advertisement that ran after the public launch event can be viewed here:

<http://vimeo.com/15571674>

Print Advertisements and Media Coverage

Full-page advertisements were provided pro-bono by local and regional newspapers conveying the "We're Closed" and "I'm Open" messages. The media also dedicated coverage to explain the campaign and the strategy's details to residents and businesses.

Article about the campaign: http://blog.al.com/businessnews/2010/09/teaser_ad_campaign_tries_to_ge.html





Billboards

“Closed” signs ran on billboards for five days leading up to the event. “Closed” signs were switched to “open” signs on the day of the public launch event.



Public Rollout Event

The BBA coordinated and hosted a public rollout event in the late afternoon/early evening at downtown Birmingham’s new Railroad Park. The event was described as “a festive celebration with just a dose of serious, pay-attention-for-a-moment program” which included remarks from the BBA’s interim CEO, the Mayor of Birmingham, and one of the steering committee’s co-chairs. At one point, Birmingham Mayor William Bell and Hoover Mayor Tony Petelos joined hands at a podium in front of the audience signaling a partnership between the region’s two most populous cities in support of Blueprint Birmingham – a somewhat unusual sight in a community that doesn’t have a strong history of regional cooperation.



An open bar, hors d'oeuvres, and live music greeted attendees, who wore "I'm Open" name tags, "I believe in Birmingham" stickers, and waved brightly colored "I'm Open to Building a Better Birmingham Region" signs, complete with the strategy's four goal areas and sixteen objectives printed on the back. The Blueprint Birmingham pavilion area pulled people in with larger than life images of the strategy and its core components, scrolling video, and the testimonials from citizens. Various donations helped offset the event costs. The event concluded with a movie in the park – "The Blues Brothers" – to play on the "Blueprint" theme.



Stills of the crowd before the event and the opening remarks





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