

Staff Report

Report To: Community Development, Tourism and Culture Advisory Committee

Report From: Brent Fisher, Manager of Community and Business Development

Meeting Date: June 11, 2021

Report Code: CS-21-061

Subject: Work from Home Capital of Canada Wrap-up

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-21-061 respecting the Work from Home Capital of Canada Campaign, the Community Development, Tourism and Culture Advisory Committee recommends that City Council receive the report for information purposes.

Highlights:

- The impact of the global pandemic has changed how people work and the City wanted to create a marketing campaign to capitalize on the desire and ability of people to work from home.
- The six-week Work from Home Capital of Canada campaign was created by BC Hughes INC to attract people living in the larger urban areas to consider moving to Owen Sound.
- The Work from Home Capital of Canada Campaign generated over 40 documented stories or references in local and national media.
- Over 400,000 total impressions were generated through digital advertising platforms.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

This report supports the delivery of Core Services.

Background:

At the June 15, 2020, Council meeting, Council noted that due to the shift in work habits and priorities of businesses due to COVID-19, there may be an opportunity to capitalize on the desire and ability of people to work from home on a more permanent basis. Staff was requested to bring forward a report on this opportunity.

Staff presented a [preliminary report to Council on July 27](#) identifying the concept and key project deliverables that included:

1. Define the target market – who they are, where they live, and what makes them tick
2. Approval of target market(s)
3. Development of a creative concept
4. Approval of creative concept
5. Development of campaign details (how we get the message to the market) to include the following potential tactics:
 - Campaign microsite
 - Google AdWords
 - Social media boosts, ads (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
 - Media Relations (story pitches, appearances, interviews)
6. Approval of campaign details
7. Build out of campaign components
8. Campaign execution
9. Metrics and tracking

The City retained BC Hughes INC and staff met to discuss the framework for a campaign that would:

- Build upon the creative concept already in place from the 'Are You Most' campaign;
- Capitalize on a sector of people looking to relocate from larger urban centres, particularly with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Recognize the emerging trend of a permanent "work from home" workforce in some sectors of the economy; and
- Separate Owen Sound from similar municipalities looking to attract the same demographic by creating a thought-provoking campaign that stands out as unique.

[An overview of the campaign creative](#) was presented and approved by the Community Development, Tourism and Culture Advisory Committee on September 18, 2020.

Analysis:

The six-week Work from Home Capital of Canada campaign was created to create awareness for people living in the larger urban areas to consider Owen Sound as an option for leaving “the city”. Although the City boasts a great quality of life and all of the amenities to work from home such as Gigabyte connectivity, access to healthcare, and full city services, Owen Sound has traditionally not been top of mind for families and others looking to relocate. The campaign was launched on January 29, 2021, and ran until March 14. The campaign was executed primarily through digital advertising and earned media, driving the target audience to the branded campaign microsite, www.workfromhomecapitalofcanada.ca.

A stand-alone microsite was created to act as the campaign’s main call to action. The website included a series of pages to be navigated before making it to the final page. By creating the website this way, those not interested would typically not make it to the final page. Those interested and making it to the final page were rewarded with information about Owen Sound and the opportunity to claim a free pair of pajamas (while supplies were available).

The digital advertising campaign ran from January 29 to March 14. Advertising mediums used included Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Google ads. The initial advertising budget was set at \$8,500, with a percentage allotted to each medium. Digital ads were monitored daily, and budgets were adjusted based on ad performance. After two rounds of LinkedIn ads, it was decided to stop these ads and move the remaining ad budget to Facebook ads as the LinkedIn ads were underperforming.

Website traffic and detailed campaign results are summarized in Attachment 1.

With the success of the ads, as well as earned media uptake, pajama requests surpassed expectations. As a result, a portion of the advertising budget was allocated to the pajama budget to fulfill additional pajama requests. This allowed the campaign to create a deeper and extended connection to Owen Sound with the recipients.

From February 23 to March 19, the Work from Home Capital of Canada campaign was picked up by 20 news outlets organically (that could be tracked) and 20 news outlets through the Canadian Press newswire.

Mayor Boddy participated in interviews with [CBC Here & Now](#), [CTV London](#), [CBC.ca](#), as well as a live interview on CTV National News Channel, among others that provided a platform to promote the City to a wider general audience.

The Canadian Press Newswire uptake showed a higher number of business-facing or industry-focused news outlets. [The Canadian Business Journal](#), [The Luxury Chronicle](#), and [Building.ca](#) all featured stories about the campaign.

Summary

As noted earlier in the report, the goals and objective of the campaign was to:

- Build upon the creative concept already in place from the 'Are You Most' campaign;
- Capitalize on a sector of people looking to relocate from larger urban centres, particularly with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Recognize the emerging trend of a permanent "work from home" workforce in some sectors of the economy; and
- Separate Owen Sound from similar municipalities looking to attract the same demographic by creating a thought-provoking campaign that stands out as unique.

It can be difficult to gauge how successful a campaign of this type can be; however, based on the goals and objectives outlined above and the campaign metrics provided within the report and presentation, staff believes the goals and objectives of the campaign were achieved with a high level of success.

Financial Implications:

The campaign budget was \$45,000. The funds were supported through the approved 2020 Community Development operating budget.

The final campaign cost was \$45,279.17.

The City was able to fund slightly more than 50 per cent or \$25,035 of eligible campaign expenses through the \$150,000 TIAO provincial grant. This resulted in a final campaign cost to the City of \$20,244.17.

Communication Strategy:

A media release was written about Owen Sound claiming the Work from Home Capital of Canada title and was distributed to a shortlist of media. As a result, 20 media stories referencing the campaign were created.

In addition, Newswire.ca also distributed the media release. However, due to a scheduling issue, Newswire did not charge the City for the subsequent distribution. A total of 20 news sources subsequently picked up and shared the story. A full list of media coverage can be found in the attached presentation.

Throughout the pandemic, the City has been approached by several major media outlets to purchase marketing recruitment advertising packages.

To provide the context of the value received from the Work from Home campaign, a campaign in the Globe and Mail offering one half-page ad and 300,000 digital impressions would have been a cost of \$12,600 per insertion plus creative.

A more targeted approach to engaging city-dwellers with [Adamo Nest](#), a new condo-living publication was proposed as well. A single-page advertisement in their publication (100,000 copies) with impressions on digital elevator screens would have cost \$14,950.

TV Advertising with a network such as Bell, Rogers, or Corus Entertainment would be in the range of \$100,000 for a 30-second commercial or about \$5-\$10 CPM plus commercial production.

Consultation:

BC Hughes INC, Director of Community Services, City Manager

Attachments:

1. Wrap-up presentation

Recommended by:

Brent Fisher, Manager of Community and Business Development

Reviewed by:

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Brent Fisher, Manager of Community and Business Development at bfisher@owensound.ca or 519-376-4440 ext. 1254.