

## **Cultural Marketing of the Comox Valley**

The Comox Valley is a unique '*place*.' Consider this cultural vision for the Valley....

..."There are certain *places* on Earth with an almost mythic capacity to draw us in, to inspire us, and to evoke a quality of spirit, creativity and community that is somehow deeply a part of us. The sights, the sounds, the icons, the design, the traditions, spoken and unspoken, say, This is a *place* like no other. This *place* lends itself more easily to inspiration than others - a *place* that contains within it that perfect, delicate mix of natural and created elements that people find so appealing. It is a *place* of supernatural beauty with a grand, yet fragile landscape millions of years in the making. This *place* has a rich cultural heritage, strong creative spirit and, perhaps most importantly it is a *place* for flat out fun..." This is Culture Comox Valley.

Simply said, culture is how the Comox Valley lives - incorporating its heritage and embracing its creative future. The expression of this Valley culture takes the form of:

- Agri-food and Gastronomy
- Artists, Artisans and Galleries
- Festivals and Events
- Heritage and Museums
- Performing Arts and Music
- Multi-Cultural Partnerships

## **Cultural Marketing Goal**

The goal of the marketing plan is to raise the profile of culture both externally and within the Valley. The plan will discuss the enhancement and promotion of culture and cultural diversity to benefit the creative community, the citizens, the business sector and the visitors to the Comox Valley.

## **Cultural Brand Positioning**

The Invest Comox Valley positioning line *Wildly Sophisticated. Economically Unconventional* has worked extremely well for both business and agrifood. A consumer positioning is now needed to dovetail with this business positioning. The consumer line needs to speak to both residents and visitors - it must speak for culture in the entire Valley. The suggestion is to use *Culture Comox Valley - Wildly Sophisticated*.

If a complimentary cultural add-on is desired, it could be *Culture Comox Valley - Wildly Sophisticated. Naturally Creative*. These options require further discussion as the culture brand is rolled out and applied to partnered marketing communication pieces.

## Cultural Marketing Strategies

Due to the multi-faceted marketing approach to position and launch a strong cultural marketing organization and brand, the following concurrent strategies are recommended:

- Ensure immediate announcement of the new Valley wide cultural organization, *Culture Works*, responsible for on-going capacity building, partnership facilitation and marketing of the heritage and culture sector
- Position and differentiate Comox Valley culture and heritage by creating a unique visual identity, brand, attitude, and brand language
- Become a significant community partner in the 2010 Winter Olympics Cultural Olympiad
- Formalize and develop the partnership of agri-food and gastronomy to showcase a strong partnership model
- Drive cultural development, multi-cultural partnerships and cross-cultural product and event packaging within the key target groups
- Create a formal public relations program that constantly works with the trade media
- Become recognized as the *'Island's Cultural Epicentre'*

Detailed objectives, tactics and descriptions are found in the main body of the marketing plan.

## Critical Success Factors

The following key areas are believed to be necessary for fast tracking and targeted marketing of culture in the Valley:

- Acceptance of culture as the driving force of the Valley - it is how we live - it is our sense of *place* - it is the sum total of what the Valley has to offer - it is the art of living
- Commitment, funding, and announcement of *Culture Works* by the 4 governing bodies
- Collaboration by all cultural groups to drive to the Valley being recognized as the 'island's cultural epicentre'
- Development of a strong, energized, cultural brand
- Benefit focused marketing collateral
- Enhancement and development of one or two Comox Valley unique, iconic experiences
- Dynamic website continually updated to create active consumer involvement
- Ongoing questioning of all products, policies and procedures - *Does this support the cultural brand vision or potentially harm it?*