EDAC Submission: Advertising Campaign

* Purpose of Project (including anticipated outcomes)
* Effectiveness / Meeting Objectives (if known)
* Challenges & Changes made
* Target Audience (demographics)
* Any specifics as detailed in the particular Awards Categories – N/A
* Any details regarding the sustainability of your project. Sustainability is about being mindful of one’s place, processes, and mentality in order to influence change for the better of our communities, local and global.

**Spend it Here Holiday Campaign**

Purpose:

The annual holiday “Spend It Here” campaign encourages Hamiltonians and surrounding area consumers to support Hamilton small businesses during the busy holiday season. This particular campaign involved “Scout the Fox” – a fun and engaging spokesperson for the objectives- who encourages consumers to dine, shop and explore Hamilton’s 11 Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). This campaign was a partnership with the Hamilton Public Library who as part of their marketing encourage Hamiltonians to discover new worlds, facts, experiences, through the love of reading. Scout is the official mascot for the library system and the partnership not only uses a very well known entity in the community, but also fits well with the campaign’s goal to get consumers to “discover” the various BIAs throughout the city and the local small businesses contained therein.

Effectiveness:

Through our digital efforts, we reached over 4,000 individuals through the posts and increased visits to our Instagram account by 566. Most importantly, we increased the number of followers over the month by nearly 100 (96). As well, the campaign was featured in the leading city focused magazine- Hamilton City Magazine: <https://hamiltoncitymagazine.ca/scout-ing-out-hamilton/>. Anecdotally, we know that there was a bump in sales from our merchants in the BIAs. Although we did not track each sale, we know from the BIAs that the Spend it Here Campaign was helpful from an awareness standpoint and did highlight the breadth of options in the BIAs for holiday spending. We see this project as part of an annual effort to extol the benefits of supporting local merchants during the holiday season and aim to make this particular campaign fun and engaging – hence the decision the last two campaigns to use puppets which resonate well with families- a target audience for the campaign.

Challenges and Changes:

As cost was a huge factor/impediment, we need high impact, low-cost solution. So, instead of creating an unknown entity from scratch and try to build up awareness throughout the campaign, we partnered with the Hamilton Public Library to utilize their well-known brand- Scout the Fox. So, by using a “spokesperson” that has a huge following across the city already, we could get right into the awareness campaign regarding the support local message without wasting time trying to build an affinity to a spokesperson. It was a simple solution to a complex problem- a form of influencer marketing.

Target Audience:

One of the core focus of the Hamilton, Ontario, Canada Economic Development Office is to ensure the promotion and economic success of our 11 Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) (may be known as Business Improvement Districts in other cities).

Simply, small business is the backbone of any well-functioning economy, with much economic activity as well as employment deriving from entrepreneurship. So, the City of Hamilton created a campaign during the 2022 Holiday/Christmas season to get Hamiltonians to support local when they were doing their shopping. Essentially, we wanted Hamilton shoppers to “Spend it Here”.

But, so many economic development organizations across the continent have a similar sort of message (e.g., Shop Local), with the same images of smiling people shopping in a small business with packages. For Hamilton, we wanted to tap into that feel-good sentiment, but we wanted to do something that would catch attention and produce something that was highly sharable (as this was mainly a digital campaign).

So, we did something that we haven’t seen from any other municipality for a holiday shopping campaign- the use of puppets.

Hamilton’s Spend it Here campaign then would be a series of digital and mainstream advertisements that followed Scout the Fox as he ate, shopped, and found entertainment across Hamilton’s 12 BIAs.

The campaign included a landing page at [www.investinhamilton.ca/spendithere](http://www.investinhamilton.ca/spendithere) and 35 individual Instagram posts (video and photos)- one for each day of the 35 day campaign (November 28-December 31).

Details/Specifics:

This was a very easy campaign to replicate because it focused on one particular “spokesperson”, was digital in nature to cut down on trying to attract an audience through various mediums and was a community effort. It wasn’t just the City of Hamilton trying to come up with an execute on an awareness campaign, it was the City with partners from the library and the BIAs to collaborate on a campaign that reflected the community. It was a total partnership (in part leveraging the over 6,000 Instagram followers from the Hamilton Public Library and the thousands more across the 11 Business Improvement Area accounts) and in the end did attract a greater audience during this time period that generated more ideas to support local during the holiday season.

Sustainability:

From a geographical perspective, the campaign was very inclusive as it involved every BIA from across the city of Hamilton. From a subject feature perspective, we worked hard to identify ethnic and gender diversity throughout the pieces over the 35 days to ensure that those entrepreneurs featured represented the diversity of the city. Finally, from a small business feature perspective, there were a number of different types of businesses represented that fell under dining, shopping and attractions. This project was in full collaboration with the BIAs (urban place management) and particularly with the downtown Hamilton and International Village BIAs that represent Hamilton’s downtown core. They essentially had double the coverage of any other geographic area.