

2018 Market Canada Award Submission
Category | Advertising

AMAZON HQ2 MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Purpose of the project (including anticipated outcomes):

In September 2017, Amazon released their RFP for a second corporate headquarters - Amazon HQ2. This was an opportunity to attract as many as 50,000 new full-time jobs. HQ2 was expected to generate over five billion in capital expenditures. With 248 cities competing for Amazon's attention, Calgary Economic Development wanted Calgary to stand, out since the most recent economic downturn and declining oil prices resulted in higher unemployment rates and downtown office space vacancy. Recruiting Amazon was a fast-track opportunity to further diversify our economy, grow and retain our city's tech talent, fill vacant downtown office space, and globally highlight the advantages of Calgary.

The plan? Put Calgary on the map. Produce an U.S.-based strategy with far-reaching results. The [marketing campaign](#) had four objectives: one, to get Amazon's attention; two, use the Amazon proposal as a way to tell Calgary's story to the States and the world their news cycles; three, engage Calgarians and build awareness of Calgary's assets; and finally, to land Amazon HQ2 in Calgary. The objectives helped shape the tactics used in an elaborate campaign, which included:

- Rallying a community (#LOVEYYC) on an online platform in community cafe conversations, brainstorming, idea generation and suggestions that ranged from a Calgary-focused elevator pitch to Jeff Bezos to ideas on how to better showcase our city.
- The pitch package of assets included an RFP book with over 100 letters of support. The design reflected the meticulous attention to detail presented in Amazon packages.
- Initiating a robust activation in Seattle with sidewalk chalk stencils around the Amazon office, a massive 100-foot banner hung directly across from the Amazon offices and ads in Seattle newspapers.
- Release of the [promotional video "Hey Amazon"](#), and targeted digital ads in the Seattle/Amazon area.

Effectiveness/meeting objectives:

While we didn't make the Amazon shortlist, we know Calgary's Amazon pitch had an impact. Just weeks following the campaign launch on Oct 19, 2017, Calgary enjoyed 150 million impressions with mentions in the New York Times, Financial Times, Tech Crunch, Geek Wire and dozens of other outlets related to the HQ2 bid. On our website, traffic jumped 71 per cent in Q4, and our U.S. traffic more than doubled. Transportation from Seattle alone was up 18 times from 2016 levels. Our social media reach in Q4 accounted for over half of our impressions for the year and #AmazonYYC trended. An intangible result was a better understanding among citizens and Calgary's business community of the work that we do to attract business investment, foster trade, and grow Calgary's workforce and economic prosperity. We collected over 100 letters of support in a short time, while the #LOVEYYC community grew to over 1,500 highly engaged Calgarians who relished the opportunity to provide input. Finally, we can leverage a number of the creative pieces from the pitch for future Calgary campaigns. We won't just "fight a bear" (campaign slogan) for Amazon; we'll figuratively "fight a bear" for any company looking to contribute to Calgary's economy and make us their home.

Challenges and changes made:

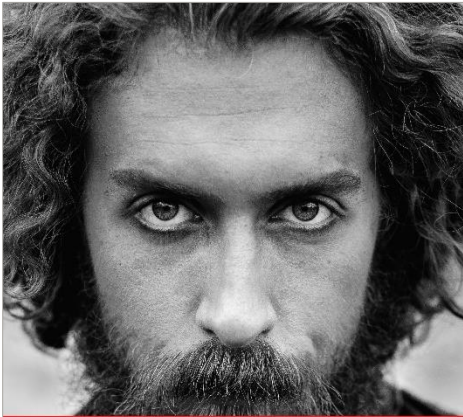
One challenge we had was understanding the enormity of the task. With a tight timeline of five weeks, we assigned three full-time staff members to Amazon HQ2 and pulled additional resources as needed. Fortunately, many prominent Calgarians, business leaders, and the community came forward to offer help. We also needed to produce the proposal outside of a vacuum. To solve this, we set up three advisory committees – a leadership, real estate, and marketing committee. Each committee member had diverse experience, expertise, and skill sets to give a balanced, objective evaluation of the overall campaign strategy, creative and plan. Next, we needed to launch a marketing campaign that made us stand out. We expected about 40 competitors; in fact, there were 248. We went for a cheeky, self-deprecating, edgy, friendly and honest approach. In the end, Amazon commended us for not acting like a traditional government agency and reinforced that we got their attention. Lastly, we wanted to sustain the campaign, which was launched just before the submission date, and continued until the shortlist announcement.

The target audience

The primary target audience for the Amazon pitch was Amazon employees, specifically members of the selection committee for HQ2 and employees in Amazon's Seattle head office. Secondary audiences included Amazon expats, influencers of key Amazonians, alumnae of Calgary post-secondaries in Seattle and the U.S., business leaders in Calgary, residents of Calgary, media - specifically in the U.S. - and social media followers.

Specific details in the awards advertising category:

Regarding advertising, the Amazon pitch led us to be quite creative with our resources. Outside of our primary goals to get Amazon's attention and use that platform as a way to break into the U.S. media landscape, we also engaged Calgarians in the process and brought them together. With the most recent economic downturn, it's no longer business as usual in Calgary. We embraced the chance to showcase Calgary and put our stake in the ground.



**HEY, AMAZON.
NOT SAYING WE'D
FIGHT A BEAR
FOR YOU...**

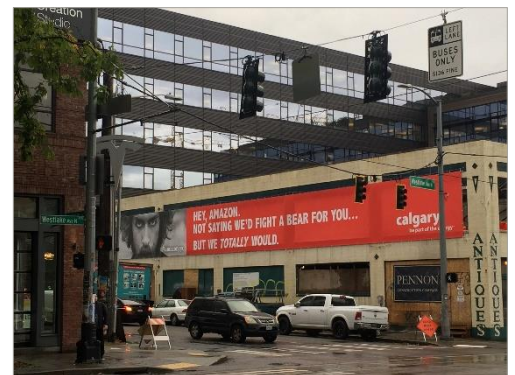
**BUT WE TOTALLY
WOULD.**

calgary
be part of the energy™

**HEY, AMAZON.
WE SERIOUSLY HAVE
THE BEST PEOPLE
UP HERE.**

calgary
be part of the energy™

Guerilla style tactics were used in the Seattle activation including sidewalk chalk stencils around the Amazon office, a massive 100-foot banner hung directly across from Amazon office and ads in Seattle newspapers. Activation initiated the morning the bid was due.



Amazon advertisement artwork shared on social channels and print. Two concepts were used in market including "We'd fight a bear for you..." and messaging that highlights the amazing lifestyle in Calgary. Fact, "We'd fight a bear for you..." has become synonymous with Calgary

CALGARY'S HQ2 BID

**150 MILLION
MEDIA
IMPRESSIONS**

Inc. **The New York Times**
GeekWire **Times**
FORTUNE
The Boston Globe

The Amazon campaign garnered over 150 million media impressions.



Amazon bid book, which included 100 letters from Calgary businesses and the community.