

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 5, 2023
Heritage Bank, 310 First Street South, Willmar

Present: Ben Carlson, Jesse Gislason Tiffany Hintz, Emily Lien and Pam Rosenau

Excused: Ann Winge Johnson

Staff: Kelsey Olson, Marketing and Communications Specialist

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Pam Rosenau called the meeting to order at approximately 12:09 p.m.

Kelsey Olson reviewed the customer personas developed to date. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss a proposed new name for the EDC, a possible tagline, create personas for community partners and local governments and determine if any of the personas developed can be grouped as one target audience.

Olson noted local governments are township supervisors and city councils and may have the following beliefs and experiences:

- May not be completely familiar with the work the EDC does
- Want to know 'what have you done for my community'
- Are looking for financial assistance, grants
- Partners in identifying housing locations, pivotal in securing and executing broadband projects
- Want support in workforce, housing and childcare, may not have solutions
- Are interested in promoting businesses in their communities
- Celebrate independently
- Proud of their town
- Looking to the EDC for demonstrated leadership and action
- Can be slow to respond, takes more work to meet with

Local government persona discussed by the committee:

Description: age 45-70, some younger 20-30 who are locally born, live, work, permanent, longevity, proud of the community, willingness to be available to citizens (hear and represent), arrogant (at times), strong beliefs, strong project allies at times, fierce oppositions, can be neighborly, constantly changing.

Communication: email, text, in-person, phone calls, mail.

Influencers: state and federal government, local businesses, constituents, other community councils, League of Minnesota Cities newsletter, religious entities, school districts.

Goals (personal and professional): set balanced budget for operations and some projects, improve the area they are elected to serve, safe community, build for a future generation, move up politically, obtain grants, financial stability, to be heard, be an influencer, build trust, reconnect citizens (bridge the gap), create unity.

Transformation: connect the dots, introductions, share information, be present, create a cheat sheet, policy/ordinance guidance/support for smaller communities, grants.

Pain Points/Hesitations: distance, lack of communication, differing opinions/views, lack of time, lack of willingness, priority not set, unexpected events, lack of knowledge, lack of trust, lack of information, is it the right decision/don't want to rock the boat.

Olson noted community partners may have the following beliefs and experiences:

- Organizations, non-profits in Kandiyohi County, most located in Wilmar
- Partner with us financially or by contributing staff time to events and projects
- Consistently help 'carry the load'
- Are very familiar with the work the EDC is doing on all levels
- Celebrate with a larger community
- Help us connect with citizens and identify needs
- Propose solutions and next steps for support independently
- Very responsive to communication, come to the table

Community partners persona discussed by the committee

Description: All ages/genders/race, live throughout the county, but work in Willmar, driven, passionate, community and countywide focus, generous, community volunteer, open to new ideas and taking risks, often quick to respond, leaders, heroes, trustworthy, neighborly, fiscal resiliency.

Communication: email, phone, social media messages, in-person, group meetings.

Influencers: other community partners, religion, state and county funding, local business support, school districts.

Goals: community connectors, to support those in need, fill gaps, to be trusted, positive reputation, be present in making decisions, work/life balance, financial stability, family importance.

Transformation: Provide information, knowledge share, grants, partner for bigger projects, be present, workforce support, connect partners to projects, assist in transitioning

Pain Points/Hesitations: limited funding resources, time, misunderstanding of the end goal, knowing the EDC can help, the EDC is a community service.

The committee compared local government and community partners to citizens.

Olson noted there are seven target audiences that have been identified: business owners, entrepreneurs, site selectors, developers, local government, community partners, citizens. She noted she is missing the pain points/hesitations for site selectors and developers.

The committee felt the following could be combined into one target audience:

- business owners and entrepreneurs;
- local government and community partners, one tab with separate pages; and
- citizens, who are looking for overall basic information.

Olson informed the committee that the legal name will remain as the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission as it was determined by state statute. A new name, Prosper Kandiyohi County, is being proposed following a working session with community and business partners. Olson provided feedback obtained on the proposed new name. Of those polled, three were in favor of the name change and five were not.

Suggestions by this committee included Connecting Kandiyohi County, bridging businesses and communities, Kandiyohi County EDC, Lakes and Farms EDC,

In the renaming process, the following questions were asked:

- What does the EDC do? Connect, inform, grow (your business), promote quality of life, assist in making dreams come true.
- Why do we do it? To help, be a catalyst for growth.
- How do we describe it? Connect the dots.
- What is the EDC proud of? Partnerships that exist, community outreach growth, networking/education, childcare.

Following discussion, the consensus of the committee was to use Kandiyohi County Economic Development Commission with possible tag lines of connecting businesses and communities. If Prosper Kandiyohi County is used, the committee suggested the tag line be “economic development connecting businesses and communities” or connecting businesses and communities through economic development.”

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, September 25, 2023** at a location to be determined.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.