

WHISTLER'S PLACE BRANDING EXERCISE FAQ:

WHAT IS TOURISM WHISTLER'S PLACE BRANDING PROJECT?

The Place Branding project was a community engagement process with businesses, residents and guests, to identify and confirm the qualities that make Whistler truly special and unique (geography, history, culture, values, etc.) and the things we should celebrate, protect and promote. Tourism Whistler will use the information gathered during the Place Branding exercise to better attract our target guests – those who are passionate about Whistler, engage in Whistler's experiences, and respect the mountain environment.

WHO EXECUTED THE PLACE BRANDING PROJECT?

The Place Branding project was a Tourism Whistler-led initiative. Supplementing our internal research, marketing and strategic planning expertise, Tourism Whistler engaged the services of Stormy Lake Consulting to provide independent facilitation and analysis of the community and visitor insights. Additionally, we worked with our creative design agency, Origin to develop our new Place Brand Platform (using insights from our Place Branding research) and the corresponding creative execution, beginning with our summer 2020 brand campaign.

HAVE YOU DONE THIS TYPE OF EXERCISE BEFORE?

Tourism Whistler has conducted branding research over the years, but it has always been visitor focused. The purpose of this Place Branding exercise was to widen the scope to engage with the entire Whistler community – residents and business leaders alike – to re-confirm our collective tourism vision and approach.

WHY DID TOURISM WHISTLER DECIDE TO DO THIS PLACE BRAND EXERCISE NOW?

Whistler has grown and evolved, and has come of age as a premiere tourism destination. We felt the time was right to undertake this project, to engage with all of our stakeholder groups on our collective tourism vision and approach. Tourism branding is not only about guest opinions, but it is also about community opinions and the alignment of the two, as the essence of a tourism destination encompasses a community and its people.

WHO PARTICIPATED?

- Business community
- Residents
 - Full-time, year-round (employees and non-employees)
 - Second homeowners
 - Seasonal (employees and non-employees)
- Visitors

WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS?

The Place Branding project was a multi-phased process that involved multiple research components including:

- **A Community Workshop (June 14)**
 - The goal of the workshop was to garner as much input as possible, from across all stakeholder groups (community leaders, Whistler business community, and residents). The workshop provided a preliminary indication of key themes, which was used to develop online surveys for a wider audience.

- **Surveys (summer 2018)**
 - A **community survey** was available to Whistler stakeholders and residents to further explore key themes and findings from the workshop. The survey was available online in order to gather input from the most extensive representation.
 - **Visitor surveys** were conducted through a combination of intercept interviews (in-depth conversations with visitors while they were in Whistler), and email/online surveys. Visitor research occurred throughout summer 2018.
- **Social media listening (summer 2018)**
 - A complete review of posts about Whistler on multiple social media platforms, providing insight into public perceptions and feelings surrounding Whistler.

HOW WAS THE COMMUNITY SURVEY PROMOTED?

The online community survey was live in July and August 2018 and was promoted in the following ways:

- On Tourism Whistler’s social media accounts, including a sponsored ad targeting Sea to Sky residents from July 26 to August 5, 2018
- Survey link was promoted through community partner channels, including the RMOW, Whistler Chamber and Pique Newsmagazine (Facebook)
- Print ad in Pique Newsmagazine (July 18, 2018)
- Link included in Member Newsletters on July 26 and July 31, 2018
- Promoted in Whistler Insider Newsletter (Sea to Sky Distribution List) – July 19, 2018

HOW LONG DID THE PROJECT TAKE?

The project began in June 2018 and continued through summer 2018. Tourism Whistler is now in the process of engaging with stakeholders to share findings and insights from the project, and discuss recommendations on how the business community can incorporate these insights into their own business and marketing efforts.

HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about Tourism Whistler’s Place Branding exercise, please contact us at membercommunications@tourismwhistler.com.