

MARKETING

The *Advance Now* Strategy identifies the essential need to tell the Madison Region's story. Though the region has tremendous assets and opportunities for business expansion and attraction, no entity has made an impactful effort to tell the world—or even the region itself—about them. The Marketing Workgroup recognized that the region must first define its story by determining a focus that accurately heralds the region's strengths and embodies each of our eight counties.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS/TRANSFORMATIVE IDEA

The Marketing Workgroup makes key recommendations to the Madison Region Economic Partnership (MREP) in its collaborative efforts to tell the Madison Region's story based on business and marketing goals, audience, and initial focus of the story.

The workgroup established marketing goals to support the primary business goal of facilitating growth among existing businesses. These marketing goals are:

- Increase awareness of our region's competitive advantage(s)
- Increase consideration of this region for business expansion, start-up, investment, etc.
- Unify eight-county region

The Marketing Workgroup recommends an initial emphasis on the internal audience, acknowledging that this will help unify the region and maintain consistency of message when going before an external audience. Internal audiences include:

- Businesses and business leaders within the region
- Economic development partners
- Regional media outlets
- State and local elected officials

The workgroup agreed that a well-defined marketing focus will position the region to become globally recognized around a message that all eight counties can claim, control, and communicate. Using research and input from regional leaders, the workgroup determined an initial focus of the regional story based on these assets:

- Unparalleled industry strength in Agriculture, Advanced Manufacturing, and Life Sciences
- Innovations that reinforce the region's leadership in these industries, particularly as they stem from advancements in technology
- Related support through research and development, skilled workforce, renowned education system, and high quality of life

The MREP Board of Directors also recommended a stronger emphasis on the region's emerging leadership in information technology.

In defining this focus for phase-one efforts, the workgroup recognized that the most demonstrative stories will connect the dots among the region's leading industries and among the work of the other *Advance Now* workgroups.

IMPLEMENTATION

MREP will be the lead implementation agent on the region's marketing efforts, working with contracted marketing and public relations agencies. Because the marketing initiative must reflect the entire region, success will rely on the input and collaboration of many partner entities. Campaign implementation will adopt the new brand, creative platform, and message platform developed by marketing agency Nelson Schmidt. The Marketing Workgroup provided input to Nelson Schmidt on brand development, operating under direction from MREP that the region's brand should align with the statewide *In Wisconsin* business climate brand championed by Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. The final region name, organization name, and logo were determined based on feedback from MREP staff, the Marketing Workgroup, and the regional economic development professionals, with ultimate approval from the MREP Board.