



## ***Executive Summary***

### **Introduction**

In today's networked world, every interest, entertainment option, leisure activity and destination has to compete with every other option for its share of consumers, investment, time, respect and attention. This competitive environment is a reality of our times. How a particular entity stakes out and communicates its distinctive value largely decides which entities succeed in attracting people and investment.

There is often a common misconception that branding is a communications campaign, a tagline, visual identity or logo. It is actually a strategic process for developing a long-term vision that is relevant and compelling to key audiences. Ultimately, the strategy's goal is to influence and shape perceptions of a culture by identifying and communicating the core promise it makes to key audiences and developing and consistently communicating the core, positive attributes of a culture.

In this document, Campos Inc attempts to reveal and underscore key value descriptors as articulated by the selected group of individuals who participated in an Outdoor Recreation Strategy Meeting on November 8, 2006. The recommendations should be considered as a broad preliminary strategy that will require more thinking and discussion on the part of committed parties who are interested in promoting a wider awareness and adoption of the outdoor recreational culture and lifestyle in the Pittsburgh region.

### **A Challenging Environment**

It is important to note that bringing the outdoor recreation culture to the forefront of what marketers refer to the "mind-space" of residents of Pittsburgh and its environs is an aspiration with many challenges that include history, learned behaviors, conflicting perceptions and a possibly unengaged population. While Pittsburgh's geography and natural resources seem to present vast opportunities for an aggregate engagement in outdoor recreational pursuits, the population, by many accounts, tends to be generally averse to embracing a healthy vigorous outdoor lifestyle. An example of support for this hypothesis includes the notion that Pittsburgh is listed among the "Top 10 Unhealthiest Cities" according to a popular Men's Health Magazine. Additionally, as a region, it appears that Pittsburgh has yet to understand or recognize the value of its

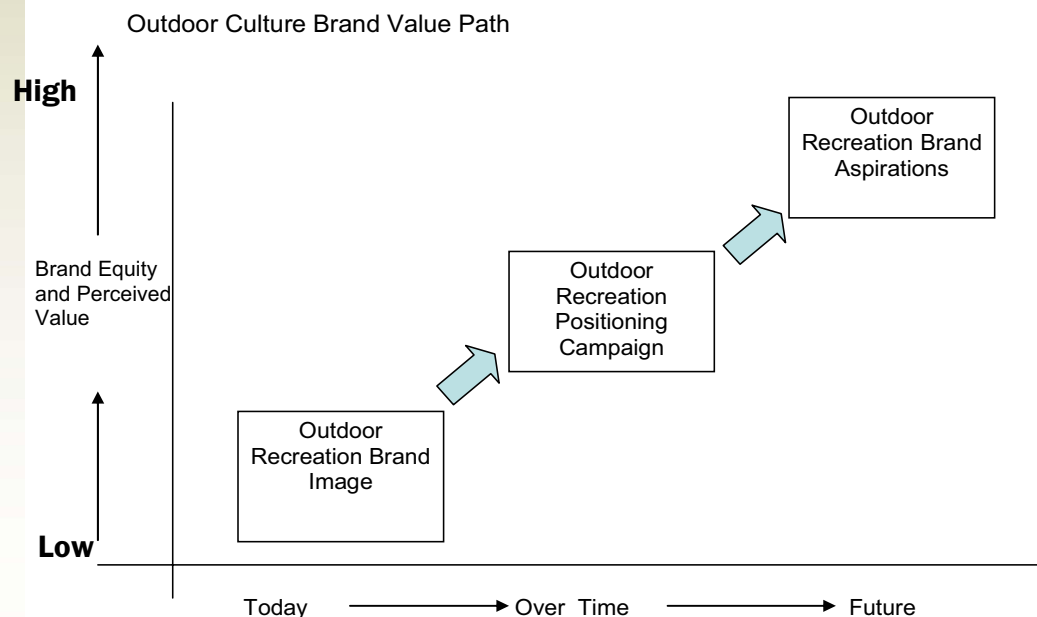
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outdoor amenities. In its 2004 Southwestern Pennsylvania Economic Indicators Report, Sustainable Pittsburgh, the sponsoring organization of his project, states:

*“Finding a way to measure our “quality of life” and access to amenities is important for our region. While we attempt to draw new talent and businesses to the region, we need to know how many of our current residents are taking advantage of and have access to the various natural, recreational and cultural outlets in the area. Our lack of an indicator suggests that we have not yet, as a region, really understood the value of these amenities.”*

*Recreational Opportunities, p.75-76*

It should be understood that any undertaking to bring outdoor recreation activities and amenities to the forefront of the Pittsburgh region’s mind-space will be a long-term investment and an exercise in public education and diligent perseverance. While it is important to influence the Pittsburgh region’s perceived value of outdoor recreation, a marketing campaign alone will not change Pittsburgh’s misperceptions and/or lack of interest in outdoor recreational activities. Changing long-held perceptions, attitudes and behaviors and elevating the perceived value of an outdoor recreation brand will require a long-term culture-shaper strategy.



### **Long-Term Culture-Shaper Strategy**

The “culture-shaper” concept goes beyond an awareness-building campaign. Changing culture means changing behaviors; for the outdoor recreation culture, this implies participation, advocacy and commitment to an outdoor lifestyle. In addition to an awareness campaign, Pittsburgh region residents and visitors must first be invited to take advantage of outdoor activities, persuaded to continue usage and finally, convinced to adopt an outdoor activity lifestyle. Because leisure time, effort and disposable income investment is also involved, Pittsburgh residents are also be asked to *forgo* some activities they are participating in now. This forgoing of current leisure activities is the primary reasons that perceived brand value and promise is so important over time as illustrated in the Outdoor Culture Brand Path diagram.

The following are overarching concept steps to increasing brand equity and “shaping” culture:

1. **PROMOTE OUTDOOR CULTURE:** Brand outdoor lifestyle with a professional marketing partner who will be responsible for the identity, look and feel of an outdoor culture brand.
2. **OFFER WAY FOR RESIDENTS TO “PRACTICE” THE CULTURE** though repeated trial.
3. **PROVIDE A “CONDUIT”** to connect with opportunities for trial of outdoor activities (such as a Pittsburgh region outdoor activity Web site portal)
4. **PROMOTE THE “CONDUIT.”**
5. **FIX A LONG-TERM (36 MONTH) TIMEFRAME** to measure progress and outdoor culture brand equity.

### **Building Awareness and Generating Trial of the Outdoor Recreational Culture**

In order to determine if any future activities designed to build awareness are effective, it is advised that a baseline of awareness be established through an awareness study. The work of building awareness and outdoor recreation amenities usage is a more complicated endeavor. The outdoor recreation group

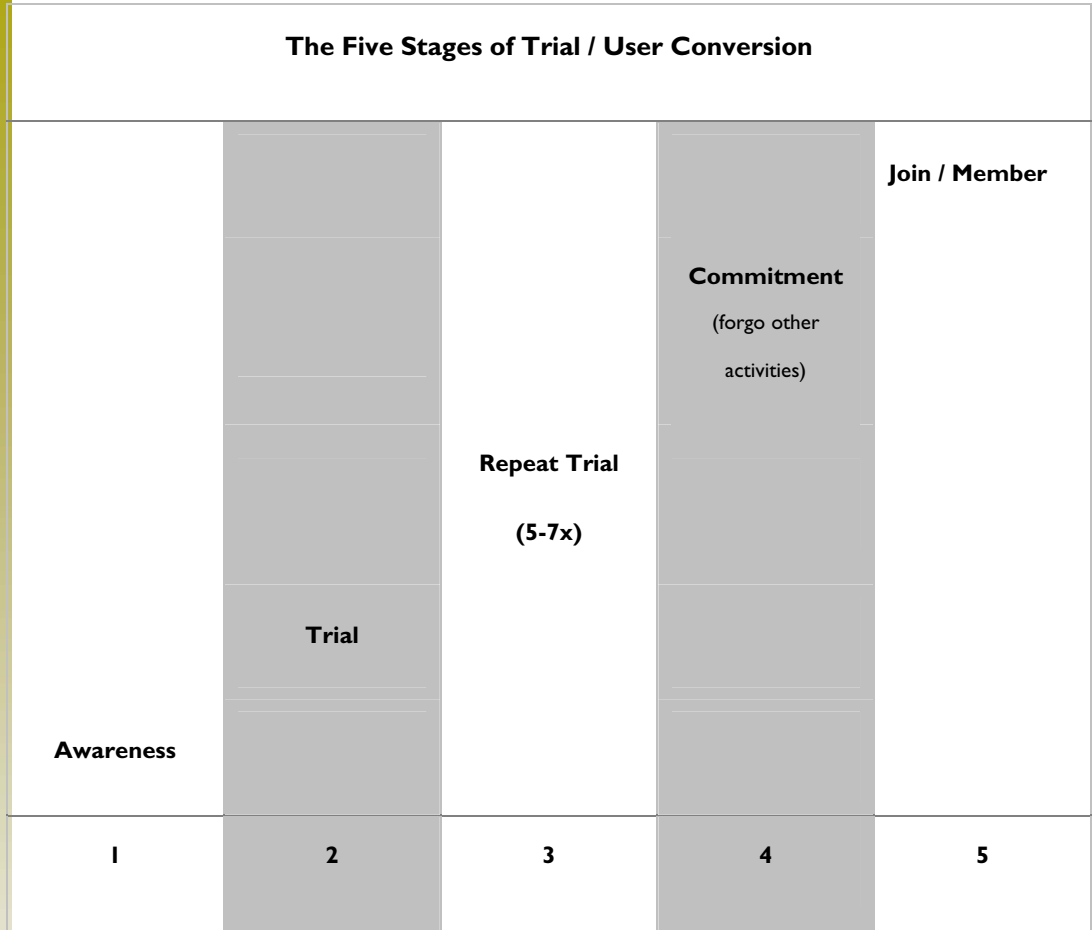
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expressed a desire to build awareness *and* usage. Furthermore, the Sustainable Pittsburgh Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Indicators Report also states that there must be a measure that reveals “*how many people are taking advantage of these amenities, and which of them are in particular demand.*”

To have an impact on usage, residents and visitors to the Pittsburgh region must first become aware of outdoor activities available, and then determine that they will *try* the activity. If they enjoy the activity and it proves relevant to their lifestyle (i.e. it fits in their schedule, they can do it with their kids etc) they may try it again. It is likely that a new user will try an activity five to seven times before they commit to the activity-- purchase gear, arrange their schedule to include activity, join/ affiliate with an organization.

Initiating this “trial” period may present the greatest challenge to the outdoor recreation providers. As revealed in the Environmental Scan exercise, the conduit between “awareness” and “trial” has been elusive. Outdoor recreation options have historically been considered as “exclusive” and not for the working population. These perceptions will have to be addressed and overcome. Effective messaging to motivate trial might include ways for the Pittsburgh non-user Pittsburgh to visualize himself / herself in the outdoor activity. The group indicated that Pittsburgh residents often deem rowing, biking and hiking as “affluent” activities that they do not participate in.

The key to building a momentum in shaping an outdoor recreation culture is to motivate repeated trial. Repeated trial is also contingent on a new user experiencing a positive interaction with the outdoor organization that provides the programming. It is important that outdoor activity providers turn their attention inward as well to ensure that user satisfaction and positive customer interaction complements a new outdoor activity trial experience.



In order to spur trial, residents and visitors of the Pittsburgh region must not only be made aware of the outdoor recreation activities available to them, but given a simple non-threatening way to try the activity. If motivated by a media message, most non-users will have difficulty transferring the call to action to pursuit of an activity— many may not even be sure about the type of activities that are available to them. Campos Inc recommends providing would be adopters with a non-threatening easily accessible “place to go” or “conduit” for further information about the wide array of outdoor activities available in the Pittsburgh region.

The outdoor recreation group is interested in shifting culture (Culture-Shapers). In order to begin this endeavor, it is first important to understand how the culture-shift will manifest itself. The most reasonable way to measure a culture

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shift is in **activity** and a marked increase in the numbers of people engaging in particular activities. In this case, activity is biking, hiking, urban gardening etc.

Campos Inc recommends the outdoor recreation culture group create a campaign around an informational outdoor activity PORTAL in the form of a shared Web site that can be promoted via a branded media campaign. The Web site would “link” the reader to various outdoor recreation options. Content delivery should concentrate on a regional approach with links to individual outdoor recreation providers’ specific sites.

### ***Broad Strategy Recommendations: Ten-Step Plan***

1. Determine which entities best represent outdoor recreation opportunities to Pittsburgh region residents and visitors
2. Establish a collaborative among entities that agree to common long-term goals (36 months) regarding outdoor recreation culture in the Pittsburgh region.
3. Appoint / hire collaborative professional coordinator to oversee long-term project.
4. Fix a timeline to the goals pursued by collaborative. Campos Inc recommends at least 36 months.
5. Determine the most effective and efficient means for collaborative to speak to shared audiences
6. Appeal to interested and able parties (i.e. foundations, corporations) to fund and support development and promotion of communication collaborative communication vehicle.
7. Engage a professional marketing partner to assist collaborative in developing and refining vehicle of communication to audiences
8. Develop strategic partnership matrix to engage regional officials, influencers and opinion-leaders and inform them of pursuits of collaborative.
9. Publicly launch communications vehicle with event (including above influencers, opinion leaders and other potential advocates) and launch subsequent communications campaign as crafted by professional marketing partner.
10. Measure and track inquires spurred by communication vehicle. This metric is critical for future improvement / expanded services funding. Furthermore, individual outdoor recreation provider entities will be challenged to continue to improve and expand their services through additional exposure and inquiry)

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On a final note, it is important that additional relevant parties be included in the ongoing outdoor recreation discussion. Citiparks, the Office of the Mayor, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation's Working Heart's Program, Community Design Center of Pittsburgh, Pedal Pittsburgh, Port Authority's Rack n' Roll Program, The Allegheny Trail Alliance, Friends of the Riverfront, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and others are all important voices to include in this long-term endeavor. It is recommended that Sustainable Pittsburgh take the initial lead on the project as it is critical that one entity drives the preliminary work focus to build momentum and continuous progress, which will be crucial in the first 12 months of the project.