



Four Strategies to Strengthen District Promotions

The purpose of Promotion in the Main Street Approach is to position the district as the center of the community and the hub of economic activity by creating a positive image that showcases its unique characteristics. As NM MainStreet leaders, we do this by marketing the district's defining assets, communicating unique features through storytelling, and supporting the buy-local experience. The local promotion team does this through image building activities, special events, retail activities and media relations.

You may have goals and a plan, but struggle with implementation on the ground, or you may spend a lot of time on an activity that has minimum benefits for your district and organization. Lets look at four strategies that can help you maximize your capacity to implement effective promotions in your district.

1. **Create diverse Promotion teams for tasks.** It is easiest to gather like-minded people to work on a project, but there are benefits to creating a team with more diversity. Including people with different personalities, ideas, skill sets, ethnicities and backgrounds who are from a variety of businesses and organizations in your community will help you to create activities, events and projects that reach a broader audience in your community. It is also a good way to create "checks and balances" on decisions your team makes that will impact outcomes.
2. **Keep it simple.** Whatever type of project you are working on, a team can get caught up with a lot of ideas and create a lot of moving parts that end up being very hard – and very stressful – to juggle. Take a step back and determine which elements are necessary, and which can be added down the road. It is better to do one or two things well, than several things with mediocrity. Remember that the results of your efforts will reflect back on your district and organization and may impact your ability to recruit people and sponsors for future activities.
3. **Always be aware of your return on investment.** Everything you do in Promotion should have a positive return relative to the time, money and effort put into that activity. Four areas to assess are:
 - a. Will it raise awareness or create a positive image or our organization and district?
 - b. Will it bring in funding to help support our efforts?
 - c. Will it build relationships for recruiting volunteers and furthering our Economic Transformation Strategies?
 - d. Will the time our executive director put into this activity be worth the results?

4. **Build strong partnerships and relationships.** As a MainStreet leader, the executive director is most often the “face” of the organization and district. One of the most important tasks is to build relationships in the district and community to help support their revitalization efforts. Promotion plays a key role in this through storytelling and helping to improve perceptions of the district in the community.

Your community has a unique combination of assets, events, projects and personalities that can be used to promote your MainStreet district. Take a step back and thoughtfully evaluate how to take Promotion to the next level and advance the revitalization efforts in your district.