



ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA
GROW SMARTER INITIATIVE
MARKETING REVIEW

Submitted by Market Street Services Inc.
www.marketstreetservices.com

July 11, 2014

MARKET ST



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Economic Development Marketing Overview	1
Community Brand	2
Direct Sales	2
Website	3
Social Media	4
Online and Traditional Media	4
Print Collateral	4
St. Petersburg Marketing	5
Economic Development Websites	5
Additional Marketing Tools	17
Traditional media	17
Social Media	18
Earned Media	19
Owned Media	19
Print Collateral	21
Conclusion	25



INTRODUCTION

This analysis of local economic development marketing efforts complements target business research by confirming the viability of existing programs and identifying potential enhancements to future efforts. *Market Street's* framework for assessing community and economic development marketing programs is based on our client communities' efforts and best practices from top chambers and economic development organizations, regions, institutions and companies. Coupled with the key findings of the Competitive Assessment and Target Business Analysis, *Market Street* will leverage the principal takeaways of the Marketing Review to directly inform development of key components of the Grow Smarter Initiative Strategy.

While many of today's chambers of commerce fund comprehensive external economic development marketing programs, the St. Petersburg Area Chamber is not one of them. In addition to traditional chamber functions, the St. Petersburg Chamber contributes to local economic development through management of its website, social media, leadership development, public policy, and investments of resources and personnel in the Greenhouse entrepreneurial event space. External marketing inclusive of the city of St. Petersburg is performed by the Pinellas County Economic Development (PCED) department and the regional Tampa Bay Partnership. The city of St. Petersburg's Economic Development division has more capacity than many municipal departments of this type and provides site-selection resources and other information on its web page.

Because the Grow Smarter Initiative is focused on the strategic future of the city of St. Petersburg, *Market Street* felt it was important to limit this Marketing Review to programs and tools used to promote the city itself and not a broader geography. Because the St. Petersburg Chamber produces a limited amount of marketing materials, the analysis was supplemented by materials from the city's Economic Development office. However, in acknowledgement of the critical importance of online resources to economic development marketing at all levels of geography, *Market Street* conducted website reviews of all key local, county, and regional economic development websites.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING OVERVIEW

PCED and the Tampa Bay Partnership invest hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to promote the county and region to key markets and influencers. While the existing marketing programs principally focused on the city of St. Petersburg are not as comprehensive, it is nevertheless instructive to present the components of a typical, fully-invested program to highlight the extent to which communities promote a brand, message, and competitive profile to external investors and internal constituents. These core programmatic elements are applicable and adaptable across many communities and serve to highlight the competitive advantages and opportunities that differentiate the market from its peers. In addition to

messaging, programs should focus on the relationship-building necessary to ensure that corporate and economic development “influencers” have the community on their radar as they consider locations for investment.

Best practice programs focus both on internal (key investors, existing businesses, entrepreneurs, government, institutions, organizations, and residents) and external (site selectors, prospective companies, future residents, and skilled workers) audiences. They are professionally staffed, sufficiently funded, and targeted on sectors that provide the greatest opportunity for high-value growth. External marketing focuses on communicating to outside audiences the community’s competitive assets and opportunities. Internal marketing addresses the need for local stakeholders to understand strategic development initiatives, efforts to enhance competitiveness, and be able to effectively tell the community’s “story” to companies, talent, and visitors. Residents and businesses must be vocal champions for their community; not only is every visitor to a community a potential investor or resident, but companies and site consultants often seek out business leaders independent of visits with economic development officials in order to get unbiased and informed opinions about the local business climate.

The following sections describe the principal components of most professional economic development marketing programs.

COMMUNITY BRAND

In marketing, a brand is often described as a “promise fulfilled.” It is less about a cute tagline and more about presenting a value proposition that can be supported by results. The idea of a brand was historically synonymous with corporations and their logos and projected “personalities” that identify the company and its products to consumers. However, the understanding of branding now goes beyond a designed symbol for a product and reflects a broader set of characteristics, including expertise, consistency, and innovation. Apple Inc.’s products are desired throughout the world, not because of a picture of an apple, but because they have the widely-held perception of being cutting-edge, usable, accessible, and well-designed.

So too must a community work to establish its own brand, a concept that must be consistently and easily represented through its logo, messaging, marketing outreach, materials, and actions. According to CEOs for Cities, a community brand “is a tool that can be used by cities to define themselves and attract positive attention in the midst of an international information glut.” The community brand should be understood as the umbrella under which marketing activities occur. Successful marketing and messaging will be reflective of the values, competitive advantages, and opportunities that are inherent in the brand.

DIRECT SALES

Direct sales are activities that place economic development organizations (EDOs) face-to-face with their target audiences. These activities include marketing missions, in-bound events, site selection visits, and trade-show attendance. Direct sales strategies are very important for relationship-building with key corporate and professional influencers and decision-makers. Consistency in direct sales is critical so that

EDO staff and key local volunteers can leverage multiple meetings with prospect companies and site consultants to build relationships that can eventually bear fruit through new investments or relocations.

Marketing Missions

Marketing missions are opportunities for EDO staff and key local public and private leaders to travel to domestic or international markets that can provide good opportunities to meet with and attract targeted companies to the community. Many times, trips are planned to specific city markets like Chicago, New York, and Atlanta where staff can not only visit with corporate prospects but also meet site consultants who are based there. These missions should entail detailed pre- and post-trip planning to ensure that time spent in the market is maximized and future trips can be planned and programmed to provide the highest value possible. Local organizations should always attempt to join regional and state partners for external events when feasible in order to save money and build relationships with colleagues.

Inbound Marketing Events

Inbound events are often planned around a major local festival or attraction (e.g. South-by-Southwest in Austin, the Jazz Festival in New Orleans, or a major sporting event like the Super Bowl or Final Four). The event must be compelling enough to secure commitments from corporate and site location professionals who often field multiple offers at one time. Often, communities schedule inbound trips around local PGA tournaments, spring training professional baseball, and other unique events. As with marketing missions, in-bound events should be carefully and strategically programmed to ensure face-time with decision-makers and site consultants is optimized.

Trade Shows and Real Estate Events

While they can be useful, these trips are often cost-intensive (travel, booth display, marketing materials) and crowded, with hundreds or thousands of competing communities vying for attendee attention. Local communities should always try to piggyback trips with regional or state organizations that might shoulder more of a fiscal load. On the whole, marketing missions tend to provide more value than these industry events and should be prioritized as necessary.

WEBSITE

A professional, consistently updated, user-friendly, and content-driven website is an absolute necessity in today's economic development climate. A chamber or economic development organization website is often the front door to the community—a first impression to site selectors, prospective companies, and future residents. The website can also help build, shape and support relationships with internal constituents. Simply stated, an EDO's website must be easily navigable, visually appealing, and contain complete, accurate and sought-after information. That is not a future goal. It is the standard by which the community will be judged.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Leveraging social media as a tool for business and economic development marketing is a relatively new practice, but one that is expanding and evolving every year. Organizations able to capitalize on new and dynamic tools with flexibility, discretion, and targeted success are reaching new markets and building trust and communication among existing audiences. There are many reasons for economic development practitioners to utilize social media networks and tools; principal among them is being able to contribute to and guide online conversations that are shaping how communities are perceived and promoted.

ONLINE AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA

The move to a 24-hour news cycle and constant online media coverage creates many opportunities for communities to gain publicity. However, not all coverage is created equal. Three types of media coverage—paid, owned, and earned—impact the authenticity and legitimacy of messaging. With so much information inundating consumers and clients, it is important that publicity be genuine and engaging.

- **Earned Media:** “Winning” coverage by reaching out to and interacting with a third-party channel. This type of coverage carries the most legitimacy and authenticity as it is part of an ongoing information flow. Of course, it cannot be directly controlled and can, at times, be negative. The proverbial concept of “buzz” is a type of earned media, and usually the result of a strategic media relations effort. Done correctly, earned media programs can be the most valuable investments made by organizations seeking to build legitimate awareness of local strengths and successes.
- **Paid Media:** An organization pays for a story or advertisement. The credibility of this type of media is low as consumers are less inclined to believe these ads at face value. However, the organization has much more control over and closeness to the message, a level of influence that not replicated with other forms of coverage.
- **Owned Media:** This dissemination channel is owned by the EDO. Examples include organization newsletters (printed and electronic), websites, blogs, promotions, and press releases. This type of coverage can be closely controlled, and defined audiences can be targeted with specific messages. Some drawbacks include the trustworthiness of the message, but owned media can stimulate earned coverage.

PRINT COLLATERAL

The use of print collateral, including brochures, direct mail, print advertising, and handouts, still bears some importance to many economic development marketing campaigns. Much of this collateral is used to paint a picture of the competitive nature of a community’s business climate and thus aimed at business prospects. The tangibility of print collateral and its ability to reach a specific audience increase its appeal; however, chambers are increasingly finding mail and print collateral to be less successful tools when compared to other marketing efforts.

Drawbacks to these kinds of marketing techniques include cost and staff time, homogenous messaging, competition with other mail, ease of discard, inability to directly track metrics, and rapidly changing data that can be obsolete in the time between designing the collateral and printing and distributing it.

Site selection professionals view direct mail and print advertising as among the least effective marketing techniques. A survey of economic development organizations' budgets found that 30 percent of EDOs cut budgets for direct mail and 52 percent of EDOs cut budgets for print advertising.¹ Organizations will need to think strategically about the role of print collateral in the marketing campaign, especially if it is deemed ineffective by the target audience.

If print collateral is developed, all attempts must be made to keep it as current as possible. In addition, all pieces must be posted for download from the EDO's website and targeted microsites.

ST. PETERSBURG MARKETING

The St. Petersburg Chamber does not engage in external economic development marketing beyond the programming and updating of its website. Per the Chamber, requests for print collateral on the city of St. Petersburg are satisfied by using a brochure developed by the city's Economic Development division. Though it does not market externally, the Chamber manages online and digital information tools, coordinates a policy and advocacy agenda, and helps fund, program, and manage an entrepreneurial-events space.

Other entities also putatively include information on St. Petersburg's assets, key industries, business climate, lifestyle amenities, and other city-specific factors. In public input for the Grow Smarter Initiative, stakeholders said that Pinellas County is an effective economic development partner to the city, but had concerns about the degree to which the Tampa Bay Partnership may favor Tampa-Hillsborough over St. Petersburg-Pinellas in its funded programs. With such a large multi-county region, the Partnership was said to be spread too thin to effectively promote all its member governments.

Though, as has been said, *Market Street* will limit this Marketing Review to tools promoting the city of St. Petersburg, we will also assess the efficacy of county and regional economic development websites as they are the most important component of any modern-day external marketing program.

Economic Development Websites

The following reviews comprise websites that might be visited by different categories of "prospects," be they businesses, site selectors, or individuals looking at St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, or Tampa Bay as places to live, work, or visit. Assessment criteria are based on industry-standard programmatic components and features, in addition to *Market Street's* perspective on best-in-class economic development websites.

¹ Ubalde, Anatalio and Andrew Krueger. *Economic Development Online*. EconomicDevelopmentOnline.com. p. 114.

St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.stpete.com/>

As the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce’s primary website, Stpete.com fills multiple roles for the community. First and foremost, the Chamber’s web content is tailored towards existing Chamber membership. Information regarding the Chamber, its calendar of events, the member directory, and its leadership and young professional groups are readily accessible. The Chamber’s website also fulfills a secondary function by providing information for new and prospective residents and visitors. The Chamber’s interactive relocation guide “Burg Life,” its YouTube campaign “St. Pete Stories,” and its interactive visitors guide reinforces the Chamber’s position as an ambassador for the St. Petersburg community.

ST. PETERSBURG AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: UTILITY AND DESIGN

<p>Overall Design and layout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chamber’s core functionality as an organization is not immediately evident due to the website’s multiple audiences and messages. • The site banner and other design features do not effectively convey the dynamism of St. Petersburg nor communicate the “Sunshine City” brand or the city’s destination appeal. • The overall site could benefit from a refresh in its design, use of color and images, and interactive features.
<p>Home page</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The large, prominently displayed, and shifting photos below the banner offer an effective way to present new, up-to-date content to the Chamber’s website visitors. • The simplistic design of the homepage makes the user feel like space could be used more efficiently and effectively to leverage additional features and interactive elements. • Social media links, including Twitter and Facebook, are large and easy to access. • The “Book a Room” feature is located below the screen-break, limiting the likelihood that prospective travelers will see this valuable feature. • The “Grow Smarter” economic development brand is not displayed.
<p>Navigation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, website navigation is responsive. The drop-down menus and feed-back response (i.e. highlighting menu selections) provide a pleasant navigation experience. • Better drop-down menu organization could further enhance site navigation. • Drop-down menu category links are hard to read because the font color too closely resembles the background.
<p>Contact information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact information is presented in multiple areas of the Chamber’s website. • While the Chamber staff’s contact information is easily accessed, general contact information is obscured within the drop-down menu.



Marketing Review

Interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With prominently located social media links, newsletter sign-up, and join now links, website users are presented with multiple avenues to access updated information generated by the Chamber. • Inclusion of interactive Chamber relocation and visitor's guides is a positive feature that enhances the prospective resident or visitors overall website experience. • Adding a scrolling Twitter feed to the Chamber's home page could add additional activity and reinforce its social media presence.
Timeliness of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding Chamber's programs (including the Leadership St. Pete program, the St. Pete Young Professionals program, calendar events, and news items) are up-to-date. • The Chamber's legislative priorities are from the previous year.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website provides extensive information regarding specific Chamber member programs, including the time and date in which they meet, current membership, and past members. • Though some Chamber programs are thoroughly explained, information regarding the Chamber itself, its objectives described within its 2013 Annual report, and other programs of work housed within the Chamber are lacking. • Specific pages that would benefit from more robust content include: About Us, Advocacy, Tourism Partners, Legislative Actions, and Economic Development Resources.

Adapted from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Awards for Communications Excellence (ACE) scorecard and Southern Economic Development Council Communications Awards score sheet\

Because the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce website strives to serve so many different audiences, the end result is a site that covers a lot of information, but lacks real content depth and dynamism. Attempts to cover so many bases through its site also take away from the Chamber's focus on self-promotion. For instance, the "About Us" page contains only the Chamber's mission statement. The user is forced to invest the time and effort to access the Chamber's 2013 annual report to receive a more robust and comprehensive view of the Chamber's activities including its three strategic priorities. Aligning the tab selections (and underlying drop-down menus) with the Chamber's organization, membership, business-support, visitor, and advocacy goal areas may provide a more user-friendly navigation experience.

Numerous opportunities exist to better realign the Chamber's website to reinforce its Grow Smarter brand. Simply incorporating the Grow Smarter color scheme throughout the website would better align the Chamber's print collateral with its online presence. The Grow Smarter brand and strategic profile should be much more prominently features on the website and in its content.

City of St. Petersburg, Economic Development Division

http://www.stpete.org/economic_development_dept/

The city of St. Petersburg Economic Development Division’s website is a gateway for business leaders and corporate site selectors who are interested in relocating or expanding their company within the city. To this end, the Division provides a content- and feature-rich experience that gives visitors the information necessary to make a location decision. Useful features include the Incentive Lookup Wizard, Market Data Statistics, Business Cluster information, Hottest Sites database, and Blue Chip Sites mapping service. Such tools can greatly assist site selectors and business leaders in the selection process.

CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISON: UTILITY AND DESIGN

<p>Overall Design and layout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At first arrival, the user is greeted with a seemingly simple layout and design. Once the user begins to navigate the site, however, complexity begins to build to the point of sub-pages becoming overly cluttered with hyperlinks. • Due to the number of hyperlinks contained within the website, users may quickly encounter intrusive pop-ups, external webpages, and inactive website links.
<p>Home page</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Economic Development Division’s home page is effectively designed. • Important information is readily accessible. Contact information for the Division is highly visible on the Division’s home page. • Current news items, popular links within the Division’s website, and a side-bar navigation menu with crucial economic development subpages are also useful home page features.
<p>Navigation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the number of hyperlinks contained within the website, the navigation experience may prove challenging for a first-time user. • The side-menu navigation is responsive. However, exclusion of a drop-down menu limits the ability of the user to quickly inventory the various information housed within the website. • Each webpage contains a variety of hyperlinks to other areas of the site, and often times, to external links not controlled by the city of St. Petersburg. While the use of links is appropriate in some respects, external links act as potential exit points for users. • The challenge of excessive use of external links is they must be consistently monitored and updated. As an example, the Division’s recognition awards section includes dead links for the following awards: Most Romantic Date Destination, Tree City USA Award, Sustainable Florida-Collins Center Award, and #1 Arts Destination for Mid-Size Cities.
<p>Contact information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact information is highly visible within the Economic Development Division’s home page and includes a link to the Division’s staff directory. • The prominence of the Division’s contact information ensures site selectors and business leaders with a specific need are able to contact the appropriate staff member.



Marketing Review

Interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Division’s website offers a number of avenues to maintain communication with the city of St. Petersburg. A floating footer at the bottom of the web page offers users the ability to follow the City on Twitter, Facebook, or sign-up to receive a newsletter. Other interactive features include the Division’s incentives look-up and Blue Chip properties mapping functions. Both tools provide a utility to site selection consultants and business leaders.
Timeliness of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compared to its county partners, the City demographic data is out-of-date. Pinellas County Economic Development reports city demographic data up-to 2013. Workforce information is out-of-date. Information sourced within the workforce subpage includes 2011 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data and 2010 Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation data. Information regarding the City’s stated clusters does not provide a source or date for the data describing each individual cluster. The sheer volume of content contained within the city of St. Petersburg’s Economic Development Division’s website could make it difficult to remain current and consistent. For instance, the number of cited businesses with the City ranges from 9,400 to 9,463 across the Business and Industry subpages. While it is a small discrepancy, it highlights the challenge of maintaining consistency across multiple subpages.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (see following tables)

Adapted from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Awards for Communications Excellence (ACE) scorecard and Southern Economic Development Council Communications Awards score sheet

The Economic Development Division’s website is somewhat constrained by its position as a subpage within the city of St. Petersburg’s website. With the absence of a drop-down menu, users are required to navigate to each subpage in order to obtain a strong grasp of the information that is provided by the Division. Utilizing Google Analytics to assess users’ experiences with the site and talking with site selectors about the Division’s content could provide insight into the best method for streamlining the website and subpage information.

TOP 10 MOST USED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE PAGES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>About Us</i>	<i>Programs</i>	<i>Data Center</i>	<i>News</i>	<i>Relocate & Expand</i>	<i>Find Property</i>	<i>Site Selection Services</i>	<i>Workforce Information</i>	<i>Large Employers</i>	<i>Maps</i>
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y

As the previous table displays, the Economic Development Division’s website contains most of the webpages commonly accessed by site selectors. While many of these pages are not accessible through the side-bar navigation menu, they are still accessible within one or two clicks from the home page. Although the Division website lists large employers, information regarding employment figures and the nature of large employers operations is missing. Finally, the Division has the opportunity to align its data center and workforce information with its county and regional economic development partners. For example, Pinellas County reports city demographic information up-to 2013. Aligning these figures with regional and county partners can create a more cohesive picture for site selectors.

MOST USED INFORMATION BY SITE SELECTORS

Contact Info	Incentive Programs	Tax Rates	Recent Announcements	Target Industry Info	Interactive Mapping Tool	Site & Building Inventory	Workforce Training Info
Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

The Division’s website contains much of the data required by site selectors and business leaders. Contact information and recent announcements are prominently displayed on the home page. Target industry information and workforce training assets are located within a few clicks from the home page. Streamlining the information as well as better integrating the site and building inventory and mapping tools into the Division’s website could further assist site selectors or business leaders’ ability to access critical information. Most economic development agencies list their site and building inventory directly on their websites.

Pinellas County Economic Development

<http://www.pced.org/>

Pinellas County Economic Development (PCED) connects prospective relocating or expanding businesses with potential sites in Pinellas County. To this end, the Pinellas County Economic Development website is an effective tool providing site selection consultants and decision makers with the information they require to make an informed site location decision. The County’s real estate database, demographic and economic data, and networking directory are specific tools and content that facilitates an informed location decision.

PINELLAS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: UTILITY AND DESIGN

Overall Design and layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pinellas County Economic Development’s website is clean and uncluttered. • The overall design and layout caters to site selectors who are seeking to access information needed by their clients in a time-effective manner. • Although the design and layout offers high utility, aesthetics could be updated to provide an eye-catching experience. The site’s layout, graphics, and design are not compelling.
Home page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusion of scrolling news stories and a link to the PODs headquarters ribbon cutting adds a sense of vibrancy and activity to the home page. However, the image would be more



Marketing Review

	<p>effective if rotated with other news stories or more frequently updated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The home page header contains useful links for site selectors or business leaders. • Inclusion of calendar items such as the export sales mission and business classes reinforce the PCED’s image as an high-value economic development organization.
Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website’s layout facilitates easy navigation, especially for information crucial in a site location search. • The real estate property database is easily accessible from the home page. • The data center drop-down menu contains far more selections than other drop-down menus within the site, making the other lists seem less robust by comparison. • The Google Search feature provides users quick access to specific pieces of information. • Some information within the data center menu could be housed within an “organizations” tab that describes the PCED, its staff, and contact information.
Contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General contact information is readily accessible from the PCED’s main page. • Contact information for individual PCED staff and other Pinellas County contacts are buried within the Data Center subpage and could be more easily accessed. • The display of a point of contact for each business cluster currently targeted by Pinellas County Economic Development is a useful feature.
Interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While PCED does not leverage social media, the website contains opportunities to stay in touch with PCED via business newsletters and updates on other events. • Other useful interactive features include the networking directory and the real estate database. PCED effectively leverages YouTube to walk through its property search database.
Timeliness of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic and economic indicators are up-to-date. County and City data contain 2013 demographic information provided by ESRI as well as projections up-to 2018. • Pinellas County Economic Development contains a high number of hyperlinks which connect to various reports, relevant websites, news stories, and other information. While the majority of these links are current, a number of links result in dead webpages. • The following links contained errors: IT Workforce Analysis documents, Florida’s Target Sector Trade Grants, and the Florida Medical Device Symposium.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>(see following two tables)</i>

Adapted from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Awards for Communications Excellence (ACE) scorecard and Southern Economic Development Council Communications Awards score sheet

The PCED website offers a high degree of utility for site selectors and corporate relocation decision makers. Navigation is straightforward and the use of drop-down menus is effective for quick scans of available information and content. Although PCED contains highly useful content, the website's header and navigation menus could be refreshed to increase the site's aesthetic appeal.

TOP 10 MOST USED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE PAGES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>About Us</i>	<i>Programs</i>	<i>Data Center</i>	<i>News</i>	<i>Relocate & Expand</i>	<i>Find Property</i>	<i>Site Selection Services</i>	<i>Workforce Information</i>	<i>Large Employers</i>	<i>Maps</i>
Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

PCED currently includes 9 out of 10 of the top most used economic development webpages. While the PCED does list programs within its website, such as its entrepreneurial and small business services, the PCED website does not centrally locate an entire program catalog. Due to the sheer amount of content contained within the website, a critical assessment could assist in ensuring that only high value and relevant information is contained within the website. Google Analytics can greatly assist in assessing which pages and pieces of information are effective as well as providing deep understanding of user experience. By ensuring that only high quality information is contained within the site, PCED could reduce the number of hyperlinks and further streamline its navigation menu.

MOST USED INFORMATION BY SITE SELECTORS

<i>Contact Info</i>	<i>Incentive Programs</i>	<i>Tax Rates</i>	<i>Recent Announcements</i>	<i>Target Industry Info</i>	<i>Interactive Mapping Tool</i>	<i>Site & Building Inventory</i>	<i>Workforce Training Info</i>
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Pinellas County Economic Development provides site selectors and corporate location decision makers with the information they must use. While the vast majority of the information contained within PCED's website is within one or two clicks of the home page, staff contact information, incentives, financing, and tax information are not readily available from the home page, nor are they located in a high visibility position within the corresponding subpage. Moving incentive, financing, and tax information to its own individual drop-down menu option as well as including a staff drop-down menu option could improve users' access to these key pieces of information.

Tampa Bay Partnership

<http://www.tampabay.org>

The Tampa Bay Partnership is the principal regional economic development organization for the Tampa Bay area. The Partnership is composed of 150 public and private business as well as 11 regional economic development organizations. Because of its position as the primary regional economic organization, the Tampa Bay Partnership plays a central role in project management for relocating or expanding businesses. Oftentimes, site selectors will approach state economic development organizations in order to identify regions within a state that suit their needs. After obtaining state recommendations, site selectors will then research each individual region before finally narrowing down county and city locations. Through its website, the Tampa Bay Partnership provides site selectors with high quality information about the region as well as insight into member county dynamics.

TAMPA BAY PARTNERSHIP: UTILITY AND DESIGN

<p>Overall Design and layout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tampa Bay Partnership’s website features excellent design, use of color and graphics, and offers a clean, crisp, and visually engaging layout. • Through content rich, many of the elements contained within the Tampa Bay Partnership’s website fall below the screen-break, limiting the content’s visibility to the casual user. • The Tampa Bay Partnership’s social media accounts are located within the footer, decreasing their accessibility.
<p>Home page</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Tampa Bay Partnership’s home page is inviting with an intuitive, effective layout. Users can easily identify and access information contained within the website. • The use of rotating testimonials regarding each of the Partnership’s four business targets is highly effective and adds depth to the home page. • Certain content housed within the home page may not be immediately visible to a user quickly browsing the site, though much of this content can be accessed through the drop-down menu.
<p>Navigation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users visiting the Tampa Bay Partnership website can quickly and easily access the information contained within the website. • Although banner rotators increase the site’s overall aesthetic value, long page load times diminish an otherwise smooth navigation experience. • Certain features are misaligned. For example, the data center subpage contains a picture of the Partnership’s asset map, but clicking on the picture does not take the user to that feature.
<p>Contact information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both general contact information and individual staff members are readily accessible from the Partnership’s home page. • The Partnership’s staff page includes quick links to the corresponding staff member’s email

	and social media accounts.
Interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Partnership’s website offers a variety of methods for its user-base to remain in close contact or participate in Partnership efforts. The newsletter, events calendar, and the Partnership blog are easily accessible from the drop-down menu. Compared to other interactive features, links to the Partnership’s social media accounts are relatively hidden amid other content.
Timeliness of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information regarding each individual county within the region is up-to-date. County profiles contain demographic and economic information up to 2013 as well as projections up to 2018. Information regarding the region as a whole lags behind the individual county profiles. The most recent economic indicators data is from September 2013 while the most recent regional profile is from 2012.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (see following two tables)

Adapted from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Awards for Communications Excellence (ACE) scorecard and Southern Economic Development Council Communications Awards score sheet

The Tampa Bay Partnership’s website conveys a positive first impression of the Tampa Bay area for site selectors and decision makers. The website is user-friendly with quick navigation features that allow the Partnership’s online users to readily access required information. As a marketing conduit for the entire region, the Partnership’s website delivers a level playing field for each community to be accessed by site selectors and decision makers. Examples of this accessibility include a communities tab along with an animated map displaying information about each county in the body of the Partnership’s home page.

TOP 10 MOST USED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE PAGES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<i>About Us</i>	<i>Programs</i>	<i>Data Center</i>	<i>News</i>	<i>Relocate & Expand</i>	<i>Find Property</i>	<i>Site Selection Services</i>	<i>Workforce Information</i>	<i>Large Employers</i>	<i>Maps</i>
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

The Tampa Bay Partnership website contains 9 out of the 10 most used economic development webpages. However, site selectors or business leaders attempting to find a specific property in the Tampa Bay area are asked to fill-out a “site selection form.” Given that many economic development websites typically feature searchable online property databases, this option may drive site consultants and prospects away from the site looking for an accessible property inventory.

MOST USED INFORMATION BY SITE SELECTORS

Contact Info	Incentive Programs	Tax Rates	Recent Announcements	Target Industry Info	Interactive Mapping Tool	Site & Building Inventory	Workforce Training Info
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

The Partnership’s website contains all of the information most used by site selectors. The data and information contained within the site is mostly current; each county profile provides 2013 information along with demographic projections up to 2018. However, some information housed within the data center subpage is out-of-date, including the 2012 regional profile. Overall, the Partnership’s website is an asset for the region and serves as an informative tool for site selectors and business leaders interested in Tampa Bay and its component communities.

The Greenhouse

<http://stpetegreenhouse.org/>

The St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of St. Petersburg have partnered to grow and promote entrepreneurship within the community. Greenhouse, a one-stop facility for starting or growing local businesses, is the result of this collaboration. Greenhouse provides business counseling, training, networking, growth or specialized assistance and access to capital and credit for startups.

GREENHOUSE: UTILITY AND DESIGN

Overall Design and layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse possesses a professional quality design and layout. The color scheme as well as common font creates a cohesive design package. Opportunities to remain connected, via social media, are predominantly integrated into the website’s overall design, allowing users to easily remain informed.
Home page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Greenhouse home page is well laid out with menu options, social media links, and newsletter sign-ups readily accessible. The “upcoming events” section reinforces Greenhouse’s image as the active entrepreneurship organization within St. Petersburg. Functionality could be added to Greenhouse’s home page. Menu options under “Grow with Greenhouse” could provide more functionality by linking to special pages that correspond to the four themes (Seed, Grow, Transplant, and Nurture).
Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigation is a straightforward process for the user. Use of drop-down menus aids the user in easily accessing information on the website. The overall simplicity of the website’s navigation experience does give room for increased complexity. For instance, the “what the greenhouse can do for you” section of the homepage

	could lead to individual pages. Currently, these options link to the same page.
Contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact information is readily accessible from the homepage via the “contact us,” “about,” and “staff” menu options.
Interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of social media accounts increases the user’s potential for interactivity. • From these social media accounts, users can further network with members who follow Greenhouse on Twitter, or have liked the organization on Facebook. Facebook user reviews also provide a more in-depth glimpse at the organization.
Timeliness of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website’s integrated calendar is up-to-date. • Greenhouse’s social media accounts are also up-to-date.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse could provide more content to its users. Currently, information contained within many of the organization’s webpages is sparse, or only contain links to external webpages. • For example, under the “business incentives” webpage, the various business incentives are only listed as hyperlinks on the website without a general description. Instead, users are directed towards City of St. Petersburg’s website to obtain more information. Adding short descriptions of the incentives could allow users to more quickly identify the incentive that suits their needs. • The Services page contains fairly limited information regarding the various services offered by Greenhouse. Providing more depth regarding Greenhouse’s services, and potentially adding case studies, could influence an entrepreneur’s decision to access Greenhouse’s offerings.

Adapted from the American Chamber of Commerce Executives Awards for Communications Excellence (ACE) scorecard and Southern Economic Development Council Communications Awards score sheet

Entrepreneurs are a distinct audience. As such, a website directed toward this audience must continually evaluate whether it provides entrepreneurs with the information and functionality they require. Greenhouse should continually evaluate the effectiveness of its website by surveying the entrepreneurs it works and networks with. Along with the survey, Greenhouse should connect its website (if it hasn’t already done so) with Google Analytics, which provides a nuanced view of how users’ access and digest the website’s content. Page view times and user-flow charts can further inform content and design decisions. By gathering more information, Greenhouse can better tailor their content to the needs of St. Petersburg’s entrepreneurs.

Additional Marketing Tools

Neither the St. Petersburg Chamber nor the city's Economic Development division invest in a comprehensive external marketing program inclusive of direct sales –marketing missions, prospect visits, real-estate conferences, etc. – and inbound events with site consultants and other influencers. The city's assets and opportunities are integrated into campaigns implemented by PCED and the Tampa Bay Partnership. *Market Street* will instead assess the tools used to market the city directly.

In response to an inquiry from *Market Street*, the St. Petersburg Chamber delivered a host of printed and electronic marketing materials to our office as well as promotional pieces generated by the city of St. Petersburg. *Market Street* reviewed all materials germane to economic development and promotion of the city as a destination for business and talent.

According to its 2006 Graphic Standards manual, the Chamber's principal brand was developed to "build a relationship with potential and current constituents and provide a guide to help them make buying decisions that favor the St. Pete Chamber," More recently, a brand directed more specifically towards economic development – the "Grow Smarter" campaign –was created to represent the Chamber's strategic philosophy towards growth.

TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Neither the Chamber nor city of St. Petersburg's Economic Development division place ads in traditional economic development and/or site selection magazines. This is a good thing and is consistent with trends showing that these types of placements do not have any impact on job creation. In the future, however, consideration might be given to placing ads in online/print media targeted specifically to the city's recommended target business sectors.

Paid: Grand Prix of St. Petersburg Ad

The Chamber purchased an ad in the Grand Prix program to promote itself and St. Petersburg. The ad is well designed and does not overwhelm with copy. The themes of sunshine, warmth, and relaxation are well conveyed. The Chamber's logo is prominently displayed, as are the Chamber's web address and a Twitter hashtag for #sunshinecity. If this ad represents the design evolution of the Chamber's marketing materials, then the campaign is moving in a positive direction. The Chamber website should be redesigned to be consistent with this refreshed brand identity.

Owned: 2013 Annual Report

The Chamber's most recent (2013) Annual Report is visually and thematically consistent with the Grand Prix ad and again represents a step forward for the Chamber's marketing output. The "Sunshine City" brand and color palette are again used for dramatic effect, especially on the report's front and back covers. The back cover image is identical to the Grand Prix ad. We liked the effective mirroring of the cover sunburst image throughout the report as dialogue boxes. The layout of the internal pages is clean with a good mix of images, graphics, and text. Logos for the Grow Smarter campaign, Greenlight Pinellas, the Greenhouse,



Focus St. Pete, and other programs and sponsors add visual dynamism and interest to their respective pages.

Overall, the Annual Report is a very well-conceived and executed owned-media piece and presents a bright, modern, design-savvy, uplifting image of the Chamber and community to members and non-members alike. As has been noted, if the Report is indicative of a new design direction for the Chamber's media output, *Market Street* is a fan. The Chamber's website should be refreshed using these new themes and design fundamentals sooner rather than later.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The intended audiences of the Chamber's social media platforms are members and community stakeholders. The Chamber engages these audiences through a number of accounts.

Facebook – St. Petersburg Chamber

The St. Petersburg Chamber's primary Facebook page is a mix of member news, promotion of Chamber events, photos from Chamber events, and links to positive news stories about the community. The Chamber typically posts one to three times daily. Almost every post has been liked, shared, and/or commented on, indicating strong engagement with the Chamber's Facebook followers.

There are also sharing and mentions of other members' and partners' good news and mentions, and positive news stories about St. Petersburg. The inclusion of photos from Chamber events and events attended by Chamber staff clearly garners more shares and likes by followers.

Twitter - @StPeteChamber

Tweets are cross-posted from Facebook, meaning that Facebook posts that go over 140 characters or include photos or links cannot fit in the Twitter framework. While automatic cross posts do provide ease, they end up speaking more to the Chamber's Facebook users than Twitter users. However, the Chamber has nearly 6,500 followers on Twitter and about 1,800 "Likes" on Facebook, so posts are being distributed to a large core audience.

#SunshineCity

Print ads created for the Chamber promote the tag "#SunshineCity." While many posts in the social media stream are referencing other places in the world (including Sunshine City, Tokyo), the majority of posts tagged #SunshineCity reference St. Petersburg. The tag is clearly being used by a wide range of partners and individuals to promote the St. Petersburg brand and events. Spreading its use to an even broader range of social media users (beyond Chamber staff and partners) should be its next step.

Other social media presence

- **St. Petersburg Greenhouse Facebook:** The Greenhouse Facebook page does a commendable job of differentiating its content from the Chamber's general pages. Articles specific to entrepreneurs are linked along with photos from local startup events, humor, and promotion of opportunities and

events. The page is effective at capturing the daily excitement around entrepreneurship and innovation in St. Petersburg.

- **@STPGreenhouse Twitter:** Like @StPeteChamber, @STPGreenhouse cross-posts from Facebook; this sometimes results in cut-off tweets with links to Facebook for the full text. The handle uses photos and the retweet function well to demonstrate the activity of the Greenhouse and related efforts in St. Petersburg.
- **St. Pete Stories Facebook:** This account appears to have been active for less than a year and has been abandoned. It should be deleted or merged with another social media account.
- **St. Pete Stories YouTube:** This channel contains four videos that are over two years old. It should be deleted or merged with the Chamber's main YouTube account.

Initial Recommendations

- Consider condensing Facebook posts to 140 characters to ensure better cross-posting with Twitter, making tweets easier to read (without following a link to read the rest of the post on Facebook) and allowing for increased sharing and promotion on Twitter.
- In addition to events and programs, the Greenhouse social media accounts should increasingly highlight startups and high-growth companies in St. Petersburg to showcase the existing density of local innovation activity.
- Increase promotion of the #SunshineCity tag for greater penetration among users and stronger presence.
- Delete the St. Pete Stories Facebook and YouTube accounts due to lack of updates and activity.

EARNED MEDIA

The St. Petersburg Chamber gathers extensive earned media from the local press, including the *St. Petersburg Tribune*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *Tampa Tribune*, Fox 13, and 83 Degrees Media. The Chamber's leadership and involvement in local planning, quality of life, and business development efforts is evident from local coverage.

The next step in earned media presence should be for St. Petersburg to find opportunities for national press around the key assets and activities emerging in the community, and to carve out an identity among external audiences that effectively captures the St. Petersburg brand.

OWNED MEDIA

Burg Life magazine

Burg Life is published annually by the Chamber as the “official St. Petersburg relocation guide.” *Burg Life* is a lifestyle magazine that covers the quality of life options in St. Petersburg. The Chamber will mail an issue to anyone requesting it from the website

Burg Life is an attractive, well-designed publication that captures the vibrancy and brand of St. Petersburg through photographs, quality articles, and profiles of residents and business owners. *Burg Life* is successful at highlighting the competitive assets that most communities promote—downtown, schools, arts, retail, diversity, outdoor activities, healthcare, housing—in a way that does not feel generic or boilerplate. The assets featured in *Burg Life* are distinctive and specific to the type of community and culture that St. Petersburg is building. The publication shows a community that is a desirable place to live, work, and invest rather than a tourist destination or short-term-visit location.

Chamber Bright Spots Newsletter

The Bright Spots e-newsletter is sent weekly (every Thursday) to Chamber members and community stakeholders; its goal is to inform and involve the readers of the newsletters in the life of the Chamber.

While Bright Spots presents useful Chamber information, the layout is crowded and hard to follow. Despite featuring ongoing sections like Chamber News, Chamber Events, Member Highlights, Member Events, Bright Spots does not display Chamber Events and Member Events next to each other, while it scatters a number of other updates, events, and ads from partners among the regular features. The lack of a table of contents or issue highlights header at the opening of the newsletter also makes it difficult for the reader to understand what is new in the issue, what is important, where events can be found, etc.



Archived issues of the newsletter are linked on the Chamber’s website. However, the links lead to newsletters that have expired and the most recent issue shown is February 6, 2014.

Chamber Advocacy Newsletter

The weekly Advocacy newsletter is more succinct and straightforward than the Bright Spots updates by virtue of serving a much more focused role with specific policy-related information. The newsletter starts with the date and a bulleted list of linked items that appear in the issue. The newsletter is well-organized and clear about the Chamber’s policy positions and next steps for the business community’s voice in legislation and ballot measures.

Initial Recommendations

- Continue to work with partners that use *Burg Life* for recruiting to be sure that the content of the annual publication is relevant to the various prospects that receive it.

- Identify where most *Burg Life* print requests and electronic downloads originate, and consider these for increased, targeted marketing efforts.
- Date Bright Spots newsletters by day (i.e. Thursday, May 27) rather than numbered weeks (Week 1, Week 2, and so forth).
- Create a brief table of contents under the heading “In This Issue” to highlight the Bright Spots sections and special features in each newsletter. Point out any updates or stories where action is requested.
- Format Chamber Events and Member Events sections adjacent to one another for ease of reviewing all upcoming events. Consider using two parallel vertical columns.
- Update the newsletter archive page (<http://www.stpete.com/?page=Newsletter>) to include the most recent past issues.
- Remove all links to expired newsletters or work with Constant Contact to make the archive accessible.

PRINT COLLATERAL

The print materials published by the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce are geared toward existing or potential members. The Chamber uses the city’s marketing materials when dealing with economic development audiences, including prospective businesses or talent. While the city of St. Petersburg publishes a large volume of brochures and material for citizens; for the purposes of this Marketing Review *Market Street* will assess its economic development collateral.

Target Cluster Brochure

The business clusters brochure published by the Economic Development Division of the city of St. Petersburg entitled “Welcome to Business in St. Petersburg!” is the principal print collateral “leave-behind” for the city’s targeted marketing. As such, *Market Street* will focus on this piece as the crux of our Print Collateral assessment.

Story: The City’s business clusters brochure is very text heavy, with data and information about St. Petersburg’s competitive strengths in the given clusters buried in small text.

While the brochure is intended to give an overview of all of the target clusters in St. Petersburg, its “catch-all” approach misses an opportunity to tailor the message of each cluster to the specific audience that would be considering St. Petersburg as a location for a business in that target.

For example, firms in Information Technology may be looking for different information about their sector and its strengths of St. Petersburg when studying a future location investment than organizations in Arts and



Culture. The audience for Marine and Environmental Sciences appears to be public and non-profit research institutions rather than relocating or expanding businesses. Each of these audiences needs to be addressed and informed through more tailored and strategic approach than the current brochure allows.

Location: The brochure does not note that St. Petersburg is in the state of Florida is until deep into the narrative on Manufacturing. Tying St. Petersburg to Florida and visually illustrating its proximity to many other major markets, international airports, interstates, universities, the Gulf of Mexico, and other location-based advantages is critical. This brochure misses the opportunity to highlight those assets as well as benefits accrued from the city's location in the dynamic Tampa Bay metro.

The Marine and Environmental Sciences section does mention the Bayboro Harbor district but does not explain what that is and what it offers companies. The Medical Technologies and Life Sciences section references the Florida High Tech Corridor but again does not define that designation's significance.

Existing Businesses and Institutions: The brochure lists businesses and institutions located in St. Petersburg that justify and strengthen each cluster. However, no explanation is given as to what the companies do or specialize in. The number of local employees engaged at large or notable companies is also not listed. These additions would demonstrate a depth of specialties and breadth of workers, both important factors in site location decisions.

The Medical Technologies and Life Sciences section contains a reference to the Aerospace Defense and National Security clusters but it is unclear if those clusters are also targeted by the city of St. Petersburg.

Workforce: The quality and depth of a community's workforce is a game-changing decision in business location decision making, and cluster marketing materials should always include a profile of the local labor pool in a given cluster.

The brochure cites average wages and number of employees in each cluster (without referencing the year or data source for these figures). The brochure should list all relative densities of high-demand degrees or skill sets.

As noted, the brochure also does not address the reality of St. Petersburg's place in a larger region. The advantages of the ability to pull workforce from beyond the city limits across the entire Tampa Bay metro should be promoted.

Competitive Strengths: Each cluster section does attempt to capture the advantages of St. Petersburg in a given business sector and its impressive local activity, but this critical information is not highlighted or prominently displayed due to the text-heavy design of the piece.

For example, the Medical Technologies and Life Sciences cluster narrative describes an active and competitive cluster in the city, but this information should be presented in a more streamlined and attention-grabbing design. Unfortunately, the section also includes typos. Important facts—e.g. St. Petersburg is home to 53 percent of the medical device manufacturers in the Florida High Tech Corridor—get lost in extended stretches of text.

Contact: Executives, site sectors, entrepreneurs, and other location decision makers want to be assured they will be in immediate contact with a responsive economic development professional.

The brochure also does not list a point of contact or email address for more information or inquiries. Only a toll-free number and P.O. Box for the economic development division of the City are shown in very small font on the very bottom of the back page.

Design: The design of the brochure is outdated and, as previously mentioned, hard to read. The design does not capture the “feel” and intended brand of St. Petersburg reflected in other marketing materials, including *Burg Life* and The Greenhouse’s branding.

If the Chamber is going to continue to rely on the city of St. Petersburg for its economic development marketing collateral, these materials should be refreshed and redesigned to be more current, readable, and reflective of the creativity and attractiveness of the community.

Initial Recommendations

- Create one piece of collateral for each cluster, with data, top employers, and workforce information formatted in an easier-to-scan style that is both web- and printer-friendly.
- Refresh and update the overall design of each cluster’s brochure, sticking to high-level bullet points and improved use of breakout boxes.
- List higher education and workforce development assets related to each cluster in clear and concise bullets.
- Include educational attainment of the overall workforce, and specific degree clusters in the region (e.g. computer science, engineering, MBA).
- When emphasizing major or notable businesses and institutions in the area, lists should also include very brief descriptions of what each company or institution does. Also denote headquarters firms. For large employers, the descriptions should also cite how many local workers the company employs.
- List and briefly describe industry incentives and business assistance available locally and at the state level.
- Include major real estate or site assets, including business districts, industrial parks, Class A office space, and transportation infrastructure for the movement of goods and workers.
- Include photos and testimonials from business executives in existing businesses to demonstrate St. Petersburg’s thought leadership in the cluster and the satisfaction of businesses with the community and its assets for their growth.
- Include general quality of life information to highlight St. Petersburg’s competitive place-based opportunities for workers and businesses. This could include livability rankings, cultural and recreational options, commuting times, proximity to other cities, and weather averages.



Marketing Review

- Prominently display contact information for the key economic development professional. Include phone number, email address, and website.
- Use a template that can be easily updated with new data, resources, and contact information as it changes.
- Post all print collateral electronically to economic development websites for easy download.



CONCLUSION

Unlike many large U.S. regions, Tampa Bay does not have one principal city, but two in Tampa and St. Petersburg. Add in the numerous other communities of size in the region and you create the real potential for confusion in the minds of professionals charged with assessing metro areas as locations for investment. While we do not want to suggest that the city of St. Petersburg should not be marketed independently of the Tampa Bay region, it is still important that, 1) the city's role in the broader regional dynamic is acknowledged and acclaimed, and 2) some amount of consistency is achieved between brands, messages, and data associated with St. Petersburg on county and regional websites and collateral materials.

Ultimately, the decision as to who controls the imaging of St. Petersburg in the state, national, and global marketplaces is up to the partners allied to advance this purpose. The question of who resources, designs, and implements this campaign is a significant one; a comprehensive program can ultimately be managed by a single organization, a coalition of public and private partners, or some other configuration.

When approved, this Grow Smarter Initiative will identify the optimal entity – or entities – to oversee the promotion of St. Petersburg to external prospects and markets. As of now, this Marketing Review sought to assess existing tools and programs leveraged to advance the prospects of the city's economy. As currently configured, these resources are underdeveloped when compared to many competitor communities. Websites need to be redesigned, refreshed, and kept more current; certain electronic and print collateral must be made more compelling and targeted; and some type of external program should be considered, either through direct investment and implementation by a local entity or through partnerships at the county, regional, and levels.

St. Petersburg has a very competitive product to sell. Enhancing the marketing of this product will be a key outcome of the Grow Smarter Initiative.