

# Analysis and Planning of the



## Campaign

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## INTRODUCTION

The decline in the economy over the past couple of years has trickled down to the northern Front Range of Colorado. The city of Fort Collins has experienced cut backs in some of its services because of reduced sales tax revenues coming into the city.

This level of impact on the community spurred the creation of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign to bring these revenues back to the city to fund various services. Other goals of the campaign are to educate residents about how their sales tax dollars are used to better the community and to attempt to stimulate the local economy.

While reduced sales tax revenue was the primary impetus for brining this planning committee together, there were some other issues that needed to be addressed as well, as they may have an impact on shoppers’ behaviors. The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee needed to find out if and why Fort Collins residents shop in other locations – such as Denver, Boulder, Loveland, Windsor, etc. The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee was also tasked with showing local businesses that they are being supported during this time of economic challenge and the local government is doing something to keep the economy going.

The “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign was given a very tight timeframe in which to pull a committee of representative stakeholders together and get materials prepared and distributed in time for the 2003 holiday season. Given the rushed timeframe, initial research and evaluation planning was not part of the start-up efforts.

However, the committee was able to quickly identify the information residents needed in order for them to change their shopping habits. This is being done through

educating residents about how their sales tax dollars are used by the city and around the community.

It is hoped that by showing residents how their patronage of local businesses provides a better quality of life for themselves and their families, that they will frequent shops in Fort Collins rather than going to other areas to spend their money.

There are many different ways to go about analyzing the work the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee has already done and to provide them with guidance for future planning. For this document, we have selected the audience segmentation framework of Vogel (1994), the Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion by Petty and Cacioppo (1986), and the strategic media plan of CSU’s own Hallahan (2001). Additionally, strategic plan steps by Smith (2002) and evaluation information by Salmon (1989) have been included to aid the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee with their future efforts. Other possible theories and methods are mentioned in the Conclusion section of this document.

We have also reviewed two other “shop local” campaigns going on in Colorado. We provide this information as a reference and source of learning for the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee and for suggestions of future work that could be implemented for the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign.

It should be noted that this document was written with two distinct audiences and needs in mind – to fulfill the requirements set out for the JT614 course (Public Communication Campaigns) and as a consulting document for the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee. Background and contact information about the author’s of this document has been included as an appendix, should the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee have any questions or need additional information.

We hope that this information is useful and helpful in the future planning of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign.

## **THEORY BACKGROUND**

In order to be able to mount a successful campaign, the audience needs to be targeted, a mode of persuasion chosen, and a strategic plan for the channels to be used in the distribution of the message needs to be outlined. We have integrated three theories to use as a framework for that purpose: Vogel’s (1994) audience segmentation framework, Petty and Cacioppo’s (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion (ELM), and Hallahan’s (2001) strategic media plan. We will use these theories as a rough framework to critique the current campaign as well as to offer recommendations to the committee putting that plan into place.

To create a successful campaign, an audience who will receive a specific message needs to be segmented and targeted. Atkin and Freimuth (2000) posit, “A key determinant of success [of a campaign] is the development of sophisticated strategies based on formative evaluation research” (as cited in Rice and Atkin, 2000, p. 125). Most effective campaigns aim at a small subsection of an audience, rather than a broad group (Atkin and Freimuth, 2000, p. 130). The more that can be learned about a potential public or audience, the better the chances of reaching them and meaningfully impacting them. Formative research overcomes the audience’s resistance barriers, and circumvents the potential problems of how to reach the audience, how much the audience already knows and how to fit that information into their already existing schemas, and possible deflection of persuasive appeals. It is difficult to reach a public or audience that has no interest in listening to your message.

“Social science findings indicate that information alone has very little effect on attitude change” (Vogel, 1994, p. 8). Vogel (1994) suggests a six-part audience segmentation framework to determine the correct public, and tailor messages to an audience that will be receptive. It breaks the audience down into these groups:

- 1) Active Opponents, who think the message is important, but disagree with the message that is sent out;
- 2) Active Supporters, who think the message is important, and agree with it;
- 3) Disinterested Opponents, who do not think the message is important enough to attend to, and do not agree with the message;
- 4) Disinterested Supporters, who do not think the message will pertain to them, but agree with it;
- 5) Potential Converts, who are interested in the message, but have not yet formed an opinion about it; and
- 6) The Uninvolved, who are neither interested, nor opinionated about the message.

Vogel (1994) argues the only audiences that should be addressed are the active supporters and the potential converts. The other groups are, in general, too hard to reach, and would possibly deflect any persuasive message sent to them anyway. The supporters should receive a reinforcing message, and the potential converts should receive a persuasive message. Vogel’s (1994) audience segmentation does not tackle what strategies to take on with the audiences other than the active supporters and the potential converts. Later in this discourse, we will use Smith’s (2002) “Step 3” to develop a strategy on how to deal with those publics not really addressed by Vogel (1994).

For this campaign, the committee roughly defined their audience as the residents of Fort Collins, and those with disposable incomes. This is too broad an audience definition. The committee behind the campaign did not consider its target audience in any depth. They also did not go so far as to tailor specific messages. Their net is extensive, and their primary audience is the potential converts, or those who live here, but do not shop here habitually. The point is that the committee did not do enough audience segmentation or analysis. What they put together was a guess based on the brainstorming of the stakeholders, without researching either the needs or wants of the audience, or even looking at how the audience would break down. Before audience research like focus groups or surveys can be administered, the audience definition should be more precise so information about them specifically can be gathered.

Vogel (1994) suggests sending messages only to active supporters and potential converts, and espouses using different strategies to reach the two publics (p. 9). Vogel (1994) asserts messages to supporters will fit in with existing belief structures, so should not need to be repeated often. This maintenance type of messaging will simply reinforce those beliefs. Active supporters are residents of Fort Collins who already shop locally. Their message in the Shop Fort Collins First campaign is reasons why buying good locally (something they are already doing) is a good idea. Vogel (1994) argues that messages for the potential converts need to be persuasive in nature, and repeated often in channels they will attend to (p. 9). Vogel (1994) also suggests using the active supporters in a “two-step flow,” as they disseminate the information to others (p. 10). The potential converts are those who have the disposable income, and are ripe to hear communication messages about why they should shop here. They might be those who work elsewhere, those who use the Internet and



do not like to brave the crowds or the “kids.” Work needs to be done (and should be done before the start of the campaign) to find out what kinds of messages appeal to that audience, who they might trust as a spokesperson, what channels would be the most likely to reach that audience, and what might persuade them to change their behaviors and spend that income here in Fort Collins. These questions will be addressed later in this text when we discuss Smith’s steps (specifically, Step 3) for application of the theory of audience segmentation.

Since the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign’s goals included a persuasive message to its audience, we felt application of the ELM could be helpful for both critique and recommendations. This model outlines two avenues to persuasion: the central and the peripheral routes. The central route is based on “high elaboration” and a highly interested, active receiver. This means the receiver will expend cognitive energy to understand the message and fit it in with the existing knowledge he or she has (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986, p. 7). Alternately, the peripheral route is characterized by “low elaboration.” If the receiver is persuaded to accept and act upon the message, it is because of peripheral cues, such as source credibility, the receiver’s mood, and the attractiveness of the spokes model or the music played in an advertisement. Persuasion can result from using either the central or peripheral route, but only the receiver persuaded by the central route tends to remain persuaded over time. Persuasion as a result of the peripheral route will only be short-term.

If a message is processed through the central route, there are two important factors to consider when tailoring a message. These factors are whether or not the receiver is already in agreement with the message, as the active supporters from Vogel’s (1994) audience segmentation structure, and the strength of the message (Severin and Tankard, 2001, p. 177). Strong messages would be tailored to the potential converts.

Regardless of whether or not persuasion occurs by the central or peripheral route, we want to persuade the public. If a spokesperson is selected, the receiver’s use of heuristics (decision rules) will make a difference in the persuasion. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) focus on three major heuristics: credibility, liking and consensus. The credibility heuristic is how much the source is trusted by the receiver. The liking heuristic pertains to the tendency for people to agree with positions held by those for whom they have an affinity. The consensus heuristic refers to the tendency of people to support a position they perceive many others agree with (Severin and Tankard, 2001, p. 177).

In order for the receiver to take on high elaboration and use the central route toward persuasion, the receiver has to be motivated and have the ability to act on that motivation. If the receiver is not in a place where he or she can attend to the message, even if it is important to him or her, the message will fail. The message must be relevant to the receiver and affect him or her directly in a way that is important.

Specifically for the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign, the audience segmentation has to be more precise in order to create more tailored messages. Once an audience is narrowed down and its characteristics are identified, a message can then be very specifically tailored to reach that particular group. Let’s say the campaign targeted pregnant women. A persuasive message for pregnant women might allude to the quality of life for kids in Fort Collins as a result of the tax revenues accrued by shopping here. It might address benefits at schools and day-care programs that the city funds, and bring up the safety of the city for the families living here because of the police who are paid out of the revenues from shopping. These messages could be found by using focus groups to test the messages.

Another possible audience segment could be the workers of the city itself. Per Vogel’s (1994) estimation of using the “two-step flow,” the active supporters could be recruited from within the structure that gave birth to the campaign. It would be easy to do research on the city employees, simply because they are convenient. The Shop Westminster campaign, which will be discussed later, used this method. The workers could be asked to have lunch in an informal setting and a small focus group could be used to see what kinds of media they attend to, what kinds of services in Fort Collins they appreciate and whom they perceive as credible and trustworthy. A message could be tailored to the workers using someone they trust and perceive as credible as well as reinforcing current beliefs about the services they already appreciate with media they pay attention to. Once the city workers are positively aligned using the above-mentioned information and a persuasive message is tailored to them, they will become the ambassadors of the message. Since they already work for the city, they might be viewed as knowledgeable about its programs and could spread the word to friends who may not have yet heard the message (Vogel, 1994, p. 10). The channels for reaching such an audience would be very different, as discussed in the next section of the text.

In *Strategic Media Planning*, Hallahan (2001) claims “mass media audiences have become increasingly fragmented” (p. 462). He observes, “The splintering of the American audience now requires placements in larger numbers of different outlets, merely to reach the same number of audience members possible in the past” (p. 462). Hallahan (2001) suggests diversifying messages over a large number of channels to reach the largest audiences. His media approach includes public, interactive and controlled media, events/group and one-on-

one communications. Each channel category has its challenges and uses, but using an integrated public relations plan is the most successful in this model (Hallahan, 2001, p. 469).

Public media channels include traditional mass media, such as television, newspapers and radio. Interactive media are media that are automated, but can provide answers to questions from a participating audience. These would include the Internet or a phone line with an automated answering system. Controlled media are mainly promotional materials delivered to carefully selected audiences. They could include videos, stickers, flyers, inserts or window tags. Events/group communications can be described as any interaction between the organization or its representative and a member of a selected public (Hallahan, 2001, p. 467). An example of this type of communication could be a float in a parade, a wine tasting or even a meeting with stakeholders. Lastly, one-on-one communication is any kind of didactic communication between a member of the organization and a member of the public (Hallahan, 2001, p. 468).

If a campaign is to be successful, there must be a great deal of formative research. Vogel (1994) has laid out a plan for identifying an audience, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) have provided the structure for the persuasive message, and Hallahan (2001) has guided our choices of channels. These theories can be used as guidelines for either the creation of a good campaign or the critique of an ongoing campaign. Since we are not creating the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign, we will use these theories to critique what has been done so far, and to offer suggestions as to how to proceed. Those critiques and suggestions will be scattered throughout the paper, mostly in the Analysis of Work Done to Date and Recommendations sections.

## **ANALYSIS OF OTHER “BUY LOCAL” CAMPAIGNS**

A number of other “buy local” campaigns are going on around Colorado, and are in various states of implementation. We have chosen to review the Westminster and Boulder campaigns relative to the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. We feel they are relevant because they are similar local communities with similar goals.

### ***CITY OF WESTMINSTER, COLORADO***

In 2002, the city of Westminster implemented an aggressive and award-winning plan to educate its residents, businesses and city employees to “Shop Westminster.” There is a business directory on the Shop Westminster Web site that includes hundreds of businesses



**Support local businesses -  
support local services**

listed by topic. It consists of two pages on the city’s Web site and is not e-commerce friendly. The Web site does not sell any products, nor does it offer a membership area where local business could pay a fee and join the group. It includes a logo (as show at right above), which can be copied and used in various materials. The logo is transferable to things like stickers, window hangings, flyers and newsletters. Once public opinion is behind the campaign, it could be profitable for a company or business to display that it supports the campaign and therefore, the city.

The Westminster Web site, <http://www.ci.westminster.co.us/city/shop/default.htm>, is an informational Web site only. The messages that could be conceived as persuasive are still informational in nature. It sports a graph showing that Westminster has lower sales tax rates than other cities in the northern Denver metro area. The Web site also says where those tax dollars go, and what city programs are funded by those tax dollars.

The Westminster campaign was started in August, 2002. Tiffany Barnhart, a public information specialist for the city of Westminster, said they had done a great deal of research before implementing their campaign. They began by doing a survey to see what city services the residents of Westminster most appreciated. The study showed the popularity was for the support of the open or green space in the city. The message the city then sent out was tailored to alert the audience to the fact that their tax revenue supported the open space and green space they had worked to conserve. The campaign planners broke the target audience into three groups. The first target audience was the residents of Westminster, second were the Westminster businesses, and the third was the city employees.

There were many goals of the campaign. The primary goal was to educate the public on the services that their tax dollars support, and to give the public a reason to stay in Westminster to shop. The organizers sent out window stickers to over 1200 stores to show people which stores contributed tax revenues to the city. One of the main goals of the campaign was to alert the residents in these areas that they were, in fact, residents of Westminster. Apparently, some residents within the jurisdiction of Westminster may have postmarks that say “Broomfield.” Also listed among the objectives of the campaign is to educate the residents about the benefits of shopping locally, and to correct the misconception that Westminster’s sales tax rate was higher than surrounding cities. For the city, the campaign sought to increase retention of local sales tax and dollars, and increase knowledge of city services.

There was an internal campaign for all city employees, designed to educate them about the tax revenues and their benefits for the city. The basis of the internal campaign was to target the city employees as ambassadors to the residents of the city. The city employees

needed to be made aware of the benefits of the campaign so they could make use of Hallahan’s (2002) one-on-one communications with the constituents of the “Shop Westminster” campaign. The internal campaign became an exercise in boosting of morale, which was low due to a hiring freeze. The organizers put together a raffle for city employees to win gift certificates to local stores. Any city employee who brought in a receipt from a local store for \$50 could enter. There were over 800 entries in the raffle (T. Barnhart, personal communication, October 27, 2003).

The city of Westminster campaign used a number of different communication tools. They used a city newsletter, the *City Edition*, as a public communication tool to reach a broad base of people. The purpose of this public information was to direct people to the educational material on the Web site. Last year, the organizers created Shop Westminster Week. The committee in charge of the campaign went to 100 businesses within Westminster to ask them to participate by offering discounts for that week. Eighty percent of businesses took part. They got feedback from businesses and have had calls asking when they would do it again. This year, they have modified this activity to encompass an entire month, and the number of businesses that are taking part has increased to 102 (T. Barnhart, personal communication, October 27, 2003).

When the “Shop Westminster” campaign committee has the budget, they plan on distributing another survey to the public to see if they have gained knowledge through the campaign of where their sales tax dollars go, and whether or not residents have changed their shopping habits. They did not wish to use tax revenues to measure the success of the campaign because “there are too many variables to claim the campaign had any impact” (T. Barnhart, personal communication, October 27, 2003).

## ***CITY OF BOULDER, COLORADO***

The Boulder Independent Business Alliance (BIBA) “was launched in 1997 [in response] to the increasing loss of community-based businesses to national chains” (BIBA, 2003). It includes over 150 local member businesses, has a part-time professional director, and offers a variety of incentives for its members. It is a non-profit organization and functions through cooperative purchasing, marketing, advertising, public information and advocacy (BIBA, 2003). BIBA’s goal is to “help Boulder County’s independent community-based businesses thrive and halt the trend of corporate chains displacing them” (BIBA, 2003). A key difference in the Boulder campaign as compared with the Fort Collins campaign is in the businesses that BIBA represents and the goals of the campaign. In Boulder, they are seeking to end the dominance of chain stores, like Starbucks and Wal-Mart. They support the locally owned (non-chain or franchise) businesses because they tend to return 70 percent of their revenue back to the community and the residents, whereas even locally owned and operated franchises will only return 40 percent of their revenue to the community (BIBA, 2003).



The BIBA (2003) Web site claims that more than 65 percent of the member businesses saw the “community benefit card” (which offered discounts to cardholders at member shops) as an advantage. This information may have been the result of a survey, but does indicate BIBA has completed some ongoing evaluation of attitudes toward the campaign, and perhaps how to better serve the businesses for which BIBA works.

This campaign is far more organized and established than the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. They have incorporated methods for businesses to pay dues to keep them in



business, and their Web site is extensive. As of the printing of this document, the “Shop Fort Collins First” Web site consists of just one informational page.

There is some conflicting information on the BIBA Web site. One section says BIBA began in 1997, where another claims BIBA started three years ago. It is unclear whether or not the site is referring to its electronic version or the campaign itself.

Since its inception, BIBA has incorporated a number of events and milestones into its campaign. In 1998, several local coffee shops in coordination with BIBA created coffee mugs that informed people how to support their local coffee shops and the importance of not shopping at places like Peabody’s and Starbucks. In 1999, BIBA and local book, music and video stores joined forces and created bookmarks espousing the evils of such places as Barnes & Noble. The messages were tailored toward those who were already shopping in those places and might be likely to impart those messages to others. In November of 1999, BIBA was instrumental in getting the Community Vitality Act passed. This Act supported local businesses by creating a city-wide mandate that no new chain stores be allowed within the city limits except as to replace a similar preexisting business, it required that the city of Boulder give bidding preference to local contractors and that commercial properties leased to the city of Boulder be leased to locally-owned businesses, not chains (City of Boulder, 2003; Retrieved from the World Wide Web on December 6, 2003 from <http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/cao/documents/x-cva.html>). Through this policy enactment, BIBA stepped into the domain of public policy reform. In 2001, BIBA launched its “Community Benefit Card,” which offers discounts to its holders at specific stores. September 8, 2003, was the first ever “Celebrate Local!” day. BIBA called it a “live barter

and expo” (BIBA, 2003). They have recently instituted an online newsletter to their members.

We tried to contact someone involved with the campaign through e-mail. We received word back from them, and they said currently, they are unable to speak with us about the formative research and evaluation they did for the campaign, or steer us in a better direction until after January. They suggested we try to get in touch with them again at that time.

### ***COMPARISONS TO THE “SHOP FORT COLLINS FIRST” CAMPAIGN***

The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee looked closely at the “Shop Westminster” program when they initially began their planning efforts. The benefits to the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee in doing this are that the “Shop Westminster” committee did a lot of research before implementing their program. It also appears that these two campaigns have similar goals – to encourage residents to shop within city boundaries and increase services to their community, as well as to educate these publics on sales tax usage.

One activity the “Shop Westminster” campaign did that we recommend to the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee is to do a survey to gather information on what parts of Fort Collins and the city’s services that the residents appreciate most. This will be extremely useful in future message development. (This will be discussed in more detail later in Recommendations section of this document.)

While the purpose and goals for the BIBA program are not as “in line” with those of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign, their use of the “community benefit card” could be modified and incorporated into future work done by the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee.

The BIBA Web site is extensive and slick. This could also be used as a model for a possible expansion into a “Shop Fort Collins First” Web site.

## **THE “SHOP FORT COLLINS FIRST” CAMPAIGN**

### ***IMPETUS***

In early September of 2003, the business editor of the *Coloradoan*, Bob Mook, published an article that discussed the ease of shopping online. Approximately one week later, a “rebuttal” article by David May, president of the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, appeared in the newspaper, talking about the need to shop locally and remain loyal to shops that have served you well during the years. The Chamber received a variety of contacts in the form of e-mail, phone calls and letters from constituents speaking in support of May’s position.

It was this article that spurred us to contact May and how we first learned about the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign.

While the campaign had started up in early August, the planning committee had not yet done any work that had received any outside attention. The initial start to this campaign planning committee had come from a city of Fort Collins official who was concerned about the recent decline in sales tax revenues. Many Fort Collins residents are not aware that the sales tax they pay goes to fund various city services such as police, fire response services, libraries and roadwork.

The city has seen a decline in sales tax revenues for a number of reasons. The general economy is one of the most obvious. Additionally, people are shopping at various spots in Denver and at the Outlet Mall in Loveland in their search for lower prices. While these

individuals may be finding more shopping variety and different prices, they are ultimately hurting themselves and their community by paying sales tax in other locations. This is one of the messages of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign.

One other goal of this campaign is to show local businesses that the community and those in positions of power and influence within the community support them during this time of economic challenge.

The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee is concerned with stemming the shopping “leakage” that has recently occurred. With additional shopping resources (such as those in Windsor and Loveland) available to northern Front Range residents, the city of Fort Collins has seen some of their shopping moving to these areas. This could be initial interest in investigating these new shopping areas, and not an indication of permanent shopping behaviors. The “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign is tasked with bringing these shoppers back to Fort Collins.

While the initial goals of the campaign committee revolved around increasing sales tax revenues for the 2003 holiday season, the committee plans on using their “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign as an ongoing way to encourage the community to support local businesses and to educate residents on where their sales tax dollars go.

### ***WORK DONE TO DATE***

As the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee has no real budget to work from, they have been challenged to find city, Chamber, Fort Collins Mall, Downtown Business Association, and other resources to donate money and materials to get the campaign rolling. Needless to say, the first few publicly visible activities they engaged in were very cost-effective.

## **Activities**

The homecoming parade around the campus area in Fort Collins was the kick off for the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. The goals of the parade were twofold. First, they wanted to increase general awareness of the campaign, and secondly, they wanted to deliver a message to the residents of Fort Collins. Those who walked in the parade threw 3,000 Smarties, a hard candy, to the people on the street. This is an example of using Hallahan’s (2002) events/group communication. The messages attached to the candy told residents to “Be a smartie, Shop Fort Collins First!” Included were various messages stating the importance of shopping here and what the tax dollars support. They wanted to specifically reinforce those who already were shopping here with examples of what the tax dollars do for the city. The tax dollars go toward the Fort Collins Police and Fire Departments, bike trails, parks and increases overall job opportunities. Shopping here increases local choices and varieties of stores.

The organizers got shopping bags from stores all over town to keep the candy in, and they procured shopping carts from stores all over town. Kohl’s Department Store paid employees to walk in the parade. They measured the success of the parade by noting that all the candy was given away, the float got third place in the Homecoming Parade, and they got some feedback from people on the street at the end of the parade. Local storeowners asked Kelly DiMartino (the campaign coordinator) where they could purchase shirts for their employees to wear at work. The parade was on a loop on the local access channel for two weeks following the parade, and the committee feels it is getting exposure from this coverage.

DiMartino has put together a television commercial to be played on Showcase Fort Collins, a show airing on the local public access TV channel (Channel 27 on the Comcast Cable system). A segment aired November 1, 2003. DiMartino and a friend interviewed local business owners and went on a shopping spree in Old Town. Though these are not widely viewed, they were played many times.

A number of articles have been written by members of the Chamber, the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, and other local organizations, and have been published in local media. These articles make people aware of the campaign. These articles have appeared in the *Coloradoan*, *The Retailer*, and the *Compass* (a newsletter from the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce). These last three examples have used Hallahan’s (2001) public media channels.

The committee designed a very simple survey (see appendix) to begin the task of gathering data on how city residents shop and get their information. In connection with the survey, the Foothills Mall and the Downtown Business Association have each donated \$500 (for a total of \$1,000) toward a shopping spree – the winner will be drawn from the survey responses the committee receives. The survey has been inserted into utility bills and passed out at a number of bank drive-through windows. A digital version of the survey was uploaded to the city’s Web site for those who did not want to mail back their response. Surveys must be returned by December 5 to be eligible for the shopping spree drawing. The drawing will be held on December 16, 2003, at the Foothills Mall during their weekly Story Time. Santa Claus will draw the winner from all of the eligible survey submissions. The survey will provide information about citizen attitudes toward shopping experiences in Denver, Loveland, Fort Collins, Boulder/Longmont, Internet and catalogs. The survey

entries also included a space for zip codes, so there is additional information about the audience that will be gathered. In addition, the number of responses will be tallied for the December 5 deadline.

The city of Fort Collins purchased ads in five local newspapers with the survey in them. Each ad has been coded so when the surveys are returned, the city will have some information as to which papers are most frequently read by local constituents. The papers with the ads in them are the *Coloradoan*, the *Bullhorn*, the *Forum*, *Fort Collins Weekly* and the *Courier*. This way, the city can have some information about where the local citizenry gets its information and news.

The committee spoke about holiday displays on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. A tree decorated with tags will be placed in the Hall of Trees, and possibly the Senior Center. There will be a large display in the front of the Foothills Mall and in the windows of the Cache Bank at the corner of Mountain and College avenues in Old Town.

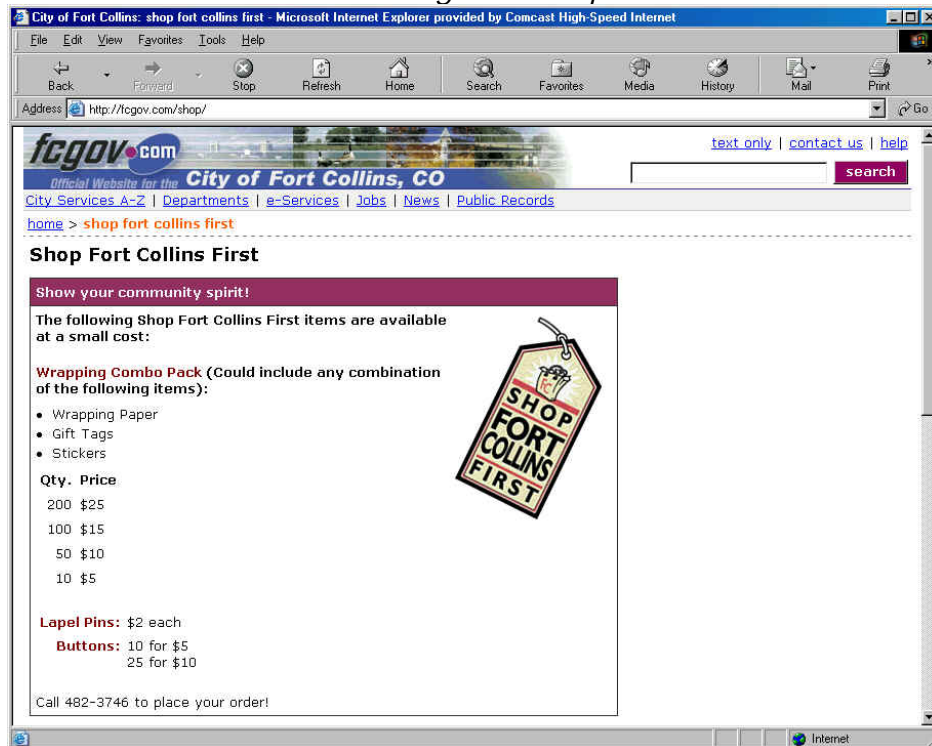
A group of CSU undergraduate students from a social work class were challenged to come up with an extreme shopping project around Old Town. They came up with a “Buy Local” campaign. A number of businesses around town have placed the students’ “Buy Local Day” posters in their shop windows.

Several ideas were spawned at the Foothills Mall quarterly marketing meeting. With the Shop Fort Collins First tags, mall staff will be decorating a large tree, making garland and looking into using Christmas wrapping paper at the wrapping stations.

The “Shop Fort Collins First” Web site (see screen shots on next page) is now up and running with an online version of the survey available to fill out for a chance to win the shopping spree, and a persuasive message as to why one should shop locally. The Web site

is located at <http://fcgov.com/shop/>. The current Web site has removed the survey and now advertises for the “Shop Fort Collins First” items, like lapel pins, buttons and wrapping paper which have been created to sell at a low cost to retailers, with a number to call to place an order. It also contains information as to the purpose of the campaign as well as information about why it is important to shop locally (a persuasive message).

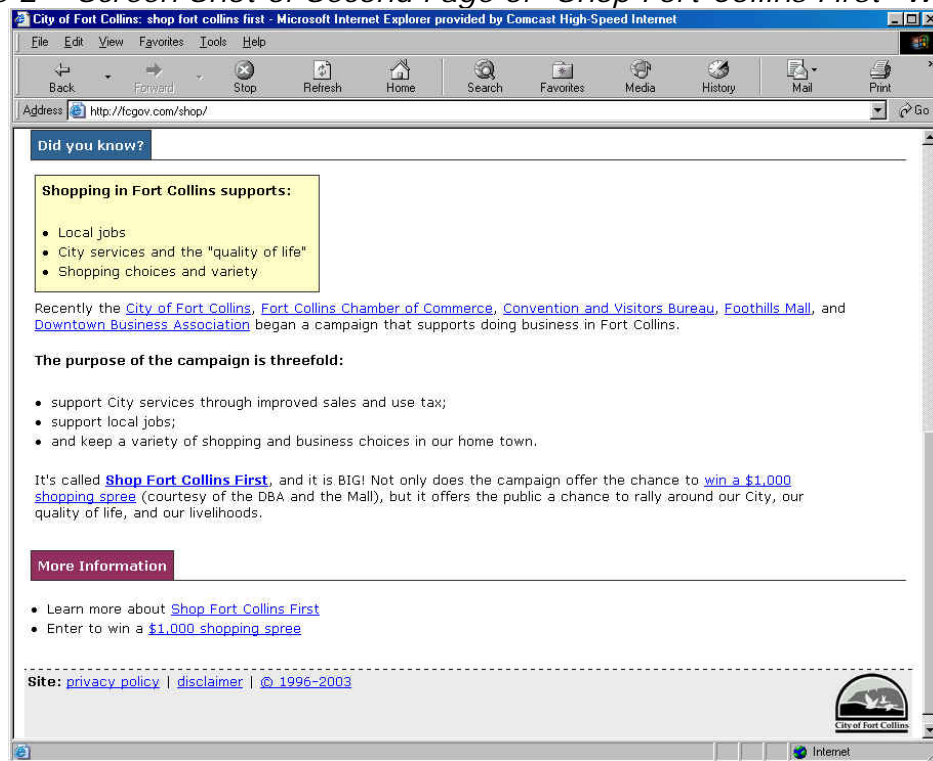
*Figure 1 – Screen Shot of First Page of “Shop Fort Collins First” Web Site*



Source: <http://www.fcgov.com/shop>, 2003



Figure 2 – Screen Shot of Second Page of “Shop Fort Collins First” Web Site



Source: <http://www.fcgov.com/shop>, 2003

As survey responses are received the data is entered into a city database. Some of the surveys were sent in from the newspaper ads, some from the inserts from the utility bills. The newspaper inserts were coded so the source could be identified and coded by the person inputting the data. The Internet surveys are in a slightly different format (with the same content), so they could also be source-coded. The inserts were not, however, coded to reflect whether or not they came from a bank or from the utility company. They were identical survey forms.

The evaluation as it stands has been anecdotal and would not stand up to any rigorous testing. The way the evaluation of the success of the campaign to date is planned is to measure the performance of the shopping season as compared to other past seasons. The

Foothills Mall has offered its sales figures to the committee for evaluation after the season.

The sales tax revenues will be measured and compared to typical sales tax figures.

There is a possible confounding variable in the evaluation. The Greeley Mall is undergoing massive construction and all of its sales are down. As an alternative to shopping there, Fort Collins could benefit from this disarray 32 miles away. So, as will be discussed in the Evaluation section later in this document, this could be the reason behind a short-term increase in sales tax revenue for this holiday season, and should be considered when reviewing sales tax revenue figures.

The most recent step the committee has taken is they pulled together window hangings, order sheets and displays of the available products for purchase to be distributed by hand by various volunteers. This is an example of Hallahan’s (2002) one-on-one communication, and is important to the success of the campaign because it allows the audience members to directly interact with the members of the organization (committee). It will also allow the business owners to get a chance to use Petty and Cacioppo’s (1986) heuristics to begin to make the choice to attend the message the committee is sending out. Hopefully, business owners will like the people delivering the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign materials, think they are credible, and feel as though the people around them also feel the same.

### **Stakeholders**

One of the biggest challenges of this campaign is the wide variety of stakeholders involved. The city, businesses and residents are stakeholders in this campaign – they can all be winners or losers depending on the results of the campaign over time. The stakeholders are represented by the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee members:

- Kelly DiMartino, Communications and Public Involvement Coordinator, City of Fort Collins
- Melissa Moran, Publicity and Marketing Assistant, City of Fort Collins
- Kerrie Flanagan, Public Relations for the Fort Collins Visitor’s Bureau
- Rich Harter, Executive Director of the Fort Collins Convention and Visitor’s Bureau
- Cynthia Eichler Manager of Foothills Mall
- David May, Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce
- Ann Hutchison, Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce
- Peggy Lyle, Downtown Business Association
- Amanda Miller, Downtown Business Association
- David Short, Downtown Business Association
- Ann Garrison, Downtown Business Association

The authors of this document are among other individuals involved in the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. Additionally, there were seven CSU undergraduate students from a social work class who got involved in various aspects of the start-up of this campaign.

### **Goals**

The goals of the campaign have already been discussed briefly in that the committee is looking to:

- Increase sales tax revenues by keeping people in Fort Collins to shop
- Educate residents on where tax money is spent
- Support local businesses during difficult economic times

Additional goals include:

- Raise awareness of city services
- Combat against online shopping

- Keep local economy going
- Prevent/stop leakage
- Focus on jobs in the community
- Honor of local businesses (Chamber)

According to the “Shop Fort Collins First” Web site, the top three purposes of the campaign are to:

- “support city services through improved sales and use tax;
- “support local jobs;
- “and keep a variety of shopping and business choices in our home town.”

(<http://www.fcgov.com/shop>, 2003)

With the diversity of the stakeholders and committee members, it could be difficult to attain all of these goals equally across all of the stakeholders.

The economy will remain a key obstacle in attaining the primary goal of increasing sales tax revenues and funding city services.

## **Planning**

Due to the limited resources and short planning cycle for the implementation of the 2003 holiday season phase of the campaign, little if any formative research was part of the campaign’s planning stage.

The committee was given information on sales tax figures and proposals for new shopping centers around the northern I-25 corridor area (including Fort Collins, Loveland and Windsor). They used this as the basis for the development of their “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign slogan, the need to get information to residents about the use of sales tax revenues in the community, and their initial informational survey.

While the focus of their initial work was for the 2003 holiday season, the committee is looking into 2004 and developing an activities plan to continue getting their message out to residents and continue to increase sales tax revenues, in turn increasing the ability of the city to provide services to its residents, and boosting the local economy and supporting local businesses.

One of the ideas in process for 2004 is putting together a specially targeted packet for businesses around Fort Collins. The committee is still brainstorming about what to put into the packet and how to pay for it. The committee suggested finding a way to include an order sheet in the packet. The sheet would give business owners an option to purchase lapel pins, T-shirts and buttons. It would also include a cover letter, a poster file and a digital “Shop Fort Collins First” logo for use in advertising. Fort Collins business and franchise owners are a good possibility for a specific target audience. Using focus groups, or just going out into the stores and talking to the owners around town might be a good way to see what the business people really want, and what kinds of services they would be willing to pay for. This will be further addressed in the Recommendations section.

Along these same lines are plans to have business “open houses” or breakfasts where they can gather information from local businesses on how the campaign has gone thus far and suggestions for how the committee can further support the businesses and their common goals. They have identified a local bank that has agreed to sponsor these events. They plan to have three of these types of events, starting in the January/February 2004 timeframe.

The committee also plans on continuing the distribution and sale of their promotional materials to businesses and individuals, as they are currently promoting them on the “Shop Fort Collins First” Web site.

Additionally, the data from the surveys will be entered into a database and will be analyzed in the coming New Year.

## ***ANALYSIS OF WORK DONE TO DATE***

While the committee has made a great deal of progress in a very short period of time, we feel that there are a few things that are missing from their initial efforts. We will be incorporating these activities into our recommendations for future work.

We feel that the inclusion of information about the use of sales tax revenues in the articles and survey created by the committee are key in the education and ultimate behavior change needed among Fort Collins residents. This should remain as a consistent theme throughout the ongoing campaign. Including information on the increased sales tax revenues and their impact on the community will go far in the reinforcement of the campaign’s message.

Audience segmentation is less than complete in this campaign. The primary audience has been identified as all Fort Collins residents. The committee identified regional residents and visitors as their secondary audience. By utilizing Vogel’s (1994) six classifications of audience segmentation, we feel that the campaign would be better served in the future by being able to create more specifically targeted messages.

If the committee had further defined their audience, and done more formative research before the campaign, they could have tailored the messages a little more. Right now, they are kind of shooting in the dark. They have a message they *think* will work, but they have no way to tell. They have not looked at what is important to the people in town, and thus were not able to create a persuasive message that would be processed through the

central route. They also did no formative research to find out what channels would be the most effective, but have tried to cover many different channels, and have addressed all of Hallahan’s (2002) audiences.

We will be interested to see the results from the survey, especially as there were no survey pre-tests, focus groups or formative research done. We feel that this survey and its results will be an integral part of the future direction of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign.

The biggest problem we see with the survey is: what does what they are measuring have to do with anything? They are finding out how people feel about shopping in Fort Collins and the outlying areas. The survey could illuminate one reason for the decline in sales tax revenues, but it does not ask any questions that have solutions. They are seeking to further define the problem. They could have taken the money they used for the surveys and held focus groups, or surveyed citizens on the phone to find out their views. One possibility here is that they could use the information from the surveys to better tailor their messages. Once they find out what the Fort Collins residents enjoy about shopping here, they can reemphasize those messages to their active supporters in the area.

As previously mentioned, there has been no evaluation done as yet on the campaign or the surveys. Additionally, there is some concern about needing to have some idea where surveys came from to begin with, but then they didn’t make any allowance for the bank flyers that look the same as the inserts in the electric bills. They marked all the surveys from the newspapers with codes in the lower right corner. They originally knew all the surveys that came from the inserts because they had a unique look. They later sent five local banks thousands of the same inserts to distribute at the banking drive-through. There is no way to

know which come from the banks, and which come from the electric bills. They started to look at the channels that reach their constituents, but did not finish that work.

## ***RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE “SHOP FORT COLLINS FIRST” CAMPAIGN***

### **Overview**

Vogel (1994), Petty and Cacioppo (1986) and Hallahan (2002) were the authors of various theories we thought could help in looking at the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. Here, we let Smith (2002) take over with a strategy for the actions to be taken with respect to the campaign. It has moved beyond the conceptual level, and now we are moving toward the actual application of the principles of these theories. We recommend that the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee segment the future work on the campaign into “phases” based on upcoming community or calendar events (such as Spring Break, graduation, Mother’s and Father’s Day), as suggested by Vogel (1994) and Smith (2002) in the Audience Analysis section. We further recommend the use of Salmon’s (1989) campaign development and evaluation techniques combined with Smith’s (2002) strategic planning steps for future planning efforts as detailed in the Evaluation portion.

### **Steps Recommended**

The “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign committee has accomplished a number of Smith’s (2002) steps. We recommend that for their future work they utilize the processes outlined in:

- Step 3 – Analyzing the Publics
- Step 5 – Formulating Action and Response Strategy
- Step 6 – Using Effective Communication



- Step 7 – Choosing Communication Tactics
- Step 8 – Implementing the Strategic Plan
- Step 9 – Evaluating the Strategic Plan

### **Audience Analysis**

As we have mentioned previously, the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee was not given time to do a thorough audience analysis. Utilizing the resources in Smith’s (2002) Step 3, the committee will be able to identify more specific audience segments that they will be able to target with more specific messages and events that are appropriate to them.

Using Smith’s (2002) Typology of Publics (p. 43), the committee will be able to easily break down their previously identified primary and secondary audiences into more specific audiences that can be targeted in future phases of the campaign. It will also help them identify opponents to the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign.

Smith’s (2002) audiences or publics are broken down into groups that can be roughly integrated into Vogel’s (1994) audience segmentation framework. Smith (2002) asserts “publics are not fixed in concrete; rather, they are fluid and evolving” (p. 54). He further argues that these are more than just publics, they are stages that can change and evolve as a result of a message or public relations activities. He breaks his audiences down into five categories. A nonpublic is roughly equivalent to the uninvolved in Vogel’s (1994) framework. The group has nothing in common with the organization and its involvement or lack thereof has no effect on the organization one way or the other. Smith’s (2002) second category is a latent public, which correlates with Vogel’s (1994) potential converts. Smith (2002) calls it “embryonic” because of its vast potential (p. 55). Smith’s (2002) apathetic public corresponds to Vogel’s (1994) disinterested supporters and disinterested opponents.

This audience is typically difficult to reach in both texts. The main difference is that Vogel’s (1994) discourse is about the appropriate audience to send messages to, whereas Smith (2002) is suggesting different methods of dealing with those publics. Smith (2002) proposes developing messages to change the opinions of the members of this public, but acknowledges it is a difficult task (p. 55). Smith’s (2002) aware public also corresponds to the potential converts in Vogel (1994). Smith’s distinction for this group is that they are favorably disposed to the message, yet are too disorganized to act. They seem an audience open to the messages of the campaign. The last Smith (2002) category is the active public, and this corresponds directly to Vogel’s (1994) active supporters. Given the committee’s previous audience identification, it is doubtful that they will find any non-publics in their audience groups – all individuals in their two audience segments will be relevant to the campaign and will fall into one of the four remaining groups.

The active public group is one that the committee needs to address only in a maintenance mode – where they keep the campaign’s message in front of them and remind them of why they continue to “Shop Fort Collins First.”

Those falling in the aware public stage are those who have either educated themselves on where their sales tax dollars go or have seen the campaign through the campaign’s exposure and work to date. Most likely these individuals will be fairly easily swayed into being part of the active public group and change (or maintain) their shopping behaviors to “Shop Fort Collins First,” or they may occasionally venture out of town to shop for specific things, but then return to Fort Collins for the rest of their shopping needs.

The latent and apathetic publics are those that the campaign committee needs to be most concerned about. Latent publics are those that do not recognize that the issue being

presented by the campaign has any bearing on them personally. Apathetic publics are those people who do not feel that the topic is worth their effort to address, they do not think it is important.

While it is difficult to know what percentage of the overall “Shop Fort Collins First” audience falls into the latent and apathetic categories, they do present the most risk to the success of the campaign. They could continue to spend their expendable income with no regard for its impact on their community. Messages should be created to target these groups once the 2003 holiday season activities are complete.

Vogel (1994) suggests tailoring and distributing messages only to potential converts and active supporters. Smith (2002) offers strategic ways of dealing with all the audiences.

### **Messages**

Messages need to be created with the principles from the Elaboration Likelihood Model in mind. All messages should be pre-tested, even if only in the most rudimentary way. Some evaluation (pre- or post-) is better than none. Messages should be evaluated to test whether the audience will be interested in the message, whether they will consider it carefully. The more carefully the audience considers the message, the more likely it is to be processed through the central route, which will (hopefully) produce long-lasting attitude and behavior change.

The receiver needs to be motivated to attend the message. Motivation is made up of a several factors. Two are whether the receiver thinks the message is relevant to him or her, and the diversity of the argument. The higher the perceived relevance and the more diverse the argument, the more likely the receiver will think critically about the message, which is good.

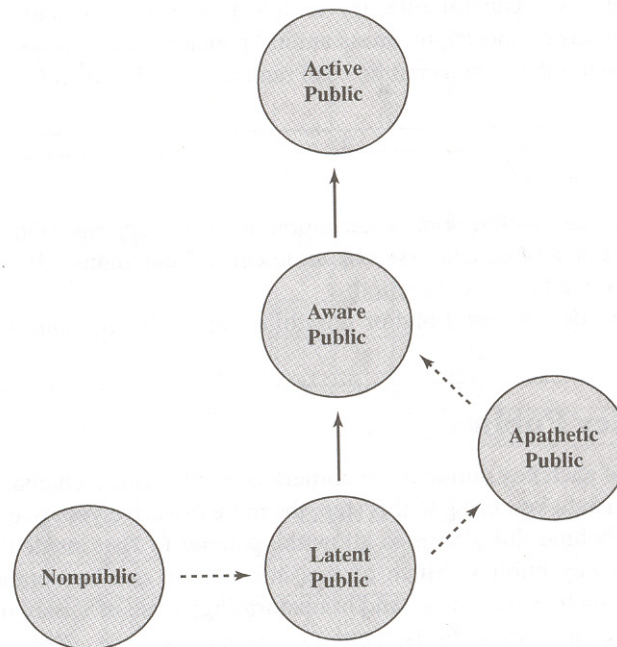
We recommend a focus group to test these messages and the perceptions of the messages for residents of Fort Collins. Make sure the arguments and messages are perceived favorably, even if the audience processes the message through the central route.

The peripheral cues can also persuade an audience member, although perhaps not to change forever. Two factors to consider are whether or not the audience member likes the person imparting the message (have likable people working for the cause), and whether or not the audience perceives them as credible. The pre-testing is used to determine whom the audience would trust: a member of the Chamber, a member of the DBM? Use this information to tailor your messages.

### **Tactical Communication**

Once the audiences have been broken down into more specific groups, the committee can use Smith’s (2002) stages of publics and their relationships (p. 54) to identify what stage the different publics are in and develop strategies for moving all of the publics up to the “active” stage. Vogel (1994) suggests creating and tailoring messages for only the active supporters and the potential converts. His strategy only deals with the tailoring of messages, and does not suggest other means of dealing with non-supportive publics; Smith’s (2002) discourse does.

*Figure 3 – Smith’s Stages of Publics*

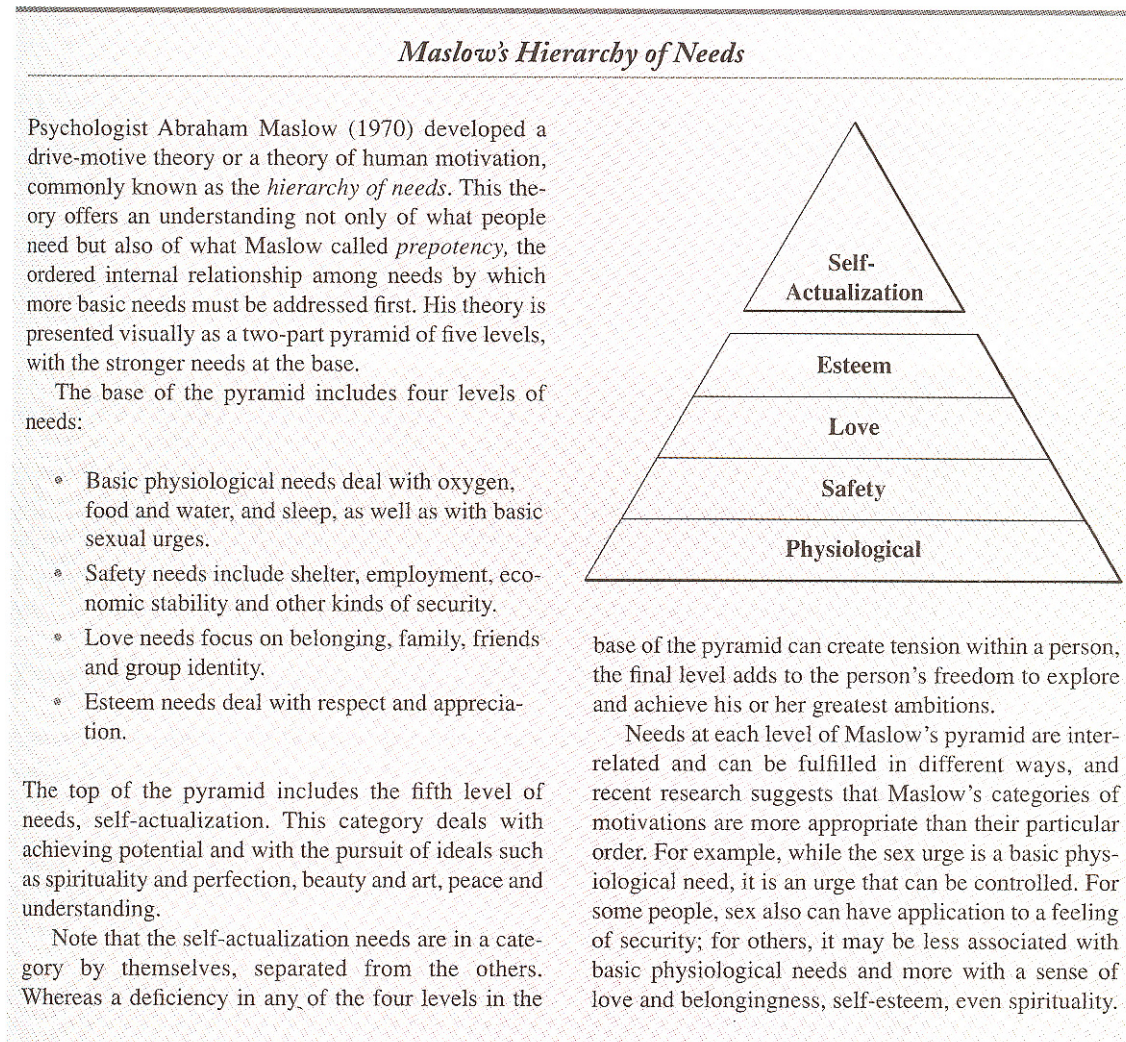


*Source: Smith, 2002, p. 54*

The development of the messages for the latent and apathetic publics would be greatly aided through the use of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Smith, 2002, p. 57) and Packard’s Hidden Needs (Smith, 2002, p. 58). These two tools would aid the committee in understanding what the key behaviors and needs of these publics are and how their beliefs and motivations could be changed.

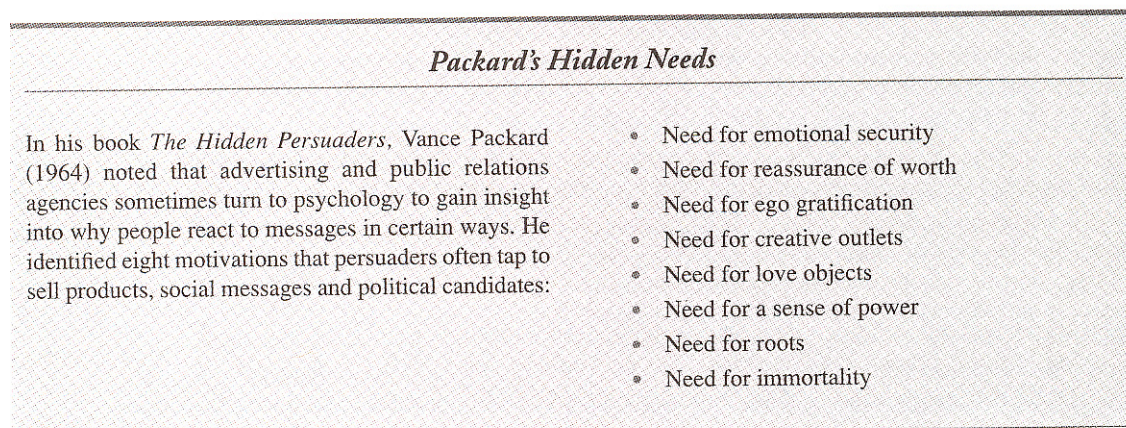


Figure 4 – Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Smith, 2002, p. 57

Figure 5 – Packard’s Hidden Needs



Source: Smith, 2002, p. 58

By identifying specific groups of people, the committee will be better able to handle any unforeseen negative responses, and the use of Smith’s (2002) Steps 5 and 7 will help them handle these events as well.

Alliances and coalitions are a powerful way for the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign to get their messages out and attract influential people and organizations to the program. By having groups such as the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Association and the Foothills Mall represented on the committee, this brings a certain level of credibility to the campaign – it does not just appear that the city is only trying to increase sales tax revenues for purposes that do not benefit residents or businesses.

By approaching other local organizations and businesses, and including their support on campaign materials, “Shop Fort Collins First” becomes even more recognizable, more influential, and more credible. They will also get more exposure and support through these activities. Appealing to the credibility heuristic is in the best interest of the campaign (see Messages).

The “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign has already benefited from Smith’s (2002) communication strategies. The committee has already taken advantage of newsworthy information and transparent communication. The committee has used its local contacts to spread news about the campaign and its messages. There have been articles in the *Coloradoan*, the Chamber publication *The Compass*, and the Downtown Business Association’s newsletter. This will continue throughout the campaign.

Smith (2002) outlines how to determine whether something is newsworthy. He abbreviates this as “SiLoBaTi + UnFa” (p. 91). This is broken down as follows:

- Significance
- Localness
- Balance
- Timeliness
- Unusualness
- Fame

When looking at having information about the campaign published in local papers and publications, or even just doing press releases, the committee should ensure that the “news” is comprised of the first four characteristics. The last two characteristics – unusualness and fame – help to increase the exposure and influence of the news, but are not used to limit the distribution of news from the committee.

After the 2003 holiday season, the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign should only work in a reactive mode when unexpected results occur. This could happen in a crisis management situation (Smith, 2002, p. 98) or in a pre-emptive way (Smith, 2002, p. 99). We feel that the committee should develop some pre-emptive strategies to deal with potential detractors to the campaign. We believe there are two main groups the committee should be concerned with – those who are looking for more variety in their shopping or feel that it is prestigious to shop in Denver or Boulder, and those who come to Fort Collins to shop from other areas and see the messages about the sales tax revenue and become concerned about the effect on their own communities by their shopping in Fort Collins. More research on these specific publics needs to be done so that effective messages can be developed to deal with these groups.



Smith (2002) discusses a number of other offensive and defensive strategies, but these do not specifically apply to the campaign goals and publics of the “Shop Fort Collins First” program.

Among interpersonal tactics, Smith (2002) describes a wide variety of activities including personal involvement, information exchange, and special events. Most of these tactics have been previously discussed, but it should be noted here that the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee is made up of people who are not just professionally involved with this campaign, but also personally involved with it. They all understand the impact of this campaign on our community, and are personally vested in the campaign’s success.

Smith’s (2002) organizational media tactics review the use of general publications, direct mail, miscellaneous print media, and audiovisual media. To date, the only category listed that the committee has not utilized in some form is direct mail. Until the program can become self-funding or they find a business or organization they can partner with, this is not a realistic way for them to reach their publics.

The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee has already shown their ability to use news media effectively, so no further discussion about this tactic is warranted here.

Likewise, the committee has already demonstrated effective use of advertising and promotional materials, and will continue to do so over future phases of the campaign.

### **Persuasion**

Effective use of communication processes is an integral part of a successful campaign. Smith’s (2002) Step 6 outlines various methods to address this. Of particular note are his discussions about ethos, logos and pathos. Smith (2002) uses ethos in the context of message source credibility and the three C’s of effective communication:

credibility, charisma, and control (p. 118). Credibility is key to the persuasiveness of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign (see Messages section). The sources that are used to distribute the messages of this campaign – whether they are publications, organizations, businesses, or individuals – will influence the receivers of the messages and whether they believe the source and information, and use that when making shopping decisions in the future.

Charisma is also an important part of persuasive messages. While the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign has not yet used individuals in any of their advertising or exposure work thus far, it can be applied to the graphics and layout used in their materials. They have developed an eye-catching logo that is used effectively and consistently throughout their materials to date. The more the logo and established layout are used, the more the publics will identify it and the message it brings. Should the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee decide in the future to use an individual as a spokesperson for the campaign, this person should be chosen with their standing in the community and personal charisma in mind.

Control is Smith’s (2002) third component of effective communication. Control is comprised of power, authority and scrutiny (Smith, 2002, p. 121). These things combine to allow the committee to develop messages and select channels that most effectively persuade their audience to “Shop Fort Collins First.”

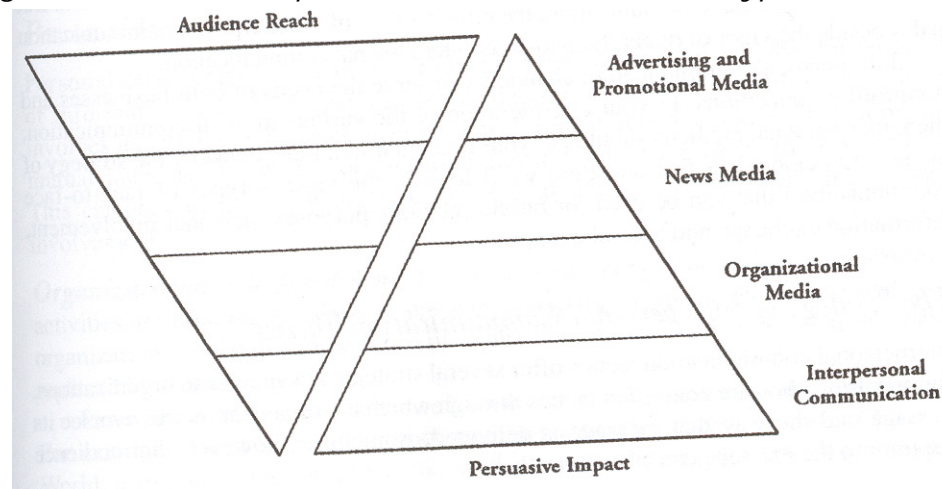
Logos is also used in developing persuasive messages (Smith, 2002, p. 126). Smith (2002) outlines appealing to the reason of publics in designing messages to reach and influence them. In particular, Smith (2002) discusses the use of propositions or claims (p. 126) in reaching an audience. One example of this is developing a television commercial to reinforce how sales tax revenue is used to make our community better. Members of the

groups funded by sales tax dollars could be filmed saying, “your sales tax dollars employ me – and me – and me – and me” where each “and me” moves to another person. This would include city road workers, teachers, police, firemen, librarians, and other relevant groups. This would further educate local residents about the use of sales tax revenues and reinforces their ability to better their own community.

This same television advertisement could also be used to appeal to the pathos or sentiment of the publics (Smith, 2002, p. 128). This commercial makes the impact of sales tax revenues more real and more human to its viewers. Smith (2002) notes two different ways to use pathos to influence publics: positive emotional appeals and negative emotional appeals. The example TV commercial is a positive emotional appeal. As the overall goal of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign is to create a better community through increased city services (via increased sales tax revenue) and a healthier local economy (through increased support of businesses in Fort Collins), the committee should stay away from negative emotional appeals in their messages.

Smith (2002) includes a graphic demonstrating the relationships between persuasive impact of various media types and how broad an audience is reached. That graphic has been included in this document because it will be a good reference for the future planning of the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee.

Figure 6 – Relationship between Persuasive Media Types and Audience



Source: Smith, 2002, p. 155

## **Planning**

The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee also needs to take a close look at Smith’s (2002) Step 5 – Formulating Action and Response Strategies. While the committee has done an excellent job of handling their activities to date, most of this work has been done in a “reactive” mode. As the committee takes a look back following the 2003 holiday season, they will realize that they need to move into more of a “proactive” mode in their future planning.

By taking a more proactive stance in their planning, the committee will be able to take advantage of upcoming events around the community and create more targeted messages around these events. Smith (2002) breaks down proactive work into two primary types of strategies: action and communication (p. 82). Included among the action strategies are organizational performance, audience participation, special events, alliances and coalitions, sponsorships, and activism (p. 83). The two sub-categories under communications are newsworthy information and transparent communication (p. 83).

Transparent communication helps publics better understand the reasons the campaign exists (Smith, 2002, p. 96). In the case of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign, this is showing the residents of Fort Collins where their sales tax dollars go, how the city uses this money to benefit residents, and how shopping in Fort Collins helps the local economy and job market. This information will continue to be part of the messages of the campaign.

Within the action strategies, the committee will be paying the most attention to the audience participation, special events, and alliances and coalitions sub-categories. Audience participation is the key to the success of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. With the current set of messages targeted at changing or reinforcing the shopping habits of residents, the campaign is also about educating this public on how their sales tax dollars are used by the city. It is hoped that this education further serves to guide residents’ shopping behaviors.

Hallahan (2002) suggests looking at the objectives of the campaign, then matching the media with the key use it represents (p. 469). Special events are an opportunity for the committee to tailor specific “Shop Fort Collins First” messages as well as get more exposure to their audiences and further educate their publics. Some of these special events could be done around other Fort Collins events such as Brew Fest and New West Fest. Other events could be marketing campaigns held in conjunction with community calendars including public holidays, spring break from schools, graduation and back to school. Additional events could be specifically designed by the committee during times when there are not a lot of other community activities or may be unique to specific publics and campaign with local businesses. The current discussion about holding “open houses” with local businesses to get feedback about the 2003 holiday season portion of the campaign and to get input for future work, falls into this category.

Smith’s (2002) Step 7 – Choosing Communication Tactics (p. 153) outlines different visible outlets for campaign messages. His main groupings of outlets includes conventional, strategic, and interpersonal. He then goes on to review various tactics of approaching these categories including organizational, news media, advertising and promotional, and packaging.

The “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign has already benefited from the use of conventional communication. This includes controlled media (the survey), uncontrolled media (stories in the *Coloradoan* by the business editor), internal media (information distributed by committee members to their own organizations) and external media (articles in various other publications). Other types of media the committee might consider using in the future are targeted media (directly aimed at specific audience groups) and public media (where the committee can utilize controlled messages to reach a broad audience).

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Smith’s (2002) communication tactics are easily correlated to Hallahan’s (2002) *Strategic Media Planning*, as they have similar ideas and concepts. Hallahan lists the five groups of media, public, interactive, controlled, followed by events/group and one-on-one communication. Smith’s (2002) controlled media are relatable to Hallahan’s (2002) category of the same name. Smith’s (2002) uncontrolled and external media appear to be the similar as Hallahan’s (2002) public media. Hallahan, (2002), however, uses public media to indicate a

larger concept, and Smith (2002) has broken down categories of public media into smaller, more targeted subcategories. These will be discussed in the paragraph immediately following this one. Targeted media (Smith, 2002) are roughly equivalent to Hallahan’s (2002) controlled media. They interchange names to talk about different subcategories of channel distinctions that reach different specific audiences. Each author, however, stresses the need for *strategic* and varied use of all the types of channels to most efficiently reach the targeted audience or public.

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Within the strategic communication category, the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign benefits from using all four of Smith’s (2002) tactical categories: interpersonal communication, organizational media, news media, and advertising and promotional media (p. 155). The plans for upcoming “open house” sessions are an excellent example of interpersonal communication in this context. The articles published in the Chamber and Downtown Business Association newsletters are examples of organizational media where the organization both publishes and controls the content and distribution of the information. The articles published in the *Coloradoan* and the sessions on the local access television channel are part of utilizing the news media. While the committee does not have funding for

advertising, the uses of the promotional materials that they have developed are examples of controlled media that reaches a broad audience.

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However, due to the rapid pace of the initial planning stages of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign, the committee was not able to do a lot of planning around the overall packaging of the campaign. They have, however, done an excellent job of designing a distinctive logo and developing matching promotional materials. Continuing to develop future materials in this same design style will outline the packaging tactic for this campaign and the consistency will build visual recognition for the publics.

Smith (2002) follows with his Step 8 – Implementing the Strategic Plan (p. 211). The first part of implementing the plan, according to Smith (2002) is to have a written plan (p. 211). This is something that the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee has not been able to formerly do. It is highly recommended that the committee take some time during their



planning sessions in early 2004 to put a written plan together for calendar year 2004, along with an outline of projects for 2005 (it is never too early to start planning!).

Included in the written plan is information about goals for the campaign, an audience analysis, a schedule of events and projects, a budget, and recommendations for other fund raising or collaborative work with other organizations, and the all-important plan for ongoing evaluation of the campaign (Smith, 2002, p. 211-212).

### **Budgeting**

As the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign was started without an official budget, it would definitely be in the best interests of the committee to outline what monies they think they will need in 2004 and 2005, based on their 2003 experiences. By identifying what the upcoming expenses are, the committee can begin to contact different organizations and other resources for possible partnering options to cover these needed funds.

Included in the prospective budget should be costs for materials, media, events, and other activities such as surveys and evaluations. Once an initial budget is developed, it should be reviewed and updated on a monthly basis. Detailed records of actual monies spent and received from various sources should be kept and utilized in future budgeting plans.

Smith (2002) goes into more details about creating a schedule and budget. When outlining a schedule of activities, it is important to identify as many specific details as possible. This will ensure that no details are missed in the planning and implementation stages, and all committee members know what everyone is responsible for and when their deliverables are due. Smith (2002) also shows a couple of different examples of how to maintain schedules: this can be done through lists, Gantt charts (highlighting the order in

which individual activities must happen), and PERT charts (Program Evaluation and Review Technique – uses arrows to indicate the flow of tasks and activities) (p. 215-216).

### **Web Site**

The “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign should develop a plan for moving into a self-funding field. BIBA, for the Boulder campaign, has a very well run Web site, which can support e-commerce. A stage we recommend the campaign move into at a future date is that of being able to offer items on their Web site for sale. Currently, the items for sale have a phone number listed below them so the viewer has to take the additional step of calling someone to place and order. If the Web site can be modified to become e-commerce friendly, the middleman can be effectively removed, ultimately saving manpower and time.

A danger to be careful of, as a Web site becomes more complicated and far reaching, however, is the need for constant supervision and updating. This is a very demanding task, and should have a person specifically dedicated to it if it is to be successful. The Web site should have consistent messages and information throughout. If a second person is hired to work on the Web site, this consistency could be compromised and the site and credibility of the campaign will suffer. The BIBA Web site has some conflicting information on it, and the Web masters were unreachable for comment.

### **Membership**

The main concern with the membership will be to make it appealing enough to all the constituents. We recommend creating two branches of membership, one for businesses, and one for Fort Collins residents. For the residents, coupons and discounted tickets to city events or happenings could be an incentive to become members.

For the businesses, we need to offer advertising and listing on the Web site. Information should be provided as to why this is better than any other Web site they may be currently involved in, like hits or traffic directed to the site. They should offer links to the sites that the businesses already have (if they have any). Cost for this should be low, if possible. Association with the campaign could be sold as positive contribution to and support of the community. Businesses should be enrolled first to entice the customers to join as well. BIBA reported 65 percent of the businesses surveyed felt the customer card was helpful in bringing in business (BIBA, 2003). For membership program strategies, the DBA and Chamber could be contacted.

BIBA lists not only its history and goals, but it also allows perspective members to sign up to become a member on the Web site. If the businesses pay a small fee for membership into the alliance, as Boulder’s do, it could help offset the budgetary concerns that constrained this year’s campaign. Incentives like offering a card to the public which will give discounts on specific days when presented will need to be incorporated. Additionally, the BIBA site has a list of “member” business who benefit from services offered by BIBA itself.

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation should specifically reflect the stated goals of the campaign. Looking at the reported goals, there could be some refinement needed to make each of them a measurable concept. For many of the goals, we will need to create measurable objectives by including some kind of timeline. (See Goals, pp 24-5). We will address them individually here. The first goal was to increase tax revenue. We will discuss the problems inherent in this elsewhere in this text. This, however, is a measure that can be used and measured

consistently over time. Secondly, they wanted to educate the residents. To measure whether or not this has actually occurred, they will need to create another survey, or find another way to discover the attitudes of the public. Questions will need to ask whether or not a resident heard a message, where they heard it, and their feelings toward the message. Another goal was to “support local businesses during a difficult economic time.” This occurs to us like a perception issue. It is very difficult to measure how a business has been supported, so we recommend asking questions on a survey to business owners as to whether or not they feel that they have been supported. If they have not, we should include a few open-ended questions to elaborate on how can the campaign support them in the future? Would there be anything that could be done to further help them reach their goals? Along the same lines were the goals of supporting local jobs and keeping variety here. We feel these are more perception issues for measurement purposes, and can be addressed through surveys and interviews about the messages they received. The question of combating online shopping can be addressed by reissuing a similar survey to the one currently being tallied. Here, the city has a good start because the current survey can be used as a baseline for future information gathering.

Smith’s (2002) final step is a topic that has been mentioned a number of times throughout this document – Evaluating the Strategic Plan (p. 231). Evaluation is something that the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee was not able to work into their initial planning efforts, but it is critical for them to incorporate this into their 2004 planning and activities. Only through evaluation will they be able to identify the success of this campaign.

Smith (2002) breaks down the evaluation process into four main activities: research design, methodology, data analysis, and evaluation reports. The research design process will

take a considerable amount of time and effort. The core of this work is crafting the questions to be asked. However, before the questions can be written, the committee must determine how they want to evaluate the success of their campaign.

With the current economic conditions, a simple review of sales tax revenues coming in to the city is not a sufficient measure of the success of this campaign. Additionally, as mentioned previously, the mall in Greeley is undergoing a major renovation, so a number of its regular shoppers may come to Fort Collins as an alternative for just this holiday season. It is recommended that the committee plan a second survey in the summer of 2004. The goals of this survey would be to determine whether residents have been exposed to the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign, whether they have learned about where their sales tax dollars go to benefit the community, and whether they have changed any of their shopping habits and behaviors. Additionally, a page for the “Shop Westminster” campaign should be taken and residents should be asked what services and features of their community they most appreciate. This is helpful information for use in future “Shop Fort Collins First” messages and activities.

The methods of distribution for the initial survey were effective, so similar distribution is recommended for this second survey. Additionally, since contact information is available for those individuals who responded to the first survey, it is recommended that these individuals receive a special mailing of the survey thanking them for their reply to the first survey and asking them to please respond to the new survey because their feedback is valuable to the community. These surveys should be specially coded so the rate of return of surveys from the first group of respondents can be measured.

As the holiday shopping spree drawing was key to the success of the 2003 survey, it is recommended that a similar tactic be used in the 2004 survey. Ideally, the survey would be distributed in the June/July timeframe with a return date of early August. Given this timeframe, a “back to school” shopping spree would be very appropriate. Hopefully positive press from the 2003 shopping spree drawing would encourage local businesses and organizations to donate money for the 2004 drawing.

The methodology Smith (2002) reviews includes qualitative versus quantitative research methods – the 2003 survey consisted of quantitative questions. Depending on how the 2004 survey is designed, both qualitative and quantitative information could be gathered. Smith (2002) also discusses specifics for measuring message effectiveness, campaign awareness, and impact of the campaign and messages on audience behaviors.

After the data is collected, it must be input and analyzed. This process would be similar to the data input being done for the 2003 survey, depending on the format of the questions asked.

Once the data has been analyzed and trends determined, it is important to create an official report to distribute to all stakeholders and committee members. This information can then be used to craft future messages, make choices about future events, and make decisions about how to market the campaign.

It is recommended that the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign be evaluated on an annual basis. Depending on the goals of the campaign and the committee, the timing of the survey could be moved around throughout the year. And, while the shopping spree drawing has proven effective, future evaluation surveys could have different possible rewards. After a period of a number of years, the campaign could be so well known and the benefits to the

community from the sales tax revenues fully integrated into the behaviors of the publics, perhaps rewards for returning the survey will not be necessary.

Salmon (1989) has similar recommendations to Smith (2002) for evaluation efforts. He notes that it is key to determine what aspects of the campaign are to be measured and how success will be determined. “While numbers themselves may be neutral, the means through which numbers are procured and interpreted certainly are not” (p. 39). Among the factors to look at in doing an evaluation, Salmon (1989) specifically lists “how to interpret a successful intervention [campaign], what contextual factors are to be examined and controlled for, and what timeframe constitutes an appropriate period of study” (p. 39-40). The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee should look at these three factors in their evaluation development efforts.

As previously mentioned, it is unrealistic at this time to measure the success of the “Shop Fort Collins Campaign” solely on sales tax revenue figures. Therefore, it is important to identify other measures of the campaign’s effectiveness. Included among these should be the exposure of the audience to the campaign, the education of the audience about the use of sales tax dollars, and whether or not this information is having an effect on the audience’s shopping behaviors.

As for the timeframe which should be studied, Salmon (1989) notes that most “evaluations rarely cover a period of time much longer than the campaign itself” (p. 43). As the “Shop Fort Collins Campaign” is to be an ongoing, long-term campaign, the committee cannot afford to wait to do an evaluation. Given that the committee was tasked with promoting local shopping during the 2003 holiday season, it makes sense for the committee

to evaluate the effectiveness of their campaign and efforts roughly six months after the committee started their public exposure of the campaign in earnest.

Contextual factors that the committee should be aware of in creating their evaluation include any competing campaigns, other social forces (including the economy), demographics of the community, and any traditions within the community. These contextual factors should be used by the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee to create a realistic scale by which to judge evaluation results.

### **Business-to-Business**

The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee has expressed a desire to create a business-to-business (B2B) arm of their campaign. Thus far the committee’s work has predominantly been with retail businesses. Linking retailers and residents is a different set of activities than that involved in a B2B effort.

We foresee the B2B efforts of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign to essentially be a networking effort to link local businesses so that they can do business with one another. There are a lot of businesses in Fort Collins that offer excellent products and services. While a number of these businesses may be doing business with some of the other local businesses, it is likely that a great number of businesses do not know about other businesses and the products and services they provide. The B2B portion of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign would allow these different businesses to learn about each other.

While organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce serve this purpose on some level, we propose that the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee approach their work from a different perspective. We recommend more of a “preferred local provider” program where businesses fill out an informational application form, in order to be part of the program. This



application will mostly be a formality and contain information such as address, phone, Web site URL, and products and services provided. As a “preferred local provider” program, the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee would check with the Better Business Bureau to see if the organization has had a complaint filed against them in the last year – if so, the company would not be accepted into the program.

After a quick check with the Better Business Bureau, the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee sends the business a letter acknowledging their acceptance into the program along with a window cling and information on the B2B page of the “Shop Fort Collins First” Web page.

This Web page would list participating companies and the products and services they provide. There would also be contact information and links to company Web sites, if available. B2B work is moving more and more toward customized products and services (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002, p. 177-178). By having a Web site that is organized by product or service offered and getting input from program participants, the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee will be able to provide the most customized program and materials possible.

As there will be some degree of effort involved in administering this program, a fee should be charged for applications. We feel that an annual fee of \$50 per business would be fair for the work involved on the committee’s end and for the networking services provided to the business. To encourage business to enroll in this program, the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee should consider offering a limited-time offer of waiving the participation fee for the first year.

The “Shop Fort Collins First” committee must do more research on what local businesses’ networking needs are. We recommend a Fall 2004 launch of the B2B program.

One of the upcoming “open houses” should be dedicated to being a modified focus group where a variety of local large, medium, and small businesses are invited and interviewed about what their needs are.

Because one of the goals of the B2B portion of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign is to encourage sales of products and services between Fort Collins businesses, we recommend that the program encourage businesses that are part of the program to offer one another discounts (perhaps 5%). It is hoped that this will encourage local businesses to do business with other local businesses, rather than use the services of companies elsewhere, thus stimulating the local economy – another goal of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign.

We feel that what members of the B2B portion of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign will need most is information on what companies are in Fort Collins, what products and services they offer, and how to contact them. This is most efficiently accomplished through the previously mentioned Web page, which will serve as an “exchange hub” (Dwyer and Tanner, 2002, p. 278).

Semi-annual “open houses” are also recommended to allow businesses to do face-to-face networking and to serve as feedback resources for the “Shop Fort Collins First” committee.

Formative research needs to be done in creating B2B messages tailored for those businesses that are part of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. While messages able bettering the community through sales tax revenue might be informational for these businesses, messages about stimulating the local economy and promoting the wide variety of products and services available here will most likely be more powerful for this audience group.

Evaluation efforts for this portion of the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign should be done six months after the program launch, and annually thereafter. This would be done through the use of mailed and online surveys asking if the program is meeting the businesses’ needs, what else they would like to see, and if the use of this program has changed their purchasing habits.

Evolution of this portion of the “Shop Fort Collins First” program will happen over time, through ongoing research, and through feedback and input from program participants.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Overall, we feel that the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign has started well, considering their timeline and budgetary constraints. Thus far, they have done a good job of working with all of the stakeholders and incorporating their wants and needs into the program. Two points we continue to bring up are formative and evaluative research. The lack of formative research (primarily, audience segmentation and research) has led to difficulty in specifically tailoring messages for those audiences.

Our original intention was to use three theories to structure the framework of our text: Vogel’s (1994) audience segmentation, Petty and Cacioppo’s (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion, and Hallahan’s (2002) strategic media planning. Each theory builds upon the next, depending on the outcome for the principles to be applied. Since there was so little audience segmentation and research, it was difficult to recommend specific messages that would be tailored to an audience, and the channels to disseminate those messages. Upon further reflection, Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovations theory might have been a better theory to use as a framework. Diffusion of Innovations discusses how changes or messages are

“diffused” into a public, and the variables that determine the likelihood of acceptance of those changes or messages. He also addresses channels, and at what stage of the acceptance of the innovation they are most effective. Another theory we feel might have been applied well to the campaign is Azjen and Fishbein’s Theory of Reasoned Action which focuses on the relationship between attitudes, beliefs and the correlation to whether or not the desired behavior will take place.

This campaign is one that is healthy for the residents of Fort Collins. The messages are not difficult to create because this is a morally just fight. There are several factors to consider when evaluating the campaign when it’s all said and done. The committee must take into consideration the construction in the Greeley Mall and the growth in Cheyenne as possible confounding variables to the measure of the sales tax revenues. This campaign and its evaluation should be a long-term commitment if it is going to make a difference to Joe Shop Owner in Old Town. The economy appears to be bouncing back, but it’s still going to be a long road for most to get back to a place where they’re making money. This campaign is of vital importance to Fort Collins as a whole and the quality of life that is available here.

By looking to past campaigns to see what has worked and what hasn’t, much helpful information can be gleaned and used to help with the “Shop Fort Collins First” campaign. BIBA and Shop Westminster offer valuable lessons and objectives. The goals of the campaign can be accomplished. More work, more evaluation, and some hard thinking will be required to incorporate what we have recommended, but if the plan we’ve put forth is implemented, this campaign can change the face and pride of not only the residents of Fort Collins, but the city itself.

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## **APPENDICES**

## ***ARTICLE SAMPLES***

***"SHOP FORT COLLINS FIRST" LOGO***





***“SHOP FORT COLLINS FIRST” 2003 SURVEY***

## ***AUTHORS' BACKGROUND AND CONTACT INFORMATION***