



Five-Year Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan

2003–2008

Your Capital — our mission, our passion

The NCC — proud to contribute to your quality of life

The Capital, symbol of our nation

INTRODUCTION

To fulfil its mandate, the Communications, Marketing and External Relations (CMER) Branch of the National Capital Commission (NCC) has developed the first integrated corporate *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* in the history of the organization. By establishing priorities, direction and activities for the branch for the 2003–2004 to 2007–2008 fiscal years, the plan aims to serve the NCC’s organizational mandate, corporate plan, master plans and strategic objectives. Developed as part of the recommendations outlined in the 2001 Sussex Circle Report, the plan will also serve to strengthen relations between the NCC, its partners and various public audiences. Inasmuch as it lays out specific activities for the Communications, Marketing and External Relations Branch, the plan impacts on all areas of the corporation and as such transcends internal sectoral boundaries.

As the seat of the federal government of Canada and cherished home to the citizens who live there, Canada’s Capital Region (CCR) is a not only a national symbol and a microcosm of national identity, but also a place that offers an exceptional quality of life.

The *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* acknowledges this dual role by proposing a two-pronged approach to its activities. The first is to increase national awareness and outreach of the Capital Region so that it is a source of pride, identity and unity for all Canadians. The second is to proactively foster closer ties between the NCC and local communities while underscoring the Commission’s achievements. This in turn will help to enhance awareness, recognition and the overall image of the Commission, while at the same time promoting a better understanding of its mandate. Central to the success of these activities will be better and broader communication as well as greater involvement of all Canadians in the NCC’s decision-making process.

The *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* establishes branch objectives and strategies by addressing market potential, target audiences, various success indicators and benchmarking techniques as they relate to:

- i) corporate activities,
- ii) events and festivals, and
- iii) the NCC’s various products.

CMER’s new strategic direction is defined on three levels:

- I. The overall marketing, communications and external relations plan, which outlines broad orientations and guiding principles.
- II. The functional plans which will define “how” each sector of the branch will proceed and operate in delivering the overall strategic plan. A functional plan will be produced for each of the following aspect: sponsorship and merchandising; community relations; public consultation; media relations; broadcasting; and corporate branding.

III. The project level where specific marketing and communications plans will be prepared for each of the NCC's 45 major projects.

We hope that this plan will provide a clear focus for staff, a solid framework for our partnerships with stakeholders and a foundation for the implementation of future plans, all with the goal of enriching the thinking and collective dialogue surrounding the development and animation of the Capital.

CMER is well aware that this is an ambitious five-year plan but we are determined to rally all available resources and work with our internal and external partners to make it a reality.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Communications, Marketing and External Relations (CMER) Branch of the National Capital Commission (NCC) has prepared a *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* that centres on two general themes:

- i) to enhance the NCC's relationship with its local partners and resident, as well as raising awareness, recognition and understanding of the Commission's role in the local community while seizing every reasonable opportunity for national visibility. This component will encompass 70% of branch efforts for the first three years.
- ii) to improve the visibility and outreach of Canada's Capital Region to all Canadians so that it may be a source of national pride, unity and identity.

The plan identifies and addresses the priorities, opportunities, challenges and issues facing the NCC and is based on a broader scope of priorities defined in the Commission's Corporate Plan. It states branch objectives and outlines strategies that involve all CMER sections.

As this is the NCC's first integrated *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan*, it transcends all of the Commission's activities in an effort to bring a more consolidated, creative approach to the development and animation of the Capital. It is also intended to provide a framework for NCC staff as they undertake activities that support the plan. During fiscal years 2003 through 2008, the NCC will work closely with its partners in the public and private sectors as well as affiliated organizations to meet its objectives through consensus-building and cooperation.

The *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* establishes the overall direction of the corporation with regard to external relations and marketing, specifically as they relate to NCC programs, products and the Capital as a whole. The plan outlines priorities, main objectives and overall strategies as well as the vehicles to be used in meeting them. This plan will be supported in its implementation by seven functional statements as it relates to: community relations; media relations; public consultation; sponsorship and merchandising; broadcasting; and corporate identity. To support implementation activities, staff will use a standardized model to develop detailed marketing and communications plans.

The Branch has identified -- and will direct its marketing and communications activities toward -- ten target audiences. These can be further divided into two main groups:

Group 1 (Intra-Capital) 70% of efforts

- residents, especially the 60% who say they are not familiar with the role of the NCC;
- elected representatives in the Capital;

- decision-makers and interest groups;
- deputy ministers and heads of federal institutions;
- local media.

Group 2 (outside the Capital) 30% of efforts

- new Canadians;
- “pro-capital” Canadians not planning to visit in the short term;
- leisure travelers;
- incidental visitors; and
- youth.

These audiences are defined using behavioural segmentation, a marketing technique that identifies users based, in this case, on their expected “Capital experience.” A specific marketing-communication formula will be defined for each of these segments in terms of objectives, overall strategy, positioning, products offered, communication vehicles and key messages.

In addition to market segmentation, the NCC’s various “offerings” will be categorized into product lines to allow for more effective, targeted promotion. Prioritizing the promotion of these product lines is based on maximizing internal resources while rationalizing our activities to stakeholders.

Local activities will focus on strengthening ties with community partners and residents as well as on increasing recognition of the NCC brand. The corporate image will be reinforced in all of these activities as it is intrinsically linked to the values the NCC imparts in all of its products and programs. By promoting the latter, we reinforce the former.

The main product lines will consist of:

- i) outdoor programs and land management activities (e.g., Gatineau Park, Capital pathways, Fall Rhapsody, Rideau Canal Skateway, Greenbelt, Sunday Bikedays...);
- ii) cultural institutions and Capital events including Winterlude and Christmas Lights Across Canada. The Canada and the World Pavilion, festivals, national museums, the National Arts Centre, and national cultural galas being held in the Capital are also products to be considered under this category.

- iii) national symbols, events and institutions that evoke patriotism (e.g., Canada Day, Parliament Hill, federal political institutions, official residences, Supreme Court, Confederation Boulevard, the Sound and Light Show...);
- iv) the Capital vision as expressed through the NCC's planning and development programs (e.g., LeBreton Flats, Capital Agenda 21, Core Area Sector Plan...).

These product lines and brands will be promoted according to the experience they represent.

Three overall strategies will be used to meet the plan's objectives:

1. A realignment of internal functions in order to better integrate communication, promotion, community relations, broadcasting, sponsorship and public consultation strategies;
2. A more structured and coordinated approach to corporate image management and information dissemination;
3. A national penetration strategy that is creative and innovative in its approach to target audiences, promotional vehicles and potential partners.

The Capital will be positioned as a national leader, a centre of excellence where any manner of Canadian expertise is showcased. This, and other, similar positioning tactics will contribute to building a Capital that is a source of unity and pride for all Canadians, symbolizing and celebrating the richness of our heritage and diversity.

The plan's overall objectives are to:

1. Increase unaided awareness of the NCC by 70% (identification of the organisation responsible for the mandate), bringing it from 36% to 60% within five years in CCR.
2. Increase approval ratings of the NCC by 20% within five years among residents of CCR, to a level of 76% (as opposed to 63% in 2002).
3. Increase by 15%, compared to 2002 levels, overall recognition of the NCC as the main organizer of its flagship activities and services.
4. Contribute to reinforcing a feeling of pride towards the NCC and the capital in general by generating an average 15% increase in participation in NCC activities, services and events within five years (as opposed to an average 2% regional demographic increase).

5. Ensure that all decisions made by the NCC include strategic communication considerations, reflect the aspiration of Canadians and build or maintain synergies between the Commission's various programs.
6. Strengthen ties with public and private partners and affiliated organizations with a view to expanding and/or increasing programs and services.
7. Increase Canadians' level of pride towards the capital, to maintain a minimum level of 80% over the next five years.
8. Increase national penetration in terms of visits, so that a minimum of one in two Canadians will have visited the capital at least once within a ten-year period; (until 2008).

Over the next three years, the NCC will focus on meeting the first six objectives with the remaining two considered more long-term in nature.

These general objectives will be supported by specific, measurable targets and tactics within each functional and program-specific plan.

We recognize that executing this plan will require creativity, strategic thinking and unwavering commitment, particularly in light of our limited resources.

PORTRAIT OF THE NCC

Mission

We present here a brief overview of the NCC's mission, to help clarify the ways in which the Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan can contribute to the achievement of this mission.

The National Capital Act (1958, mod. 1988), which established the NCC, confers upon it the responsibility to "prepare plans for and assist in the development, conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance; organize, sponsor or promote such public activities and events in the National Capital Region as will enrich the cultural and social fabric of Canada, taking into account the federal character of Canada, the equality of status of the official languages of Canada and the heritage of the people of Canada"¹.

In 1988, Parliament broadened the mandate of the NCC, charging it to "transform the public spaces of the Capital into "Capital Stages" and to use them in a way that would inform Canadians about themselves and inspire them with pride in their country and their citizenship"². Finally, the *Act* also grants the Crown corporation the power to: "Coordinate the policies and programs of the Government of Canada respecting the organization, sponsorship or promotion by departments of public activities and events related to the NCR"³.

In its 2001–2002 to 2005–2006 Corporate Plan, the NCC reaffirms its mandate, which is "Creating the Capital"⁴, that is, "to develop a Capital that would reflect Canada as it evolved into a great modern state"⁵. It also renews the NCC's commitment towards its mission, while emphasizing its national scope, by committing to work towards "creating pride and unity through Canada's Capital Region"⁶. Thus, "the question of national unity continues to drive the NCC" while realizing that "the NCC must make itself better known as the steward of Canada's Capital and as the agency charged with the creation of a legacy for future generations"⁷.

Activity Sectors

For over a century, the NCC and its predecessors have worked to build a capital that would be a source of pride and unity for all Canadians, symbolizing and celebrating the richness of our heritage and diversity.

To achieve its mission, the NCC has grouped its activities into three sectors: promotion and animation of Canada's Capital Region (CCR); planning of CCR; and, management and development of real estate.

Promotion and Animation of Canada's Capital Region

The NCC promotes the capital region to Canadians through its marketing campaigns and initiatives, focusing primarily on its services, activities and programs to present the Capital to visitors as a wonderful place to appreciate the culture and achievements of Canada. NCC programming includes:

- Festivals and events of national scope (e.g., Canada Day and Winterlude);

- Interpretation programs, usually centred around symbols and institutions in the region (such as the Sound and Light Show on Parliament Hill, Confederation Boulevard, and Mackenzie King Estate);
- Programs for youth and teachers;
- Visitor services (information and orientation);
- Commemorative monuments and works of art in public spaces;
- Leisure activities that highlight the natural resources of the region;
- Networking activities between the federal capital and the provincial and territorial capitals.

Planning Canada's Capital Region

The NCC is responsible for planning the development and use of federal lands as well as the coordination of development projects, and strives for excellence so that the development of the region is worthy of its role and importance as Canada's capital. The NCC produces, for the capital region, a wide range of visionary plans that provide direction concerning the ownership, use and development of federal lands; it develops master plans and sector and zone plans; and it issues approvals for land use, design and transactions for all federal lands in the capital region.

Real Estate Management and Development

The NCC is responsible for the management, planning and protection of real estate that is of national importance (lands and official residences), as well as activities such as maintenance, rental and sale of properties, and development. It is responsible for the environmental stewardship of federal lands as well as the development and management of these lands in the capital region.

Partners

For its activities to remain viable, the NCC must mobilize public, private and affiliated partners, who provide goods and services that complement or otherwise enhance the Commission's offerings. We recognize the important role of these partners in assisting us to deliver this plan – particularly in terms of the added value they can offer -- and will seek to garner their support and appreciation for what it takes to build a world-class capital that belongs to all Canadians.

The NCC's main partners are:

- Federal institutions, such as Canadian Heritage, Public Works and Government Services Canada, the national museums, the National Arts Centre, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), Communication Canada, Parks Canada, and central agencies that support the NCC in carrying out its mandate;
- Provincial governments, in the areas of transportation, urban development and tourism;
- The municipalities of Ottawa and Gatineau;

- The tourism industry, including tourism authorities and associations (Ottawa Tourism and Convention Authority (OTCA), Tourisme Outaouais); the hotel industry; and organizers of events and attractions as well as tourist service providers;
- The media (print media, radio, television, internet);
- Sponsors and other private partners;
- Interest groups and civic organizations, namely the volunteer community.

PRIORITIES OF THE COMMISSION

This strategic plan is based on the priorities of the organization as defined in the NCC Corporate Plan.

In keeping with the 2003–2008 Corporate Plan, our resource allocation and key messages will focus on the following areas:

- Revitalization of the core area, in particular LeBreton Flats, Sparks Street, Victoria and Chaudiere Islands and the Gatineau shoreline along the Ottawa River corridor.
- Promotion of key elements of the *Plan for Canada's Capital* (1999), and details about its implementation as outlined in Capital Agenda 21.
- Complementary planning initiatives for the capital, including the Urban Lands Master Plan, *Gatineau Park Master Plan*, Core Area Sector Plan, and interprovincial transportation initiatives in CCR.
- Activities that promote a green capital, in particular the recreational pathway network, the Rideau Canal Skateway, and the environmental management strategy, which aims to protect natural areas for future generations.
- Revitalization of flagship programming, especially Canada Day, Christmas Lights Across Canada, the Sound and Light Show on Parliament Hill, Winterlude and the Canada and the World Pavilion.

ISSUES RELATED TO MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

A key component in our strategy is to define the scope of activity and establish parameters accordingly. To do so, we must address questions such as: What do we want to do and what can we realistically expect to be able to do? What major issues and challenges are we facing and how can this new marketing and communications plan help to address them?

Absence of an Integrated Marketing Plan

The NCC has never had a marketing plan that integrates all of its marketing, communications and external relations activities. Communications and tactical plans have been developed for some programs, events and initiatives but not within the context of an overarching, integrated marketing plan. This lack of coordination and prioritization has at times reduced our effectiveness in reaching key audiences and has likely resulted in missed opportunities. As a result of the endorsement of the Sussex Circle report and the creation of a marketing and communications branch, this kind of initiative is now made possible.

Reduced Funding

Over the last decade, significant cuts to NCC funding have translated into an increased reliance on partnerships and collaborative activities to fulfill the corporation's mandate, particularly as it relates to national outreach and changing Canadians' perception of the capital. But the reality of limited resources does not diminish the fact that, to meet its objectives, the NCC must strengthen the Capital's positioning at the national level, and its own presence locally; however, it does mean we will have to be more creative to do so.

Reconciling a national mandate within a regional context

While the NCC's mandate calls for decisions to be made in the interests of all Canadians, the reality is their impact is felt most strongly by local residents. As a result, the Commission often finds itself at the centre of a maelstrom of opposing positions. The controversy that often surrounds these decisions – no matter how sound they are in terms of long-term vision or national interest – is testimony to the need for better communication of our role and mandate to residents who may be affected by the NCC's decisions.

Poor Corporate Recognition

To date, communications and promotional initiatives have tended to focus on specific products such as Winterlude and Canada Day or on the capital region itself. Inasmuch as these efforts brought recognition to the individual programs, they did not underscore the NCC's role in providing them nor, by extension, did they enhance the NCC's corporate image. The 2001 Sussex Circle Report clearly stated the challenges the NCC faces vis-à-vis public recognition of its ownership of various products and services. The Report also made recommendations to remedy the situation, primarily by focusing on regional efforts to increase corporate recognition. In keeping with this assessment, we will endeavour to take greater corporate ownership

whenever it is realistic and appropriate to do so, and without compromising our national efforts to promote the Capital.

Striking a Balance

CMER's activities must strike a balance between: i) regional and national initiatives, ii) promotion of the NCC and its partners, and iii) promotion of individual product brands and the capital as a whole. To do so, strategic and budgetary planning should distinguish between:

- regional and national initiatives;
- investments in sponsor-driven promotion versus corporate promotion; and,
- corporate promotion versus promotion of individual products or services.

Canadians' Pride in their Capital

While Canadians' pride in their Capital is central to the NCC's mandate, few relevant studies have been conducted in recent years to measure or compare levels of pride. Aside from a few questions in a 2003 national omnibus survey, the most recent study (1995) does not directly address the notion of pride in the capital. The absence of accurate and recent data concerning Canadians' perception of the capital has forced us to adopt a very basic approach to market segmentation. More national surveys, combined with results from local studies would enable us to measure perceptions more accurately and eventually, allow us to adopt a more precise method of segmentation.

A new social fabric

There can be no doubt that demographic shifts have changed the profile of the "average Canadian" and have made defining "Canadian identity" – never an easy task – even more complex than it was as recently as a decade ago. Results of the last national census in 2001 show the extent to which the country's demographic growth is increasingly generated by immigration, and any future promotional activities will have to take this into consideration.

Municipal Mergers

The creation of the two large municipalities of Ottawa and Gatineau in CCR changes the dynamic of relations between the NCC and its municipal partners, making a comprehensive plan all the more necessary.

Uncertainty in the Tourism industry

The tourism industry has been hard hit worldwide by a number of events including the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the high tech crash, SARS, West Nile Virus, mad cow disease, and, most recently, the war in Iraq. While there are signs of a gradual return to business as usual, the current geopolitical climate remains uncertain and we have no way of predicting its long-term effects on Canadian travel. This will necessarily impact the NCC's tourism-related activities.

Launching of Large-scale Projects

The NCC has recently committed to some projects that are among the most ambitious in its history. The launch of these major projects -- the decontamination and mixed-use development of LeBreton Flats, the

implementation of the *Core Area Sector Plan*, ongoing improvements to Confederation Boulevard, and the Capital Agenda 21 to name a few – will be accompanied by equally ambitious marketing and communications strategies.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* takes into account the economic, socio-demographic and other factors influencing the NCC's activities, particularly as they relate to motivating Canadians to visit their capital. Following is a summary of these factors.

Analysis of the External Environment

Economic Context

The tourism industry was deeply affected by the events of September 11, 2001, which radically slowed leisure travel and shifted travel destination preferences over the short term. In September 2002, the Bank of Canada estimated that economic activity, which experienced an upsurge at the end of 2001, would remain strong, and stabilize at an average rate of 3.5% in 2002–2003, at which time it was predicted the economy would attain its full potential⁸.

Demographic Trends

The Canadian population, which reached 30 million in 2001⁹, will increase by 25% in 15 years¹⁰.

During the last census period (1996–2001), Canada's population increased 4%¹¹. The population of Alberta saw the greatest increase, at 10.3%, whereas Ontario's population grew 6.1%, British Columbia, 4.9%, and Nunavut, 8.1%¹². The population remained stable in the Maritime provinces, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan¹³. However, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Northwest Territories fell 7% and 5%, respectively¹⁴.

In addition, urbanization is becoming more pronounced in Canada. In 2001, over half the Canadian population was living in one of four large urban centres: southern Ontario, Montreal and its environs, the Lower Mainland region and south Vancouver, and the Calgary–Edmonton corridor. In these regions combined, the population increased 7.6% from 1996 to 2001¹⁵. Moreover, in 2001, nearly 80% of the population was living in an urban centre with 10 000 or more residents¹⁶.

The median age of the population was 37.6 years in 2001, which represents an historic high¹⁷, while the average family size was three persons¹⁸.

Population diversity is also becoming more marked. Canada received more than 250 000 immigrants in 2001¹⁹. It is estimated that 11.2% of Canadians belong to a visible minority and that 60% of them were born abroad²⁰. "For Canada as a whole, immigration was the main source of growth in population between 1996 and 2001, as the nation experienced a decline of about one-third in natural increase (the difference between births and deaths) compared with the previous 5-year period"²¹. Furthermore, over half the immigrants who came to Canada from 1996 to 2001 settled in Ontario²².

In addition to population growth, both immigration and ageing of the population have a positive influence on Canadian travellers. Senior citizens, and especially baby boomers, whose first wave will reach 65 years of age in 2016, will enjoy activities such as those offered by the NCC.

Social Trends

Canadians continue to express some reserve when asked about integrating the Canadian and US economies. According to a Pollara survey, Canadians would not support adopting the US model.²³

Furthermore, according to the Centre for Research and Information on Canada, since September 11, 2001, Canadians feel a greater need to protect Canadian sovereignty, even though there is growing support for adoption of a Canada–US currency. Moreover, Canadians greatly support the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which they consider as important to Canadian identity as the national anthem and the Canadian flag²⁴.

The environment ranks third as a concern among Canadians, after health and poverty²⁵. It is estimated that three quarters of the population believe that the quality of the environment has deteriorated over the last decade²⁶.

Furthermore, a survey by Léger Marketing²⁷ carried out in March 2002 showed Canadians have the following views about Canada:

- 95% are proud to be Canadian (this percentage increases to 98% in all provinces, except Quebec (87%) and Alberta (95%);
- 75% are of the opinion that Canada provides the highest standard of living in the world. This percentage is highest in Ontario and Alberta (82%) and lowest in Quebec (65%);
- 53% identify first with Canada, while 23% identify first with their city and 21% with their province (in Quebec, 41% of people identify first with their province, 24% with their city and 32% with Canada);
- 40% consider that the federal government adequately deals with regional interests (this percentage reaches a maximum in Ontario, at 55%).

The pro-sovereignist movement has weakened in Quebec, where 33% of Quebecers (and 39% of francophone Quebecers) were inclined to vote in favour of sovereignty in September 2002²⁸. The majority of Quebecers oppose holding a referendum before 2005.

In the area of Canadian culture, a July 2002 survey by Léger Marketing²⁹ revealed the following:

- only 7% of Canadians feel there is, in fact, a “Canadian culture”, whereas 90% believe a variety of regional cultures exist throughout Canada;
- 61% believe that the prominence of U.S. culture is a threat to Canadian culture;
- 73% of Canadians read more than one book in the last 12 months; of these, 61% read a book by a Canadian author;
- 84% of Canadians read magazines; of these, 87% regularly read Canadian magazines;
- 34% of the population saw an art exhibit in the last 12 months;

- 63% went to a film, and of these, 30% saw a Canadian film (as opposed to 49% in Quebec);
- most of the time, Canadians watch television shows produced in the U.S. (52%) rather than in Canada (32%).

Political Scene

Speech from the Throne

In the 2002 Speech from the Throne (*The Canada We Want*), the Government committed to supporting development of prosperous cities and healthy communities, at the same time encouraging a rich and diversified cultural life and setting up a broad program of modern urban infrastructures spread out over 10 years.

“Working with provinces and municipalities, the government will put in place a ten-year program for infrastructure to accommodate long-term strategic initiatives essential to competitiveness and sustainable growth”³⁰, according to the Throne Speech. To this end, the government will put in place “a new strategy for a safe, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation system that will help reduce congestion in our cities and bottlenecks in our trade corridors”³¹.

To accomplish this task, the government will be counting on new partnerships. The NCC intends to seize the opportunity to contribute to the deployment and implementation of this government strategy within CCR, to present our “Capital Vision” product line through all NCC’s development and planning programs, as well as through our relations with our target “resident” market and municipal partners.

Furthermore, “the government will work with Canada’s largest cities to develop targeted strategies to reduce the barriers faced by new immigrants in settling into the social and economic life of their new communities”³². The NCC intends to help realize this objective by providing more information on the Capital and, by extension the country, to new Canadians. This will be done in collaboration with our partners, including potentially the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

Canadian Heritage

Canadian Heritage set forth its priorities for 2002–2005, defining its strategic objectives aimed at promoting Canadian content, encouraging participation and commitment in the area of culture, strengthening the ties that unite all Canadians and promoting active civic and community participation. One of the Minister’s central priorities is “to promote an inclusive society and a shared sense of citizenship that builds on and values Canada’s linguistic duality and cultural diversity”³³. In the coming years, we can expect the Minister to unveil policies dealing with dual citizenship and an integrated cultural portfolio, as well as introduce changes to certain laws in order to entrench the government’s commitment to copyright protection, sport and heritage. Strategies of good governance will be used to realign some programs so that these reflect ministerial objectives and priorities, and finally, its promotional programs with the public will be strengthened.

Environment

In 2002, the government of Canada renewed its commitment to preserving the environment. In September 2002, during his speech to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced that the parliament of Canada would be called to vote on the ratification of the Kyoto

Protocol once the consultations had concluded at the end of 2002. The Prime Minister's initiative was favourably received by the public. At the same time, the Government also committed to completing the national parks network in the next several years, designating seven new national parks.

Regional Context

Canada's Capital Region, which extends over two provinces, is unique in Canada. The government of Canada is both the largest property owner and employer (the second employer being the high-tech sector). Ottawa–Gatineau is home to the third largest francophone population in North America; 37% of residents are bilingual compared to 17% for the rest of Canada³⁴.

Ninety percent of the city of Ottawa area is rural, while 90% of its population is urban³⁵. The agricultural sector generates 10 000 jobs, making Ottawa–Gatineau among the highest ranking Canadian cities in this sector³⁶.

The combined areas of Ottawa and Gatineau are four times greater than that of Toronto, extending 85 km from east to west and 85 km from north to south. The region is home to national museums, art galleries, historic sites and buildings, and high calibre educational institutions.

In 2000, Ottawa experienced an 11.1% growth in GDP. The region experienced strong demographic and economic growth. Ottawa–Gatineau rose to fourth place among the large cities of Canada, with a population of 1 064 000³⁷.

Regional Urban Issues

The real estate market is expanding in CCR. Property values are on the rise, the vacancy rate remains low, and there is strong pressure for affordable housing yet limited public funds are earmarked for urban development. This climate makes it all the more important for the municipalities and the NCC to work together on urban planning and service delivery. To this end, a National Capital Planning Committee, with representatives from the NCC and cities of Ottawa and Gatineau, was created in January 2002 with the primary goal of harmonizing plans for CCR. The committee also studies issues concerning interprovincial transportation, including the locations of new bridges. The Municipality of Ottawa will manage development and growth of the city according to its Official Plan and supporting Master Plans, including a Transportation Master Plan, an Environmental Strategy, and Water, Wastewater and Storm water Master Plans. The Official Plan is ambitious ("Smart Growth"), and shows the kind of city that Ottawa residents want to live, work and invest in over the next 20 years. The newly-amalgamated Municipality of Gatineau is also working on plans to harmonize regulations, zoning and urban planning. These plans should be ready by the end of 2004.

In May 2001, the federal government created a Task Force on Urban Issues whose responsibility is to consult with citizens, experts, and other public bodies to find ways of working together more effectively to improve quality of life in major urban centres. The task force works with municipalities on a wide range of federal concerns such as: the environment, including air and water quality as well as land-use planning; cultural institutions and assets; municipal infrastructure; immigration; and, economic competitiveness. Following a roundtable discussion on Ottawa-Gatineau, the following recommendations were tabled in the task force's April 2002³⁸, progress report:

- develop an urban vision for Canada, starting with the appointment of a Minister of Urban Affairs and related Cabinet committee. The vision should encompass a funding model, municipal

consultation guidelines, programs that encourage socio-economic union; a desire to build both a country and a community, as well as reliable sources of revenue;

- Facilitate the implementation of a joint plan for CCR, in collaboration with Ottawa, Gatineau and the NCC;
- Ensure long-term financing for infrastructure such as a congress centre, a regional transportation network and new bridges;
- Consider extending or broadening partnerships between the federal government and municipalities;
- Increase long-term financing of programs for settling immigrants;
- Increase funding for multiculturalism and programs that fight racism.

Predictions for the Tourism Industry

The events of September 11, 2001 threw the tourism industry into an immediate and unprecedented crisis. According to the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC), while travel and tourism have declined significantly in the short term, there are no firm predictors of the long-term impact the terrorist attacks will have on the industry.

The situation is further compounded by the war in Iraq, the SARS crisis, mad cow disease, and a weakened airline industry. The only local good news story on the tourism front in recent months was the 2003 announcement of an expansion project for the Ottawa Congress Centre.

While global competition for tourists is heating up, security concerns and economic uncertainty may entice Canadians to increase domestic travel, if only in the short term. The CTC states that "less expensive getaways, closer to home, are becoming the preferred travel option, especially domestic and shorter-haul trips by train, bus or car. More people are returning to the skies, but passenger volumes are still dramatically off from last year³⁹." The CTC further contends that, "in the short term, Canada's domestic travel market is where the greatest opportunities reside⁴⁰". "More Canadians are deciding to vacation here at home this year, helping at least partially to offset a slow recovery and continuing declines in other areas⁴¹".

In the longer term, a rapid world-wide rise in tourism over the next 20 years is predicted, and the globalization of tourist activity is expected to progressively increase.

Evolution of Tourist Behaviour

Over the last decade, some dramatic demographic, social and technological shifts have transformed the tourism market. According to Tourisme Montréal, tomorrow's consumers will be drawn together more by common interests than by geographic proximity⁴². They will form virtual communities around interests such as gourmet food, wine tasting, and history⁴³.

Predictions by Tourisme Montréal seem to corroborate those of the WTO⁴⁴, which states that consumer behaviour is one of the main factors that will influence tourist activity until 2020. Increasingly, consumers will be looking for an experience as opposed to a service, a trend that will have a major bearing on market segmentation.

As for socio-demographic trends, Tourisme Montréal believes the most promising markets will be singles, single parents, couples without children and blended families⁴⁵. They also predict that adventure tourism will continue to grow, and that Aboriginal and cultural tourism, as well as winter and off-season tourism, will continue to gain popularity⁴⁶.

Trips will become more frequent but shorter⁴⁷. Tomorrow's tourist will be looking for experiences that are enriching, entertaining and educational⁴⁸.

The table below shows the latest trends, as predicted by Tourisme Montréal.

Table 1: Traveller of Yesterday and Tomorrow	
<u>Yesterday</u>	<u>Tomorrow</u>
Sun seeker	Seeks new experiences
Follows the crowd	Wants to control their trip
Here today, tomorrow elsewhere	Looks and appreciates without destroying
Enjoys talking about trips	Travels just for enjoyment
Own	Be
Superiority	Understanding
Enjoys attractions	Enjoys sports
Takes precautions	Enjoys adventure
Eats at the hotel	Tries the local food
Homogeneous	Hybrid

Source: Tourisme Montréal, *Orientations stratégiques 2000-2005, Le tourisme mondial: quelques faits et prévisions*, 26 janvier 1999, taken from the World Tourism Organisation publication, *Tourism 2020 Vision: Executive Summary*, Madrid, Espagne, 1997, 29 pages.

Profile of Canadians who travel domestically

While Canadians enjoy foreign travel, they also make up the vast majority of tourists in Canada. According to CTC data, the number of pleasure trips made by Canadians to the U.S. in 2000 grew 3.8%⁴⁹. Since Canadians take an average of 5.4 trips per year, the CTC sees enormous potential for growth in domestic travel. The organization believes 6% to 12% of Canadians could be convinced to change foreign travel plans to domestic travel if the packages offered were attractive enough⁵⁰. The CTC and its partners who market Canada as an all-season vacation destination, are tremendous allies for promoting Canada's Capital Region.

Assessment of tourism in Canada's Capital Region

In April 2001, the NCC released a study on tourism in CCR. This study, based on data collected in 1999⁵¹, showed that the region welcomed more than five million visitors in 1999⁵². Appendix A presents the major tourism statistics and a profile of the Canadian visitor to CCR.

According to this study, Ottawa–Gatineau has risen to fourth place in travel destinations preferred by Canadians, with 9.3% of the national market. It is preceded by Toronto (22.9%), Montréal (14.3%) and Québec (10%).

Between 1995 and 1999, the annual average rate of increase of visits to the capital was 2.4%⁵³. In terms of visitors' place of origin, Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island show a growing trend, while Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia show a diminishing trend or no change at all.

Visitors to the capital are overwhelmingly Canadian, with 81.5% of total visits, or 4 601 000 visits. This percentage is above the national average; according to the CTC, Canadians travelling in Canada made up 79% of all person-trips over 24 hours in length.

Canadian visitors to CCR mainly come from Ontario, with 2 756 000 visits (60%). Of these, few are from Toronto (444 000 visits, or 16% of visits by Ontarians). CCR also receives many visitors from Quebec (1 561 000 visits, or 34%), with a majority coming from Montreal (971 000 visits, or 62% of all visits from Quebec). Of all Canadian visitors, 44.5% come from urban centres. In terms of demographic profile, 40% of visitors are 35 to 54 years old, whereas senior citizens and persons aged 15 to 34 years make up nearly a quarter of all visits.

The main reason for visiting the Capital is to see relatives and friends (39%). Nearly 75% of Canadians who visit are travelling alone or as a couple. It is estimated that 33.3% of visits take place in the summer (July to September), followed by April to June (29%). The main activities of Canadian visitors are to see friends (49%) or relatives (38%), shopping (34%) and tourism (21%). It should also be noted that 41.6% of visitors are leisure travelers stopping over for less than 24 hours, while the remaining are tourists⁵⁴ to the Capital.

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* was developed following an extensive organizational review which identified strengths and weaknesses both within the Commission and the region as a whole. Factors having a potentially positive or negative influence on NCC marketing and communication activities were also identified at the time. Following is a summary of this assessment.

Capitalizing on Our Strengths

The Capital

- Residents of the Capital have a positive attitude about the quality of life in the region, and 86% say they are proud to live here⁵⁵. This number increases to 94% among francophones⁵⁶.
- Close to 90% of residents consider the quality of life in CCR excellent or good. The aspects that are valued most highly by residents are parks and green spaces (29%), opportunities for sports and recreation (15%), cultural and artistic assets (14%), air quality and lack of pollution (13%)⁵⁷.
- Things that residents say need improvement include traffic, parking and roads (41%), affordable housing (11%), health services (10%), the attitude of government and bureaucracy (7%), poverty and homelessness (6%) and infrastructure (5%). Housing is considered to be the most important social issue (13%) while preserving green spaces was identified by 2% of respondents⁵⁸.
- CCR has a competitive advantage over other Canadian destinations: as a symbol of Canada and the seat of national government, it has institutions and events that reflect Canadian values and identity.

Canadians see the national capital as first and foremost the seat of the federal government and its administration. According to GCP International (*Branding Ottawa*)⁵⁹, the status of the national capital is an important asset, since it contributes to attracting visitors to Ottawa, particularly people who are interested in the history of government and cultural assets.

GCP International⁶⁰ cites four main assets that give Ottawa a competitive edge: its status as national capital and seat of federal institutions (including Parliament), its historical attractions, its culture (including its European feel) and its quality of life (which can be attributed to recreational activities, various events, entertainment and the cleanliness and natural beauty of the location)⁶¹.

- CCR is perceived as being picturesque, clean and green. The “green” aspect of CCR is one of the elements that contributes most to the positive image that visitors have of the Capital.
- It is safe and perceived as a city on a human scale (an important criterion for visitors since September 11, 2001).

- Embassies and the diplomatic corps give it an international flavour
- The standard of living in CCR is among the highest in the world.
- CCR's wide range of tourism products and offerings appeal to a wide range of Canadians with varied interests.
- CCR represents the linguistic and cultural duality of the country.
- It offers high quality accommodations,(partly attributable to a recent growth rate of 17% in the lodging industry).
- It is easily accessible by car (thanks, in part to the completion of highway 416, which links the region to the Trans-Canada Highway).
- It has an exceptionally high-quality infrastructure outdoor sports and recreation (cycling, hiking, skating, skiing, outdoor/environmental stewardship, etc.)
- It offers a range of cultural choices, including events, festivals, national museums, and art galleries.
- It is home to monuments, historic sites and, national institutions and symbols, including Parliament, the official residences, commemorative monuments, the Rideau Canal, Mackenzie King Estate, and the ByWard Market.
- It has an increasingly modern image (Silicon Valley North).
- It welcomes large numbers of Canadians (81.5% of visitors are Canadian)⁶² and enjoys a wealth of tourists (six million visitors per year) and this despite limited promotional dollars. Close to two out of three Canadians have visited CCR during the past 15 years.

The NCC

- 83% of residents say that they personally benefit from the presence of the NCC⁶³.
- The NCC's approval rating among local residents rose from 55 to 63% from 2000 to 2002⁶⁴.
- In spite of budget restrictions, the NCC has been able to develop and provide a range of high-quality products and events to animate the Capital. The popularity and success of flagship events, activities and infrastructure, such as Gatineau Park, Canada Day and Winterlude, is indisputable. Moreover, they hold national meaning for all Canadians.
- According to the Sussex Circle report (*Enhancing Relations*, 2000⁶⁵) and a recent survey⁶⁶ that confirmed these results, the NCC generally has a very positive image, attributable in large part to its "green" activities. It is unusual for a government organization to have such a high level of support. (However, the report also cited concerns and major issues among residents which we discuss under the "Working on Our Weaknesses" section of this plan.)

- According to Decima's 2002 study, the vast majority of residents (83%) value the NCC for the events and attractions (such as parks and cultural activities) it provides to residents and the community⁶⁷.
- The NCC maintains harmonious relationships with its federal and municipal partners, as well as with the tourism industry and the media. These relationships have become stronger in recent years, and have broadened to include a wider range of partners — a situation that is already reaping benefits (for example, OTMP support, BGM agreement, broadcast agreements, improvement in the tone of coverage).
- The NCC's mandate and responsibilities are clearly set out in the *National Capital Act* and are recognized by the government of Canada and local stakeholders.
- The NCC has access to federal government resources, and can benefit from the influence and prestige evoked by the Canada wordmark.
- NCC employees are highly competent and professional. The 2002 Decima study shows that residents have an 80% satisfaction level with NCC staff with whom they have had direct contact.
- The NCC is supported by a pool of volunteers who not only contribute to the success of our events but also act as Capital ambassadors in their community.
- The Capital website makes it possible to have closer contact with Canadians, to promote the accessibility of the NCC and to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information. The canadacapital.gc.ca web site saw a 49% increase in traffic over the previous year.
- The NCC is most recognized and supported for its expertise in organizing popular events and for its management of parks and recreational/tourism infrastructure; 27% of area residents value the NCC specifically for its role in managing parks and green spaces⁶⁸.
- The NCC has developed public consultation mechanisms over the past 15 years. This aspect is integrated into the planning of all major projects, although the public is not always aware of this fact.

Working on Our Weaknesses

The Capital

- CCR is still suffering from an image problem: Ottawa has traditionally been considered a sleepy city that is passive and conservative; it suffers from the effects of sometimes-unpopular political decisions. The political character of the Capital is further reinforced by the media, who typically use "Ottawa" as a synonym for the federal government.
- The Capital doesn't have a cohesive identity or image, particularly after the respective amalgamations of Ottawa and Gatineau, which produced a number of confusing messages. As both of these municipalities rightfully seek to increase their visibility among their respective stakeholders, it makes it very difficult to stage a coordinated effort for messaging to markets outside of the region.

- Outdoor activities — the heart of what the Capital has to offer tourists — are weather dependent, and, as global warming can attest, this is becoming increasingly difficult to predict.

The NCC

- The management of federal lands and planning of the Capital often raise questions about short-term municipal interests and issues, and expose the organization to controversy on a regular basis.
- The NCC has never had an integrated corporate marketing, communications and external relations plan.
- Compared to its flagship products, which are well known, recognition of the NCC among CCR residents is weak. On average, only about 50% of residents recognize that the NCC is responsible for the services it offers.
- Media coverage that involves criticism of the NCC has been evaluated at 20%. Furthermore, residents have high expectations of the NCC and public consultations that involve planning and use of land managed by the NCC (Decima, 2002). Also, the Commission continues to draw criticism for holding its board meetings in private as residents fail to appreciate it is a Treasury Board directive and not a unilateral decision made by the NCC.
- With the exception of large-scale events such as the Canada Day celebrations and Winterlude, NCC products could benefit from being better known outside the region.
- Human and financial resources are limited when it comes to fully carrying out our mandate (particularly the national aspect).
- Some policies for developing funding formulas to compensate a lack of public funds are currently under review (sponsorships).
- Due to a lack of resources, there is little long-term planning for programming. This in turn hinders our ability to develop products that reflect growing trends or preferences.
- As a result of financial constraints, there is little investment to renew and improve flagship events.
- Progress needs to be made in terms of perception, transparency, accountability and public consultation for NCC decisions (57% of people surveyed recently would like more public consultation for planning and development)⁶⁹.
- There seems to be some erosion of recognition of activities and services offered by the NCC, in part because of the stronger presence of municipalities in the region. And while the NCC has a daily impact on the lives of local residents, its mandate remains unclear to many (only 36% of residents say they know the role and mandate of the NCC).

Seizing Opportunities resulting from a repositioning

- We need to reposition the NCC's image, implementing the recommendations of the Sussex Circle report (to develop a strategic approach that focuses on "communicating activities, plans, mandate,

vision and benefits of the NCC to citizens of the NCR⁷⁰, and take advantage of its participation in programs and activities that are organized throughout CCR⁷¹). This new direction will be realized through better and broader communication as well as greater involvement of partners and residents in the NCC's decision-making process.

- The NCC is consistently recognized for its positive performance by the Office of the Auditor General.
- We need to strengthen our relationships with federal, provincial and municipal institutions so that they incorporate a Capital perspective into their business plans.
- The NCC must be vocal and proactive in its support of Canadian Heritage's goal to create links between Canadians, especially through the promotion of Canadian values, culture and heritage, all of which are sources of national pride.
- Along with municipalities and tourism organizations, we must reposition the image of CCR to make it more attractive, more modern and more representative of Canadian society. The recent amalgamations afford us an opportunity to forge an identity and a coherent image for the Capital at a time when we are redefining our relationships with municipal partners (development, community participation, public consultation, etc.).
- We need to seize opportunities to increase visibility through national media, whether it be through media relations activities or broadcasting initiatives.
- We must maximize synergy and savings that come from public and private partnerships.
- We must build on the latent need of Canadians to express their national pride.
- We must make the most of potential clients and visitors to reinforce the "capital" aspect, whether to visiting friends and relatives (which make up 39.1% of visitors)⁷², leisure travelers or young people.
- We must make use of the Internet for media relations and broadcasting in order to reach more Canadians and to promote our activities.
- We must make better use of the popularity of special events, outdoor activities and our role as environmental steward to improve the image and reputation of the organization.

Forecasting Threats

- Travellers are increasingly diverse and demanding, which makes communications and segmentation strategies more complex and the analysis of consumer behaviour more difficult.
- Massive layoffs in the high-tech sector have cast doubt on the Region's reputation as a "technopolis".
- Sponsorship is an uncertain source of funding that ebbs and flows depending on the economic climate. And with sponsorship comes concessions, be they increased commercialism of NCC

activities or sponsor visibility, both of which dilute the organization's image and visibility.

- The recent controversy surrounding some federal departments and agencies has, unfortunately, tainted the government as a whole

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Regional

At the regional level, the NCC seeks to increase pride in the region, encourage participation in NCC activities and use of NCC services. We also seek to impart a better understanding of, and support for, the role of the organization. These efforts to garner public support and recognition are often hindered by “competition” from organizations that provide similar or complementary services to those provided by the NCC. In this respect, while not considered direct competitors, the municipalities of Ottawa and Gatineau are a source of “interference” between the NCC and its intended audiences as the public often confuses which body is responsible for what service. This situation affects the municipalities as much as it affects the NCC.

In some respects, non-NCC related activities and events might also be considered a competitive threat. However, since our goal is to market a rich and full Capital experience, we prefer to treat them as complementary activities that, combined with the many NCC offerings, enhance the visitor’s overall experience.

National

We want to position the Capital as a place to be proud of, a place that contributes to Canadian unity. Since part of this strategy involves encouraging Canadians to visit their Capital, we could consider other destinations attempting to draw Canadian visitors as competition (bearing in mind that our objectives are not financially motivated).

KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Communications Approach

- We must adopt a communications approach that takes into account the expectations of Canadians and the impact the NCC's decisions have on public perception. A better understanding of the role of the NCC and the services it offers to residents are key to the success of this plan.

Internal Communications and Support

- Internal communication and employee buy-in are crucial to the success of the *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* as it ultimately relies on staff to generate the proposed synergies and collaborative efforts.

Resources

- Our capacity to turn the *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* into reality over five years depends upon the available future resources, including financial support from corporate partners and sponsors. Funding for promotion and communication should be decided across the organization with a corporate perspective.

Partnerships

- The success of the *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* depends to a large extent on the support and commitment of partners (public, private and affiliated organizations) and on the NCC's ability and propensity to attract them.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

More emphasis should be placed on the unique nature of the NCC and its contribution to the quality of life of CCR residents. We also need to capitalize on the NCC's expertise, know-how and leadership role in Capital planning and long-term development.

At the national level, we need to emphasize that the Capital represents Canadian values — particularly with respect to environmental and cultural preservation. We need to find better ways of telling people about planned changes to the Capital landscape and the national significance of core area projects.

The plan will therefore focus on two practical competitive advantages:

First, the NCC, by virtue of its expertise, resources and mandate, is the only organization that is capable of building a capital that all Canadians can take pride in and which residents cherish for its exceptional quality of life.

This is the nation's capital and we are extremely fortunate to have such an exceptionally good "product" to market – from the national symbols, institutions and celebrations it hosts to the values and aspirations it represents for all Canadians.

MARKET SEGMENTATION

Type of Segmentation

We have opted for a behavioural segmentation approach to divide the market and establish priorities. This method defines target markets according to attitudes toward the Capital, primarily as they related to expectations of benefits, attractions and/or desired experience.

This type of segmentation will allow us to define specific targets for each initiative and fine tune messages and product offerings accordingly.

Although the NCC has a national mandate, and its target market is all Canadians, this plan's short-term priority will be residents of the Capital Region: 70% of our efforts and resources will be directed toward initiatives targeting group 1 (people within CCR), over the next three years. These activities will foster an enhanced relationship with those groups; a two-way communication process, rather than a "one-way" NCC promotion. We will revise strategies and balance out our efforts during the fourth and fifth years, depending upon the results we achieve in the first flight of the campaign.

Group 1 (Within CCR)

70% of effort and resources

- Local residents, particularly the 60% who say they are not familiar with the NCC's role (known target areas);
- Federal, provincial and municipal officials in the Capital (with the sole intention of providing information and seeking consultation, while remaining at arm's length as required by law);
- Decision makers and interest groups: civic leaders, associations, and others who have an interest or stake in NCC activities and decisions;
- Deputy ministers and heads of federal organizations involved in joint projects with the NCC;
- Local media, who we will try to engage more fully in various NCC activities so that CCR residents might be better informed of our role and responsibilities.

Group 2 (Outside CCR)

30% of effort and resources

All Canadians and in particular:

- New Canadians;
- Canadians who have positive views about the Capital but who have no intention to visit in the short term (this segment includes linguistic minority communities);
- Incidental visitors;
- Leisure travelers; and
- Youth.

Using residents of the capital as an example, here is a brief look at how our segmentation approach is expected to work: This group is generally positive about the quality of life in CCR, and neutral to positive about the NCC. Members of this group are continually looking to improve their quality of life and are interested or active in the Capital's development because it is their home.

The NCC's strategy with this group is to engage them more fully in the decision-making process and ensuring they are well-informed of our plans for development and use of green. This in turn will raise awareness and recognition of the NCC's role, increase public participation in our decisions and at the same time encourage residents to become ambassadors of the Capital to current and potential visitors.

WHAT THE NCC HAS TO OFFER: WHAT WE WANT TO COMMUNICATE

The *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* focuses primarily on marketing the NCC's corporate brand and various products as well as on strengthening relations with local target groups (70% of efforts). The remaining 30% of our efforts will be on marketing the "Capital experience" to markets outside this region.

1. — The Corporate Brand

To fulfill our primary objective of strengthening relations while enhancing our corporate image locally through increased awareness and recognition of the NCC, we must position ourselves better. That is, we need to take ownership of our products and services through more assertive corporate branding efforts.

We will therefore make concerted efforts to ensure the NCC brand permeates all of our activities, be they corporate or product-related. This in turn will help to impart what we stand for – commitment to, quality of life in, and respect for the Capital – into virtually all that we do. A strong corporate identity will not only serve to intrinsically link the whole of the NCC to its various parts, it will help build awareness and invoke more positive attitudes toward the organization by associating it with initiatives such as the green capital and cultural preservation.

By integrating our products through corporate branding, we will increase visibility and awareness of the NCC and, by extension, engage residents to become more involved in our activities. This, in turn, will enhance the organization's image among residents. In marketing terms, we will be applying principles of social marketing to affect a change in behaviour towards the NCC. But it must be understood that this is not a spin-doctoring exercise but rather a genuine willingness on the NCC's part to be open to the views, ideas and involvement of our various constituencies.

A brand is a name, a symbol or graphic depiction that clearly identifies individual or groups of products and services. To better brand the NCC, we recommend strengthening the corporate identity by adopting an acronym and renewing our graphic look (see Appendix L for details). The Commission will communicate and integrate this new identity gradually over time, using a lifecycle management approach to replace signage and produce new communication materials, so that additional costs will be minimum.

1.1 — The NCC's Corporate Image

Background

A core principle of the NCC's mandate is "to develop a Capital that would reflect Canada as it evolve[s] into a great modern state"⁷³. Over the years, the NCC's pursuit of this objective has resulted in the acquisition of more than 465 square kilometres of land stretching out over an area of 4,715 square kilometres on both sides of the Ottawa River⁷⁴. The NCC is the region's single largest landowner.⁷⁵

With the recent municipal amalgamations the NCC's two main partners are the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau.

Current Image

The 2000, Sussex Circle report entitled *Enhancing Relations*⁷⁶ examined the NCC's relationships with regional municipalities, federal organizations, the general public and interest groups and made recommendations for improving these relationships.

The report concluded that, in general, the NCC has a very positive image, due in large part to its "green" activities. However, the report also cited major issues and concerns that residents have with the NCC. While a minority of residents were critical of the Commission, the report suggested that if the NCC did not take steps to address these concerns they risked becoming a major issue in the future⁷⁷ and would adversely affect the NCC's existing positive image.

The report put forward 11 main recommendations to strengthening and otherwise improving the NCC's relations at the local level. In the area of marketing and communications, for example, the report suggested "The NCC should develop a strategic approach to communications and marketing [that] should focus on communicating activities, plans, mandate, vision and benefits of the NCC to citizens of the NCR."⁷⁸ It further stated that the NCC should "more actively market its involvement in programs and activities throughout the NCR."⁷⁹ This marketing, communications and external relations plan is a direct result of the Sussex Circle report and its recommendations.

Other recommendations included: creating a committee whereby the mayors of Ottawa and Gatineau would be involved in regional development issues; increasing public participation and involvement in NCC initiatives; and the development of a new corporate website. These recommendations are gradually being implemented in order to make the NCC more accessible and understood. (See Appendix V for a complete list of the Sussex Circle recommendations.)

It should also be noted that local media have sometimes portrayed the NCC in a negative light. This in turn taints our image and undermines our ability to fulfill our mandate. It behoves the Commission to study the root cause of this criticism not only to improve its image but to identify potential sources of controversy and proactively seek to defuse them.

Repositioning the NCC's Image

It is important to rally residents' favourable perceptions of CCR and to progressively build on them. We can do so by taking the following steps:

- By staying the course of transparency, respect, goodwill and commitment in all of our activities;
- By bolstering efforts to better inform and engage Canadians in NCC management activities;
- By increasing communications and promotion of the NCC's outdoor programs and environmental preservation activities;
- By increasing the NCC's visibility in cultural programs and activities in CCR;
- By increasing NCC visibility at the local level and being more proactive in promoting and communicating its role in various projects and activities, rather than too often being on the defensive;
- By strengthening the corporation's visual identity that simultaneously updates the NCC's image, captures the spirit of the region and conveys the NCC's dynamism and commitment to excellence⁸⁰; and
- By creating a corporate brand that unifies the NCC's family of products and obviates their relationship to the NCC.

Repositioning the NCC's image will be supported by the implementation of a consultation strategy on issues of interest to residents, particularly those having to do with urban planning and development of the Capital. We will also become more proactive in our relations with media, interest groups and decision makers. As for raising the corporate profile among other audiences, we endeavour to become better at promoting the NCC's many programs, services and events.

Positioning statements

The National Capital Commission is the federal body responsible for creating a Capital Region that is a source of pride and unity for all Canadians while providing exceptional quality of life.

To date, we have considered, and intermittently used, the following taglines:

The NCC — your Capital, our mission, our passion
La CCN, notre mission, notre passion, votre capitale
 or
The NCC — proud to contribute to your quality of life
La CCN, fière de contribuer à votre qualité de vie

The application and use of these taglines will be included as part of our standards for the new corporate identity which are currently under development.

In many ways, the NCC's corporate image as a whole will be defined by the sum of its parts, that is, the family of products and services to which it is intrinsically linked. The qualifiers, or features, we would associate with this image are: representative of national values; integrity; "know-how"; quality; and vision.

The corporate identity will also incorporate the Canada wordmark, and we would be remiss not to capitalize on the prestige and national branding it brings to our efforts.

1.2 — Branding the NCC

The NCC brand represents the organization's promise to consistently deliver a series of benefits and services within its programs and products. The NCC logo will carry a five-level message.

1. Values

The values that NCC employees embrace should be reflected, whenever possible, in all of our products and services. These values are manifest in all facets of what we do – from planning to production to the end result.

Key Values	Example of Application
Respect	Professional ethics, integrity and confidence underpin the services and activities offered by the NCC to residents.
Goodwill	NCC staff are competent and comfortable in their ability to make the right decisions. They do the right thing and have demonstrated this time and again in their dealings with the public.
Commitment	In building a capital for all Canadians, NCC staff are guided by the underlying principles of creativity and excellence. Their unwavering commitment distinguishes the NCC in virtually every facet of its activities.
Transparency	The NCC's commitment to transparency will have to become increasingly evident in all of our activities, from our own internal processes to the planning and delivery of programs and services to the public. This is key to all proposed approaches in this document.

2. Features and Benefits

The NCC associates various features with its products and services including: representative of national values; integrity; know-how; quality; and vision.

For the consumer, these features translate into benefits such as better knowledge of Canada and the Canadian identity, guaranteed quality in program and service delivery, and the security of knowing activities are carried out in deference to the benefits they provide over the long-term. Recent studies show that the public associates the NCC with quality programs, and these standards are to be maintained.

3. Culture

The NCC brand should reflect the corporate culture resulting from the implementation of the Sussex Circle report recommendations, that is, a culture which is client- driven, and which conducts its activities in the public interest. The NCC's corporate culture should strive for, and ultimately be defined by innovation, consultation, customer focus, efficiency and excellence. It is further recommended that the Commission strive to become one of the country's Top 100 Employers within the next five years.

4. Personality

In order to counteract the perception problems facing the NCC, we must ensure our corporate personality reflects the true nature of how we arrive at decisions and directions for the organization — in an open, honest environment where all views are considered and discussed. A more human personality, focussing on openness, listening and empathy will be crucial to continue to improve the perception of the organization.

We should avoid a staid, impersonal corporate image and humanize the NCC by featuring our people and our partners. By giving a higher public profile or easier access to our board and advisory committee members, as well as NCC senior managers, we will give a more human face to the corporation and show it for what it really is: a public organization that uses both public and private sector practices to manage its business.

5. Users

The NCC identity should also reflect the identity of people in the target market groups, so that they identify with the organization and feel a sense of belonging.

The definition of these targets is presented in the Market Segmentation section of this plan.

1.3 — The Main Products

It is proposed to regroup NCC products into four main product lines that reflect priorities and demonstrate the synergies and cross-promotion opportunities that exist within each group.

The main product lines associated with the NCC are:

1. **Vision for the Capital, planning and development of the Capital.** Since Capital planning is a cornerstone of the NCC's mandate, our activities in this area should be promoted more aggressively. Indeed, the Capital plays a leading role as a symbol of national identity and a showcase for excellence in all things Canadian, to demonstrate and apply Canadian expertise and "know-how" in various sectors. The Capital should be perceived as the jewel of the country, a model to follow, in showing leadership by applying policies established by the Federal government.

In addition to promoting the Capital as a leading example for all Canadians, the NCC will highlight specific initiatives over the next five years including: the core area plan (LeBreton, the Victoria and Chaudières islands, Sparks Street and the completion of Confederation Boulevard), the Urban Lands Master Plan, access to Gatineau Park and the *Gatineau Park Master Plan* revision. The role of the NCC in the development, coordination and maintenance of planning and standards will also be highlighted.

2. **Outdoor activities and environmental stewardship activities.** The NCC is known for its role in protecting urban green spaces both within and outside the core of the Capital. However, we need to better inform people about our conservation and environmental stewardship programs, as well as about the family of "green assets" and outdoor activities (such as Gatineau Park, the Capital Pathway, the Greenbelt, Fall Rhapsody, the Rideau Canal Skateway, urban parks, Sunday Bikedays, contaminated site management, the environmental management strategy and the Capital's landscape architecture. This line of products will help us show just how the Capital reflects the environmental values shared by Canadians.
3. **The NCC's special events and cultural products** that fall under the "promoting and animating CCR," portion of our mandate. While this range of products reflect Canadian values and the national identity, they also represent strong communications and marketing tools for the Capital. Products include Winterlude, Christmas Lights Across Canada, the Canada and the World Pavilion, and, to a lesser extent, the national festivals and museums supported by the NCC in their promotion or actual program delivery.
4. **Patriotism evoked by national symbolic institutions and events**, such as Canada Day, Confederation Boulevard, the Sound and Light show, interpretation programs on Parliament Hill, the official residences, Mackenzie King Estate and commemorative monuments. We should also highlight, albeit to a lesser degree, the Commission's role in commemorative events such as Remembrance Day, national parades, and the Changing of the Guard as well as our work involving the Capital's political institutions and buildings.

All products and events will be promoted within a national context, which will also reinforce their importance at the regional level. For example, the cutting edge environmental techniques used in the cleanup of Lebreton Flats should be served up as a contemporary model for decontamination in urban centres. Similarly, in addition to promoting the recreational aspects of Sunday Bikedays and Fall Rhapsody, we should leverage these activities to promote the NCC's — and by extension the federal government's — environmental stewardship programs. In short, we need to better exploit the rich content and positive social impact of what we do and underscore their importance from a national perspective.

2 — The “Capital” Brand

Here we address the overall Capital experience, to which we will devote 30% of the marketing and communications effort, with particular emphasis on NCC and federal partner activities.

Positioning

From the outset, we will position the Capital as a symbol of our nation, using elements that show its reflection of Canadian values and identity.

Our communication at the national level will focus on the “Capital experience” as a whole and not just NCC and/or federal products, although these will be given priority status within the campaigns. Presenting a broad picture of the Capital and its offerings will attract greater interest from potential visitors.

Positioning will also encompass the leadership qualities intrinsic to a nation’s capital such as state-of-the art technology and a showcase for Canadian expertise. These will be highlighted through their application in various sectors throughout the capital.

The proposed national positioning statement is: Canada’s Capital: the soul of a nation

La capitale: symbole de notre nation

Image of Canada’s Capital Region

The *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* proposes initiatives that will allow the NCC to reposition the image of CCR at the national level while distinguishing itself as a meeting place for all Canadians, a source of national pride, and a leading example of Canadian stewardship. This image must capture the unique character of Canada’s Capital without resorting to stereotypes.

According to a focus group study by GPC International⁸¹, Ottawa is suffering from an identity crisis and has not done enough to promote itself.

Focus group participants agree that Ottawa needs to define its image, identify target markets, decide on promotional strategies and determine how it stands out from its competitors. Respondents also agreed that raising awareness and visibility of Ottawa is the single biggest challenge underlying promotional efforts to position the city as a high-tech centre and tourist destination. Another challenge is to dispel Ottawa’s image as a “sleepy government town.” Other challenges include the cold climate and competing Canadian cities. While overcoming these challenges is more the responsibility of the two regional tourism associations, the NCC plays a key role in ensuring the region is marketed as the Capital and not that just the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau.

Current Image

The region’s national symbols, events, monuments and institutions present Canadians with myriad images of Canada’s Capital. But what do they collectively evoke for Canadians?

To most Canadians, the national capital is, first and foremost, the seat of the federal government and its administration. The media reinforce this notion by using “Ottawa” synonymously with the federal government. Rarely do they portray anything else as being representative of the Capital.

According to a study by GPC International, Ottawa’s status as national capital is an asset when it comes to tourism. Respondents cited it as a major draw for visitors to Ottawa, particularly those interested in history culture. And because it’s the nation’s capital, visitors could expect a certain level of beauty and cleanliness.

Tourism experts point to four major features that give Ottawa a competitive advantage: its status as a national capital and the seat of federal institutions (including Parliament); its historical attractions; its cultural features (particularly its European feel); and its quality of life (which includes leisure activities, various events, entertainment, cleanliness and natural beauty)⁸². Experts from the high-tech field and the service industry chose high technology, the skilled workforce, the small town/big city feel and the quality of life as traits that are distinctive to Ottawa⁸³. The NCC positions CCR as a “green Capital” and “showplace for Canadian culture and identity.”

It should be noted that a 1989 study mentions arts and culture, nature and the environment, and symbols and traditions as the three dimensions of the national capital’s identity⁸⁴.

Repositioning the Image

A strategy to create a brand for the Capital would help to solidify an image with which all Canadian could identify.

Several tourism bodies, including the Canadian Tourism Commission, Tourism Ontario, Tourisme Québec, the Ottawa Tourism and Convention Authority and Tourisme Outaouais, have proposed strategic directions for target markets, priority products and marketing.

Tourism and municipal organizations are working more or less concertedly to develop a picture of the Capital that could be marketed at both the local and national level to attract tourism and businesses to the area. The following themes have been used: “culture/nature” (Tourisme Outaouais), “high-tech capital of Canada” (the Ottawa Economic Development Corporation) and “technically beautiful” (the City of Ottawa). The latter slogan was dropped following wide public criticism and the onslaught of massive layoffs in the high-tech industry.

It is important for these stakeholders to work together to ensure a unified approach is used to position the Capital and that the resulting image is one with which residents and indeed all Canadians can identify.

In any event, a modern image of Canada’s Capital must reflect and convey its distinctive qualities, including its character as a meeting place for all Canadians and not merely the centre of federal politics.

This image includes three components of the main product lines previously mentioned:

- Cultural centre (special events and cultural products)
- Green capital (outdoor products environmental stewardship activities)
- Reflection of Canadian identity (patriotism: national institutions and events and, when relevant, planning and development projects with national scope)

The weight given to each of these product lines will depend on the financial resources available for their promotion outside of the local market. However, it is generally understood that cultural events and national institutions often receive the lion's share of public attention and, by extension, promotional resources.

Since 85% of Canadians feel that the Capital should be a neutral place belonging to all Canadians⁸⁵, it would seem appropriate to integrate the word "Canada" when referring to the nation's capital. We therefore recommend that the traditional "National Capital Region" be replaced by "**Canada's Capital Region, Ottawa-Gatineau**" ("**Région de la capitale du Canada, Ottawa-Gatineau**") in all NCC communications and promotional materials. This expression not only links local residents, it reaches out to Canadians everywhere.

The NCC's main role would be to launch initiatives that have potential for a good return on investments and to support and encourage local tourism partners to sell not only Ottawa and Gatineau as cities in their own right, but as components of Canada's Capital Region. Moreover, we will not engage in national promotion activities with a goal to bring visitors unless it is done in partnership with a tourism organization.

Again, we can expect that cultural events such as Winterlude and Canada Day would benefit from greater visibility as there are bigger promotional for these activities.

We would like to conclude with some excerpts from a speech by former minister John Manley who captured well the NCC's vision:

*[...] this city has flourished as a modern, vibrant capital that supports and speaks for the whole of Canada.
[...] A capital city must reflect the strengths, achievements and ambitions of its nation. It must offer both a showcase and a shelter for all its citizens, and anchor itself as a centre of excellence that teaches, leads and inspires in all fields of national endeavour, from governance, to science, to the arts, to entrepreneurship, community service and beyond.*

John Manley
NAC, May 23, 2002

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE MARKETING PLAN

Setting realistic, achievable objectives is key to ensuring staff have a clear understanding of corporate priorities and are motivated to work toward them. Consequently, we have narrowed and aligned our objectives along two central themes: increased corporate visibility and public involvement in NCC activities and decision-making process (70% of resources) and increasing national awareness and appreciation of Canada's Capital Region (30% of resources). Synergies between these two strategic priorities are such that activities in one area cannot and should not be considered in isolation from activities in the other.

While the NCC does not have a "tourism" mandate per se, it is clear that a visit to the capital is an excellent way to enhance knowledge and appreciation of the capital among Canadians and instil pride at the national level. Moreover, by measuring visits to the capital and the impact of our events and activities, we can better justify investments into NCC programming and services.

Following are the *Marketing, Communications and External Relations Plan* general objectives, listed in order of priority.

1. Increase unaided awareness of the NCC by 70% (identification of the organisation responsible for the mandate), bringing it from 36% to 60% within five years in CCR.
2. Increase approval ratings of the NCC by 20% within five years among residents of CCR, to a level of 76% (as opposed to 63% in 2002).
3. Increase by 15%, compared to 2002 levels, overall recognition of the NCC as the main organizer of its flagship activities and services.
4. Contribute to reinforcing a feeling of pride towards the NCC and the capital in general, to be represented by an average 15% increase in participation in NCC activities, services and events within five years (as opposed to an average 2% regional demographic increase).
5. Ensure that all decisions made by the NCC include strategic communication considerations, reflect the aspiration of Canadians and build or maintain synergies between the Commission's various programs.
6. Strengthen ties with public and private partners and affiliated organizations with a view to expanding and/or improving programs and services.
7. Increase Canadians' level of pride towards the capital, to maintain a minimum level of 80% over the next five years.

8. Increase national penetration in terms of visits, so that a minimum of one in two Canadians will have visited the capital at least once within a ten-year period (until 2008).

Over the next three years, the NCC will focus on meeting the first six objectives with the remaining two considered more long-term in nature.

These general objectives will be supported by specific, measurable targets and tactics within each functional and program-specific plan.

GENERAL TACTICAL STRATEGIES

In order to define priorities, we have identified three general strategies that will guide Branch initiatives and provide a framework for staff as they undertake plan-related activities. These strategies will be supported by functional strategies for each of seven categories including: community relations; media relations; public consultation; sponsorship; merchandising; broadcasting; and corporate identity. Those functional strategies will describe the nature, the process and the guiding principles of all sectors of the branch.

I. STREAMLINING MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

To improve Branch effectiveness and the overall impact of our activities, we will undertake a more coordinated approach to our operations. While this might be misconstrued as more of an implementation detail than an actual strategy, it represents a fundamental shift in how the Branch currently operates and is more reflective of how the Commission sees itself operating in the future.

Following are the key elements of the proposed strategy:

- Using market research, community relations feedback and strategic communications to guide major decisions and project planning from the outset. This will involve adopting an integrated marketing and communications optic and fostering that approach for all corporate projects. In other words, we will have to integrate and plan for a communications-marketing dimension in all initiative and decision making process. The plans themselves will be informed by situational analyses and will set out measurable objectives.
- The Communications section of the Branch will continue to coordinate key messages for the corporation and, in collaboration with the Marketing section, will be the main point of contact for other NCC branches. More precisely, the Communications section is the watchdog for corporate messaging and is responsible for developing and funnelling key messages to other sections of the branch.
- A project management approach will be adopted so each file and/or project has a Branch "lead". The lead is responsible for coordinating Branch services and activities for a specific project and acts as a point person for the Commission's other branches. These Branch "lead" will act as "integrators" of marketing-communications functions in all projects. (See Appendix U for a breakdown of files/projects and leads).
- Representatives from each section of our branch will form multi-disciplinary teams to ensure Branch efforts are integrated and resources are maximized, as well as to ensure proper application of all external relation tools. Teams will be assigned files on major corporate projects or activities and will be responsible for ensuring the Branch's deliverables are met. Virtually all major activities will be vetted through these teams, except in instances where a single service is required (such as a news release).
- As new products and activities arise, we must adopt strategies that recognize potential synergies with other activities within the product line.

- Every communications initiative should reflect the interests and objectives of all sections of the Branch, as well as promoting as many aspects as possible within the product line.
- Marketing and Communications plans will be drafted using a standardized template for each major project. (See Appendix U.) The plans will be developed in collaboration with internal clients and jointly agreed upon before any tactical tools are produced. This is consistent with NCC's adoption of a project management approach and the marketing & communications plan documents will be the Branch's contribution to the project(s) planning process.
- The aforementioned seven functional strategies will be created and implemented in year one, to support the broader orientations of this plan.
- The new procedures will conform to the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada as set forth by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat in 2002.

This includes adherence to the policy's 10 basic principles which are to:

- Provide the public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- Communicate in English and in French.
[– and reach out to linguistic minorities]
- Ensure that institutions of the Government of Canada are visible, accessible and accountable to the public they serve.
- Employ a variety of ways and means to communicate, and provide information in multiple formats to accommodate diverse needs.
- Identify and address communication needs and issues routinely in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.
- Consult the public, listen to and take account of people's interests and concerns when establishing priorities, developing policies, and planning programs and services.
- Deliver prompt, courteous and responsive service that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of the public and respectful of individual rights.
- Encourage public service managers and employees to communicate openly with the public about policies, programs, services and initiatives they are familiar with and for which they have responsibility.
- Safeguard Canadians' trust and confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Public Service of Canada.

- Ensure all institutions of the Government of Canada work collaboratively to achieve coherent and effective communications with the public.

Excerpt from the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2002

- Senior Management should conduct an annual review of all marketing/ communications budget allocations for the entire corporation, as CMER is only responsible for about 50% of the NCC's total spending on marketing and communications.
- A committee composed of representatives from all branches will be created to involve all sectors of the organization in the implementation of this strategy.
- A weekly tracking system will need to be drawn up to permit regular reviews of marketing communications results in reference to the objectives set for a given program. The project lead would be responsible for meeting these objectives.
- All CMER employees should be offered training in marketing and communications (including new TBS regulations) as well as project management.

Following is an example of how a major collaborative project – in this case the remediation and development of Lebreton Flats -- would involve all sections of the Branch working strategically together:

- Development of a corporate image and key messages for the project
- Promotion—as opposed to simply posting information—of the project on the corporate website
- Organisation of regular media briefings and updates
- Developing an inserts for distribution in daily newspapers
- Working with the Speakers' Bureau to place information kiosks in public areas
- Speaking engagements (business associations, community groups etc)
- Distribution of flyers to residents of areas affected by changes to the community
- A media blitz to highlight the project's innovative approach to urban planning and environmental stewardship

All of these activities would take place within a short timeframe to maximize their promotional impact.

This approach is a dramatic shift in the NCC's strategic direction as it not only integrates messages but also the vehicles for delivering those messages, effectively extending the reach of all of the corporation's communications activities.

II. RECOGNITION OF THE NCC

Seventy percent (70%) of initiatives and financial resources will be put toward enhancing the NCC's local relationships and raise awareness, recognition and understanding of the Commission's mandate and role. This will in turn serve to better inform Canadians at large about how the NCC uses the resources entrusted to it, will encourage participation in its decision-making process and, finally, contribute to the Commission's transparency.

The accompanying communications campaign will entail media and community relations, public consultation, broadcasting, and sponsorship strategies whose scope will be defined by the following key drivers:

Context

- In keeping with the NCC Corporate Plan, this strategy aims to underscore the Commission's role as steward of the Capital and whose activities are conducted for the benefit of current and future generations of Canadians.
- All aspects of the campaign will serve to i) better inform the public, ii) build a larger support base, and/or iii) encourage support for the corporation and a sense of ownership in its activities.
- This strategy emphasizes a more rigorous adoption of a perspective centred on communication and the interest of Canadians when any decisions are made by the NCC and on the adoption of a marketing concept in our management mechanisms. In addition, it includes regularly making all staff aware of the impact their actions on the public. Proactive communication, commitment to the public interest and the adoption of a marketing-based approach to our internal activities are keys to the success of this strategy.
- A return to the practice of having the Strategic Communications section review all submissions to the Executive management committee will allow us to more effectively frame and underscore the NCC's contributions.
- The new priority will consist of communicating the overall mandate more effectively and reorienting communication initiatives according to corporate priorities, while continuing to support existing programs and services. These initiatives will be carried out in accordance with the Sussex Circle Report, emphasizing the benefits the NCC provides to residents in the capital, while carrying out its role at the national level.

Research

In order to measure our effectiveness and overall progress, we will need to conduct strategic market research. Specifically, we will need formal media monitoring tools as well as annual public opinion surveys (with the latter focusing on local residents).

Linking to the Corporate Plan

- Priority will be given to key messages related to the following initiatives:
 - i) Plans for development and realization of the NCC's vision to make the capital a leader in the country, and a showcase for Canadian expertise and know-how (for example, LeBreton, Sparks, core area development);
 - ii) Outdoor activities and projects related to the management and protection of the environment;
 - iii) Activities involving animation of the capital and highlighting its cultural assets.

This will be done with continuous support to promoting the legislative and political functions of the Capital.

The Communications, Marketing and External Relations Branch will support both the National Programming Branch and the Environment, Capital Lands and Parks Branch in their efforts to renew existing programs and develop new activities.

Governance/Understanding the NCC's Mandate

- An awareness campaign will be launched, focussing on the NCC's corporate mandate and the services we offer. It will be critical that the campaign be of public interest, and that it brings real added value for citizens by better informing them about NCC programs and plans. We will invest only in campaigns that provide benefits to the public – such as improved security measure for recreational pathways – and will forego those that might be deemed as self-serving.
- New board and advisory committee members will be promptly introduced to the public through press briefings or releases.
- A better-defined public consultation strategy will be put in place to emphasize the NCC's openness to public participation in its decision making process. This must be done in such a way as to dispel any notion that it is simply a public relations exercise and that we do indeed take public opinion into account, particularly when they reflect the opinion of the majority.
- We must introduce measures aimed at better informing politicians and government partners of NCC's initiatives, through the systematic release of strategic documents (for example, programs of flagship activities, corporate plans, research results).
- Creation of a database of partners and interest groups, in order to inform them on a more regular basis on NCC activities (application of "relationship marketing" principles).

- Assist Human Resources in trying to get the NCC recognized as one of the top 100 employers in the country.

Priority of the NCC Corporate Identity

- A new corporate identity that is punchier and more easily adapted onto NCC products will go a long way to serving the new direction and positioning we're proposing. The streamlining of individual product brands to give more prominence to the corporate brand will further increase recognition of the NCC.
- We need to reclaim ownership of our events and services. This will require a radical shift in how we position ourselves. We can do this by adopting the following measures:
 - A much stronger presence of the NCC's corporate identity in all collateral materials (both written and electronic) as well as during any media or public events. This includes ads produced to recognize sponsors or partners. In short, our underlying goal is to graphically reinforce the NCC's corporate image in everything we do.
 - A strategic signage campaign carried out within a lifecycle management framework. The reclamation of NCC ownership in all of our products and properties requires investment as we need to replace signs (for parks, recreational trails, construction sites or public events etc.). As lifecycle ends and signage is replaced, we must ensure the NCC brand is more prominent (indeed, some existing signage fails to mention the NCC at all). New signage will only be added where it enhances user experience and/or safety.

For example, a complementary set of signs will be designed and developed for systematic use at all NCC sites and sponsored events. The NCC logo will be figured more prominently in parks and on recreational trails through the addition of more signage as well as structures that enhance user experience and/or safety

Another example of how we can increase corporate profile is through the installation of large temporary signage to be affixed to the NCC building during flagship events.

Standards for design and application will be developed for and applied to all NCC work sites, which could number in the hundreds at any given time, at no additional cost to the organization.

- The installation of signs at main entry points to the Capital (road, rail and air) that welcomes people to Canada's Capital Region" (Gateway program).
- Improve visibility of the corporation whenever it makes use of sub-contractors to offer its services (for example, PRO FAC and Lafleur de la capitale).

- The NCC web site should maintain its current level of information but be integrated into a single entry point instead of the corporate/tourism addresses currently used. The site should adopt a user-driven focus similar to what was recently done for the recreational pathways portion of the site.
- Revisit the vocation of the Capital Infocentre, so that it becomes more of a showcase of the NCC, a place where people can “meet” with the NCC (for example, public consultations, meetings with interest groups).
- Every occasion should be taken to cross-promote and use the NCC’s existing communication network rather than initiating projects in isolation. Here are some possible examples:
 - Promoting the *Gatineau Park Master Plan* during Fall Rhapsody;
 - Advertising the annual general meeting and various public consultation meetings at the Infocentre and in all our public spaces;
 - Promoting outdoor activities in Gatineau Park in the skate shelters on the Rideau Canal;
 - Promoting commemoration initiatives in a flyer on Canada Day;
 - Using interactive kiosks for public consultation (taking advantage of crowds on the Rideau Canal Skateway))
 - Placing panels in various Tulip Festival locations to promote environmental stewardship activities (Did you know that...?)

Push Strategy

- A community relations strategy will be put in place, as a sort of push strategy that would capitalize on a variety of opportunities such as:
 - i) Creation of an annual plan of speaking engagements for the Chairman and senior staff. All speeches and presentations would be vetted by the “Speakers Bureau” to ensure consistent and accurate messaging
 - ii) Meetings with interest groups coordinated by the public consultation group, in addition to the annual meeting taking place with the NCC Board;
 - iii) A stronger presence in the region (at special events, in shopping malls etc.)
 - iv) Maximizing advertising and promotion surrounding the AGM and interest group meetings as part of a corporate promotion campaign to be unleashed over the next three years. In addition to public service announcements, a campaign will be maintained, for at least the next three years. Results of public consultations and their translation into NCC activities will also be communicated on a regular basis.
 - v) Organisation of an “Open House” event at the NCC, during which the public would have access to certain sections of headquarters, satellite offices, and official residences, as well as direct contact with NCC employees;

- vi) An annual meeting of decision makers (power meeting) where the priorities and action plans of the organization would be explained;

Development of leading edge presentation tools (for example, a modular CDROM, corporate video, portable signage, and media material) that would assist staff in their public presentations and ensure professionalism and consistency in message delivery, while reducing costs by using the same material for a variety of applications.

Increased Media profile

- In the interests of promoting transparency and accessibility, we will become more proactive with the media, conducting a series of media “blitzes” (paid and editorial) seven times a year. This is in addition to the aforementioned corporate campaign:
 - i) A media blitz for the tabling of results of the annual public opinion survey and the results of an annual compilation of completed studies;
 - ii) Promotion of major accomplishments as presented during the public annual general meeting and tabling of the annual report;
 - iii) A broad media blitz during flagship events, where priority will be given to recognition of the NCC (Winterlude, Tulip Festival, Canada Day, Confederation Boulevard program summer season launch, Fall Rhapsody, and Christmas Lights Across Canada);
 - iv) More frequent updates on public consultation and other activities of interest to the public; and a better promotion of their impact on projects, through paid advertising and public relations;
 - v) Promotion of the corporate website. Regular media relations blitzes supported by advertisements will be made whenever information particularly important to the public is added, to increase use of the site;
- All crisis situation will have to be dealt with in a proactive way, by setting up a structured intervention plan, supported and endorsed by the Executive management committee;
- Sponsorship agreements will not only bring in alternative source of funding for programs, but they will also have to generate new means of communicating those activities as well as contributing new programming elements. When justified, we will also publicly announce new partnerships and renewed sponsorships in an effort to demonstrate our commitment to finding alternative funding sources.
- We will wrest control over messages about the NCC by:
 - i) Being proactive in holding press briefings and other media events directed at local and national media. This would allow us to control our messages and make our own news instead of being on the defensive;

- ii) Working with all internal branches to better identify and/or fine tune key messages before making any public announcement.

Summary

Working within the budget approved by the Executive Management Committee, we will pursue every reasonable opportunity to improve NCC's approach to communication and consultation, with the ultimate goal of enhancing our relations with federal partners, regional municipalities and the public at large.

A more proactive and positive approach to external communications (i.e. media and the general public) will cast a better light on our activities and accomplishments at the local level while offsetting the reactionary role we often find ourselves playing in response to negative publicity.

To address issues of accessibility, transparency and aspirations of the public in general the NCC must strengthen relations locally and prove itself as being sensitive to the needs and interests of local administrations and residents. This will be achieved through increased public consultation and involvement in planning the Capital. A "push" strategy should be adopted to better inform community leaders and various interest groups of our Corporate Plan and priorities for action. And, finally, we must assume a strategic communications approach to all major projects.

In so doing, we can ensure the NCC receives due recognition for our role in:

capital planning and vision

preservation and protection of the environment

the organisation of national celebrations

management of lands of national interest

promotion of Canada's Capital Region.

III. NATIONAL PRESENCE

Thirty percent (30%) of efforts and resources will be dedicated to this component, with more focus starting in the fourth year of the plan.

NATIONAL VERSUS LOCAL INITIATIVES

First, it should be emphasized that any initiative undertaken on the national level will also lead to benefits for the NCC at the local level. Whether it is in distributing materials with a national scope to a local audience or in generating national media coverage for an event being held in the Capital, those activities will also allow to better inform the local public about the role and responsibilities of the NCC.

Communication activities outside the Capital region will be restricted to Canada, and no major investments will be made outside the country. The international presence of the Capital remains the responsibility of the tourism authorities, although the NCC may opt to participate in low cost/high return opportunities that might arise.

Context

In contrast to past initiatives where the NCC regularly launched national campaigns with limited means, we propose a narrower, more targeted approach that capitalizes on national partnerships and distribution networks. Given that we have limited resources at our disposal, we must ensure each opportunity is fully leveraged and that the target audience is well-defined. Through clearly defined target markets, performance-based research and collaborative partnerships, we should be able to, in sequence:

- i) Increase national awareness;
- ii) Generate better knowledge and understanding of the product (s);
- iii) Influence attitudes about the capital through pride-building activities (emotional impact);
- iv) Where possible, encourage people to visit the capital.

When initiated to generate a visit, these activities will have to be carried out with the support of, or in partnership with, local tourism authorities. Never will we undertake campaigns unilaterally, as they risk to having only a marginal impact. We will, however, use every possible means to reach linguistic minorities across Canada wherever possible.

Products

As indicated under the heading "The Capital Brand", the product lines to be marketed will be:

- Special events and cultural products

- Products related to the outdoors and environmental stewardship
- Reflections of Canadian values and identity (i.e., certain elements of the capital vision as well as certain institutions and national symbolic events, with a national perspective).

The focus given to each product line will depend on the level of resources available for outreach and external market communication. It is expected that based on the present context, more visibility will be given to cultural programs such as Winterlude because of the financial resources available.

In keeping with current market trends, the value of these products and events will be positioned according to the experience they're intended to provide (i.e. using an experiential marketing approach)

- The Communications, Marketing and External Relations Branch must influence the development and nature of products offered or proposed in the overall package. New products will have to be studied, especially such as programs involving participation of national museums, a more extensive Fall Rhapsody program, initiatives aimed at an increased presence in provincial representation, special events demonstrating the national leadership role to be assumed by the capital (for example, a "no cars" day), integration of high-tech services and the animation of NCC sites (for example the animation of Sussex courtyards and the Astrolabe), and the renewal of the Christmas lights across Canada.
- We will have to work with our federal partners to ensure local activities are sustained over the long term and to define thematic orientations with more of a long term perspective.
- We should pursue national and international recognition and/or accreditation for some of our programs such as:
 - North-American listings of our recreational pathways
 - Seeking a Guinness world record(s) for the world's longest skating rink (Rideau Canal Skateway)
 - Environmental or scientific endorsement for some our green products (Gatineau Park, Mer Bleue Bog etc.)

Partnerships

- It will be necessary to establish new strategic partnerships that go beyond traditional agreements. Some possible examples include:
 - A national program promoting our recreational pathways, which could bring together major partners such as a national manufacturer of health products, Health Canada, Canada Economic Development Corporation, tourist authorities, and the CTC could participate.

- Awareness-building for new Canadians, in which Citizenship and Immigration Canada, national carriers and the CTC could participate.
- Creation of a product club focused on the capital, in collaboration with the CTC and the Canadian Capital Cities Organisation.
- Solicitation of various transportation companies to ensure greater accessibility to the Capital by school groups.

New and/or expanded ways to communicate

- Sales and promotional tools must be developed for the capital that are national in scope (advertising messages, information kits for the media, major national sponsorship sales tools, etc.).
- We should try to make inroads with existing media opportunities so that, in instances where the Capital is portrayed as the country's political centre, we can also inject other images of the region such as culture, the outdoors and environmental stewardship. This could take place during special broadcasts such as Canada Day, Remembrance Day, the Speech from the Throne, reception of Olympic athletes or the Governor General's Awards. And could be achieved through television broadcasting agreements, media relations initiatives, and advertising.
- We must strengthen relations with national media, especially major television broadcasters and large dailies.
- Greater reliance on sponsors to deliver key messages using their own communications channels as well as incorporating images of the Capital into national campaigns. Such as those involving Amazon.ca, Zellers Canada. Sponsorship initiatives should also contribute to the renewal and development of programs.
- Steps must be taken to draw galas and other prestigious national events to the capital, as the people and media coverage they attract will assist us in our positioning efforts. Similar to what we did for the Juno Awards, the NCC would offer its services to rally local partners to bring major events to the Capital and, once secured, would use the opportunity to promote the Capital.

Sustaining current efforts

- Broadcasting agreements, sponsorship activities as well as marketing and communications partnerships with the tourism industry continue to play a key role in the success of this plan. Sustained efforts will include:
 - Organizing FAM tours for journalists in collaboration with tourism authorities.

- Launching a national seasonal campaign in partnership with the national networks, with the support of sponsors and tourism partners.
 - Having national and international shows taped in the capital.
- We will continue our national campaigns to attract visitors to the Capital for flagship events and /or outdoor recreation as long as we have partners f to help us out and a good return on our investment. These campaigns include:
 - The Winterlude campaign
 - Promotion of Canada Day
 - Regional promotion of the Canada and the World Pavilion
- The Ottawa-Gatineau film office will play a key role in welcoming production crews to the capital for TV, movie or ad shoots.

SUMMARY ACTION PLAN

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Implement new segmentation	Corporate endorsement of communications-marketing budget allocations for the entire organization	New value-added signage	targeting new-Canadians	
Set up template for marketing/communications management of 45 identified files		Signage on building during events (NCC visibility / sub-contractor)	Club products CTC/CCCO	
Prepare 7 functional strategies	Set up guidelines for all communication activities	NCC kiosks in public places	Develop new national sales/promotion tools (publicity messages)	
New corporate identity approved	Institutional campaign re: NCC mandate, with added benefits in terms of public safety or quality of experience	NCC Open House	Build on national opportunities outside NCC portfolio, e.g., Remembrance Day, Governor General's Award, athletes parade	
Implement new corporate identity	Implement functional strategies such as public consultation	Coordinate long-term themes with federal partners	FAM national media tours	
Apply new branding principles	Increase visibility of board and advisory committee members	New strategic partnership – recreational pathways	Acquire events (national galas)	
Implement new product lines				
Initiate communications approval process for submissions Adapt communication policy of the TBS 2002	Add "NCC" to existing signage (Gateway, highways)			
Marketing training / Branch project management	Project template			
NCC prominence in promotion, interviews, ads	Visibility kit for all sponsors			

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Gateway – airport	Set up cross-promotion			
Increased MarCom support for AGM promotion and public consultation	Speakers bureau			
Development of presentation tools				
Set up minimum 7 media blitzes per year				
Set up crisis management & communication plan	Additional meetings with interest groups by Public Consultation			
Changes to existing products; new product development	Power Meeting			
	Make use of sponsorships in the media			
	Develop national media solicitation tool / national media kit			
	New sponsorship agreements with national visibility (Amazon.ca, Zellers)			
	Grey Cup – Ottawa			
National campaign with electronic media networks / secure production & national airing of TV program				
leverage the Film Bureau of Ottawa-Gatineau				
Large-scale campaigns for flagship events: Winterlude, Canada Day, Christmas Lights Across Canada				
			Resume national campaign of printed materials	

PLAN BUDGET

This plan will be implemented within the existing marketing and communications budget. However, we should undertake a corporate review of all marketing and communications budget allocations to ensure they are adequate. Furthermore, additional capital monies will be needed for signage and these should come from Capital budgets. Any new spending on signage will be made as long as it contributes to an improvement of public safety or the quality of experience, or if it can support the development of new partnerships.

A revised breakdown of available budgets will be presented over the coming months, following financial analysis of the current situation.

EVALUATION MECHANISMS

We need to make use of several evaluation mechanisms to define the strengths and weaknesses of products and services offered by the NCC and to more accurately measure frequency of visitation and other perceptions of Canadians. Our limited market research budget means using less costly measurement tools and grouping certain markets and products together to obtain desired data and results.

Residents

To measure public opinion and residents' perceptions of the NCC, we often draw on results from a recent Decima study as well as the Sussex Circle report, among others. In a study conducted recently, we measured understanding of the roles and mandate of the organization, degree of awareness of the NCC, perceptions of different products such as outdoors/environmental stewardship, cultural events and levels of residents' pride. To track our progress in influencing public opinion and measuring the effectiveness of our actions, we will undertake this type of study regularly. This will further ensure we are optimizing human and financial resources and orienting our strategies properly. Where appropriate, we should include questions about awareness of the organization and pride in the Capital in market research conducted by other areas of the organization.

Regional omnibus surveys asking specific questions about resident opinions will further inform our activities while media monitoring and public consultation will provide us with the pulse and tone of local opinion.

National Level

To evaluate the effectiveness of national promotion campaigns, we need to establish mechanisms for measuring the total number of impressions and GRP (Gross Ratings Points – reach times frequency) of combined marketing and communications activities.

We should also use internal methods of to gather information about -- and spot trends for -- visitor origin, interests and reasons for visiting. This will be done by examining data collected by the call centre (both the 1-800 number and e-mail), web site visits, and visits to the Capital Infocentre (CIC). Moreover, surveys will be carried out on our sites to determine visitors' degree of satisfaction with our products. This information will

be shared with local tourism authorities for comparison against their results and data. We will also identify and seek partnership opportunities within the federal family, that is, Heritage Canada, Communications Canada, etc., to take advantage of different research projects.

Conducting national surveys will help us to evaluate Canadians' perceptions of the Capital and to set up a more accurate segmentation method. It will be essential to conduct a study similar to the one described in appendix at least once a year.

We will use the AdPact model to evaluate the impact of publicity/promotional activities on awareness of CCR, the image it conveys, purpose of travel as well as the level of pride Canadians feel towards the Capital.

For the youth segment of the market, we will send surveys to teachers as they plan, or once they've completed, a visit to the Capital to determine their degree of satisfaction and seek their comments on programs. And, finally, we will compile data on group reservations so that we might quantitatively evaluate program performance.

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⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Government of Canada, Canadian Tourism Commission, *Canada Marketing*, taken from the CTC website.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Government of Canada, National Capital Commission, *Tourism in Canada's Capital Region*, Corporate Audit, Research and Evaluation, 2001, 62 p.

⁵² In terms of tourist visits, Statistics Canada compiles trips of one night or longer without considering the distance travelled, and same-day trips of 80 km or more. The study also measured the number of visits and not the number of visitors, since the same visitor could visit several times during the study period.

⁵³ According to the following calculations, estimated from data collected 1995 to 1999, and taken from the presentation *Tourism in Canada's Capital Region, CARE presentation to CAEC, Five-year trend analysis*, 28 June 2001.

4 182 000 visits $(1 + g)^4 = 4\ 601\ 000$

g = rate of increase = 2.416%

⁵⁴ According to the World Tourism Organization, an excursionist is a day visitor who does not spend the night outside his or her main residence and whose trip lasts under 24 hours, whereas a tourist is a visitor who spends at least one night in a lodging in the area being visited.

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⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.56

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