



CULTURAL CAPITALES
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Comox Valley Cultural Development Marketing Plan *Marketing the Cultural Economy*

Prepared for
Cultural Capital of Canada Steering Committee

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Comox Valley Cultural Development Marketing Plan

Marketing the Cultural Economy

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'Leadership is the willingness and ability to leave your thumbprint...'

Success happens when you go faster than you can control...'

Sarah Weddington Vancouver Feb 20 2008
Roe vs Wade US Supreme Court 1973

Introduction

The Comox Valley is a unique '*place*.' Consider this cultural vision for the Valley....

..."There are certain *places* on Earth with an almost mythic capacity to draw us in, to inspire us, and to evoke a quality of spirit, creativity and community that is somehow deeply a part of us. The sights, the sounds, the icons, the design, the traditions, spoken and unspoken, say, This is a *place* like no other. This *place* lends itself more easily to inspiration than others - a *place* that contains within it that perfect, delicate mix of natural and created elements that people find so appealing. It is a *place* of supernatural beauty with a grand, yet fragile landscape millions of years in the making. This *place* has a rich cultural heritage, strong creative spirit and, perhaps most importantly it is a *place* for flat out fun..." This is Culture Comox Valley.

Simply said, culture is how the Comox Valley lives - incorporating its heritage and embracing its creative future. The expression of this Valley culture takes the form of:

- Agri-food and Gastronomy
- Artists, Artisans and Galleries
- Festivals and Events
- Heritage and Museums
- Performing Arts and Music
- Multi-Cultural Partnerships

The Cultural Marketing of the Valley

The marketing of culture in the Comox Valley will take a unique, less travelled path. The intent of the marketing plan is not to outline the 'usual' ways of marketing culture, rather to think 'out of the box' with creative partnerships and programs that, with time, will earn the Valley the recognition of the '*Island's Cultural Epicentre*.' This cultural *place* we are going to feature is where the creative expression is truly recognized, appreciated and where more and more cultured people want to live and conduct a cultural business. The culture is just felt. This feeling will become the brand essence.

Building on-going cultural brand equity, enhancing and developing unique cultural products and programs, ramping-up for the 2010 Cultural Olympiad, while simultaneously embarking on a consolidated marketing plan necessitates a non-sequential marketing plan.

As such, the *Cultural Marketing Plan* will serve as an abbreviated tactical action plan that supports the *Cultural Development Plan* to ensure a quick start to the powerful on-going legacy of cultural development in the Comox Valley.

The Cultural Economy

For the purposes of this marketing plan, the representation of culture and the economy will refer to culture as the *producers*, and the economy as the *consumers* or *participants* in the cultural experience. Writers on the cultural economy suggest that a community plan that stimulates more arts, cultural nodes and lifestyles is intrinsically better than one in which there is minimal focus on culture. The new creative class wants communities with culture. A successful cultural economy maximises cultural meanings, lifestyles and identities, just as successful economic development maximises profits and output. Within the cultural milieu, we must attempt to do both - focus on a complimentary balance of cultural producers, cultural experiences and the economic consumer.

Cultural Marketing Goal

The goal of the marketing plan is to raise the profile of culture both externally and within the Valley. The plan will discuss the enhancement and promotion of culture and cultural diversity to benefit the creative community, the citizens, the business sector and the visitors to the Comox Valley.

Cultural Strengths - Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

To attract cultural businesses, market to the visitor, build the artistic sector and fulfill the creative citizen, it is important to articulate what is creatively unique or special about the Valley. The following cultural strengths of the Valley should be considered as communication pillars in all cultural marketing communications:

- Culture in the Comox Valley is not a spectator sport - people just participate
- Citizens - young and old are passionately committed and involved. Like attracts like.
- The natural, unpolluted beauty of the area brings artisans and artists to *feel* their work and live in the calm, quietness of nature
- Personal image concerns of a bigger city are abandoned which allows creative, inner authenticity to bubble to the surface
- The pristine, rural land supports extensive agri-food production and an emerging gastronomic and culinary tourism experience
- Musicians have the freedom to practice in wide-open spaces as well as within organized groups
- Families move to the Valley for safety and freedom and to give their children 'old fashioned' cultural values
- The school district still funds an arts coordinator who fosters the incubator spirit of culture at a very young age
- Cultural volunteering is proportionally higher in the Valley than elsewhere
- Audiences are very supportive due to the high quality of amateur productions
- Heritage stories abound from the ocean, the mine and First Nations

From greenways to galleries - and so the circle of cultural renewal and legacy continues throughout the Comox Valley.

Cultural Obstacles - What is in Our Way?

The Valley has been discovered. Now let's really put it on the cultural map of 'must visits' while on the island, and enhance the strong community cultural involvement. Below are the noted obstacles to achieving this marketing vision:

'Culture Works'

Clearly an integrated approach to maximizing cultural development and marketing is needed and agreed to by the key stakeholders. Let's call this new, overarching group - *'Culture Works'* to give it a creative name, and to differentiate it from involvement with any past or existing organizations. This new organization removes the development and marketing of culture externally from the 4 governing bodies. Staff must be senior and have the ability to envision the collaborative development of the cultural sector and brand.

Competition for Share of the Entertainment Dollar

Cultural groups within the Valley are not inclined to package and promote together, other than to do minimal co-op advertising. With over 50 festivals and events during a given year, it is difficult for all groups to remain viable, and to market themselves to both the visitor and the community in a clear, uncluttered way. People only allocate so much money to cultural entertainment or purchases, so the buying decision must be made easy and exhibit high value to ask the participant for their time and/or money.

Skill Level

At both the staff (management, marketing) and the professional (actor, musician, artist) level there is a lack of, and an appreciation of highly qualified people. Both groups require adequate remuneration and currently the Valley cultural organizations are not able to, or don't see the value of the professional skill level. Community level cultural endeavours book spaces (the Sid) that could be used to 'raise the cultural bar' and skill level should various professional groups be given a permanent venue to entertain.

Facilities and Funding

Currently there is a shortage of cultural facilities. Going forward, strong co-ordinated marketing and joint packaging will increase the pressure on existing facilities. Suggestions of a multi-cultural campus, an arena/concert facility and a larger theatre were all mentioned. To support these new facilities and the aging baby-boomer demographic, more higher end hotel accommodation should also be built.

An on-going funding model for *Culture Works* must be established to ensure continuity. Project by project and year by year funding is not optimum for sustained development of the cultural sector.

Cultural Brand Positioning

The Invest Comox Valley positioning line *Wildly Sophisticated. Economically Unconventional* has worked extremely well for both business and agrifood. A consumer positioning is now needed to dovetail with this business positioning. The consumer line needs to speak to both residents and visitors - it must speak for culture in the entire Valley. The suggestion is to use *Culture Comox Valley - Wildly Sophisticated*.

If a complimentary cultural add-on is desired, it could be *Culture Comox Valley - Wildly Sophisticated. Naturally Creative*. These options require further discussion as the culture brand is rolled out and applied to partnered marketing communication pieces.

Cultural Marketing Strategies

Due to the multi-faceted marketing approach to position and launch a strong cultural marketing organization and brand, the following concurrent strategies are recommended:

- Ensure immediate announcement of the new Valley wide cultural organization, *Culture Works*, responsible for on-going capacity building, partnership facilitation and marketing of the heritage and culture sector
- Position and differentiate Comox Valley culture and heritage by creating a unique visual identity, brand, attitude, and brand language
- Become a significant community partner in the 2010 Winter Olympics Cultural Olympiad
- Formalize and develop the partnership of agri-food and gastronomy to showcase a strong partnership model
- Drive cultural development, multi-cultural partnerships and cross-cultural product and event packaging within the key target groups
- Create a formal public relations program that constantly works with the trade media
- Become recognized as the *'Island's Cultural Epicentre'*

Key Messages to Target Groups

While there are unique cultural target groups, there is significant overlap and very fine marketing points differentiating the key messages to each group. The following table outlines these messages externally to those in the creative community, business that support the creative community, and visitors we are hoping to attract to the Valley.

Target Group	Key External Messages <i>(to attract the creative community, creative businesses and visitors)</i>
Agri-food and Gastronomy	<p><u><i>Creative Community and Businesses</i></u> - be a producer or processor of niche agricultural products on rich soil with easy access to international markets in a pristine, micro-climate valley</p> <p><u><i>Visitors</i></u> - enjoy a participatory, culinary, artistic or shopping farm experience in a pristine rural valley while understanding farm production and enjoying time in the country</p>
Artists Artisans Galleries	<p><u><i>Creative Community and Businesses</i></u> - become part of a passionate, active, creative community from sculptors to graphic and media artists that thrive in a pristine, rural valley</p> <p><u><i>Visitors</i></u> - experience artists and artisans from all creative disciplines creating in their rural surroundings in a pristine, rural valley - enjoy artistic exhibits in over 20 Galleries including 2 large First Nations Galleries and many private artist country galleries</p>
Festivals and Events	<p><u><i>Creative Community and Businesses</i></u> - with over 50 events and festivals each year the opportunities for creative expression and supporting businesses are endless</p> <p><u><i>Visitors</i></u> - on any given weekend there is a smorgasbord of cultural events to entice and entertain visitors of all ages - from the Taiwanese Lantern Festival to Shellfish Nautical Days, the Filberg Craft Fair to mountain top wine festivals - something for everyone</p>
Heritage and Museums	<p><u><i>Creative Community and Businesses</i></u> - from ocean to the mountaintops opportunities abound with packaging and protecting the varied heritage of the Valley</p> <p><u><i>Visitors</i></u> - 4 unique museum experiences from a replica of an 1880's coal mine, ocean legends of the early white settlers, large Canadian Air Force Museum of memorabilia, and the vibrant K'omoks First Nations Gallery and big house</p>

Target Group	Key External Messages <i>(to attract the creative community, creative businesses and visitors)</i>
Performing Arts and Music	<p><u><i>Creative Community and Businesses</i></u> - a concentration of both community and professional performing artists along with a recording studio, allow the performing artist to excel and perform in one of 3 theatres and many community performance venues</p> <p><u><i>Visitors</i></u> - beefy local music is the thread that weaves through all artistic performances including the Vancouver Island Music Festival that attracts 30,000 attendees</p>
Multicultural Partnerships	<p><u><i>Creative Community and Businesses</i></u> - a unique blend of Chinese, Japanese, First Nations, French and other European cultural opportunities exist to feature the unique heritage of the Comox Valley</p> <p><u><i>Visitors</i></u> - the unique heritage experiences of the Francophone Sugar Shack and the Native annual pow-wow feature the Comox Valley as a <i>place</i> like no other</p>

Marketing Objectives, Tactics and Descriptions

The objectives and tactics below will be undertaken to realize the marketing strategies. It is understood that further discussion will be required to ensure a strong implementation of the suggested tactics and their relationship to the marketing plan.

<p><u>Objective</u> <i>Define mandate and announce the 'Culture Works' organization</i></p>	
<p><i>Tactic</i></p>	<p><i>Description</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and ramp-up <i>Culture Works</i> as the Valley Cultural Advocacy Agency as defined in the Cultural Development Plan of March 08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is imperative that this advocacy agency also have the responsibility for Valley wide cultural marketing in addition to cultural capacity building. It is recommended that the Director, and Marketing Manager of <i>Culture Works</i> be hired and jointly funded by the 4 regional governments. Culture crosses all political boundaries and needs a Valley-wide focus.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a ribbon - cutting ceremony to announce <i>Culture Works</i> and that the Comox valley is a member of the <i>Creative Cities Network</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to avoid any 'turf wars,' this event must be planned and orchestrated carefully. It is a good opportunity to call on all 'cultural activists' to participate with their art form (easels, violins, props etc) in the helicopter shoot of them all together - an excellent internal cultural team building activity while creating an external image for marketing Criteria for involvement in the Creative Cities Network needs to be analyzed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a Creative Community Conversation Workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite key players from the cultural organizations to give input to <i>Culture Works</i> on a regular basis as the organization unfolds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announce one cross-cultural project spearheaded by <i>Culture Works</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the ribbon-cutting ceremony above, feature the partnership of one or two high profile, unique, new cultural partnerships. This could be a redefinition of an existing festival or a partnership of new players or a unique event or contest. This may be the time to announce the <i>Bike Art Sculpture Contest</i> which will be discussed further.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate all Culture Comox Valley branding into the essence of <i>Culture Works</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Valley cultural brand is more than a logo and positioning line. It is the internal values this group works by and shares with the community and the visitor. The values of the Calgary Arts Development Board outlined in the Cultural Development Plan - March 08 is an excellent beginning for <i>Culture Works</i>.

<p><u>Objective</u> Define mandate and announce the 'Culture Works' organization</p>	
<p>Tactic</p>	<p>Description</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External marketing projects will follow the published brand development guidelines.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create ongoing external <i>Culture Works</i> communication tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure regular updates go out to the cultural community and press every 2 months outlining accomplishments of <i>Culture Works</i> to ensure on-going community by-in to the organization Work very closely with the Public Relations firm to ensure optimum positioning Use Shaw Cable as an effective notice board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote ongoing mutual benefits of Valley wide cultural networking, support and true joint, collaborative marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wherever possible promote the formal partnership of festival, events, art shows, musicals etc. This is not co-op advertising. Establish <i>Culture Works</i> guidelines to ensure the partnership model is successful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance and develop all Valley cultural festivals and events to be 'best of breed' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Culture Works</i> will encourage and educate festival organizers to continually 'raise the bar' on their event and look towards fewer events with greater impact

<p><u>Objective</u> Create and announce the Culture Comox Valley visual identity brand and sub-brands</p>	
<p>Tactic</p>	<p>Description</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define cultural positioning line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate the line <i>Wildly Sophisticated</i> or discuss alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine key cultural messages and brand language platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unique wording, attitude, style and use of images should be documented so all cultural marketing messages remain 'on-brand' Always challenge the naming of programs, services and events to be truly 'head turning' Examples - the <i>Seaweed Lady</i> who has a <i>Wild Seaweed Culinary Tour</i> or Fairburn Farm's <i>Culinary Boot Camp</i> or <i>The Chain Gang</i> mountain bike experience

<p><u>Objective</u></p> <p><i>Create and announce the Culture Comox Valley visual identity brand and sub-brands</i></p>	
<p><i>Tactic</i></p>	<p><i>Description</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document and design extensive valley-wide brand partnership guidelines for cultural people, places and products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and implement high standards for Comox Valley cultural products, events and experiences Incorporate distinct signage for artist studios, culinary farms and establish a 'VQA' type label that is a coveted <i>Culture Works</i> designation for cultural undertakings eg - '<i>Hand made in the Comox Valley</i>'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot one unique cultural sub-brand with one partnership organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with agri- food and gastronomy as the pilot sub-brand to expand and highlight the cultural experiences on the farm, from the ocean and within the arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design <i>Culture Works</i> email templates, banner ads, thank you cards and power point templates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designs will be individualistic and distinctive, yet be on brand with the new visual identity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print a <i>Comox Valley Cultural Experience</i> brochure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combine all aspects of Valley culture in one brochure (no advertising) with unique detailed day-trips outlined by sub sector, a cultural visitor passport program and a detailed list of all events and festivals by month = a one-stop shop for visitors and citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design the cultural website to partner with, but stand out from, the Invest Comox Valley website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture is not generally seen as an economic driver, so it must have its 'own' website, yet look like it belongs to the brand family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and execute a cultural positioning ad that is also produced as a large billboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the ad to both announce <i>Culture Works</i> as an entity, as well as position the cultural experience in the Valley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a cultural partnership ad that incorporates the 'coveted' <i>Culture Works</i> designation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with 2 cultural groups or individuals that meet the <i>Culture Works</i> designation for the initial ad Set the bar high so others will aspire to 'earn' the designation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and build 1 - 2 large 10 foot sign structures under the cultural brand identity where cultural groups could slip in their event notifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs to be located centrally and event templates to be given to each organization. This should help eliminate the 'lawn sign' look of each event posting their own signage through out the Valley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Become a significant player in culturally focused trade shows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List all trade shows, develop specific messaging and marketing materials and let it be known that the Comox valley is the <i>place</i> for culture of all kinds - not just the traditional definition of culture

<u>Objective</u> <i>Become a significant community partner in the 2010 Winter Olympics Cultural Olympiad</i>	
<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Description</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately target the 2009 Cultural Olympiad criteria and sources of funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first cultural Olympiad ran in Feb/March 2008 and the next one is 2009. The <i>Art Partners in Creative Development</i>' Legacy Program around the Olympics is of particular notice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Olympics as the platform to brainstorm the creative marriage of sports and culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Culture Works</i> should facilitate a culture and sport brainstorming session
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a <i>Comox Valley 2010 Cultural Olympiad Plan</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the funding criteria for Cultural Olympiad is clearly understood, develop and design a Valley wide cultural focus that maximizes the uses of these funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a joint cultural planning session with the Swedish ski team and local culturists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the experience of the Swedish visitors in the run-up to the Olympics, ensure their culture is included or featured in Valley events and festivals etc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage local artists, musicians and performing groups to understand and include the Olympics in their planning to 2010 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host a Cultural Olympiad Workshop to ensure the Comox Valley is focused on maximizing all cultural opportunities around the Olympics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Olympic Gift Giving Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission local artists to create Valley unique Olympic gifts for selling around the Olympics and for official gift presentations. • All gifts would carry the coveted <i>Culture Works</i> designation brand insignia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a <i>'Children of the Arts'</i> Program around their vision of Valley culture and the Olympic culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are naturally curious about the Olympics and generally express themselves well in an art form - theatre, painting, music etc. Search for the next youthful Cultural Olympian!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announce a <i>Cultural Trip Around the Valley Scavenger Hunt and Car Rally</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together the most unlikely cultural partners to boggle peoples' minds as to the definition of culture. For example, work with the mountain bikers and let them showcase their culture of food, music and art. • Announce a <i>'Recycled Bike Sculpture'</i> competition as part of the Public Art Program

<u>Objective</u>	
<i>Formalize and develop the partnership of agri-food and gastronomy</i>	
Tactic	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the positioning of 'culture' in agri-culture and arts around food in joint marketing and partnership campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capitalize and develop the definition of agriculture (the science, art, and business of cultivating soil, producing crops, and raising livestock) and the definition of gastronomy (the inter-disciplinary activity that around food there exists the arts - the study of the relationship of culture and food) These definitions state an excellent marketing platform for creative development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage Producers and Processors to develop an educational component to their business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist producers and processors with a visitor market readiness assessment and suggestions Announce a high school summer tour/co-op program for the development of farm cultural tours and experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redesign the Growers Guide to a Growers and Farm Experience Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include a strong marketing component of the guide to attract visitors to include a farm tour in their itineraries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create education experiences along with all events to raise the cultural knowledge level of patrons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If people are more educated about culture, they see the value and are willing to pay higher prices for food, performing arts, wine etc, thus contributing economically to the community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an annual signature arts and gastronomic festival - <i>The Art of Food</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An example may be the <i>Fifty Mile Culinary and Arts Event</i> that would focus all restaurants and farms to serve all local food while partnering and exhibiting all local art, or a local play and local music for a one week period The idea is to stimulate true partnership and joint marketing of this signature event that is marketed under one brand identity Solicit involvement with the Emily Carr group at North Island College because they have done this event in Vancouver
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have <i>Chef on the Move</i> partnership dinners throughout special <i>places</i> in the valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with a local winery or farm to bring in renowned chefs to create 'foody' events for the increasing numbers of moneyed people moving to the Valley Partial proceeds could go to the <i>Public Art Reserve Fund</i> or scholarships to local culinary students aspiring to greatness

<u>Objective</u>	
<i>Become recognized as the 'Island's Cultural Epicentre'</i>	
<i>Tactic</i>	<i>Description</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Announce a <i>Public Art Program</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary objective of the program would be to have a competition call of local artists to create public art that tells a story of the Comox Valley, its heritage or its future direction Determine the <i>Public Art Reserve Fund</i> at 1% of capital budgets from general tax revenue Appoint a small Public Art Committee (4-5 people) Developers should be encouraged to create commissioned art or give a 'donation' to the Public Art Reserve Fund Co-ordinate with Cultural Olympiad
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a <i>Cultural Identifier Signage Program</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design a multi-level signage program to offer all artists and artisans a sign, 'An artist Paints Here, A Sculpture Creates Here, A Musician Composes Here etc... Flood the valley with small signs, tastefully done, that visually assist with promoting the conclusion - this <i>place</i> truly is the island's cultural epi-centre.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the "Eagle in the City" Program (Lions Society) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with corporate sponsors to buy the eagles and attract local artists to paint. For example, WestJet and Brian Scott to exhibit an eagle at Comox Airport until after the Olympics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an annual <i>Culture Works Academy Awards</i> program and charity event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should be the 'signature event' in the valley - a black tie/blue jeans affair perhaps hosted in a farmer's field under many tents incorporating all aspects of culture within the Valley. Street performers, artists, maybe a wandering play throughout the evening all under one cultural theme Perhaps it is a combination of one or two past successful valley-wide events, or could be during <i>The Art of Food</i> event Professional event organizers should be hired and the ticket prices (\$125+) should reflect the quality of the event Proceeds go towards the Public Art Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoot a 2 minute YOU TUBE video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define the most unique cultural experiences in the Valley. Holding nothing back, shoot and creatively edit these experiences and upload to YOU TUBE There must be an 'off the wall' title for this video

<p><u>Objective</u></p> <p><i>Become recognized as the 'Island's Cultural Epicentre'</i></p>	
<p><i>Tactic</i></p>	<p><i>Description</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create education experiences along with all experiences to raise the artistic knowledge level of patrons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patrons are more educated on culture, they see the value and are willing to pay higher prices for food, performing arts or artistic products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly understand corporate sponsorship mandates of companies such as WestJet, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Teresen Gas, BC Hydro etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All companies categorize sponsorship opportunities into philanthropic and marketing driven objectives. If these objectives are clearly understood, events can be tailored to suit a sponsor's mandate thereby ensuring significant funding contributions which result in a much stronger, highly recognized program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm all multi - cultural and regional partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong partnerships answer the problem of "too few funds for too many requests" thereby mitigating the competitive grant system while enhancing cultural experiences

Research

Cultural market research and exit surveys will form the basis for the ongoing strategic and tactical evolution of the Valley cultural brand and positioning. Generally the research will be qualitative input to enhance product and service development, with quantitative measurement of topics on an as needed basis. Research will provide insights and comprehension on issues or situations that affect the Valley's delivery of exceptional cultural experiences.

Critical Success Factors

The following key areas are believed to be necessary for fast tracking and targeted marketing of culture in the Valley:

- Acceptance of culture as the driving force of the Valley - it is how we live - it is our sense of *place* - it is the sum total of what the Valley has to offer - it is the art of living
- Commitment, funding, and announcement of *Culture Works* by the 4 governing bodies
- Collaboration by all cultural groups to drive to the Valley being recognized as the 'island's cultural epicentre'
- Development of a strong, energized, cultural brand
- Benefit focused marketing collateral

- Enhancement and development of one or two Comox Valley unique, iconic experiences
- Dynamic website continually updated to create active consumer involvement
- Ongoing questioning of all products, policies and procedures - *Does this support the cultural brand vision or potentially harm it?*