

TARARUA

What does it take to brand a genuine rough diamond?

The bane of any small town or region is the saying “if you blink as you are driving you’ll miss it”. It is all too easy to drive on through some of the best New Zealand has to offer on the way to something bigger, louder or newer. Tararua is a hidden gem, and one that just needed to identify itself, and what made it interesting, vibrant and unique - in order to regenerate local pride, tourism and investment interest.

Sometimes a love of what is different makes you the same: We helped Tararua define its ‘sense of place’ and unify its people to be able to celebrate what they loved about their rugged and remote region in order to attract other likeminded visitors, businesses and residents.



The Challenge

Tararua offers a rugged, physical environment with an unspoilt coastline. It is also defined by a community with a pioneering heritage who have a real “sense of place”. Tararua caters for visitors through a diverse range of tourist attractions and activities. Local industry included the likes of Feltex Carpets, Kiwi Cooperative Dairies and Norsewear. In 1999 civic and business leaders recognised the benefits a common vision and unified approach could achieve for the region. Three key objectives were identified:

- a. To increase pride and local identity.
- b. To boost population growth in the region.
- c. To increase awareness of the area and exploit its natural tourism opportunities.

This strategic work identified the need for a Tararua brand. This was seen as integral to the success of the region’s marketing – promoting Tararua as a fantastic place to live, work and visit.

The Solution

The first step was developing a Brand Blueprint using DNA’s inGENEius methodology.

This process defined the brand’s purpose, values, personality, competitive environment and target audiences etc. The core brand essence was confirmed as Rough Diamond.

The brand was then brought to life through the development of the visual identity (logo, supporting imagery, strap line, colour palette, fonts/typography, print collateral layout/design etc.) and applied to a wide range of communication and marketing formats.

The design focussed on two themes – the Tararua Ranges (the region’s iconic landmark) and the rugged spirit of the people and landscape. This translated into the gritty typography of the Tararua logo, simple graphics depicting the mountain peaks, a strapline (Explore the Elements) and an earthy colour palette. These were combined with other strong, energetic, typographic/illustrative elements to convey the district’s intrinsic approach to life.

The Result

The project is seen as having been a “huge success” by the Tararua District Council. Buy in from the local community was “immediate and well beyond expectations. They now lived in Tararua, not somewhere in Southern Hawkes Bay”. This success quickly led to DNA being asked to re-image the Council so the two brands were visually compatible. At the time, the fact that no other region had such a well defined and uniquely expressed brand platform gave Tararua the opportunity to make real impact with its marketing. Results directly attributed to the brand include:

Tourism – this soon became the fastest growing industry in the region with 38% growth over the two years following the brand’s launch two years – one new business opened per month during 2002.

Resident Attraction – a direct influence was seen on improving land values, increasing demand for housing, and an increase in buyers from outside the region.

Regional Website – Visitors numbers soon increased from 150 to over 3,000 a month (60% are from overseas)

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