



# McKinney, Texas: Unique by Nature

## Presented by CoCo Good

### Director of Communications & Marketing



# What is a **BRAND?**

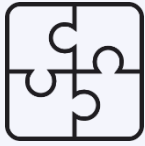


MORE THAN JUST A LOGO & TAGLINE

Simply put, a brand is your **story**, your **reputation**  
and your **community's DNA**.

# Why is research important?

## DATA-DRIVEN AND INTENTIONAL DISCOVERY



- Your brand must be authentic:
  - You must be what you market.
  - You cannot successfully market what you simply wish to be.
- Therefore, without proper research:
  - You cross your fingers and are completely unaware whether anyone will listen... let alone act.



# Creating a community-owned brand

## NOT JUST A NEW LOGO



- Team players in developing the brand:
  - City Council and Leadership
  - Economic Development Corporation
  - Community Development Corporation
  - Visit McKinney
  - Main Street, Performing Arts Center
  - McKinney National Airport
  - Community
    - Key stakeholders/focus groups
    - Boards and commission members
    - Citizens



# What research did we do?

## DATA-DRIVEN BRAND CREATION



Partnered with nationally-renowned branding and research company. Data driven and intentional process.

14 qualitative and quantitative research methods included:

- Marketing audit
- Key constituent analyses
- Focus groups
- Stakeholder surveys
- Inquiry and visitor origin mapping
- Hospitality Development Index
- Prizm reports
- Man-on-the-street interview
- Target audience perception study
  - Visitors (business and leisure)
  - Hoteliers
  - Business prospects (sold and unsold)
  - Site selection consultants
  - State tourism office
  - State economic development executives



# What did the research show?

## COMMON THEMES



- The words “**unique**” and “**nature**” surfaced, and continues to surface, repeatedly
  - The unique nature and inherent **character of our community**, as well as our natural assets
- Great to be close to Dallas, but we’re our own community
- Conscientiously planning our development in face of growth
- Strong community pride and community spirit – hometown feel
- People love many things about McKinney, not just one thing
  - Well-rounded - arts, downtown, education, parks, businesses, quality of life, events, entertainment, airport, etc.
- **Dichotomy is our strength** – old and new, large but hometown feel, traditional and nontraditional developments, amenities and open space
- Modern amenities, but feels different than surrounding cities



# Our brand communicates who we are

## OUR BRAND IS OUR IDENTITY



- Represents a promise of what our community stands for and what we are committed to being
- The best brands flex and evolve, but stay consistent over time, outliving trends and fads
- Central messaging platform for storytelling
- Guides all communication so it looks and feels cohesive
- Broad enough to apply to messaging across a full spectrum of communications
- Build marketing awareness for McKinney, opening the door to aggressively sell McKinney assets





# A community brand

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE UNIQUE BY NATURE?



- Represents the **community as a whole**
- Cultural diversity, quality of life, great education, unique developments and dynamic new growth
- Natural assets: rolling hills, city parks, streams and lakes
- Brand is a reminder of the “**essence**” of the **entire community**
- McKinney will continue to **grow** and **change**, but our Unique by Nature qualities will remain

**The brand continues to communicate who we are,  
where we came from and where we're headed**





**We are McKinney.**  
**We are unique by nature.**

The City of McKinney's *Unique by nature* brand defines our city's image for residents, businesses and visitors alike. The tagline speaks to McKinney's inherent uniqueness and embodies the spirit of our community: our historic downtown, cultural diversity, charming neighborhoods, business-friendly environment and natural assets.



McKINNEY IS  
UNIQUE BY NATURE  
BECAUSE:

It's a great place for business!  
Employees love working  
& living in McKinney



McKINNEY IS  
UNIQUE BY NATURE  
BECAUSE:

I can escape to a  
Mediterranean village  
without ever  
leaving town.

McKINNEY IS  
UNIQUE BY NATURE

It's a thoroughly  
modern city wrapped in  
hometown charm.



McKINNEY IS  
UNIQUE BY NATURE  
BECAUSE:

we have the BEST events,  
BEAUTIFUL parks and  
MILES of nature trails



McKINNEY IS  
UNIQUE BY NATURE  
BECAUSE:

It's the  
friendliest town  
EVER!



McKINNEY IS  
UNIQUE BY NATURE  
BECAUSE:

of its history,  
its people,  
its restaurants...  
**EVERYTHING!**



[www.McKinneyTexas.org](http://www.McKinneyTexas.org)

SPEAKS TO THE CHARACTER  
OF OUR COMMUNITY

## Unique:

being without like or equal

## Nature:

1. anything in the physical world not made by people
2. disposition or temperament
3. the inherent character or basic constitution of a person or thing

# Brand commitment: Holding true to its origins

## BUILDING A FLEXIBLE-GROWTH BRAND



- Designed to evolve and adapt with our growth
- Brand still holds true to the city vision, the foundation of our strategies and priorities:

### **2040 Vision Statement**

- We are One McKinney – a united community that supports the diversity of its economy and people.
- We celebrate our natural and cultural assets, and invite private developments that create places of lasting value.
- Smart public and private investments ensure McKinney remains a top choice for people to live, work, play and visit through 2040 and beyond.



# Umbrella branding architecture

## McKINNEY MARKETING STRATEGY



# City communications



## WHO WE ARE TALKING TO:

- Residents, businesses/developers, visitors
- Employees, job seekers
- Our neighbors – Our sister cities
- Media: News and editorial

## WHAT WE ARE SAYING:

- Overview of the community, who we are
- Individual messages from 25+ departments
- Transparency, open information
- Council messages and communications
- Crisis and public safety communication
- Internal employee communication





# Business & visitor communication

## WHO WE ARE TALKING TO:

- Global, national and local corporate decision makers
- Prospective retail, restaurants and corporate considering relocation to McKinney
- Aircraft owners, corporate fleets
- Pilots and operators
- Flight crews, schedulers and dispatchers
- Residents and potential local, regional and national visitors
- Businesses seeking unique location and atmosphere
- Event attendees

## WHAT WE ARE SAYING:

- McKinney is pro-business, pro-growth
- Acclaimed quality of life, a place where businesses/employees want to call home
- Diverse economy, housing and workforce
- Growing retail, restaurant and corporate opportunities
- Convenient ground and air location, close to Dallas and surrounding cities
- McKinney as a destination for shopping, dining and entertainment
- Community events
- Preservation of historic cultural district





## Community buy-in

I AM UNIQUE BY NATURE



The city implemented an “I am Unique by Nature” campaign to share the essence of our brand.

- The goal is to encourage residents to take ownership of our brand and share how it speaks to them personally.

Award-winning campaign includes:

- Dedicated webpage: [UniquebyNature.org](http://UniquebyNature.org)
- Monthly advertisements in Community Impact
- Video series
- Promotional pieces
- Social media photo challenges

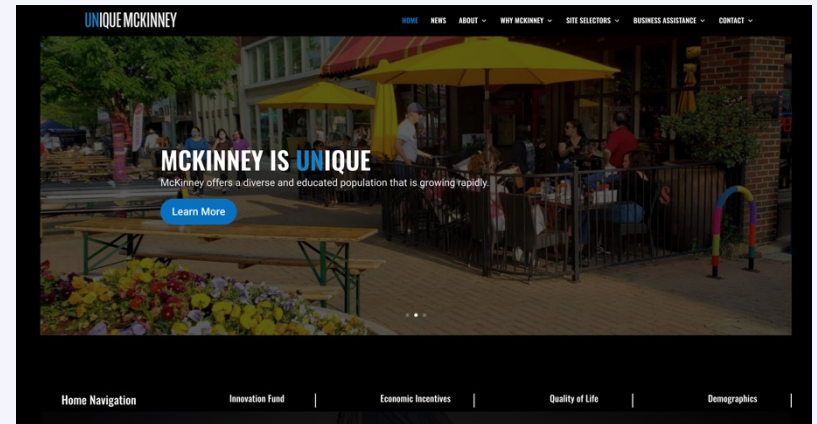


## TOP 100+ WORDS TO DESCRIBE MCKINNEY



**SOURCE: SILO MURAL PROJECT  
SURVEY MARCH 2022**





# MEDC “UNIQUE MCKINNEY” RESEARCH

BUSINESSES WANT TO BE WHERE EMPLOYEES WANT TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY



- This brand campaign stretched across the **three key pillars** in economic development - **live, work, and play**.
- There are thousands of cities across the country that are competing for the interest of a site selector and **only the most UNIQUE cities will be considered** for any given development project.
- McKinney is UNIQUE and the reasons are endless. **The new marketing was developed to give the audience a sense of what makes McKinney UNIQUE.**



# McKinney is the branding gold standard

DOING WHAT OTHERS ONLY ASPIRE TO ACCOMPLISH



- Our city holds a valuable 18-year brand, an investment that continues to pay dividends
- Director of Communications invited to speak at two state and national conferences in 2022 on municipal branding
- Our brand is still winning awards from respected industry professionals



# Meeting the goal

## OTHERS RECOGNIZE AND SPEAK OUR BRAND



- **Dallas Morning News Editorial Board April 2022**

*"[McKinney] has seen fantastic economic development and low taxes flow to McKinney, a place where people love to raise their families."*

- **Money Magazine 2014**

*"It's a thoroughly modern city wrapped in hometown charm."*

- **Dallas Morning News Editorial Board on the launch of the brand February 2005**

- *"McKinney has hit a home run."*
- *"Unique by nature" works. The city is unique to its core..."*
- *"...and the city does have a greater diversity of natural beauty than almost any other in North Texas."*
- *"A welcome addition. A display of personality."*



## OTHERS RECOGNIZE AND SPEAK OUR BRAND

### Businesses

- **David Brooks, Chairman and CEO, Independent Financial**  
Video interview, in reference to why a business owner should look to locate a business in McKinney:  
*"When you narrow it down to Dallas-Fort Worth and go 'Gosh, within Dallas-Fort Worth where would I want to build the company today, where I can attract terrific employees who have a desire to live closer to where they work, they don't want to do the long commutes?' McKinney is perfect because you get a sized city that can make a deal economically, but the quality of the school system, the higher education opportunities and the business environment here is really unparalleled."*
- **Keith Lewis, Founder/President, TUPPS Brewery**  
*"If you say that McKinney is Unique by Nature, I think we put the exclamation point at the end of it, because we're pretty unique."*
- **Common Desk (thecommondesk.com)**  
*"McKinney, TX truly lives up to its tagline, 'Unique by nature,' and we can't wait to embrace every bit of its flavor in our workspace."*
- **Astra Realty (astrarealty.com)**  
*"The city's Unique by Nature brand is more than a tagline, it embodies the community's willingness to work together to make McKinney a great place to be."*



## OTHERS RECOGNIZE AND SPEAK OUR BRAND

### Residents

- “**Open spaces**, close to **nature**. Inclusive. Modern leadership.”
- “It is **a city of contrast** – one which values the past...and one which looks to the future it embraces and makes a **priority of nature, history, and art.**”
- “When we moved to the Dallas area, we had to look for where we wanted to place our roots. McKinney gave us the best of both worlds with a small-town feel while also having so much to do with **so much character and life.**”
- “In a suburban area with not much old and sometimes devoid of character, **McKinney has organic character** due to its age.”
- “Beautiful, green with lots of trees! **Nature all around us.** It is friendly and **rich with culture and history.**”



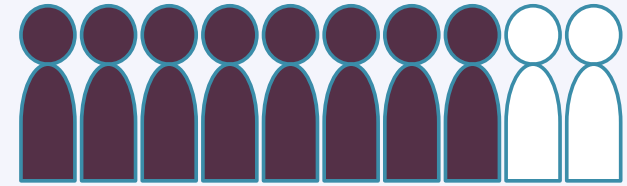
**SOURCE: SILO MURAL PROJECT  
SURVEY MARCH 2022**



## CITIZEN SATISFACTION

**93%** gave positive marks to the overall image/reputation of McKinney.

## ECONOMIC HEALTH



At least **8 in 10**

Respondents rated the overall economic health of McKinney as excellent or good

## PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE IN MCKINNEY

Creating/preserving open lands

95%

Retail, restaurant, and entertainment options

93%

Purchasing high-quality land outside of the floodplain

88%

Outdoor entertainment venue

84%

Expanded hike and bike trail system

83%



**SOURCE: 2021 CITIZEN SURVEY**

# Questions?

