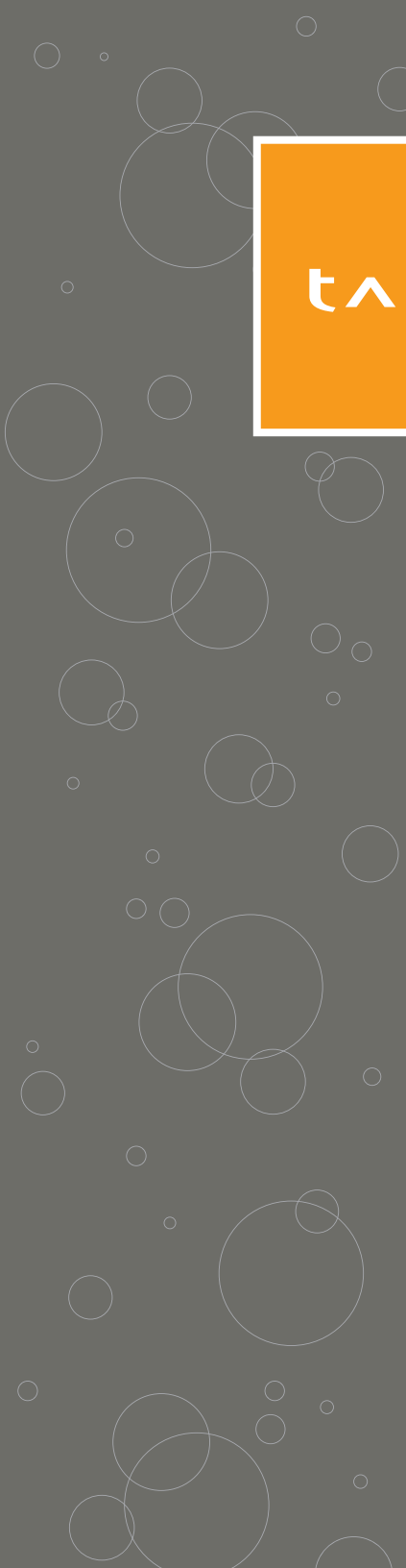




CASE STUDY IN BRAND REVITALIZATION  
Community Futures  
Network of Alberta



# We strengthen the core of your brand and your business.

Building powerful brands from the inside out. It's what we do best. We help our clients align their organization's behaviours, communications and business processes so that everything and everyone focuses on the right strategy. We take our clients through a rigorous process to discover what's truly unique, appealing, and relevant about their company, product, or service. The end result defines, differentiates and dramatizes the brand to generate value, clarity and a framework for unifying the organization — inspiring its people and creating meaningful customer experiences.





In 2005, Taiji Brand Group (TBG) developed a comprehensive brand program for Community Futures Pan West, an overarching association which encompasses 90 independent Community Futures offices and 4 provincial associations. Since that time TBG has been supporting all 90 offices in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba with the ongoing implementation and evolution of this new brand asset. In 2007, the Community Futures Network of Alberta, which provides support to 27 local offices, approached TBG to develop a specific provincial strategy aimed at dramatically increasing loan activity and raising the organization's profile as a community lender.

### Background

Community Futures is a national program created in 1986, conceived as a national economic adjustment initiative operated at the local or regional level. It was designed to be a grassroots, community-driven program leading to a stronger future for rural communities. As independent, community-based developmental lenders and rural economic development specialists, Community Futures has actively supported thousands of businesses and community groups in creating diverse, sustainable rural economies.

### Challenge

While Community Futures had remained successful over the last twenty years, it needed to do more to adapt to the tremendous changes taking place in rural economic development. For better or worse, small businesses are now part of the global economy, and communities are facing unparalleled economic and environmental pressures. To remain relevant and vital, Community Futures needed to take a look at how they provided services in this volatile, changing small business environment. In particular, access to their loan products needed to be diversified and improved in order to meet the needs of a new generation of rural entrepreneurs.



**THE ROAD  
AHEAD** is about following  
your dreams





## The Objectives

The objectives for the campaign included performance goals as well as specific target numbers:

1. Reinvigorate Community Futures' positioning as dynamic, progressive and relevant community players
2. Advance the organization's rural diversification mandate and, specifically
3. Realize a substantial increase in loan activity by 2010

This meant:

- Redefining the Community Futures experience, and making it consistent across all Community Futures offices in Alberta
- Creating fast, flexible and affordable financing products and services
- Giving 24/7 access to targeted business loan information
- Developing an easier, more streamlined loans process

## The Strategy

To achieve the campaign's objectives, a number of changes were made both to the products and services being offered and to the way they are delivered to clients. New tools and strategies were developed in collaboration with the CFNA executive in order to update and streamline processes across the province.

Once the plan was in place, it was imperative to achieve buy-in from all 27 of the local Community Futures offices. Without their complete commitment to the new direction, nothing would work at the ground level. With this in mind, TBG orchestrated a dynamic, engaging introduction to the new campaign at the CFNA's Annual Conference in Calgary in November, 2008.

Elements of the campaign included:

- A re-tooled, re-branded suite of loan products that are specifically geared to today's small businesses. This included the re-packaging of existing loans and the creation of new loans to address specific market segments.
- An interactive small business lending website at [www.roadahead.biz](http://www.roadahead.biz). With this site, not only can prospective clients access information about Community Futures loans, they can also create and store their loan applications online.
- A toll free number that routes each caller immediately to the Community Futures office nearest them, in order to ensure direct contact with staff who can actually help them.
- A multi-media marketing campaign including province wide-radio and public relations, as well as a campaign toolkit (ads, posters, presentations and collateral) for each local Community Futures.



### SMALL BUSINESS LOANS TO HELP YOU GET AHEAD

- RealEstate:** \$25K to \$100K for purchase or refinance of up to \$750,000 - no fees can result in a great opportunity.
- Finance:** Provide \$50K of credit lines from \$10,000 to \$100,000 in many ways that work when you need it.
- TruckLoan:** Loans for sales, delivery, inventory, and working productivity and developing new products and markets.
- Business:** Loans for start-up, expansion, and working capital needs with the benefit of an existing and successful business.
- Invoice:** Loans for entrepreneurs who want to start a business or a community-based by Community Futures.
- Vehicle:** Loans for young entrepreneurs ages 18 to 26 with a great business idea.
- Business:** Loans for growth with a business, looking to start or expand a business.

We can help you start, expand, buy or relocate a business. Find out more: 1-877-858-9998 | readahead.ca

### What's your dream? Make it come true.

### Helping Rural Business Meet the Road Ahead

Every year, over 100,000 people start a new business, many of which are small businesses. In Canada, that's nearly 1 million new businesses each year. But to make a lot of jobs, our provinces and territories need more businesses, and that means more jobs. Our provinces and territories need more businesses, and that means more jobs. Our provinces and territories need more businesses, and that means more jobs.

Community Futures is a national organization that provides financial and technical assistance to small businesses across Canada. We help you start, expand, buy or relocate a business. Find out more: 1-877-858-9998 | readahead.ca

### Community Futures

## "THE ROAD AHEAD"

Helping Rural Business Meet the Road Ahead

Community Futures is a national organization that provides financial and technical assistance to small businesses across Canada. We help you start, expand, buy or relocate a business. Find out more: 1-877-858-9998 | readahead.ca

### CODIE PREVOST: HE HAD THE TALENT AND THE DREAM WE GAVE HIM THE TRACTION

We helped Codie Prevost achieve his business dream. What's yours? 1-877-858-9998 | readahead.ca

4





**Reference:**

Jon Close  
Executive Director  
Community Futures  
Network of Alberta  
403.851.9995 Ext 222  
jon@cfna.ca

**Creative Concept**

The marketing campaign, entitled “The Road Ahead” was built around Codie Prevost, a young and up-coming country singer who recorded his first album with the help of a Community Futures loan. Codie is bright, personable, hard-working and ambitious – and represents everything positive about rural entrepreneurship. The campaign’s radio ad features a casual, interview-like conversation with Codie in which he talks about the help and support he received from Community Futures in pursuing his goals. Codie also appears on the campaign posters and other collateral material. Codie appeared at the campaign launch in Calgary and immediately created a tremendous sense of excitement and optimism about the new direction. As a unique add-on to the campaign, Codie was also available to go to local Community Futures offices to perform for clients and guests, and talk to them in person about his experience.

**Results**

The Community Futures offices love the campaign and are very engaged at the local level. In the first month of the campaign Codie did over 25 interviews with radio and print media, including some national publications, there were over 3,000 unique visits to the new loan website, each local Community Futures office received an average of 21 calls on the campaign toll-free line.

The following quotes from various Community Futures managers attest to the impact the campaign is making:

“Traditionally, most clients have found us through word of mouth ... when they need our services. And then along came ‘The Road Ahead’ with Codie Prevost – and our office has been running off our feet ever since.”

“Because of the Road Ahead campaign – we have had more unpaid press in the local paper and radio station in the last few weeks than in the past few years. By the half-way mark of the campaign, we had already met our annual objectives for new loan activity!”

The Community Futures movement in Alberta is feeling refreshed and revitalized. The local offices have received a real jolt of energy and enthusiasm, and are looking forward to the future and even greater endeavours.



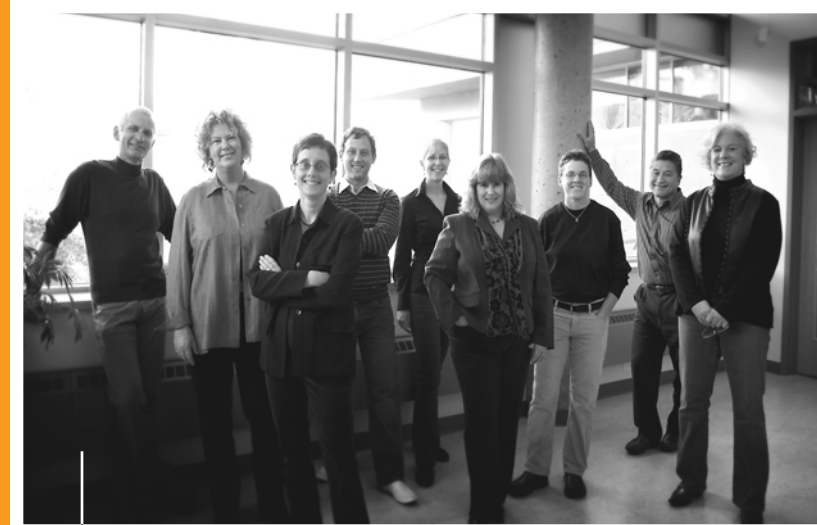
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250.743.0649

[www.taiji.ca](http://www.taiji.ca)

Taiji Brand Group is a full-service, integrated communications firm with a specialization in building powerful brands. Using our proprietary methodology, we help progressive companies measure, evaluate, understand, craft and express their brands. We help companies mobilize their brand as a strategic tool and help them increase its value.

Our clients range from promising, young enterprises to established firms recognized as among Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies. We work with clients on comprehensive brand development and we also take on specific projects or parts of the branding process. With roots in both traditional communications and business consulting, we provide a unique blend of sound strategic thinking, outstanding creative and dedicated service.



The Taiji team, from left to right: Zachariah Crow, Cheryl McBride, Claire Matthews, Dale Nigel Goble, Amy Rutherford, April Shepherd Trent, Jenny Farkas, Wayne Taiji, Caroll Taiji. Missing from the photo are Victoria Loyer and Tanya Young. Behind the camera is Nik West.