



2021 Valdez **Branding Strategy** **for COVID-19 Recovery** *Brand Proposal*

qualifications & experience

FIRM INFORMATION

Spawn Ideas

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Spawn Ideas is a full-service, independent, employee owned firm. As such, all staff/owners have skin in the game, making us uniquely entrepreneurial, forward thinking, accountable, and hardworking. We consistently follow what's new and necessary in research, trends, technology and capabilities, ever growing and changing given client needs and our fast-moving industry.

Spawn doesn't consider location as a barrier - for clients or staff - given efficient use of technology. Best-in-class talent is our goal with team members in Alaska (home office), Colorado, Dallas, Atlanta and Hawaii. Tools like DropBox, GChat, Workamajig (project management software), and Zoom make us a great virtual team, able to collaborate internally and with clients, successfully, from anywhere.

PROJECT TEAM



Karen King
President & CEO



Amy Adams
Senior Art Director



Roland Adams
Senior Art Director



Siobhan Johansen
Project Coordinator



Abbey Brau
Account Supervisor

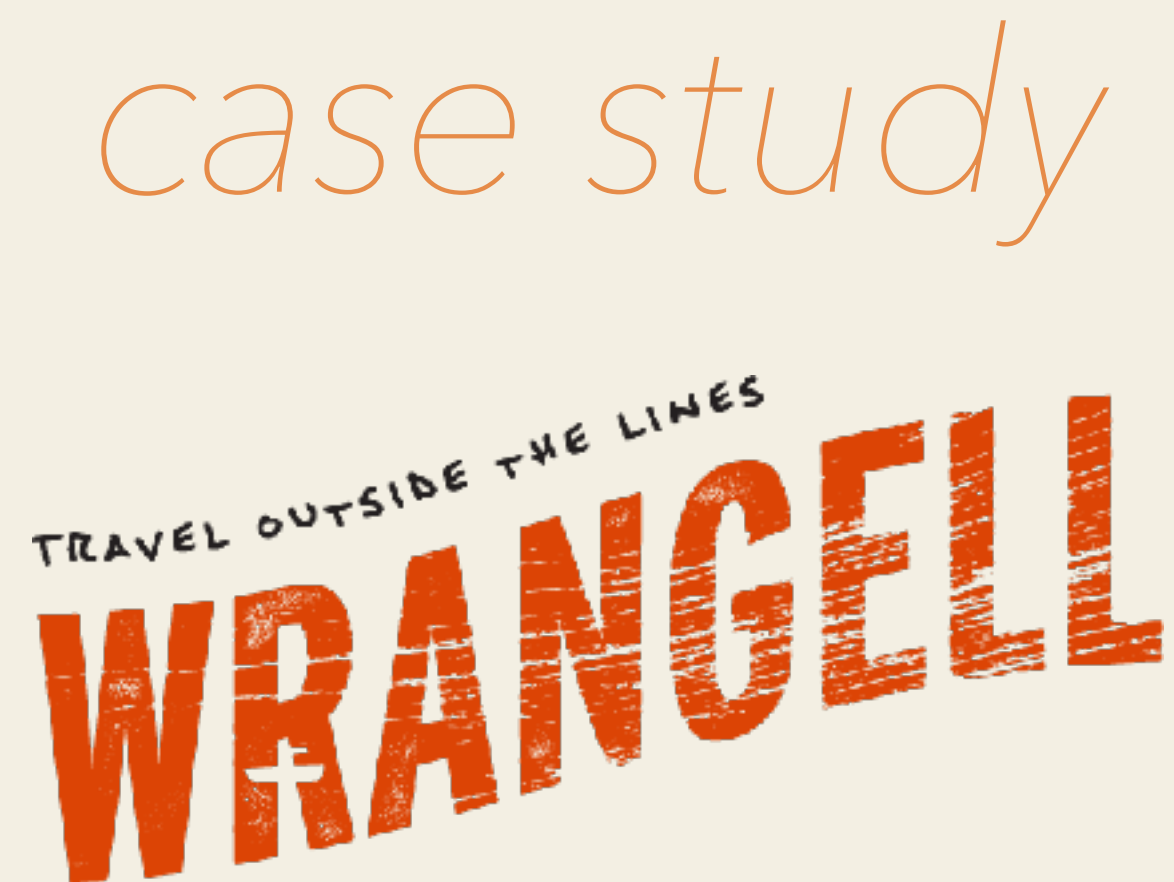


Jesse Alleva
*Senior Strategist,
Market Researcher*

Find more about Spawn and read bios of each of our team members [here](#), and watch our :60 video [here](#) - we're so excited to partner with the City of Valdez on this project!

EXPERIENCE WITH BRANDING - PORTFOLIO LINK

We've included our most recent rebranding work, for the city of Wrangell, in a case study on the following page. And we demonstrate our branding experience through other highly relevant, creative and branding process examples [here](#).



BRANDING WRANGELL, ALASKA (2020)

ASK

Refresh Wrangell's destination brand image to ensure that Wrangell stays relevant and top of mind for visitors amongst a stagnant travel industry following the Covid-19 pandemic. The brand should represent the city, people, and unique history of Wrangell.

DELIVERABLES

Research: Wrangell resident and visitor interviews

Branding: brand attributes, brand personality, brand promise

Design: logo and tag line development, brand guidelines, sample advertisement and web use of brand design

Brand Implementation: recommendations for community outreach planning, media placement, and measurement

BRAND OBJECTIVE

Create a destination brand for a proud, friendly community of Alaskans that want to share their home with intentional visitors looking for high-quality, active, and immersive Alaskan experiences.

CHALLENGE

Wrangellites are a small, proud community. They love where they live and want to share it with people who want to experience it – not *tourists*, but *visitors* – the right visitors. Many Wrangell residents had strong opinions on how their community should be represented to the world and who it would attract, e.g., visitors to Wrangell should be interested in the history and community. They should care less about selfies and tchotchkes and would happily share a beer with a local they met on the docks.

Spawn spent time in Wrangell, worked with community leaders and spent time with residents willing to share their opinion. We got fluent on Wrangell, and identified a brand that not only captured the spirit and hospitality of the community, but also the beauty and rugged, real Alaska that Wrangell delivers.

RESULTS

We have permission to share this case study, though Wrangell's new brand has not yet been made public. Presently, the WCVB is working on brand launch and web development plans for Spring 2021. The success we've seen comes from the mostly volunteer board we worked directly with to develop the brand. Their happiness and excitement about the new brand tells us we hit the mark in finding the balance between elusive and friendly; historic and bold. The conversations that Jesse Alleva, our research strategist, had with the community allowed him acceptance as a sort of an honorary Wrangellite, and win over their trust that Spawn Ideas, as partner, could help Wrangell to not just bring in tourists, but bring true visitors.

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Valdez is at an inflection point. In many ways, the city has always been a crossroads: the terminus of the Pipeline and the beginning of Alaska oil southward via barge, the meeting of the Chugach mountains and Prince William Sound, a place nearly spoiled by one of the largest oil spills in history and yet containing endless unspoiled scenery and wildlife. Once again, today, Valdez is determining where it wants to go and what it wants to be – for residents and visitors. Do you want to be the Gateway to the Interior? Gateway to Prince William Sound? Do you want people to “Discover Valdez?” As the city charts a course for the future with its comprehensive plan, it may seem that starting all over with a branding process is a mistake.

We agree – and we have a solution. We know that Valdez has been engaged, focus grouped, and questioned to death by branding and other experts. What can possibly be different this time around? The good news? We believe you’re almost there.

Instead of starting over, we plan on building upon previous research. As a former Valdez councilman put it, “Anyone who has lived here already knows the strengths and weaknesses of Valdez. It seems rhetorical that we are asking ourselves the same question and getting the same answer.” Touché. That’s why Spawn will do more than simply capture or summarize our research. We’ll do the hard work of finishing the job, uncovering insights and distilling what we learn into a unified message about Valdez that shows value and impact. We understand that given previous rebranding efforts and the devastating effect of COVID-19 on Valdez, this needs to be a wise investment that shows true ROI. Guided by the Branding Committee and informed by the public, we will ensure that Valdez is at the front of the line with a unified message when the world recovers from COVID-19.

We Don’t Do One-Size-Fits-All Templated Branding

Our approach is customized for Valdez and, as such, doesn’t recreate the wheel. Your destination/city is distinct from other projects, period. And even more so in its history of consulting projects, with brand research that may be sitting on the shelf. It would be folly and arrogance if we didn’t use what’s been done to get a head start on this project.

Valdez, with its new harbor, Meals Hill project and COVID-19, has seen recent change. So Spawn will work to fill in the gaps from previous branding efforts with a modicum of targeted research on our own, e.g., better engaging the Alaska Native community with this new effort. And we’ll pay special attention to the VCVB, Port, Harbor, Parks and Recreation and other Valdez economic engines.

You’ve already done so much of the work (interviews, group meetings, public forums) and finding reports exist. So, importantly, we offer a branding process in which Valdez will see more strategic branding creative assets sooner – things like brand promises, attributes, concepts – logo, look and feel, and a tagline. We will present your recommended brand identity with sound rationale, then gather feedback on these tangible assets from the Branding Committee and the public to revise and/or polish them for further comment and development. Valdez needs to see progress quickly and your timeline demands it.

HOW IT WORKS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“Nothing about Valdez, without Valdez.” A post on the Valdez Bulletin Board Facebook group suggested this process be bottom-up rather than top-down. With guidance from the Branding Committee, here is our three-fold engagement process outline:

- 1. **Engage the Branding Committee.** We will meet with this group early about the rebranding plan, their role and process milestones. These top-down insiders will help guide our effort. From this group, we will compile a list of candidates that represent outsiders for semi-structured interviews to capture insights, perceptions and recommendations.
- 2. **Assess Stakeholder Individual and Group Research to Date.** Avoid repetition. Supplement with additional research prudently, respecting those who’ve already done so much work.
- 3. **Inform and Engage the Community.** This group represents the bottom-up insiders. A place brand is co-created by the community, so it is important the community be engaged with the process. We will be transparent in our efforts, accessible to the Valdez community and will also engage underrepresented groups whose voices may not have been heard in previous branding efforts. Expect action and deliverables rather than just reports and summaries.
 - As part of this effort, we’ll create and consistently update a public-facing website that tracks rebranding progress and solicits community feedback.

KEY NEEDS: METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

- All previous branding research not available publicly.
- List of insiders and contact information for engagement. Potential stakeholders include city government, Alaska Native leaders, Parks and Recreation, Harbor officials, Port of Valdez officials, tourism, writers and artists, previous visitors, and the fishing community, business owners and other resident leaders.
- Input and approval regarding website development for the project
- Together, we’ll develop a clear understanding of the Branding Committee’s participation (level of engagement), and project milestones, deadlines, community engagement, reporting, and outcomes.

Throughout this proposal, teal-blocked or bolded areas/lines indicate Scope of Work (SOW) needs/participation requested of the Branding Committee (RFP VII E). See final page of this proposal for percentage of Spawn's time dedicated to key areas of your SOW like Community Engagement, Research and Assessment, etc.

HOW IT WORKS: RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

1. Audit the current Valdez brand, competitors and stakeholders.

- We have access to several reports from current/previous comprehensive plan efforts. We will audit these, and any other past Valdez branding research/resources, to form a clearer understanding of place (as determined by stakeholders), and determine where there are holes in the research.
- We will use data mining software on visitor-generated content to further capture stakeholder opinions. We scrape content from sites such as TripAdvisor, Facebook and other social media and analyze sentiment, frequency of keywords and model topics.
- With the Branding Committee, we'll determine key Valdez competitors (tourism, Port, Harbor, etc.), and review competitor messaging and marketing strategies.
- And we regularly consult with American Association of Advertising Agencies and other research resources for greater understanding of consumer attitudes, preference and behaviors that impact engagement with the Valdez brand.

2. Conduct semi-structured interviews.

We will conduct 15-18 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, striving for equitable views. We'll hear from as many diverse audiences as time and budget allow, especially from underrepresented groups who may have been absent from previous research efforts. Coalescing all around the new brand is essential to its success.

3. Visit Valdez.

Since a brand is the promise of an experience, we want to explore what Valdez has to offer – through new eyes. Though many of us have experienced Valdez over multiple visits, we will visit again, being extra careful given COVID-19. But on the ground and face-to-face best serves our research philosophy that “if you want to know how and why people do the things they do, the best people to learn from are the doers themselves, and the best place to learn is where the doing gets done.”

KEY DELIVERABLES: RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

- Creation and curation of project website
- Analysis and synthesis of previous research and presentation to Branding Committee for input
- Complete market research plan to address gaps in previous research
- Semi-structured questionnaire guide and survey
- Post-interview transcripts and analysis into a market research report

Why doesn't Spawn recommend focus groups?

We think Valdez may be focus grouped to exhaustion. Focus groups are an excellent market research tool. However, they can be problematic when flexibility is needed since scheduling these groups to meet the timeline of participants can affect timelines and increase costs. In addition, they don't always encourage participants candidness, especially in a smaller-town focus group setting. Finally, increasing the number of participants in focus groups decreases depth of conversation, just skimming the surface of possible learning and insights. All that said, with your additional input about the community's needs, we may host some community feedback sessions at the creative strategy and concepts stage of rebranding.

HOW IT WORKS: BRAND DEVELOPMENT

SWOT analysis. Since we believe that a SWOT already exists from previous research, we will seek to update it given any changes since its creation.

Strategic Marketing Tools. We develop stakeholder fluency to optimize brand effectiveness. Data and human insights are essential to creating credible and actionable audience personas and customer journeys, so go deep to get to know audiences through smart marketing tools such as these:

Jobs to Be Done: People hire solutions for their problems through a process marketers and social scientists call “jobs to be done.” A family visiting Valdez might want to solve a social “job” like “feeling connected.” There are many different solutions that the family could “hire” to help them, so when we understand their “job” we’re better able to persuade them to choose Valdez as a solution.

Audience Modes: Modes are mindsets or behaviors that people get into in order to get a “job” done (yield the best productivity or enjoyment in the moment). People differ in perceptions, associations, and values, yet are surprisingly universal in their modes. Examples: While fishing, a person might be in “harvesting” mode, or “killing time” mode. When kayaking, they might be in “relaxing” mode, “daddy” mode or “disconnecting” mode. Choosing the right message for the right mode helps brands connect deeply and valuably with people – often across audiences.

Brand Identity/Image. We’ll reveal stakeholder insights – human attitudinal and behavioral truths about your distinctive brand. Beyond facts, these insights are derived from the careful and thorough inquisition and observation described in the work above, and are foundation elements of your brand creative brief. The brief, to be approved by the Branding Committee, will also include Spawn’s recommendations on the Valdez brand promise and differentiated position, brand attributes, values and personality.

Brand Concepts. The approved brief is then presented to our talented creative staff for brand concept development. Three to five initial concepts will be presented to the Committee, each with look and feel imagery, and recommended brand story and taglines. With the Committee’s input, we’ll narrow to 2-3 creative directions for public testing/feedback.

Engagement and Testing.

1. Public-Facing Branding Website

We’ll keep those interested in Valdez brand development in the know through a public-facing website as the brand promise, position and other assets are created. The goal is an iterative and inclusive process in which we can quickly explore options with brand users.

This simple site will:

- Outline the rebranding process
- Report out on research findings
- Show Spawn’s work developing conceptual brand directions
- Test/collect public feedback via survey(s) on brand identity and creative concepts, taglines, logos, etc., as the brand is developed
- Offer FAQ’s and contact us outreach

2. Community Presentation

In addition to surveys and other input-resources fielded on the site, we may also host a community feedback session to present and test final brand deliverables. Offering context and guidance for providing input will generate the most useful information.

KEY DELIVERABLES: BRAND DEVELOPMENT

- SWOT Analysis
- Identification of modes and strategic insights
- Creative brief
- Brand Identity: promise, position, attributes, values and personality/voice
- 3-5 conceptual ideas, narrowed to 2-3 brand concepts, publicly tested
- Final brand identity including brand dress (look and feel imagery, logo, tagline, story)

HOW IT WORKS: BRAND IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION

Once the rebranding elements are finalized, a new phase of work begins for the Valdez community. Earlier community engagement will have created interest and ownership. Now it's time to socialize the new brand, broadly. This means presenting the brand, with the context of the rebranding process, to stakeholders, often multiple times. These audiences need to know (1) how to be champions of the brand and (2) what's in it for them that will help them achieve their objectives (e.g., Harbor, Port, Parks and Recreation, Tourism, etc.).

Each brand requires a different implementation strategy due to category, budget, and timeline, but generally, for destination brands, we recommend the following:

Marketing and Promotion

Brand Rollout to Valdez

- Internal presentations help influential groups/organizations both use the brand and persuasively sell it to others.
- A brand reveal celebration can be a slow rollout or big splash.
- Brand training webinars and centralized brand resource access will help businesses and organizations effectively leverage the brand for Valdez.

Media Strategy Road Map

Spawn will create a media strategy road map that addresses all steps in the consumer journey purchase funnel: Awareness, Interest, Decision and Action. We'll offer a prioritized list of tasks in the context of a multichannel strategy.

- The above strategy will define suggested brand use and resources for key entities such as the Port of Valdez, Valdez Harbors, Valdez Parks and Recreation, external residents and the tourism industry/visitors.

KEY NEEDS: IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION

- Organizing/calendaring of internal presentations
- Understanding of resources (people and process) for a potential brand reveal, and for posting and keeping training and resources up to date and posted to a website for external access/use
- Rough budgets for implementation deliverables found below so that we can make realistic and cost efficient recommendations

KEY DELIVERABLES: IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION

- Media plan recommendations
- Brand rollout recommendations
- Prioritized list of tasks and cost estimates
- Brand guidelines and key messages
- Final delivery of all brand assets

EVALUATING OUTCOMES

What gets measured, gets managed. We will work with you to determine the targeted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and the methodologies and metrics necessary for proper evaluation of your brand’s success. Typical destination branding KPIs include awareness; preference; social media mentions, views, clicks and sentiment; website visits; CTA response, e.g., visitor guidebook request and bookings, other lead generation, PR and stakeholder participation and influence. Valdez will have additional metrics for success relevant to your resources such as the Port and Harbor, Parks and Recreation and others.

KEY NEEDS: OUTCOMES

- Current measurement activity employed re: Valdez economic development; Valdez tourism
- Understanding of Valdez resources for tracking (people and processes)

KEY DELIVERABLE: OUTCOMES

- Measurement plan and recommendation for tracking results

REFERENCES

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Community Engagement & Research and Assessment Phases	Brand Strategy & Development Phase	Wrap Up Phase & Support Phase
4/1-4/30 4 weeks	4/30-6/15 6 weeks	6/15-6/30 2 weeks
<p>Contract Awarded: 4/1</p> <p>Kick off meeting: 4/2</p> <p>Create market research plan and identify interview participants: start 4/5</p> <p>Schedule interviews: start 4/5</p> <p>Community engagement site launch: week of 4/5</p> <p>Conduct interviews: 4/12-4/16</p> <p>Valdez visit: week of 4/12-4/19</p> <p>Research analysis: start 4/19</p> <p>Findings presentation: by 4/23</p> <p>Insights/Creative brief development: start 4/26</p> <p><i>Teal bolded text denotes branding committee-required meeting participation.</i></p>	<p>Present creative brief to key stakeholders: week of 4/30</p> <p>Brand concept development: start by 5/3 (following COV approval)</p> <p>Concept presentation & concept testing selection: 5/21</p> <p>Community testing phase: week of 5/24</p> <p>Final concept selection: 5/31</p> <p>Revisions to selected concept presented: 6/7</p> <p>Final brand creative presented: 6/11</p> <p>Final brand development/package developed and provided: 6/15</p>	<p>General Spawn support with implementation, outcome measurement planning and community understanding.</p>
	Implementation & Evaluation Strategy Phase	
	5/21-6/11 3 weeks	
	<p>KPI development in partnership with COV: start 5/21</p> <p>Implementation strategy and media recommendation work: start 5/21</p> <p>Presentation of implementation strategies, KPI measurement tools and measurement optimization plan presented: 6/11</p>	

**Note: this timeline assumes 1-day turnaround on approval or feedback during research, creative brief, concept selection and creative feedback presentations. Spawn highly recommends COV adds an additional 3-5 weeks of time to the project timeline, if possible, to allow for additional research analysis, creative development, community involvement and revisions as needed.*

			Community Engagement & Research and Assessment Phases	Brand Strategy & Development Phase	Implementation & Evaluation Strategy Phase	Wrap Up + Support Phase			
			Timeline	4/1-4/30 4 weeks	4/30-6/15 6 weeks	5/21-6/11 3 weeks	6/15-6/30 2 weeks		
Proposed Project Team	Role	Hourly Rate	Est. Hours	Est. Hours	Est. Hours	Est. Hours	Total Hours	Total Cost	
Karen King	President/CEO: Karen's roots started in brand development and you'd be hardpressed to find anyone in the state with more experience. Having her expertise ensures your brand will be effective and long-lasting.	\$135	10	10	3	5	28	\$3,780	
Jesse Alleva	Senior Strategist: Business Intelligence: Jesse's a master at understanding consumers and then developing messaging strategies that effectively resonate with audiences. He does this through fact-based research ranging from in-depth data analysis to simply asking the right questions of the right people.	\$135	85	15	10	5	115	\$15,525	
Abbey Brau	Account Supervisor: Abbey's expertise is in bringing the right people to the table to ensure an effective communications strategy is developed and (maybe most importantly) followed during execution.	\$135	25	25	25	5	80	\$10,800	
Siobhan Johansen	Project Coordinator: Siobhan's attention to detail means that your critical scope elements - timeline + budget + deliverables - will happen as planned.	\$135	40	20	13	2	75	\$10,125	
Amy Adams & Roland Adams	Senior Art Directors: Amy and Roland’s unique ability to develop creative assets that are not only beautiful, but carry the strategy to the next level, is unmatched. Amy will be the lead on this effort.	\$135	20	130	10	5	165	\$22,275	
Implementation Specialists	Once we get to the implementation and evaluation strategy development phases, we'll pull in additional in-house expertise, including Leslie Stocker and Bear Collins, Spawn's Assistant Media Director and Director of Creative Technology, respectively.	\$135	25	25	22	3	75	\$10,125	
Interview Transcription Costs								\$1,000	
Travel Costs								\$1,200	
Percent of Total Time Spent			38%	42%	15%	5%			
Totals							538	\$74,830	