

LEBANON
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT
Communications Toolkit



Prepared by FleishmanHillard

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Introduction

Beginning with Lebanon's designation as a Missouri DREAM Initiative community in 2008, the Lebanon Downtown Business District (LDBD) has helped to fulfill the community's existing revitalization dreams. With partnerships from the City of Lebanon, the Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce and other development groups, the LDBD now has an opportunity to further build on these efforts to implement the vision of a vibrant community in downtown Lebanon.

In the following toolkit, please find resources, recommendations and turnkey solutions to better communicate with LDBD members, enforcing that the organization is much more than a taxing body. In time, the group will be known by all as community leaders working to build a better future and vibrant community where Lebanon residents can visit, work, live and play.

Communications Toolkit Strategy

Under the guidance and leadership of City staff, the existing group of downtown merchants, property owners, residents and other individuals that comprise the LDBD have worked tirelessly to accomplish their revitalization goals. Historically, the organization has focused their efforts on the success of an individual project, such as the purchasing and installation of the Coachman-style lampposts. However, it is now time to build on the vision of improving the district's infrastructure.

In this toolkit, FleishmanHillard has included real-world examples of communities who have implemented these tools and suggestions to show how communities across the country are using these solutions.

Several strategies and tactics are outlined throughout this plan to help the LDBD and other interested parties achieve success in critical areas. Most of the included recommendations can be enacted immediately at little to no cost or can be implemented in the coming years.

Toolkit Objectives

To create sustainable and long-lasting impacts for the community, the LDBD's marketing and communications efforts should focus on supporting three primary objectives, which are outlined below:

- Create a consistent messaging platform for the LDBD to explain their mission and expand their role in downtown revitalization efforts, such as through the development of a permanent structure for the farmers market.
- Create a viable and robust downtown business district. Improve pedestrian friendliness and building conditions, post wayfinding signs and provide residents with more retail options and services to keep resources circulating within the community.
- Improve image and re-establish downtown as the heart of the community. Unite community stakeholders to build on existing revitalization efforts, enable small business owners to operate in downtown and offer residents a concrete sense of place.

Additional goals for the community should include:

- Make use of existing buildings and celebrate the historic landmarks located throughout the city. To build on this theme, the LDBD should pursue a "historic district" designation for the downtown district through the Laclede County National Register.
- Improve communications with community and organization leaders.
- Clarify the community's identity.
- Develop a list of past accomplishments and future projects for easy reference.

In addition, the LDBD can pursue the following:

- Provide more employment opportunities, whether in retail, service, government, healthcare or other sectors.
- Expand the local tax base.
- Prevent blight and abandonment.
- Develop a brand identity for the LDBD and downtown area that appeals to residents and visitors.

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT NAVIGATION

Clicking on each item below will direct you to the corresponding section of this toolkit.



[01: Lebanon Organization History and Resources](#)



[02: LDBD Member Engagement](#)



[03: Events: Growing Downtown and the LDBD Presence](#)



[04: Increase and Sustain Marketing and Communications](#)

[CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS](#)

[APPENDIX](#)



01: Lebanon Organization History and Resources

About City of Lebanon and Partner Organizations

Lebanon is a thriving city located in south-central Missouri. The community is close to ample natural resources, serving as a hub for outdoor recreation in the area. Nearby, visitors can float the Niangua River, fish for Rainbow Trout at Bennett Springs State Park or get their kicks on Route 66. Located on State Highway 5, Downtown Lebanon remains the civic and business center for the city, housing the county courthouse, churches, shops, galleries, restaurants, the post office and much, much more.

There are several organizations and governing bodies in Lebanon that contribute to the vision of a vibrant and thriving downtown community, led by the City of Lebanon and the Lebanon Downtown Business District (LDBD). The LDBD was formed in 1976 for the purpose of installing and maintaining infrastructure elements in the district, including managing newsstands, maintaining curbs and gutters and similar improvements. This Special Business District set boundaries around the downtown area and runs using funds generated from real estate assessments and business licenses from businesses within the boundaries to fund beautification and enhancements in the district, as well as conduct general maintenance and business promotions. The group is comprised of merchants, property owners, residents and other individuals and organizations interested in downtown revitalization efforts.

Under the guidance of City staff and an advisory board, the organization has accomplished substantial and lasting improvements to the district, including creating accessible parking and establishing the local farmer's market. However, the LDBD is more than a self-taxing body. The individuals and groups that comprise the organization's members are the champions of downtown Lebanon and are committed to the community's growth and development.

Partners

A standing partner for the community development process is the Lebanon Regional Economic Development Incorporation (REDI), which evolved from the America's Heartland Economic Partnership (AHEP) as a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. REDI is an invaluable community partner as REDI members are dedicated to strengthening the economic base of Lebanon and Laclede County – including efforts to support and revitalize businesses and the community atmosphere of the downtown area.

To assist with developing the economic culture of Lebanon, the Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce represents the business interests of the local business owners. Through this renewal effort, the Chamber can strengthen Lebanon's local economy by supporting downtown business development and expansion. The Chamber can specifically focus on initiatives that have a direct impact on residents and visitors, such as identifying needed routes to City attractions, coordinating with REDI to develop wayfinding signs, and emphasizing the historic business district of downtown Lebanon. The Chamber is a valuable resource for all business owners in the area, and some of the tools in this plan can be used to collaborate with their outreach efforts to bring additional business opportunities to the city and enhance their current efforts with the LDBD.

To learn more about the Lebanon Area Chamber of Commerce, and to stay informed about upcoming events, visit lebanonmissouri.com.

Organization Accomplishments

When the city of Lebanon was chosen as a DREAM community in 2008, the initiative provided both immediate and long-term benefits to the downtown area. The LDBD has been instrumental in orchestrating these improvements and planning for future infrastructure and community betterment projects. Over the past several decades, the organization has created substantial and lasting improvements to the downtown District, including:

- **Beautified the District.** In 1989 the District planted over 100 trees and shrubs, as well as distributed potted plants around the area to beautify storefronts and add lush greenery to the area.
- **Created Accessible Parking.** In 1999 the LDBD purchased four tracts of land adjacent to the district to be used for much needed additional parking. And, in July of 2012, the LDBD completed the purchase of parking lots adjacent to the district to allow for more convenient parking for residents and tourists alike.
- **Achieved Energy Efficiency.** In an effort to live more sustainably, in 2010 the City and the LDBD applied for and were awarded a grant through the [Energize Missouri Green Streets Program](#) to conduct energy audits and installing energy efficiency retrofits to 19 businesses in the downtown district, in addition to replacing three pumps and motors at the wastewater treatment plant.
- **Established the Farmers Market.** In 2010 the LDBD began leasing a portion of the parking area between Jefferson and Adams to establish a twice weekly farmers market to offer fresh local foods and goods to the community on Wednesdays (2-6 p.m.) and Saturdays (7:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.).
- **Lit up the District.** In 2012 the District and the City leveraged grant and local matching funds and labor to install the distinctive coachman-style lampposts in the downtown district, adding lighting for safety and charm.
- **Making Seasons Bright.** In 2013 the LDBD purchased new holiday lighting and decorations for the district, including 16 wreaths, 16 Star of Bethlehem figures and garlands for 32 poles.

Upcoming Projects

These accomplishments were essential to providing the framework for a thriving downtown district. LDBD members continue their commitment to revitalization through several upcoming projects that will increase the productivity and prosperity of downtown Lebanon.

The LDBD is pursuing various enhancements to the downtown district, including lighting structures, greenscapes, landscaping designs, façade improvements, a permanent structure for the farmers market and regular downtown events to enhance the already vibrant community.

FleishmanHillard has developed the following set of resources to assist the LDBD with communicating the essential message of the organization and its dedication to community betterment initiatives. This toolkit of resources includes an elevator speech, key messages and additional turnkey materials below, and in the [Appendix](#).

Elevator Speech

Spreading the message of the LDBD is best with clear, simple language that conveys the message of the organization and invites the listener to engage or interact. This can be easily communicated in a short “elevator speech,” or, a brief description of the organization’s purpose and accomplishments. A sample elevator speech for the LDBD is included below, and can be customized according to the purpose and delivery:

“The Lebanon Downtown Business District, or LDBD, is made up of small business owners, property owners and Lebanon residents. Together we work to revitalize the district, attract new visitors and businesses and increase the unique appeal of Downtown Lebanon. We partner with the City, the Chamber and REDI to maintain and improve the existing streetscape and infrastructure, and together we’re committed to the continued growth and development of downtown.”

We’ve implemented various beautification initiatives, such as holiday decorations, plantings and greenery along the sidewalk, and improved lighting with the classic coachman-style light posts. Additionally we’ve created easily accessible parking and established the local farmers market. We continue to work towards improving the District and providing economic and community benefits to the people of our city.

If you are interested in learning more about our organization, please contact Benjamin DeClue, Assistant to the City Administrator, City of Lebanon, at (417) 588-7122 or bdeclue@lebanonmo.org.”

Key Messages

To best capture and communicate the benefits of the LDBD, we have provided several helpful talking points that can be used on their own, or to accompany the elevator speech. These messages are important to have on hand during community or partnership meetings, LDBD-sponsored events or when out-and-about in the community.

- *The Lebanon Downtown Business District (LDBD) is a Special Business District that encompasses most of Downtown Lebanon.*
 - *[If needed] A Special Business District is a separate area recognized by the city and state that may impose additional property taxes and business license taxes to fund improvements and services within boundaries of the district.*
- *We’re a group of Lebanon residents, organizations, property and small business owners who want to create an inviting downtown area to attract new revenue and opportunities.*
- *We’re working to make downtown Lebanon a more dynamic and attractive place for people to live, work and play through funds generated from local real estate assessments and business licenses in the district.*
- *Our mission is to maintain and improve the existing streetscape and infrastructure that you see today. This includes everything from managing newsstands to maintaining curbs and gutters in the district.*

- *We're committed to the continued growth and development of downtown Lebanon. In the past 15 years we've accomplished several substantial and lasting improvements to the district, including creating accessible parking, establishing the local farmers market, and bought many new holiday decorations to make the season bright. (Refer to organization accomplishments listed above for additional examples.)*
- *By partnering with other community organizations – such as the City, the Chamber and REDI – to make spending decisions, we can provide benefits to residents and visitors alike, as well as make downtown Lebanon an attractive place for small business owners to pursue their ventures.*
- *The downtown area is the heart of the community, where residents and visitors experience all that Lebanon has to offer. Our organization works to ensure the health and vitality of Lebanon's downtown District through community improvement efforts and initiatives. A prosperous and active downtown is essential for the overall wellbeing of the community.*
- *For more information about how the LDBD boosts the unique appeal of the district, our current projects, or to become involved in our organization, contact Benjamin DeClue, Assistant to the City Administrator, City of Lebanon, at (417) 588-7122 or bdeclue@lebanonmo.org.*

**Please note, these materials can also be found on a separate sheet in the Appendix.*

FleishmanHillard's Recommendation

The elevator speech and key messaging points are essential to communicating the benefits of the LDBD and their vision for the City of Lebanon. We recommend creating a designed version of these documents, using the resources outlined below, so these messages can be shared internally among LDBD members and partners.



02: LDBD Member Engagement

The LDBD consists of community leaders, small business owners and residents who are committed to the restoration of the District as a vibrant community center. To increase the chance of this organization's success, the LDBD should consider expanding their membership, and their district boundaries, to include key community leaders, new businesses and residents that demonstrate a personal passion for community betterment. In this section of the toolkit, you will find several resources to assist with recruitment, retention of current members and suggested communications to new or existing members of the LDBD.

Welcome Kit for New Businesses

To encourage prospective business owners to choose downtown Lebanon for their next business venture, please refer to the template "Welcome New Business" presentation provided in addition to this toolkit. Customize this presentation to fit the interested individual and their type of business or organization.

Additionally, the LDBD should have a set of resources readily available to promote the creation and retention of downtown businesses. Some materials are already located in the toolkit, including [key messages](#) and an [elevator speech](#). However, you may consider developing other items for your use, such as:

- ***Lebanon and LDBD Fact Sheet*** – A brief document highlighting the town's history, traditions and key facts to inform new businesses about the city. The goal of this material is to provide a quick "glance" into the community, introducing Lebanon to new audiences. This information can be adapted from existing outlets online, such as the official [City of Lebanon](#) website, and should be available to the public.
- ***"What People Are Saying"*** – This document should include positive testimonials and quotes from residents and business owners to demonstrate the benefits of a renewed downtown area. This item should also be featured on the City of Lebanon website to provide a face to the community.

In addition to these items, we recommend that the LDBD provide new businesses with the following tools to ease the transition and welcome potential new employers:

- A map of downtown Lebanon displaying current businesses and important local landmarks, including the current district boundaries. Additionally, the map should list business owners and each owner's contact information to build a sense of community and provide a network for the new owner.
- An invitation to join the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce, complete with contact information for the owner to take the next steps, if desired.
- A calendar of upcoming community events that will take place downtown. Consider including sponsorship information for these opportunities, which will give the new owner outlets to more easily engage with the community.
- Offer to partner in creating signage that promotes their grand opening or upcoming sales.
- Provide new owners with a list of relevant social media tools, such as the Chamber of Commerce Facebook page, Lebanon downtown hashtag, etc. Offer to provide new owners with

social media training by giving them access to the [04: Increase and Sustain Communications](#) section of this toolkit.

Provide this information to new businesses and encourage them to enroll their business in the Chamber. This information is also included in the “Welcome New Business” toolkit.

How to Present These Tools

We’ve outlined additional suggestions for presenting these materials below and recommend that you package them in a PDF format so they can be easily distributed to new business owners. Include all relevant toolkit materials such as maps of downtown, social media tips, Chamber of Commerce invitation, community calendar, talking points and the “Welcome New Business” PowerPoint presentation. When assembling a new business kit, consider what additional information would be helpful, such as contact information for professional organizations and recent statistics about Lebanon’s economy. Tailor these presentations to each new business to ensure that owners and employers are prepared to thrive in this community.

We have included additional recommendations for the presentation of this toolkit below:

- Consider formatting the PDF document with the “Welcome New Business” PowerPoint slides first. Include a title page and a table of contents so that employers and owners know where to find each item or resource. Link to these items throughout the document for easy access.
- Include personalized information whenever possible. New business owners will likely print most of these materials to keep on hand, so keep the color scheme and tone consistent throughout.
- Make sure it is clear that the LDBD is responsible for distributing this item. Include contact information at the beginning so the recipients know where to turn with questions.
- The key takeaway for these items is customization. The new business PowerPoint will be more effective if it is customized to the service or product being introduced.

As we’ve described in the [04: Increase and Sustain Communications](#) section of this toolkit, becoming active on social media is important for local businesses to create brand awareness in the Lebanon community.

Resources are outlined in this toolkit and available for the following platforms:

- [Facebook](#).
- [Twitter](#).
- [LinkedIn](#).
- [Pinterest](#).



03: Events: Growing Downtown and the LDBD Presence

Event Involvement

Though multiple events throughout the year are recommended to bring the community to the downtown area, it is important that the community become an integral part of the planning process and contribute resources and volunteer hours on a regular basis. To assist with determining what types of events may be the best fit for Lebanon, a tiered structure of event recommendations is included below:

- **Tier 1.** Extended business hours once a month, or once a quarter, in all downtown businesses to allow residents and visitors to spend more time and resources exploring the district. The LDBD can partner with the Chamber of Commerce to ensure business owner awareness and participation.
- **Tier 2.** Community events in Downtown Lebanon bring the attention of nearby residents and visitors to the heart of the community. Events such as the grand opening of the permanent structure for the farmer's market, block parties or downtown festivals engage small business owners and their customers, as well as integrate the LDBD further into the community.
- **Tier 3.** Business-focused events downtown, such as "Small Business Saturday" celebrations, extended hours, open houses or special promotions throughout the year serve as regular reminders of the benefits of local business. Encourage residents to "spend local," and explore the unique shops, restaurants and entertainment venues in the downtown area through business-focused events. New business owners can become engaged in this effort as well, through introductory or "grand opening" events. To help new business owners get started in downtown Lebanon, refer to the "Welcome Kit for New Business" in the Appendix.

Meet the LDBD

To help the LDBD reintroduce their members and their mission to Lebanon, the organization should consider a series of "kick-off" events to garner community support. The board can take advantage of existing events or create new community traditions, but all events should involve partnerships with key organizations such as the Chamber and REDI to ensure success within the community.

Rallying community support for a stronger downtown center can take physical manifestation in the push for a permanent structure for the downtown farmers market. This structure will add to the Downtown Gateway concept, as its proposed location serves as a welcome point to the downtown district.

Additional benefits of creating a permanent structure to host the farmers market include:

- The LDBD can better solidify its role as the lead organization responsible for downtown revitalization, as well as a signal to developers and nearby businesses that the group is committed to expanding the economy of Lebanon.
- Provides a large project to provide a rallying point for community members to see the benefit of promoting downtown revitalization.
- Covered parking for nearby shops when the market is not in use.
- Opportunity for local businesses to showcase their wares and engage with the community.
- Bring visitors and residents from nearby cities to the downtown Lebanon area, which will increase commerce and visibility.
- Provide a community "meeting place" for important festivals, events and celebrations for the future.

PGAV has provided planning objectives for this pavilion, including potential market designs, landscaping and site plan illustrations.



To promote and support the development of a permanent farmer’s market pavilion, the LDBD should consider an informational open house and welcome event during the 2015 farmer’s market opening to showcase plans for an improved structure and invite community member support. When considering this event, the organization can refer to the key messages, elevator speech and marketing tactics outlined in this toolkit as helpful resources for planning a successful event.

An internal calendar may also serve as a valuable resource for the LDBD, as it allows members to plan ahead and maximize available time to engage the community and increase excitement throughout the region. Internal calendars should include annual community events and holidays, as well as internal event planning and deadlines to ensure the LDBD completes goals within appropriate time frames to benefit the community.

We recommend hosting an event downtown approximately every quarter in order to keep the community engaged, as well as internal engagement of LDBD members and city officials. These events do not need to be large, and can include long-standing festivals, summer movie nights or holiday activities.

In addition to an introductory open house event for the promotion of a new permanent structure for the farmers market, other events could include:

- Internal LDBD events, such as a potluck community “meet and greet.”
- Board meetings.
- Adoption event with local humane society.
- Shopping and dining days.
- Downtown “open houses.”
- Block party.
- Barbeque with baseball/softball league home games.
- Pool party at Boswell Aquatic Center.
- Father’s Day golf outing at Great Life Golf and Fitness.
- Mother’s Day community brunch.
- Viewing parties for national/global television events, such as the Super Bowl, World Series or the Olympics.
- Wine tasting with live entertainment at one of 70 area wineries.

- Summer outdoor movie screenings for the family in Gasconade City Park or Spiller Park.
- Town hall meetings where residents are invited to ask any nagging questions that they may have.
- An impromptu winter festival with the first large snow, including a snowman building contest and carriage/sled rides.
- A “relaxation day,” offering downtown visitors a free neck massage and coordinating with downtown retailers to provide sales on relaxing products and refreshments.

Community Event Support

When planning an event, there are numerous community resources to tap to achieve a successful turnout. To ensure that this process runs smoothly, it is important to start planning as early as possible to secure a venue, speakers, vendors and other necessary participants. We recommend having one (or more) back-up plan(s) in place, as plans often change last minute or issues arise.

- ***Best Practices and Helpful Tips***
 - Start planning at least two months in advance of the event.
 - Determine your budget and check in regularly to verify that you are staying within the parameters for the event.
 - Consider a community survey for event suggestions or a survey after the event for feedback on ways to improve future community functions.
 - Determine any audio and visual needs for each event. Plan a rehearsal to ensure that all equipment is working properly.
 - Determine the best way to accept registrations or attendance – web, email or phone.
- ***Working with Vendors and Photographers***
 - Take advantage of existing relationships whenever you can.
 - Frequently communicate and confirm your needs, as well as consistently monitor the vendor’s performance.
 - Remain flexible when working with vendors and their contractors.
 - Also, it is important to remember that photographers need to use release forms for photo permissions.
- ***Incorporating Local Business Owners***
 - Engage local businesses, retailers and restaurants to host a booth or open house during downtown events.
 - Reach out for donations, volunteer hours and/or materials when these items are needed. Lebanon residents may not be able to contribute a monetary gift, but small items such as folding chairs and tables, extension cords, pallets, etc. can make an open house or event successful.
 - Involve business owners early in the planning process.
 - Coordinate with owners to offer uniform retail hours during events, and stay open into the evening for downtown events.
 - Request that local business owners display event details in store windows or near cash registers.
 - Reach out to vacant building owners to feature a “pop-up” storefront. These temporary shops would provide Lebanon residents with the opportunity to experience potential new businesses, cafes and stores in the downtown area. If a continuous demand for

- these products persists, the new business owner may consider permanently renting the storefront space.
- Consider having a business owner speak at an event and share their story about the community.
- Always offer to promote the business as a partner in some capacity, including the company logo included on printed materials, T-shirts, etc.
- **Best Practices for Working with Volunteers**
 - Ensure that volunteers know their job description and what is expected of them.
 - Take the time to welcome volunteers and provide ample orientation to answer any questions they may have about their role.
 - Keep workloads manageable.
 - Keep volunteers informed of any changes.
 - Give volunteers the opportunity to take breaks during the event.
 - Provide an incentive – this could include a small discount at a participating store or restaurant or be as simple as a T-shirt, which will also help during the event to easily spot volunteers.
 - Reach out to local civic organizations or students who may need service hours.
 - For additional resources on how to best work with volunteers, we recommend visiting the following websites:
 - [Best Practices for Volunteer Management Professionals](#)
 - [The 27 Best Practices of High Performing Volunteer Organizations](#)
 - [Managing Volunteers: A Good Practice Guide](#)
 - [Managing volunteers: The motivations and the pitfalls](#)

FleishmanHillard’s Recommendation

The events described in this section, such as the farmer’s market, are used to serve as examples to the LDBD as community rallying points. We recommend choosing one “kick-off” event to serve as an introduction to the LDBD and their identity.



04: Increase and Sustain Marketing and Communications

To get started, let's first review a few of the basics about marketing and communications. These simple definitions can also be shared with the LDBD board and with volunteers at a board meeting or other upcoming event.

What is marketing? Why is it important?

Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling the product or service. It is essential in building brand credibility and reinforcing a positive reputation.

Through marketing initiatives, the LDBD can better control the city's brand identity.

Why is marketing the LDBD important?

Marketing helps to grow business and with strategic marketing and communications, partners and community members begin to value your organization as a downtown resource.

Strategic marketing means more than just hosting a sidewalk sale or placing a newspaper ad. In order to achieve sustained growth and build brand loyalty downtown, the LDBD needs to focus on a more comprehensive plan, considering the area's collective goals, objectives, audiences and resources. It is also important to remember that resources are not just limited to financial resources – time is perhaps one of the most important resources of all.

Audiences are also an important consideration for a marketing plan. Potential audiences include:

- Current residents of Lebanon
- Existing desired tourist base
- Desired tourist population
- New residents
- Visitors with family and friends in Lebanon
- Residents of nearby towns such as Springfield, Rolla, Camdenton or Bolivar
- Students attending high school or college in nearby cities
- Existing business owners
- Existing property owners
- Potential business owners
- Potential property owners

Please note, it is critical to reevaluate audiences on a regular basis to consider if there is a new audience segment that can be targeted.

What is the difference between marketing, public relations and advertising?

Advertising, PR and marketing can frequently be used interchangeably, lumped into a singular category. While it is important to understand the key differences between these practices, our primary focus is how all of these practices can work together.

The chart below outlines these practices, with key differences noted within each category.

Advertising	Public Relations	Marketing
Paid media (costly)	Free or low cost	Paid (range of costs)
Consumer-based external audience, primarily focused on goods and services	External audiences/publics	General audience, specifically a targeted market
Uses media outlets (radio, TV, online, print) to convey messages	Uses special events, news releases, speeches, social media to convey message	Branded materials to convey message (brochure, materials, banners)
Supports public relations	Create and manages marketing and ad messages	Supports advertising
Function is to sell goods and services by promoting brands	Function is to manage relationships between audience and brand by building and maintaining environments	Function is increase demand and interest by building and maintaining markets
One-way communication, controlled by the organization	Two-way communications, controlled by both the organization and media outlets	One-way communication, controlled by the organization

Source: [Intersection Consulting](#)

How do you market an entire downtown?

To market the downtown as a whole, we recommend first engaging all of the downtown business and property owners to work together to decide several clear objectives, goals and define what success will look like for Lebanon. Then, outline the specific steps you each need to meet these objectives. This can take the form of a structured, traditional marketing plan, which will allow you to track successes and areas for improvement, or it could be a less formal document that suits the needs of the board. Collective marketing is the broadest and most effective coverage with limited funds, as it will capture more interest and attention of customers, provide more reasons to visit downtown and – most importantly – reduce costs for running promotions, buying ads and producing other marketing materials.

Marketing Suggestions for Lebanon

Below please find specific marketing recommendations for downtown Lebanon to implement for a stronger downtown core. All of these programs and suggestions increase the awareness of other businesses in downtown Lebanon and also increases the chance that shoppers will stay downtown for longer periods of time.

- **Expand Existing Cross-Promotions and Create Additional Opportunities**
 - Encourage cross-promotions of downtown businesses – both formally and informally. Consider each other, business owners and downtown employees, as a source for

referrals. Do not underestimate the power of word-of-mouth marketing and promotions. Remember, a stronger downtown benefits everyone.

- The LDBD should provide promotional materials to all local business owners, so that they can have a flyer or brochure handy if asked about other local businesses. This piece of collateral is a great additional resource to an informal recommendation of another business to explore or an inviting place to stop and grab a bite to eat.
 - Consider introducing Small Business Saturday (the Saturday after Black Friday that annually encourages Americans to shop locally) or “Downtown Days” where downtown merchants have longer, more uniform hours once a month. It does not need to be a Saturday – work together to find the best solution for everyone.
 - Develop a progressive sale or a passport-style promotion with several local owners.
 - ❖ A progressive sale can take many forms, and is inspired by a progressive dinner, where each course is served at a different location. Consider working with business owners to create a sale that is a package deal, where if a customer purchases items at both Location A and Location B, they receive a special discount.
 - These types of promotions typically work best with retail locations or restaurants, but can be expanded to include service industries as well. For example, dinner and a show! Combine a show at Ozark Hills Theater with dinner at one of downtown Lebanon’s premier restaurants. If a customer shows their ticket stub, they can receive a special discount at the partnering restaurant(s).
 - ❖ Another option is to create a passport-style program, where a customer receives a punch for every purchase made in downtown Lebanon on a small wallet-sized punch-card-type document. After a certain number of punches have been achieved, the individual can receive a discount or promotion with participating local businesses.
 - ❖ These promotions require that local business owner’s work together to share profits and discount agreements.
- **Take Advantage of Existing Events**
 - Take advantage of existing events, trends or other significant dates – both in the community and nationwide. First, conduct research online and speak with community leaders of small towns in other geographical areas that are successfully revitalizing their downtown districts. What works best to draw people in in this community? For instance, what programs exist similar to Small Business Saturday, which encourages residents to patronize local businesses?
 - Also, consider creating a series of small events to attract residents and visitors to downtown. Work with business owners to offer family friendly events, such as a citywide sidewalk sale with discounts, food offerings, special demonstrations and entertainment for all ages. Think outside the box, and – most importantly – have fun.

Advertising

Paid advertisements are an important component to the LDBD’s overall communications strategy, and should absolutely be included as a part of any plan. However, advertising depends on many factors, including:

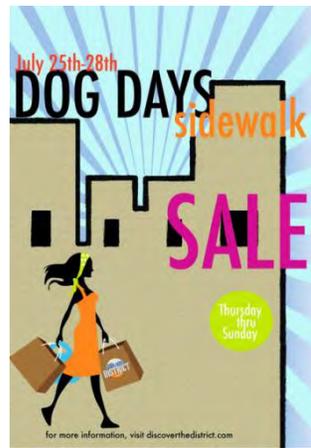
- Type of event or circumstance.
- Budget.
- Messaging.
- Type (print, broadcast, social media, among others).

Advertising Examples: Communities Doing It Right

As you consider your options for advertising all that Lebanon has to offer, we have included a few examples of effective advertising from other Missouri DREAM communities.

Example: Columbia, MO

Columbia’s “Discover the District” has a yearly marketing plan that covers a wide range of media, including print, radio, TV and social media outlets, but also nontraditional advertising including Facebook and other online options. The District introduced hashtags such as #districtshophop or #discoveryourroots that individual merchants can use on Facebook or Twitter to provide customers with real-time updates on discounts, events and more.



“Discover the District” also hosts several events throughout the year, including two Shop Hops, the Living Windows Festival, the Dog Days Sidewalk Sale and Halloweenie. To the far left is an example of a flyer for the [Living Windows Festival that occurs during the holidays each year](#). During the festival, merchants in the District create festive window displays, and the District features open houses, strolling carolers, holiday treats and visits with Santa. Additionally, in another image you will see a social media graphic used to advertise the Dog Days Sidewalk Sale, which was shared on the District’s Facebook page and served as the event photo.

Example: Rolla, MO



Similar to Columbia, the [Rolla Downtown Business Association](#) creates flyers and social media to advertise events taking place with downtown businesses. The flyer to the left includes the organization’s logo, along with all the businesses participating in a punch card program where if a shopper spends \$50 at downtown businesses in a week, his/her card is entered into a drawing for \$250.

Why are graphics effective in advertising efforts?

- Flyers and social media posts like the ones shown here are simple, but capture attention through their use of color and creativity.
- All successful designs include the organization’s logo and are consistent, program after program. Creating a brand for the LDBD will be important to increase recognition.
- Because there are few words, the important facts are easy to take away, such as date and time.

Best Practices for Media Outreach

It is important to recognize that every communications campaign has the potential to impact business objectives, build a reputation and attract new customers. To understand how to best utilize the power of the press, it's helpful to understand the power of media. Media relations allow credible sources to broadcast your message to a widespread audience. By utilizing [earned media](#), or media that is not paid for or posted by the original source, you can spread the group's message within your target audience. In addition to spreading messages through word-of-mouth marketing, you will create a lasting relationship with your audience and generate greater visibility.

For Lebanon's media efforts, earned media will provide the best opportunity to attract awareness while remaining cost-effective.

Tips for Working with the Media

- Research local reporters who frequently cover community events and promotions.
 - Reach out to these reporters to develop a working relationship.
 - For instance, if you know a particular outlet will be covering an event in a nearby town, invite them to visit Lebanon for a related experience.
 - Stay in touch.
 - Send notes or call reporters to stay in touch and keep them up-to-date on upcoming events. This will be appreciated by local media, as they typically request longer lead-times to accommodate smaller newsroom staffs.
 - Even if the reporter doesn't express interest in a particular event request, they will know who to contact when they need to reconnect with a LDBD or City representative.
- Expand your list of contacts.
 - Reach out to media in neighboring towns and invite them to cover Lebanon events by emphasizing the relationship between the surrounding cities. Keep a list of media contacts in an Excel grid and reach out to them periodically with updates on the city. Include important information in your grid, such as the reporter's name, contact information for the news desk and any notes regarding specific beats or interest areas.
 - Please note that newsrooms change over regularly, so it is important to refresh this list from time to time with new contacts and notes.
- When you receive a request from a reporter, follow up within a timely manner.
 - Always be sure to inquire about the reporter's deadline.
- Be prepared.
 - We often suggest thinking of interviews as a presentation instead of a conversation.
 - To prepare yourself or another spokesperson, develop two or three key messages that you want to convey during that time, and stick to these messages during the interview.
 - Always include a call to action in your communications.
 - Also, anticipate and prepare to answer tough questions.
 - We always say if you dread them, you will get them.
 - For example, if you own a small business, you may be asked about whether or not you will be enrolling in the Missouri Health Insurance Marketplace. You do not need to answer this question, but can instead reply that you are here to discuss the topic at hand.
- Get social.

- Regularly post on social media channels to maintain audience engagement and encourage a large community following. Be sure to link to social media platforms on all outgoing communications.

Conducting Outreach to Media

Media “pitching” refers to the practice of approaching a reporter or outlet and proposing the opportunity to cover an event or product. Not every reporter will be interested in covering your event initially, but a thoughtful, creative pitch note can ensure that they refer back to you when the timing is right for their publication. This is why it is essential to maintain relationships with reporters and outlets in your area, and consistently provide information regarding upcoming events, which will result in a greater opportunity to respond with favorable coverage.

Also, it is important to note that the media works on a 24-hour news cycle and that many outlets may not plan final scheduling until the week of the event. To ensure that your opportunity is on their radar, we suggest following up on your original note with a personal phone call closer to the event date to remind them of the opportunity and allow them to ask initial questions and gauge their interest. If the reporter does not show initial interest, consider following up with a few event photos after the fact, along with attendance and a few other key figures. This can be a great way to generate content about an event.

Social Media

Social media can be used to promote individual businesses or downtown Lebanon as a whole to best market the entire downtown area, consider exploring the channels below, which all offer free, easy to use solutions and provide an opportunity to engage with potential customers, increase visibility and allow the LDBD’s brand to present a cohesive message.

With over 30 percent of the global population interacting through the Internet, it’s important to generate conversation where it’s taking place – online. By providing Lebanon residents and visitors with a variety of platforms to interact and share experiences on what makes Lebanon a great community to live, work and play.

It is important to consider audience when choosing a social networking site. Each platform targets a different population. For example, some social networks are specifically designed for business or corporate use. The features offered on these sites will appeal to a different audience than the features offered on a site used only for social connection purposes. Below you will find a breakdown of each social media site and their intended audience, with examples from other Missouri DREAM communities.

Facebook

Facebook remains the most popular social networking tool in the social media space, and has more than 864 million active users engaged on its platform *each day*. By communicating through Facebook, you are contributing to a global conversation with potential customers. Facebook offers numerous business advantages, building off word-of-mouth marketing to inspire recommendations among friends.

Tips for Posting on Facebook:

- Promote Lebanon businesses by liking their page, linking to their website and posting frequently on their timelines.

- To establish your credibility, share relevant articles that Lebanon residents and business owners would be interested in reading, as well as other partners and other Lebanon social channels.
- Maintain and build a cohesive brand image by sharing quality posts that engage consumers and represent the community’s unique brand identity.
- Engage with your audience. Respond to questions, comments and feedback promptly and in a tone that represents your business or organization. Remember, your brand is reflected in every post, status and response. Use polls or contests to solicit feedback from consumers and show that your company values their opinion.
- Show your personality. Encourage your employees to engage with the site as well – give consumers a face and a name behind your company.
- Use tags (@) and hashtags (#) to connect Facebook with other sites like Twitter and Instagram.
- The best times to post on Facebook are in the afternoon, early in the week and several days leading up to an event.

Twitter

Twitter allows users to engage in real-time conversations about an event or product using direct, concise messaging. This platform serves as a town hall, public forum, worldwide conversation and instant connection. However, due to their Short Message Service delivery system, messages are limited to 140 characters – so make them count!

What is Twitter? Twitter is a great way to engage with potential consumers as it appeals to their shortened attention span and cuts through the clutter of longer advertisements and messaging. Your messages are delivered in real-time, much like a conversation, and are displayed alongside exchanges about television shows, breaking news and personal stories in an individual’s news feed. Twitter can be used as an online newsroom, chat room, networking site or microblog for updating their followers.

Users post with hashtags, the symbol “#”, to label tweets as part of one particular conversation topic. This allows users to find and post content related to one subject. To build a following for the LDBD or Lebanon businesses, encourage business owners and event organizers to display the identified “community hashtag,” such as “#LDBD, on all communications and advertising. Working together with other businesses in Lebanon to identify a common hashtag will help consumers easily locate products and downtown companies.

Example Twitter Account: [Farmington, Mo](#)



The City of Farmington’s Twitter account is used to post breaking news, promote community events and engage with residents.

- 4,078 tweets.
- 415 followers.
- Posts regularly.
- Links to city businesses and event information and provides a resource for community news.



Tips for Engaging on Twitter:

- Twitter provides your business with the opportunity to:
 - Build cohesive brand imaging online with a profile picture, background information and bio.
 - Direct users to website through links and images.
 - Address issues with consumers directly.
 - Network with partners and affiliates (@mention to build a network).
 - “Follow” friends, news sources acquaintances, business partners to keep abreast of their current news.
- Keep messaging clear and concise using the 140 characters you get to best share your message with your followers and the community.
- Tweet often and engage other users by tagging them in posts to gain awareness.
- Tweet to local reporters about upcoming events and encourage them to follow you or engage in an online conversation.
 - Create specialty hashtags for downtown events that local businesses can use to promote the LDBD. Examples include #LDBD or #DTLebanonMO. It is critical to create short hashtags as these will be included in the 140-character count.
- Link to photos, videos and relevant articles to expand your reach.
- Reach out to community leaders and ask them to tweet about an upcoming event or promotion. Often, these “community celebrities” have a larger following and greater online influence.
- Interact with loyal followers using the retweet, tag and favorite options to build your online community.
- To track trending topics online, follow hashtags of popular stories and insert your business when applicable. Trending hashtags appear on the left side of the home screen and reference the ten most popular stories or items at any given time. These phrases represent the most popular “tweet topics” of the day.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking service. This online community allows companies, brands, employers, job-seekers, workers and professional groups to engage with each other and create a social network of professional relationships – both current and desired.

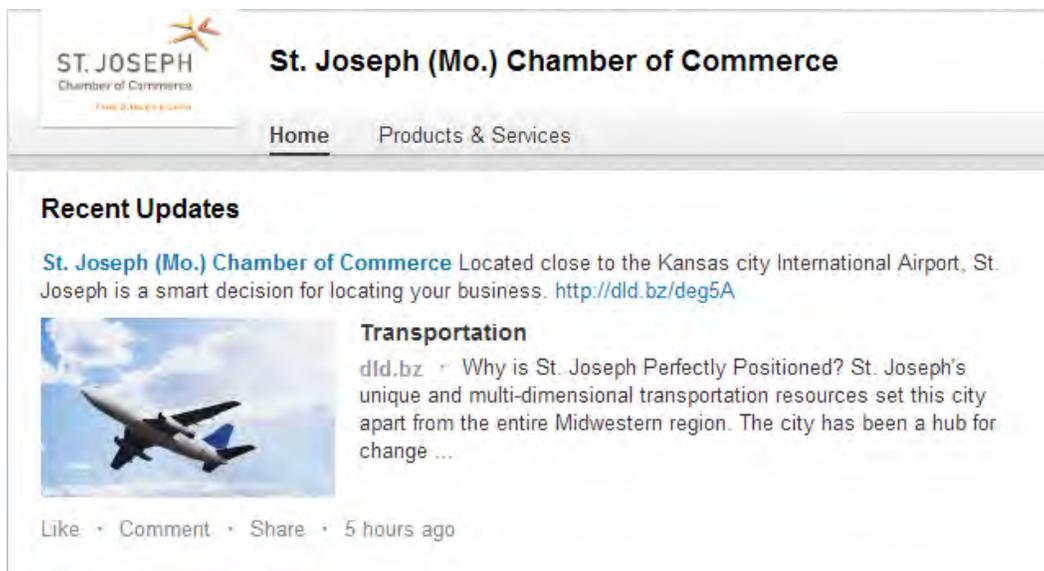
Encourage Lebanon business owners and employees to join LinkedIn, and engage with each other on this network-building site and promote the downtown Lebanon area. Lebanon businesses should note that LinkedIn is the preferred tool for service industries, as it allows potential customers and clients to easily research an organization’s company profile, product or service offerings, and current employees

on the site. By increasing the visibility of Lebanon businesses, customers within your targeted industry have greater access to available products and services.

LinkedIn Tips and Techniques:

- Post intelligently. LinkedIn is not a platform for daily thoughts, unless they apply to your business or professional development. Post relevant articles and engage with other users in a professional manner. Remember, when posting on behalf of a community or organization, your tone and content should apply to all members of that community.
- Identify a “wish list” of individuals or organizations within your industry sphere with whom you would like to connect. Develop these relationships through online introductions and by supporting their content.
- Update your community or organization’s profile page frequently. If a new project was completed in Lebanon, post photos or content from that project to attract new connections.
- Create a “[showcase page](#)” for your company to extend your LinkedIn presence.
- To learn how to create your LinkedIn company page, visit http://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/710.

Sample LinkedIn Page: [St. Joseph, Mo. Chamber of Commerce](#)



Why is this page successful?

- Users frequently post about downtown businesses and promotions, articles relevant to residents and upcoming community events.
- Users post at a steady pace of once per day and link to original content.
- The page includes detailed examples of the products and services in the St. Joseph area.

FleishmanHillard’s Recommendation

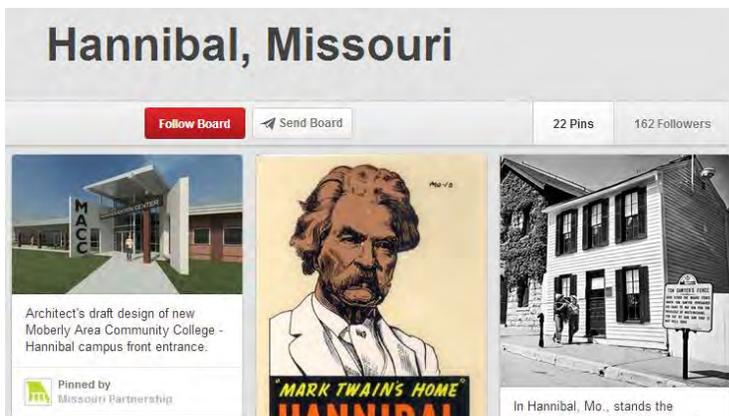
Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and are all important tools to use to promote the LDBD as a relevant and trusted source for both visitors and residents of Lebanon. We recommend that the LDBD cultivate a strong following or rhythm for posting frequent, relevant content on these three channels before pursuing other social media platforms such as Pinterest and Instagram.

Pinterest

Pinterest functions as a virtual bulletin board where users can post events, products, articles and photos of their favorite Lebanon restaurants, locations and events. Much like when you tear out a recipe or product from a magazine you can “pin” images for inspiration.

- Pin outside the box. Pinterest is an informal platform where inspiration is key to a well-populated page. Strictly pinning informational content will not attract users to your page. Be sure to include recipes, favorite hiking and picnic spots, best local fishing, promotional videos, etc.
- Follow Lebanon businesses and organizations with existing Pinterest pages and link to their original content.
- For downtown businesses, this is the best way to showcase your personality and your brand’s image. Pinterest can act as a virtual storefront for products or aspirational décor/recipes/ideas.
 - For example, if you own an antique store in downtown Lebanon, you can pin images of your products as well as links to articles describing techniques for preserving furniture or home décor. Inviting users to pin your items to a “wish list” board will engage them with your products and spread awareness about your business. Be sure to include the title of your organization and a link in the “Pin description.”
 - Pinterest is also great for local bars and restaurants. Pinning new recipes, drink concoctions and seasonal items will appeal to users and drive them to the website or venue.
- When should you pin? Every day! Since Pinterest doesn’t distribute regular alerts to users like Facebook or Twitter, users can choose when to view your boards. Therefore, new content can be posted continuously and viewed alongside previous posts at the user’s discretion. When using this tool, be sure to pin from the original source so content is correctly linked.
- To learn more about how to set up your business on Pinterest and begin pinning, visit <http://business.pinterest.com/>.

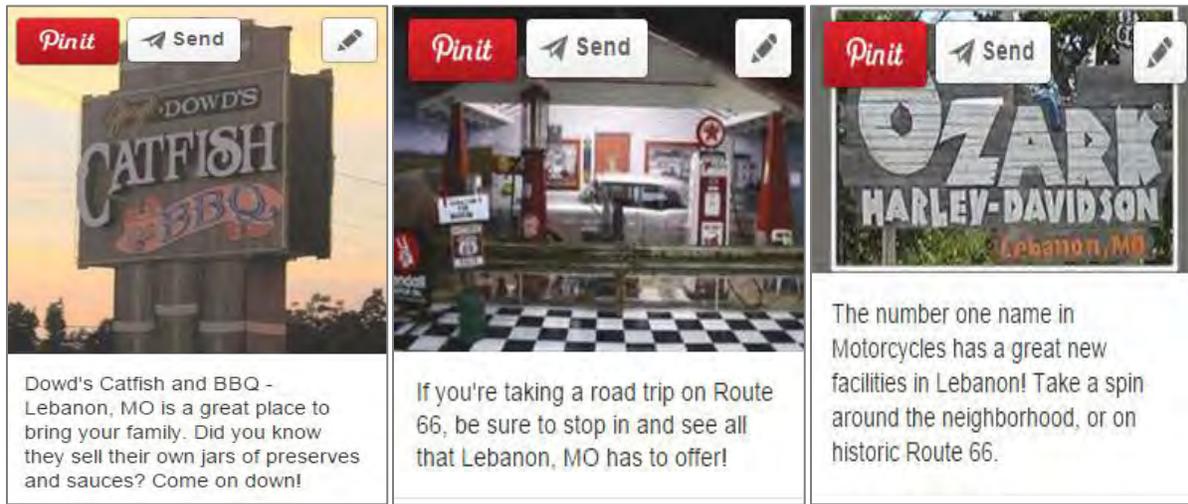
Example Pinterest Page: [Hannibal, Mo.](#)



The City of Hannibal’s Pinterest page is used to post interesting photos, links to information about historical buildings and monuments, things to enjoy in Hannibal and fun facts about the city.

- 201 followers.
- 29 pins.
- Links to city businesses and event information.

Sample Pins for Lebanon:



Promote favorite restaurants
([Source](#))

Historic Route 66 Landmarks
([Source](#))

Destination Shops and Stops
([Source](#))

Why are these pages successful?

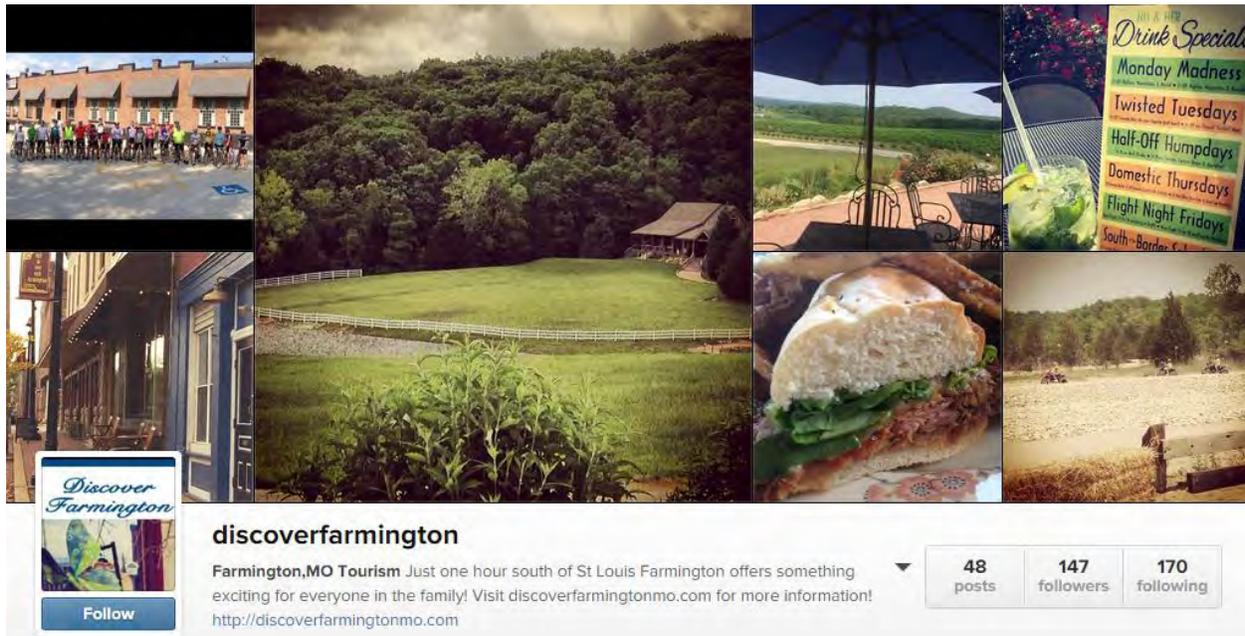
- Residents and visitors can create “boards” of their favorite restaurants, landmarks and locations within a city and link back to the original source, such as city resources or other social content pages.
- Users can pin from other members of the community and engage in a photo dialogue that builds out their presence on the platform and increases the popularity of certain pins. For example, posting about Lebanon’s history with Route 66 would ensure visibility through other travel or American history boards.

Instagram

Instagram provides users with a visual snapshot or video of an event, product or experience in a scrolling feed. With over 200 million users, this application is the most popular social networking site and functions similarly to Twitter by using hashtags and trending topics to engage users. By following these hashtags and connecting them with relevant content, you can increase your application popularity and online search engine status.

- Post as often as you like! The posts are immediately viewable, so employing these on the day of an event can drive traffic to that location before the event is over.
- Employ the different image filter effects to add visual interest and make photos and videos unique and appealing.
- “Like” other businesses and users frequently. They will be more likely to respond with “likes” of their own.
- Share these photos immediately on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Tumblr to integrate your social media platforms.
- For more information about using Instagram for your Lebanon business, visit <http://business.instagram.com/blog/>.

Example Instagram Profile: [Farmington, Mo.](#)



Residents in Farmington, Mo. frequently post interesting photos of popular restaurants, cafes, events, retail stores and outdoor activities that take place in their community. Lebanon residents can upload photos during events that will entice those living in nearby areas to check out what downtown Lebanon has to offer.

Why is this page successful?

- Residents frequently post photos of their favorite city landmarks, restaurants and local “celebrities” to their pages and tag them to “DiscoverFarmington.”
- Businesses and organizations host contests or showcase developing projects. The LDBD can follow this trend by posting the step-by-step development of projects such as the permanent structure for the farmers market, with “behind the scenes” shares of the construction process.

Fitting in the Media Mix: Business, Financial and Professional Services Companies

It’s hard to remain connected to all of these media channels, but putting Lebanon businesses online in the public sphere will increase the foot traffic and interest in the downtown area. Be sure to keep the following in mind when cross-promoting downtown businesses and events:

- Regardless of industry, work together with all downtown businesses to support each other.
- Consider each other as one of the most effective sources for referrals.
- Don't underestimate the value of word-of-mouth marketing.
- Get to know each other!
 - Do you know the businesses surrounding you?
 - Make connections with staff, clients, etc. of other downtown businesses.

Staying Current with Social Media

At first, it might seem difficult to stay current, as new social platforms are unveiled nearly every week. Don't be afraid to try out new channels for Lebanon, and more importantly, don't stress yourself out. There are a lot of free, easy solutions to explore for your community.

The easiest way to explore new channels is to do a bit of research and look at how other small businesses or downtown organizations are using these tools successfully. Also, consider regularly checking [publications dedicated to exploring new and improved social media options](#). By reviewing these sites on a regular basis, you will learn to identify new opportunities in traditional and social media that will best serve the Lebanon community. Incorporating new applications into your media routine will ensure that Lebanon retains a place in the expanded, online community outside the downtown area.

Popular Technology and Social Media Publications

Visit [Mashable](#) to learn more about new social media applications, trends, tips or ways to integrate your existing platforms.

For more information, also consider checking out the following websites as resources:

- [Wired](#)
- [Tech Crunch](#)
- [Engadget](#)
- [Gizmodo](#)
- [Fast Company](#)
- [Social Times](#)
- [DailyTech](#)

Helpful Tips and Techniques:

The examples below are helpful tools for best practices in social and traditional media. Please note that some of these techniques may best inform advanced community managers, but employing the basics will eventually lead to a well-developed social media presence.

- [Mashable Community Management](#) specifically focuses on marketing strategies, best practices for social media managers and how to efficiently expand your social brand.
- [Best Practices for Social Media](#) provides 14 tips for developing your brand image online and maintaining your message across multiple channels.
- [These six social media best practices](#) tips come from the perspective of a digital newsroom and advise on how to "amp up" your posts and platforms.
- [Social Media Today](#) provides up-to-date news and tools for managing social media for businesses or entire downtown areas.

Community Newsletter

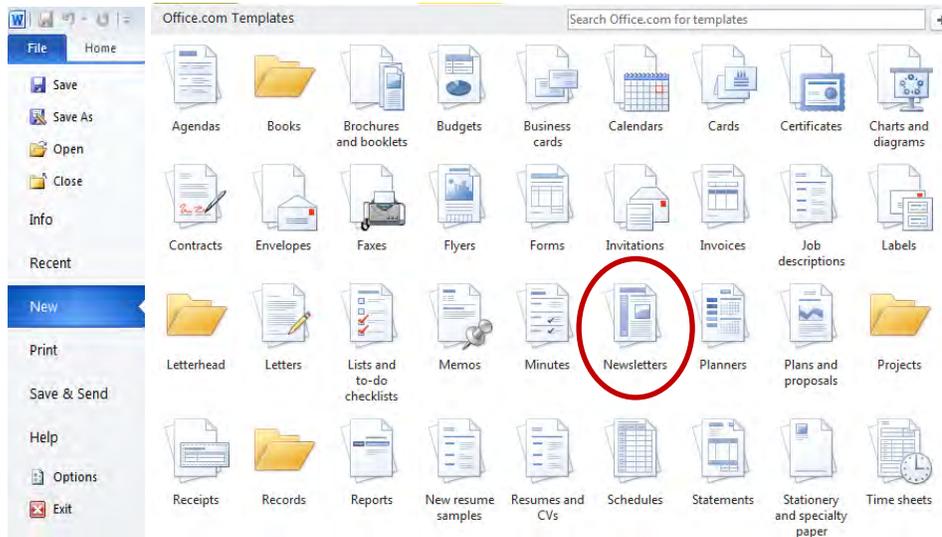
To keep community members regularly updated on important events and updates in and around downtown Lebanon, consider drafting and sharing a monthly, bimonthly or quarterly newsletter either via email or mail. This tool is helpful for consistently providing information regarding upcoming events, which will result in a greater opportunity to respond with favorable coverage. To ensure consistent content, set a deadline for all submissions and communicate with the community through a specific email or mail-in address each month. Newsletters can increase Downtown Lebanon's visibility and provide a great opportunity to receive community feedback on upcoming projects and proposals. Each newsletter should follow the same formatting with regular sections included, such as:

- Updates on current projects in the community; i.e., construction updates in the District
- Upcoming events.
- "Small Business Spotlight;" i.e., pick a small business to feature in each edition and include a photo, short summary on their offerings and advice the owner might have for other small businesses.
- Q&A with community members.
- Photo of the month; i.e., have community members submit their cute or funny photos and pick one to highlight in each edition.
- Leave room for a "special" section in each newsletter – this could include feature stories about major upcoming projects, news in Lebanon and neighboring communities, advice column, holiday stories and recipes, etc.

When determining how to best circulate your newsletter, consider including each edition in existing community mailings (i.e., the monthly water bill) and also share each edition in a digital version on Lebanon's website. If you're running low on ideas for content, consider reaching out to the local high school for "freelance" opportunities from students, or open up portions of the newsletter to the community for comment.

While there are many resources to help you design and build a newsletter, here are a few user-friendly resources to consider:

- For both email and print, [Pinterest](#) offers a great selection of free newsletter templates, however, a Pinterest account (free) is required to view these. Instead, [Canva](#) offers a variety of newsletter, and other publication material, templates with user-friendly graphic design elements that spruce up any event flyer, presentation, social media post or invitation. This platform provides free content for some images, as well as premium images for low cost.
- For an email newsletter, [MailChimp](#) offers an indefinite free trial period based on your number of contacts and emails per month; beyond that, prices start at \$10 per month.
- For printed newsletters, use Microsoft Word – go to "New," then select "Newsletters." There are several basic design options for you to choose from. You can view more, plus [email versions](#), on [Office.Microsoft.com](#).



Many communities use newsletters as their primary source of information and updates for residents. Check out the [Columbia, MO](#) online monthly newsletters – you can refer to this as a model for creating a dynamic newsletter for Lebanon, as well as the tools and resources described above.

FleishmanHillard's Recommendation

As mentioned above, [Canva](#) is a free, user-friendly design tool that can bring to life the materials and resources outlined in this toolkit. For example, we recommend the LBD use Canva as a resource when designing the key messages, community newsletter template, communications to new business owners and upcoming events, openings or news to be distributed to the Lebanon community.

Conclusion: Recommendations and Next Steps

All of the tools and examples included in this toolkit are meant to serve as a resource for the LDBD and partners to improve the downtown district and surrounding community. To continue this mission, included below are recommendations and next steps for LDBD members.

Examine Organizational Structure

Downtown revitalization is a community process that requires local champions who are willing to invest the needed time and effort required to support it. One of the first steps for successful revitalization is the formation of an organization dedicated to the cause.

Organizational change may be necessary to better meet the evolving needs, roles and responsibilities of revitalization efforts. In this case, restructuring the entity in charge of revitalization efforts is recommended to build organizational capacity – such as financial resources, personnel, volunteers, mission and leadership.

PGAV provides long-term recommendations to improve the organizational structure within the City of Lebanon, including the:

- Formation of Downtown Lebanon Community Improvement District (CID).
 - A CID is created as a political subdivision where funds would be generated through an additional sales or property tax.
 - The formation of a CID must include an adequate community outreach campaign where the benefits are shown to outweigh the costs.
- Implementation of a Local Option Economic Development Sales Tax (EDS).
 - An EDS is an additional sales tax, up to one-half of one percent, which may be imposed by Missouri cities to fund economic development initiatives.
 - This statute provides the municipality with broad discretion in the use of revenues, meaning it can be allocated to assist in downtown revitalization.
- For more information, consult PGAV.

Partners

The LDBD and REDI should consider regular joint meetings to discuss current restorative initiatives and determine which organization will be responsible for owning these efforts. Such projects can include expanding the variety of stores in the downtown area and marketing existing structures to drive additional business. The LDBD, REDI and the Chamber can pursue a seminar program series to assist downtown businesses in better serving their customers and attracting new business opportunities to the area.

Additionally, the Department of Tourism in Lebanon is a group that is primarily responsible for vocalizing all of the wonderful sights and events this city has to offer. As a historic town along Route 66, Lebanon has a lot to offer tourists by way of downtown attractions. The Department of Tourism is a valuable component to the revitalization effort and can promote the various events and projects of the LDBD and other organizations.

The Department of Tourism hosts the official city of Lebanon website, found here:

<http://www.lebanonmo.org>.

Creation of Permanent Structure

By constructing a new structure downtown, the LDBD can put forward a project for the community to rally around and make use of some of the resources in this toolkit. One example we've mentioned is the farmer's market, which will give local businesses the opportunity to showcase their products, interact with the community and each other. By taking responsibility for this project, the LDBD can signal to developers and nearby businesses that the group is committed to expanding the economy of Lebanon.

Serving the Community

As the LDBD is limited to a specific geographic area, the organization can only promote initiatives that have a direct positive impact on the specific location. Currently, the downtown area is enclosed within the outline shown below. To accommodate major roadways, pedestrian traffic and popular locations, the LDBD should consider expanding its influence to include a larger portion of the down district to provide community benefits to all Lebanon business, visitors and residents.

Current boundaries:



The LDBD can work to expand their reach and create a healthy downtown district by developing a strong volunteer core to implement these community betterment initiatives, not just within current district boundaries, but in an expanded market area as well.

Proposed boundaries:



Digital

In today's digital-first society, having a user-friendly website is a necessity. Once downtown revitalization efforts are further underway, we recommend creating a general "downtown" tab on the

Lebanon website that acts as a resource for both community residents and visitors alike when they seek information about downtown happenings, attractions and the amenities available to them. We recommend including:

- A link to the business directory for Lebanon businesses.
- An introduction briefly explaining the organization’s revitalization efforts.
- A community calendar of downtown-specific events.
- Highlights of local town jewels and unique businesses. Consider featuring a business each month with a brief interview with the owner, and photos of the owner and the store.

With all downtown-focused content in one place, visitors can easily access information. This page could also include photos of downtown through the years, such as a “Throwback Thursday” or “#TBT” social media post featuring historical images of downtown places and events.

Additional Resources

- When reaching out to potential partners, remember basic networking skills can prove to be extremely useful. Below are some resources that provide networking tips that are applicable to numerous settings:
 - [3 Networking Tips to Grow your Business](#) – Forbes.
 - [How To Use Social Media To Promote Your Small Business](#) – Forbes.
 - [24 networking tips that actually work](#) – Passive Panda.
 - [10 Networking Tips for People Who Hate Networking](#) – HowStuffWorks.
 - [The Power of Face-to-Face Networking](#) – Small Business Administration.
 - [10 ways to use social networking tools to promote your business](#) – Tech Republic.
- [Resources from the USDA Rural Information Center](#) – includes community planning resources, examples of downtown revitalizations and funding sources.

Additional Event Suggestions

We recommend hosting a small event approximately every quarter, and brainstorming several larger annual events. Some examples of annual events could be the unveiling and grand opening of the permanent structure for the farmers market, the annual holiday parade or reintroducing the tradition of Lebanon’s “Hillbilly Days” set in the downtown area.

Suggested Milestones to Celebrate

Milestones are a great reason to host an event and create excitement in a community. Below are a few suggestions of milestones worthy of celebrating:

- Anniversaries, such as the founding of Lebanon, LDBD formation, parks, railroad, etc.
- Completion of community projects.
- Opening of new restaurants or businesses.
- Accomplishment of goals outlined in long-term planning.

Appendix

The Missouri DREAM Initiative

The Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri (DREAM) Initiative is a collaboration between the Missouri Department of Economic Development, Missouri Development Finance Board and Missouri Housing Development Commission to provide communities across the state with access to technical and financial assistance for downtown revitalization. Since 2006 the DREAM Initiative has provided nearly 40 communities across the state of Missouri with the support and resources needed to further existing downtown revitalization plans.

The goals of the DREAM Initiative are the following:

- Re-establish the properties in use in downtown areas.
- Increase property tax values and sales tax opportunities.
- Re-establish a sense of place and cultural heritage in the heart of the community.
- Attract new private investment and jobs.

The purpose of the DREAM Initiative is to re-establish the downtown area as the image and identity of a community to restore the heart of the community. This project leverages local public and private improvements to sustain revitalization momentum and create productivity and prosperity within Missouri communities.

PGAV, an urban planning, architecture and destination consulting firm, is responsible for this effort to revitalize and restore nearly 40 communities in Missouri as vibrant community centers. PGAV also partners with FleishmanHillard, a global communications firm, to assist with marketing and communication efforts for developing DREAM communities.

Lebanon's Selection as a DREAM Community

The DREAM planning process for Lebanon began in 2008 with an assessment of downtown Lebanon's growth potential as a community hub for business and play. The first meeting to explore revitalization initiatives took place in November of 2008 and was attended by City officials, members of the City Council, the LDBD, the Chamber and REDI. Following these important conversations, the LDBD was gradually tasked with the goal of installing and maintaining downtown infrastructure elements and implementing community growth initiatives.

Through the DREAM Initiative, the LDBD has collaborated with the City of Lebanon to update the city's existing streetscape, improve pedestrian elements such as crosswalks and street furnishings and provide landscaping and signage along Highway 5 to guide visitors to the downtown area. The LDBD is committed to advancing these improvements and expanding revitalization activities in both scope and geography. These efforts will be supported by the City, the Chamber and REDI.

To date, most of the ground work has been completed with surveys, assessments, maps, conceptual plans, organizational structure review and building and streetscape guidelines. Key groups such as the LDBD, REDI, the Chamber and the City will continue to work together to incorporate these findings in their improvement initiatives.

PGAV Partnership

In order to provide planning, architectural and technical assistance, the state of Missouri selected PGAV to implement DREAM and assist with overall program administration.

PGAV is a premier, professional services firm renowned for its work in the disciplines of urban planning, architecture and destination consulting. PGAV Planners has been working with the city of Lebanon and other community stakeholders to develop a plan to nurture retail development, restaurants and entertainment to help balance the downtown business mix and develop the area to be a hub for business and play. The scope of services available through DREAM includes an organizational structure review, land use surveys, community and consumer surveys, residential and retail market analysis, streetscape, financial assistance review, marketing assistance and strategic planning.

Other DREAM communities that [PGAV](#) has worked with in partnership with the state of Missouri include:

- Boonville
- Farmington
- Fulton
- Lamar
- Louisiana
- Strafford
- Warrensburg
- Webb City

For a full list of Missouri DREAM communities, please visit www.modream.org/dream-communities.

Plans available through the DREAM Initiative: <http://www.modream.org/dream-communities/2008-dream-communities/lebanon/>.

For more information about Lebanon and the DREAM Initiative, or to view future reports, visit <http://www.modream.org/dream-communities/2008-dream-communities/lebanon/>.

Or, contact Mike Hemmer, PGAV at mike.hemmer@pgav.com.

Elevator Speech

Spreading the message of the LDBD is best with clear, simple language that conveys the message of the organization and invites the listener to engage or interact. This can be easily communicated in a short “elevator speech,” or, a brief description of the organization’s purpose and accomplishments. A sample elevator speech for the LDBD is included below, and can be customized according to the purpose and delivery:

“The Lebanon Downtown Business District, or LDBD, is made up of small business owners, property owners and Lebanon residents. Together we work to revitalize the district, attract new visitors and businesses and increase the unique appeal of Downtown Lebanon. We partner with the City, the Chamber and REDI to create and maintain the existing streetscape and infrastructure, and now we’re building on that vision.

We have implemented various beautification initiatives, such as holiday decorations, plantings and greenery along the sidewalk and improved lighting with the classic coachman-style light posts. Additionally we have created easily accessible parking and established the local farmers market. We continue to work towards improving the District and providing economic and community benefits to the people of our city.

If you are interested in learning more about our organization, please contact Benjamin DeClue, Assistant to the City Administrator, City of Lebanon, at (417) 588-7122 or bdeclue@lebanonmo.org.”

Key Messages

To best capture and communicate the benefits of the LDBD, we have provided several helpful talking points that can be used on their own, or to accompany the elevator speech. These messages are important to have on hand during community or partnership meetings, LDBD-sponsored events or when out-and-about in the community.

- *The Lebanon Downtown Business District (LDBD) is a Special Business District that encompasses most of Downtown Lebanon.*
- *We're a group of Lebanon residents, organizations, property and small business owners who want to create an inviting downtown area to attract new revenue and opportunities.*
- *The boundaries of the district were set in 1976 when the group was formed. We work to make downtown a more dynamic and attractive place for people to live, work and play through funds generated from real estate assessments and business licenses from businesses within the boundaries.*
- *Our mission is to install and maintain the existing streetscape and infrastructure that you see today. This includes everything from managing newsstands to maintaining curbs and gutters in the district.*
- *We are committed to the growth and development of downtown Lebanon and are now building on that vision. In the past 15 years we have accomplished several substantial and lasting improvements to the district, including creating accessible parking, establishing the local farmers market and bought many new holiday decorations to make the season bright. (Refer to organization accomplishments listed above for additional examples.)*
- *By partnering with other community organizations – such as the City, the Chamber and REDI – to make spending decisions, we can provide benefits to residents and visitors alike, as well as make downtown Lebanon an attractive place for small business owners to pursue their ventures.*
- *The downtown area is the heart of the community, where residents and visitors can meet to share their experiences of all that Lebanon has to offer. Our organization works to ensure the health and vitality of Lebanon's downtown District through community betterment efforts and initiatives. A prosperous and active downtown is essential to maintaining the overall health of the community.*
- *For more information about how the LDBD boosts the unique appeal of the district, our current projects, or to become involved in our organization, contact Benjamin DeClue, Assistant to the City Administrator, City of Lebanon, at (417) 588-7122 or bdeclue@lebanonmo.org.*