

RAPPAHANNOCK RAPIDAN FOOD COUNCIL

• BRAND RECOMMENDATIONS •

The following report captures all of the data collected and analyzed by The Spark Mill as part of the Brand Strategy Assessment. The data was culled from surveys, interviews, and two brand sessions. The overall recommendations for the brand are included below with suggestions for how to implement it through graphic representation.

CHARGE

The Spark Mill was asked to investigate a brand for the Rappahannock Rapidan Food Council for the promotion of their locally grown agricultural products and make recommendations for the naming of the campaign. Results of this study will be shared with the graphic designer to incorporate into a new visual identity to use to market the products grown and created within the region.

CORE BRAND INSIGHTS

The brand should be balanced between simple and sophisticated and highlighting farming as a craft. Feels comfortable to the residents but targets the core audiences of the brand. Visual cues include the Blue Ridge mountains, foothills and the red clay soil. The key to remember in branding is that it should resonate with customers most strongly, rather than describe the farmers and producers of the region. As an example, the Food Alliance brand was picked out by several session participants as their favorite.

This modern and clean simply colored brand can be used as a basis for exploring graphic options.



NAME OPTIONS

The Rappahannock-Rapidan agricultural area has few defining characteristics and brands that aren't shared outside of the region and no distinct name or brand that stakeholders identified. Constituents noted this challenge in our public branding sessions. This creates difficulty with creating a cohesive brand. This is further complicated by the vastness of the products included in the agricultural assets of the region. Naming options fall into two general categories - known and unknown.

UNKNOWN - These tend to have a higher cost to get moving but their uniqueness often pays off in the long run once the brand becomes known.

KNOWN - Known brands have the added benefit of shared cost for marketing because they are a known quantity in the community or others are spending time and energy in order to promote it. This results in residual marketing benefits for campaigns. There are three known "brands" in the area that could be used to increase your presence.

RAPPAHANNOCK RAPIDAN FOOD COUNCIL

• BRAND SESSION + SURVEY REPORT •

THE HEART OF THE REGION

RURAL CULTURE

- small town
- generational farms (home grown)
- community involvement
- we know each others' names - supportive not competitive, we trust each other
- drive along country roads / scenic highways
- open space / remote and beautiful
- somewhat disconnected / privacy / isolation

AGRICULTURE

- cattle
- horses
- dairy
- field crops
- tree fruit
- take pride in our work and our land
- creativity and innovation in agriculture
- legacy of the agricultural trades
- heritage farms and breeds

FOOD

- food destination: restaurant + dining culture is growing
- legacy of our food goes back to Thomas Jefferson
- centrally located Farmers' Market

QUALITY OF LIFE

- lifestyle is active and healthy / outdoor recreation (lakes, hiking, Old Rag)
- get out of the city and be free
- aura of aspiration
- downtown shopping - unique boutiques, american made
- access to artisans and agriculture
- great family experience

DEFINING FEATURES

- changing seasons
- proximity to the mountain and ocean
- horse country (becoming wine country)
- Blue Ridge Mountains
- red clay soil
- modern charm - embracing the old but continuing to modernize
- unique combination of recreation / dining / lodging, and walkability

AUDIENCE

LOCALS

- women, 40-50s
- families
- healthy lifestyles, healthy eaters
- on the go, want convenience
- neighbors
- generations care about the future of the region
- want to support the community
- identify by the major roads they take

TRANSPLANTS

- seeking slower lifestyle
- want to buy local, engage with local food scene
- passionate about food and want transparency in sourcing
- young families
- thoughtful decision makers
- younger generations really care about healthy, nourishing food

FARMERS MARKET SHOPPERS

- want farm to table lifestyle
- care about seasonal, fresh
- want / have a relationship with their farmers
- looking for the real deal (want dirt on their produce)

COMMERCIAL PARTNERS

- restaurants
- grocery stores
- care about scale
- want the process of working with farms to be easy and reliable

WEEKENDERS

- mid 40s+
- live / work in DC, Maryland, Georgetown
- legacy home owners
- taking mini-vacations on the weekends
- feel disconnected but not remote
- blend in but don't know vernacular
- agri-tourism opportunities
- care about high quality products
- will engage with value added products

IMMERSION TOURISTS

- want to live the local lifestyle
- interested in engaging with stories, history, and authentic culture
- want to bring back something that reminds them of their trip
- agri-tourism opportunities
- younger tourists want a memorable experience over goods
- will engage with value added products

FARMERS

- care about scalability and growth of their business
- large variety in size and scale
- have to compete for limited farmers market space
- medium sized farmers are hurting the most
- need / want to create more value added products (like the success of Moo Thru)

GOALS

- create an identifiable brand to market the region - a regional identity (all about geography)
- promote regionally grown food and drink products (later create a label)
- increase sales of locally produced food
- create an agricultural powerhouse of a presence in Virginia (i.e. Shenandoah Valley)
- provide marketing support to farmers in the region
- change the "image" of farming to an accurate one for today's industry & educate our audience about terms and modern practices
- balance simple and sophisticated image
- connect tourists and weekenders to local food through co-branding with vibrant downtown areas and the beautiful landscape
- create the opportunity for visitors to feel "immersed" in our food culture
- create a brand that's universal and target our approach to each audience within that
- define what "local" means
- support commercial buyers of regional food
- finding compromise between breweries, wineries, produce, + meat

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

- getting buy in / participation from farmers
- there's no regional term that's familiar to most people
- competition with farmers' brands
- manpower required to take on marketing initiatives is difficult
- not many defining geographical features (other than 'Tween Rivers)

BUSINESS CRUSHES

- Save The Crabs, Then Eat Them
- Fauquier Grown - hyper local & super fresh

NAMING

- geographically focused
- Piedmont - overused and too broad
- tourism focused - Tween Rivers is nice but unfamiliar to most
- use an emotional appeal - food, homegrown, fresh
- brief & memorable
- maybe a new new word

BRAND ATTRIBUTES

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Distinguishing characteristics of your brand.

- honest
- simple
- pure
- safe
- innovative
- of the earth
- family oriented
- quality (award winning)
- wholesome
- nourishing
- fresh
- transformable
- elevated
- knowledgeable
- slow tempo
- rooted in tradition
- scientific in approach to craft
- expertise in their skillset
- strength
- steadfastness
- approachable
- caring
- aware and connected

TONE OF VOICE

How to speak with your brand's voice.

- a little fun
- approachable
- crunchy
- trustworthy
- appeals to your emotions
- fresh ("needs a little dirt")
- genuine (connecting consumer and producer)

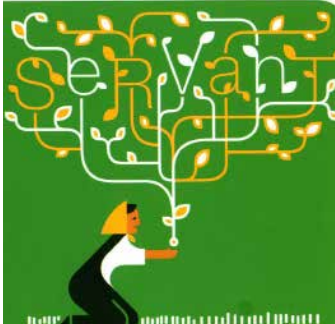
GRAPHICS

Considerations for the brand's aesthetics.

- green symbolizes growth, sustainability, and agriculture
- progressive: find a balance of traditional and modern
- keep it clean and simple, multiple colors are expensive to print
- words and message needs to be clear and concise
- Food Alliance logo - like the connection to "collaboration" and the farm house & silo
- Rappahannock County logo - like the combination of identifiable elements (cattle, grapes, wheat, barley)
- like the idea of a truck as a symbol

BRAND ARCHETYPES

“An archetype is a universally familiar character or situation that transcends time, place, culture, gender, and age. It represents an eternal truth.” - Jon Howard-Spink



SERVANT

THE SERVANT can assume a spectrum of roles, from one who serves another to servant leadership. The true spirit of the Servant does not contain a mandate to subservience or being indentured but represents a calling to service for the benefit of enhancing others' lives. A diligent and dedicated helper, the Servant is a humble steward, freely choosing to serve and to satisfy. The rewards of service are sufficient for this archetype, and external recognition is not required.

STRENGTHS: Service. Ability to listen. Empathy. Awareness. Commitment to the growth of others. Talent for community building. Humility. Persuasion. Stewardship. Openness.

CHALLENGES: Loss of individual sustainability, leading to burnout. Too much sacrifice. Dependence on external acknowledgment.



GUARDIAN

THE GUARDIAN finds identity and fulfillment by defending, protecting or caring for others. This archetype is the keeper of traditions, legacy and values. Seeking to offer a firm hand to strategically guide and form a path toward the greater good, the Guardian is a bottomless well of compassion for the bitter-sweetness of life. Powerful and self sacrificing, the Guardian is a multifaceted manager, offering safety, respecting privacy and promoting accountability and liability in service to protecting others from harm.

STRENGTHS: Gift for nurturing guidance. Desire to offer loving oversight. Protection. Compassionate discipline.

CHALLENGES: Abuse of power. Neglect. Overbearingness. Entrapment.



ENGINEER

The Engineer is curious and looks to find solutions to everyday problems. Eminently practical, this archetype converts creative energy into practical expression, and its results driven and delivery oriented. Interested in patterns the Engineer demonstrates the value of a structured approach to problem solving. This archetype prefers to work methodically, to stay calm and to avoid intuitive leaps. The Engineer is a good team player, placing high value on collective work that is focused toward an outcome. At its core, the engineer is a systems specialist.

STRENGTHS: Practicality. Sensibility. Engagement. Honesty. Groundedness. Patience.

CHALLENGES: Manipulation. Temptation to seeking one's own advantage or act as a puppet master.



CHILD

Enjoying all that life has to offer, THE CHILD reawakens the autonomic joys of play and curiosity. Energetically, the Child embodies playfulness, lightness, freedom and the expectation of wonder. This archetype demonstrates a relentless belief in the goodness of humanity and uses the power of imagination to see the possibility for fun in everything. A joy to be around, the Child tends to bring out the best in others.

STRENGTHS: Temperament that is easily amused. Inner toughness and resilience.

Positive attitude and energy. Fascination with the world. Openness to possibility.

CHALLENGES: Inability to grow up and accept responsibility. Difficulty being reliable, grounded or dependable. Tendency to be highly mutable and vulnerable to influence.

SURVEY SNAPSHOT

WHO RESPONDED?

RACE: 96% of respondents identified as white

AGE: 61% of respondents 50 years of age or older, 28% between the ages of 35 - 49

INCOME: 40% between \$50,000 - \$100,000 and 25% between \$100,000 - \$150,000

EDUCATION: 38% Graduate level degrees, 32% Bachelor, 23% Some college

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

These questions cannot live in a vacuum. They are most valuable when examined in context of one another and their interconnectivity is analyzed, telling a more complete story. Questions 3, 4, and 6 in particular are working together to tell us a story about the shopping patterns of this group of people, while Questions 10 and 11 tell us their priorities.

When you put all of that information together you reveal three subsets of people/perspectives.

1. A small/medium sized group of people that would probably buy local if it was offered in their chain grocery store for around the same price as everything else. The benefit and community value of buying local does not resonate with them, or they haven't had much exposure to the freshness of local products, or they do not have the time and financial privilege to pay more and hop all over town to track it down.
2. A larger group who is still mindful of costs and convenience, but like going to the farmer's market and chatting with the farmers, or have extra time to swing by the local specialty market to pick up ingredients for dinner that night. This group probably has a better understanding of how buying local impacts the local economy and has the flexibility in time/finances to do this occasionally. They may have a couple of favorite products, like John's bacon or the spinach from THAT farm that they always buy. They are not opposed to grabbing produce from Kroger when they make their big shopping runs.
3. A small group of people with a more dispensable income and/or really adamant about locally grown products. They are willing to pay whatever the local product costs, and will make multiple stops around town to pick up everything they need. They are likely the ones that put selection as their main obstacle to buying local.

*Organic is listed as important to a number of respondents, and the issue was raised that local does not mean organic.

QUESTIONS

Q1 – 12% of the respondents report living outside of the Rappahannock Rapidan 5 county region.

Q3 – 51% of people said they grocery shop once a week or less. This likely means they are planners and one-stop shoppers who head out to their large grocery chain or Wal-Mart and pick up everything on their list for the next week or two. They choose from what is offered at that store. This is important to the analysis of the rest of the survey.

3 Words to describe food from RRR

	Bottom 7 (5% or lower)
	Visionary
Top 7 (20% or higher)	Daring
Quality	Refined
Wholesome	Exciting
Nourishing	Compassion
Neighborhoodly	Unique/Original
Trusted	Conventional
*Heritage	
*Traditional	

Notes: 12 people wrote in Fresh.

What do you like best about food grown in the region?

Fresh, Taste/Flavor, Support local economy/farmer

Other common themes included relationships with farms/growers and the knowledge or access to knowledge about the food's story

Top Obstacles: Inconvenience, Price, Selection, Lack of Information

How much more will you spend on local food?

For 34% affordability is most important, 41% seek a combination of affordability/local (they are most likely swayed by convenience), and 25% prefer local regardless of cost (they actively seek out local products and generally refuse to buy produce at the grocery store.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Option 1: Red Clay Raised - This name picks out the defining characteristic of the region's agricultural industry and highlights it. Raised also opens it to more than just farming and feels both simple and sophisticated if articulated in a clean visual representation. This responds to constituents need for a brand with "a little dirt on it." This also feels kitschy enough for out of town tourists to respond to while local enough for the farming community to embrace. We recommend a playful yet modern brand that will make locals smile and tourists laugh.



Option 2: Fresh from the Foothills - This name pulls from the known food system geography while also allowing for a connection to the earth and the dirt. The key in using this name would be to create a modern brand that would live into the balance between tradition and a visitor friendly bold brand. "Foothills Fresh" is an existing campaign in North Carolina centered around Asheville which may be far enough away to not cause confusion. This brand suggests the secrets you might find in the foothills

- your home away from home. Where you can meet the farmer that harvested your dinner. It still needs to be playful, extroverted and friendly to resonate with tourists. This is a much more common brand used up and down the east coast.



Option 3: Tween Rivers Grown - This brand has co-branding opportunities with tourism, but is unknown and moderately disliked by community. This brand will likely grow over time but resonates less with the local community and more so with the tourist community. There will be cost savings because of the dual branding and marketing efforts. An agricultural brand would need to be similar enough to benefit from co-branding while focused more on products. A sample tag-line could be "harvested in the foothills."



Other Options Considered

Known Options: Piedmont Grown, Piedmont Fresh, Freshly Piedmont, Fresh from Rappahannock, Rappahannock Grown - These are recognizable within the region, slightly generic, and overly broad - the technical regions extend well beyond the boundaries of the RRPDC.

Unknown Options: UpCountry Grown, Silo Harvest, Red Clay Ripe, Fresh from UpCountry, Hay Bale Harvest