



## Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

Many, if not all, U.S. states are struggling to attract and retain workforce talent. As Wisconsin businesses seek to maintain the state's high-quality workforce in the face of record-low unemployment, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) realized that it must reach young people. By evaluating the other 49 states' economic development efforts, WEDC knew that it needed to evolve its messaging to this audience and rethink its marketing approach by both boosting awareness of the career and quality of life opportunities that exist in Wisconsin, while also broadening perceptions of the state. Wisconsin is a state whose identity is deeply linked to leadership in manufacturing, agriculture and a Midwestern sense of pragmatism and hard work without pretense. This identity is built into a few well-known associations, stereotypes even, when one thinks of Wisconsin: cheese, cold winters and the Green Bay Packers. The challenge was to attract talent to and retain talent in Wisconsin despite the limited perceptions and a lack of awareness and to stand out from the other attraction initiatives across the country.

By surveying the target market—Millennials in Chicago—on the economic and lifestyle factors they would weigh if considering a move to Wisconsin, the team confirmed the target audience's limited perceptions of the state's career opportunities and quality of life attributes. A new shared brand platform—Think-Make-Happen In Wisconsin—came to life to represent Wisconsin's various regions, industries, economic assets, natural resources and cultural attributes. This created an opportunity for collaboration between municipalities and regional and state entities, as well as interagency cooperation between Wisconsin tourism, workforce development and economic development stakeholders. Delivering the core brand message to a specific audience segment—Millennials living in Chicago—required the development of a highly targeted campaign, one that was driven

by the central (tested and validated) idea that Wisconsin is "more you.". The team highlighted the benefits of life in Wisconsin across four main campaign pillars: Commute Time and Loss of Opportunity; Family Life; Cost and Quality of Living; and Cost and Quality of Housing. WEDC's strategy targeted its core audience through paid, social, owned and earned media elements as well as face-to-face marketing.

Given the density of its target audience population and its proximity to Wisconsin, Chicago was chosen as the geographic focus of the external launch of the Think-Make-Happen In Wisconsin brand. Media was chosen with the goal of intersecting the target audience's active lifestyle and InWisconsin.com was created as a destination to inspire and educate potential residents. The team developed eight creative treatments on Chicago's L Train system and in the fitness areas in major health clubs in Chicago to emphasize the outdoor activities available in Wisconsin. Ads within mobile apps and were geo-targeted to Chicago, invited the user to calculate their commute time and cost of housing compared to Wisconsin's

The national campaign earned coverage from several major news outlets — including the Chicago Tribune. The team saw a more than 5% lift in answers to the question "Would you move to Wisconsin?" within the target market after only four months of the campaign. ●