

Tennessee Arts Commission Brand Presentation

Accompanying video

Good morning. My name is Suzanne Lynch and I am the Director of Marketing and Development with the Tennessee Arts Commission.

In Tennessee, the arts are vital and vibrant, rooted in history and geography.

Tennessee is known best as a cradle of musical innovation: bluegrass, here is Doyle Lawson with his band, Quicksilver. We have rock and roll and the blues. Home to both Elvis and BB King, and soul, home to Stax Records and the Stax Music Academy, gospel and of course, country.

Tennessee is rich in traditional arts such as Fife and Drum. On the left is R.L. Boyce, bluesman and drummer. On the right is Kesha Burton, a young drummer and poet.

Jack Martin of Selmer, Tennessee is a fourth generation broom maker continuing the craft he learned from his grandfather.

Fiddle maker Jean Horner shown here with his apprentice, Austin Derryberry. For over 40 years Jean has made fiddles and mandolins full-time in a shop near the cabin where he was raised on the Cumberland Plateau.

This is Thomas Maupin, widely considered Tennessee's most gifted practitioner of flatfoot buck dancing. He is a 2017 NEA Heritage Fellow.

Tennessee is home many cultures that have brought their traditions with them. This is Angela Webb learning traditional pollera dressmaking from her mother, Malvina Carrera.

This is Manuel Delgado, a third-generation Mexican-American luthier with his daughter, Ava soon to be the fourth-generation.

And this is Manuel Cuevas, rodeo tailor to the stars and a 2018 NEA Heritage Fellow.

Tennessee also has wonderful craft. This is Bill Capshaw who created the award for the 2017 Governor's Arts Award.

The Metal Museum in Memphis is the only institution in the U.S. devoted exclusively to the advancement of the art and craft of fine metalwork.

Tennessee is home to great institutions for independent film, symphonies, orchestras, dance, the visual arts, theater and opera, as well as festivals in big cities and small towns like the River Bend festival in Chattanooga, Decatur's Summer Nights and the International Storytelling Festival.

Arts education is thriving in urban and rural communities alike, offering opportunities for student in and out of school to engage quality arts programming.

As the state arts agency, it was essential to establish a relevant and unique brand that complements Tennessee arts and culture

The branding conversation began in 2013 during strategic planning public meetings and research.

The research determined that stakeholders felt that advocating for the arts should be one of the Commission's top priorities.

In the 2014-2019 strategic plan, Goal Four was called Champion for the Arts, which included the objective of communicating the impact of the arts.

To do that effectively, the agency needed an integrated brand that would connect our grantees together across the state.

And the brand needed to represent all of the arts across Tennessee.

As you know, a brand is much more than just a logo and a catchy tagline. But it is a good place to start.

The process took approximately a year and included lots of internal and external feedback.

It was important to understand the various audiences of the agency: the artist, the arts administrator, the student, the arts educator, the nonprofit, the school, the local government, the arts supporter, the legislator and the public.

With the target audiences in mind, the agency mission defined the brand strategy,

"The Tennessee Arts Commission cultivates the arts for the benefit of all Tennesseans and their communities."

There were several different concepts initially, but eventually the field was narrowed to two. The staff and board cast a vote for the winner.

Tennessee is comprised of three grand divisions, from the banks of the great Mississippi river in the west, the rolling hills of the middle and the mountains in the east.

The Tennessee state flag consists of three stars, which represent these three grand divisions

The concept for the logo was that the arts bring Tennesseans together, across divides and unites us.

As you can see, the logo is a combination of three stars creating a unique symbol representing the Tennessee Arts Commission.

The tagline followed the same process as the logo, again using the agency mission statement as the brand strategy.

The mission was boiled down to three short words: Cultivate. Create. Participate.

Keeping in mind that grantees had to incorporate the TN Arts logo into their promotions, it was essential that the new logo and tagline was flexible.

Three versions of the logo were made available: the primary version, the horizontal version and the vertical version. All three versions were available in two colors, one color, grey scale and knockout.

A brand toolkit was put on the agency website which also includes the brand guidelines.

The brand was introduced at the state arts conference in 2014 and grantees were ask to implement the new brand over the course of the next year.

Additional awareness of the new branding included e-blasts, social media, newsletter posts and one-to-one communication with program directors.

The launch was successful and grantees implemented the new branding quickly.

Here we are four year later and the brand has woven itself throughout all of the agency's touch points.

Having additional important elements in the branding helps to keep the brand fresh and relevant.

The brand has a font palette that includes a sans serif and a serif. By having two style options, publications, even websites can establish different tones.

There is also a universal font for everyday use in the office because most staff don't have access to extending their type palettes.

There are also color palettes. Along with a primary color palette, a secondary palette was developed, which has proved to be indispensable, as it extended the brand to allow for many color combinations that could be used for different programs or events.

This allowed the brand to be flexible but maintain a consistent look. The following are examples of the brand in action.

Environmental graphics included new signage for agency entrances such as the gallery entrance and the lobby.

The agency websites was developed with the same fonts, colors and additional graphic elements such as the background pattern.

This is the cover of the strategic plan. The graphic at the top is frequently used element with or without photos.

The 2016 statewide arts conference introduced the hexagon made from triangles, as is the bee.

The conference included an outdoor concert that complimented the theme.

The 2018 statewide arts conference them was design thinking. Even though it still uses brand colors and geometric shapes, I think this version feels quite different from the last one.

This is the conference t-shirt design, more triangles.

Over the last few years, agency collateral was updated to reflect the new brand. This is a postcard for promoting Poetry Out Loud.

Several programs have their own mini-brands but they all tie back into the main brand. This is the logo for the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program. This is for the Creative Aging Tennessee. And this is the logo for the Tennessee Military, veterans and the arts initiative. Again all use the same colors and fonts.

Here's a couple of examples of grantees using the logo on their promotions.

The Specialty License Plate program which funds 2/3 of Tennessee arts budget and we promote across the state, is also tied to the Commission's branding.

Going forward, how does the brand continue to evolve and build equity?

Over the past two years, we have begun producing video in-house, specifically for our Governor's Arts Award and more recently for the NEA.

As video is an effective way to tell a story, we will be utilizing video more to communicate the impact of the arts in Tennessee.

All agency websites will be refreshed in time for the launch of the new strategic plan that is due September of 2019. It will be an opportunity to improve navigation and add new features while still maintaining the branding.

That just about does it. Thank you so much for your time.