

BWP: Bringing Our City to the World



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Written by Michael J. Chin

During this time of economic uncertainty across the globe, Boston World Partnerships (BWP) could be just what the city needs to bring stability to its economy and promise to its future. This unique, non-profit organization will globally market the advantages Boston offers to growing businesses, while creating opportunities for the city's established and upcoming enterprises alike.

"The standard ways to market a city or state are by lowering property taxes or buying ads. What we see everyone else doing is scaling back their marketing initiatives while we can push forward, but in a more specific way, because ours is structured so cost-effectively," said Dave McLaughlin, executive director of BWP, "The current economy means it is even more important and the strategy even more timely."



McLaughlin referred to the concept of "crowd sourcing," where the crowd, in this case high profile Bostonians and organizations, promotes the message. "It's word of mouth marketing on a global scale through the people that participate in the exposure and access to this network. We are empowering Bostonians to express their own feelings," McLaughlin explained.

This network will be realized in the form of an information-rich website, that groups data, news and commentary in channels that are relevant to the entire spectrum of the business community. The BWP will also provide a comprehensive email system for businesses called Ask Boston. "What do you do when your business needs something? You flip the rolodex and ask what those people can offer you. Ask Boston allows you to ask the whole Boston network," McLaughlin said.

With the launch of the online network, will come a series of events in Boston to share ideas and insights for the project, as well as the creation of a team of BWP "connectors," or ambassadors, who are "high achievers, accessible through the website." This portion of the project is essential to make the website a meaningful tool; it has to connect to the right people.

"Our city's biggest asset is the human capital. It is so important that we engage people from all communities. This initiative really needs to capture the full benefits of the diversity reflective of today's Boston. If we don't, we won't be successful. We need professionals in all industries and all communities who are doing great things, and the one thing they have in common is that they are positive about Boston."

Although Boston has felt the pressure of a struggling national and global economy, it has fared better than other cities because it has several strong industries, a quality BWP will promote. At the same time it will take on the, perhaps dated, perception of Boston as an insular community, "We are addressing it from perception and reality. Whether it's a big problem or a small problem, either way (BWP) is going to make it better."

The BWP was founded by Mayor Thomas Menino with seed money from Proctor & Gamble and the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The officers and board members of BWP are prominent private and public leaders who share a common goal, to reposition Boston in the global landscape. Like the city, the success of BWP depends on its people, and McLaughlin believes that to be a fundamental goal, "Connecting people is what we do."