

SPLINTER

CARRBORO BRANDING REPORT

11.6.13

The Splinter Group is in the final stages of a nine-month campaign to develop a new brand identity for the Town of Carrboro. In the following report we will update you on each phase of this campaign, including research/community engagement, creative development, and presentations to our focus group and town committees and brand stakeholders. Through this process we have received positive feedback and strong preference for a logo direction and tagline we believe will serve Carrboro well for its signage, identity and marketing needs.

SCHEDULE

MARCH: Official Hire

APRIL-MAY: Let's Talk Carrboro, Research & Community Engagement

JUNE: Report Findings to Stakeholders

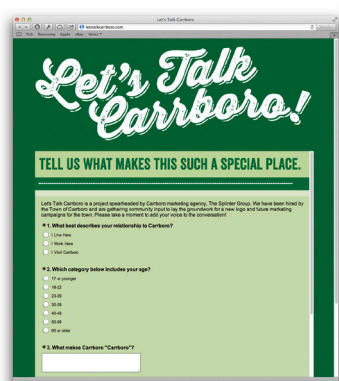
JULY-AUGUST: Creative Development

SEPTEMBER: Focus Group Presentation, Revisions to Feedback

OCTOBER: Presentations to Stakeholders

NOVEMBER: Final Presentation & Approval

LET'S TALK CARRBORO



Our campaign started with a two-month community engagement campaign we called “Let’s Talk Carrboro”. Our goal in this phase was to engage town officials, residents and visitors to share experiences, emotions and opinions about Carrboro. The primary components of this campaign were:

ONLINE SURVEY: We had 135 responses to our online survey at letstalkcarrboro.com, 57% of respondents live in Carrboro, 28% work here and the remaining 15% visit. Over 55% of survey participants were 30-49. Our questions centered on wordplay, emotions and experiences.

IDEA STATIONS: We placed “idea stations” at 23 Carrboro businesses including Weaver Street Market, Carrboro High School, Open Eye Café, The Salon at Winmore, Calvander BP and Cat’s Cradle asking one simple question...What Makes Carrboro “Carrboro”. We had over 200 responses over a four-week period.

GROUP : & INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS: We hosted group sessions with the Arts Commission, Economic Sustainability Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, Planning Board, Transportation Advisory Board, and Driving Carrboro Forward, attended events such as Open Streets and Carrboro Farmers’ Market, and held over 50 individual interviews.

FINDINGS

We distilled the feedback we received during Let's Talk Carrboro into some initial findings that helped guide the creative process.

- **Carrboro is an unconventional place that cannot be neatly wrapped up with a bow.**
- **Carrboro is non-traditional and supports creativity.**
- **Carrboro is genuine. It looks you in the eye.**
- **Carrboro has an independent spirit that is positive and optimistic.**
- **Carrboro is a feeling. People feel different when they are here.**
- **Carrboro welcomes outsiders because it is one itself.**
- **Carrboro is neighborly. We are on a first-name basis.**
- **Carrboro is smart and serious, but it can also laugh at itself.**
- **Carrboro is cool but would never call itself cool.**

We filed two reports in June with more information on Let's Talk Carrboro. Those reports are attached for easy reference.

CREATIVE PROCESS

When we begin the creative process, the first question we ask ourselves is “what story are we telling?” What is the message that we want our audience to take away? In developing brand identities, the outcome is usually a logo paired with a tagline or slogan. In the case of this project, we began with slogans first as creative ways to distill down the key sentiments we drew from our research. We needed our creative to be meaningful, not just attractive.

Our research told us that we want folks to understand that Carrboro is a lively town that is unconventional, open to new ideas, unique beyond words, accepting of others and supportive of growth and change.

We produced a series of key words to provide criteria for our creative process. We wanted to create a brand expression that said Carrboro is:

- **Active**
- **Unconventional**
- **Independent**
- **Welcoming**
- **Creative**
- **Complex**

Our approach to visual design again referred back to our research. We learned that there wasn't a single shared visual icon that represented the town. Unlike some towns, we don't have a huge Arch, or a Golden Gate Bridge or even an Old Well. Over and over we heard that Carrboro is a feeling. An attitude. A sense of possibility. So we decided to pursue a mark in which the very rendering of the name itself captured and communicated the unique feeling of the town. Rather than creating an icon that stood next to a conventional type treatment of the name, we put all of our energy into developing a creative portrayal of the name through interesting typography and graphic design.

We wanted to create an original design that spoke to the people of Carrboro first. We wanted Carrboro to “get it” before anyone else did. And we wanted there to be a moment of interactive interpretation and a sense of discovery.

FOCUS GROUP

Fifteen initial slogans and logo directions emerged from our creative process. In August we presented these to a focus group consisting of members of the Arts Commission, Economic Sustainability Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, Planning Board and other members of our community.

The focus group echoed and reinforced our instincts—they challenged us to avoid being safe and easy. Carrboro is not just another town..it isn't easy to sum up and neither should the logo be.

Of all the logos and slogans presented to the focus group, two main directions on each rose to the surface.

SLOGANS

1. DIFFERENT AS USUAL

When in Carrboro, expect the unexpected. Our eclectic mix of characters, businesses, and organizations push the envelope on creativity and progress. There is nothing typical about Carrboro. We are known for our being ahead of the curve and outside of the box. The uncommon is common and our diversity is what unifies us.

2. IT'S CARRBORO, FEEL FREE

This phrase is about liberty, encouragement, and hospitality and has its roots as a Southern colloquialism. It captures both our welcoming, hospitable nature, but also speaks to the notion of empowerment that comes from a supportive community. "Feel free" implies an open-mindedness where more is possible. Carrboro is supportive and encouraging. Optimists and pioneers are welcome here. Do your own thing becomes own your own thing. Open a business, start a band, learn a foreign language or run for office. Feel free means more yes's than no's. With less doubt, more is possible here.

LOGOS

Two logo directions also emerged, as seen on the following pages...

LOGO #1

We use overlapping, blended type and color to illustrate the idea that Carrboro is made up of many unique individuals that come together to create one body. Different colors, perspectives and voices retain their sense of individuality while tolerating and embracing difference. Through community, there is social overlap and colors begin to blend and change. This logo tells the story of how Carrboro takes all kinds and is more than the sum of its parts. It's colorful, energetic and interactive.



= DIFFERENT AS USUAL =

LOGO #2

For our second design we created an evocative piece of original art that captures the lively energy and spirit of the town. Rather than using traditional typography, this design creates the town name entirely out of lines and circles that flow into each other. The shapes within the design are suggestive of growing trees, faces, bicycle tires, spinning records, hoops and trails. The interplay between the letters gives a sense of movement, encouraging you to wander through the design as you would tour through the town, seeing unique characters and sites along the way. The flow in this design grew out of the notion that things are fundamentally different here. Helvetica does not apply. Carrboro has its own sensibility and we sought to capture it with this design. Like Carrboro itself, the mark is open to interpretation.



OUTCOME

In our six committee presentations during the month of October, logo #2 and “Feel Free” were the consistent favorites. Folks overwhelmingly responded to the originality of the design, the signature shape, and the way in which it communicated the essence of “feel free”. The legibility of logo #2 was discussed in some of our meetings but the idea that the logo was abstract and worthy of a longer look in itself spoke to the essence of Carrboro. Additionally, our context mocks (to follow) showed that logo #2 is much more versatile than Logo #1. Because logo #1 relies on a variety of colors to communicate its essential idea, it lost much of its power when reduced to fewer colors. This is a real concern when dealing with printing limitations and associated costs.









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Et justo odio dignissimos est lorem ipsum et ducimus uht.

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CALENDAR

CARRBORO DAY

Join neighbors and friends to learn about and celebrate the unique qualities that make our town special. Enjoy old Carrboro stories and photos, poetry readings, music and dancing, interactive field games, crafts, family activities and more!

[View All](#)

10



OPEN SOURCE VARIATIONS

While there will be an approved logo for official town use, one of the things we love about Logo 2 is the concept of it being a signature shape or icon that is open to interpretation and customization. In the spirit of the “feel free” tag line, the mark has an open-source quality in which color and texture could be added by the public in a very Carrboro way. The interpretations carry the signature brand design while highlighting different aspects and appeals of the town. This participatory sense of the brand is emblematic of the process we’ve been engaged in. From the beginning, we’ve sought to create something unique that folks will embrace and make their own. Allowing and encouraging interpretation puts our money where our mouth is. Below we are showing how the Farmers’ Market, NC PRIDE, a skate shop, or Open Streets might interpret the mark.



SUMMARY

From the beginning of this process we've firmly believed that we are branding Carrboro because we CAN, not because we MUST. This difference in motivation is a critical distinction. Carrboro is not a desperate product that needs to increase market share. It is thriving, attracting regional and national attention, and it's simply time to unify and symbolize what makes this place so singularly original. This decidedly positive motivation has led us to creative choices born out of a sense of celebration and joy.

We are seeking your approval on this logo direction and feedback to color variations. The following two color schemes were favored in our presentations and have been used in the context examples. Your feedback will help us to create a style guide that specifies approved color, usage for identity and marketing and any allowable variations of use.

