

February:

Corporate vs. Civic Branding - What is La Montanita's Purpose?



1. INTRODUCTION

Synopsis: In this Board Study, participants will explore the opportunities of 1) identifying La Montanita as a civic brand and 2) exploring La Montanita's "Purpose." The goal of this Board Study is to encourage Board Study participants to think beyond La Montanita's current Bylaws, Mission Statement, Values, Principles, and Ends Policies, and to explore deeper reasons why the cooperative is needed in the communities of Albuquerque and New Mexico. Readings for this Board Study also have a specific focus on place-making.

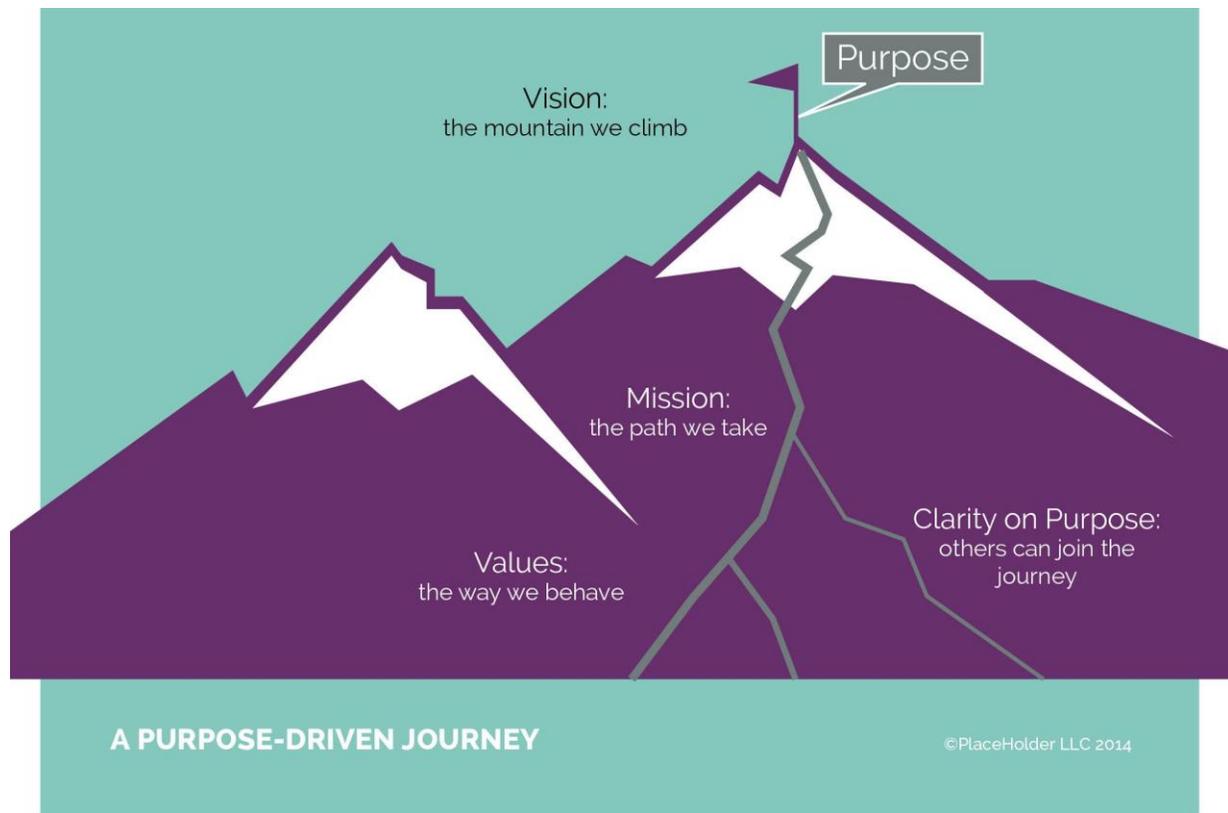
Discussion: La Montanita's Board of Directors and owners can all agree that the cooperative operates in the following ways:

- as a food hub
- as a network that lends food education insights
- as a finance operation that offers micro-loans to start-up farmers
- as an innovative cooperative responding to the shortcomings of NM's modern food system.

→ *But as important as it is that we identify, and maintain, the various functions and operations of the cooperative, how do we begin to ask the "juicier" questions of "Why does La Montanita exist?"*

→ *By asking both the cooperative's Board of Directors and owners these kinds of questions, the Board Study can begin to uncover the deeper reasons why La Montanita's work extends beyond local food systems to encompass almost every aspect of life in Albuquerque and New Mexico.*

**Strategic Planning Behind Research Topic: This study session will be a suitable follow-up for the CDS Consulting Coop Training Session that took place January 23.*



Studio Graphique is a lead branding, placemaking and wayfinding firm with expertise in shaping how people interact with public entities and environments. They help communities, planners, developers and institutions create positive and connective experiences, enhance pride in community and increase economic vitality.

- ❖ Studio Graphique’s promise is “We promote economic vitality by leveraging our strategic branding and wayfinding expertise to produce and preserve exceptional place-based experiences.”
- ❖ Studio Graphique’s materials will be used to:
 - *1) stimulate discussion surrounding La Montanita’s civic branding amongst our local food system, and other social, political, and economic systems*
 - *2) the identification of La Montanita’s Purpose*

2. DISCUSSION - Supplemental Materials

Making Sense of Civic Brands

<http://www.designwithdirection.com/making-sense-of-civic-brands/>

- **Summary:** *When we begin to identify what the differences are between corporate/product brands and civic brands, a few topics become apparent: What is their structure? How do they function? How do they interface with other brands? Who owns them?*
 - *The structure of **corporate brands** is very much planned. A company forms, they choose a name, they conceive of their mission, they develop a few products and then they build a brand that can market their product or services to their selected audiences. Message and purpose is specific, targeted and controlled. For that reason, we have identified this method as controlled branding. Just like the companies they embody, the structure of this type of brand has a top-down approach, carefully controlling and managing the various sub-brands, products and messages under their roof.*
 - *When we talk about **civic branding** you may not have the same amount of control that you would have with a corporate brand. It is a collection of perceptions, whether planned or incidental that are inherent to your city, town or district. You're not inventing a new place; you are working with what you have.*

The Power of Purpose

<http://www.placeholderllc.com/the-power-of-purpose/>

- **Summary:** *Our sister company, PlaceHolder, declares that Purpose is even bigger than Mission, Vision and Values, or that it is a succinct combination of all three. Purpose is the fundamental root reason for why an organization or a place exists.*
- *Having a shared Purpose begins to build your foundation and connection to each other. A clearly articulated Purpose provides a clear framework for making decisions that determine overall strategies, design, communications and experiences which will engage target audiences. When an organization and its stakeholders face a challenging choice, they can look to their Purpose Statement for guidance.*

3. ANALYSIS - Taking a Look at La Montanita's Current Bylaws, Mission Statement, Values, Principles, and Ends Policies

Mission Statement (as outlined in current bylaws): The Co-operative Association is organized to provide high quality, natural and organic products at the lowest prices possible, as well as education and information about cooperatives, to, and for the social and economic benefit of, the community at large and the membership in particular. The management of our Co-operative, under direction of the representative Board of Directors, shall try in every way to:

- 1. Provide food and other commodities and services at the lowest prices possible by forming the most direct link between producer and consumer.*
- 2. Educate ourselves about and take responsibility for our environment.*
- 3. Actively support individual participation and group cooperation.*

Values: Cooperatives are based on the values of:

- *Self-help*
- *Self-responsibility*
- *Democracy*
- *Equality*
- *Equity*
- *Solidarity*
- *Honesty*
- *Openness*
- *Social responsibility*
- *Caring for others*

Principles: As a cooperative, La Montanita strives to uphold the seven cooperative principles in all that they do:

- *Voluntary and Open Membership*
- *Democratic Member Control*
- *Member Economic Participation*
- *Autonomy and Independence*
- *Education, Training and Information*
- *Cooperation among Cooperatives*
- *Concern for Community*

Ends Policies: Global: A co-operative community built on beneficial relationships based in healthy food, sound environmental practices, and a strong local economy with results that justify the resources used.

- 1. Increased access to, and purchase of healthy foods.*
- 2. A growing regenerative agriculture sector that uses sound environmental practices.*

3. *A thriving and sustainable local economy that benefits members and community.*
4. *A strengthened co-operative community.*

4. DISCUSSION - Identifying La Montanita's Purpose

After discussing and exploring La Montanita's Bylaws, Mission Statement, Values, Principles, and Ends Policies, how do identify its *Purpose*? Given our recent discussion at the Cooperative Training about having conversations across silos (along the value chain), how does establishing La Montanita's Purpose help guide these conversations?

Purpose drives those responsible for a place to dig deep for answers to questions like:

- *"Why do we exist?"*
- *"What unique value do we bring to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the world?"*
- *"What do we believe so deeply that we will do our best to fulfill that belief?"*