

Using Place Branding to Increase Levels of Immigration in Smaller Provinces

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## **Introduction**

Recently, Canada has relied heavily on immigration as a way to grow its workforce and improve its economy amid an aging population (Mendicino, 2020). Yet, immigrants decide where they settle and over the years, Canada has seen a large division in the rates of immigration to larger rather than smaller provinces. Provinces with big cities like Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec have gained disproportionately larger numbers of immigrants, while levels of immigration in smaller provinces have stayed low. In 2021, 38.8% of the permanent and temporary residents in Canada settled in Ontario, while 22.6% settled in Quebec, 13.5% in British Columbia and 11.6% in Alberta (Statistics Canada, 2021). In contrast, only 6.5% settled in the Atlantic provinces, 6.7% settled in the remaining prairie provinces and 0.3% settled in the territories (Statistics Canada, 2021). The clear divisions between immigrants' in-take between provinces has been highly problematic, as smaller provinces already face limited populations and fewer resources (Valad, 2017). Without higher rates of immigration, these provinces will also face sharp population declines leading to labour shortages, less government spending, unequal political influence and community closures (Valad, 2017). These factors have also been exacerbated amid the COVID-19 pandemic, where national shutdowns and travel restrictions have led to economic recession and historically low levels of immigration throughout the country (Government of Canada, 2020; Hagan, 2021).

It is clear that raising levels of immigration in smaller provinces is paramount to aid in Canada's economic development and it is of increased necessity today. To address this, my research will explore different branding strategies smaller provinces can use to better attract immigrants. In doing so, I hope to provide smaller provinces and their organizations with a

thorough understanding of best branding practices as well as a set of branding recommendations to help them increase their rates of immigration.

## **Literature Review**

Existing literature on the topic has pointed towards a growing use of branding in cities, provinces/states and countries. In short, a brand is a type of mark comprised of aspects such as a logo, slogan, image and colour scheme that serves to differentiate a company, product or service from others (Cudny, 2019, p. 62; Kenton, 2020; Vuignier, 2016). It serves to create a public image for said company/products that can immediately evoke certain ideas or associations in customer's minds, while also acting to differentiate it from other similar companies/products (Govers, 2011; Kavartzis and Kalandides, 2015). In order to do this, brands must create value and mental associations with their brand through different strategies and practices (Kavartzis and Kalandides, 2015). In place branding, which is the promotion and branding of a specific location, these ideas are the same but applied instead to a place (Vuignier, 2016; Noronha, 2017). Place branding is a new method and today, the majority of places throughout the world rely on place branding to encourage visitation (Noronha, 2017). Yet, the results of place marketing are largely mixed, as many researchers have noted that places are complex and fluid spaces. Differing from corporations or products, places involve a variety of systems such as culture, geography, history and social relations (Andersson, 2014; Sevin, 2014). Due to their complexity, researchers argue that places should be branded in alternative ways, emphasizing for more holistic approaches to branding that places can use to effectively brand themselves and encourage visitation (Cleave and Arku, 2020; Hudson and Ritchie, 2009; Kavartzis and Hatch, 2013). Aside from this, research also points to the importance of considering one's target

audience when establishing a place brand. Target audience refers to the individuals or groups a place attempts to attract through its marketing and branding (Cudny, 2019, p. 17; Wæraas, et al., 2015). The goal when forming a place brand is to connect emotionally with one's target audience to create positive associations in their mind about a certain place in order to attract them (Wæraas, et al., 2015). Therefore, places must be able to deeply understand and connect with their target audience when forming their brand.

In a separate sense, researchers have also outlined a variety of push and pull factors that attract and deter immigrants from a given area. Throughout Canada's history, factors such as increased safety, economic opportunities, and land, served to encourage immigration (Li, 2003). Today, these factors have remained largely the same as immigrants state that an area's economy and housing are the two most important factors when deciding on a new place to live (Cleave and Arku, 2020; Lowell, 2009). Besides this, other pull factors attracting immigrants to Canada have also been described such as educational opportunities, social ties, health care, and culture (Chen, 2017; Lowell, 2009). Other researchers have also outlined separate push and pull factors that encourage immigrants to move to the city rather than more rural areas. These include greater economic and work opportunities, public services, global recognition, housing, and more diverse communities (Dufty-Jones, 2014; Valade, 2017). Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, pull factors such as healthcare and economic opportunities have become especially attractive, as immigrants face higher rates of infection, joblessness and poverty (OECD, 2020).

Aside from place branding and pull factors, many studies have also focused on the current and previous branding practices utilized in Canada. An article written by Export Development Canada (2017) highlights the need for Canada to develop a strong global identity and describes possible perceptions like clean natural spaces, multiculturalism, innovation and



trust that are currently held about Canada throughout the world. Other studies have also pointed towards alternate aspects of the Canadian identity such as a differentiation from the United States and a positive international and educational reputation (Cros, 2012; Katz, 2009). Yet, other studies have also acknowledged the complexity of forming a Canadian identity that encompasses the large range of cultures, languages and different communities that currently reside in Canada. Many have pointed to the intersectionalities that can shape one's identity within Canada (Petropoulos, 2006; Su and Hynie, 2020; Houston, 2015); and a study by Paradis, et al. (2018) outlines the importance of taking culture and historical accuracy into account when branding Canada's northern territories. Different Canadian regions have also been found to use different branding strategies. Cities and urban provinces are commonly branded as creative and industrial spaces with lots of activities and culture (Rantisi and Leslie, 2006; Cleave and Arku, 2015). In contrast, townships and more rural areas are often branded as agricultural and emphasized for their large properties and open spaces (Cleave and Arku, 2015). Each province also has a different branding strategy, as bigger provinces like Ontario divide branding by community, while smaller ones like Nova Scotia use a province-wide brand (Cleave and Arku, 2015; Government of Ontario, 2021; Nova Scotia Immigration, 2021)

Despite the large body of research on the topics of place branding, nearly all studies focused on the use of place branding in tourism rather than immigration. Due to this, none of the studies observed place branding with immigrants as their target audience. Yet, place branding has been found to be a highly successful method in the tourism industry and this provides ample opportunity for its use in immigration. To account for the significant lack of place branding research on immigration, I conducted an analysis of existing research to understand some of the best practices and strategies smaller provinces can use to brand themselves to better attract

immigrants. To address this, my research was guided by the following research question: what are some of the factors that smaller provinces can take into account to brand themselves to better attract immigrants?

## **Methodology**

In order to understand the methods that smaller provinces can use to brand themselves to better attract immigrants, I conducted my analyses in two parts. The first was an in-depth literature review of existing research on place branding used to uncover the specific place branding strategies recommended by researchers in the field. To make it simpler, I grouped these strategies into the two broad categories of “Personality” and “Flagships” provided by Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005). For the second part, I analyzed the findings from two researcher studies which outlined the various factors that attract immigrants to Canada. The first was based on an extensive research study conducted by Drolet, et al. (2016), which summarized a large variety of papers outlining the many pull factors that persuade immigrants to come to Canada. The second was based on an analysis of the LSIC Wave 1 data conducted by Newbold (2007), which outlined the reasons for interprovincial migration. These findings are later followed by two in-depth case studies of current place branding campaigns used in the provinces of Nova Scotia and British Columbia. These are observed through an analysis of each campaign’s website and promotional videos. Based on these findings and case studies, the paper then ends with an analysis of the findings and a set of recommendations for branding smaller provinces.

## **Results**

### Part.1: Place Branding Strategies

## *Personality Branding*

The most common strategy that is noted in place branding research is the development of a place's personality. A place's personality can be widely referred to as the multiple set of features, ideas and messages that distinguish a place from others and which give the place a particular image or identity (Cudny, 2019, p. 63; Kavartzis and Ashworth, 2005). A good example can be found in the city of Toronto's slogan "Diversity Our Strength", which highlights many aspects of the city's personality such as its openness, heterogeneity and power (City of Toronto, n.a.). Most researchers consider the development of a place's personality the first step in place branding, and it is an important aspect as it provides audiences with a particular message and image about a place – helping to create associations and value around it (Cudny, 2019, p. 63; Grovers, 2011; Kavartzis and Kalandides, 2015). Yet, many researchers also note that developing a personality or identity for a place is much more difficult than developing one for a company or product. Unlike products, places are very complex and fluid spaces that involve a multitude of different features and actors (Cudny, 2019, p. 63; Grovers, 2011; Zenker and Braun, 2017). Their personality is therefore enshrined in many pre-existing notions that involve a variety of historical, political, geographical and cultural contexts, to name a few (Hanna, et al., 2020; Kavartzis and Kalandides, 2015). Aside from this, the inherent complexity of places also means that their personality is rarely static and instead, continually evolves with the different groups of people and interactions within it (Assche, et al., 2019; Kavartzis and Kalandides, 2015).

For these reasons, developing a personality for a place differs substantially from developing one for a product or company and many researchers emphasize the importance of

utilizing more holistic approaches. From these, narration or storytelling has been widely recommended as a method for clearly establishing a place's personality within these many contexts (Assche, et al., 2019; Grenni, et al. 2020; Ren and Gyimothy, 2013; Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 142). Yet, to do this effectively, a large multitude of studies also advocate for the need to consider the views of a place's residents and stakeholders. Known as participatory marketing, involving a place's stakeholders and citizens is not common but highly recommended as it takes into account the many views and lived experiences of those living within the place (Eshuis, et al., 2014; Campello, et al., 2013; Kemp, et al., 2012; Ntounis and Kavaratzis, 2017; Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 142; San Eugenio-Vela, et al., 2020). This, in turn, helps to tackle the complexity of a place's personality and increases citizen and stakeholder's personal attachment and value to the place's brand (Eshuis, et al., 2014; Campello, et al., 2013; Kemp, et al., 2012; Ntounis and Kavaratzis, 2017; Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 142; San Eugenio-Vela, et al., 2020). Other studies add to this idea by examining the role of social media and other forms of public discourse such as news in decimating and establishing a place's personality. Like participatory marketing, social media sites and other methods of communication provide a platform for individuals and groups to showcase their personal views and lived experiences about a place, further contributing to its image, identity and personality (Falkierner, 2014; Graziano and Albanese, 2020; Wæraas, et al., 2015). Besides this, media such as public relations and news outlets also provide a space to distribute narrations about a given place, further acting to influence it's view and portray messages around its identity and image (Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 144; Falkimer, 2014).



Image. 1: Example of personality branding – I AMsterdam logo (image: Uterwijk, 2018)

### *Flagship Branding*

Another strategy widely acknowledged in place branding research is the promotion of flagships or specific features of a place that make it inherently unique (Richards and Druif, 2019, pp. 38-39; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). Although flagship and personality branding seem similar as they act to increase the associations and value of a place, they are vastly different strategies (Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 38; Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005; Cudny, 2019, p. 38; Rein and Shields, 2007; Wæraas, et al., 2015). Flagships involve the promotion of specific feature(s) within a place rather than the greater image or view of the place itself. For example, the city of San Francisco uses the flagship strategy by promoting its Golden Gate Bridge and the bay that lays next to it as a destination and attraction (Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 39). This

differs from San Francisco's personality strategy invoked by its slogan "Only in San Francisco" which takes into account the city's history and culture to promote a message of uniqueness, opportunity and diversity (Gauli, et al. 2014, p. 23).

As it is made clear, flagships most commonly consist of a place's landmarks such as its geographical locations or architecture, but they do not have to be solely confined to these aspects (Richards and Duif, 2019, pp. 38-39). Sports teams, companies, celebrities, policies, events and programs are all features that places commonly use as flagships (Richards and Duif, 2019, pp. 38-39; Ren and Gyimothy, 2013; Jones and Kubacki, 2014; Rein and Shields, 2007). For example, an article by Rein and Shields (2007) touches on the common flagship strategy where places associate themselves with a famous sports team from that area to positively shape their place personality and improve public relations. The hosting of events such as the Olympics is another common strategy and has been noted to be highly successful, as it serves to attract large numbers of participants, establish brand personality through multiple platforms and provides large-scale media coverage, all on a global scale (Rein and Shields, 2007; Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 39; Cudny, 2019, p. 38). Large-scale flagships such as these also help places further develop and convey their personality by adding new value and associations around that place (Rein and Shields, 2007; Richards and Duif, 2019, p. 38-39, Cudny, 2019, p. 38). Yet to do this, places must also use methods like narration and take into account aspects such as a flagship's history and relevance in order to build its meaning and create value for their audiences (Richards and Duif, 2019, pp. 38-39, 142; Ren and Gyimothy, 2013). Aspects such as news, media, and public relations communications are therefore also an important aspect of flagship strategy as they help to shape and decimate these messages to a wider audience (Graziano and Albanese, 2020; Porter, 2011).

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Image. 2: Example of flagship branding – Explore Paris ad. (image: Kanakia Paris, 2018)

## Part. 2: Pull Factors

Analysis of the study conducted by Drolet, et al. (2016) provides significant insight into the pull factors that serve to attract immigrants to Canada. From these, social pull factors were repeatedly referenced as the most significant (Drolet, et al., 2016). Having family and/or friends in the area and family reunification were the most common reasons reported for migration,

especially among family class immigrants (Drolet, et al., 2016). The presence of a similar ethno-cultural or immigrant community was also reported as a common reason, and both communities and the presence of family/friends were seen to promote a continuous flow of immigrants to a given area (Drolet, et al., 2016). Besides this, the perception of Canada having a welcoming community and a better quality of life were also significant factors in attracting immigrants to Canada (Drolet, et al., 2016).

Economic factors were also widely referenced as a major attraction that would often work synonymously with social factors (Drolet, et al., 2016). From these, the perception of Canada having a strong economy, higher wages and increased work opportunities were some of the most widely reported reasons for wanting to immigrate to Canada (Drolet, et al., 2016). The view of Canada as containing a “Canadian Dream” with opportunities for economic growth was another commonly cited reason as well as more affordable amenities such as housing (Drolet, et al., 2016). Educational opportunities paired with policies like the Post Graduate Work Permit that facilitate permanent residency after graduation are also widely reported pull factors, especially for international students (Drolet, et al., 2016). Other pull factors such as immigration policies and the availability of different social services were also frequently reported as well as environmental reasons (Drolet, et al., 2016).

**Figure. 1**

*The Major Pull Factors Driving (Im)migration to Canada and Alberta.*

Social Pull Factors	Economic Pull Factors	Other Pull Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and friends</li> <li>• Family reunification</li> <li>• Ethno-cultural and linguistic communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong economy</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Higher salaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigration policies and practices</li> <li>• Permanent residency and citizenship</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social networks</li> <li>• Personal connections and relationships</li> <li>• Welcoming community</li> <li>• Quality of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-employment opportunities</li> <li>• Economic growth</li> <li>• Market stability</li> <li>• Economic stability</li> <li>• Affordable amenities</li> <li>• Social welfare programs</li> <li>• Advanced education opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease and speed of visa processing for international students</li> <li>• Accessible public services</li> <li>• Availability of immigrant services</li> <li>• Environment</li> </ul>
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*Note.* From “Geographies of Immigration to Canada and Alberta: Improving Understanding of Social and Economic Factors Driving Migration Patterns” by J. Drolet, et al., 2016, *Government of Alberta*, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.15241.88160

An analysis conducted by Newbold (2007) also provides important information on the pull factors which influence interprovincial migration. The majority of these were around the topic of housing and space as a total of 52.6% of immigrants surveyed reported moving to find better privacy and 26.7% reported moving to have more space (Newbold, 2007). All three immigrant groups presented similar results in both facets as well as in the category of moving to find more independence which totalled to 21.2% and better-quality housing which totalled to 15.9%. (Newport, 2007). Moving to be close to work or study was also widely reported by both family (7.8%) and skilled class immigrants (8.7%), and the presence of family/friends also played a large role for family class (9.6%) and refugees (7.1%).

**Figure. 2**

*Most Important Reason for Moving (Percent) by Immigrant Class.*

Reason	Immigrant Class			
	Family	Skilled	Refugee	Total
Found cheaper place	2.9	6.6	3.6	5.8

Found better quality housing	13.6	17.1	7.3	15.9
To have more privacy	40.4	56.4	35.0	52.6
To have more space	26.0	27.2	23.2	26.7
To have more independence	16.5	22.7	14.5	21.2
Found safer neighbourhood	1.9	3.5	1.8	3.2
Found better neighbourhood	1.9	4.0	—*	3.4
To be closer to better schools	1.9	3.9	1.8	3.4
To be closer to family/friends	9.6	3.0	7.1	4.2
To be closer to work or study	7.8	8.7	1.8	3.4
To be closer to children's school	1.0	2.2	—*	1.9
Moved from temporary housing or center for immigrants/refugees	1.0	7.6	37.5	8.9
To find work or better employment	3.8	4.0	1.8	3.8
To buy own place	2.9	1.0	—*	1.2
Other	6.8	3.9	3.6	4.2
*Insufficient numbers to meet disclosure requirements, and/or CV > 33% Values do not sum to 100%, as respondents could indicate multiple reasons for relocation				

*Note.* From “Secondary Migration of Immigrants to Canada: An Analysis of LSIC Wave 1 Data,” by B. Newbold, 2007, *Canadian Geographer*, 51 (1), pp. 58-71.

Findings from Newport’s study (2007), which looked at the factor’s immigrants most liked about their city of residence, also provided important insights. Paralleling the pull factors which attract immigrants to Canada, a total of 58.8% of immigrants across all three groups reported the presence of family and friends as their favourite aspects of their city of residence (Newport, 2007). Family played the largest role, especially for those in the family class which reported 93.1%, but also among refugees at 44.9% and skilled class at 19.8% (Newport, 2007). Other factors were also reported among skilled immigrants such as educational opportunities (7.8%), lifestyle (6.8%) and housing (5.2%), but these are significantly lower than the percentage given to family and friends (Newport, 2007).

**Figure. 3**

*Most Important Reason (Percent) for Living in Observed City of Residence by Immigrant Class.*

Reason	Immigrant Class			
	Family	Skilled	Refugee	Total
Family here	93.1	19.8	44.9	41.1
Friends here	1.4	24.7	12.2	17.7
Ethnics here	0.2	2.9	3.1	2.2
Job	1.8	3.1	1.0	2.1
Business prospects	—*	3.1	1.0	2.1
Education prospects	0.7	7.8	2.0	5.5
Previous knowledge	0.5	1.7	—*	1.2
Climate	0.2	3.2	1.0	2.2
Lifestyle	1.4	6.8	3.1	5.1
Language	—*	3.2	2.0	2.3
Housing	0.7	5.2	4.1	3.9
No choice	—*	0.9	22.4	2.0
Other	—*	1.2	1.0	0.9
*Insufficient numbers to meet disclosure requirements				

*Note.* From “Secondary Migration of Immigrants to Canada: An Analysis of LSIC Wave 1 Data,” by B. Newbold, 2007, *Canadian Geographer*, 51 (1), pp. 58-71.

### **Case Study #1: Nova Scotia “Room to Live”**

Many of the findings from the data collected can be demonstrated with Nova Scotia’s current immigration place branding strategy “Room to Live”. Firstly, the “Room to Live” brand has a clear personality that evokes notions of happiness, openness, community, a better quality of life and the idea that Nova Scotia is inherently a home. This can be overtly demonstrated through their slogan “Room to Live”, which emphasizes living rather than visiting Nova Scotia as well as the many pictures of happy families and friends found on their website (Nova Scotia Immigration, n.a., Image. 3). Their promotional video “This is Nova Scotia” also heavily

enforces these ideas by asking the question: “Wouldn’t it be amazing to call this a home?” followed by multiple images of a very diverse and positive group of Nova Scotians (Nova Scotia Government, 2018). Their promotional video and website also use storytelling and imagery throughout, paralleling the recommendations provided by researchers on forming a personality for a place brand.



Image. 3: example of Nova Scotia’s personality strategy emphasized by images of welcoming communities and happy individuals.

The notion of Nova Scotia being a positive place to live is also further enforced through a flagship strategy which positions Nova Scotia as one of the only places in Canada with a unique quality of life. This is explicitly stated in their website and through different statements such as Nova Scotia’s unique “slow pace” that facilitates family living as well as its abundant natural resources (Nova Scotia Immigration, n.a., Figure. 4). The availability and affordability of housing is also a topic heavily promoted throughout their website and videos, and explicitly stated in their slogan “Room to Live” (Nova Scotia Immigration, n.a., Figure. 5). Nova Scotia’s low population is also touted as a flagship as it is said to increase community bonds and lead to a population of “happy, friendly, and inviting people” (Nova Scotia Government, n.a.).

Nova Scotia offers a quality of life that is disappearing in much of North America, allowing its residents to keep everything in perspective: work, family, relaxation and responsibility.

**More than 7,400 kilometres of coastline.**

Image. 4: example of Nova Scotia's quality of life flagship.

## **AFFORDABLE LIVING**

It is very affordable to buy a home in Nova Scotia. The cost of living is actually one of the lowest in Canada.

**In June 2020, the average value of a home in Nova Scotia was \$286,227, compared to \$538,831 for all of Canada.**

Image. 5: example of Nova Scotia's affordable housing flagship.

These place branding strategies also focus on many of the pull factors previously observed in immigration research. Flagships enforced by Nova Scotia such as affordable housing and space were found to be significant factors influencing interprovincial migration (Newbold, 2007, Figure. 1). Furthermore, the image of a small and welcoming community that is enforced throughout both Nova Scotia's personality and flagship brands also parallel the pull factors frequently stated by immigrants of welcoming communities, social networks, and the presence of family and friends (Drolet, et al., 2016, Figure. 1). The large emphasis on social networks and family/friends throughout the "Room to Live" brand also reflects the findings by Newbold

(2007, figure. 3), which found that the presence of family/friends was the most important feature reported by immigrants about their city of residence. Most of the other pull factors outlined by Drolet, et al. (2016) such as the presence of ethno-cultural and linguistic communities are also promoted (Image. 6), as well as others like information on immigration policies, social services and work opportunities (Image. 7).

## WELCOMING DIVERSITY

Formed in 1975, the [Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia \(MANS\)](#) reflects the needs of Nova Scotia's multicultural communities. It helps promote multicultural education, information-sharing and equality. MANS hosts a large multicultural festival held annually in Halifax, as well as several other cultural events, conferences and forums throughout the year.



Image. 6: A sub section of the “Room to Live” website promoting diversity.

## Job market

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With five key regions and everything from small towns to growing cities, Nova Scotia has a variety of industries and businesses to choose from.

Nova Scotia has one of Canada's fastest growing information and communications technology sectors.



Image. 7: A sub-section of the website providing information on work opportunities.

### Case Study #2: British Columbia “Welcome B.C.”

Another interesting example of a place brand strategy is the “Welcome BC” brand used in the province of British Columbia. Unlike the “Room to Live” strategy, “Welcome BC” does not have a clear personality brand and instead takes an informative stance, serving to educate the public rather than invoking emotions or value. This can be seen throughout their website where information is presented through educational writing and facts, rather than storytelling or imagery (Image. 8). For example, many subheadings throughout the website lead with words like “Find...”, “Learn...” and “Discover...”, which evoke notions of learning and education (Government of British Columbia, n.a.). Links to websites with facts and educational resources

like the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, are also common throughout the website and emphasize an educational stance. Besides this, the use of images is also minimal as they are only used for the website's page banners.

The target audience for the website is also quite different than most place branding research, as the "Welcome BC" campaign is largely targeted towards individuals with pre-existing ideas of coming to BC. For example, the slogan "Welcome BC" invokes the notion that one has already arrived or plans to arrive in the province. Other text used throughout the website also invokes this notion such as the questions: "Are you planning to come to B.C. to study?" or "Are you moving to B.C.—or already here—and looking for work?" (Government of British Columbia, n.a.). An entire section of the website is also dedicated to showcasing the steps one must take when first moving to BC also furthering the notion that their target audience is already planning or has already immigrated to British Columbia (Image. 9).



## FIND A JOB IN B.C.

Soon after you arrive in British Columbia, you will probably want to find work if you don't have a job already. To get a job, you will need to have your credentials recognized, learn English or improve your language skills, and possibly learn some new job skills.

It often helps to have a job offer before you come to B.C. You can take many steps before you leave your home country.

The resources listed below can help you learn about job demand and opportunities in British Columbia, and help you find a job.

- [WorkBC job board](#) – Search the WorkBC job board for a comprehensive database of job postings from all around B.C..
- [WorkBC career profiles](#) – Check out information on dozens of occupations in B.C., including wages, licensing requirements and more.
- [Canada Job Bank](#) – Use an online tool to find job opportunities across Canada.
- [Planning to Work in B.C., Canada Workbook](#) – Download a helpful workbook on finding jobs in B.C.
- [B.C. Labour Market Outlook](#) – Read about job opportunities in B.C.'s labour market over the next few years and the skills and education that would be needed for them.
- [WorkBC Jobs in Demand](#) – Find out which occupations are expected to have the most job opportunities in the coming decade.
- [Income and wages in B.C.](#) – Learn about B.C.'s average income and minimum wage, and find related resources.

Image. 8: Example of the educational and highly neutral facts used on a subsection of the website.

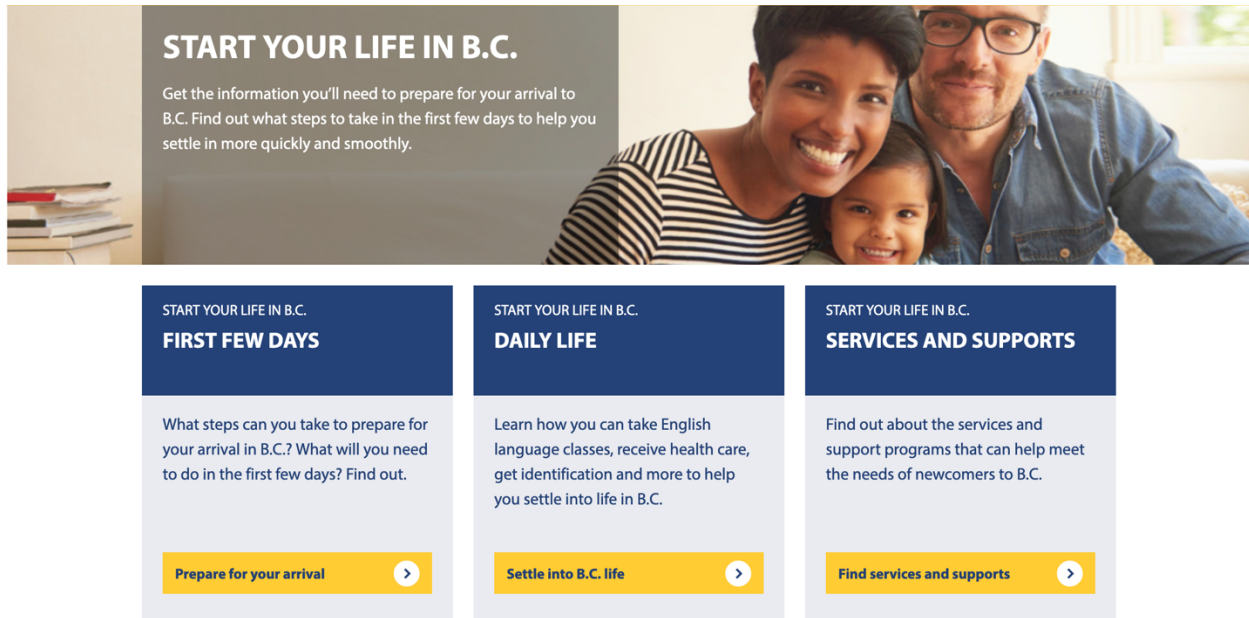


Image. 9: The “Start Your Life in BC” section of the website, demonstrating their target audience as immigrants who are considering or already in BC.

Besides personality strategy, the use of flagship is also very minimal throughout the campaign although aspects of flagship are more commonly used than personality. As mentioned previously, the website holds a highly informative stance that focuses on educating the target audience rather than evoking emotions and creating value around the brand. For this reason, aspects that make BC appealing are outlined throughout their website, but they are not highlighted as heavily as flagships that make BC inherently unique or special. Instead, these aspects are presented as positive facts about BC that explain why individuals may want to live there. Even persuasive sections of the website such as the subpage “Why Choose BC?” follow a similar format (Image. 12). Although this uses some facets of flagship strategy such as the highlighting and promotion of specific assets of a location, it does not serve to create inherent value, emotions and immediate associations around them— a fundamental aspect of flagship branding.

## WHY CHOOSE B.C.

British Columbia (B.C.) is one of the most appealing places to settle within Canada. In addition to its abundance of natural beauty, there are many reasons that make B.C. a very desirable destination to work, study, and live.

- **High Standard of Living:** The United Nations Human Development Index consistently ranks Canada as one of the world's best countries to live in. For more information on the cost of living in B.C., please visit the [WorkBC Cost of Living Calculator](#).
- **Excellent Health Care:** B.C. has an affordable and reliable health care system. Once enrolled in B.C.'s [Medical Services Plan \(MSP\)](#), you and your family will be able to access excellent health care services.
- **Wages and benefits:** People in B.C. earn competitive wages and enjoy a high standard of living. Many employers in BC offer their workers extended benefit plans, including full medical and dental coverage options. Your income will depend on your education, experience and occupation. For more information on working in B.C., please visit [Work in B.C.](#)
- **Diverse Culture:** People from many cultures call B.C. their home, creating a diverse and vibrant society that welcomes students, visitors and new British Columbians, from all over the world. To learn more about B.C.'s ethnic diversity, please visit [Multiculturalism](#).
- **Rich Cultural Heritage:** B.C. is home to approximately 200,000 Indigenous people who have been living within the unique geography of the province for more than 10,000 years. For more information, visit the following [WorkBC.ca](#) page: [B.C. First Nations & Indigenous People](#).
- **Range of Workplaces and Industries:** B.C. is home to a large range of different opportunities and industries including agriculture, construction, forestry, health and manufacturing.
- **Safety in B.C.:** Low crime rates and effective regulation make B.C. one of the safest places to work and live. For more information on the system of governance in B.C., please visit [Understanding Our Government](#).

Image. 11: The “Why Choose BC?” section of the website highlighting aspects and facts that make BC unique– this uses some but not all aspects of flagship branding.

As previously mentioned, the “Welcome BC” campaign focuses on educating their target audience by showcasing a lot of information and resources around immigrating and living in BC. The majority of these are presented as links to external resources and pages with further information, allowing the campaign to cover practically all pull factors outlined by both Drolet, et al. (2016) and Newbold (2007). An example of this is the “Explore BC” page which holds

links to external pages and resources on aspects such as language programs, the multicultural nature of BC, and BC's environment (Image. 12) . Yet, although the use of external links allows the website to cover a larger range of pull factors, some are highlighted much more than others. Work and educational opportunities as well as information on immigration programs, services and streams, are the most commonly cited and even have their own pages (Image. 13). This reflects both the economic and other pull factors like immigrant policies and services, which were outlined by Drolet, et al. (2016). Another page containing resources solely for employers also adds to the emphasis on economic pull factors. Other pull factors outlined by the studies such as the presence of family/friends, diversity, privacy and affordable housing were also referenced throughout the website but were mainly constricted to external links, website subsections and the images on website banners (Drolet, et al., 2016; Newbold, 2007).

## TOPICS IN THIS SECTION

<p><b>Explore B.C.</b></p> <p>Start with a look at B.C.'s diverse regions, environments and lifestyles. </p>	<p><b>Climate of B.C.</b></p> <p>Discover the remarkable range in B.C.'s regional climates, as well as its four seasons of fun. </p>
<p><b>Geography of B.C.</b></p> <p>B.C.'s varied geography includes coastlines, forests, mountains, grasslands and even deserts. </p>	<p><b>Regions in B.C.</b></p> <p>Learn about B.C.'s unique regions and what makes each one a special place to live and work. </p>
<p><b>Multicultural B.C.</b></p> <p>Welcome to a multicultural way of life in the most ethnically diverse province in Canada. </p>	<p><b>B.C. First Nations &amp; Indigenous People</b></p> <p>Learn about B.C. Indigenous people—their history, cultures and deep bond with the land. </p>
<p><b>Language in B.C.</b></p> <p>B.C. features many languages, and you'll find great programs to help you improve your English. </p>	<p><b>History of B.C.</b></p> <p>Find a brief summary of B.C. history—from 10,000 years of First Peoples to today's newcomers. </p>
<p><b>Understanding our government</b></p> <p>Learn about Canada's national, provincial and local governments and when they are elected. </p>	<p><b>Visit B.C.</b></p> <p>What a great way to get to know us, especially if you are thinking of moving here. Learn more! </p>

Image. 12: Links to external resources and information from the “Explore British Columbia” webpage.

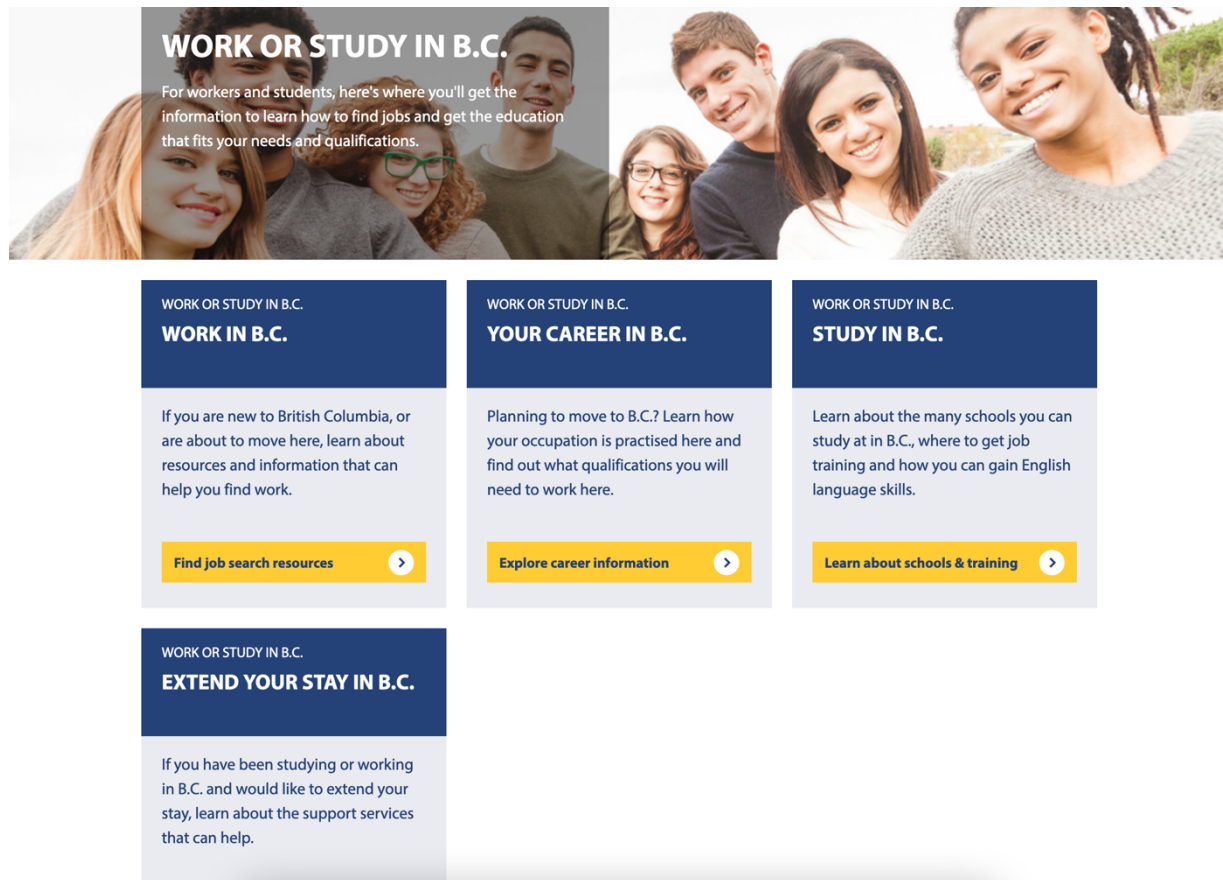


Image. 13: A page on the website focused on information around work and educational opportunities in BC.

## Analysis and Recommendations

Nova Scotia’s “Room to Live” and British Columbia’s “Welcome BC” campaigns demonstrate very different styles of place branding. In Nova Scotia’s “Room to Live” campaign, a clear personality brand is established that promotes an image of Nova Scotia as a welcoming, happy, diverse and close community, ideally suited for families. This personality is showcased throughout the campaign using most of the methods outlined in prior research such as the use of imagery and narration. At the same time, the use of flagship strategy is also common throughout the campaign as various features like affordable housing and a small population are highlighted as aspects that make Nova Scotia inherently unique. Like it’s personality brand, the flagship

brand used in the “Room to Live” campaign also uses promotional language and narration to convey these ideas.

Beside branding, the “Room to Live” campaign also serves to reflect many of the pull factors outlined in the studies conducted by Drolet, et al. (2016) and Newbold (2007). Following the findings outlined by both studies, the “Room to Live” campaign places the largest emphasis on social pull factors such as the presence of families, welcoming communities, diversity, and a unique quality of life. Besides this, the second most commonly highlighted pull factor in the campaign was the affordability of housing and spacious land found in Nova Scotia, paralleling the findings by Newport, which saw housing and space as the most significant pull factor influencing interprovincial migration (2007, Figure. 2). Other pull factors outlined by Drolet, et al. (2016) were also emphasized such as information on work opportunities, educational attainment, the environment, and immigration services and programs.

In comparison to Nova Scotia, British Columbia’s “Welcome BC” campaign utilizes a highly different branding approach, as it does not have a clear personality or flagship strategy. Instead of instilling a particular image or identity that encompasses BC, the “Welcome BC” campaign focuses on educating and informing their audience about the province. This is done by presenting many facts and resources on the website using multiple pages, subpages, and external links. Due to this, the use of imagery in the campaign is minimal, as images are constricted to webpage banners. The narration and the use of descriptive or emotional language found in the Nova Scotia campaign is also kept at a minimum in “Welcome BC”, in favor of more neutral facts and educational links and resources. The target audience on the “Welcome BC” website is also different than Nova Scotia’s, as it focuses on individuals with pre-existing notions of immigrating to B.C.

Yet, like the “Room to Live” campaign, the “Welcome BC” campaign also emphasises many of the pull factors previously outlined by both studies. Due to its highly informative stance and the use of links and subpages, the campaign adds even more information on the topic compared to the “Room to Live” campaign. Aspects such as links to employer resources, a step-by-step guide on daily life in BC, and a subsection explaining Canadian values are all examples of additional information that can be found on the “Welcome BC” website, and which highlight many immigrant pull factors. However, despite the increased information on the website, the campaign has a very different focus than the “Room to Live” campaign. Rather than focus on social pull factors and housing, “Welcome BC” mostly highlights economic pull factors such as educational and work opportunities. This is demonstrated through various webpages on the website that highlight topics around work and study as well as various links to resources such as BC’s 2019 Labour Market Outlook (Government of BC, n.a.).

Although these are vastly different approaches, the strategies used in BC in comparison to the more traditional branding strategies used in Nova Scotia can be explained by the pre-existing higher rates of immigration to British Columbia. As individuals are already likely to choose to live in BC before coming to the “Welcome BC” website, it makes sense for the campaign to lack a personality and flagship brand. It is also understandable for the campaign to focus on educating rather than persuading its target audience, as they are much more likely than Nova Scotia’s target audience to have pre-existing notions about British Columbia. It is important to note however, that although BC does get very high levels of immigration, the majority of these are constricted to the city of Vancouver and its surrounding areas. This can be demonstrated as a study found that in 2016, 81.2% of the recent immigrants in BC resided in the Metro Vancouver region (NewToBC, 2018). To account for this and promote greater levels of



immigration to less popular regions in the province, I would recommend for the “Welcome BC” campaign to utilize some of the place branding strategies of personality and flagships used in the “Room to Live” campaign. Although it may not make sense for them to use these strategies for the provinces as a whole, it would be a good idea to develop a separate brand or webpage that does utilize them for regions with low levels of immigration. This could be especially helpful for the “Welcome BC” campaign, as many areas in BC are not well known and immigrants will likely not look up their website or any information about them before coming. By using methods from the “Room to Live” campaign such as imagery and narration, the “Welcome BC” campaign can help create associations and value around these lesser-known areas, serving to attract immigrants to them and leading to a more equal distribution of immigrants throughout the province.

Like branding, the different pull factors outlined by both campaigns also makes sense given the province’s different regions. For Nova Scotia, aspects like small, close-knit communities and affordable housing are understandable pull factors given the small size of the region and its low cost of living. In comparison, it makes sense for the “Welcome BC” campaign to highlight economic pull factors rather than social ones or housing as the city of Vancouver boasts a greater number of work and educational opportunities. It is also for this reason that the strategy of using external links and resources to highlight a greater amount of information around pull factors is also a good idea for the province of British Columbia, as it allows it to showcase its many features. Nova Scotia’s “Room to Live” campaign may also benefit from utilizing a greater number of external links and resources, as this could be a good way for the campaign to include even more pull factors and give greater detail about the province. Although “Welcome BC’s” emphasis on economic factors makes sense given the greater number of economic

opportunities in Metro Vancouver, it is also important to note that smaller and more rural areas in BC will likely not have the same economic and educational opportunities. For this reason, the campaign should also strive to highlight other pull factors such as family and welcoming communities in the same way as economic opportunities, rather than just linking these to external sources. This is especially important given the findings by Drolet, et al. (2016) and Newbold (2007), which emphasized the importance of social pull factors. Besides this, pull factors outlined by Nova Scotia as a smaller province can also be especially helpful in promoting smaller and more rural areas of BC, as these likely have similar pull factors. If used in conjunction with my previous recommendation on the creation of a brand for smaller areas in BC, this could also be a very good method of encouraging interprovincial migration.

## **Conclusion**

With approximately 86.5% of immigrants choosing to move to larger provinces with cities in 2021, it is clear that smaller provinces must do something in order to increase their currently low levels of immigration (Statistics Canada, 2021). To address this, I conducted an analytical research study to understand the different aspects that smaller provinces can take into brand themselves to better attract immigrants. From this, analysis of existing literature revealed that the strategies of personality and flagship branding were recommended when developing a place brand. Personality strategy refers to the creation of a place's overall image or identity and studies demonstrate that aspects such as narration, participatory marketing and imagery were all recommended when formulating a place's personality (Assche, et al., 2019; Cudny, 2019, p. 63; Grenni, et al. 2020; Kavartzis and Ashworth, 2005; Ren and Gyimothy, 2013; Richards and Duif, 2019). The second strategy of flagship branding refers to the promotion of specific place features

to distinguish a place from others (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005; Richards and Druif, 2019, pp. 38-39). This strategy too was found to be promoted by aspects such as narration and imagery as well as the news and media (Graziano and Albanese, 2020; Porter, 2011; Richards and Duif, 2019, pp. 38-39, 142; Ren and Gyimothy, 2013). Besides branding strategies, data from two studies also outlined various pull factors that serve to attract immigrants to Canada and influence interprovincial migration. The study by Drolet, et al. (2016, Figure. 1) revealed that social and economic factors played the largest role in attracting immigrants to Canada as well as others such as immigration policies, social services and educational opportunities. Analysis of the data from the study conducted by Newport (2007, Figure. 2) demonstrated slightly different facts as immigrants reported aspects related to housing such as increased privacy and space as the most significant factors influencing their decision to immigrate to another province. Surprisingly, the same study also outlined that the presence of family and friends was the most important reason for staying in their place of residence, paralleling the importance of social factors as outlined by Drolet, et al. (2016) (Newport, 2007).

Case studies of Nova Scotia's "Room to Live" brand and British Columbia's "Welcome BC" served to showcase many of these factors. Following the majority of methods outlined in pre-existing literature, the Nova Scotia "Room to Live" campaign had a clear personality and flagship brand that served to position Nova Scotia as a home with many positive and unique factors such as welcoming communities, diversity, and a positive quality of life. Through both its personality and flagship strategy, the "Room to Live" campaign also highlighted many of the pull factors previously outlined. From these, the highest emphasis was placed on social pull factors and aspects surrounding the affordability of housing and space. In comparison, British Columbia's "Welcome BC" campaign did not have a clear personality nor flagship strategy and

instead focused on educating and informing its target audience. Due to this, the campaign was able to emphasize many more pull factors than Nova Scotia's through the use of external links and resources. These stark differences in branding strategy can be explained by the different compositions of each province and their differing rates of immigration. Based on my analysis, I recommend smaller provinces to follow the footsteps of Nova Scotia in creating a brand with a strong personality and flagship strategy using imagery and narration. Although taking an educational stance is a good strategy for larger provinces like British Columbia, many could also benefit from having a personality and flagship brand to increase immigration in smaller regions that need higher levels of immigration.

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