



Rick Whittington Consulting

FIRM PROFILE

www.EconDevWebsites.com

www.RickWhittington.com

PROFILE

Rick Whittington Consulting is a website design, development and marketing strategy firm located in Richmond, Virginia. From innovative design and development to strategic online marketing, we work with companies and organizations to plan and create effective, productive websites.

Because each individual client's goals and needs are different, we listen, we research, design and build highly-functional websites to suit every situation.

Much of our work deals with economic development organizations (EDOs), and our work has been recognized by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC), *Communication Arts* and the AIGA.

We strive for quality in all work that we do, and that translates to tangible, measurable results.

SERVICE OFFERING

A website isn't just be a piece of artwork. It should be strategically designed and organized to meet the informational needs of the people that will use the website. We strive to design and develop websites and marketing campaigns that tell the unique stories of the communities they represent.

We work as your organization's partner, understanding your business goals, your challenges and your target market, then designing a highly-functional, engaging website to meet your community's specific needs.

We specialize in the following areas:

- Website design
- Website development
- Place branding
- Content management
- Content development/copywriting
- Website usability
- Website effectiveness
- Website design
- Data and research
- Mobile website design
- Mobile website development
- Search engine optimization
- Social media
- Paid search
- Website analytics & insights
- E-mail creative and marketing
- Photography
- Website surveys and focus groups

PEOPLE

Rick Whittington has over 12 years of experience designing, building and marketing websites. He has over 5 years of Fortune 500 experience and has built more than 140 websites. His skills in website design, information architecture, usability and web marketing strategy have earned his company a nationwide client base.



Rick Whittington, Principal

Mike has 14 years of design experience for clients in diverse industries.

Mike's work experience includes economic development and tourism design for several communities. Mike earned his Bachelors of Fine Arts degree at State University of New York at Oswego.



Mike Dupre, Creative Director

Shannon manages content for clients, including writing for audiences across many different channels, including websites, blogs, social media/networking sites and print. She has three years of experience and has worked with clients in a variety of industries.



Shannon Sullivan, Content Specialist

Chip holds a bachelor's degree in mass communications with a concentration in creative advertising. As a student, Chip won two Gold and two Judge's Choice Student ADDY awards. Chip also has also been known to occasionally return to his VCU roots to teach web design to eager undergrads.



Chip Stevens, Designer/Developer

OUR APPROACH

We believe that designing a website involves more than just skilled graphic design. We work as a collaborative team of design, technology and marketing professionals, each with a particular expertise, to deliver websites that connect with your prospects and effectively market your community.

Our **Strategic Approach** involves four essential steps:

1 RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

We always start by listening. We learn about your community and the marketing challenges you face. We do our own competitive research and conduct ideation sessions with our economic development consultant. This discovery process helps us devise a plan for communicating the advantages your community has to offer and what website features are needed to support it.

2 DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

Working as your partner, we provide the appropriate design and technology solutions for your website to meet specific business objectives and goals. From mobile-friendly site development to customized content management systems, usability and effectiveness standards are incorporated in every design.

3 ONLINE MARKETING

We help drive traffic to your website's core features through search engine marketing and targeted email marketing. We can help write news and devise a marketing plan that includes social media and email newsletters to keep your community top-of-mind.

4 ANALYSIS & INSIGHTS

Using web analytics and research tools, we refine the tools on your website, make it more usable and adjust marketing plans to make your ad spend and your efforts more effective.

SELECTED PROJECTS

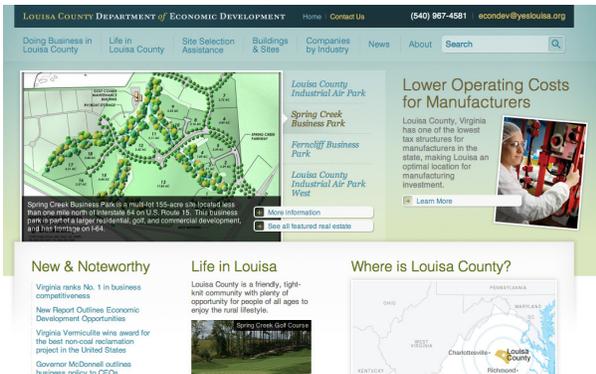
We have had the pleasure and privilege to work with several economic development organizations, as well as a range of companies related to economic development.



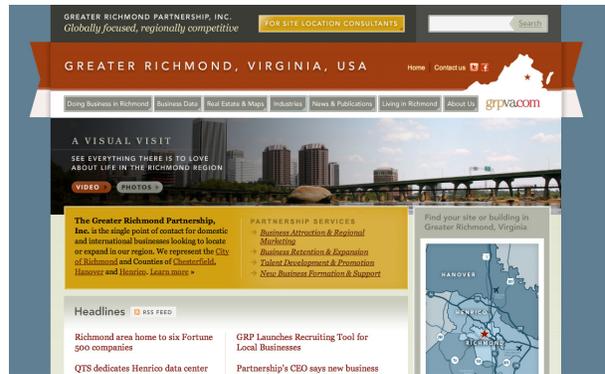
Stafford County, Virginia Economic Development
<http://www.gostaffordva.com>



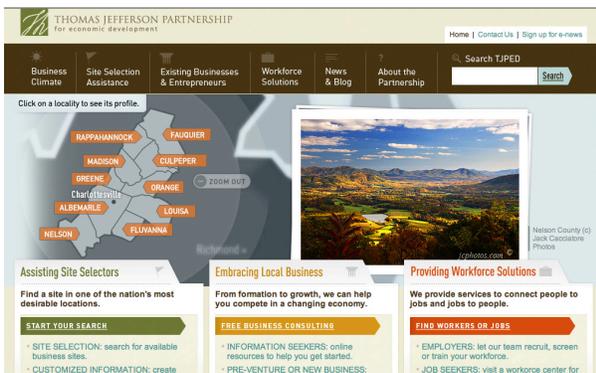
Hanover County, Virginia Economic Development
<http://www.hanovervirginia.com>



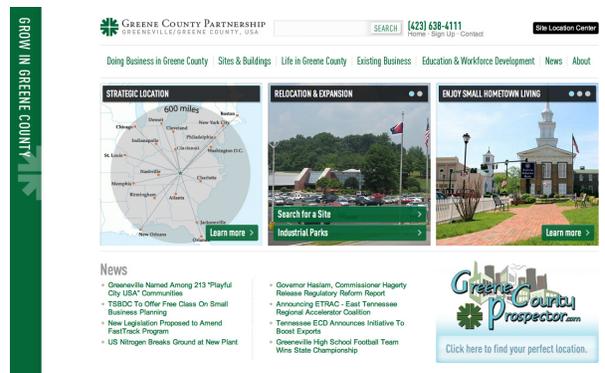
Louisa County, Virginia Economic Development
<http://www.yeslouisa.com>



Greater Richmond Partnership
<http://www.grpva.com>



Thomas Jefferson Partnership
<http://www.tjped.com>



Greene County, TN Partnership
<http://www.growinggreene.com>

CASE STUDIES

Client: Greater Richmond Partnership

Project: Website Redesign

Situation: Regional economic development group needed a new, more efficient, more easy-to-update website to generate leads and promote the region to domestic and international businesses that are expanding or relocating. It also needed to serve as an informational tool for students, relocating families and the media.

Solution: We performed an in-depth website assessment to make their site more effective. This assessment allowed us to compile an exhaustive snapshot of similarly-sized economic development firms' web presences and identified their core audience segments. Interviews were conducted with members of their core audience, which enabled us to understand what content the core audience found most useful.

Having constructed a roadmap for success, we designed and re-architected the site to appeal to all audience segments.

Results: Content is managed and organized in a web-based content management system, allowing their staff to update and access the parts of the site that they are responsible for. They can also manage 5 websites from one web-based interface, and content flows to all three sites as it is published.

The new design allows for easier navigation, provides enhanced functionality and encourages site visitors to explore the region for business opportunities through photos, video testimonials from business and community leaders, data, news and publications.

The site has won several awards including Gold Cannonball for Complete Websites (highest award) in the 2009 Richmond Ad Show and awards from the Southern Economic Development Council Development (SEDC) and International Economic Development Council (IEDC). It was also selected as a feature on the Communication Arts website.

Web analytics show the site is more effective for visitors. The Average Time on Site is up 52%, Page Views is up 159% and Pages Visited is up 33%. Site Visits are up 95% and it continues to receive positive feedback.

Client: Stafford County, Virginia Economic Development

Project: Website Redesign

Situation: Stafford County's economic development website, GoStaffordVa.com, was outdated and lacked a clear focus. In addition to economic development information, there was extensive content pertaining to tourism in Stafford County.

Solution: A new real estate listings system pulls in all real estate listings in Stafford from Virginia's "Virginia Scan" system on a nightly basis. The new listings system also integrates with Stafford County's GIS system to provide "one-stop" access to GIS parcel information and other important site data. A new "data center" allows prospects and economic development staff to select documents from a list and build a custom report in seconds. Functional enhancements are further complemented by a refined design with a rich color palette, compelling graphics and photography of the people and places of Stafford County.

Results: The website now paints an accurate and compelling picture of the economic climate in Stafford and available business opportunities. GoStaffordVa.com is purely dedicated to economic development information. Prospects will have an easier time finding relevant content. The website is built to fit different screen sizes automatically, thus preserving readability and usability on a variety of devices, ranging from laptops and large computer screens to tablets and smartphones. The new website, with its expanded data and tools and clearer brand identity, provides Stafford County with a solid online marketing platform and positions the County for continued growth.



We couldn't be more pleased with the way our new economic development website turned out. In addition to a creative design, easy navigation, user-friendly platform, and some great new features such as the Data Center, the RWC team was extremely accommodating and eager to facilitate the integration of new tools such as GIS mapping into our website.

- Tim Baroody, Deputy County Administrator

Client: Hanover County, Virginia Economic Development

Project: Website Redesign

Situation: Hanover County Economic Development's website was data-focused, but the data was outdated. HCED also lacked a unique, memorable brand. The development and prosperity of neighboring localities overshadowed the County's own business opportunities and impressive economic growth.

Solution: We provided direction for place branding, which included the creation of a brand positioning statement for HCED: "Innovate. Prosper. Grow." Testimonials from local business owners and photography of their businesses assert Hanover County as a first-rate business location where innovation, prosperity and growth are the norm. The website features a custom real estate directory, plus integration with the state's "Virginia Scan" system, the County GIS real estate search tool and the County GIS map. Target industries have unique, dedicated landing pages and visitors can search through a custom database compiled from several sources and lists over 3,000 businesses.

Results: The new website balances critical data with compelling copy and visual elements that truly distinguish Hanover County from other localities. The business profiles and custom photography provide living proof of Hanover's thriving business environment. The website is built to adjust itself for easy readability on mobile devices. HCED now has a brand platform and message on which to build future marketing communications, both online and off, and has the online tools needed to make the County more competitive.



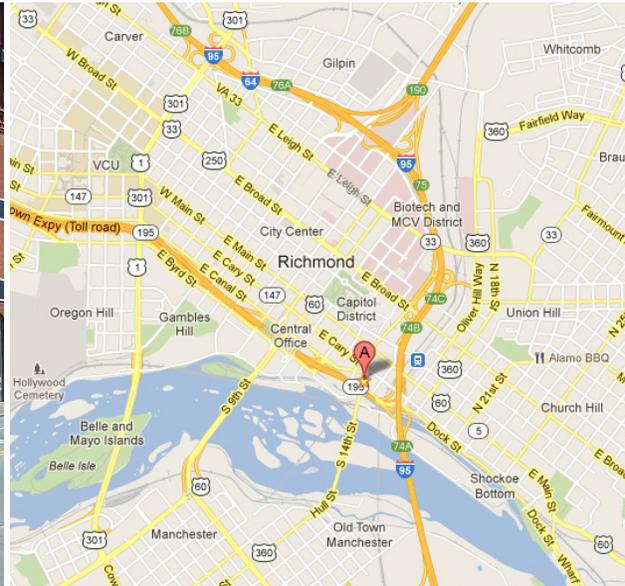
Our goal is to brand Hanover County as a great place to do business and to provide a resource for existing businesses. Rick Whittington Consulting's concept and execution really exceeded our expectations. Rick and his team were able to advise us on what content needed to be included and how that content was best presented to our target audience. Their experience with the site selection community helped us tailor both our message and how it is presented. I can't underscore enough the value of their economic development knowledge and experience.

- Edwin Gaskin, Executive Director

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- **2012 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Silver Excellence in Economic Development Award** for the Hanover County (Virginia) Economic Development Website Redesign in the category of General Purpose Website for communities with populations of 25,000 - 200,000.
- **2012 Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) Communication Award**, Award of Superior in the Websites - Local, State or Regional Economic Development Organizations - Medium Division category for Greene County Partnership.
- **2012 Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) Communication Award**, Award of Excellent in the Websites – Other – Large Division category for RichmondWorldView.com (Client: Greater Richmond Partnership).
- **2012 Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) Communication Award**, Award of Excellent in the Websites – Other – Large Division category for LoveWhatYouFind.com (Client: Greater Richmond Partnership).
- **2011 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Excellence in Economic Development Award**, Honorable Mention in the General Purpose Website Category, population between 200,000 - 500,000 for work on the Thomas Jefferson Partnership for Economic Development website
- **2010 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Excellence in Economic Development Award**, Honorable Mention in the General Purpose Website Category, population group Greater than 500,000 for work on the Greater Richmond Partnership website
- **2010 Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) Award** for Superior Websites: Local, State or Regional Economic Development Organizations, Large Division for work on the Greater Richmond Partnership website

CONTACT



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