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## Dick Maggiore: Is 'Canton' a brand?

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President and CEO of ad agency Innis Maggiore Group says yes, our brand is 'home of fame,' and we need to embrace it and tell the world.

By Dick Maggiore President & CEO, Innis Maggiore Group

A brand isn't just something you buy. It's part of who you are.

Carrying an iPhone or Android helps define you. Chevy vs. Ford ... Coke or Pepsi ... Xbox or PlayStation. You wear a different brand if your T-shirt is The Ramones instead of KISS or the Browns over the Steelers.

Our home town can be a brand, too. The Big Apple, Sin City, Hotlanta, The Windy City, The Big Easy, Bean Town, Big D, The Rubber City. More than a nickname, a brand is what you stand for as a company or a product or even a hometown.

Canton is a brand, with its own identity that's not defined by the city's border but by our greater community. What's good for Canton is good for Massillon, Jackson, Navarre, Perry, North Canton, Louisville, Alliance and the whole of Stark County and its surroundings. It's the rising tide that floats us all. Visitors come to cities, not counties, and citizens identify with their hometown, not their home county.

Canton is the home of fame.

That's our area's brand — and yes it's about football. The association with the hall and with Hall of Fame Village is "top of mind," as we say in advertising, yet it transcends football. It's about such values as discipline, courage, character, commitment, perseverance and teamwork. It took an outsider who happens to be the Pro Football Hall of Fame's president and executive director, David Baker, to show us.

First Ladies and Arts District painters and photographers are obvious examples of fame found here. Every day, we live this brand with everyday acts, both little and not-so-little, that are worthy of fame.

We are an extraordinarily charitable community, all while we support the growth of commerce. We are makers and builders, thinkers and doers, fuel-cell researchers and Utica Capital laborers, scholars and musicians. We care and we share, with family and strangers alike.

As marketers, we say a brand is defined by one thing, one idea, that can be owned in the mind of its constituents, and that a successful brand lives that differentiating position.

Canton is the home of fame. We do live it every day.

Now, let's go tell the world!