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## Ask My Millennial: A virtual learning experience for business

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By now, you've probably heard that the former Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention and Visitors Bureau has changed its name to **Experience Grand Rapids**. And you might know they celebrated this change Tuesday at a networking event focusing heavily on Twitter.

If you have heard the latter news, that could be a good thing or a bad thing.

While there were plenty of people tweeting positive things about the event, there were also a good number of people voicing criticism. In all honesty, I believe the event organizers had good intentions and their critics had good arguments. So I'm approaching the topic from a position of neutrality.

I'm Swiss, babe.

The CVB earlier this summer sent out invites to the "GR Tweet Elite" event, and the few details it shared about the event's purpose focused on promoting the city, particularly through social media.

As it turned out, the event was a

celebration of the CVB's new name — which was that morning, and President Doug Small spoke more about later in the evening. Overall, it was not much different from many other networking events, aside from the Twitter conversation directed by the [@GrandRapidsCVB](#) account.

However, many in the social media community were put off by the use of the word "elite" in the name and the invitation-only policy. More than likely, the combination of these factors was the true problem, as many see Twitter and other forms of social media as somewhat of a great equalizer.

While it seems the majority of tweets tagged with #GRTweetElite were from attendees, there were quite a few negative remarks that showed up in the search results. Some were constructive criticism, but others were more harshly worded.

Regardless, Experience Grand Rapids has a good goal and tried to accomplish it in a good way.

Rebranding an organization is hard and requires a lot of conversations with people outside the organization — especially when the purpose of your business is to brand an entire city to the rest of the country. So getting some of the more notable local tweeps to interact with the organization is a great idea. As I mentioned in [my previous column](#), a [recent study](#) found that people who use Twitter are more likely to talk about a company's brand in other digital venues, as well.

And who could argue that encouraging people to share their positive Grand Rapids experiences is a bad thing?

That being said, there are a few things others can learn from how this virtual conversation digressed.

First, watch your wording, especially when you're trying to describe something in a few words. Even if it rolls off the tongue, some might not find it cute.

Second, when it comes to social media, it's truly necessary to have organic conversations. Those

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