



## Canadian Alternative Investment Cooperative (CAIC)

### Communications Issue

CAIC was formed in the early 1980's by a number of religious communities who wanted to pool their resources in order to make investments that support positive social change and promote alternative economic structures. They offered alternative financing to shelters, daycare centres and other community-based organizations that may have been turned away by traditional lending agencies. Their issue? They weren't receiving as many requests for funding as they had money to lend. They wanted to get the message out to the organizations they thought could use the service.

### Communications and Brand Response

We identified CAIC's primary communications issues as a lack of focused marketing to their potential constituency. And when they did communicate, the language was more intimidating than accessible. In addition, their overall brand was not helping as it looked dated and institutional. We developed a number of new concepts and "looks" for CAIC and applied it to all the relevant communications materials, using plain English and visuals and third party endorsements that represented the work of their constituency. The overall themes were "The people we work with have other things on their minds besides money ... alternative financing for community based projects" and "We've worked with some great organizations. We'd love to work with yours." In addition to the re-brand, we developed a "Borrower's Kit," an accessible guide to loan procedures, and a "Borrower's Questionnaire" to help potential borrower's organize their thoughts and materials. Given the size and focus of the audience, we used direct mail as the main vehicle to transmit the message.

### Result

The new identity and materials were launched at the Annual Meeting of CAIC. Reaction to the re-brand and the direct mail campaign was tremendous. Many responders thought it was a new organization!

