

# Hitting the Refresh Button

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There is a common misconception across communities that in order to grow, you must leave behind all your traditions. But growth and tradition are not mutually exclusive. Your community is able to thrive and succeed while maintaining your most valued traditions. With the correct approach, bringing your traditions forward can not only maintain your foundation and identity as a community, but welcome in the new generations in support of collective success.

People have a tendency to believe that in order to have growth within and as a community, you must eliminate traditions. Alternatively, to undermine growth, you must keep traditions. However, in reality, the best way to perceive traditions is to acknowledge them and work towards finding ways to build and grow with and around them. To ignore your traditions is to lose a part of who you are, to lose part of your identity. Rather than viewing these traditions as something that is hindering or holding you back, see their value and learn from them. You have the unique ability to bring together the old with the new to create a community that is part of each other as much as it is its own entity standing strong within the larger economic picture. If you don't find ways to grow with them, your traditions will die out because there will be no one to hold onto them, to nurture them, and to feed them.

One of the greatest examples of embracing tradition while demonstrating exponential growth, is the tradition of the Calgary Stampede. The Calgary Stampede is an annual rodeo, exhibition, and festival held in Calgary, Alberta. Founded in 1886, the Stampede began as an individual exhibition held by Calgary and the District Agricultural Society. In 1912, an American promoter organized the first rodeo and festival and in 1923 it merged with the Calgary Industrial Exhibition to create what we know today as the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. The Stampede brings together thousands of volunteers from the Calgary community with the support of civic leaders and together, the event that is so strongly rooted in the identity of Calgary itself, has grown into one of the largest tourist attractions and means of revenue for the city. Instead of letting go of this over 130-year-old tradition, the city of Calgary embraced it, cared for it, and grew with it. Not only does this annual event support the community through an income brought in from the thousands of people being drawn to it from around the world, but it has built a community within the city of residents who are proud to take on this identity, even going to the lengths of referring to themselves as "Stampede City" and "Cowtown", and naming their Canadian Football League team the Stampeders.

In contrast, you don't need to look very far for examples of who has gotten it wrong over the years. Many community service club organizations have failed to adapt and adjust, staying too attached to their traditions without seeing the potential for growth with what they have already established. Without the willingness to build and evolve their traditions, they have failed to draw in a new and younger membership base. This loss is felt greatly in their communities, falling behind by their unwillingness to looking forward.

There is so much potential in every community to embrace their traditions and be proud of who they are and where they began while having an openness to the new and wonderful ways society has

developed to bring growth and undoubted success to the people that make up who they are as a community.

*This syndicated content is provided by Doug Griffiths, best-selling author and chief community builder at 13 Ways, a company with a mission to push communities to face their challenges to find their unique path to success. For more information visit [www.13ways.ca](http://www.13ways.ca), or we can start the conversation at [info@13ways.ca](mailto:info@13ways.ca).*