



*Ten Chimneys:
A Re-branding
Proposal*

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The Proposal

Ten Chimneys is one of the most intriguing pieces of history in the Midwest, but is also one of the most underexposed and underappreciated in the United States. I blame this on the lack of media exposure and overarching interest from a dying, faltering population – those who grew up and loved the Fabulous Lunts. We need to re-approach Ten Chimneys with a new sense of innovation, and a plan – a rebranding if you will. Times are changing, a truth of life, so Ten Chimneys as a historical foundation must change as well – in audience approach.

The most important part of this process is to, first and foremost, not let this fact deter you from the foundation's progression. Positivity is essential in the success of any business, company, museum, etc. So let's take a second and get excited. Ten Chimneys has a huge future ahead of it, and this is simply another chapter in its success.

To help garner this positivity, let me state some facts about Ten Chimneys. First, I've seen and heard nothing but raving reviews about Ten Chimneys. Online at websites such as TripAdvisor, nearly every person gave excellent reviews. Out of 58 review rankings on TripAdvisor, 48 people gave Ten Chimneys an "excellent," and 8 people gave it a "very good." One person gave it a "poor" review, and I assume that person must have been experiencing something else miserable, wearing a form of gray goggles, or is delusional. One person wrote, "If you love art, architecture, the theater or romance, you

will love this gem..." On Yelp.com, another person wrote, "Ten Chimneys is the place of magical retreat and history." Someone else on the site wrote, "Truly amazing gem of an experience... This is a do not miss, make a reservation ..." Almost every review I've read gave raving reviews, and I have yet to read a negative one. You guys have celeb-

rity endorsers, i.e. Laura Linney, something that the public will appreciate. Ten Chimneys as a show can only boost interest – people have been ecstatic about the Broadway show as well. You also have a multitude of articles from very prominent newspapers like the New York Times that only boost positive public image of the museum.



So what's the problem? The second part of the about quoted review from TripAdvisor states that it's "tucked away," a place between Milwaukee and Madison that few people know about. Not enough people are getting there, and that is because it is simply underexposed. A friend of mine has lived in Wisconsin for thirteen years and is a theater advocate, yet has never heard of Ten Chimneys. She says that if she knew about this place, which she does now from my work, she would have definitely make a trip.



This mini chain-web in itself has helped Ten Chimneys, even though it is slight and miniscule. People say that even one person can make a difference, a true fact, but imagine hundreds of people spreading the word about Ten Chimneys, thousands even. This is the second problem. People need to expose Chimneys to others by talking about it, spreading the word, creating a whisper about it that will intrigue others to visit. Things become popular not just from Internet reviews, but from talk.

The third and maybe most detrimental problem about Ten Chimneys is the decline of interest is its dwindling following. The Lunt-Fontaines come from the decades of the 1920's to the 1960's. Anyone who lived and loved the Lunt-Fontaines is either dying, becoming old and uninterested, or connecting their life to their careers and families. The continued success of Ten Chimneys must come from a new demographic of interest, that being the youth. Social media and technology surround youth these days. I've noticed that on your website, links to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc. is at the bottom of the website.



I believe that this is one of the problems in your approach to publicity as well. Place these means of communication at the top of your "revamp list," and utilize all that the youthful world has to offer. Here's where I come in. I'm a 21-year-old college student who's not only a professional youth connector and social media user, but a bright and fresh mind specialized in innovation, analysis, communication and experience design. There is no better person to aid in the rebranding of Ten Chimneys than a college student like myself.

I propose a rebrand of Ten Chimneys that targets college students and young families and makes Ten Chimneys an interactive experience instead of just a tour.

Compare this ideal to a time period place like Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts or the Wisconsin Dells. Both places have a variety of activities to offer, and so must Ten Chimneys. Some of these activities that I propose include:



- A theater experience/show
- A dinner/eating accompaniment
- Workshops accessible to the public



This is an exciting addition to Ten Chimneys. But let's add another element to the place. That is time period actors. People love immersing themselves in another time period, perhaps because it's a means of getting away, escaping the complicated world we're in, much like why the Lunt-Fontaines had this estate! What's great about incorporating time period actors is having these actors themselves exposed to Ten Chimneys. If these actors are acting students at



universities or schools nearby, i.e. University of Wisconsin-Madison, not only are they learning about a great place while gaining acting experience and pay, but they're indirectly involved in networking. An actor-in-training will tell their roommates and friends about their job, as well as promote it to help increase their own personal gain as well as yours.

Nothing should be physically changed in regard to the estate. The buildings are beautiful, their possessions timeless, and everyone will love being able to experience the Ten Chimneys estate just as the Lunt-Fontaines and their acting circle did. We just need to re-approach the spot and make it a place where younger people and younger families will want to make a day out of it. Tour sites and historical buildings across the United States are losing interest because we're now in a world surrounded by technology and innovation. Old Sturbridge Village has been losing interest in numbers of visitors per year, and has since changed aspects of the village like replacing informational video clips with time period actors in monologue to entertain a new and more tech-savvy youth (www.osv.org). Like Old Sturbridge Village, Ten Chimneys doesn't have to change the site in any way, but just tweak a few things to make it more appealing to a changing demographic of people.

Let's make Ten Chimneys come to life again. Let's increase exposure of the site by increasing social media publicity, hiring students and others in the area as time period actors, utilizing famous endorsers who love the place just as much as we do; Let's make the site a theatrical experience with dinner and a show, a place where people can make a day out of it, where people can anticipate visiting; Let's make it a get-away experience the way the Lunt-Fontaines made it, and everyone will want to come see what Ten Chimneys is all about.



TEN CHIMNEYS