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The “Our little secret” tourism slogan no longer applies in Manatee County.

1981 — “Our little secret” made itself obsolete, working so well that the county now routinely ranks high on national lists of vacation destinations, according to Manatee County Commissioner Carol Whitmore, who chairs the county’s Tourist Development Council. The tourism logo used at the time was “Manatee County and the gulf beaches around Bradenton on the West Coast of Florida,” irritating copy editors and linguaphiles.

TOURISM SLOGANS, LOGOS EVOLVING

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How many ways can you say “Come visit” over 35 years? Turns out, quite a few. Manatee County tourism officials

have long promoted the county and the communities of Bradenton, Palmetto, Anna Maria, Bradenton Beach, Holmes Beach, Longboat Key and Lakewood Ranch with slogans like “Florida Like It Used to Be” and “The Closer Caribbean.”



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“Crystal Blue Persuasion” raised objections that the slogan referred to illegal drugs.

1989 — “Crystal Blue Persuasion” was controversial; some opposed the slogan, speculating that the 1968 song title referred to the drug methamphetamine. The period’s logo was “Manatee County - where Tampa Bay Meets the Gulf of Mexico,” giving free publicity to Tampa.



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“Pure Florida, nothing artificial” was a take-off on orange juice advertisements.

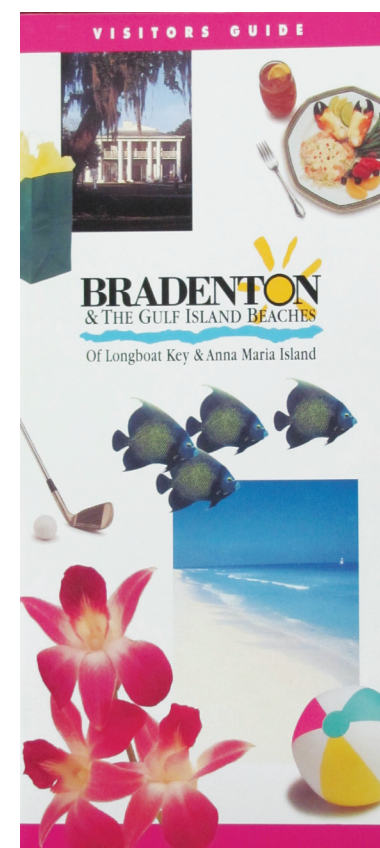
1993 — “Pure Florida, nothing artificial,” reminiscent of orange juice advertisements, was accompanied by a mouthful of a logo, “Bradenton & Florida’s Gulf Island Beaches, including Anna Maria Island, Longboat Key, Bradenton Beach, Holmes Beach and Palmetto.” Bradenton had replaced Manatee County on the suggestion that cities are more recognizable than counties. As Bradenton Mayor and Tourist Development Council member Wayne Poston said, “Pittsburgh Pirates fans don’t know where Allegheny County is.” But the logo didn’t specifically name the city of Anna Maria, and wrongly implied that Palmetto is a Gulf Island beach. The city was left out of future logos.

1995 — “Florida’s quiet side,” not quite a slogan, according to the Bradenton Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (which changed its name from the Manatee County Convention and Visitors Bureau), appeared on some publications with the logo, “Bradenton & The Gulf Island Beaches Of Longboat Key & Anna Maria Island.” The side referred to the southwest coast of Florida, compared to the more densely populated southeast coast of the state. The logo was changed in 1999 to “Bradenton & Florida’s Gulf Islands of Anna Maria & Longboat Key,” and changed again in 2000 to “Florida’s Gulf Islands – Anna Maria & Longboat Key, The Bradenton Area.”

2005 — “Take me away,” another mini-slogan, appeared on some brochures with the logo, “florida’s Gulf Islands – anna maria, longboat key, bradenton,” which was grammatically problematic because the city of Bradenton is not an island, and prompted objections to lower-case letters on state and city names.

2007 — “Welcome to our world,” another near-slogan, appeared on a brochure with the logo, “florida’s Gulf Islands – anna maria, longboat key, bradenton & lakewood ranch,” which included the unincorporated community of Lakewood Ranch for the first time in a tourism logo, but mistakenly implied that Bradenton and Lakewood Ranch are islands.

2010 — The logo was changed to “Anna Maria Island & Longboat Key, florida’s gulf islands, and on the mainland, Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch,” raising eyebrows of some Anna Maria Island residents who never considered that going into town was quite as adventurous as going to the mainland. The reference was removed the following year when the logo was changed to “Anna Maria Island – Longboat Key, florida’s gulf islands, Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch.”



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Local tourism logos have undergone many changes over the years



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“Real. Authentic. Florida.” The current slogan, born in 2012, is shown, bottom left, on a portion of a visitor’s guide cover.

2012 – After years of changes, today’s tourism slogan was coined in 2012. “Real. Authentic. Florida.” It is so popular that the Anna Maria Island city of Bradenton Beach changed its city motto from “Blessed with History, Hospitality, Spirit” to “Real Florida History, Hospitality and Spirit.”



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Manatee County’s current tourism logo is “Bradenton, Anna Maria Island, Longboat Key,” in the turquoise and orange colors of Manatee County park signs.

The current tourism logo is “Bradenton, Anna Maria Island, Longboat Key,” in the turquoise and orange colors of Manatee County stationery, benches and park signs. All three destinations are widely known today, thanks in part to decades of memorable slogans and logos.

In 2012, the county tourism agency hit on “Real. Authentic. Florida.” Echoing catchphrases popular in business advertisements, including “Old Florida” and “Real Florida,” the reality underlying the slogan has changed since 2012, and is likely to continue changing as Anna Maria Island and the communities of Manatee County continue developing and redeveloping. **Meanwhile**, the slogan avoids mislabeling or leaving out any of the area’s communities, has no grammar, and hence no grammar problems, eliminates annoying ampersands and seems to have pleased just about everyone.