

Guide to Best Practices in Tourism and Destination Management

Guide to Best Practices in Tourism and Destination Management

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Georgia Institute of Technology
Economic Development Institute
Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers
(TRACS)

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Georgia Institute of Technology's Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers (TRACS)

Georgia Tech's Economic Development Institute (EDI), helps grow economies by assisting business and communities. The institute's core business solutions are technology-driven and assist with economic development, information technology, process improvement, and quality enhancements. EDI is supported by federal, state, and industry funds and is part of Georgia Tech's Office of Economic Development and Technology Ventures.

Based in Georgia Tech's Economic Development Institute, TRACS draws on more than four decades of technical, research, and implementation assistance. Its primary goal is to provide innovative economic development assistance focused on tourism. TRACS also acts as an advocate for economic developers focusing on tourism, promoting the tourism industry, providing credible and reliable tourism data, and demonstrating the need for increased tourism funding.

Among TRACS' products and services are:

- Customer segmentation and targeting.
- Market profiling.
- Market feasibility analysis.
- Economic feasibility and impact analyses.
- Planning and development studies.
- Best practices assessment.
- Comprehensive assessments.
- Various other customized projects.

TRACS is available to provide tourism research to clients from local to international.

About the Author

Senior business associate for Georgia Institute of Technology's Economic Development Institute (EDI) and Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers (TRACS), Dr. Harrill brings a broad range of research experience to the programs, including specific expertise in tourism planning, tourism motivation, heritage tourism, ecotourism, scenic byway development, and sustainable community development. His professional work includes recreation and open space planning, land-use and comprehensive planning, environmental planning, citizen participation, and survey research. He has also taught university-level courses on community tourism development; international and national resort development; behavioral aspects of parks, recreation, and tourism management; environmental planning; and planning theory.

He holds a doctorate in parks, recreation, and tourism management, with emphasis in tourism planning, and a master's degree in city and regional planning, both from Clemson University. His bachelor's degree in political science is from the College of Charleston. He is a member of the Travel and Tourism Research Association and the American Planning Association.

Dr. Harrill is available to present the results of the case studies to your organization and to discuss what has been learned from the research and how the research can be applied to your specific tourism and destination management concerns.

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The following organizations allowed solicitation for nominations to be sent to their members via e-mail or listserv:

- The Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA)
- International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (IACVB)
- National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)
- Society of Parks and Recreation Educators (SPRE)
- American Association of Geographers' (AAG) Sport, Recreation, and Tourism Group
- American Planning Association's (APA) Resort and Tourism Division
- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
- National Association of State Development Agencies (NASDA)

I thank these organizations for their support and participation in this project.

Many thanks also to the people too numerous to list who work in convention and visitors bureaus, state tourism agencies, and university research programs; they graciously and patiently answered my sometimes prying questions. The enthusiasm they display for their work and the tourism industry provided momentum for this project. This book is dedicated to those people working in CVBs, chambers of commerce, state tourism agencies, and universities around the world.

Introduction

A best practice exemplifies initiative and innovation and represents a significant improvement over traditional practices. There are many possible catalysts for a best practice—from a collective response to external events to a leader’s vision. While best practice guides are common in many fields, Georgia Institute of Technology’s Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers (TRACS) saw the need for such a guide for tourism and destination management of convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs), chambers of commerce, and state tourism and economic development agencies. In addition, TRACS sought to improve its own services to these groups. This book presents case studies about successful strategies and approaches that can be easily adopted by all types and sizes of tourism organizations.

A work such as this is valuable for a number of reasons. Because the tourism industry comprises many different sectors, including transportation, lodging, and entertainment, it is often difficult to assess the types and rate of innovation in the industry. In addition, because the tourism industry is a loosely knit community of diverse actors, including CVBs, state agencies, and university academic and extension programs, it is often a challenge to disseminate information about innovative practices. In real-world application, the adoption of a best practice or practices can help an organization demonstrate innovation, often a requirement for continued funding. Ironically, however, funding is often a prerequisite for innovative programming. Our hope is that organizations using this document will significantly reduce research costs.

We also hope that this guide will bridge gaps in information, enhance accessibility to that information, and improve practices in an ever-growing and expanding worldwide tourism industry.

The best practices presented here fall into the following six categories:

- *Research.* In this category, organizations or agencies are highlighted that provide public, private, or non-profit research at levels ranging in scope from local to national (producers of primary tourism research or practitioner-client joint research, for example).
- *Funding.* This category features best practices in the many tourism funding options used by organizations and agencies—again at levels from local to national—such as public-private partnerships that include membership dues for cooperative tourism advertising and marketing.
- *Professional Development:* Best practices in professional development were drawn from organizations or agencies involved in educating and training members of the tourism industry (sponsors of community tourism development workshops, for example).

- *Information Dissemination.* Organizations or agencies involved in disseminating tourism information and data are showcased in this category. Representative of the members of this group are providers of “how-to” workbooks and fact sheets.
- *Advocacy.* Organizations or agencies involved in lobbying or testifying on behalf of the tourism industry (such as sponsors of forums with federal or local decision-makers) are featured in this category.
- *Web Marketing.* This category highlights organizations or agencies using the Internet for destination promotion—online fulfillment and travel planning, for example.

Methods

The final set of case studies was selected from nominees obtained during the summer and fall of 2001. To identify these nominees, researchers:

- Sent e-mail messages soliciting cases to electronic distribution lists (listservs) that were likely to include tourism marketers and developers. The following organizations sent the best practices nominations to members via e-mail or listserv: the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA); International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (IACVB); National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA); Society of Parks and Recreation Educators (SPRE); American Association of Geographers' (AAG) Sport, Recreation, and Tourism Group; American Planning Association's (APA) Resort and Tourism Division; National Association of Development Organizations (NADO); and National Association of State Development Agencies (NASDA).
- Called key members of the tourism industry for cases. Case studies for the Web marketing category were not open for nomination in the original solicitation for nominations, and were selected solely through industry contacts. This was done because the researchers felt they did not have enough expertise to judge nominations in this category this year, yet the topic was deemed too important to exclude from a best practices guide. The Web marketing category will be open for general nominations as part of our preparation for the next edition.
- Reviewed secondary sources such as tourism and hospitality journals, newsletters, and Web sites.
- Nominated additional cases based on experience and knowledge.

The following screening criteria were used to determine the eligibility of a practice as a case study:

- Research
 - Traditional practice: extrapolation of historical or economic trends
 - Innovative practice: accountability studies, including benchmarking and conversion studies; research for funding and advocacy
- Funding
 - Traditional practice: funding through budget allocations
 - Innovative practice: use of partnership funding; revenue-generating activities
- Professional Development
 - Traditional practice: one-day workshops; single-issue instruction
 - Innovative practice: instruction at different levels of experience and focus areas

- Advocacy
 - Traditional practice: interest-group lobbying, including personal communication, letters, and petitions
 - Innovative practice: coordinated and sustained media campaigns; use of multimedia
- Information Dissemination
 - Traditional practice: use of tourism databases with limited access or availability
 - Innovative practice: use of tourism information technology with multiple users
- Web Marketing
 - Traditional practice: single Web site with static text and graphics; limited marketing and sales capability
 - Innovative practice: a Web “portal” to the destination with multiple sites; dynamic text and graphics; extensive marketing and sales capabilities

The criteria resulted from an in-depth review of literature related to the tourism industry, including marketing and development, community tourism development, and “e-tourism”—the use of the Internet in the industry. The criteria for innovation represent practices and policies that emerged primarily during the 1990s.

After the call for nominations, 59 cases were retained for further consideration. In January 2002, researchers conducted telephone interviews with the program managers and directors of these cases. The final interview was designed to obtain a more detailed description of the innovative and traditional elements listed previously. The interviews resulted in the organizational and best practice descriptions and determined whether the case was worthy of selection as a best practice, based on:

- Broad applicability.
- Ability of the interviewee to indicate what was innovative or distinctive about the practice.
- Evidence of an ongoing program.
- Willingness of the interviewee to participate in the full case-study data collection process.
- Evidence of an outcome or outcomes.

The selection criteria used to choose the final cases were based on qualitative considerations, rather than scoring or summing categories. Such quantitative methods were not necessary because of the sufficient number of practices generated by the nominations. Obtaining a final set was not a matter of eliminating cases; it was instead a matter of culling cases from the nominations that met the selection criteria and whose contacts agreed to participate in the data collection process.

The case selection process was not designed as a true sampling procedure. As a result, any attempt to tally the final case studies and make numeric comparisons among different case studies would be highly misleading. The main contribution of the study was to describe a variety of innovative practices in the tourism industry. This book does not contain a review of all practices, but is limited to cases nominated by industry members.

Furthermore, readers should remain aware that there is a distinct difference between best practices and performance standards. Performance standards are comparative, quantitative, and presented as rankings or indices. Conversely, best practices are not comparative but qualitative, and are often presented as case studies. The best practices presented in this book should be construed as models that may be applicable to many destination management organizations. However, by no means are these models suitable for adoption by all such organizations; to do so would be to compare apples and oranges, corrupting the intent of best practices in general and this book in particular.

Also, there is a concern that best practices of any description can be too widely adopted, thus stifling the creativity and innovation that must be at the heart of any good organization. The adoption of a best practice in one organization should by no means stop the processes of innovation at work from within that organization.

Finally, it is possible that individuals outside the tourism and destination management industries would inappropriately and unfairly use a best practices guide as a yardstick for the organization in their community. Good ideas evolve within a certain organizational culture, influenced by many social, economic, and political variables. Thus, an excellent best practice in one city or community may be inappropriate for another.

One researcher—the project director—conducted the case study research. The data collection method was chosen to meet the project's time and budget restrictions. The principal investigator also reviewed materials such as brochures, reports, and Web sites provided by program managers and directors.

The final data set was used to develop the case studies. The case studies themselves were constructed from the interviews, materials submitted by the organizations, and other media.

Each case begins with an "Overview" of the practice and a brief discussion of what was special about the practice that resulted in its selection. The "Context and History" section explains the problem that the practice was designed to solve and processes that led to the establishment of the practice. The "Organization" section discusses management, staffing, partnerships, and the funding of the practice. The "Best Practices" section describes the major features of the practice and how it is used. The "Results" section describes program outcomes based on evaluation or program measurement systems. The "Chronology" section provides important dates and milestones in the organization's history, including milestones regarding the best practice. The "Reference Materials" section includes material used to construct the case studies, as well as Web addresses.

Contact information appears in the Appendix.

Executive Summary

Tourism is a rapidly evolving industry that has become increasingly competitive in the global marketplace. With advances in communication and transportation, U.S. destinations now compete directly with destinations around the world, and vice versa. It is important that today's destination management organization (DMO) managers keep up with innovation within the industry. The purpose of this book is to provide examples of such innovation that can be adapted to an organization's needs.

These case studies illustrate a remarkable diversity of techniques and approaches to tourism marketing and development. Represented among the selections are nine convention and visitors bureaus, four state and regional tourism agencies, and two university programs. While these organizations differ in mission and focus, they share common characteristics, including activities in the best practice categories of research, funding, professional development, information dissemination, advocacy, and Web marketing.

Written for scholarly and general audiences, this best practices guide provides models that can be adapted by other organizations. For example, if a DMO wanted to improve its efforts in funding and Web marketing, it could quickly glean this information from the case studies in these sections. We also hope that the book serves as a touchstone for discussion regarding the growth and structure of the rapidly expanding tourism industry.

Increasingly, tourism organizations must defend expenditures and find alternative means of generating revenues. Accountability studies are a primary method of internally measuring progress and externally defending budget expenditures. *Finger Lakes (New York) Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association*, a regional tourism organization, has used benchmarking in the form of conversion and economic impact studies to measure its effectiveness in the critical first years of its existence. Similarly, the *Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau* uses conversion to determine the number of visitors influenced by its marketing campaigns and economic impact analysis to measure the contribution of tourism dollars to local economies. It then returns to the legislature each year with strong evidence of its efficiency and effectiveness, demonstrating the need for continued funding.

Universities are well-known for their research. However, as university extension programs have declined in recent years, few institutions feature a center or unit dedicated to community tourism outreach. *Michigan State University's Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center* produces several products that benefit the state's communities and the industry at large. These products include county tourism profiles, regional tourism marketing surveys, and tourism tax reports.

The *San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau (SFCVB)* is represented in both research and funding, with diverse services and products. The SFCVB's innovative research includes its "foodie" and "joy" studies, the former investigating motivations of culinary tourists and the latter examining the sense of well-being and contentment associated with travel to a destination. Innovative funding techniques

employed by the bureau beyond partnership fees and cooperative advertising consist of trademark licensing and co-branding.

Tourism funding is showing signs of innovation as state agencies seek more consistent funding sources for marketing and development purposes. Two contrasting models have emerged in response to the funding challenge. Florida's state tourism agency, *Visit Florida*, has implemented a partnership based on voluntary fees. Conversely, the *California Division of Tourism (CalTour)* has opted for mandatory self-assessment from partners.

Education in tourism and leisure services is also receiving more attention. The *International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus (IACVB)* has developed a four-step educational process, beginning with the fundamentals of destination management and moving to certification of professionals in destination management, then certification for destination management executives, and finally a master's degree in destination management, which is currently in development.

Demonstrating a commitment to technological innovation and information dissemination, The *Vienna (Austria) School of Economics and Business Administration's Institute for Tourism and Leisure Studies* has developed a computer system called TourMIS for the dissemination of tourism marketing data. The system has technical capabilities that make it a true tourism decision support system with multiple users, as opposed to only a limited database with a few users, and it is currently available throughout Austria and the European Union.

The *Lee Island Coast (Florida) Visitor and Convention Bureau* is a leader in tourism advocacy because of its commitment to several products and events that educate and inform the public and the tourism industry. The bureau holds a large, monthly Tourism Development Council forum that addresses tourism issues and information for the public and tourism professionals. The bureau also plays an active role in shoreline management, thus helping preserve the very product it markets. Increasingly, environmental sustainability is becoming important to domestic and international destinations.

The *Oregon Tourism Commission* makes the link between research and advocacy explicit, summarizing its research efforts in a pocket fact book distributed at the commission's annual Tourism Industry Council of Oregon Legislative Reception. Similar to the Lee Island Coast VCB, the commission also shows a strong commitment to community tourism development and the sustainability of the state's primary attraction—its natural amenities.

The *Greater Lansing (Michigan) Convention and Visitors Bureau* has developed an innovative approach to advocacy through its "Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown" program, in which residents are invited to Lansing's attractions during a festival event. By educating residents to view their own community through the eyes of tourists, the event improves host-guest relations and educates residents about the importance of tourist dollars to the local economy.

Web marketing is revolutionizing the tourism industry, integrating service and sales missions for CVBs and state agencies. The *Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) Convention and Visitors Bureau* has led the way for this new method of doing business by offering extensive trip personalization and packaging capabilities through its Web site. The bureau has succeeded in convincing regional hoteliers, restaurateurs, and attraction

managers that visitors are purchasing the destination when they visit Pittsburgh, rather than a single bed, meal, or event.

The *Nashville (Tennessee) Convention and Visitors Bureau* has achieved excellence in Web design. In addition to quality graphics, the site features a trip builder and a custom guide that asks the visitor questions about interests, then searches for matches in the database. Both the trip builder and the guide can be saved for a later visit if an e-mail address is provided. The bureau adds a distinctive touch to its site through celebrity endorsements, including representatives of the internationally known "Nashville Sound," allowing prospective visitors to experience the destination before making their travel decision.

As CVB Web sites increasingly integrate service and retail sales, privacy and confidentiality should assume even greater importance. *Travel Montana* includes an extensive privacy and confidentiality statement on its Web site. The agency is also a leader in Web marketing, having created nine niche sites in addition to its main site, including a Lewis and Clark site and a children's site.

Overland Park (Kansas) Convention and Visitors Bureau has developed an outstanding Web site on a budget typical of moderate-sized bureaus. The site features a balance of utility and esthetic appeal. More important, however, the site reinforces the city's image of having a park-like environment. This testifies to the community's early commitment to growth management, an issue that is becoming more important for many CVBs, new and established.

Several major trends in tourism and destination management emerged from the best practices study. For example, movement toward a private-sector business model for tourism organizations has stimulated a new emphasis on accountability and program evaluation. No longer representing an unquestionable "public good" requiring little or no justification, DMOs, state agencies, and university programs must be creative in developing funding methods and securing new funding sources. Emphasis on accountability and funding also results in direct involvement of the tourism industry in the political arena. This funding challenge has been answered, in part, by the diversification of Web marketing and increasing retail sales. However, with retail sales comes a recognition that business ethics in the form of Web privacy and confidentiality are no longer optional.

New DMO departments in technology and global marketing have also resulted in widespread departmental reorganization. Skilled professionals must be hired or trained to accommodate these new duties and initiatives, thus stimulating a renewed interest in advanced tourism and destination training beyond the bachelor's degree.

As the industry continues to evolve and globalize, destination development also will be important. To this end, these case studies offer numerous suggestions for organizational development, resource management, and public relations.

Whether these trends constitute a paradigm shift or a new era in tourism and destination management remains to be seen. Readers are invited to peruse this book and decide for themselves.

Part I

Research

Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association

Overview

Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association, based in Corning, N.Y., is a public-private partnership with a 13-member board representing the region. Several counties and corporations in upstate New York, including Corning Enterprises, the Corning Museum of Glass, the Arnot Mall, Chemung County, Schulyer County, and Steuben County financially support the association.

The combined expertise and funding support of the Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association allows for a strong promotion and marketing program that none of the partners could afford individually. The collaboration not only strengthens the impact of spending by bringing individual tourism and marketing budgets together, but also allows the region to position itself as a destination. The association's mission is to increase tourism and tourism revenues within the region.

The purpose of the association is to develop and implement marketing and promotion programs that build a new image for the region, better reflect the area's assets, generate awareness concerning the region among vacationers, and encourage touring vacationers to come to the region.

The association has begun to position the region as a brand. The branding strategy provides the marketing partners with a communications umbrella so that all partners can work together. The focus of the brand is one of the area's unique core assets: the wine experience.

Context and History

In 1997, a regional tourism director was hired by the Corning Corporation for the Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association.

The creation of this position was based on the corporation's decision to invest \$65 million in renovating the Corning Museum of Glass, formerly an internationally renowned museum chronicling the history of glass making. The corporation believed that promoting the region as a tourism destination and offering other amenities besides outdoor recreation would boost sagging museum attendance.



Courtesy Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association

Corning also saw the need to develop the region to attract professionals to its workforce. The company realized what many people are now coming to understand about tourism as economic development: that an area's quality of life is important to both tourists and potential residents. Addressing quality-of-life issues in a community is often the first step in community tourism development.

Organization

The director's initial mandate was to build regional cooperation for tourism to support the museum, and she initially convened a small group of attraction owners, hotel and motel proprietors, and others involved in the local tourism industry. Almost immediately after its formation, the group began to address serious questions regarding tourism marketing. Members realized they needed research to provide direction in developing regional tourism. Impressed with Longwoods International's record of successful research and branding, the group decided to hire the Toronto-based firm to help market the Finger Lakes region. To fund these efforts, Corning Enterprises pledged \$250,000, and matching funds came from Chemung, Steuben, and Schuyler counties and the Corning Museum of Glass. The final sum for the first year totaled \$550,000.

Best Practice: Research

One of many international firms that conduct such research, Longwoods undertook the effort with the promise to partners that solid research based on fact would



Courtesy Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association

pay immediate dividends. Another Toronto-based firm, the Rudder Group, was hired as marketing strategists.

Longwoods found that the Finger Lakes region needed to reposition itself in the tourism market. The research discovered that the area had a great reputation for outdoor recreation, but few people knew of the region's other amenities. Previously, tourism marketing in the region had targeted people who traveled there mainly for hunting, fishing, and camping. Longwoods determined that the region, to expand its appeal, should capitalize on its wine-producing history and capabilities. This tri-county area is the largest wine-producing region east of the Rocky Mountains, and possibly the second largest in the entire country behind California's Napa Valley.

Longwoods also determined that the region already had assets to provide the types of experiences sought by the touring vacationer, such as wineries, scenic beauty, entertainment, museums, and other cultural attractions. The compelling wine experience sets the region apart from other competitive touring destinations in the northeastern United States.

Among Longwoods' findings was that touring vacationers contribute greatly to the region's economy. Unlike outdoor vacationers, who usually stay in campgrounds, touring vacationers stay in hotels, shop in stores, and visit attractions. In addition, touring vacationers seek unique, exciting, and cultural travel experiences such as museums and entertainment, not just the outdoor activities of camping and fishing. The touring vacationer segment is growing, especially among the baby boomer market segment. These educated, affluent vacationers prefer good accommodations and convenient services.

Due to social, economic, and psychological factors, touring vacationers, much more so than campers and fisherman, can be influenced by advertising in such media as television, tour books, and the Internet. The Finger Lakes region's two-part challenge was to (1) make touring vacationers aware that it offers experiences that appeal to them, and (2) motivate them to visit the region.

Results

Based on its spring 2000 advertising campaign, the association conducted a benchmark study with Longwoods to determine the program's success. The study confirmed the group was on the right track: for every \$1 spent, the region received \$21 in return, totaling \$11.4 million in revenue. Despite the association's modest advertising budget of \$156,300, 28 percent of all residents in three key markets recalled seeing at least one of the print or broadcast ads for the Finger Lakes Wine Country, according to the study. The advertising campaign consisted of two television commercials; three print ads that ran in nine publications, including *Better Homes and Gardens* and the *AAA Annual Tour Book*; and nine Internet banner ads.

The study also indicated that 131,000 new travelers came to the Finger Lakes region as a result of the spring advertising campaign. Of those travelers, 47,000 came on day trips, while 84,000 took an overnight trip. In addition, the study found that the advertising campaign significantly increased interest in visiting the region, namely an estimated 358,000 additional intended trips over the next two years. Based on this data, the association successfully raised an additional \$89,000 in 2001, allowing it to extend the marketing program from five weeks in 2000 to five months in 2001.

A subsequent 2001 conversion study, a second study of the same time period, conducted by Longwoods showed that 71 percent of all visitors in 2000, or 93,000 persons, came to the Fingers Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association counties of Schulyer, Steuben, and Chemung.

Of those visitors who said in the earlier benchmark study that they planned a trip, 22,000 visitors came to the region from July to October of 2001. Visitors on overnight trips spent on average \$114 per person, while those who visited on day trips spent an average of \$74 per person. The Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association spent \$536,000 on operations, marketing, and research in 2000, and budgeted \$680,000 in 2001.

Based on its demonstrated success, the association plans to expand, creating three major wine trails and including a fourth county.

Conclusions

Using Longwoods research, the Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association managed to reposition its assets and bring more revenue to the region's cities and counties. The group has been successful because of its commitment to benchmark research that helped it avoid wasting valuable resources. For itself, the group followed a methodological and strategic approach of leading partners through the tourism development process step-by-step and impressing upon them the value of research.

The leaders of such organizations must convince partners that they share in a greater collective vision for tourism marketing and development based on research, rather than on political differences. Implementation is also a key to marketing: partners must learn the requirements for developing regional tourism beyond initial marketing. In sum, critical elements of success include credible research, regional vision, proven leadership, and keeping partners involved.

CHRONOLOGY

1997	A regional tourism partnership forms.
1999	The association contracts with Longwoods International to undertake custom branding research. The Rudder Group develops creative approaches and makes recommendations for implementation based on branding research.
January 2000	The association presents results of branding research to regional partners, county legislators, possible funding organizations, and a broad-based group of industry representatives including attractions, accommodations, and retailers.
March 2000	The Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association forms as a public-private partnership with a 13-member board.
April 2000	The Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association launches its first advertising campaign.
March 2001	The association presents results of benchmarking and conversion research for the first year showing \$11.4 million in revenues. It reports that \$21 came back into the economy for every marketing dollar spent. The association's budget grows to over \$600,000.
October 2001	The association wins the Tourism Industry Association of America's (TIA) Odyssey Award in the domestic marketing category.

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Michigan State University Michigan Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center

Overview

Michigan State's Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center was established in 1985 to promote the state's tourism industry as an economic development tool. The center is affiliated with the university's Department of Park, Recreation, and Tourism Resources, one of 12 units in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The department and center work closely in research and outreach programs, and the center provides support for expanded teaching programs in tourism. It receives its funding from the Michigan State University Extension and Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station. The center has several publications that reflect a best practice in tourism research, including its *County-Level Tourism Profiles*, *Regional Michigan Tourism Market Survey*, and *World Travel and Tourism Tax Barometer*.

Context and History

The center was formed during the 1985 recession, an event compounded by increasing global competition in the automotive industry. The state's reaction to this downturn—that is, using tourism as an economic development tool—preceded the rest of the nation in taking this approach, as trade treaties such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the 1990s resulted in significant industrial restructuring. Given this economic context, the center was mandated to provide research-based information, including strategic plans based on actual, up-to-date data. In sum, the center was conceived as a one-stop shop for tourism and recreation resource information.

Organization

The director of the center reports to the dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. In addition to the director, the center employs another faculty member of the Department of Park, Recreation, and Tourism Resources; four



Courtesy MSU Michigan Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center

research and outreach specialists; one research specialist; seven research assistants; and an office manager.

Best Practice: Research _____

The center's Tourism Area of Expertise (TAOE) group conducts the county-level profiles. These profiles of Michigan's 83 counties are intended to help developers, tourism professionals, public officials, and others make informed decisions

regarding the state's tourism industry. The profiles contain state sales and tax collection statistics obtained from the Michigan Department of Treasury. Statistics are presented on tax collections from family restaurants and cafeterias and on room use tax collections from hotels and motels. In addition, the profiles provide sales and tax collection statistics on other business sectors including gas stations, watercraft sales and services, men's and boys' clothing, women's clothing and accessories, family clothing, shoe stores, liquor stores, sporting goods stores, rooming and boarding houses, and trailer parks. All tax statistics are available from the center by month and county from 1983 to the present, in both electronic and printed formats.

The *Regional Michigan Tourism Market Survey* has existed since 1996. Every month since that time, the center has conducted telephone surveys of an average of over 400 households in Michigan, adjacent states, and Ontario, Canada. The survey includes a set of questions designed to track Michigan travel activity, behavior, and characteristics. Data are also collected monthly on travel intentions. The survey also includes rotating questions for information on timely issues, such as the impact of gasoline prices on Michigan travel activity or the interrelationship between Michigan's wine and tourism industries.

Established in 1993, the center's World Travel and Tourism Tax Policy Center (TPC), sponsored by the World Travel and Tourism Council, is dedicated to strengthening the international travel and tourism industry, and the world's economy, by providing information and analysis of tax policy issues to government policy makers, industry leaders, and the public. The center's educational services are designed to promote equity, efficiency, and simplicity in the fair generation of travel and tourism tax revenues to stimulate industry growth.

The TPC's primary goal is to track and monitor the status of taxes imposed on travelers and on travel and tourism companies around the world. The TPC has developed a worldwide cost barometer; conducts applied economic research on the impact of taxes on the travel and tourism industry; and serves as a conduit for relevant and objective evaluation of travel and tourism tax policies.

The *World Travel and Tourism Tax Barometer* is an economic index developed to track and monitor changes in travel-related taxes in more than 50 high-traffic destinations worldwide. The Barometer's results represent an index of taxes paid by a hypothetical traveler visiting each destination. The base-year tax rates were set as of June 15, 1994. Prices and exchange rates were fixed to September 12, 2000. The index numbers reflect the cumulative change in the amount of tax paid in U.S. dollars as of September 15, 2000. A recent barometer showed that travel and tourism taxes have increased in 41 of 52 destinations since 1994. Taxes have decreased in nine of the 52 destinations over the same period, and remained at the same level in two destinations as of January 2001. The WTTC produces the Barometer to enable decision makers to track global destinations that are becoming noncompetitive. Industry growth, investment, and job creation are more likely to occur in destinations with supportive tax regimes and competitive prices.

Finally, Michigan State's Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center produces the *Tourism Matters* newsletter, with a circulation of 4,000. The

publication features information and data for the tourism industry and local communities, as well as events and programs sponsored by the center.

Results

The TTRRC measures success in various ways, including its growing number of clients, reports produced, new services provided, and increasing revenue. The center has recently added three new office and project staff as well as a new tenure-track position shared with the Department of Park, Recreation, and Tourism Resources. In the 2000–2001 fiscal year, the center's portfolio included funding from the Detroit Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, the West Michigan Regional Planning Association, and Michigan State University. Renewal of major support from the Michigan Department of Transportation and the World Travel and Tourism Council was instrumental in an overall increase in external project funds by about \$75,000. The center continues to seek additional revenue and external funding sources while maintaining a solid reputation for its research.

Conclusions

The center believes many elements contribute to its success. First, it recommends that similar extension programs secure a recurring budget source to augment project revenues.

Second, it is helpful that at least some staff have university tenure. An extension program may not be a good position for a junior faculty member attempting to juggle research projects, establishing a publishing program, and developing service endeavors. Conversely, senior, tenured faculty can contribute experience, credibility, and stability to a program existing outside normal channels of university administration and curriculum.

Third, extension programs should adopt a private-sector business model of accountability and production because they depend upon revenue generation and have a year-round schedule of programs and projects.

Finally, it is advantageous to maintain a close relationship with similar academic departments for the purpose of partnering on projects as well as sharing resources.

For all its successes, a major challenge for the center and other extension-oriented programs is that the place of such units in a university system is often uncertain. Because such programs are non-traditional units, they sometimes do not receive the types of administrative attention and support they deserve given the value of research reports and programs to local communities.

Part of the problem with establishing and maintaining such units has to do with the shrinking of extension services in U.S. universities. Frequently, extension services are placed in the hands of academic units rather than developed as separate units. Thus, academic departments become overburdened with education, research, service, and extension duties. The departments themselves may be unsure about the role of extension within their departments. In addition, faculty with extension duties may perceive their efforts as under-appreciated in a department focusing on high-level national and international academic research.

However, as extension services are withdrawn, public need usually forces a university to address the extension role one way or another. In the end, the establishment of an independent, well-funded extension center like Michigan State's Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center is arguably more cost-effective to have on a single campus than to have its duties and presence spread across an entire university system.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1985 The Michigan Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center is established.
- 1995 The *Regional Michigan Tourism Market Survey* and World Travel and Tourism Tax Policy Center are established.
- 1996 The center receives funding to implement a full-scale regional survey.
- 1998 The center completes the first edition of the county profiles.

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Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau

Overview

The Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) provides a best practices case study in accountability research, especially conversion studies, to secure adequate funding and further its mission. That mission is to create a sustainable, diversified, global travel demand for the Hawaiian Islands. The principles of innovation, integration, inclusion, and accountability serve as the foundation for the HVCB's marketing program.

The HVCB is a private, non-profit corporation and true public-private partnership: a marketing organization with tourism industry and business representation, government funding, island chapters that promote the interests of individual counties, and specialized divisions focused on specific areas of expertise.

The bureau promotes leisure and business travel, including meetings and conventions, and acts as an advocate for improving and expanding Hawaii's wide-ranging tourism products while using tourism as an economic development tool.

Context and History

The HVCB is about 100 years old, initially formed as a tourism promotion committee and evolving into the Hawaii Visitors Bureau in the 1950s. In 1997, the HVCB was formed with the mission of increasing tourism demand for the Hawaiian Islands.

Tourism in Hawaii began in 1902, when W.C. Weedon convinced a group of Honolulu businessmen to pay him to advertise the Territory of Hawaii on the mainland United States. Despite objections by the territory's powerful sugar planters, tourism promotion began that year under the auspices of the Hawaii Chamber of Commerce and the Merchant's Association.

On July 19, 1902, the Merchant's Association proposed a permanent tourism promotion bureau. By 1903, a source of funding for the organization had been secured—a share of the voluntary tonnage tax that shippers levied to rat-proof docks during an outbreak of the bubonic plague. This tax was also used later to create a public health emergency fund and to promote business.

The same year, the territorial legislature debated tourism promotion for the first time, ultimately rejecting the Joint Tourism Committee's request for \$10,000. Then Governor Sanford Dole backed the chamber's plea for reconsideration, and \$15,000 was approved for what became the Hawaii Promotion Committee.



Courtesy Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau

Over the decades, promotional efforts grew and so did the number of tourists. In 1919, the tourism promotional agency acquired a new name, the Hawaii Tourism Bureau. A record 31,846 tourists visited Hawaii in 1941, but World War II brought an abrupt end to the upward trend. Three years later, the Hawaii Chamber of Commerce began reviving tourism through the Hawaii Travel Bureau. In 1945, the Hawaii Visitors Bureau (HVB) was launched, and a new era of promotion began.

Statehood in 1959 brought with it the arrival of the first jet service to Honolulu. The HVB changed again in 1961, when it began doing business under contract to the state Department of Planning and Economic Development. Private contributions had dissipated—industry leaders were spending more on their own advertising—while government spending increased. The 50-50 funding became two-third state and one-third private financing of the HVB.

Yearly tourism totals in Hawaii reached nearly 7 million visitors in 1990. However, 1991 was a trying year for Hawaii's tourism industry. The Gulf War raised fuel prices and detoured aircraft headed to Hawaii. Airline arrivals and passengers decreased through 1994 amid the souring of both the U.S. and Japanese economies and the shrinking of overseas capital investment. Since that time, however, Hawaii's tourism market has rebounded behind the efforts of the HVB.

Organization

These domestic and international factors resulted in a basic restructuring in the way many convention and visitors bureaus did business, shifting toward a private-sector model. During 1995 and 1996, the HVB shifted from a community/



Courtesy Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau

government model to a business model emphasizing public-private partnerships. New goals, performance standards, and accountability measures were established, and new initiatives were conceived, although they remain hindered by budget constraints.

In July 1996, the name of the organization was officially changed to the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB), reflecting an emphasis on business and meeting travel and responsibility for marketing the Hawaii Convention Center. The \$350 million center in Honolulu officially opened in June 1998 and represented the first significant tourism-related construction in more than five years.

In 1998, the Hawaii Legislature passed a special tourism bill establishing the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), with dedicated funding at a globally competitive level. The HTA's purpose was to create a strategic vision and direction for tourism in Hawaii.

The HVCB is contracted on a three-year basis to market the islands under the Hawaii Tourism Authority, which has oversight for the state concerning the tourism industry. The HVCB maintains two contracts, one in leisure and the other in conventions. The bureau accrues income from both partner memberships and cooperative advertising dollars. It has over 3,000 members, and assists them with marketing and planning for conventions and meetings.

The HVCB's Board of Directors is designed for a balanced, statewide representation of companies, individuals, and associations from the tourism industry, general businesses, and the community. A 10-member Executive Committee, with mandated membership and balance from each county, acts as a steering group for the board.

In 1999, in collaboration with the HTA, the HVCB reorganized its key personnel and programs into four business divisions: Leisure and Business Markets (North America, Japan, Developing International Markets and Meetings, Conventions and Incentives); Global Marketing Services (Customer Trends and Communication, Strategic Partnerships, and Knowledge Bank and E-Marketing); Finance and Corporate Services; and Island Chapters (Kauai Visitors Bureau, Oahu Visitors Bureau, Maui Visitors Bureau, and Big Island Visitors Bureau). Each island chapter has its own director.

Program planning and leisure marketing strategies address eight major geographic marketing areas: U.S. West, U.S. East, Canada, Japan, Europe, Other Asia, Oceania, and Latin America.

Best Practice: Research

The Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau has been the source of all visitor research in the state since 1950. Early in its history, the bureau focused on visitor counts, which contributed to a historical record of visitation. These counts were relatively easy to accomplish, because nearly all tourism in the state's early history arrived by boat. However, to show progress to the state for the purpose of maintaining revenue, the HVCB began to use more sophisticated measures. In 1994, it began to learn more about people who have never been to Hawaii and their motivations for *not* traveling to the destination. Accountability and conversion have become major parts of the bureau's research program, as it must return to the state legislature every year for tourism marketing funding. The HVCB sponsors ongoing tourism measurement so it can report how the state's funds are being allocated.

To provide accountability, HVCB commissioned Longwoods International to evaluate the effectiveness of its advertising and integrated marketing campaigns. Longwoods' work for the state included measurement of advertising awareness achieved by HVCB's campaigns, and tracked conversion of this awareness into actual trips to the state over a two-year period following a given campaign. Longwoods evaluated HVCB's 1994 advertising campaign, 1997 U.S. and Japan emergency fund campaign, 1998 Aloha Southern California integrated marketing campaign, and 2001 Japan advertising campaign.

Results

Longwoods' first effort at measuring the effectiveness of HVCB's advertising efforts started with the bureau's 1994 U.S. advertising campaign. The firm found that the campaign influenced 757,000 trips to Hawaii (411,000 trips in 1995 and 346,000 trips in 1996). The total trips resulted in \$75.5 million in additional tax revenues for the state, or a return of \$9.59 for each \$1 Hawaii invested in tourism marketing.

In the fall of 1996 and spring of 1997, Hawaii experienced a decline in visitors from both the mainland and Japan. To address this problem and to combat aggressive advertising by competitors in key markets, state government provided an emergency fund of \$10 million to HVCB for marketing in these countries.

Longwoods found that the emergency advertising campaign generated 809,000 additional trips (495,000 from the United States and 314,000 from Japan), despite lower total spending (\$4 million from the United States and \$6 million from Japan). The firm also found that poor economic conditions and lack of consumer advertising in Japan prior to the 1997 campaign seemed to have dampened the effectiveness of HVCB's 1997 advertising in that country, compared to the conversion rate of the 1997 U.S. campaign, which benefited from other ongoing advertising and promotion efforts already at work in the market.

In August 1998, HVCB conducted its Aloha Southern California marketing program, which incorporated print, TV, and radio ads, along with numerous special events and promotions held in Los Angeles and Orange counties. Longwoods' conversion research on the integrated marketing program indicated that not only did it raise awareness of Hawaii, but also produced a significant increase in actual visits.

The findings indicated that 809,000 individuals were initially influenced to travel to Hawaii by the campaign, and 19 percent of these people planning a trip to Hawaii between January 1999 and June 2000 actually visited. This visitation translated into an additional 156,000 actual trips to Hawaii and \$239 million in visitor expenditures, including \$18 million in tax revenues.

Conclusions

The HVCB cites several reasons for its success. The research program is forward-looking and market-driven, as opposed to extrapolating historical trends. The Bureau focuses on the production and use of visitor spending patterns and motivations for traveling to Hawaii as well as reasons for traveling to competing destinations. The HVCB emphasizes monitoring national and global tourism trends, and it recommends developing consistent methodologies to measure tourism, methodologies that are valid and reliable, and defensible to a legislative body.

The HVCB's research is also disseminated to its many partners. The bureau believes that cultivating its strategic partnerships in the private and public sectors will reap long-term dividends. Major hotels and airlines and other hospitality-oriented businesses primarily represent strategic partners. Although most bureaus believe in the utility of such partnerships, they are even more important to HVCB because many of its partners are spread geographically among the islands and on the mainland.

The HVCB also believes in community involvement and participation in tourism development. Because the islands experience high volumes of tourists in concentrated areas as illustrated in its research, the bureau believes it is important to keep channels of communication open to residents and non-tourism business interests as well as to partners. The HVCB strives to ensure that tourism's benefits and impacts are distributed in an equitable way among the residents of Hawaii. For example, it is committed to maintaining a call reception center in Hawaii staffed by ethnic Hawaiians.

Future goals for the HVCB are to entice tourists to stay longer in the state and visit more than one island. The bureau has also attempted to broaden its marketing

scope to reach potential visitors in the U.S. Midwest and East Coast. Finally, it will continue to work on its Web marketing efforts to develop an integrated, comprehensive Web portal for the state as opposed to a one-dimensional Web site.

These goals should not be difficult to achieve for the HVCB, given that its strong research program consistently demonstrates the need for funding, and support of such efforts by residents, legislators, and the business community.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1902 W.C. Weedon advertises the Territory of Hawaii on the U.S. mainland.
- 1903 The Hawaii Promotion Committee is formed.
- 1919 The Hawaii Promotion Committee becomes Hawaii Tourist Bureau.
- 1941 A record year for tourism in Hawaii with 31,846 visitors.
- 1945 The Hawaii Visitors Bureau (HVB) is launched.
- 1948 Scheduled air service begins to Hawaii.
- 1959 Hawaii gains statehood.
- 1961 The HVB receives its first contract with the State Department of Planning and Economic Development, now the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.
- 1990 Tourism in Hawaii reaches nearly 7 million visitors.
- 1994 The HVB begins its effort to measure advertising effectiveness.
- 1996 The HVB becomes Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau.
- 1998 The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) is formed with dedicated funding.

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San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau

Overview

The San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau (SFCVB) is unique among the best practices case studies because it was selected in two categories: research and funding. In both categories, the SFCVB has developed several innovative approaches that can potentially be adopted by other CVBs. The bureau's mission is to strengthen the city's economy by marketing San Francisco as a destination for meetings, conventions, trade shows, and leisure travel. In turn, the bureau enhances the visibility of its member businesses within the visitor market.

The bureau counts more than 2,000 Bay Area businesses as members, making it one of the largest local-business associations in the country. These members run the spectrum from small businesses to major corporations serving the visitor market: hotels, restaurants, retail shops, tour and transportation companies, and attractions. Members also include vendors and wholesalers who supply products and services to those businesses.

Context and History

The San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau evolved from the San Francisco Convention and Tourism League, a non-profit, local business association founded in 1909.

The purpose of the league was to market the city as a destination for conventions, assemblies, and other meetings. The impetus for its formation was the Great San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, which had a disastrous impact on the once-booming visitor industry. The league worked to lure visitors back to the rebuilt city and to reclaim San Francisco's position as a world-class destination.

During its first year, the new league generated 27 conventions attended by 30,000 visitors who pumped \$1.2 million into the city. In 1921, the organization changed its name to San Francisco Convention and Tourist Bureau. In 1952, "Visitors" replaced "Tourist."

Throughout World War I and the Roaring '20s, the city's convention business burgeoned. In 1920, 81 conventions and 294,000 out-of-city conventioners poured \$11,763,000 into the local coffers and in 1928, the city boasted 236 conventions. Then the stock market crashed. Fortunately, the solid groundwork laid in previous years sustained the local industry through the Great Depression. The bureau persevered and survived.



Courtesy San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau

After World War II, a nationwide boom in trade shows began. Exhibit booth rentals provided financial support for many large organizations that had not previously used displays in their conventions. This new trend created a demand for increased exhibit space. In 1948, W. L. Rothschild, then SFCVB president, advocated construction of an exhibit hall. The first bid for a bond failed in November 1953, but a new bond proposal the following year won overwhelming approval. Brooks Hall was dedicated on April 11, 1958.

The bureau broadened its programs and responsibilities in 1963 as a result of merging with Californians Incorporated—an organization that promoted Northern California as a vacation destination—and the adoption of the hotel room tax, providing greater funding of visitor and convention promotion by the city without using general-fund revenues.

Powerhouse growth distinguished the mid-1970s. Convention and visitor expenditures rose to \$554 million by 1975. Accelerated inflation and the pleasure-travel boom boosted San Francisco's visitor receipts to over \$1 billion in 1979. Foreign visitation also grew rapidly during this time, accounting for an estimated 35 percent of San Francisco's pleasure-travel market.

On December 2, 1981, San Francisco celebrated the completion of one of its most impressive productions, the 650,000-square-foot George R. Moscone Convention Center. In the ensuing four years, the facility achieved a 90 percent usage level. In 1992, Moscone Convention Center expanded by yet another 300,000 square feet, with Moscone North joining the existing Moscone South.

A bond measure passed in 1999, which provided the groundwork for the next expansion of the Moscone Convention Center. Currently under construction and scheduled to open in the summer of 2003, Moscone West will add another 300,000 square feet of meeting exhibit space, bringing the total such space to 900,000 square feet.



Courtesy San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau

In 2000, the city had 17.7 million visitors (82.2 percent hotel occupancy), who spent \$7.7 billion. The Bureau emphasizes how tourism impacts the city's economy by citing the following statistics: visitor dollars spent in the city in 2000 generated \$474 million in taxes and fees that support the city's general budget, health and safety, arts and cultural organizations, recreational facilities, and low-income housing. Visitor dollars supported about 82,000 jobs in the hospitality and tourist industries, or about \$2.2 billion in local payroll. Finally, if San Francisco's visitor industry were to disappear, the bureau claims that each resident would need to spend about \$27 per day (or \$9,830 per year) to replace the loss in revenue.

Organization

The Bureau is a private, non-profit organization headed by a 54-member board of directors elected by the membership. The SFCVB works closely with city government and other organizations such as the chamber of commerce and the San Francisco Hotel Council to build the visitor industry. The SFCVB has 71 full-time staff around the world representing the bureau in leisure and corporate travel.

The bureau's annual operating budget for the 2001–2002 fiscal year was about \$15.3 million, with 42.7 percent coming from the private sector in the form of advertising and program revenues and membership dues. The other 57.3 percent comes from a small portion of the revenue generated by the San Francisco hotel room tax. The bureau holds a contract with the city to use this resource to promote San Francisco as a destination and to book conventions and trade shows in the city's convention facilities.

Best Practice: Research

The bureau sponsors a quarterly Hotel Guest Survey, which determines hotel customer demographics, spending, origin, segments, and psychographics (social psychological motivations for tourism and leisure behavior).

In addition, the bureau sponsors a quarterly VFR (visiting friends and relatives) Survey, calling Bay Area households to determine the size of the VFR market. This survey defines the number of visits per household per year, spending, and other behaviors.

Additional primary research includes analyzing the impact of the SFCVB Annual Trade Show, analyzing the use and effectiveness of the bureau's Web site, and analyzing the Brand San Francisco Audit Report.

Under the auspices of the bureau, the 1999 National Destination Perception Study analyzed American adults' perceptions of 15 top travel destinations, including attributes and 25 additional variables such as uniqueness, planned visitation, crime, and airport access. This research contributes to the national tourism industry as well as providing the bureau with information regarding its market positioning.

Two research programs sponsored by the SFCVB warrant particular interest as a best practice in research: a food and travel study and an opinion survey.

Its 1999 American Food and Travel Study analyzed the behaviors of U.S. adults regarding their dining habits. Besides trends and desired dishes, the study also identified the particular psychographics of dining hobbyists, also known as "foodies." The study presented findings in a nationwide survey of consumer attitudes and opinions toward restaurant dining and travel. The principal goals of the study were to gain insight into the marketplace and to develop market information that could be used by both destination marketers and restaurant industry entrepreneurs.

The study found that foodies compose a market segment with a high propensity to dine frequently and with higher tendencies for splurging while in restaurants. The study also found that this segment represents a high proportion of the dining population. In addition, their proclivity for frequent dining makes them targets as repeat customers. Conversely, they are culinary explorers with a stronger-than-average taste for new foods and dining places. They appear to be more demanding customers and may therefore require more care. Understanding their opinions and behavior may hold the key to retaining them as customers.

The SFCVB's 2001 National Opinion Survey examined American consumers' travel opinions and behavior. It was conducted in June and July of 2001. The principal goals of the survey were to understand traveler psychographics and to develop a more complete understanding of the emotional states consumers associate with a positive travel experience. Another primary goal of the survey was to understand the role of information sources used by travelers when planning their leisure travel.

The study found that advertising imagery and message are more likely to be effective if they tap into the emotions consumers associate with a positive travel experience. This "joy factor," or what a person felt strongly or passionately about

during a vacation, may be instrumental in convincing that consumer to travel again. The top six indicators of the joy factor included spending time with someone they love; feeling happy or joyous; building memories they perceive to last a lifetime; being free from responsibilities of home; being surrounded by natural grandeur or beauty; and feeling relaxed or re-energized. In the case of San Francisco, the city has focused its marketing efforts on these social psychological attributes, rather than on cultural symbols such as the Golden Gate Bridge or cable cars.

Finally, SFCVB research has been a source of income. The bureau seeks partners for national research work and sells completed studies to non-bureau organizations.

Best Practice: Funding

The SFCVB maintains one of the most balanced private-to-public funding ratios of any CVB in the United States, ranging from 58 percent to 42 percent in the recent years. These figures indicate a bureau with healthy, balanced support from the public and private sectors.

In addition, the bureau is one of the most successful cooperative partnerships in the country. Leveraging ratios for SFCVB investment against outside funds were as high as 89:1 during the 1990s (for every \$1 of SFCVB investment, partner investment allowed for approximately \$3.89 in total spending).

The SFCVB seeks funding from partners outside the travel and tourism industry to support its advertising and marketing programs, such as VISA USA and Kodak. Revenue from cooperative advertising has totaled \$4.8 million over the last five years.

Non-dues revenues generated through the Visitors Services Division have grown steadily over the last five years, increasing 494 percent since the 1995–1996 fiscal year, from \$46,000 to \$223,000. This increase has been primarily due to the integration of sales activities with the service mission at the bureau's Visitor Information Center in San Francisco.

Revenue from the bureau's Web site could exceed \$100,000 in the 2001–2002 fiscal year, primarily through the sale of postage and merchandise.

The SFCVB actively seeks licensing revenue from its owned trademarks, "49 Mile Drive" and "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," and is also seeking new trademarks. Revenue from this area could exceed \$200,000 in FY 2001–2002.

In September 2001, the SFCVB introduced the first co-branded destination Barbie dolls. The "I Left My Heart in San Francisco Barbie" is sold in over 200 See's Candies stores worldwide.

Also, the bureau, on behalf of the city and county of San Francisco, has negotiated for an official credit card with VISA, with derived revenue for the city and county coming through consumer use of the card.

Results

The bureau measures funding success in many ways, including return-on-investment measures, survey of Internet use about the destination, feedback from partners, and spending information gathered from its VISA advertising and marketing

CHRONOLOGY

1906	The Great San Francisco Earthquake strikes the city.
1909	San Francisco's Visitor Promotion Agency is founded in response to the earthquake's devastation, and originally incorporated as the San Francisco Convention and Tourist League. In its first year, it draws 27 conventions attended by 30,000 visitors who generate \$1.2 million in revenue for the city.
1915	The Pan-Pacific Exposition results in building an Exposition Auditorium in San Francisco's Civic Center.
1920	Eighty-one conventions and 294,000 out-of-city conventioners generate \$11,763,000 in revenue for the city.
1921	The San Francisco Convention and Tourist League changes its name to San Francisco Convention and Tourism Bureau.
1928	Before the Great Depression, the city hosts 236 conventions.
1940s–1950s	Growth of the SFCVB.
1958	Brooks Hall, an exhibit venue, is dedicated April 11, 1958.
1963	Bureau merges with Californians Incorporated, an organization promoting Northern California as a vacation destination. City adopts the hotel room tax that provides greater visitor funding of visitor and convention promotion without using general fund revenues.
1975	Convention and visitor revenues total \$554 million.
1979	Convention and visitor revenues exceed \$1 billion. Foreign travel accounts for 35 percent of pleasure travel to the city.
1980	Affected by the recession, tightening credit, and rising cost of transportation, lodging, food, and other goods and services, domestic travel declines 15.8 percent. In response, the city allocates a larger share of the \$28 million accrued in 1980 hotel tax revenues for intensified marketing purposes.
1981	The 650,000-square-foot George R. Moscone Convention Center is completed. In the ensuing four years, the Moscone Center achieves a usage level exceeding 90 percent.
1992	Moscone Convention Center is expanded by another 300,000 square feet with the new Moscone North.
1995	Bond passes for Moscone West, adding another 300,000 square feet of meeting space, bringing the total of such space to 900,000 square feet.
2000	San Francisco reaches 17.7 million visitors (82.2 percent hotel occupancy) and \$7.7 billion in gross spending on the part of visitors.

program. Because of its tourist motivation research, San Francisco has remained a top U.S. destination. For example, in 2000, 4.3 million people stayed in San Francisco hotels and another 1.5 million stayed with friends or family in the city. The bureau also has succeeded in improving regional tourism. Twenty-seven percent of the bureau's visitors live within a day's drive of the city, or 4.7 million visitors from its own region. In addition, thousands of visitors to San Francisco take day trips from the city throughout Northern California. Additional funding programs, such as trademarking and co-branding, initiated by the bureau complement the already significant economic impact.

Tourism goals for the city include working closely with the San Francisco International Airport to ensure the success of international routes; developing new tour and incentive programs from domestic and international flights; and maintaining and expanding San Francisco's image in the international marketplace, as well as its accessibility through its six overseas offices. The bureau also represents and sells San Francisco at trade shows and conducts targeted sales calls in established and emerging markets. Overall, the SFCVB has diversified its research and funding techniques, without losing sight of its mission—to bring visitors to San Francisco.

Conclusions

Even with its record for excellence and success in research, the bureau knows it must constantly strive to remain competitive. For example, it is actively entering the realm of electronic marketing—the direct e-mail marketing of its destination. In addition, the bureau will continue to consolidate the San Francisco brand through the trademark designation of images and phrases. Trademarks not only earn revenue through motivation to travel, but also through licensing fees. The bureau has realized that this type of internally generated funding helps cushion the impact of fiscal uncertainties in the visitor market.

The SFCVB understands that keeping a competitive edge in the tourism marketplace relies on the scope and content of its research efforts. The bureau asserts that the key to tourism marketing is to understand what motivates a tourist to travel and to visit a destination. Once this understanding is met, based on research, staff and training can be positioned to meet this motivational interest—whether based on culinary interests or psychological feelings of joy experienced when visiting San Francisco. The bureau takes great pride in knowing its customers and managing its advertising from start to finish.

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Part II

Funding

Visit Florida

Overview

In a single year, more than 70 million visitors to Florida generate nearly \$50 billion in retail sales and \$2.9 billion in state taxes, and they account for employment of more than 840,000 Floridians. The state has had to innovatively create organizations and agencies that market its amenities nationally and internationally to maintain and increase the volume of tourists.

The state's primary tourism marketing entity, Visit Florida, is a public-private partnership between the Florida Commission on Tourism and the state of Florida. It is the mission of the Florida Commission on Tourism, through Visit Florida, to increase the state's competitive edge through marketing, sales, product development, and visitor services. Created in 1996, Visit Florida promotes the state worldwide under the FLA USA brand.

Based on its long experience with tourism marketing, the state of Florida and Visit Florida offer a case study of funding tourism through a public-private partnership. The results of this collaboration are both a dependable source of tourism funding and the strengthening of the tourism industry statewide. This case study demonstrates that successful tourism funding must include a wide variety of public, private, and non-profit players, and partners both large and small, and can thrive on voluntary membership fees.

Context and History

During the 1970s, industry leaders and the Florida Division of Tourism endeavored to develop the state's tourism industry, despite lack of funding and coordination among various interests. At this time, there was a growing concern that the industry should play a greater role in funding its own tourism marketing. This concern led to initial discussions about forming a public-private partnership and the discussions continued through the 1980s. The government agency responsible for tourism at the time, the Division of Tourism, continued to return to the state legislature each year for funding. Because government monies for tourism would fluctuate annually, the industry had no dedicated source for responding to changes in the tourism industry or planning for the industry's future.

In the 1990s, Governor Lawton Chiles created the Florida Commission on Tourism, composed of 17 regions with a commissioner for each region. The commission's primary goal was to develop a state tourism marketing program. However, despite a common goal, each region tended to work autonomously, creating



Courtesy Visit Florida

an atmosphere in which lobbyists labored at cross-purposes. In sum, there was no “unified front,” an aspect required to effectively market the state’s tourism assets.

To fulfill its legislative mandate, the commission created the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation (FTIMC) in 1996, which today is named Visit Florida. The corporation’s primary funding vehicle is partnership fees—voluntary membership fees from which partners receive services from Visit Florida.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2002 and the U.S. recession helped create Florida’s highest unemployment rate since 1995, at 5.7 percent. About 55 percent of visitors fly into the state, accounting for a total of \$73.5 million from domestic and international visitors in 2000; therefore, the state was hit hard by the attacks. In response, the state used a \$2 million emergency fund—a funding best practice in itself—to address these challenges to the industry. In addition, Visit Florida received an extra \$20 million for tourism marketing in 2001 and raised an additional \$20 million in matching funds.



Courtesy Visit Florida

During the months following the attacks, Visit Florida spent its \$11 million budget in a marketing campaign to lure more in-state businesses and out-of-state visitors within driving distance. It also continued to maintain its presence at major media and tourism trade events. Visit Florida encouraged its 3,000 partners to offer discounts and promotions to draw cost-conscious vacationers. Also, the Florida Lottery, in cooperation with Visit Florida, launched a \$2 scratch-off game, Play FLA USA, with a top prize of \$10,000. The game offered chances to win tourism packages. Cooperating tourism destinations received exposure on all non-winning tickets by offering discounts at more than 300 hotels and attractions.

Organization

The responsibility for promoting and marketing the state's tourism rests with the Florida Commission on Tourism. The commission consists of three public-sector members: the governor, a state House of Representatives member, and a state senator. In addition, there are 28 private-sector members from the state's tourism industry representing various segments, including hospitality, attractions, parks and campgrounds, airlines, cruise lines, and rental car agencies, as well as the various state geographical regions. The Commission forms the core of Visit Florida's Board of Directors, which has additional industry representatives on its numerous committees.

Visit Florida's officers include a president and chief executive officer, senior vice president, vice president of sales, vice president of research, director of visitor services, vice president of finance, and director of communications.

Best Practice: Funding

Visit Florida receives a portion of its operating budget from state government, funded by a designated share (15.75 percent) of the state's \$2 per-day rental car surcharge. In 2000, that state allocation alone totaled \$21.6 million. However, the state also mandated that Visit Florida match public funding with private funds by June 30, 2001. Those private funds come from several sources, including direct investment by the industry partners, strategic alliances, cooperative business advertising venues, promotional media, and merchandising of the FLA USA brand. Because of industry enthusiasm for the partnership, that mandated matched funding was reached two-and-a-half years ahead of schedule, in early 1999.

In return for their financial support, partners receive several membership services. In the publicity arena, Visit Florida publishes an *Official Florida Vacation Guide* in which partners receive a free listing. The organization also publishes an *Official Florida Meeting Planner*, which is the state's most complete resource for the meetings market. Another product, the *Florida International Travel Planner*, is the state's official resource for international travel agents, tour operators, and wholesalers abroad. In addition, the *Great Getaways* guide focuses on lifestyle-based, in-state travel for Floridians. Research conducted for partners primarily via Visit Florida's Research Office includes visitor volume, demographics, psychographics, economic impacts, and other factors affecting Florida travel. Visit Florida partners have free access to these studies and reports.

Results

Because Visit Florida was created as a partnership, one primary measure of success can be found in the growing number of partners. Since its inception, the corporation has grown from 407 partners to more than 2,900. Partners, ranging in size from kayak and canoe rental firms to the Disney Corporation, are solicited at travel sales events and through Visit Florida representatives contacting local CVBs and chambers of commerce. In addition, the partnership has formed a number of strategic alliances with major companies. Revenues for Visit Florida grew from \$41.8 million in 1996 to \$65 million in 2000, allowing it to consistently match state funding.

Conclusions

Visit Florida's success can be attributed to the fact that it is essentially industry-driven and strives to obtain voluntary contributions from all member parties in the tourism industry, large and small. Many different sectors are made to feel they are important to the development of Florida tourism and instrumental in their own success. However, there are obstacles that the partnership has had to overcome on its way to success. For example, local political interests have been a challenge the corporation has had to address, as every region believes it has special needs that may not be met in Visit Florida's current marketing program. The challenge is especially evident when Visit Florida attempts to grant regional funds for tourism

marketing. Visit Florida continues to aggressively seek growth and development through the cultivation of new partners and dedicated funding sources.

This case illustrates issues the tourism industry should keep in mind when considering funding and marketing. According to Visit Florida, a tourism organization must remain open and politically active, meaning that it must be accountable to governmental and public scrutiny and, at the same time, target legislators and other officials as strategic allies and benefactors.

A dedicated funding source should remain a primary goal, Visit Florida claims, because tourism organizations can be severely restricted in achieving growth and expansion without such monies.

Visit Florida asserts that given the inherent nature of partnerships, the successful tourism organization must balance government and industry interests, integrating their disparate concerns and goals into effective tourism marketing programs. The leaders of an organization such as this must persuade partners to embrace a wider vision of what tourism can be in the state.

CHRONOLOGY

July 1996	The Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation, doing business as Visit Florida, begins operation as authorized by the state legislature.
August 1997	Visit Florida unveils the FLA USA brand. All Florida tourism marketing is conducted under this umbrella. The state's first official tourism Web site goes online. At the end of the first year of existence, Visit Florida has slightly more than 407 industry partners.
January 1999	Charged with a legislative mandate to match its public funding dollar-for-dollar with private-sector contributions by July 1, 2001, Visit Florida accomplishes this goal two-and-a-half years before deadline.
May 1999	American Express becomes Visit Florida's second strategic partner, joining the Florida Hotel and Motel Association, one of the organization's founding partners in 1996.
December 1999	Florida's official welcome centers, operated by Visit Florida, celebrate 50 years of continuous operation.
May 2001	Total number of partners now tops 2,900 statewide, representing tourism businesses of all sizes and locations throughout the state.
September 2001	Terrorist attacks devastate tourism. Visit Florida is authorized to tap its \$2 million economic risk-advertising fund to provide immediate additional marketing resources for the industry.
December 2001	State legislature approves \$20 million additional allocation for tourism advertising. Visit Florida lines up cooperative advertising partners throughout Florida to potentially double that outlay.

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6

California Division of Tourism (CalTour)

Overview

The California Division of Tourism (CalTour), an office of the California Technology, Trade, and Commerce Agency, promotes travel to and within California and works with the state's travel industry to maintain the state as a primary destination for travelers. CalTour also provides important tourism information and services to the state's travel trade and news media. However, it is the division's method of funding these activities that make it one of tourism's best practices.

CalTour develops California's annual marketing plan that is reviewed and approved by the California Tourism Commission, composed of tourism industry professionals. Several industry committees advise CalTour on the formulation and execution of the plan, including those concerning advertising and promotion, international and domestic travel trade, publicity, rural marketing, and multicultural tourism.

Economic and market research produced by CalTour helps California companies and destinations understand the changes that occur in the tourism marketplace and better anticipate these changes in their economic development and marketing programs. CalTour works closely with other offices in the California Technology, Trade, and Commerce Agency, as well as other state agencies, in creating and retaining tourism-related economic development programs.

To promote California, CalTour utilizes various tools, including national and international advertising, state-organized travel trade sales missions, familiarization (FAM) tours, and heightened California presence at major travel trade shows. It has representatives in Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Mexico. It also funds cooperative marketing campaigns and promotions, publicity, press trips and media relations, production of California visitor guides, maps, travel trade guides, regional brochures, toll-free visitor information, and programs designed to increase visitation to lesser-known California destinations.

Context and History

The Division of Tourism (CalTour) began as the Office of Tourism, an office of the governor, during the 1970s and has continued to evolve. However, as was the case with many states, California's tourism marketing efforts were hampered by a lack of a permanent funding source. Numerous attempts to convince the state



Courtesy CalTour

legislature to allocate money for a competitive state tourism program were made by travel businesses and associations over the years. During former Governor Jerry Brown's administration, the state tourism program was actually eliminated, and letters from people who wrote to California for travel information were returned unanswered for a short time.

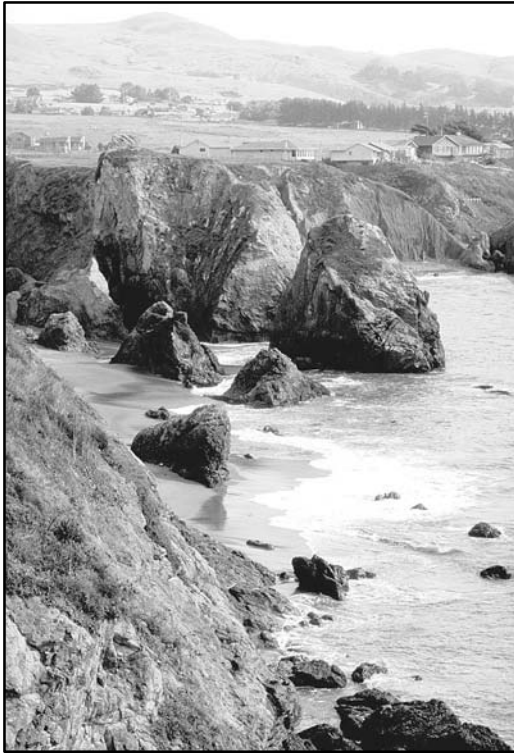
During the 1980s and 1990s, the state tourism budget became a political "football," and was increased or cut by the legislative leadership as a means to gain leverage with the governor on programs the legislature favored.

In 1993, California's tourism budget was stabilized, and the legislature has consistently funded it at \$7.3 million since then. During this time, an industry-influenced marketing program was implemented, and the consistently funded program resulted in a recovery of travel and tourism in the state.

Also in 1993, then-Governor Pete Wilson established a body of 40 travel industry professionals to resolve the funding dilemma. He directed a task force to find a new, non-tax solution to financing statewide tourism marketing. Called the Governor's Task Force on Tourism Funding, this group studied the problem, how other states finance tourism promotion, and various inventive solutions. They concluded that the best model for California was found in the state's agricultural industry, which utilizes mandatory self-assessment of industry partners to finance agricultural marketing efforts.

Organization

CalTour and the California Trade and Tourism Commission are managed in tandem by the California Technology, Trade, and Commerce Agency; however, the



Courtesy CalTour

commission is a private, non-profit corporation, separate from state government and having a board of directors composed of travel industry professionals. The California Trade and Tourism Commission consists of 37 members from four sectors: accommodations, restaurants and retail, attractions and recreation, and transportation and travel services. Twenty-four members were elected by travel industry vote during the 1997 referendum and 12 were appointed by the governor to represent each of the 12 tourism regions in the state.

The secretary of the Technology, Trade, and Commerce Agency chairs CalTour. An industry-elected member serves as vice chair. All members of the commission (other than the secretary of Technology, Trade, and Commerce) must be travel industry professionals. The executive

director of CalTour receives policy direction from the California Travel and Tourism Commission and day-to-day administrative and financial direction from the secretary of the California Technology, Trade, and Commerce Agency.

Best Practice: Funding

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the tourism industry in California grew increasingly frustrated that, despite contributing \$3.5 billion to state and local governments, state tourism marketing and promotion remained underfunded. The industry also realized that inconsistent and non-competitive allocations had resulted in ineffective tourism marketing. In addition, the industry realized the futility of trying to convince a highly politicized process to allocate over \$30 million needed annually to stay competitive. Tourism representatives determined that if California were to remain competitive in promoting itself, then the industry would have to fund and manage a statewide tourism marketing program.

In the past, numerous funding proposals arose. In 1990, former Assemblywoman Maxine Waters proposed a \$2 per room hotel tax, and the state legislative assembly proposed a statewide tourism tax. The \$2 per room hotel tax was opposed by the state hotel industry as being excessive and directed against one industry segment for the benefit of all tourism industry segments. Hotel and motel

interests also believed that the proposed tax was redundant to the Transient Occupancy Tax, a regressive tax against the least expensive accommodations and not capable of being dedicated to tourism promotion. The proposal did not pass. The statewide tourism tax was broadly opposed by all segments of the tourism industry as being excessive and unusable for tourism promotion. Because the California Tourism Marketing Act was under consideration at this time, the statewide tax was not brought forward. In the end, mandatory financial self-assessment from industry players was the only funding methodology supported by the travel industry, the legislature, and the governor.

The California Tourism Marketing Act, adopted in 1995, authorized a referendum of California businesses that benefit from tourism spending. The referendum passed in October 1997, establishing the California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC) and a statewide marketing fund derived from mandatory assessments.

Passage of the referendum made California the first state in the nation to utilize industry-elected assessments to partially fund tourism marketing activities. The measure passed by a 69 percent to 31 percent margin within the state's \$58 billion tourism industry. The new money generated by the assessment brought California's total yearly marketing budget to approximately \$12 million, elevating the state's tourism budget from 24th to 12th in the nation.

Over the past five years, these additional funds, managed by the California Travel and Tourism Commission, substantially increased California's promotional presence in international markets; increased promotional support to rural areas; stimulated retail sales by travelers; and met the growing demand for informational materials to people planning California vacations.

The rate of assessment, the same for large and small businesses, is \$450 per \$1 million of tourism revenue, accounting for 90 cents for each \$2,000 in travel-generated sales. Businesses can also pay a maximum \$250,000 assessment if they do not want to disclose revenues. Only business locations that benefit directly from travel and tourism are subject to assessment, but all businesses receiving a Tourism Assessment Form are required to complete and return it to determine whether they must pay an assessment fee for the current year. The Tourism Marketing Act states that businesses may pass fees along to consumers. Specific exemptions include the following:

- Public bodies, defined as a public entity or a corporation where a majority of the corporation's board of directors is appointed by a public official or public entity, or serves on the corporation's board of directors by virtue of being elected to public office, or both.
- Business locations not in an industry segment, including accommodations, restaurants and retail, attractions and recreation, and transportation and travel services.
- Business locations with California gross receipts, less returns and allowances, of less than \$1 million from sales in California.
- Business locations where less than 8 percent of the California gross receipts for the business is "travel and tourism revenue." Travel and tourism revenue is

defined as gross receipts derived from expenditures to and/or within California by people who travel at least 50 miles from home, for purposes other than commuting for work or school; or have an overnight accommodation as part of the travel, regardless of the distance or purpose traveled.

- The business is a travel agency or tour operator that receives less than 20 percent of its California gross receipts from travel and tourism.
- The business is a regular route intrastate and interstate bus service, which does not derive any revenue from a bus service that requires authority from a certificate of public convenience and necessity, or a permit to operate as a charter-party carrier of passengers.
- The calculations on the Tourism Assessment Form show that the travel and tourism assessment would be less than \$50 for the business location.

CalTour has also been successful in its cooperative advertising programs. By leveraging the purchasing power of the state's \$7.3 million tourism budget, CalTour raised approximately \$15 million in additional cooperative partner funds in 1998 to globally promote travel to California. Cooperative funding was developed from private and other governmental sources in every major category of CalTour's program. However, the program still faces challenges. For example, the California legislature votes every two years to maintain the program and to keep the Tourism and Travel Commission intact, so the division and its partners must regularly lobby to sustain operations.

Results

The Tourism Marketing Act has been deemed fair and equitable throughout the state because all businesses pay the same assessment per \$1 million in revenue. All regions of the state and all business categories are represented on the commission. Industry categories, such as accommodations, elect their own commissioners relative to their financial contribution. In addition, marketing plan development requires public input and review from tourism and non-tourism parties. Thus, each business has the opportunity to directly influence how it feels statewide tourism marketing plans should be structured.

Based on this funding, CalTour maintains an active research program, including California travel impacts by county, program evaluation research, domestic and international market research, a quarterly newsletter, and seasonal forecast. Special marketing strategies include the production of an IMAX film, "The California Experience." IMAX films are seen in specially designed theaters with massive motion picture screens providing very realistic impressions of scenery and motion. These theaters are primarily located in museums around the world. One of the most famous is the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

Conclusions

California travel industry leaders support this program because they saw self-assessment as the fairest solution to the challenge of tourism funding, reasoning

CHRONOLOGY

May 1964	The Office of Tourism and Visitors Services is created by the California State Legislature (Assembly Bill 27).
August 1977	Creation of the Office of Visitor Services through enactment of the Holmdahl-Rains-Lockyer Economic Development Act (Senate Bill 27).
March 1978	Office of Visitor Services is re-established by Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., who appoints Rick Lawrence as director.
January 1981	Office of Visitor Services officially changes name to Office of Tourism.
November 1983	Governor George Deukmejian convenes first Governor's Conference on Tourism.
July 1984	California Tourism Policy Act (Senate Bill 1061) is passed by state legislature. Act appropriates \$5 million to fund tourism marketing and advertising campaign.
March 1985	The first tourism advertising campaign in California's history is launched.
July 1988	Funding for Office of Tourism is eliminated by state legislature.
September 1988	Partial funding (\$5.5 million) for Office of Tourism is restored and operations resume.
February 1993	Governor Pete Wilson issues Executive Order #W-41-93 creating The Governor's Task Force on Tourism Funding for the purpose of "investigating various tourism funding methods and making policy recommendations regarding a new, non-tax method of providing stable financing for statewide tourism promotion."
November 1993	The Governor's Task Force on Tourism Funding Report delivered to Governor Wilson.
January 1996	California Tourism Marketing Act (Senate Bill 256) becomes law. The CTMA allows California businesses that benefit from tourism to determine if they wish to cooperatively finance and take control of statewide tourism marketing.
October 1997	In a statewide referendum, the California Tourism Marketing Act is approved by businesses that benefit from travel and tourism, by a 69 percent to 31 percent margin.
December 1997	The California Travel and Tourism Commission (CTTC), a private, non-profit corporation designed to market California as a travel destination, is created.
January 1998	First meeting of newly created CTTC.
October 2001	California Tourism Marketing Act renewed in a vote of 84 percent to 16 percent by businesses that benefit from travel and tourism.

that all businesses benefiting from statewide tourism marketing should help finance it. They also realized that if the state's travel industry did not take control of financing and management of tourism marketing, state government eventually might have eliminated the state tourism program or imposed a tax upon travel and tourism businesses to fund it. That would probably have resulted in excessive taxation with no guarantee that the money would be dedicated to tourism marketing.

In sum, the California Tourism Marketing Act of 1995 resulted in the establishment of a more stable funding source, which was then used to increase international marketing and expand tourism staff. Because of this law, California now has a unified voice for state tourism: travel-related businesses pay into the assessment fund, and in return assist in guiding and approving state tourism marketing and development plans.

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Part III

Professional Development

International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus

Overview

The International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus (IACVB) serves more than 1,200 members of approximately 500 destination management organizations in 30 countries, making IACVB the world's largest such organization. Its mission is to enhance the professionalism, effectiveness, and image of destination management organizations worldwide. The IACVB's vision is to create an inclusive, accessible, and responsive organization for all tourism professionals in the world.

Context and History

The IACVB was founded in 1914 as the International Association of Convention Bureaus (IACB) to promote professional practices in the solicitation and servicing of meetings, conventions, and tourism. The original charter was formed that year in Detroit, Michigan, to share information on convention meetings and automobile shows. Recognizing the growing importance of tourism in convention and visitors bureau operations, IACB officially added a "V" to its name in 1974.

As the organization continued to grow, its mission expanded to include professional development and certification. Today, the IACVB provides educational resources and networking opportunities to its members, as well as information to the convention and visitors bureau industry and to the public.

Helping members become more successful in their jobs, these resources and opportunities include quality education and professional certification, industry research and information, public relations and branding, leadership and peer networking opportunities, and meetings and conferences with industry vendors and service providers. Many of these programs are designed exclusively for CVBs. Membership fees are based on each bureau's annual operating budget.

Membership benefits include:

- Regular meetings focused on areas of professional expertise or "shirtsleeve tracks."
- E-mail discussion lists based on the "shirtsleeves tracks."



Courtesy IACVB

- Alerts for Requests for Proposals (RFPs).
- Access to MINT (Meeting Information Network), the world's largest convention industry database with profiles of more than 21,000 association and corporate meetings.
- A destination showcase that features face-to-face meetings with association and corporate professionals who come with RFP's or bid proposals.
- A membership directory.
- IACVB E-News, a weekly e-mail effort that keeps members informed of industry news, programs, and activities.
- Several membership programs for alliance and business partners.

Organization

The IACVB has a governing six-member executive committee, comprising a chair, chair-elect, treasurer, and secretary, immediate past chair, and president and chief executive officer. The board also has 19 directors. The IACVB currently has 37 staff positions, ranging from president and chief executive officer to research and communications coordinator.

Best Practice: Professional Development

The IACVB's professional development program began over 80 years ago and has evolved to include tourism. The organization offers many services to its members.



Courtesy IACVB

For example, the Professional Development Institute is an educational conference annually offering programming and networking opportunities for all professional staff of CVB or tourist boards. General sessions include broad topics and in-depth breakout discussions. Interactive “shirtsleeves tracks” are offered each day to foster exchange of ideas and information among colleagues.

The IACVB conceived its overall educational program in four steps, beginning with an introductory course on the convention and visitors bureau industry. This course, *Fundamentals of Destination Management*, provides information on CVBs, the practice of destination management, and IACVB membership benefit opportunities.

The second step, the Professional in Destination Management (PDM) program, is part of the IACVB’s commitment to the continuing education of its members. The IACVB enhanced its certificate program to help professional staff obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to become more effective and efficient destination leaders and CVB managers. The program’s required courses cover the fundamentals of management as well as other skills important to each member’s success. By taking courses from a variety of specialty areas—marketing to finance—participants can broaden their knowledge and hone their skills as CVB professionals. IACVB members must complete four required classes and acquire 36 additional credits during a five-year period to receive a certificate.

The third step, the Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME), is recognized by the industry as its highest educational achievement. This designation is designed for veteran CVB executives seeking advanced education courses, and it is earned by completing three interrelated core courses, two elective courses, and a final examination. By taking two additional elective courses, a person with CDME designation can become a Fellow in Certified Destination Management Executive (FCDME). This intensive program was developed in conjunction with the University of Calgary (Canada) World Tourism Education and Research Center and Purdue University.

To date, the IACVB has graduated 59 CDMEs and 14 FCDMEs (included in the total of 59 CDMEs). In 2002, the organization will have about 10 new CDME graduates and 3 FCDME graduates.

The fourth step, planned for the near future, is a master's degree in Destination Management program that will offer advanced and customized graduate education for senior CVB executives.

Other educational opportunities include the IACVB Sales Academy, which emphasizes destination selling. The two-day program addresses issues ranging from prospecting and initial contact to follow-up. It is designed for people with two years or less of experience in every area of destination sales: convention, tourism, membership, services, and communications.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Forum enables CVB CEOs and presidents to meet and discuss relevant and innovative issues frankly and openly, and features in-depth discussions of management and leadership issues with direct application to a CEO's day-to-day responsibilities. Together, they learn about important issues facing the global tourism industry.

Finally, the previously mentioned interactive learning shirtsleeves meetings are a professional development program in which members choose tracks based on their primary job responsibility or professional expertise. During these meetings, members convene with others in their professional area, share ideas, and review programs that may or may not have worked or discuss how to handle specific situations. The IACVB offers the following tracks: chief executive officer, communications, convention bureau services, convention marketing, finance and administration, membership, research, satellite operations, technology, and tourism marketing.

Results

The IACVB cites many elements of success in its professional development program. First, it strives to ensure that the content for certification matches bureau executives' needs and expectations for the benefit of their own CVBs. Second, the IACVB believes its formal certificate programs provide informal forums for open discussions regarding the state of the CVB industry. Finally, the IACVB enjoys considerable involvement from its members, and in turn receives feedback that it uses to improve its professional development efforts. This feedback is critical to offering instruction to a multifaceted industry: the program must be broad, yet

cover topic areas in sufficient depth. The IACVB has succeeded in this difficult balancing act.

Because it is based primarily on membership and participation, the IACVB closely monitors its registration at conferences, forums, and courses. Evaluation is a key to improving the quality of its professional development products, including both guest speakers and salient topics. The IACVB asserts that quality is paramount because registration fees support the professional development program itself.

The IACVB also would like to expand its delivery of professional development via online education. Internet-based education would meet the organization's goal of expanding members' choices regarding professional development training. The option of online education would possibly increase registration in the bureau's programs and decrease time and travel costs for members without sacrificing the quality of the training. The bureau is actively cultivating relationships with academic and research institutions having hospitality and tourism programs to enhance its overall educational effort. This relationship will strengthen the relationship between university departments that train CVB workers as well as keep CVBs up-to-date on current developments in destination management research.

Conclusions

As the movement toward certification and professional designation has grown, the CVB industry now recognizes the importance of tourism professionals to hold separate but related skills. Goals for the IACVB's professional development program include the expansion of certification to a more discipline-specific level, e.g., marketing, in reference to the certification of a tourism or marketing professional.

Outside its professional development program, the IACVB already has accomplished many of the organizational objectives specified in its strategic plan. Concerning education, it continues to aspire to be the premier source for

CHRONOLOGY

- 1914 The International Association of Convention Bureaus (IACB) is founded by convention secretaries, as they were called at the time, to share information about meetings they host and to promote professional practices in the industry.
- 1950 "On Registration Day," a pamphlet on how to organize and manage a registration desk is published by IACB.
- 1974 Recognizing the growing importance of tourism in CVB operations, the IACB officially adds a "V" to its name to become the International Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus.
- 1993 The IACVB establishes a professional designation for CVB executives, the Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME).
- 1994 The IACVB hires its own professional staff and moves to Washington, D.C.
- 1996 The IACVB awards the first CDME professional designations.

destination marketing education and training worldwide. In performance measures, it strives to be *the* global source for industry standardization and statistics. In branding, it desires to establish a recognizable brand for products and services offered by destination management organizations around the world.

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Part IV

Information Dissemination

Vienna (Austria) University of Economics and Business Administration Institute of Tourism and Leisure Studies

Overview

The Tourism Management Information System (TourMIS) is a decision-support system that delivers tourism market research and information via the Internet. Currently housed and managed at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration's Institute of Tourism and Leisure Studies, TourMIS had as its original impetus the Austrian Ministry of Finance's requirement to justify spending on tourism marketing and development.

TourMIS supplies current tourism statistics for market research to regional tourism organizations in Austria, such as the Austrian National Tourist Office and Austrian provincial tourist offices, as well as international tourism organizations, such as the European Travel Commission and European Cities Tourism.

The TourMIS server is located at the Institute of Tourism and Leisure Studies at the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. The Austrian National Tourism Office and the European Travel Commission helped develop the system. A network of various partners from the Austrian and international tourism industries maintains the data.

Context and History

During the past two decades, processing the growing volume of tourism data has become a major challenge for tourism researchers. To manage this information, the industry has had to create databases that provide users with efficient access to all the opportunities for decision-making and market forecasting that computer technology can offer. In addition, this information must be accessible by untrained personnel using simple-to-operate, user-friendly functions.

Begun in 1984 as a personal-computer-aided decision-support system, TourMIS was developed by the Austrian Society of Applied Research in Tourism (ASART) and the Institute of Tourism and Leisure Studies. The project reached fruition with the help of the Austrian National Tourism Office's Market Research Department. Dr. Karl W. Wöber was responsible for the conceptual development

of the program, programming, and implementation of the system. The TourMIS software allows for the rapid retrieval of data and the production of printouts of tables and graphs.

As a non-profit organization with the goal of supporting Austria's tourism economy, the Austrian National Tourism Office decided to open the system to all branch offices in 1991. In consideration of the existing hardware and software resources, a complete copy of TourMIS was installed in seven Austrian state capitals. Maintenance of the database was organized by sending a set of diskettes every month to all participating offices.

However, the data monitored by the regional and city tourist offices were completely different from the National Tourism Office's focus. For example, the evaluation of main competitors and the resulting market volume and market share calculations differed significantly. As further enhancements to the database system became necessary, the maintenance of individual databases became increasingly complex and cost intensive. Furthermore, the regional organizations, with limited resources to purchase powerful computer hardware and software, could not fully utilize all decision-support tools offered by TourMIS.

Organization

The success of TourMIS has encouraged continual updates to the system. Today, four companies run TourMIS in a local network, providing access to more than 50 domestic and international users of the database. Dr. Wöber continues to manage the system.

Best Practice: Information Dissemination

Originally, TourMIS was designed as a single-use system consisting of three components: (1) a retrieval system for storage and access to key marketing variables by a user-friendly interface; (2) several procedures for basic statistical operations (divided into formulation and calculation functions); and (3) a methods and models interface containing several planning and decision-making tools such as portfolio presentation, analytic hierarchy processing, and budget optimization.

TourMIS stores international travel data, the results of travel and guest surveys, and selected economic indicators for countries of origin. TourMIS distinguishes between two different storage formats: (1) data from regular statistical publications providing tourism volume figures, such as overnight and capacity studies, stored in time-series format; and (2) data from guest or travel surveys stored in the original disaggregated data format, allowing for full flexibility in response to user queries.

Untrained operators can use TourMIS to calculate ratios such as duration of stay, occupancy, market volume, market share, and travel volume. Although tourism experts provide the formulas, simply pressing a button carries out the actual calculations. The system also generates alternative possibilities for the calculations.

In addition, an optimization tool is available for major decision-making processes such as budgeting. Optimization tasks can be approached using marginal analysis or dynamic programming. The Austrian National Tourism Office uses

this instrument when dividing up its annual advertising budget between its branch offices and tourism-generating countries.

An important objective of the TourMIS project is to gather and analyze information on user behavior under different technical, organizational, or economic conditions. Therefore, the marketing information system has built-in statistical-usage tracking applications for detailed behavior studies. A database stores historical case-based information about the uses of TourMIS, including date and time of access, a user's path through hypermedia, employed type of Web browser, and standard identification number.

TourMIS works in conjunction with various tools and techniques for processing the data into basic marketing actions. Statistical operations range from simple (addition and subtraction) to sophisticated multivariate techniques (factor analysis and non-linear parameter estimations). Report generation functions include adding, taking ratios, making comparisons, plotting relationships, and identifying exceptional cases.

Untrained tourism managers can use the more sophisticated applications in TourMIS by downloading the appropriate software tools via standard file-transfer program protocols. With the downloaded data, a user can calculate all required information, such as market volume and growth rate, absolute and relative market shares, and guest-mix ratios of tourism-generating countries. Although tourism experts and computer scientists provide the formulas used for calculation, the actual calculations are carried out individually depending on the user's interest and data.

The data are maintained by the Institute of Tourism and Leisure Studies to ensure that different sources with different survey methods deliver comparable data. The institute carefully rectifies distorted and incomplete data, and all data are updated annually. Time-series data are recorded monthly. Maintenance of demographic data is carried out as soon as the data have been published.

Results

In 1993, the Austrian National Tourism Office decided to transfer TourMIS to an online distributed marketing information system. Because branch offices were located all over Austria, different forms of Web network facilities were evaluated. Finally, the organization decided in favor of the Internet, a distribution channel offering easy access to large quantities of information by browsers and file transfer protocols. This decision was strongly supported by the institute's survey of 61 European city tourism offices. In 1995, from all interviewed tourism managers, 53 percent had Internet access and 40 percent had plans to install Internet software. The popularity of the Internet as an information delivery system lies in most managers' familiarity with finding other information available on the Web, compatibility with different hardware and software conditions, and advanced graphical capabilities.

As of 2000, approximately 26,000 inquires were answered by TourMIS and the system currently answers an average of 3,000 inquires per month.

Currently, the program provides access to more than 10,000 time series and results of 25 European guest and travel surveys, representing more than 40,000

interviews. Depending on the data and hardware conditions, inquiries are processed in two to ten seconds.

Conclusions

TourMIS has been successful primarily because of its homogenization of tourism statistics, definitions, and methods, making it stand apart from among similar systems. This format is particularly useful when comparing different geographic layers of tourism data from country or region to the city level. Standardization is the key to success of TourMIS and is required for a database of this size with a large number of users. However, as might be expected, there are significant political issues surrounding the use of the tourism data. For example, some of the original sponsors of the program were reluctant to share TourMIS with non-Austrian users around the world to protect their copyright on the program. At other times, it was debated whether the information should be provided for free. However, the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration has been democratic about how many people have access to and use the system. Because of these issues, adaptability of TourMIS by other tourism organizations might be difficult without strong government support and regional cooperation and coordination.

In sum, TourMIS is an innovative best practice in information dissemination because it is evolutionary, like the tourism system itself. The Institute of Tourism and Leisure Studies is currently attempting to integrate more efficient and effective reporting figures into the system's functions. It wants to build a system that users will feel even more comfortable using and that can easily be converted into an educational tool for students and the public, in addition to being a research tool.

The most important value of TourMIS is the high level of human-computer interaction achieved during a decision-making process and the objective to support users through a better understanding and communication of decisions.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1984 MIS (Management Information System) is initiated by Austrian Tourism Office and database is installed in a host system at the Scientific Computer Center at the University of Vienna.
- 1990 Dr. Karl W. Wöber of the university's Tourism and Leisure Studies Institute becomes project director.
- 1991 The Austrian regional tourist boards establish a project consortium and change the name to TourMIS (Tourism Marketing Information System).
- 1997 The project consortium led by the Austrian National Tourism Office decides to move TourMIS to the Internet.
- 1999 The Austrian National Tourism Office opens system to the public, and Federation of European Cities Tourist Offices (ECT) begins using TourMIS as a platform to exchange tourism statistics.
- 2000 Some 26,000 inquiries are answered by TourMIS.
- 2002 TourMIS answers an average of 3,000 inquiries per month.

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Part V

Advocacy

Lee Island Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau

Overview

The Lee Island Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau is located in southwestern Florida and includes the Lee County communities of Sanibel and Captiva Islands, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, North Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Bonita Springs and Estero, Pine Island and Boca Grande, and Lehigh Acres. The bureau excels in many areas of advocacy, including forums and events that not only promote the bureau but also the entire industry. The Lee Island Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau works with tourism industry partners to increase visitation to this part of Florida. It does so with programs that use all available marketing disciplines in an integrated fashion, including advertising, public relations, promotions, sales, visitor services, research, and product development and preservation. The bureau seeks to differentiate the Lee Island Coast from other Florida destinations by:

- Positioning this stretch of coast as Florida's only tropical vacation, creating advertising that focuses on the area's tropical, natural, and upscale qualities.
- Scheduling advertising to stimulate summer and fall business with an emphasis on in-state visitation.
- Developing additional print ads within existing campaigns.

Context and History

In 1982, the Lee County Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution establishing and appointing the members of the Lee County Tourist Development Council. At this time, a 2 percent tourist tax was levied throughout Lee County for advertising the county. An additional penny was added in 1988. This council oversees the tourism tax fund and provides direction on programs and expenditures of the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau.

The Lee Island Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau was created in 1986, with the mission of increasing tourism in the off-season and raising awareness about Lee County as a vacation destination.

Organization

The Lee County Tourism Development Council (TDC) directs the VCB. The TDC is a nine-member organization appointed as an advisory committee to the Board of



Courtesy Lee Island Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau

County Commissioners. The TDC oversees the entire tourism and development fund, provides direction on programs and budgets, and reviews quarterly expenditures of the Visitor and Convention Bureau. In addition, the TDC-appointed seats are composed of three elected officials, three representatives from accommodations collecting the tourism tax, and three repre-

sentatives from tourism-related industries as directed by Florida Statute 125.0104. The TDC is chaired by a county commissioner who rotates each year.

The TDC and the bureau are funded by a 3 percent tourist tax collected on accommodations rented for less than six months. Two percent comes from a bed tax to promote tourism and a third penny goes to beach and shoreline management. The funding is allocated in the following manner: 53.6 percent for VCB operations and promotions, 33 percent for beach and shoreline related improvements, and 13.4 percent for debt service payment on the Lee County Sports Complex and promotion for non-profit attractions. The bureau has an annual total budget of \$6.7 million, with \$3 million allocated for advertising.

From 1990 to 2001, tourist tax collections grew by over 60 percent. During 1990, \$6,231,494 were collected versus \$12,144,150 in 2001. Also in 1990, the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau established the Tourism Economic Emergency Fund by setting aside \$3 million for economic downturns that may occur as a result of various externally driven problems. The reserve may be used for emergency marketing or a communications program.

Best Practice: Advocacy

The Lee Island Visitor and Convention Bureau annually holds several forums to update the tourism industry on current visitor research and to remind government and business leaders of the importance of the industry.

The most important of these forums is the VCB's monthly Tourism Development Council meeting at which tourism data and information are released to the news media. A printed transcript of the meeting, called the "Tourism Development Council Report to the Industry," is distributed to VCB's 700 partners, including tourism-related business and non-profit organizations, the first Friday of the month after the meeting. Recent topics have included the state of local air



Courtesy Lee Island Coast Visitor and Convention Bureau

transportation after the September 11 terrorist attacks, the condition of the local shoreline, and baseline data regarding tourism in the region. The VCB also holds occasional meetings on such topics as events marketing and beach and shore capital improvements.

The bureau also sponsors a monthly marketing meeting

with a core group of about 40 local hoteliers. This session is used to plan sales missions and share sales research. The bureau developed this meeting to instill a sense of teamwork among hoteliers, to combine marketing efforts, and to reduce redundancy in advertising efforts. For example, the group shares information on occupancy, advance bookings, and payment from tour operators.

In the two years since the group was formed, it has nurtured strong relationships among industry members, making the Lee Island County destination stronger. Thus, the bureau has been responsible for initiating lines of communication among industry players that previously did not exist. Such ties serve to underscore the point that, from a destination marketing perspective, the most important issue is to get people to the destination without confusing marketing signals from various organizations. In this way, the bureau serves as an advocate not only to residents and public officials, but also within the regional tourism industry itself.

The bureau's advocacy efforts also include a "tourism minute" feature on local radio newscasts showcasing a new aspect of area travel and tourism.

In addition, the bureau sponsors two annual meetings; one in May during National Tourism Week and one in October in which sales, marketing, and advertising efforts for the coming year are unveiled to the public and partners.

One distinctive program from the bureau is called "Guests First." Created in 1998 to ensure that employees make a difference when interacting with visitors to the Lee Island Coast, this program features workshops geared to frontline staff as well as management personnel and offers hands-on training in customer service techniques. The focus is not only countywide but also regional to reach diverse businesses as well as hospitality members. The program covers such topics as body language, listening, working with international visitors, communication skills, and problem solving. Partners in the project include chambers of commerce, area businesses, and government and other industry partners as community hosts. As of 2002, 11,000 people have attended the program. Graduates receive a Certificate of Completion and optional continuing education credits. Follow-up with

workshop attendees and employers is done through information updates on an as-needed basis.

Finally, the bureau offers the Elaine McLaughlin Outstanding Hospitality Service Awards (the “E” Awards) as a method of recognition and advocacy *within* the tourism industry. The E Awards acknowledge excellence in hospitality through service and dedication, honoring employees who provide superior customer satisfaction in the categories of attractions, hotels and motels, restaurants, transportation, allied partners, and an Honor of Distinction winner chosen annually as the best overall representative of outstanding service each year. Nomination forms are distributed each year so that anyone can nominate an employee who positively affects a visitor’s experience by providing extraordinary service. Nominees are accepted through April, with winners announced in May at the annual Visitor and Convention Bureau meeting.

The bureau also uses its Web sites to promote the industry. In 1996, the bureau launched a Web site (www.leeislandcoast.com) as a means for accessing destination information. This allowed the VCB to reduce fulfillment costs (requests for information about the destination by potential tourists) by 40 percent. In 2001, a second site, www.leevcb.com, was created to provide statistical information, tourist tax collection information, news releases, and job opportunity listings to local industry partners.

A year later, two additional sites were created. One site (www.thegreatcalusa-blueway.com) promotes a newly developed kayak trail in Lee County, which receives TDC funding. The other (www.leevisitorservices.com) provides information regarding services the bureau offers at the Southwest Florida International Airport.

Results

The Lee Island Visitor and Convention Bureau cites many keys to its success. First, it believes all CVBs not only need effective marketing to be successful, but also need a community-targeted program of education and advocacy about tourism. A bureau must create a constituency that regularly discusses and debates tourism.

Second, the bureau sees information technology as instrumental to its success; it currently has two main Web sites. One is for the local tourism industry, addressing such issues as the shortage of workers for hotels and resorts and offering a job line. The other markets the destination to potential tourists.

Third, the bureau feels strongly about customer service and has worked hard to ensure that guests are treated well and receive accurate information.

Despite these successes, the bureau must contend with challenges. One is its own name: Lee Island Coast. This appellation can sometimes confuse potential visitors and industry partners because of the area’s many destinations, ranging from Sanibel Island to Fort Myers. However, the bureau is working hard to market the Lee Island Coast as a tourism region with many interesting attractions and destinations.

Another challenge for the Lee Island Coast is the destination itself. An abundance of natural, recreational, and cultural amenities can generate

CHRONOLOGY

- 1982 The Lee County Board of County Commissioners adopts a resolution establishing and appointing the members of the Lee County Tourist Development Council.
- 1982 A 2 percent tourist tax is levied throughout Lee County to be used for promoting and advertising Lee County.
- 1984-Present The Advertising Partnerships and Strategic Alliances cooperative program offers more than 500 separate marketing opportunities for hotel and attraction partners.
- March 1988 An additional 1 percent tourist tax is levied to be used for the beach and shoreline capital improvement program.
- 1990-2001 Tourist tax collection grows by more than 60 percent. During 1990, \$6,231,494 were collected versus \$12,144,150 in 2001.
- 1990 The Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau establishes the Tourism Economic Emergency Fund by setting aside \$3 million for economic downturns that may occur as a result of any number of externally driven problems.
- 1990 Visitors Services at the Southwest Florida International Airport is created to assist and greet visitors. Over 100 tourism ambassadors participating in this program assist passengers from booths located in the airport's concourses. Many ambassadors are multilingual.
- 1991 The Visitors Assistance Program is created to offer special assistance to domestic or international vacationers and their families during a personal or public crisis.
- 1996 The Web site, www.leeislandcoast.com, debuts and becomes a primary means of accessing destination information, which allows the CVB to reduce fulfillment costs by 40 percent.
- 1997 The Lee County Superior Small Lodging program is developed to certify and enhance the image of small hotels by building a unified brand. This program is marketed by the bureau to meet customer demand for a smaller and intimate hotel experience.
- 1998 The Guests First program offers customer service workshops to front-line, support, and management personnel in the hospitality and business industries.
- 2001 A second web site, www.leevcb.com, is created providing statistical information, tourist tax collection information, news releases, and job opportunity listings to local industry partners.
- 2002 Two additional web sites are created. One site, www.thegreatcalusablueway.com, promotes a newly developed kayak trail in Lee County, which receives TDC funding. The other, www.leevisitorservices.com, provides information regarding miscellaneous services the VCB offers at the Southwest Florida International airport.

complacency. The staff constantly strives for creativity and innovation to improve the bureau and the overall destination.

Conclusions

The Lee Island County Visitor and Convention Bureau takes pride in educating the public about tourism, and in bringing education to the industry itself through information, workshops, Web sites, and forums. In turn, the industry does a better job in promoting tourism for Lee County. Many of the inquiries from other local and national CVBs to the Lee Island County VCB do not regard sales and marketing, but rather programs in other areas such as advocacy, information dissemination, and professional development. This trend not only shows that the bureau is succeeding in these areas, but also that the industry as a whole is hungry for appropriate information.

Among the lessons learned from the bureau are how to: (1) present tourism data to government and industry leaders; (2) communicate this information in a timely and efficient manner; (3) reward and reinforce excellence in customer service; and (4) instill an ethic of teamwork among local industry players. These elements add up to a best practice case study in advocacy and regional tourism development. The bureau continues to grow and move toward a model for sustainable community tourism along Florida's Lee Island Coast.

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Oregon Tourism Commission

Overview

Oregon's tourism industry is growing at a rapid pace. In 2000, an estimated \$5.9 billion were generated in the state by visitor expenditures, which represented an average increase of 6 percent per year since 1991. The Oregon Tourism Commission, the state agency responsible for tourism marketing and development, has done a remarkable job managing this growth. The commission is a best practice selection because of its efforts to educate legislators and the public as to the importance of tourism to Oregon's economy. However, what makes this case study unique is that it chronicles the relationship between an organization's research and its advocacy efforts.

The mission of the Oregon Tourism Commission is to encourage economic growth and to enhance the quality of life in the state through stronger economic impact of tourism. The commission encourages increased expenditures by visitors to Oregon, and cooperates with local, regional, and private tourism entities. To accomplish this mission, it promotes an image of Oregon that is exciting, natural, and friendly.

The Oregon Tourism Commission pursues the following goals as mandated by the state legislature:

- To maximize the return on public and private investment in tourism
- To encourage longer stays by visitors in Oregon
- To reduce the seasonal fluctuations in travel and tourism-related industries
- To encourage visitors to be destination-oriented in the state
- To encourage Oregonians to vacation in Oregon
- To encourage visitors from foreign countries to come to Oregon

Context and History

Oregon's tourism efforts began with the Travel Information Office of the Oregon Highway Department in the 1920s. This office not only handled tourism information for Oregon, but also served as a type of regional tourism office in that it printed maps for neighboring Washington. In 1980, the Tourism Information Office moved to Oregon's new Department of Community and Economic Development. At this time, the Oregon Tourism Commission had nine members appointed by the governor to advise him on the tourism division.



Courtesy Oregon Tourism Commission

In 1995, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 354, streamlining several state tourism entities into one and creating the Oregon Tourism Commission (OTC). The Commission was permitted to set up a separate private-partnership bank account. This arrangement enabled the agency to operate financially in ways that other state agencies could not, allowing it to be proactive in tourism marketing and development. Monies can be received into the account, and the account is not subject to state budget shortfalls. Such funds come from various sources, including cooperative advertising and fees from trade shows.

Because of its origins in the Department of Transportation and the Department of Community and Economic Development, the OTC has evolved to include both tourism marketing *and* destination management in its scope and vision. OTC officials understand that while marketing is important to attract visitors, an adequate infrastructure—sufficient transportation, lodging, and attractions—is also necessary to bring visitors to the state and ensure they have a pleasant and memorable experience. The inclusion of tourism planning into OTC's repertoire serves as a model for destination management organizations that must advise city halls and governors' offices on tourism development projects or are increasingly asked to initiate such projects within their own organization.

In addition, Oregon is a leader in sustainable tourism development as an economic and physical development tool because it has long realized that satisfactory tourism experiences depend upon quality natural and built environments. The OTC focuses on marketing lesser-known places in Oregon so that a few destinations will not receive disproportionate social and environmental impacts and



Courtesy Oregon Tourism Commission

economic benefits. The OTC employs a tourism development manager who oversees community tourism marketing, access issues, and environmental permitting. The commission's dual focus in marketing and development makes it uncommon among state tourism commissions.

Organization

Nine commissioners oversee the Oregon Tourism Commission. The governor appoints seven of the nine, one is appointed by the speaker of the House and one by the Senate president. Commissioners provide regional representation and direct the actions of a nine-member staff, consisting of a director, an assistant director, tourism development manager, international and travel trade manager, public relations manager, and four services staff members.

The Oregon Tour and Travel Task Force (OTTTF) is a cooperative partnership between the OTC and the diverse, but allied, business constituencies composing the state's visitor industry. Represented by tourism professionals throughout the state in a voluntary capacity, the group includes CVBs, attractions, hotels, chambers of commerce, tourism associations, restaurants, retail operations, travel agencies, destination marketing organizations, tour companies, and festivals. There are no membership dues.

Also known as Team Oregon, the OTTTF began to meet informally in January 1989 to discuss how Oregon could better enhance its share of the group motor

coach market. Today, with more than 200 members, the OTTTF is considered a key element of Oregon's visitor industry development. Members receive advertising, public relations, publications, consumer brochure placements, leads, labels, international and domestic travel trade shows, and research tips. In addition, they can avail themselves of tourism development workshops, a matching grant program, and programs regarding scenic byways, agritourism, nature-based tourism, and Native American tourism.

Best Practice: Advocacy

The Oregon Tourism Commission's advocacy efforts began with its research program. Like other state agencies, the commission produces or commissions visitor profiles, economic impact analyses, accountability studies, and return-on-investment studies.

In 1998, the OTC asked Toronto-based Longwoods International to undertake a research program that provided information for strategic marketing and accountability regarding the impact of the commission's marketing efforts for Oregon.

The research found that the OTC's 1997 tourism advertising campaign had proven very effective. An estimated 3.4 million travelers with household incomes of \$45,000 or more saw at least one of the commission's advertisements and had a much more positive image of the state, especially in secondary markets where people were less familiar with Oregon. The campaign generated a total of 402,000 new trips to the state that would not have occurred without the campaign. This was a conservative estimate, as it did not take into account trips that would have occurred regardless of a campaign, and it included only one trip per traveler. It is notable that these positive impacts were accomplished with a media budget of under \$500,000. In sum, each trip costs the state only \$1.22, making Oregon's effort one of the most efficient tourism marketing campaigns that Longwoods had measured.

With this information, the OTC returned to the state legislature and lobbied for tourism funding based on the argument that for every \$1 the state invests in the tourism industry, it earns \$4.28 in visitor spending plus taxes. The commission could effectively argue that the advertising campaign had reached its intended target audiences and that the Commission's estimation of the state of tourism in Oregon was accurate. This message went directly to the governor and state legislature, who continue to support the OTC's \$6.4 million biennial budget.

Results

One interesting aspect is that this information was conveyed through an event called the Tourism Industry Council of Oregon Legislative Reception, during which *Visitor Industry Pocket Facts* was circulated. The small, folded fact book states the mission of the Oregon Tourism Commission, provides a summary of Oregon's visitor industry and tourism statistics; details the commission's return on investment and visitor volumes; and provides OTC with contacts. The pocket fact

book is a simple and cost-effective way of promoting tourism in Oregon—to politicians and the public.

After the fact book was distributed during the reception, each tourism region representative met with key legislators to reinforce facts or entertain questions brought up by the booklet, emphasizing the importance of tourism to state and local economies.

By linking research to advocacy, the Oregon Tourism Commission strengthens its credibility and exercises considerable influence on public policy in Oregon. For example, in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, the commission received \$200,000 in emergency funding. During the recession of that period, the OTC was not subjected to statewide budget cuts. In many legislative discussions on finances, the commission's tourism data are often recited verbatim.

Conclusions

Despite its proactive approaches to research and advocacy, the OTC remains conservative in its tourism estimates and projections, chiefly so it won't inflate expectations regarding Oregon's tourism industry. In addition, OTC often uses a third-party consultant to review research findings before passing this information to public officials. The OTC prefers solid and credible research and recommendations.

The ability to make connections between tourism marketing and development, as well as between research and advocacy, makes the Oregon Tourism Commission a successful case study in sustainable, economically viable tourism development.

CHRONOLOGY

1920s	Travel Information Office begins in Oregon Highway Department, functioning as a type of regional tourism office.
1980	The Tourism Information Office moves into Oregon's Department of Transportation.
1983	The office moves to the Department of Community and Economic Development.
1995	Oregon Tourism Commission is created by Senate Bill 354.
1997	The Oregon Tourism Commission begins annual economic impact research.
1998	Oregon begins strategic marketing and accountability study with Longwoods. The firm finds that for every \$1 the state invests in the tourism industry, approximately \$4.28 is returned to Oregon's coffers from visitor spending and taxes.
2000	Visitor expenditures in Oregon total \$5.9 billion.

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Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau

Overview

Michigan's Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau (GLCVB) is a best practice in advocacy because it educates local residents about the role tourism plays in the community, mainly via its annual "Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown" event. The mission of the Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau is to positively impact the economic well-being of greater Lansing by marketing the entire region—including Ingham and Eaton counties and the cities of Dewitt, Charlotte, Holt, Mason, Lansing, and East Lansing—as a desirable convention and tourism destination.

The bureau markets Greater Lansing at national, state, and local trade shows. It showcases the area's natural and cultural amenities and promotes greater Lansing as an ideal destination for conventions and meetings, group tours, and leisure travel. The bureau's goal is to increase sales and marketing efforts that will in turn improve the area's economy.

Context and History

Lansing began to develop during the 1870s as a manufacturing center. Michigan's automotive industry can be traced to 1887, when one of Lansing's most famous residents, Ransom Eli Olds, built a three-wheeled vehicle with a one-horsepower steam engine. In 1897, the Olds Motor Vehicle Company was formed, and today it is North America's oldest continuously operating automotive company. The first Oldsmobile built that year is currently housed in the R. E. Olds Transportation Museum in downtown Lansing.

With a booming automotive industry, an expanding municipal government, and a strong educational system, Lansing continued to develop, encouraged by increasing residential and business growth. Even during World War II, Lansing continued to make its mark by channeling its industrial capabilities into wartime production.

Although the city's core continued to develop, population growth in suburban Lansing during the 1950s changed the character of the city. Over the next decades, housing quickly expanded into the countryside, and greater Lansing began to take shape.

Today, a diversified government, education, and the automotive industry continue to play an important role in the local economy. But tourism is rapidly



Courtesy Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau

becoming an important part of economic development, generating \$455 million annually and supporting 9,800 jobs. The area is now home to 500,000 residents.

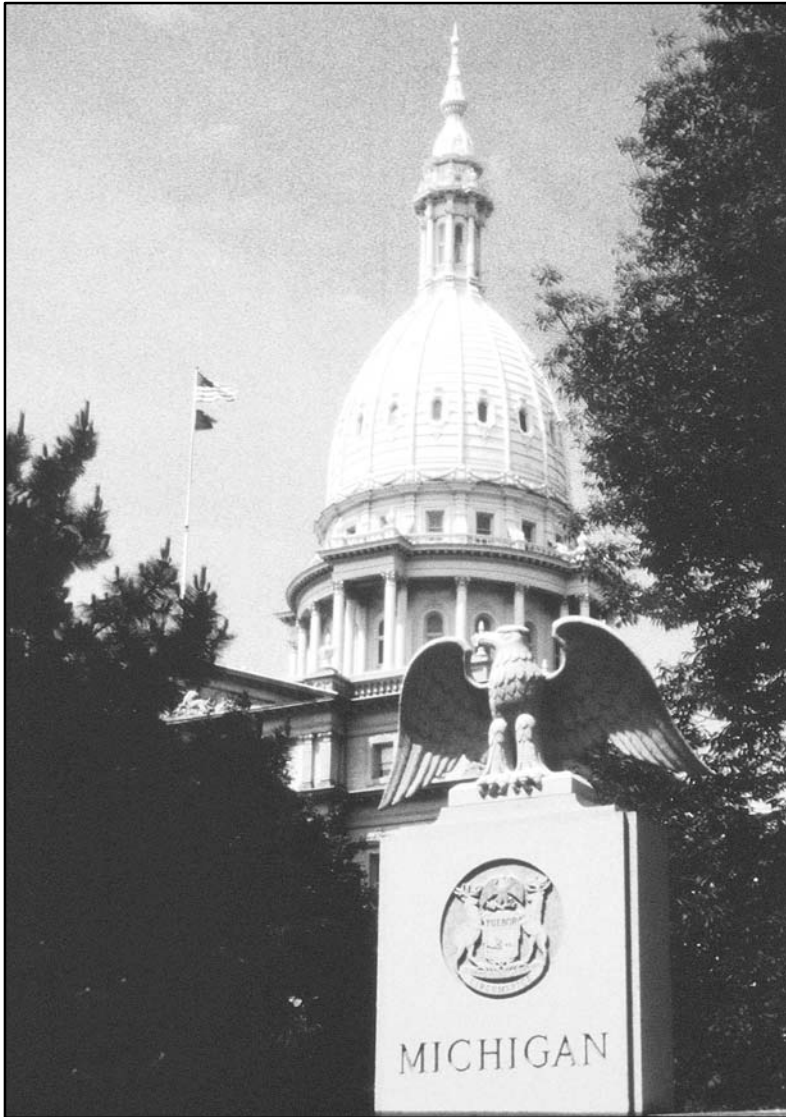
The Greater Lansing Convention and Visitor Bureau was founded in 1960 by a group of hotel managers and local investors for marketing central Michigan as a convention destination. Throughout most of the 1960s and 1970s, the focus of the GLCVB remained primarily on attracting small conventions from neighboring communities such as Detroit and Grand Rapids. In the beginning, the organization consisted of two employees with offices in the old Lansing Civic Arena. However, bureau stakeholders quickly recognized the potential of the convention industry as an economic stimulant.

Organization

The GLCVB is a membership organization consisting of approximately 450 businesses, primarily hospitality focused, that pay nominal dues to be represented by the bureau. The bureau's staff consists of 22 full-time employees in five departments—Destination Sales, Visitor Services, Marketing and Communications, Community Relations, and Finance and Administration.

Funding in the bureau's early days was limited, and as a result the organization's impact was hampered. Like many CVBs, sales efforts consisted primarily of attending conventions with the hope of being in the right place at the right time to convince decision-makers to consider Lansing as a potential destination.

In 1991, the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, with the consensus of most of the hoteliers in the county, agreed to increase the excise tax, better known as the bed tax, from 2 percent to 5 percent. That decision led to further growth of the bureau. Today, the GLCVB has an operating budget of nearly \$3 million, which



Courtesy Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau

helps attract over 5 million visitors to the region and contributes over \$455 million in direct spending to the local economy.

Best Practice: Advocacy _____

The GLCVB's advocacy efforts are centered on the "Be a Tourist in Your Own Home Town" program, increasing tourism's visibility as an economic development tool for greater Lansing and heightening awareness of the city's cultural and

entertainment activities available to residents and tourists alike. The objectives of the program are: (1) to acquaint greater Lansing residents with GLCVB member attractions, including hotels, restaurants, and transportation within Greater Lansing, and (2) to strengthen the bureau's commitment to cooperatively promote the city and surroundings.

The one-day event, first held in 1995, primarily targets residents of greater Lansing, but also includes regional media contacts, policy makers, and travel industry members. The event presents an opportunity to learn about greater Lansing from a visitor's perspective. Participants include area attractions, hotels, restaurants, the GLCVB and its members, the city of Lansing, local area sponsors, and transportation providers.

The late May event works through attractions, hotels, restaurants, and city transportation providers all making special offers including discounted rates, complimentary admissions, or bonus food buys. A "passport" is sold or given away by sponsoring area businesses or organizations and distributed through designated outlets during the one to two months prior to the event.

At each participating attraction, the resident "tourists" have their passports stamped and these papers contain everything needed to enjoy the day's activities—free admission to over 20 attractions and children's activities, free parking, shuttles, and special coupons. Passport holders also have a chance to participate in special prize drawings and receive discounts at area attractions and restaurants throughout the month of June, after the event. Participating attractions, hotels, restaurants, and transportation providers are encouraged by the GLCVB to provide special activities, entertainment, events, or giveaways to further enhance participation.

Members of the event Steering Committee are asked to chair subcommittees such as Promotions, Entertainment, Transportation, Volunteers, Passport Distribution, Event Sponsorship, Information Centers, Prizes, and any others necessary to coordinate the effort.

The GLCVB uses various media to promote the event, including advertising, press releases, interviews, public speaking engagements, publicity events, electronic media, marquee exposure, and newsletters of significant area businesses and other organizations.

Another program sponsored by the bureau is "Be a Guest" Breakfast. Each month, the Greater Lansing Visitors Center hosts about 40 front-line employees from area hotels, restaurants, shops, and transportation companies for a customer-service-oriented educational seminar. Topics vary depending on the season and speaker availability; however, the intent is to develop greater customer service skills among hospitality employees. The program has become so successful that the GLCVB now offers it onsite at hotels and attractions.

The Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau also offers an "add to itinerary" link through its Web site, www.lansing.org, to tourists' personal digital assistance (PDA) devices such as a Palm Pilot. This feature enables tourists to easily compile and maintain a list of attractions, events, restaurants, and accommodations they would like to visit while in Greater Lansing. Items on the PDA may be added or deleted at any time, and the personal itinerary follows visitors as they

navigate a site. When they are finished at the site, the itinerary can be e-mailed, faxed, or downloaded to the hand-held device.

The PDA service was implemented during the bureau's Web site development free of charge through www.Advantgo.com. The system is financially supported through advertising of various business sponsors. The GLCVB expects PDA downloads to increase as more people use the technology and become aware that the bureau can disseminate tourism information in this manner.

Results

The "Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown" event was initially developed when the GLCVB felt it needed an event to showcase area tourism—and it has succeeded in this regard. Residents, exhibiting increased attendance each year, have appreciated the opportunity to experience the tourism amenities in their own backyard. In turn, they gain an understanding of and appreciation for the city's tourist and tourism marketing and development efforts. The program has resulted in stronger support for community tourism as well as improved resident-tourist relations. The event has also raised the profile of the GLCVB through local media attention.

However, for any community wishing to replicate the program, there are challenges to address. For example, in many climates, weather, such as rain or snow, is an important variable. In addition, there is a natural tendency for such programs to lose focus over time. Also, because the event is family focused, the Steering Committee avoids aspects that cannot be enjoyed by the whole family, such as selling alcohol. Despite such challenges, "Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown" continues to grow, and the committee has begun highlighting some different component of tourism each year, such as cultural or historical tourism.

Financial considerations are not considered critical to the success of the program by the bureau. In fact, the GLCVB depends on sponsorship just to break even. To measure growth of the event, the bureau attempts to track attendance each year in terms of shuttle use or museum attendance. Volunteerism also has increased as citizens become more aware of how economically important tourism is to their community. The program also has been adopted by other cities and towns in Michigan as part of their CVB programming and an integral part of their efforts to be advocates for the tourism industry.

In 2000, a study by Michigan State University indicated an annual area visitation of over 5 million people. The bureau has an operating budget of nearly \$3 million, which helps attract over 5 million visitors who contribute \$431 million to the local economy.

Conclusions

The GLCVB has been so successful with "Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown" that it is attempting to cut back the program some, reining it in as a pure, family-oriented event promoting tourism facilities and attractions. Also, it hopes to place the event under the control of a new bureau department called Event Services.

Keys to the success of the event include: (1) increasing media attention each year; (2) attractions that work together as a true tourism community; (3)

community responsiveness to the event; and (4) the success in transporting guests from one venue to another. Without the free travel donated by local transportation authorities, the GLCVB claims the program would not be as nearly successful.

The GLCVB demonstrates innovation by two methods: one traditional and the other non-traditional. For its “Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown” event, the bureau placed a new twist on a traditional CVB program— holding a festival or event to promote or publicize some aspect of the organization. In the second instance, in offering downloads to personal digital assistance (PDA) devices, the bureau uses new technology to promote and publicize its services. The GLCVB is an excellent example of a convention and visitors bureau rethinking old strategies and adopting new ones to accomplish its mission.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1960 The Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau is founded.
- 1975 The bureau begins collecting an excise tax (bed tax) in Ingham County, increasing the funds available to market the region.
- 1991 The Ingham County bed tax is increased from 2 percent to 5 percent.
- 1995 First annual “Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown” is held.
- 1999 The bureau opens mid-Michigan’s first full-service visitor information center.
- 2000 Study by Michigan State University indicates an annual area visitation of over 5 million people. The bureau has an operating budget of nearly \$3 million, which helps attract over 5 million visitors who contribute \$431 million to the local economy.

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Part VI

Web Marketing

Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau

Overview

The Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau (GPCVB) is a case study in technological innovation among CVBs. The bureau is one of relatively few such organizations to offer trip personalization and packaging through its Web site.

The Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau is the official tourism promotion agency of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Its mission is to create revenue and employment in Allegheny County by generating conventions, trade shows, and leisure travel business. Although centered in Pittsburgh, the bureau considers itself a regional convention and visitor organization.

Statistics support the reasoning behind the regional approach. More than 14 million people visit the Pittsburgh area each year, with tourism contributing \$2.91 billion to the region's economy and sustaining more than 37,000 full-time jobs. The economic impact of conventions alone currently stands at an annual \$200 million. Each year in Allegheny County, tourism generates \$131 million in state and local tax revenue. Overnight visitors outnumber the population of Pittsburgh by 10 to 1.

Context and History

Pittsburgh developed as a crossroads of commerce and travel. During the 1700s and 1800s, Pittsburgh was considered the "Gateway to the West," and once boasted the largest hotel between New York and Chicago.

The GPCVB began in 1935, when a small group of hotel managers and civic leaders formed the Pittsburgh Convention and Tourists, Incorporated. Its mission was to draw conventions and conferences to the city, as well as to induce residents from other cities and counties to travel to Pittsburgh.

Today, the GPCVB has an annual budget of \$10.5 million. Of the city's occupancy tax rate of 7 percent, 5 percent is allocated to bonds for the new Convention Center and 2 percent is allocated to bureau marketing. The GPCVB also receives significant contributions from the local foundation community, particularly to fund the arts.

Organization

The 55-person GPCVB is divided into departments of Convention Sales, Convention Services, Tourism, Cultural Affairs, Membership, Administration and Finance, and Communications.



Courtesy Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau

The bureau serves and markets Allegheny County and greater Pittsburgh to regional, national, and international markets, including meeting planners, convention delegates, leisure travelers, associations, tour operators, travel agents, and journalists.

In 1999, the GPCVB opened its new Office of Cultural Affairs. The next year, ground was broken for the David L. Lawrence Convention Center, scheduled to be completed by 2003.

In November of 2000, the bureau launched its main Web site www.visitpittsburgh.com. The meeting planner Web site www.planpittsburgh.com was launched in April 2002.

Best Practice: Web Marketing

Before launching its main Web site, the GPCVB noticed the changing dynamic of purchasing on the Web and decided to offer integrated travel packages on its site. The bureau decided to move in this direction although there was little precedent for Web-based travel personalization and packaging among U.S. CVBs.

The Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitor Bureau Web site, like many other Web sites, incorporates a travel planner. However, the site's "My Getaway Itinerary" option allows visitors to browse the site and build their own customized package by adding accommodations, restaurant reservations, and tickets to events and attractions. Incremental savings are calculated as visitors add new items to the package. When they are done, visitors can purchase their package by using a credit card.

With the launch of the site, Web users gained round-the-clock access to Pittsburgh's travel amenities. The city's accommodations and attractions appear on the



Courtesy Greater Pittsburgh Convention and Visitors Bureau

site through more than 40 videos and virtual-tour photographs. Users can view the most recent exhibits, performances, and sporting events. They are also able to scroll down through restaurant descriptions and menus, select from a variety of accommodations before purchasing tickets, booking a room, and making reservations—all at a discount. Streaming videos, digital sound, and 360-degree virtual tours provide users with the opportunity to preview and plan itineraries before their arrival in Pittsburgh.

Users must purchase at least one night's hotel accommodations to purchase anything more on the site. This feature ensures that the site and all products offered on it are marketed directly to visitors, who may select from featured gateways or create their own gateways. A credit card is all that a visitor needs to book a room, make restaurant reservations, or purchase attraction tickets.

Several navigational features make planning and booking a trip to Pittsburgh convenient. Charts illustrate seating zones for performances and sporting events. Mapping features enable visitors to download driving directions to any featured attraction, and information on the site varies from what to pack to what to look for in each Pittsburgh neighborhood. A link with the Weather Channel's www.weather.com provides the latest local weather news. In addition, an online calendar provides listings of large and small events throughout the region.

Results

Since its launch in 2000, the Web site has logged 524,172 visits and more than 7.7 million hits. Nearly 500 new visitors go to the site each day. Visitors from as far away as Tokyo and San Francisco have planned and purchased trips to Pittsburgh online. However, the GPCVB hopes to capture unique users—those who stay at

the site for some time, rather than just browsing or making a hit. The bureau is proud of the fact that its site draws approximately 500 users a day with an average view time of eight minutes, as opposed to the four-minute Web average.

The GPCVB stresses patience in obtaining the budget and expertise to support such a site. However, for all the time and expense required to maintain the site, the bureau claims the site more than pays for itself in increased tourism revenue. In this respect, the bureau regards the Web site as more than just a visitor fulfillment vehicle; it is an integral part of the GPCVB's marketing and advertising program. As such, officials allocate to the site a significant share of the bureau's overall marketing and advertising budget. The GPCVB spent nearly \$1 million to develop the site in 2000, with \$500,000 provided by foundation support, such as arts and cultural groups, and \$500,000 provided by state grants and budget allocations. The bureau spent approximately \$500,000 of this money on video production for the site, including videography, compression (formatting video for the Web), script writing, voice-overs, and music licensing. In turn, this quality video was then given to the arts and cultural foundations for their own use.

The bureau's Web marketing experiences have thus far been positive, but not without challenges. For example, the GPCVB had to convince local tourism partners that Web personalization and packaging would only enhance the overall attractiveness of the destination, instead of undermining their individual efforts to sell separate tourism products. They successfully argued that few visitors would care about a single hotel room or event if they were not interested in the overall destination.

Conclusions

The GPCVB hopes that other CVBs will adopt its Web marketing model of trip personalization and packaging, reasoning that the more comfortable people feel with this method of purchasing, the better sales will be for the entire convention and visitor industry.

In addition, the bureau hopes to improve trust among site users through strict privacy and confidentiality policies. Although privacy and confidentiality, in the form of extensive policy statements, are a growing concern among most CVB Web sites, it is perhaps even more important to sites that offer online destination purchasing because of credit card number theft and fraud.

The GPCVB is doing its part to change the standard CVB operational model from the presentation of brochures to the delivery of value through electronic personalization and packaging. The bureau believes that to compete in a global marketplace, CVBs must enter the realm of sales as well as information dissemination. Rapidly improving information technology probably will facilitate this transition.

Reference Material

Web Sites:

www.visitpittsburgh.com

www.planpittsburgh.com

CHRONOLOGY

1935	The Pittsburgh Convention and Tourists, Incorporated, is formed.
1999	The GPCVB opens new Office of Cultural Affairs.
April 2000	Groundbreaking of new David Lawrence Convention Center.
November 2000	www.visitpittsburgh.com is launched.
February 2002	Opening of Phase I of new convention center.
April 2002	www.planpittsburgh.com is launched.
March 2003	Expected completion of new convention center.

Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau

Overview

In 1999, Nashville, Tennessee, hosted more than 10 million visitors, resulting in over \$2.7 billion in revenue for the city and 54,890 jobs. The city boasts 32,699 hotel rooms. Opryland Hotel is the largest non-gaming hotel property in the United States, with 2,884 rooms and 288,000 square feet of exhibition space.

Music is central to Nashville's image and brand. The city, home to a wide spectrum of music—including country, gospel, bluegrass, and rock—boasts perhaps the world's largest and most concentrated community of songwriters. Differing from other U.S. music cities such as Branson, Missouri, New Orleans, and Austin, Texas, the Nashville music community writes, plays, and performs its own distinctive music often referred to as the "Nashville Sound."

The mission of the Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau (NCVB) is to promote business and tourism in "Music City USA," for the city's musical heritage, or the "Athens of the South," for the city's dedication to fine arts and higher education. Nashville boasts a dual image as both a sophisticated, vibrant city, and premier music destination. To market the destination, the bureau has excelled in Web design.

Context and History

Prior to 1976, the NCVB was a division of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce's Retail Department. In 1976, the bureau was made a separate entity with Tourism and Convention Sales departments. That year, a 3 percent city hotel tax passed for the bureau's funding. The NCVB began with a \$250,000 budget. By 1991, the bureau's staff consisted of 17 persons, and its budget totaled \$1.9 million.

In 1994, the hotel tax was increased from 3 percent to 4 percent and the staff expanded to 30 persons. In addition, the budget grew to \$4 million. That year, the bureau's first satellite office opened in Washington, D.C., and its international office opened in London. In 1998, the hotel tax rose yet again from 4 percent to 5 percent and NCVB staff expanded to 42 full-time and part-time employees.

Organization

The Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau is an affiliate branch of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, and maintains a separate budget. The bureau is funded solely through hotel tax collections.



Courtesy Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau

Major staff positions with the organization include an executive vice president; vice president of tourism, sales, and marketing; director of research, training, and industry relations; director of communications; convention and visitor bureau network administrator; and vice president of convention sales and marketing.

The bureau operates a Visitor Information Center in the Gaylord Entertainment Center on the corner of Fifth and Broadway in Nashville. In addition to literature, directions, and general information, the center features museum exhibits, discounted attraction tickets, children's programming ideas, an online information station, and Nashville merchandise.

Best Practice: Web Marketing

The NCVB's site, www.nashvillecvb.com, was first developed in 1997. It was updated substantially in 2001 for about \$50,000, featuring high-quality graphics and flash effects, in addition to endorsements by local celebrities such as Reba McEntire, whose endorsement reads, "I love Nashville because it has all the elements of a big city, like great restaurants, museums, and professional sports, but still feels like a small town." Celebrity pictures and quotes are part of the theme, "You Never Know Who You Might Run Into in Nashville." These endorsements lend a familiar touch and local flavor to the site.

The site also features an events search function, including a quick-find calendar, a preview of events for the day, and advanced searching. Events information is updated regularly—a notable achievement, given the city's large number of venues.

Finally, the site's trip-planning functions include a trip builder that can be saved electronically for later use if an e-mail address is provided to the CVB. Trip planning also features a customizing guide that asks visitors questions about interests and searches the database for matches. The guide can also be saved for a later visit if an e-mail address is provided.



Courtesy Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau

The bureau persevered to develop that site after working on five sites in ten years under five different Web development consultants. Although the NCVB knew what it wanted on the site, staff had a difficult time locating a vendor who could design a site suiting users' needs and the NCVB's objectives.

In 2001, the bureau redesigned the Web site again, this time with flash movie and audio, as well as adding a scrolling marquee to the home page. The bureau launched a new advertising campaign on the site. The site included a search engine for everything excluding events information. At the same time, the bureau revamped its database. The next year, the NCVB hired a full-time Web specialist, or Web master, to oversee the site. It redesigned the site again to include a flash header and menu, as well as a search engine for every item on the site, including events. Overall new visits to the site peaked at 57,000. In 2002, the bureau launched a MapQuest® function on the site, which enables visitors to easily find the city and attractions within the city.

Because the city itself is a special product as "Music City USA," Web users expect something different when visiting the site. The Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau has succeeded in creating an exciting site that offers endorsements by the music stars that users associate with Nashville. Once drawn into the site by this attractive introduction, the user can then easily build a customized trip to the city. In addition, users are exposed through the site to other non-music-related attractions the city has to offer, such as museums and sports events.

Results

Subsequently, the bureau has adopted the principle that Web development is never complete, but is always a work in progress. Web marketing and development are in a constant state of evolution because both computer technology and the tourism market continuously change. Future additions to the site include the ability to offer hotel and event discounts. The NCVB considers its site to be yet another salesperson on staff.

The Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau measures Web site success not by hits but by user visits in which length of stay and use of the site is considered more important than visiting the site for a few minutes. In March 2000, the site had 1,797,419 hits, 218,451 page views, 70,628 user sessions, and 3,947 e-mail requests for additional information. Also, average length of time at the site ran 15 minutes and 12 seconds, well above the four-minute Web average.

Conclusions

In the future, the NCVB would like to extend its regional focus to a 250-mile radius and entice more day travel. It also wants to attract more government-related associations for conventions and meetings in the city. An attractive Web site can help the Bureau meet these goals.

The NCVB should be emulated for its overall philosophy about Web development. With any new technology with so much promise to increase sales, there is always a tendency to be the biggest and best, introducing a plethora of site functions that may be highly efficient, although not that effective. The creative way the NCVB markets Nashville as a "music city" is a qualitative attribute that is just as important as site statistics. While competition among CVBs may be healthy for the industry, many organizations may lose sight of their overall mission in pursuit of Web excellence. The NCVB views its Web site as an important piece of a much larger organizational puzzle. To its credit, it has remained focused on Nashville, instead of highlighting the Web site itself as a destination.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1976 The Nashville Convention and Visitors Bureau is formed with Tourism and Convention Sales departments. A 3 percent hotel tax is passed for the bureau's funding. It begins with a \$250,000 budget.
- 1985 The bureau forms its Communications Department.
- 1991 The bureau continues to grow, with 17 staff persons and a \$1.9 million budget.
- 1994 Bureau staff grows to 30 persons, with a budget of \$4 million. The hotel tax is increased from 3 percent to 4 percent. First satellite offices open in Washington, D.C., and London.
- 1997 www.nashvillecvb.com launched.
- 1998 Bureau staff increases to 42 full-and part-time persons, with a budget of \$9.1 million. Hotel tax increases from 4 percent to 5 percent.
- 1999 Satellite office opens in Chicago. This same year, the bureau redesigns its Web site.
- 2000 The bureau redesigns Web site again, this time with flash movie and audio; and home page with scrolling marquee. The bureau launches a new advertising campaign on the site. The site includes a search engine for everything excluding events information. At this time, the bureau also revamps its database.
- 2001 The bureau hires a full-time Web specialist to oversee the site. It redesigns the site again to include flash header and menu, as well as a search engine for every item on the site. First use of different recording artists' pictures and quotes to go with the theme, "You Never Know Who You Might Run Into in Nashville." Overall new visits to the site peak at 57,000.
- 2002 The bureau launches MapQuest ®function on Web site, which enables users to locate Nashville and attractions within the city.

Travel Montana

Overview

The growth of tourism in Montana over the last decade has outpaced all of the state's natural-resource-based industries. From 1991 to 1998, the number of non-resident visitors to the state increased by 23 percent, from 7.5 million to 9.5 million. In 1998, 9.5 million visitors spent an estimated \$1.52 billion in Montana. The state has 27,000 jobs directly related to the travel trade. In addition, Montana workers earned \$400 million in 1998 from jobs directly related to non-resident travel.

Created in 1982 as a division of the Montana Department of Commerce, Travel Montana is the primary organization for promoting tourism in the state. Travel Montana's mission is to strengthen Montana's economy through the promotion of the state as a vacation destination and film location. Travel Montana strives to foster an enjoyable experience for visitors, while encouraging preservation of Montana's environment and quality of life.

Context and History

The Montana Promotions Division was part of the Department of Highways until 1981, when it moved to the Department of Commerce and at that time became Travel Montana.

Prior to the 1980s, there was no dedicated funding source for tourism in Montana. In that decade, the state's tourism regions began to seek such funding. In 1987, Montana's legislature created a 4 percent lodging facility use tax, commonly known as the bed tax. Lodging facilities (such as hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, guest ranches, resorts, and campgrounds) collect this tax from guests. In turn, these funds are directed to the Montana Historical Society; the university system; the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Montana's tourism regions and CVBs; and the Department of Commerce's Travel Montana programs. No additional money for funding comes from the state's general fund.

In 1988, the year the bed tax was first collected, \$5 million was generated. In 2002, that figure exceeded \$11.3 million, representing an increase of more than 100 percent in over a decade.

Bed tax collections are Montana's source of funding for all its marketing efforts; however, the bed tax itself supports more than tourism marketing. About 20 percent of the bed tax currently supports tourism-related infrastructure around the state. This includes items such as historic preservation, maintenance of state parks, funding for special programs such as the Lewis and Clark bicentennial program, and historic signage.

Here, I have
room to breathe
and mountains
to explore.

Thunder pounds
in my heart

and I drive
onward.

To plan your winter
journey, call 1-800-VISIT-MT
(847-4868), ext. 664.
<http://travel.mt.gov>



Montana
SIMPLY BETTER SKIING

Courtesy Travel Montana



Courtesy Travel Montana

Organization

Travel Montana has five major offices: film, information, tourism development, marketing, and operations. Major staff positions include director; administration; tourism development and education; group travel and overseas marketing; group travel and conventions; consumer marketing; information services; industry program services; and publicity, publications, and operations.

The Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) was created in 1987 with the bed tax. The council, composed of 12 Montanans from the state's tourism industry, has many duties. First, it advises the governor on matters related to travel and tourism in Montana. Second, it sets policies and guides the efforts of Travel Montana. Third, it oversees the distribution of funds and sets regulations for all of Montana's non-profit tourist regions and CVBs. Fourth, it determines allowable administrative expenses for bed tax funds for tourism regions and CVBs. Finally, the TAC oversees the university system's travel research, approving all subjects before they begin. Funded from the same source, the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) works closely with Travel Montana, providing timely and comprehensive research for state tourism marketing and development efforts.

Travel Montana's partners are the regions and CVBs it serves. These organizations are listed in Travel Montana publications such as the *Travel Planner*, *Vacation Guide*, and *Winter Guide*. In addition, the Film Office produces a production guide that lists service providers as well as film industry representatives in the state.

Travel Montana does not have a membership fee, and all its services are free; all funding comes through the bed tax. However, Travel Montana does charge a small fee (\$25) for hot linking through its Web site.

Montana's six tourism regions are private, non-profit organizations dedicated to marketing themselves to visitors. Each year, they submit marketing plans to the Tourism Advisory Council for approval. These regions are Custer, Glacier, Gold West, Missouri River, Russell, and Yellowstone.

Like Montana's tourism regions, the ten CVBs market themselves to visitors and must also submit annual market plans. These bureaus consist of Big Sky, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Flathead Valley, Missoula, West Yellowstone, and Whitefish.

Best Practice: Web Marketing

Travel Montana illustrates a best practice in Web marketing and development, particularly regarding its privacy and confidentiality policies. An extensive policy statement on privacy and confidentiality is no longer optional for DMOs (destination management organizations) as sales through Web sites increase. Visitors must be comfortable in purchasing a destination package or attraction online if sales are to increase industrywide via this new technology.

In 1994, Travel Montana lacked a Web site, but subsequently developed a graphics-heavy site to publish a vacation guide online. But by the end of 2000, Travel Montana's Web site, www.visitmt.com, was generating nearly 1.45 million inquiries for information annually—more than four times the number of inquiries received from other methods. Through August 2001, the site was averaging nearly 5,000 user visits a day, each averaging over 11 minutes. Much of this development was facilitated by the University of Montana's Information and Technology Resource Center, which worked with Travel Montana on the site's original design.

Travel Montana is notable in its diversification of sites, maintaining ten sites, each targeting a specific market niche. These sites are:

- www.visitmt.com, Travel Montana's main Web site with visitor information and vacation planning assistance.
- www.lewisandclark.state.mt.us, devoted to Lewis and Clark's 1804 journey across the state .
- www.wintermt.com, Montana's winter recreation site .
- www.montanakids.com, specifically designed for children.
- www.montanameetings.com, the meeting planner's site, offering information about meeting or convention services and locations.
- www.montanafilm.com, the official site of the Montana Film Office, with location photographs and information about filming.
- www.travelmontana.state.mt.us, Travel Montana's intranet site, offering up-to-date information about the state's tourism industry.
- www.indiannations.visitmt.com, devoted to Montana's Native American people.
- www.montanagroups.com, the Montana Group Tour Planning Guide, offering information on group tour services.
- www.bizmt.com, Montana's business recruitment site.

The Montanakids.com site offers an example of how Travel Montana attempts to educate and develop a future market. The site includes educational information on agriculture and business in the state; activities and games; a description of things to see and do in the state; Montana's plants and animals; Montana facts; Montana history; a What's New function; features on the state; and information on Lewis and Clark. However, what really makes Travel Montana's Web marketing and development program a best practice is its dedication to user privacy.

The Travel Montana privacy policy is easily accessed from the Web site, as well as every page on the site, including those pages where data are collected. Users of the site are informed regarding the collection and use of personally identifiable information. According to Travel Montana, such information is "individually identifiable information about an individual collected online, including a first and last name; a residence or other physical address, including street name and name of city or town; an e-mail address; a telephone number; a Social Security number, or unique identifying information that an Internet service provider or government Web site operator collects and combines with any other personal information."

Travel Montana informs users that they do not have to routinely provide personal information to access its Web sites or to download information.

Travel Montana uses industry-standard encryption technologies—software that codes or masks information—when transferring and receiving consumer data exchanged on the site. It states it has appropriate security measures in place at its site to protect against loss, misuse, or alteration of information it has collected from an individual at the site. Privacy on a site can be violated in several ways, most notably gathering personal information without the user's consent and the use of a person's name and or other personal information for unauthorized purposes.

Travel Montana spends approximately 7 percent of its overall budget on electronic marketing, or about \$541,000. In comparison with the tourism revenue generated by the site, this amount is relatively modest. The budget allocation covers maintenance of the ten sites and use of data from the site in other publications.

Results

Travel Montana's Web marketing efforts have been very successful. In 2001, www.visitmt.com received 44,511,170 hits (121,948 per day), averaging over 11 minutes per session. The niche sites have also been popular. For example, in 2001, www.montanakids.com received 9,987,314 hits (27,362 per day) also averaging over 11 minutes per session.

It is possible that increased visitation and use of Travel Montana's Web sites are the result of high confidence that their private information will not be used illegally or inappropriately.

According to a report by Strategic Marketing and Research Incorporated, the [visitmt.com](http://www.visitmt.com) Web site provides thorough and useful information, as stated by 93 percent of site visitors. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of the site visitors considered its contents "very useful," and another one-third rated it "somewhat useful." These findings were positive, the firm reported, indicating that the site met user

Exhibit 1 Travel Montana Privacy Policy




		INFORMATION FOR TRAVEL IN BIG SKY COUNTRY			
PLAN A MONTANA VACATION		FEATURES & EXTRAS	LINKS TO RELATED SITES	ADVANCED SEARCH SITEMAP/HELP/FAQ'S	WEATHER & CONDITIONS
Attractions <input type="button" value="GO"/>		<h3>Travel Montana Privacy Policy Statement</h3>			
		<p>Rights This is a web site of Travel Montana, Department of Commerce, and State of Montana. All contents © 2002, Travel Montana. All rights reserved. If you feel that this site is not following its stated information policy, you may contact Travel Montana.</p>			
A dvanced Site Search Site Index FAQ's Free Vacation Planning Kit		<p>Purpose The purpose of the statement is to inform users of this site with regard to the collection and use of personally identifiable information. If you have further questions we can be reached via e-mail at webmaster@visitmt.com or you can reach us by telephone at 406-841-2870. Our postal address is:</p>			
QUICK SEARCH <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="FIND"/>		<p>Travel Montana PO Box 200533 301 South Park Helena, Montana 59601</p>			
Wintermt.com Montanakids.com Lewis & Clark Indian Nations International Visitors Montanafilm.com Montanagroups.com Montanameetings.com State of Montana		<p>Definition of Personally Identifiable Information <i>Personally identifiable information</i> means individually identifiable information about an individual collected online, including:</p>			
Email This Page To A Friend		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a first and last name; (b) a residence or other physical address, including a street name and name of a city or town; (c) an e-mail address; (d) a telephone number; (e) a social security number; or (f) unique identifying information that an internet service provider or a government website operator collects and combines with any information described in subsections (b)(a) through (b)(e). 			
TOURISM REGIONS 		<p>Personally Identifiable Information Not Routinely Collected Citizens do not have to routinely provide personal information to access Travel Montana Web sites or to download information. We will not collect any personally identifiable information about you (name, address, telephone number, email address) unless you provide it voluntarily.</p>			
		<p>Personally Identifiable Information Collected</p>			
		<p>Guest Book</p> <p>If you do not want your personal information collected, please do not submit it online. We may request personally identifiable information from you in order to provide requested specialized services, but such information is handled as it would be on an in-person visit to a government office.</p>			
		<p>The information you voluntarily submit is used by Travel Montana to notify consumers about updates to our Web site, used to contact consumers for marketing purposes and shared with reputable Montana businesses and organizations to contact consumers for marketing purposes. Individuals are provided with the option to not have their name shared. None of the information we collect will be used for a purpose other than the express purposes set forth in this statement, except as required by law. Individuals will be provided with the ability to "opt out" at anytime of any communication regarding new service updates from Travel Montana.</p>			

Exhibit 1 (continued)

Email This Page to a Friend

If a user elects to use our referral service for informing a friend about our site, we ask for the friend's name and email address. Travel Montana will automatically send the friend a one-time email inviting them to visit the site. Travel Montana stores this information for the sole purpose of sending this one-time email.

Surveys and Contests

From time-to-time our site requests information from users via surveys or contests. Participation in these surveys or contests is completely voluntary and the user therefore has a choice whether or not to disclose this information. Information requested may include contact information (such as name and shipping address), and demographic information (such as zip code, age level). **Contact information will be used to notify the winners and award prizes and may also be shared with Montana businesses and organizations to help them contact consumers for marketing purposes.** Survey information will be used for purpose of monitoring and improving the usability and satisfaction of this site and will not be shared with Montana businesses or organizations to help them contact consumers for marketing purposes.

Log Files and User Tracking

For each visitor to our Web page, our Web server automatically recognizes the consumer's domain name and IP address. We use IP addresses to analyze trends, administer the site, track user's movement and gather broad demographic information for aggregate use. IP addresses are not linked to personally identifiable information. We collect the domain name and IP address of visitors to our site, browser type and version, operating system, aggregate information on what pages consumers access and how long they stay on each page and information volunteered by the consumer, such as survey information and/or site registrations and e-mail. This information is used to enhance and position the content on our Web site.

Cookies

A cookie is a piece of data stored on the user's hard drive containing information about the user. We use cookies to store visitor's personally identifiable information in the Sweepstakes component only. The sweepstakes cookie stores users voluntarily submitted preferences. The survey cookie does not collect any personally identifiable information.

Links

This web site contains links to other sites. Please be aware that Travel Montana and the State of Montana are not responsible for the privacy practices of such other sites. We encourage our users to be aware when they leave our site and to read the privacy statements of each and every web site that collects personally identifiable information. This privacy statement applies solely to information by this Web site.

Changing or Removing Personal Information

If you do not want to receive e-mail from us in the future, please let us know by contacting Travel Montana.

If you supply us with your postal address on-line you may receive periodic mailings from us with information on new services or upcoming events. If you do not wish to receive such mailings, please let us know by calling us at the number provided above, e-mailing us at the above address or writing to us at the above address. Please provide us with your exact name and address. We will also remove your name from the list we share with other organizations. We do not partner with or have special relationships with any ad server companies.

Persons who supply us with their telephone numbers on-line will only receive telephone contact from us with information regarding specific requests they have placed on-line or in the case of winning prizes from our online contests.

From time to time, we may use customer information for new, unanticipated uses not previously disclosed in our privacy notice. If our information practices change at some time in the future we will use only data collected from the time of the policy change forward.

Customers may prevent their information from being used for purposes other than those for which it was originally collected by contacting Travel Montana. Upon request we provide site visitors with access to all information [including proprietary information] that we maintain about them. Consumers can access this information by contacting Travel Montana. Consumers can have this information corrected or changed by contacting Travel Montana.

Security

We use industry-standard encryption technologies when transferring and receiving consumer data exchanged on our site. We have appropriate security measures in place at our physical site to protect against the loss, misuse or alteration of information that we have collected from you on our site.

expectations. The firm concluded that most customers appeared to be pleased with the site, and it was not necessary to enhance it. Nonetheless, Travel Montana constantly seeks to improve its Web services. It is currently revamping its primary database, as well as redesigning its call center software to add such features as online counseling and more fulfillment options.

Conclusions

Travel Montana's statement regarding privacy (Exhibit 1) should result in the public feeling comfortable at its tourism industry site, opening the way for more online retailing.

As advice to other organizations beginning Web marketing and development efforts, Travel Montana claims that "usability is king"; that is, customers must be able to navigate a site quickly and reliably.

A key to Travel Montana's Web marketing success has been its willingness to invest in new computer infrastructure. Because of this investment, the organization has been able to develop a number of niche sites, targeting several different audiences without drawing them away from the main attraction—the state of Montana.

Officials also believe that this investment must be matched with good data. Travel Montana regularly conducts surveys, tracks events and travel planner information, and updates contact information. Given the amount of these investments, the site must have users, users who are comfortable that they can visit a site without any violation of their privacy and confidentiality—meaning personal and financial information—as well as solid information regarding travel plans and preferences.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1982 Montana Promotions Division in the Department of Highways moves to the Department of Commerce and becomes Travel Montana.
- 1987 The Montana Legislature creates a 4 percent lodging facility tax, or a bed tax. This funding supports a number of organizations, including Travel Montana. The Tourism Advisory Council is created.
- 1988 Five million dollars in lodging facility taxes are collected.
- 1988 Some 9.5 million visitors spend an estimated \$1.52 billion in Montana.
- 1992 Travel Montana develops first five-year travel and tourism strategic plan.
- 1996 Visitors to the state spend an average of 4.3 days and \$97.24 per day, accounting for \$1.4 billion in expenditures.
- 2002 Lodging facility tax collects \$11.3 million.

Reference Material

Web Sites:

www.visitmt.com

www.lewisandclark.state.mt.us

www.wintermt.com

www.montanakids.com

www.montanameetings.com

www.montanafilm.com

www.travelmontana.state.mt.us

www.indiannations.visitmt.com

www.montanagroups.com

www.bizmt.com

Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc. 2002. *Montana Department of Commerce: 2001*. Helena, Mont. Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc.

Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc. *Internet Conversion Research Report*. Helena, Mont. Strategic Marketing and Research, Inc.

Travel Montana. 2000. *Travel Montana: 1999-2000 Tourism and Film Marketing Plan*. Helena, Mont. Travel Montana.

Travel Montana. 2002. *Report on the Montana Tourism Industry*. Helena, Mont. Travel Montana.

Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau

Overview

Overland Park, Kansas, is a suburb of Kansas City and a relatively new city, incorporated May 20, 1960. At that time, the city had a population of 28,085, but it since has grown to 152,000 residents, making it the second most populous city in the state. Its geographical area includes about 56 square miles of Johnson County, located in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

The Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau, created in 1983, has been a leader in the city to make tourism part of the local economic development composition. The services and functions of the bureau are focused on the promotion and marketing of Overland Park as a destination for conventions, meetings, and tourism. Among the bureau's duties are enhancing economic diversification, expanding the tax base, promoting the identity and image of Overland Park, promoting local amenities, creating additional employment, and bringing new dollars into the economy through traveler spending.

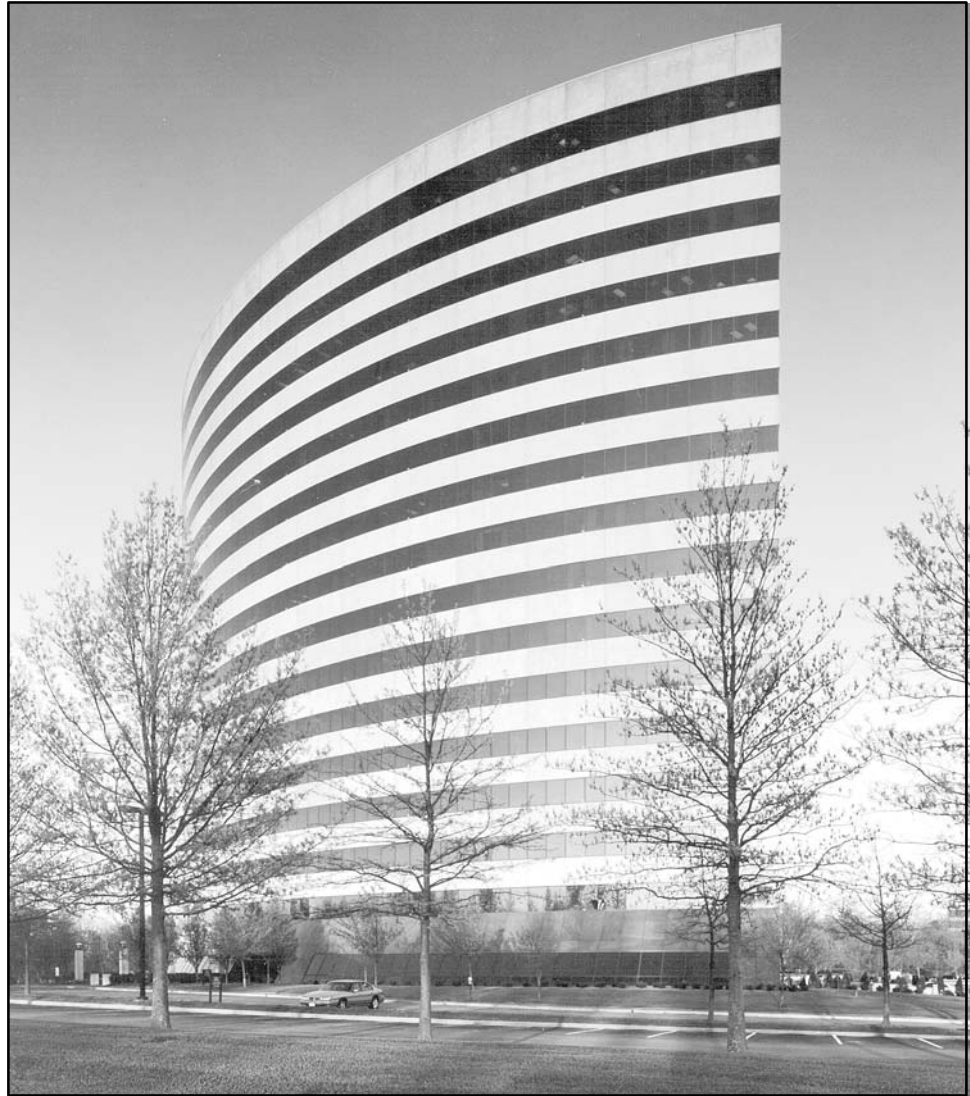
Context and History

During the early 1960s, city leaders adopted a comprehensive plan to manage growth in the following areas: land use, parks, schools, zoning, and housing. The plan also addressed industry, shopping districts, and expressways.

The 1960s and 1970s brought the city shopping centers, subdivisions, and a city hall. In the 1980s, Overland Park experienced a boom in commercial and residential development, and by 1988 the city's population surpassed 100,000.

The Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau was established in 1983 as a branch of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce. In 1987, the bureau separated from the chamber, although both entities maintain a cooperative and supportive relationship.

Overland Park has continued to develop its tourism infrastructure, including more than 32 hotels, 250 restaurants, a dinner theater, 77 parks, two enclosed shopping malls, and various stores and specialty shops.



Courtesy Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau

Organization

The bureau operates under the direction of the Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors. This board is composed of 25 members: 11 from the hotel and motel industry, 7 from the community at large, 3 standing members, and 4 ex-officio members.

Bureau staff positions include a president; finance manager; information services manager; communications director; sales director; communications director;



Courtesy Overland Park CVB

advertising head; student intern; convention services representative; motor coach and reunion sales; government, religious, and medical sales; corporate sales; association sales; regional and national convention sales; and athletic sales.

The OPCVB's partners are the chamber of commerce, city government, its board of directors, and local business and industry.

The Ambassador Volunteer program began in 1983 with five members. Since then, it has grown to a pool of 33 people. These volunteers are called to help with meeting and convention registration, assisting with the OPCVB's "Points of Presence" campaign for motor coach groups, and other projects with the bureau.

Best Practice: Web Marketing

Overland Park's Web site is a best practice in Web marketing because of its overall excellence on a modest budget—\$35,000 invested in the site. This budget is typical for a moderate-size convention and visitors bureau.

The bureau has a simple and effective Web site tailored to the specific interests of its users. The site clearly explains its purpose and directs visitors to important information such as dining and accommodations.

In November 2001, the Bureau launched a new image on the Web by unveiling its new site with a number of helpful features. The site features the bureau's new branding as "Overland Park: The Natural Choice." This phrase captures Overland Park's natural, park-like environment. The site features lush green colors and photographs of summer foliage. The site includes a searchable database of lodging, dining, and events in Overland Park. The Weather Channel's www.weather.com provides current local weather conditions.

The site also features a separate section for meeting planners, group tour operators, and sporting event organizers. Planners can obtain online information about holding a meeting in Overland Park or submit a request for additional meeting information through the Web. Group tour operators can view suggested itineraries, and sporting events organizations can gain information on the city's ability to host their sports group in Overland Park.

Overland Park's site is designed for esthetically pleasing images as well as functionality. The goal was to create a site allowing visitors the opportunity to "experience" Overland Park by viewing images of the city's natural setting, as well as accessing information about the city. The site is designed for quick downloads

and easy printing to accommodate the needs of all visitors, from the leisure traveler to the meeting planner.

Regarding site esthetics, officials felt it was important to market Overland Park as a “tree city,” a city of parks and green spaces. Many sporting events take place in these venues, and the site provides a map to parks and events. Such images contribute to an overall theme for the city as the “natural choice” for visitors desiring a healthy, family-oriented destination.

The OPCVB has been successful in its Web marketing and development efforts because it has thought strategically about what users want to experience and how to create that experience on the site. To access these user perceptions and expectations, the bureau created an enhanced feedback section on the site, as shown in Exhibit 1.

After discerning what the users wanted, the OPCVB then determined maintenance issues, including the separation of in-house and out-sourced tasks for the site. The bureau has ensured that the site is ready for added infrastructure and that the site can change and grow as the bureau itself evolves.

Results

It appears that the bureau’s Web marketing has contributed to the growing success of Overland Park as a destination. In 2001, the OPCVB reached a milestone for generating hotel/motel room nights exceeding 110,000, a new bureau record. The OPCVB will continue to focus on its major market segments—including athletics, conventions and associations, local corporations, government/medical/religious, and motor coach and reunions.

The OPCVB has several ideas for improving its Web site. First, officials would like to enhance service and sales to meeting planners, with nearly all aspects of planning for a meeting in Overland Park to be accomplished through the site. Similarly, non-meeting group planning would be accomplished through the site as well, offering more information. In the future, the bureau will provide more destination information to tourists and conference attendees.

Regarding technical aspects of the site, the OPCVB expects to add more graphics and video capabilities, including showing the community’s new convention center in real time to prospective visitors. In addition, the bureau would like to continue to develop the “natural” theme for Overland Park, showing potential visitors many of the natural outdoor and recreation amenities, such as parks and sporting events offered or sponsored by the city.

Conclusions

The fact that the city can offer this natural theme is related to early foresight regarding managing growth in the area before it occurred. In this respect, the case study also illustrates the increasing importance of considering tourism in the context of growth management, or smart growth. Convention and visitors bureaus should have a grasp of these issues for work originating in their own office or undertaken in conjunction with city hall or the city planning office.

Exhibit 1 Online User Feedback

OVERLAND PARK
Convention & Visitors Bureau

[Welcome to Overland Park](#) | [Visitor Guide](#) | [Group Planning Guide](#) | [About OPCVB](#)

Feedback

Thank you for visiting the Overland Park Convention & Visitors Bureau Web site. To help serve you better, we would appreciate you taking a few minutes to provide us your comments on this Web site including what you may want to see added as we continue to expand the site with you in mind. And in our appreciation, we'll send you a complimentary Sprint phone card! Remember that all questions are voluntary; however, you must include your name and mailing address to enable us to mail you a phone card.

How important is the information on our Web site to your travel plans?

Yes, you may e-mail me when there are significant changes to our Web site?
 Yes, you may contact me in three weeks for a post-trip follow-up survey?

Is there specific information on Overland Park that you failed to find on our Web site? Please specify:

Did you experience any technical difficulties within our Web site? Please specify:

Please enter your general comments about our Web site:

Yes, you may use my comments and name for promotional purposes

The following questions are for demographic purposes only:

Gender:

Number in household
 Adults: Children:

Your education:

Household income:

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey. In order to receive your complimentary Sprint phone card, please be sure to complete the address fields to the left.

NAME:

ORGANIZATION:

TITLE:

ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE / PROVINCE: ZIP / POSTAL CODE:

E-MAIL:

PHONE: FAX:

Which of the following best describes you as a visitor to our site:

Leisure traveler planning a future trip to Overland Park
 Leisure traveler planning a future trip to Kansas City
 Overland Park resident obtaining information on the city
 Travel agent or tour operator
 Meeting or event planner
 Journalist or travel writer
 Just seeking general Overland Park information
 Other (please specify in text box)

How old are you?

During your stay, which of the various attractions do you plan to visit? Check all that apply:

The Arboretum & Botanical Gardens
 Deanna Rose Children's Farmstead
 The New Theatre Restaurant
 Dick Clark's American Bandstand Grill
 Downtown Overland Park
 Yardley Hall at Johnson County Community College
 Museums
 Hike & Bike Trails
 Historical Sites/Tours
 Shopping
 Night Life
 Sports Teams
 Fairs/Festivals
 Other (please specify):

Courtesy Overland Park CVB

The Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau educates the public and practitioners alike about the potential for marketing destinations and attractions via the Web, providing evidence that non-exotic destinations with modest budgets can also benefit from this technology. The bureau does an excellent job of marketing its region by including many links to nearby attractions and destinations, such as events in the new convention center. In sum, the OPCVB sees the Web as a vehicle for image creation as well as generating the necessary linkages for regional tourism development.

CHRONOLOGY

August 1982	The Transient Guest Tax of 1 percent is initiated.
January 1983	The bureau begins operation. The city at this time has nine hotels/motels accounting for 1,572 rooms.
January 1985	The Transient Guest Tax of 2 percent is initiated.
June 1988	The bureau begins own corporation, separates from chamber of commerce.
September 1989	The Transient Guest Tax of 4 percent is initiated.
July 1998	The Transient Guest Tax of 6 percent is initiated.
December 2000	Overland Park houses 31 hotels/motels offering 4,620 rooms. The city has 2 million visitors with an economic impact of \$701 million.

Reference Material

Web Site:

www.opcvb.org

Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau. 2001. *2001 Annual Report*. Overland Park, Kan. Overland Park Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Part VII

Conclusion

16

Conclusion

The case studies presented in this book depict an industry in a state of transition. For DMOs, this transition means becoming a destination *management* organization instead of just a destination *marketing* organization. Economic recessions and privatization in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s have caused state tourism agencies to embrace accountability and evaluation. Return-on-investment studies, once considered a luxury, are now considered critical to the survival of these organizations. University research programs confront similar economic pressures and political realities, and are expected to creatively synthesize tourism with cutting-edge technologies, as well as demonstrate the relevance of their research agendas within their home states. Evidence for these shifts is found in these best practice categories: accountability research, diversified funding, advanced professional development, tourism information technologies, the increasing importance of advocacy, and integration of service and sales among DMOs.

However, the tourism and destination industry still faces significant challenges. Regarding the adoption of private-sector business models, which model is appropriate? Although many organizations still feature a hierarchical, top-down approach to management, others are moving toward a more vertical model with each department or function operating synchronously, but with greater autonomy. The move toward destination management from marketing also means the addition of new staff with new skills and roles. However, there is widespread disagreement among DMOs as to what these new skills and roles should be.

In addition, the revolution in Web marketing is problematic in that many DMOs appear to be committing scarce resources to this area at the expense of other critical functions, such as strategic research and advocacy programming. Many Internet sites themselves are devoid of the content consumers hunger for; they instead are overinvesting in design and sales. In time, consumers will purchase this content elsewhere. Increasingly, successful DMOs will distinguish between *knowledge* and *information* management. A knowledge-oriented DMO will selectively gather and analyze information that will help it move strategically into the future and provide ample choices and improved experiences to consumers. Conversely, an information-oriented DMO simply gathers massive amounts of data from its Web site and other sources for benchmarking purposes without significantly improving the destination experience, real or virtual, for consumers.

In conclusion, the findings here suggest that as the management function of DMOs continues to expand, these organizations must reassess the concepts of *place* and *community*. Destination management means perceiving the community as a package of special places, from entranceways to the community to primary

attractions, instead of viewing the destination as a special place built around one or two primary attributes.

In addition, the expanding management function will mean a dual focus on communities, both real and virtual. The real community is the local community that supports the organization. This community demands that the organization show concern and support for the local economy and physical environment. Conversely, the virtual community is the community around the world with an interest in the destination. This community demands that the organization provide access and knowledge. Both communities are patrons and partners of the contemporary destination management organization, and both communities play an integral role in the success or failure in the best practice categories of research, funding, professional development, information dissemination, advocacy, and Web marketing.

--R.H.

Appendix Contacts

Organization	Contacts
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Michigan State University Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center	Dr. Donald F. Holecek 172 Natural Resources Building Michigan State University East Lansing, MI 48824-1222 Telephone: (517) 353-0793 Fax: (517) 432-2296 E-mail: dholecek@msu.edu
Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau	Barbara L. Okamoto Vice President, Customer Trends and Communications 2270 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite 801 Honolulu, HI 96815 Telephone: (808) 924-0242 Fax: (808) 924-0292 E: bokamoto@hvcb.org
San Francisco Convention And Visitors Bureau	Brian Baker Vice President of Marketing 201 Third Street, Suite 900 San Francisco, CA 94103-3185 Telephone: (415) 227-2615 Fax: (415) 227-2602 E-mail: bbaker@sfcvb.org
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Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau	Kent A. Love, APR Vice President, Marketing Communications 1223 Turner Street Lansing, MI 48906 Telephone: (517) 377-1418 Fax: (517) 487-5151 E-mail: klove@lansing.org

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