

Introduction

In December 2014, the Board of Directors determined that it was time to re-evaluate the roles Central Counties should be playing in the delivery of tourism within the region. Through several high-level facilitated discussions, the board identified several “buckets” where CCT should/could be focusing their attention. These were:

- RTO, SUB-REGION, Stakeholders Collaboration
- Product Development
- Workforce Development
- Advocacy
- Brand and Marketing
- Accountability and Reporting

Based on the discussions surrounding these “buckets”, Central Counties Tourism’s Board of Directors commissioned the development of a Destination Management Plan for the region. The purpose of the plan was to reset priorities, gain a thorough understanding of “who does what” and ensure that all stakeholders understood and “bought-in” to overarching visions.

This document serves as the executable Destination Management Plan based on the Destination Management Report provided by BrainTrust. It highlights where CCT wants to be functioning under each of its five pillars (Governance, Workforce Development, Product/Experience Development, Marketing/Communications and Investment Attraction), how we believe we can get there and when, what success looks like and how we are going to measure that success.

Strategies and Objectives that line up with the “buckets” will be highlighted.

Purpose

In 2014, Central Counties reviewed its Vision and Mission Statements and replaced them with a Founding Principle and Core Values. It is within this principle and values that the Destination Management Plan was developed.

FOUNDING PRINCIPLE: Central Counties Tourism believes stakeholder engagement and alignment will draw businesses together to build a strong, visitor centric focus and maximize results for tourism operators

CENTRAL COUNTIES VALUES: Conducting business with integrity, transparency and respect
Embracing diverse tourism experiences
Collaboration and leveraging resources
A sustainable business model through solid stewardship and innovation

Definitions

In discussing strategy, it is important to have a common understanding of the terms used in the document.

Strategic Direction	Where CCT wants to ultimately be positioned under each of its pillars. Each Strategic Direction supports the Founding Principle and Core Values.
Objectives	Manageable, time-sensitive allocations of resources that move the organization toward the ultimate Strategic Direction. There is a clear link between each objective and a Strategic Direction. Objectives are the backbone of the yearly Business Plan and build on each other year-over-year.
Tactics	Individual activities that support the achievement of Objectives. Each Objective may have several tactics associated with it. Tactics are measurable and are used to gauge organizational effectiveness at achieving the Objectives and moving towards the Strategic Direction.
KPI'S	Key Performance Indicators are the agreed upon outcomes that will be measured to determine the execution effectiveness of each tactic.
Goals	The quantitative and qualitative, agreed-upon target to be achieved for each tactic.
Results	The final measurement of achievement for each tactic.

Definitions Cont'd

Operator:	A tourism-related business or organization that is providing an end product/service that is utilized directly by consumers.
Partner:	An organization that supports the tourism agenda without directly owning the products/services that are used to deliver the tourism experience. These include Municipalities, BIAs, Chambers of Commerce, DMOs and Festival Organizers.
Stakeholders:	An umbrella term to capture all operators, partners and individuals who support and/or benefit from tourism.
Region(s):	In its singular, Region is referring to Central Counties Tourism Region (RTO 6). When used as a plural, Regions refers to the three sub-regions that make up Central Counties borders. These are Durham Region, York Region and The Hills of Headwaters tourism region.
DMO(s):	The staff and board of directors of the three regions that work to further tourism within their borders.
Categories:	The five product categories identified in the DMP as strengths for CCT. They are: 1) Four Season Outdoor (leisure), 2) Small Towns, Villages, Rural Landscapes (Leisure), 3) Golf (Leisure and Sport), 4) Sports Tourism, 5) Meetings, Conventions, Incentive Travel
Leisure Market:	Visitors travelling for personal reasons, not as a group or for a sport tournament or business meeting/convention

Acronyms

CCT	Central Counties Tourism
HTA	Headwaters Tourism Association
YRACT	York Region Arts, Culture and Tourism Association
Durham	Durham Region Tourism
OTMPC	Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation
TIAO	Tourism Industry Association of Ontario
DC	Destination Canada (Federal Tourism Agency)
IDO	Investment Development Office (Ministry of Tourism)

Central Counties Categories

The DMP report concluded that there are five overarching categories of strength in the region. These categories have been identified as being CCT's best bets for developing unique selling propositions. They are currently in different states of market-readiness and will be the focus for the organization. They are:

- 1) Four Season Outdoors (Leisure)
- 2) Small Towns, Villages and Rural Landscapes (Leisure)
- 3) Golf (Leisure and Sport Tourism)
- 4) Meetings and Conventions (MC&IT)
- 5) Sport Tourism

RTO Pillars

The Ministry of Tourism evaluates the efforts of the 13 RTO's under five pillars which were identified by the industry as being the most important for tourism growth. They are:

- 1) Workforce Development (CCT is taking this a step further and calling the pillar Industry Equipping)
- 2) Product Development (The Ministry now recognizes it as Product/Experience Development)
- 3) Marketing
- 4) Investment Attraction
- 5) Governance and Administration (CCT has included Industry Relations under this pillar)

Ideal Guests

An analysis of the visitor profiles for RTO 6 was a key element in CCT's strategy development process undertaken as part of the DMP. This assessment and application to CCT's tourism assets resulted in the identification of three primary leisure visitor profiles or traveller types as CCT's "ideal guests":

- Up and Coming Explorers
- Nature Lovers
- Connected Explorers

What follows is a snapshot of each traveller type. These traveller types will be used as a basis or backdrop for CCT's product / experience development and promotional activity. The specific traveller characteristics shape and prioritize development and promotion using CCT's core tourism assets as a starting point. It also has application at the operator level. In other words, tourism operators can look at their tourism offering and refine, modify or enhance it to have appeal to not only the typical traveller but also to these three specific traveller types. RTO 6 staff have access to the detail descriptions for each segment and should review this in detail with the DMO's and operators alike. An overview of the segments are presented here.

Up and Coming Explorers

This group consists of young families, aged 18-34 with kids. Many have a diverse background – 45% are visible minorities and 40% are immigrants. They are recently affluent and emerging into a new life phase that includes enjoying new experiences like travel. Visiting friends and family IS NOT a primary travel driver. Their travel experiences start with what is “nearby” and typically considered a core tourism attraction. This group wants to explore and learn new things. 72% see learning as the core benefit of travel, especially when explorations are guided. 70% plan travel to see major sites and attractions.

Nature Lovers

Typically families with kids, this group has a passion for experiencing the great outdoors together. Travel for them is all about exploring new, undiscovered places off the beaten path. With a lower than average travel budget, these travellers are happy with the basics – camping in a tent, spending time as a family, and taking in all the beauty around them. Because spending time outdoors means an opportunity to enrich family bonds.

Connected Explorers

Connected Explorers are young couples under 40, both with and without children. They are a confident, youthful, optimistic group. They have a deep-seated need to travel and expose themselves to many new experiences. Travel for them is about expanding their horizons, and they are looking for a fully packed schedule of activities. Technology is a key part of travel. They use it at all phases of a trip including researching, booking, planning and especially when sharing their travel experiences once back home

DMP: Next 18 months

The DMP provided CCT with a framework from which to build our business plans. Each new business plan builds on the previous year, moving the organization towards the agreed upon Strategic Direction. This summary only encompasses Q3/Q4 of fiscal 2015/2016 and fiscal 2016/2017 (Year 1). In fall of 2016 and annually after that, the Strategic Direction will be reviewed and evaluated against the changing tourism landscape and yearly objectives for the following fiscal will be set.

One of the founding principles in the DMP is that CCT should “attract with the best”. To this end, it is important to note that operator/stakeholder efforts outlined below will be focused on what is considered “the best” Central Counties has to offer.

The Destination Management Plan for the remainder of this fiscal and 2016/2017 has been broken into five pillars; governance, product/experience development, industry equipping/workforce development, marketing/communications and investment attraction.

Governance

Strategic Direction: All stakeholders have a full and comprehensive understanding of the tourism landscape, their unique contribution to it and how to best leverage resources where synergies and alignment exists

Objectives	Implementation	Responsibility	Notes
Establish who does what in each sub-region under each of the five pillars and each of CCT’s areas of focus, understanding that it may be different for each DMO. Agree to where alignment currently exists and can be developed	Q3/Q4	CCT ED and DMO Leads	RTO/Sub-Region Collaboration Identified as the #1 Priority by Board and DMP
Establish a comprehensive inventory of stakeholders that cater to our defined target audience and support our five categories of focus	Q3/Q4	CCT ED and DMO Lead	Board recognizes the need for better understanding of CCT assets
Municipalities, Operators, other stakeholders have a clear understanding of the Direction and how they can align to benefit.	Year 1	CCT with DMO support	
Further develop alignment as identified in Q3/Q4 so that 60% of joint (DMO/RTO) tourism resources build on aligned projects	Year 1	CCT and DMO	
Align with Ministry goals, OTMPC and DC direction so that we leverage minimum \$100,000 in value added media per year	Year 1	CCT	

Products/Experiences

Strategic Direction: Enhance competitiveness of tourism offerings that appeal to our ideal guest within our categories to grow tourism visitation and economic contribution

Objectives	Implementation	Responsibility	Notes
Establish product/market match under the three identified leisure categories	Q3/Q4 and Year 1	CCT	This begins the process of demand-side thinking and leading with the best
Develop a minimum of two tourism-ready product experiences based on the product/market matches to drive trackable economic impact	Year 1	CCT	Supports the Product “bucket” from Transition Plan

Industry Equipping and Workforce Development

Strategic Direction: Ensure we have informed, effective and service-oriented tourism providers

Objectives	Implementation	Responsibility	Notes
Informed Industry regarding “What tourism-ready” means	Q3/Q4	CCT	Matches directly with board’s Workforce Development “bucket” from the Transition Plan
Stakeholder tourism-readiness gaps analysis so that priority industry equipping opportunities are identified for year 1 implementation	Q3/Q4 and Ongoing	CCT	
Engaged tourism operators participating in industry equipping opportunities to fill identified gaps	Year 1	CCT	

Marketing/Communication

Strategic Direction: To develop a marketing and communications plan that has clear, measureable objectives, tactics and goals that are aligned in voice and message.

Objectives	Implementation	Responsibility	Notes
Develop a consumer brand strategy for CCT so that DMO name recognition is included	Q3/Q4	CCT with DMO input	The Brand & Marketing “bucket” had all three of these objectives as early priorities
Develop an aligned web strategy so that CCT web referrals to DMO’s and operators increase	Q3/Q4		
Develop social media and digital strategy so that consumer engagement increases	Q3/Q4		
Execute web, social media, digital and brand strategies	Year 1	CCT	

The one difference between the DMP and the original direction taken by the board through the transition is the delivery of marketing and communication services. Prior to transition, CCT was conducting region-wide campaigns under the Central Counties Brand. The transition called for better support of the sub-regional brands and CCT conducted three separate campaigns for Spring/Summer and Fall. The DMP calls for campaigns based on aligned product categories that drives back to an umbrella site highlighting the sub-regional strengths in that category.

Investment Attraction

Strategic Direction: Be the regional resource and champion of tourism investment. Be the catalyst and facilitator of regional investment discussions.

Objectives	Implementation	Responsibility	Notes
Support stakeholders in their efforts to bring additional tourism assets to the region	Ongoing	CCT	This aligns with the advocacy “bucket” from the Transition Plan
Identify regional tourism asset gaps	Q3/Q4	CCT	Already being done for one of the Governance objectives
Match gaps with opportunities so that investment in tourism increases	Year 1	CCT	

Accountability and Reporting

This is one of the “buckets” from the Transition Plan that is not overtly represented in this document. However, the document as a whole does match the board priority in the accountability area. It is important to note that the reporting priorities will be a focus of the business plans which layer on tactics and key performance indicators to the objectives.