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Introduction

Central Counties Tourism (CCT) is the provincially funded not-for-profit dedicated to supporting and promoting the tourism assets of Durham Region, York Region and Headwaters Tourism Region. It is governed by the industry through an appointed and elected Board of Directors.

In 2017, the Board of Directors undertook a strategic planning session to lead the organization forward through 2021. Building off the success of the 2015-2018 Destination Management Plan, the board engaged the services of Floor13 to complete an industry scan and facilitate discussion and research of stakeholders, board and staff to build a comprehensive plan that is relevant and timely.

The plan was developed utilizing the latest tourism data and incorporating direction from the Strategic Framework for Tourism in Ontario and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sports' Strategic Priorities.

In November 2017, the Board approved the “Central Counties Strategic Plan: 2018 – 2021” (Appendix 1) with the understanding that it is a fluid document meant for yearly review to ensure that it remains relevant to the changing realities of the industry and organization.

The 2018-2019 Central Counties Business Plan builds off of the success of the last three years and incorporates the priorities set by the board in the new strategy. It is written to satisfy both the primary objectives outlined in the strategy and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport pillars.

Mission

Our Mission is to foster the growth of tourism visitations to Central Counties, leading with strategic partnerships that strengthen market readiness and consumer awareness.

Core Purpose

We are passionate about telling the story of tourism in Central Counties.....providing our industry partners with leadership and a unified direction by which to grow their business and achieve their goals

Strategic Direction 2021

Aligned with Ontario Ministry of Tourism priorities, and powered by strategic partnerships that focus on communicating, innovating and marketing.....Central Counties will achieve growth of 3% annually in product and experience development, and growth in total visitations of 5%, by the end of fiscal 2020-2021.

Primary Objectives

- Communicate the value of tourism, the role of CCT, and how CCT can facilitate stakeholders capitalizing from tourism.
- Work with tourism organizations and stakeholders to enhance and deliver experiences to target markets.....for stronger experience alignment and greater visitor spend.
- Develop and/or support communications programs designed to assist stakeholders to tell their stories to target audiences.

Definitions

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

| | |
|------------|---|
| 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. |
| Outcome | The cumulative affect of results supporting the objective |

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 four product categories identified as strengths for CCT. They are: 1) Four Season Outdoor (leisure), 2) Small Towns, Villages, Rural Landscapes (Leisure), 3) Golf (Leisure and Sport), 4) Group Travel (sport, MC&IT, group tour) |
| 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 |
| YRAC | York Region Arts and Culture |
| Durham | Durham Region Tourism |
| DeON | Destination Ontario (formerly Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation) |
| TIAO | Tourism Industry Association of Ontario |
| DC | Destination Canada (Federal Tourism Agency) |
| IDO | Investment Development Office (Ministry of Tourism) |
| Q(1-4) | Fiscal Quarters Q1 Apr-Jun, Q2 Jul-Sep, Q3 Oct-Dec, Q4 Jan-Mar |

Ideal Guests

In 2017, Central Counties commissioned Strategic Navigator to complete an Audience Research study (Appendix II) to ensure that audiences identified in the 2014 Destination Management Plan were still relevant and to identify emerging audiences. The research identified eight types of visitors who are currently aware of and visit the region. These are:

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
|  <p>Family Fun Fan (wants to have a good time with the family)</p> |  <p>Outdoor Enthusiast (enjoys getting outside, enjoying fresh air and connecting with nature)</p> |  <p>Backroads Explorer (wants to discover towns and experiences off the beaten path)</p> |  <p>Culture Connoisseur (enjoys food, music, arts and culture)</p> |
|  <p>Thrill Seeker (enjoys lots of excitement)</p> |  <p>Knowledge Hunter (Seeks to understand more about the region, its history and its people)</p> |  <p>Pampered Traveler (Loves to relax and get pampered)</p> |  <p>Shopping Enthusiast (Enjoys shopping and finding great deals)</p> |

Central Counties’ top three recent visitor types are Family Fun Fan, Outdoor Enthusiast and Backroads Explorer who represent more than 60% of the visitors that come to the region.

| | | Prospective Visitors % | Recent Visitors % |
|--|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Family Fun Fan - who wants to have a good time with the family | | 21 | 25 |
| Outdoor Enthusiast - who enjoys getting outside, enjoying fresh air and connecting with nature | | 17 | 21 |
| Backroads Explorer - who wants to discover towns and experiences off the beaten path | | 11 | 15 |
|  <p>TRAVELER PERSONA</p> | Culture Connoisseur - who enjoys food, music, arts and culture | 16 | 13 |
| | Thrill Seeker - who enjoys lots of excitement | 6 | 10 |
| | Knowledge Hunter - who seeks to understand more about the region, its history and its people | 11 | 8 |
| | Pampered traveler - who loves to relax and get pampered | 10 | 5 |
| | Shopping Enthusiast - who enjoys shopping and finding great deals | 7 | 4 |

Perspective visitors are more apt to be a little bit older and less likely to travel with kids. The Culture Connoisseur persona becomes the third visitor type, replacing Backroads Explorer for prospective visitors.

Central Counties uses Destination Ontario’s Traveller Segment Profile to identify audiences and has been focusing on:

- Up and Coming Explorers (Family Fun Fan)
- Nature Lovers (Outdoor Enthusiast)
- Connected Explorers (Backroads Explorer)

It is interesting to note that the three segments CCT has focused on over the last three years represent more than 60% of current visitation. Below is a brief description of each segment.

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

Nature Lovers are 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, authentic 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

The Audience Research indicates that of the people who have not already been to Central Counties, the most likely visitors will be Family Fun Fans, Outdoor Enthusiasts and Culture Connoisseurs. Culture Connoisseurs translate to Knowledge Seekers in the DeON Traveller Segment Profile.

Knowledge Seekers

Travellers in this segment are looking to appreciate and understand the places they visit. Their trips are typically about expanding their knowledge and stimulating their minds rather than resting and relaxing. They are driven by a desire to explore culture, history, architecture and natural landmarks and often focus on sight-seeing, museums, galleries and historical sites.

B2C vs B2B

A very key insight from the audience research was that the regions do not resonate with travellers. Of potential visitors (those with interest in travelling to or within Ontario but have not visited Central Counties) to CCT, not one of them knew the names York Region, Durham Region or Headwaters Region. In fact, a full 75% of people who indicated they visited a place within the region did not know they were in Headwaters, York or Durham. And even when prompted with a visual map of the region, a full 55% did not recognize that they were in Durham, York or Headwaters. It wasn't until specific locations (towns) or attractions (Canada's Wonderland, Tree-Top Trekking, Spirit Tree, etc.), were mentioned that they said, "Oh yeah, I have been there in the past 12 months."

Central Counties focuses its limited resources working with stakeholders to develop strong, desirable experiences and then communicate the experiences to the right audiences in order to motivate travel to our region. A prime example is the partnered *Where Am I* campaign with DeON in 2017, which featured three properties in the region and drove more than 120,000 unique visits to the YDH website, matching experience with place.

Having said that, it is very important to foster and grow the Central Counties Tourism brand with all stakeholders. Stakeholders need to recognize CCT as their one stop shop for all things tourism. Work to ensure that the CCT brand is front and centre among stakeholders began in 2017 and is a key element of the successful delivery of the strategy over the next three years.

Executive Summary

The 2018-2019 business plan is very focused on moving the needle forward against the three primary objectives of the new Strategy (Page 3). At its highest level, the Strategy is very simple and linear.

- 1) Make sure that all stakeholders understand the economic impact of tourism, how they can benefit from it and how Central Counties can help their businesses/communities thrive from it
- 2) Engage stakeholders and enable them to become more tourism ready – from staffing to social media, partnering to experience development – so that they are ready to welcome more guests who will then become their champions
- 3) Assist stakeholders in telling their stories to the right audiences at the right times so that they realize success from their investments in tourism readiness

While the strategy is linear in assisting a business with no tourism knowledge/experience become tourism ready and reap the benefits of motivating a new audience to visit, CCT recognizes that its stakeholders are at different points along the path. To this end, CCT will be active with all three primary objectives simultaneously to assist the greatest number of stakeholders at the same time. The focus for 2018-2019 delivers on the recommended tactics from the strategy.

To deliver on Objective #1 and strengthen the Central Counties (B2B) Brand, CCT will:

- Have the Executive Director present at municipal councils both pre- and post-election. Pre-election messaging will be about the importance of tourism as an economic driver and post-election messaging will be a high-level overview of Central Counties and how we can help municipalities benefit from tourism.
- Establish a “Tourism Awareness” B2B communications strategy (including online, social media, news tracking, etc.) with the Sustainability Committee that determines:
 - why we are doing it
 - who are we telling the stories to
 - what are the goals/expected outcomes

The strategy will be developed in Q1 and executed in Q2-Q4.

- Conduct 1-2 Town Hall style Tourism Now sessions per region that are open to all stakeholders. In addition, municipalities/BIAs/community groups may also request to have a private Tourism Now session.

- Investigate, develop, recommend and implement by Q4, a visitor tracking program for the region (demographics, travel values, visitor experiences vs expectations)
 - Work with regions to identify a comprehensive program to track key indicators re: spend, visitation, business events, etc.
 - Provide stakeholders with the tools to accurately track and measure visitation, revenue and other metrics (media, clicks, etc.) at their locations and rework all contracts and MOU's to include the delivery of tracking/measurement back to CCT.
 - Retain a data collection house to monitor, collect, police, digest and analyze the data to meet competition laws.
 - Successful implementation provides CCT data and baselines for 2019-2020.
- Determine if stakeholders are ready to move Symposium to one location for two days.
 - Research conducted at 2018 Tourism Symposium
 - If it is feasible, a communications strategy will be developed in Q2 to ensure strong participation
- Collect industry research and trends and communicate to CCT's network of stakeholders

The second primary objective is “to work with tourism organizations and stakeholders to enhance and deliver experiences to target markets.....for stronger experience alignment and greater visitor spend.” Stakeholders rely on CCT to help them become more tourism ready by providing relevant courses, workshops, networking and destination/experience development opportunities. To deliver on this objective, CCT will:

- Successfully launch, sell and deliver the three Bootlegging experiences developed in 2017-2018 to showcase and evaluate the value of working together to create new saleable experiences.
 - Develop a clear and concise Memorandum of Understanding with all partners participating in the bootlegging experience to track successes and any challenges.
 - Incorporate the experiences into the 2018 summer campaigns.
 - Review the program and determine CCT's future role in developing and delivering experiences for profit.
- Complete a Development and Investment Plan for CCT and its regions which includes an updated assets map (Accommodations, Sporting Venues, Group Ready Attractions) and gaps analysis.
- Work with Business Development Committee to determine benchmark metrics for 2019-2020 including:
 - Data needs
 - Training
 - Advocacy and awareness
- Provide training and development opportunities for stakeholders who want to incorporate group travel as a revenue stream.

- Increase the relevant content on www.centralcounties.ca including:
 - Easy to follow “how-to” forms/instructions so that stakeholders have the tools to complete their profiles, register for online courses, upload events, complete readiness surveys, etc.
 - Easy to find research and data to assist make sound business decisions.
 - Testimonials and business success stories from stakeholders working with CCT.

- Develop and launch a supporting B2B marketing and communications plan which may include:
 - B2B social media
 - Information sharing
 - Improved eNewsletter
 - Networking

- Provide opportunity for stakeholders to receive customized, detailed visitor information for their property
 - Phase II of the Environics program allows CCT staff to produce a detailed report about a stakeholder’s visitors including demographics and psychographics.
 - In BC, some tourism agencies are selling this report to stakeholders for \$2,500. CCT is working with Environics to produce a scaled version of the report, keeping in the meat and interpretation information and launching it at the 2017-2018 Tourism Symposiums to be held March 2018.
 - CCT will offer to complete these reports for stakeholders for \$99, which covers staff time and instills a sense of value to the stakeholders.

- Research, secure and implement stakeholder tourism training opportunities
 - Experience Development learning opportunities in province to assist more businesses to understand how to leverage what they are already doing in a slightly different, saleable way.
 - Online learning through eLearning University and CCT generated webinars.
 - Partnered training/learning opportunities with OTEC, TIAO, Ministry, Etc.
 - Facilitate Community Tourism Plan and Wayfinding Strategy development with municipalities.

- Champion Experience Development by:
 - Launching the Bootlegging experiences (above)
 - Develop trails and nature experiences from 2017-2018 research for 2019 launch
 - Research Art/Culture experience feasibility for 2019-2020 development

The third primary objective of the strategy focuses on driving visitors to and around the region to spend money with CCT stakeholders. Central Counties will develop and/or support communications programs designed to assist stakeholders tell their stories to target audiences. To accomplish this Central Counties will:

- Design and launch five integrated communications campaigns (spring, summer, fall, holiday, winter)
 - Itineraries/experiences themed around the campaigns and built with target audiences in mind
 - Supported with paid media, social media and by partner stakeholders through their social media channels
 - Drive consumers to www.yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca where they can easily choose their own adventures in the region
 - Host fam tours for travel influencers

- Support stakeholders in their efforts to tell their story to a broader audience
 - Provide media advisory distribution service
 - Keep the event calendar updated for stakeholders so that CCT content remains robust
 - Explain “whys” and “how tos” for tagging CCT, DMO’s and DeON in stakeholder social media
 - Offer co-op advertising opportunities to make it possible for stakeholders to advertise on channels they would not be able to on their own
 - Use partnership dollars to leverage stakeholder resources to expand their marketing and communications efforts
 - Staff to keep on top of the newest industry trends to take advantage of new ways to reach consumers and influence their decision making

- Work closely with DMO's and DeON
 - Develop regional marketing campaigns to engage residents to get out and explore their neighbourhoods
 - Continue to push for integrated stakeholder profile and event listings across
 - Provide compelling content to DeON so that stakeholders get provincial and international exposure
 - Continually update CCT content on www.ontariotravel.net to drive consumer visitation to www.yorkdurhamheadwaters.com

- Drive measurable MC&IT, Sport Tourism and Travel Trade visitation to the region
 - Create net pricing itineraries for the travel trade segment and facilitate pilot travel trade fam tour during summer and fall
 - Partner with stakeholders to bring saleable products/experience to trade shows
 - Develop and launch sales website to better support stakeholders in those markets

Staff are confident that they can achieve the goals set out in the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan and are excited to put the new plans into place. All activities will be conducted with transparency and will follow the policies and procedures of the organization.

Business Plan Details

While the 2018-2021 Strategy is written to deliver against three primary objectives, it is important to note that Central Counties must deliver against five pillars as part of its funding arrangement with the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport. These pillars are Industry Equipping, Experience Development, Marketing & Communications, Investment Attraction and Partnership (which CCT has called Industry Relations for several years).

As part of the 2018-2019 RTO Guide developed by the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Culture, generic Objectives have been developed to assist in creating consistency between the thirteen organizations. The Guide was a key piece of the research conducted by Floor13 in the creation of the three-year strategy and you will notice that the objectives listed below under each pillar match very closely with the objectives of CCT's strategy plan.

Each action area under the pillar is broken into chart form where tactics to achieve the action are described. Where relevant, KPI's and Goals have been added to the tactic. The Results column will be filled out at mid-term and year-end to demonstrate how CCT delivered against the plan. The Lead is the manager responsible for ensuring staff and organization are on track to deliver the tactics.

Industry Relations (Partnerships) and Industry Equipping (Workforce Development)

Objectives: To become a catalyst in building strategic alignment and promoting collaboration within the industry
Facilitate and support the attraction, development and retention of a tourism workforce to enhance the customer experience.

| Communicating the value of CCT to Stakeholders | | | | |
|---|--|------------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| CCT presentations to council about the Economic Impact of Tourism and the role of Central Counties to help municipalities and other stakeholders be more successful | # of council presentations | 12 | | ED |
| Establish a "Tourism Awareness" B2B communications strategy (including online, social media, news tracking, etc.) with the Sustainability Committee | Strategy approved by committee and implemented | Done in Q1 | | DMC |
| Implement the B2B communications strategy | % implementation by end of Q4 | 75% | | |

ED=Executive Director, DMC=Director of Marketing and Communications, DIR=Director of Industry Relations, MFP=Manager of Finance and Procurement

| Investigate, develop, recommend and implement by Q4 a visitor tracking program for the region – demographics, travel values, visitor experiences vs expectations | | | | |
|---|---|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Redraft all partner contract types to include reporting metrics back to CCT | # of partners reporting | 18 | | ED |
| Complete RFP for company to recommend and implement a board approved system of collecting sample metrics across the region | Awarded RFP | Q1 | | ED |
| Have stakeholders from a variety of tourism sectors actively participate in the collection of tourism metrics | # of participating stakeholders | 20 | | ED |
| Collect and disseminate data to stakeholders and funders | # of reports generated | 4 | | DIR |
| Use year-end data as baseline metrics for next fiscal | | | | |
| Provide stakeholders the opportunity to learn more about who their visitors are, where they are coming from, where similar people live, etc., through the Environics program. | # of stakeholders participating in program year 1 | 10 | | DIR |

| Provide learning opportunities for stakeholders to become more tourism ready | | | | |
|--|---|------------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Conduct Tourism Now Open Houses to inform stakeholders about all the ways CCT can assist them in becoming more successful | # of Open Houses # of Participants | 5 75 | | DIR |
| Research and conduct partnered learning opportunities for stakeholders to expand their knowledge about relevant tourism-related topics | # of Courses # of Participants | 4 100 | | DIR |
| Relevant Tourism Symposium content drives additional stakeholder registration | # of registrations Satisfaction Rating | 350 90% | | DIR |
| Update www.centralcounties.ca (B2B) website to include better access to information, forms, events, newsletters, forums, etc. so that stakeholders can better prepare for incorporating tourism into their products/programs | | | | DIR |
| Include learning opportunities to make AGM more engaging and relevant for stakeholders | # of Attendees Satisfaction Rating | 100 90% | | DIR |

| Stakeholder Support | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Keep B2C content timely and accurate by researching and uploading relevant events. This will increase the depth of content for media distribution and online. | # of events uploaded | 720 | | DIR |
| Maintain membership in associations that assist CCT and stakeholder achieve their goals through research, business development opportunities, media and communications | | | | MFP |
| Support TIAO's Tourism as a Career program and campaign to help grow the pool of qualified workers across the region and province | | | | DIR |

Product / Experience Development

Objective: To enhance visitor experience through well-designed tourism products that meet current and future customer demand.

| Develop compelling itineraries and trails (E.g. Wine & Ale, Country Path) to support the B2C communications efforts and provide compelling ideas/reasons to visit the region | | | | |
|--|--|----------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Determine best pan-regional themes for trails | # of theme chosen | Min. 2 | | DMC |
| Work with stakeholders to build compelling trails | # of stakeholders participating | 18 | | DIR |
| Set participation criteria to leverage partner resources | Dollar value of partner participation (in-kind and cash) | \$18,000 | | DMC |
| Refresh existing itineraries to support campaigns | # of refreshed itineraries | 24 | | DIR |

| Launch CCT's Bootlegging Experiences (one for each region) and promote the self-guided versions | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Keep the logistics, operations and sales of the experiences in CCT control to test the viability of creating new revenue generation opportunities for the organization | | | | |
| Execute a Fam Trip for media to showcase the new immersive experiences | Ad value of generated stories | | | |
| Sell a minimum of six guided Bootlegging Experiences (two per region) | # of trips Total participants | 6 120 | | |

| Develop Nature and Outdoor Experiences for launch in 2019-2020. This builds off the Trails Strategy developed in 2017-2018. | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Procure a project lead who will work with stakeholder experts such as conservation authorities, trail organizations, nature clubs and interested municipalities to collect nature and trails stories and activities that are specific to CCT. | | | | ED |
| Work with an interpretive planner to craft the stories and activities in to succinct, saleable, experiences | # of curated experiences | 3 | | ED |
| Through a production manager, work with identified stakeholders to bring the interpretive plans to life with an end result of new guided, interactive experiences that are ready to go to market | # of market ready experiences | 3 | | ED |

| Research the viability of developing art and artisan experiences in 2019-2020 | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Procure a research firm with art/culture experience to complete a landscape of art and artisan opportunities across the region. This information will be useful for CCT on a number of fronts, not just for experience development | | | | DMC |
| Have firm recommend one to three themes that merit experience development in 2019-2020. | | | | |

Investment Attraction

Objective: To increase investment in the tourism industry to enhance visitor experience.

| Work with communities and other organizations (BIA's, Conservation Authorities, Regions) to adopt tourism delivery and enhancement as part of their mandate and make the necessary investments to deliver on the mandate | | | | |
|---|---|--------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Develop Community Tourism Plans with interested municipalities. The plan prioritizes needs to enhance the visitor experience and, once adopted by council, usually results in investment of some sort. | # of Completed Plans | 4 | | ED |
| Develop and support the implementation (through the Partnership Fund) of Community Wayfinding Strategies with communities that have completed a tourism plan through CCT or another facilitator. Wayfinding is a good first step for many municipalities in their efforts to become more tourism ready. | # of Completed Strategies # of wayfinding partnerships | 3 2 | | ED |
| Discuss, as part of council presentations, the impact of allowing and supporting investment in facilities designed to drive visitors to the municipality. | | | | ED |
| Connect Investment Development Office with municipal Economic Development Staff and vice versa in an effort to ensure that no opportunities are missed (regardless of whether they come to fruition or not) | | | | |

Marketing Plan

Objective: To increase awareness of Ontario as a travel destination and increase conversion in target markets.

The following plan follows the guidelines as set out in the 2018-2019 RTO Guide and includes:

- Campaign Timelines, Elements, Weight
- Product Focus
- Consumer Segments
- Geographic Breakdown
- Marketing Objectives

Campaign Timelines

| Campaign | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | March |
|----------|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Spring | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Summer | | | 17 | | | | | | | | | |
| Fall | | | | | | 4 | | | | | | |
| Holiday | | | | | | | | 6 | | | | |
| Winter | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | |

Campaign Elements and Resource Weight

- Spring: Digital, PR, Co-Op ad in Globe and Mail – 10%
- Summer: Digital, PR, Print Magazine, Co-Op ad in Globe and Mail – 40%
- Fall: Digital, PR, Co-Op ad in Globe and Mail – 10%
- Holiday: Digital, PR, Co-Op ad in Globe and Mail – 5%
- Winter: Digital, PR, Print Magazine, Co-Op ad in Globe and Mail – 35%

Product Focus

As per the direction of the original Destination Management Plan (2015-2018) and supported by the audience research report and new Strategic Plan (2018-2021) all York Durham Headwaters consumer campaigns focus on the following:

- Outdoor & Indoor Adventure/Trails (cycling, hiking, equestrian, snowshoe, cross country ski)
- Small Towns and Rural Landscapes (arts and culture, festivals, events, heritage)
- Culinary (craft beer, distillery, agri-tourism)
- Golf
- Family Attractions (year-round)

CCT has reassigned the above into 5 major categories for consumer consumption:

- Artsy Fartsy
- Foodie Fanatics
- Adventure Seekers
- Family Fun
- Golf

| Product Focus | Spring | Summer | Fall | Holiday | Winter |
|-------------------|--------|--------|-------|---------|--------|
| Artsy Fartsy | Blue | Green | Green | Blue | Green |
| Foodie Fanatics | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue | Blue |
| Adventure Seekers | Blue | Green | Blue | Blue | Green |
| Family Fun | Blue | Green | Blue | Blue | Green |
| Golf * | Green | Green | Green | Black | Black |

Please note: Green indicates heavy promotion during campaign, blue is constant. Golf has its own campaign as part of a joint venture with other golf destination in the province under the brand Golf in Ontario.

Consumer segments

Our four priority consumer segments for York Durham and Headwaters are:

- Connected Explorers
- Nature Lovers
- Up and Coming Explorers
- Knowledge Seekers*

Please note that we have expanded our previous segmentation to include Knowledge seekers based on the audience needs research study done in 2017. Please see page 10 for detailed information.

Geographic Campaign Focus (The Audience)

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Spring/Summer/Fall | Primary: Ontario (GTA and Other) - 80% |
| | Secondary: US Border States (NY, MI, OH, PA) - 15% |
| | Quebec – 5% |
| Holidays/Winter | Primary: Ontario (GTA and Other) - 100% |

Overarching Marketing Objectives

- **Build** Brand Awareness based around “products” found in York Durham Headwaters
- **Drive** visitation to our regions in order to increase economic impact via conversion
- **Raise awareness** of our stakeholders and regional products
- **Align** with Destination Ontario and other tourism partners in order to raise awareness of Ontario as a premier destination.
- **Partner** with a major brand for the promotional purpose of extending audience reach.

Brand Strategy

B2C:

In 2018-2019, CCT will continue to focus on strengthening the YorkDurhamHeadwaters (YDH) brand in the B2C market. Audience research conducted in Q1 and Q2 identified that the consumer is still struggling with the YDH Brand despite incredible success in product awareness. The research concluded that because the GTA consumer (80% of our target market) had no brand recognition of the regional brands (York Region, Durham Region and Headwaters Region), this in fact is impacting the brand traction of YDH. Another finding indicated that because of our close geographical orientation to the GTA, this issue is unlikely to be resolved and thus we should continue to stay the course and focus on a product oriented brand. We believe strong YDH campaigns and partnerships with like-minded tourism brands like: Destination Ontario, Greenbelt and others will assist us in gaining consumer awareness of our products.

B2B:

In 2018-2019, CCT will focus on raising awareness of our B2B stakeholder investment programs and the resulting impact on stakeholder development and the direct economic impact to our regions to grow a strong Central Counties business brand.

| Continue to build the YorkDurhamHeadwaters consumer brand without diluting the impact of the sub-regions. | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Create B2C style (logo, colour wheel and font) guide to ensure consistency in market | # of guides | 1 | | DMC |
| Create pan-regional campaigns for ideal target audience optimization in order to increase visitation to the regions | # of campaigns | 5 | | DMC |
| Promotionally partner with third party organizations or corporations who are brand appropriate in order to increase marketing reach | # of partnerships | 2 | | DMC |
| Partner with leading tourism business to raise awareness of brand affiliation | # of partners | 6 | | DMC |

| Build the Central Counties Tourism brand in order to build/increase stakeholder trust in B2B programs and support the RTO business model through the telling of success stories. | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------|---------|----------------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Create a B2B style and support recognition guide | # of guides | 1 | | DMC/DIR |
| Create B2B marketing and communications plan | # of plan | 1 | | DMC/SC/DI R |

Web Strategy

CCT will focus on developing a website oriented around its leading product offerings. The year will focus on campaign content organized around its key pillar consumer product categories. We will also dedicate 30% of our time updating the directory and main menu categories and highlight our Tier 1 tourism businesses.

CCT will continue to develop the Choose Your Own Adventure Itinerary tool while integrating exciting content to procure new visitors to the site, engage them and increase length of visitation

| Build creative content on yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca that engages consumers and assists them on their path to visitation conversion | | | | |
|--|------------------------|-------|---------|--------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Refresh our product landing pages that target our ideal audience as outlined in the 2018-2021 DMP. | # of landing pages | 4 | | DMC |
| Complete quarterly YOY visitation comparison | % improvement | 5% | | DMC |
| Complete a visitor experience audit | # of completed surveys | 350 | | DMC/MM |
| Continue to develop the itinerary building tool | # of tools | 1 | | DMC/MM |
| Research and communicate to stakeholders research reports to assist with marketing initiatives | # of reports | 2 | | DMC |
| Integrate curated articles on yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca | # of articles | 12 | | DMC/MM |
| Launch podcast download tool on yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca | #of podcasts | 1 | | DMC/MM |

Digital Planning and Content Development

CCT will continue to invest in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to improve its ranking and grow in search priority. We will continue to grow our CCT Social Media Portfolio model to include Pinterest and Instagram to highlight user generated content. CCT will also be able to create and provide in-depth reports in order to meet stakeholder, board and ministry needs.

CCT will also invest heavily in staff development and networking opportunities to ensure we are innovative and leading edge in our content creation while developing stronger relationships with our leading tourism partners.

The acquisition of quality photography and video remains a top priority in 2018/2019. CCT will work with the regions to ensure their needs are met, but will be responsible for: prioritizing all shot lists, hiring creative talent and monitoring shoots in order to ensure all submitted creative is approved, up to industry standard and all contractual criteria is met. All new images will be uploaded to the new CCT image bank.

CCT will conduct an archival audit and re-org of the CMS system. It will also create an image bank user manual for stakeholders to reduce staff hours assisting businesses with technical inquiries.

Create a strong digital plan that is aligned with pan-regional and provincial campaigns while delivering compelling content that increases engagement and unique traffic to YDH social media channels while assisting leading stakeholders with their own programs.

| Tactics | KPI's | Goals |
|--|---|---|
| Develop support campaigns to drive traffic to sub-regional tourism leaders | # of campaigns | 5 |
| Social Media Engagement: Complete quarterly YOY engagement growth comparison for all social channels | # of engagement increases per channel | Twitter: 1200 Facebook:15000 Instagram:3000 Pinterest: New Channel TBD |
| Social Media Referral: Complete quarterly YOY comparison for all social channels | # of unique traffic referrals per channel | Twitter: 250 Facebook: 4000 Instagram: 100 Pinterest: 100 |
| Content Development: Create, prioritize and execute a “shot list” to continue to build a robust image bank that accurately reflects the pillar product content inventory of each region for marketing purposes | # of images for print/web | 350 images |
| Content Development: Continue to develop the video bank to accurately reflect the pillar product content inventory of each region for marketing purposes | #of videos | 4 videos |
| Content Development: Create written content for web in order to support SEO optimization | # of blogs | 12 |
| Research and attend International Social Media Conference | # of conferences | 1 |
| Draft and provide best practices, trend and research Report for B2B purposes | # of reports | 1 |

Paid Marketing

CCT will continue to focus on paid marketing campaign support and co-op marketing support opportunities which will consist of print and digital (programmatic, native, PPC, sponsored stories, AdWords)

Secure and execute thoughtful and relevant paid marketing campaigns that drive visitation and increase economic impact to our businesses.

| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
|---|----------------------------|---------------|---------|------|
| Partner with tourism businesses to raise awareness of tourism products | # of full page co-op ads | 8 | | DMC |
| Execute a targeted programmatic marketing campaign to raise awareness of tourism products | # of impressions | TBD by Budget | | DMC |
| Create 2 seasonal magazines to tell the YDH story in Summer and Winter | # of distributed magazines | 200000 | | DMC |
| Execute monthly PPC/Ad word campaigns | # campaigns | 12 | | MM |
| Execute boosted, sponsored and native social media campaigns | # campaigns | 5 | | MM |
| In conjunction with the SRT team, run 3 regional-centric marketing plans | # of plans | 3 | | DMC |

PR and Media

CCT will continue to offer its PR and media monitoring services to stakeholders. This incredibly successful CCT PR Opportunity Program (PROP) allows stakeholders to access earned media opportunities (value) and monitor the success of their events and programs through the earned media lens. Services include: press release distribution to Canadian, US and Global media, inclusion of event listing CCT monthly event release and program support releases.

| Provide stakeholders with resources to tell their stories through media and public relations so that the reach is greater than they could do on their own | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------|---------|------------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Monitor traditional earned media so that results can be broken down by region and/or story and monetized for reporting purposes | # of reports | 12 (monthly) | | DMC |
| Monitor social media so that results can be monetized for reporting purposes | # of reports | 12 (monthly) | | DMC |
| Press release distribution for stakeholders in order to extend marketing efforts | # of releases distributed | 75 | | DMC |
| Press release creation and distribution of CCT generated press releases and advisories in order to raise awareness of programs, festivals and events. | # of releases distributed | 16 | | DMC |
| Detailed Quarterly and Annual analysis reports of the impact of CCT media relations and social media programs | # of reports completed | 4 | | DMC |
| Continue to reach out to traditional and digital media via networking international/national conferences (Go Media and/or CMM, and TBEX) | # of conferences | 2 | | MM/DM C |

Working with Destination Ontario

CCT staff has developed an incredible relationship with Destination Ontario (DeON). In 2016 & 2017, CCT and Destination Ontario collaborated to create one of the most successful WHERE AM I campaigns featuring RTO generated content. Together, the two organizations ran two successful media fams and co-created the DeON Cycling video. Together, we also brought the PBS documentary series “Road School” to our region and had a major article posted in the New York Times.

Because of these successes, DeON has offered RTO 6, the opportunity to build a customized co-investment marketing plan.

| Align with Destination Ontario so that CCT leverages their funding and reach | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Co-invest with DeON to organize and execute media influencer event in order to extend earned media reach, increase social engagement and increase visitation | # of events | 1 | | DMC |
| Advertise with DeON on their OTIC digital channels in order to extend marketing reach for CCT programs and campaigns into the US and Ontario markets | # of ads | 2 | | DMC |
| Collaborate with DeON and invest in the Google Verification Program | # of programs | 1 | | DMC |
| Partner in the 2018/2019 Where Am I digital campaign | # of campaigns | 2 | | DMC |
| Partner in content development program (video or photography) | # of programs | 1 | | DMC |

| Support the Golf in Ontario program in partnership with other regional golf destinations and DeON to increase the economic impact of golf vacationers in the region | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Pass the lead of the program to Foreward Business Solutions who has been successfully managing the portfolio for three years | | | | |
| Assist Foreward Business Solutions in connecting with CCT golf courses, stakeholders, restaurants and attractions to strengthen regional allure for golf vacationers | | | | |
| Keep up with and communicate metrics and successes to stakeholders | | | | |

Business Development (Sales) Plan

Objective: To increase the economic impact by targeting group business for group-ready York, Durham and Headwaters stakeholders

To assist, through learning opportunities, stakeholders become group-ready

Provide opportunities for businesses to leverage group visitation through programs like Show your Badge and Save

2017-2018 Actions

- Provide in market support programs supporting targeted markets
- Grow the MC&IT external awareness and qualified lead distribution
- Grow the Sport Tourism external awareness and qualified lead distribution
- Re-introduce Travel Trade external awareness and generate viable leads for regional stakeholders
- Industry Support
- Administrative Overhaul

| Provide in-market support programs supporting targeted markets. | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Grow the usage of the CCT Show Your Badge and Save Program | # of groups using the program | 10 | | BDM |
| Grow awareness and use of the Sponsor Circle application | # of new views/clicks | 25 | | BDM |
| Launch a new in-market program for tourism groups to utilize while in market | Launch by April 1 2019 | 1 | | BDM |
| Communicate in-market program availability to event and tournament organizers and supporting CCT Stakeholders | # of direct contacts | 50 | | BDM |

| Grow the MC&IT external awareness and distribution of qualified leads. | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Attend event planner tradeshow | # of connections | 100 | | BDM |
| Provide qualified leads and opportunities to CCT Stakeholders | # leads | 25 | | BDM |
| Manage membership profiles and annual assessment of market placement | 100% | | | BDM |
| Develop supporting collateral | # of supporting docs. | 3 | | BDM |
| Evaluate and manage potential event bid opportunities | % of qualified opportunities | 90% | | BDM |
| Partner with successful stakeholders and assist with tourism aspects of the event | # of events support is provided for | 3 | | BDM |
| Manage CVENT supplier network and respond to RFP's, developing relationships with event planners | % of RFP's responded to by CCT | 90% | | BDM |

| Grow external Sport Tourism awareness and qualified lead distribution | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Attend Sport Tourism Tradeshows | # of connections | 100 | | BDM |
| Provide qualified leads and opportunities to CCT Stakeholders | # leads | 25 | | BDM |
| Manage membership profiles and annual assessment of market placement | % of completeness | 100% | | BDM |
| Develop supporting collateral | # of supporting docs. | 3 | | |
| Evaluate and manage potential sporting event bid opportunities | % of qualified opportunities | 90% | | |
| Partner with successful stakeholders and assist with tourism aspects of the event | # of events support is provided for | 3 | | |
| Manage CSTA supplier network and respond to RFP's, developing relationships with sporting event planners | % of RFP's responded to by CCT | 90% | | BDM |

| Re-introduce Travel Trade external awareness and generate viable leads for regional stakeholders. | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Attend Travel Trade Tradeshows | # of connections | 100 | | BDM |
| Provide qualified leads and opportunities to CCT Stakeholders | # leads | 25 | | BDM |
| Manage membership profiles and annual assessment of market placement | % of completeness | 90% | | BDM |
| Develop supporting collateral and business tool that will assist in securing business | # of supporting docs. | 2 | | BDM |
| Manage and assess industry directions as led by Destination Ontario, Destination Canada supplier network and respond to RFP's, developing relationships with key players | % of RFP's responded to by CCT | 90% | | BDM |

| Provide Industry Support and Education on the three group tour markets | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Provide "Group Tourism" info sessions in line with Tourism Now | # of Sessions Held | 3 | | BDM |
| Be a part of industry related committees and initiatives within CCT | # of committees / initiatives | 5 | | BDM |
| Meet with Key industry partners growing understanding and support of the Group Tour Market(s) | # of partners met with | 12 | | |
| Site visits gaining knowledge on new facilities within our regions | # of site visits | 12 | | |

| Internal and External Communications | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------|---------|------|
| Tactics | KPI's | Goals | Results | Lead |
| Database review and overhaul | Completion by March 31, 2019 | | | BDM |
| Develop and launch Business Development website | Completion by March 31, 2019 | | | BDM |
| Work closely with the BDAC and host meetings | Satisfaction Survey | 75% | | |
| Provide monthly and quarterly status reports | % Yearend task completion | 85% | | |
| Attend professional development – industry related courses/seminars/ | # of courses attended | 12 | | |