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Introduction

In September/October, staff met with municipal staff from across the region to determine their 2024 markets, activities and the gaps they most relied on Central Counties Tourism (CCT) to fill. This information played an integral role in determining the priorities for the organization when the Board and Staff met to plan out fiscal 2024-2025.

Every year, more and more businesses and organizations within the region are recognizing the importance and benefits of positioning themselves to attract and retain visitors. Central Counties Tourism is recognized as the industry expert for all things destination development and, as such, stakeholder engagement continues to grow. There is concern that, under the current model, the organization may not be able to sustain its ability to deliver quality support.

Fiscal 2024-2025 will be a year of transition for the organization as it develops more cost recovery and revenue opportunities so that it can continue to deliver its core service to an ever-expanding stakeholder base. There is intrinsic value in the services provided by Central Counties Tourism and delivered through organizational excellence. CCT also has the luxury of being able to focus 100% of its attention on growing the visitor economy, providing opportunities to act as a Destination Development and Management Organization for regions and municipalities that may not have internal capacity to do so.

The 2024-2025 Business Plan builds on the successes of previous years and demonstrates CCT's commitment to a bottom-up, all of industry approach to destination development. The organization believes that the goals and objectives are achievable and will help stakeholders build their capacity to collectively grow the visitor economy.

2024-2025 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been taken into consideration in the development of this business plan:

- Provincial funding will remain unchanged
- The economy will be in a slow-down, if not a recession
- Provincial and Federal Grants for tourism will be minimal or non-existent
- There will be an increase in Ontarians traveling within Ontario and international trips to Ontario
- Consumer price sensitivity will increase

Based on those assumptions, CCT believes our stakeholders will experience:

- Continued front line staff shortages
- Increased costs (operating, fixed, taxes and cost of goods sold)
- Challenges ensuring their marketing/communication efforts are effective
- Difficulty remaining relevant through social media channels (changing algorithms)
- Increased access to capital (but at a much higher borrowing rate than in years past)
- Decrease in time to focus on growing/expanding their business including working with other businesses to build a destination

2024-2025 Municipal Priorities

Almost all communities within CCT have growth of the visitor economy as part of their 2024 plans. The following are the ranked results of the types of activities they will focus on to grow visitation, the tactics they will use to grow visitation and what gaps they want CCT to help fill.

Municipal Areas of Focus for Growing the Visitor Economy in 2024	Tactics Municipalities will Focus on to Help Grow the Visitor Economy in 2024	CCT Supports Municipalities Require to Help Grow the Visitor Economy in 2024
1. Festivals and Events 2. Routes / Trails 3. Art / Culture / Heritage 4. Downtowns / Retail 5. Sport Tourism 6. Family Activities 7. Agri-Tourism / Rural 8. Cycling 9. Outdoor Adventure 10. Culinary Tourism 11. Film Tourism 12. Multicultural 13. Business Tourism 14. Group Tourism 15. Indigenous 16. Wellness	1. Website 2. Social Media 3. Print / Radio / Television 4. Festivals & Events 5. Networking Events / Stakeholder engagement 6. Influencers 7. Research 8. Route / Trail Development 9. Wayfinding Plan 10. Downtown Revitalization 11. Dedicated Staff 12. Newsletters / E-blasts to consumer database 13. Infrastructure upkeep and development 14. Red Tape Reduction	1. Funding Support 2. Social Media Amplification 3. Research 4. Industry Equipping 5. Experience Development 6. Influencers 7. Photography / Videography 8. B2B Networking 9. Resident Sentiment 10. Website Support 11. Wayfinding 12. General Marketing 13. Partnership 14. Marketing Co-Ops 15. Community Tourism Planning *Green indicates an alignment with CCT board & staff in terms of the best opportunities to support stakeholder growth and success.*

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

2024-2025 Priorities

CCT's overarching priority is to continue to grow and deliver its core business services to stakeholders so that they have the capacity to increase the impact of the visitor economy on communities across the region. Central Counties Tourism believes in a bottom-up approach to tourism and, as such, builds much of its business plan around business and municipal priorities – supporting their growth focus and filling the gaps where possible. The 2024-2025 priorities, and the actions and tactics to support them, reflect what the organization has learned through one-on-one conversations, stakeholder feedback and surveys.

Business Model & Sustainability

Priorities: Increase stakeholder engagement through B2B channels and CCT-led networking opportunities
Grow funding to maintain and increase core deliverables
Zero-base budgeting
Explore the feasibility of completing an internal I.D.E.A. audit to understand organizational gaps

Role: Be the recognized regional leader and experts on growing the visitor economy
Research and implement stakeholder programs that include cost recovery
Lead efforts to increase the amount of funding available to CCT (grants, sponsors, etc.)
Lead the sustainable growth of the organization and the services it provides

Policy/Advocacy

Priorities: Municipal understanding of the importance of the visitor economy
Municipal / Regional investment in the visitor economy
Increasing resident sentiment
Pan-Regional collaboration

Role: Lead discussions with municipal staff and council regarding the visitor economy
Advocate for municipal programs and supports that invest in visitor growth
Support stakeholders and municipal staff on their quest to increase resident sentiment
Lead communication of growth successes

Research

Priorities: Geo-Fencing for individual stakeholders, BIAs, Municipalities, etc.
Municipal data insights for product/market/investment development
Data collection partnerships so that we can collectively tell compelling stories (ROI)
Champion evidence-based decision making by ensuring stakeholders know how to interpret and utilize the information
Cost recovery

Role: Educate stakeholders on the research services CCT offers and their benefits
Lead aggregate data collection, analysis and reporting for the region
Support stakeholders' understanding of how to interpret and utilize the data
Support the development of new tools and datasets to further the understanding of the visitor economy and how to grow it.

Industry Equipping

Priorities:
Develop and source learning opportunities to fill gaps identified by stakeholders
Provide access to learning & skills development opportunities
Deliver hybrid events to encourage collaboration and the sharing of local inspiration
Share research & trends, and showcase learning & funding opportunities led by others

Role:
Lead the development/implementation of relevant learning opportunities for stakeholders
Connect stakeholders to other learning opportunities
Lead the feedback loop to gather insights for better education delivery
Trusted, go-to source for validated industry information and guidance

Product & Experience Development

Priorities:
Increase the number of stakeholder-led routes and experiences
Engaged stakeholders taking part in CCT-led routes and experiences
Support CCT consumer campaigns by developing compelling trails and experiences

Role:
Lead stakeholder understanding of the advantages of route development
Lead the connection of and collaboration between stakeholders
Lead the development of CCT-led routes and experiences
Support consumer campaigns by connecting stakeholders to themes and itineraries

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

B2C Marketing

Priorities: Collaborative approach with tourism partners
Target audience reframing
Seasonal campaign evolution
Adherence to guidelines and strategic vision

Role: Be the experts in consumer tourism marketing and communication trends
Lead the regional content creation and successful implementation of consumer campaigns
Support stakeholders through strategic marketing and communication

B2B Marketing

Priorities: Sustained engagement and participation in the stakeholder development and tourism
growth initiatives of Central Counties Tourism
Communicate the importance of the visitor economy
Engaging with industry thought leaders
Personalized communication
Video Marketing

Role: Be the experts in B2B tourism marketing and communication trends
Provide stakeholders with engaging, relevant and implementable content and information
Lead the communication of success stories to emphasize the importance of the visitor
economy
Support stakeholders, through B2B resources/content, grow their capacity

Executive Summary

Central Counties Tourism's bottom-up approach to destination development really took hold in fiscal 2023-2024. The year was punctuated by several defining successes that demonstrate the results of CCT's efforts to engage, inform and support its stakeholders.

Community Tourism Planning: CCT facilitated the development of another three Community Tourism Plans (CTP), which demonstrates municipal understanding of the visitor economy on the vibrancy of their communities. 2023-2024 marked the year that EVERY municipality in Durham Region is working under a CTP. Municipal investment in the visitor economy continues to grow through programming, staffing and budgets.

Partnership Program: The 2023-2024 partnership program was oversubscribed by as much as four times the available funds. At the same time, the quality of the investment projects increased as well, as more and more stakeholders, through their engagement with CCT, have a better understanding of what they need to do build their capacity to attract and retain more visitors. Partner investment to grow the visitor economy in 2023-2024 was close to $600,000, supported by $379,000 from Central Counties Tourism, provided through the Government of Ontario.   It is an incredible ROI that, once tallied, will result in more tax revenue than the investment by CCT.

Research: Across the province, CCT is recognized as a leader when it comes to providing timely, relevant and implementable analysis of data from several different sources. One of the highlights from this past fiscal was the ability to provide each municipality a top-line economic impact from visitors in 2022. As a teaser, just the overnight visitation within York, Durham and Headwaters was over $3 billion.

Industry Relations Managers (IRM): Central Counties Tourism's biggest strength is its people and stakeholder's access to us. The IRM team have proven to be incredibly important to both the CCT team and the stakeholders. Stakeholder engagement is at an all-time high thanks in big part to the IRM team. They connect stakeholders to all of the incredible resources CCT offers to help them build their capacity. At the same time, because of their in-depth knowledge of the stakeholders in their region, they are able to support the content development for the marketing team, which leads to amazing campaigns, which drives people to the stakeholder locations, which get them even more engaged. New this fiscal, the IRM's have been hosting networking events, bringing stakeholders from a geographic area to meet and learn about each other's businesses. This has led to the successful development of several informal partnerships and formal routes that are all stakeholder-driven. These new partnerships and products help grow the destination and continuation of this practice is a priority in 2024-2025.

Augmented Reality: Experience enhancement through the use of technology was something that many of our stakeholders told us they would love to utilize but it was much too expensive for them to implement. In 2023-2024, CCT funded the development of a brand-new proprietary technology that made augment reality programming accessible to all stakeholders. The augmented reality "tour guide" can be customized and used by almost every stakeholder – from a go-kart operator using it to do an orientation to a municipality animating each story in a 30+ stop historic tour. All for a fraction of what it would cost to purchase a fully rendered augmented reality experience.

CCT's engagement with its stakeholders and municipal partners means that each business plan reflects what we are being asked to deliver to help build capacity and grow our destinations throughout the region. CCT conferred with staff from every municipality within its borders to determine priorities for this fiscal. There are two success stories right there: 1) CCT has a great working relationship with municipalities who rely on us as industry experts, and 2) every municipality is working on growing the visitor economy through investment and collaboration.

Fiscal 2024-2025 will continue to focus on strong destination development, supported by stakeholder-led routes and other collaborations. When businesses have control over their projects and have "skin in the

game", the chances of the project succeeding increase dramatically. To support stakeholders through the process, CCT is launching a Route Development Toolkit on its learning lab portal. This free workshop guides stakeholders through the entire process of creating collaborations to drive mutual growth between partners and is broken into bite-size digestible pieces to make the process an engaging as it is informative and useful. It is a win-win for both the stakeholders and the destinations they represent, providing more reasons for people to visit, more often, and from further away.

Advocacy for and education about the importance of the visitor economy is something that our municipal partners would like CCT to take the lead on. As destination development sees success through increased visitation, resident sentiment decreases. CCT will focus attention on educating residents about the importance of the visitor economy for the vibrancy of their communities. This will not be a one-year project and is expected to be a staple as visitation to our communities continues to grow.

CCT is a service provider for municipalities, organization and businesses involved with growing the visitor economy. Engagement with and growth of our network of stakeholder increased dramatically in 2023-2024 with the addition of a formalized B2B communications program. CCT is continuing to grow our B2B efforts to further match stakeholders to the myriad of resources we provide to help them grow their capacity.

Of course, one of the services we provide is helping stakeholder reach a broader audience. Extensive market and trend research was conducted in the development of the 2024-2025 consumer marketing and communications plan. CCT continues to be at the forefront of tourism promotion and, through collaborative efforts with stakeholders, will increase consumer engagement and visitation to the region. In addition, CCT will explore the possibility of becoming a paid third-party service provider for municipalities and regions that may not have the internal resources to fully execute marketing and communications efforts. The organization is fully focused on growing the visitor economy, which is something that most municipalities do not have resources to do.

The entire 2024-2025 business plan builds on the successes the organization has had over the past 10 years. It will deliver results for our stakeholders, who, in turn, will deliver projects, programs and experiences that will grow visitation and have a positive economic impact across the region.

Central Counties Tourism's own resources are stretched to the point where there is concern that it won't be able to match the demands from its ever-growing base of engaged stakeholders. One of the shifts the organization is making is to be more proactive at finding new opportunities for funding and becoming more sustainable, so that we can continue to deliver the core resources our stakeholders have come to rely on. This means that some more of the non-core resources will become pay-to-play so that we can recover some of the delivery cost and reallocate those funds back to core stakeholder resources.

2024-2025 is going to be another banner year for the region as CCT supports the projects and plans of our partners as they work to build destinations and grow the visitor economy. The below plan is both ambitious and achievable and the staff look forward to delivering against the goals and KPI's outlined in it.

Defining Success for Central Counties

Each of the Community Tourism Plans that CCT facilitates starts with a question: "What does tourism success look like for [name of the community]?" While there are many variations of specific success measures, there are some underlying similarities in all of them. It is those similarities that define what success is for Central Counties.

1) Businesses understand the importance of the visitor economy on the vibrancy of their communities and collaborate with each other to create more reasons for people to visit more often and from further away.
2) Residents understand that visitors are adding money to the tills of their favourite places to eat, shop and visit, often making the difference between the businesses being solvent or having to close. The collaboration (not competition) between businesses creates a growing pride of place with residents who then become ambassadors, welcoming visitors and helping connect them to the great things to see and do.
3) Municipalities invest in infrastructure that makes communities more visitor friendly and connects destinations within its borders and beyond. Staff and council understand that there are no walls between their municipality and those they border and start to work on projects that build an even bigger destination which will appeal to a larger audience willing to travel greater distances to get there.
4) Destinations within Central Counties deliver amazing guest experiences that build reputation and brand. Strategic and targeted marketing & communications, coupled with word of mouth, propel visitor growth across the region.
5) Sustained and increasing visitation prompts investment in new businesses that further support the visitor economy and bring full time employment to the region.
6) Visitors become residents who increase a captive workforce which prompts investment in non-tourism businesses to open in the region.

Business Plan Details

The tactics, KPIs and goals listed below are how CCT plans on delivering against the priorities as set out by the Board of Directors. The expectation in 2024-2025 is that no additional supports will be available and it will be up to staff to find additional funds to complete projects not directly tied to the draft budget.

Staff Lead Acronyms
[ED – Executive Director, DO – Director of Operations, DM – Director of Marketing, DID – Director of Industry Development, MM - Consumer Marketing Manager, B2B – B2B Communications Manager, RDM – Research Development Manager, IRM – Industry Relations Managers,]

Governance, Administration & Sustainability

The backbone of CCT's success is its strong governance model, financial management, ability to deliver value to stakeholders and its expert voice at decision making tables across the region and province. This strength has increased both engagement with and expectations from the stakeholders who drive the visitor economy, which means that sustainability is a new priority for the organization.

Objectives: Organizational Excellence
Industry Experts
Communicate Advocacy
Sustainability

Organizational Excellence				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Bylaws are ONCA compliant	Updated bylaws approved by board	Oct. 1		ED
Strong financial management	Clean Audit and On Budget	June 15, 2025	Administration	DO
Board of Director Oversight	# of meetings	5	Administration	DID
Implement the Business Plan to grow visitation and visitor capacity	% of Business Plan Objectives Achieved	90%	All	ED
Consultant to complete an IDEA Audit	Audit Complete	1	No budget available	DID

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CCT is the Industry Expert for Stakeholders				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Facilitate Community Tourism Plans and Wayfinding Plans	# of new or refreshed CTPs or Wayfinding Plans	3	Revenue	ED
Sit on Tourism Boards, Advisory Committees, Panels, Industry Groups, etc.	# of local, regional, provincial and national industry groups CCT has a voice at the table of	6		All Staff
Communicate the impact of the visitor economy to stakeholders / government / media			Marketing	B2B
Provide 2023 visitor economy results to municipal and regional councils	# of municipal / regional council updates (in person or through municipal staff report)	10		ED

Communicate advocacy priorities through sharing of testimonials and success stories				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Share "new" Quarterly Trend reports directly with DMO's & Municipalities (see B2B Plan)	Reports distributed	2 x		IRM
Create a CCT Release program that communicates CCT programs, and success stories to industry and media. (see B2B Plan)	Press released distributed	10 x		B2B

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Grow CCT revenues to provide additional core functionality				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Grow research purchases both in-region and in partnership with other RTOs	Revenue from research sales	$50,000	Revenue	ED
Create a compelling sales kit for the augmented reality project to spark early adoption of the software	Membership Revenue	$100,000	Revenue	ED
Secure sponsorship for the 2025 CCT Tourism Symposium	Sponsorship Revenue	$35,000	Revenue	ED
Create a compelling sales kit to encourage year-round corporate sponsorship (Check-in Canada, B2B Advertising, overall sponsor, etc.)	Sponsorship Revenue	$50,000	Revenue	ED
Create cost offsetting programs for non-core marketing & communications functions	Revenue from cost offsetting	$8,200	Revenue	DM
Create a business case and explore the possibility of becoming the Destination Development and Management Organization for municipalities/regions that do not have the capacity.	# of municipalities / regions engaged in conversations about CCT becoming the DDMO in 2025	3	Revenue	ED

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Research

CCT's investment in a research manager has made the organization the go-to leader within the region and across other RTO's. The ability to demonstrate the economic impact of the visitor economy on municipalities has led to more attention, emphasis and, most importantly, investment being made by councils to help grow visitation. In 2023-2024, the RTO's started working together to figure out how to leverage economies of scale to make data accessible to more stakeholders. This collaboration will continue in 2024-2025.

Objectives: Stakeholders use research to make informed investment and development decisions to grow the visitor economy
Provide aggregate visitor analysis to stakeholders, municipalities, DMO's and RTO's
CCT is an integral part of provincial/national research working groups and panels
Make research results easy for all stakeholders to understand, interpret and use for making informed decisions

Stakeholders use research to make informed investment and development decisions to grow the visitor economy				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
IRM team champions the importance of research leading to purchase of CCT research services	# of new stakeholders that purchase CCT Research Services # of stakeholders that purchase new datasets for comparative purposes		Revenue	IRM

Provide aggregate visitor analysis to stakeholders, municipalities, DMO's and RTO's

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Collect monthly hotel occupancy rates and revenues for Durham, York, and aggregated CCT (shared quarterly).	# of collections	4	Industry Relations	RDM
Geo-fence specific locations for municipalities, DMO's and RTO's.	# of reports	25	Industry Relations	RDM
Write a series of articles for the B2B Newsletter on visitation trends & success stories.	# of B2B Articles	4	Industry Relations	RDM

CCT is an integral part of provincial/national research working groups and panels

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Continue to represent RTO6 and its stakeholders at a provincial/national level within various research groups and disseminate key insights as needed.	# of committees	3		RDM

Make research results easy for all stakeholders to understand, interpret and use for making informed decisions

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Present research results through infographics/visualization with key take-aways and suggestions.	# of reports	4		RDM

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Industry Equipping & B2B Alignment

Most municipalities do not have the capacity to assist stakeholders in building their capacity through education. It is a gap that they, along with businesses, have asked CCT to fill. In 2024-2025, CCT will focus on communicating the opportunities (and the importance of taking advantage of them) that are available for stakeholders to better their capacity to welcome and retain guests. This includes both the courses & workshops developed by CCT and relevant programs that are offered by third party suppliers like OTEC and other RTO's.

In addition, CCT will be creating a new online tool to assist stakeholders to create and implement multi-stakeholder routes to drive more visitation.

Objectives: Grow engagement with new and existing Learning Lab resources to assist stakeholders in building their capacity
Communicate validated education and certification opportunities outside of CCT to support them in addressing changes in the tourism landscape
Provide access to available workforce development, training and staffing programs to support recruitment and retention of employees in the tourism sector
Survey B2B Stakeholders to support 2025-2026 Business Planning, to ensure Stakeholder feedback is better represented
Showcase to Stakeholders, Indigenous-led tourism partners and Indigenous allies connected to and located in CCT region
Increase engagement / connection between stakeholders and the services that CCT offers

Note: If the Lead is listed with a "**/**" between roles, these tactics have shared responsibility. If the Lead is listed as **DID (ED),** these tactics are thought to be reasonably assumed by the ED in the temporary absence of the DID.

Grow engagement with new and existing Learning Lab resources to assist stakeholders in building their capacity

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Develop, launch and promote the Route Development Toolkit	Interactive content availability in the Learning Lab	1	Industry Equipping	DID (ED)
CCT-led webinar (info session) to support the launch of the Route Development Toolkit	# of webinars Track attendees and feedback for benchmarking	1	No Cost	DID (ED)
Support upskilling and training of the tourism workforce and grow completed course counts for the existing Learning Lab courses	# of newsletter inclusions # of IRM discussions # of completed courses	6 Tracking only 100	No Cost	B2B/ IRM

Communicate validated education and certification opportunities outside of CCT to support them in addressing changes in the tourism landscape.

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Provide stakeholders with access to digital training that is available outside of the Learning Lab (ex. Digital Main Street)	Promote a 3rd party training opportunity each quarter	4	No Cost	DID/ B2B
Promote the benefits 3rd party memberships and accreditations	CCT Stakeholders enrolled and/or successfully certified	5	No Cost	DID/ B2B

Provide access to available workforce development, training and staffing programs to support recruitment and retention of employees in the tourism sector.

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Promote available tourism workforce development programs to stakeholders (ex. TIAO Sustainability Program, OTEC/TSNO)	# of newsletter inclusions and/or dedicated eBlasts # social amplification of Program Profiles	12 6	No Cost	B2B/IRM

Survey B2B Stakeholders to support 2025-2026 Business Planning, to ensure Stakeholder feedback is better represented.

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Develop and distribute a Stakeholder survey to gather feedback about 1) Customer experience with CCT 2) Programs, Services, Supports 3) Challenges/ Opportunities facing their business/organization event etc,. To be sent out in September to support 2025-26 Business Planning	# of completed surveys	100	No Cost	DIR/ B2B

Showcase to Stakeholders, Indigenous-led tourism partners and Indigenous allies connected to and located in CCT region.

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Promote initiatives and events being led by Indigenous partners & allies	Promote as available	Benchmark year	No cost	B2B

Increase engagement / connection between stakeholders and the services that CCT offers

Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Increase engagement with stakeholders within each of the regions	# of new stakeholder profiles on CCT Dashboard	24		IRM
Connect stakeholders to the no cost services that CCT provides and have them use them	# of connections (press releases, marketing, learning lab, etc.)	500		IRM
Utilize CRM (HubSpot) systematically to track and facilitate stakeholders through the CCT core services and sales funnel.	# of AR and Research Leads entered in HubSpot	*(TBD based on AR and Research Prospecting lists)*		IRM
Connect stakeholders to the paid services that CCT provides and have them use them	Revenue from paid services (AR, Research, Co-ops, photo/video, design service)	TBD		IRM

Product / Experience Development

The new Augmented Reality product will be available to stakeholders in 2024-2025 and will be a big focus for CCT as it will enhance stakeholder experiences across the region. Staff will also be working with, and encouraging, stakeholders to develop new collaborative routes, while also updating CCT's successful experiences.

Objectives: Stakeholders incorporate the Augmented Reality program into their businesses
Stakeholders work together to develop new or enhance existing routes
CCT updates and/or enhances (including use of AR) their key products including Temperance & Temptation, Spine Tingling Tour, and Trail Talks.

Stakeholders incorporate the Augmented Reality program into their businesses				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Create a sales deck which includes average pricing for "extra" creative services that a stakeholder may choose to use instead of doing it in-house	Delivery of the Sales Deck	Q1		DM
Communicate the benefits and value of the software which convert to sales leads	# of in-region leads # of out-of-region leads	90 10		IRM ED
Convert the leads to sales	# of sales	$100,000		ED
Support the successful implementation of AR use to enhance the visitor experience	# of organizations using the software	75		IRM/ED
Create a full User Guide which includes contact info for creative service providers used by CCT	Delivery of the User Guide	Q1		DM/ SG

CCT updates and/or enhances (including use of AR) their key products				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Showcase the augmented reality product by enhancing CCT's Spine Tingling Tour – a year-round route dedicated to telling the real ghost stories of key buildings/landmarks in the region.	# of stories told using new AR technology	20		DM
Highlight local business and the entire Temperance and Temptation Tour through the T&T Podcast series, recorded on location at partner breweries, wineries, cideries and distilleries.	# of new episodes	6		ED
Update the experience pages and content on the YDH for CCT-led experiences. Use channels to drive consumers to the content.	# of updated content pieces	4		DM

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Stakeholders work together to develop new or enhance existing routes				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Connect stakeholders to other businesses to share best practices and encourage collaboration	# of businesses sharing information	24		IRM
Connect stakeholders to resources and provide advice that will help them grow their business (reservation systems, banking, e-commerce, etc.)	# of times stakeholders implement new initiatives based on advice	24		IRM
Coach stakeholders so that they are more successful getting additional funding (through CCT or other programs)	# of stakeholders who are successful in leveraging their investments	60		IRM

Investment Attraction

CCT role in Investment Attraction is two-fold. Through advocacy and community tourism planning facilitation, CCT increases municipal and regional investment in resources that help grow the visitor economy. And, by working directly with businesses and organizations that deliver visitors experiences and enhance their stay, CCT builds destinations that attract more visitors, more often. When those two things are combined, the more likely it is for new businesses to invest in that community.

Objectives

- Grow municipal investment in tourism through the facilitation and implementation support of Community Tourism Plans and Wayfinding Plans
- Leverage stakeholder investment through the partnership program
- Provide visitor insights to communities to demonstrate the value of the visitor economy

Grow municipal investment				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Audit existing CTP action items	# of action plans reviewed	6	I.A	ED
	# of action items implemented	10		
Solicit municipal investment in research to provide prospective investors a clear picture of the visitor impact	# of municipalities purchasing research	10	Revenue	RDM

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

Leverage stakeholder investment through the partnership program				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Successfully implement the 2024-2025 partnership program	# of stakeholders applying for partnership	75	Partnership	ED
Co-invest with stakeholders on projects that will grow the visitor economy	$ invested by stakeholders	$450,000	Partnership	ED
Stakeholders build capacity through completion of mandatory learning lab modules	# of stakeholders completing modules	75		ED

Provide visitor insights to communities to demonstrate the value of the visitor economy				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Communicate available research programs and available reports to municipalities	# of times research programs are communicated to stakeholders through email and B2B social	24	B2B Marketing	B2B
Communicate good news stories about how municipalities have successfully used research to grow the visitor economy	# of stories communicated	6	B2B Marketing	RDM
Solicit municipalities to purchase visitor insights data to support growth in the visitor economy	# of municipalities purchasing datasets	10 (same 10 as the first table)	Revenue	ED

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CCT MARKETING PLAN 2024/25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The 2024/2025 Central Counties Tourism Marketing Plan represents a significant evolution in our approach to destination marketing. Our strategy, grounded in comprehensive data and research, centers on enhancing visitor engagement, redefining target audiences, and revitalizing seasonal campaigns to align with evolving trends and preferences.

KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR THE PLAN.

- Website Enhancement: Our website is our Hub. It is a measurable key to our success. We are continuing to invest in growing our website to offer more immersive and user-centric experiences, enabling visitors to explore our diverse offerings seamlessly. We are also investing in some technical tactics in order to ensure our functionality and SEO ranking remain high.
- Content Creation: Emphasizing quality and relevance, our content strategy aims to captivate audiences by showcasing the unique attractions and experiences Central Counties has to offer. We're committed to crafting compelling narratives that resonate with our target demographics.
- Digital Strategy: Leveraging social media and external channels, we're implementing a refined digital strategy. This includes tailored campaigns to amplify reach and engagement, fostering a stronger connection with our audience.
- Earned Media: By cultivating partnerships and fostering authentic relationships with accredited media, we aim to garner organic attention and endorsements, maximizing the impact of our marketing efforts.
- Paid Marketing: Strategically place promotional content in online & print publications to reach our target markets, while partnering in high yield paid partnerships.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH WITH TOURISM PARTNERS:

Our marketing initiatives are crafted collaboratively, in close partnership with key players in the tourism industry. By working hand in hand with our stakeholders, we aim to support their growth and contribute to the economic vitality of our regions. This collaborative effort underscores our commitment to shared success within the tourism ecosystem.

TARGET AUDIENCE REFRAMING:

Recognizing shifts in housing and lifestyle preferences, we've re-evaluated and re-framed our target audience. This strategic realignment ensures that our campaigns are finely attuned to the interests and needs of our current and prospective visitors.

SEASONAL CAMPAIGN EVOLUTION:

Departing from the uniform "Ultimate Road Trip" theme, each seasonal campaign now embraces a "special theme and creative focus." This personalized approach allows us to cater more effectively to our diverse audience segments while maintaining our identity as Ontario's Road Trip Destination. The goal is to drive deeper engagement and encourage immersive exploration of our offerings.

ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES AND STRATEGIC VISION:

The marketing plan is a result of thoughtful deliberation in accordance with the guidelines established during the 2023 CCT Board retreat and the RTO Strategic Assumptions Plan. This approach ensures that our strategies are not only innovative but also reflect the collective vision and strategic direction outlined by our organizational leadership and industry partners.

TARGET AUDIENCE

VISITOR PROFILE

Central Counties Tourism has identified six visitor profiles that were created using extensive research using Numeris Data, Mobile Data Geofencing, Postal Code Audit and Prizm Segmentation profiles. Each profile and characteristics was matched with CCT stakeholder businesses. This information allows tourism businesses to better target and market to their ideal consumer.

In 2024/25 there will be no change to these profiles as they continue to remain relevant and accurate.

Our six visitor profiles include:

- Adventure Seekers
- Art Lovers – Urbanite (Core)
- Art Lovers – Community Explorer (Tactical)
- Family Fun
- Foodie Fanatics
- Passionate Putters

For more information about these profiles, visit https://centralcounties.ca/visitor-profiles-2/

GEOGRAPHICAL

The CCT Marketing Plan targets the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and its regions: York, Durham, and Headwaters and residents withing a 20-40 km radius of its border. CCT has noted two emerging trends: increased cross-regional visitation and a growing market beyond the GTA. Escalating concerns over housing affordability and urban amenities in the GTA have prompted families to explore housing options in growing towns to the North, West, and East. This migration is driven by the quest for affordable, spacious homes and a quieter lifestyle within a 60-120 kilometer radius of the GTA.

This shift in housing patterns prompts a re-evaluation of our tourism perspectives, necessitating a marketing approach that encompasses emerging affordable towns within this radius.

SOME EMERGING GROWTH TOWNS ABSORBING GTA RESIDENTS

- Barrie: Positioned to the north of the GTA, Barrie has seen substantial growth due to its relatively affordable housing, expanded amenities, and proximity to Lake Simcoe.
- Guelph: Located west of the GTA, Guelph boasts a growing population attracted by its diverse economy, reputable educational institutions like the University of Guelph, and a burgeoning arts and culture scene.
- Oshawa: Situated to the east of the GTA, Oshawa has been drawing residents seeking affordable housing options and improved infrastructure, including easy access to major highways and transportation.
- Grand Valley: This town, although smaller, is gaining traction due to its affordability, serene environment, and the appeal of a close-knit community.
- Milton: Positioned to the west of the GTA, Milton has experienced rapid expansion driven by new developments, improved infrastructure, and a family-friendly environment.
- Burlington: With its scenic location along Lake Ontario, Burlington attracts GTA residents seeking a balance between urban amenities and a more relaxed lifestyle.
- Hamilton: Known for its burgeoning arts scene, diverse economy, and comparatively affordable housing, Hamilton continues to draw residents seeking a blend of urban living and natural landscapes.
- Collingwood: Positioned close to the Blue Mountains and Georgian Bay, Collingwood's recreational offerings and scenic beauty make it an appealing choice for those seeking a more outdoors-oriented lifestyle.
- Orillia: Situated north of the GTA, Orillia is becoming increasingly popular due to its picturesque setting, access to lakes, and a growing range of amenities.

Sources: Toronto Real Estate Trends Report 2022, CCT Research.

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

MARKETING TRENDS

We have been doing our research and our plan reflects it. We have strategically aligned our tactics with prevalent destination marketing trends, ensuring our continual growth and adaptation in reaching our audience. Some of the ways we have embraced and will further evolve these trends include:

User-Generated Content (UGC): Actively encouraging visitors to share their experiences across social platforms. By showcasing authentic, visitor-generated content, we've fostered trust and provided genuine insights into our destination.

Influencer Marketing: Collaborating with influential personalities focused on travel experiences, we've expanded our reach to a wider audience. These influencers have shared their personal experiences, effectively endorsing our destination and our stakeholders to their dedicated followers.

Sustainable and Responsible Tourism: Highlighting our commitment to eco-friendly practices and responsible tourism initiatives, we've attracted environmentally conscious travelers. Promoting conservation efforts has amplified the appeal of our destination.

Personalized Marketing: Leveraging data analytics, we've tailored our campaigns to match the preferences and behaviors of potential visitors. This personalized approach has significantly enhanced the effectiveness of our marketing efforts.

Storytelling: Through captivating articles, videos, and social media content, we've cultivated emotional connections with our audience. Our stories convey the unique experiences and attractions of our region.

Social Media Engagement: We've prioritized engagement on social platforms by consistently providing live videos, interactive content, and regular updates. Our active presence fosters audience interest and facilitates excellent customer service.

Content Marketing: By creating high-quality, shareable content, we've positioned our destination as a valuable resource. We offer in-depth insights into our attractions, culture, communities and experiences.

Mobile Optimization: Recognizing the growing reliance on smartphones for travel planning, we've ensured our websites, apps, and content are mobile-friendly. This optimization ensures a seamless user experience and accessibility.

Video Trends: We will be doing more vertical videos which are designed to be viewed on mobile devices. They are becoming increasingly popular on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok. They are typically shot in portrait mode and take up the entire screen. Reels are a necessity now for our digital strategy as they are designed to be consumed quickly and the digital consumer loves them.

Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR): Utilizing the new AR software, we will attempt to include AR activation in our tactics. For example: Our printable maps will have a QR code embedded, which will trigger an avatar experience.

YDH SEASONAL CAMPAIGNS

Each seasonal campaign will highlight products that are appealing to all six visitor profiles. Each campaign will have a tailored theme and creative identity under the brand "Ontario's Road Trip Destination."
Passionate putters will be excluded from the Winter campaign but the landing page will still be active.

In-Market Timeline

Campaign	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Spring	🟩	🟩										
Summer			🟨	🟨	🟨	🟨						
Fall						🟥	🟥					
Holiday								🟥	🟥			
Winter										🟦	🟦	🟦
*Maple Syrup												🟫

Maple syrup is a fast-growing supporting campaign for winter.

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WEBSITE: YORKDURHAMHEADWATERS.CA

The strategy for YorkDurhamHeadwaters.ca underscores the imperative of strategic growth, emphasizing both technical enhancements and enriched content to optimize its impact. Recognizing the pivotal role of SEO ranking, the strategy prioritizes regular investments in annual SEO audits and participation in online workshops to stay abreast of analytical trends. By focusing on technical functionalities, the aim is to ensure the website resonates effectively with Google's algorithms, enhancing its visibility and accessibility.

Content augmentation remains a cornerstone, aiming to captivate online visitors through vibrant imagery, immersive videos, and interactive tools. The strategic restructuring of content into user-friendly landing pages is envisioned to heighten accessibility and engagement. These efforts align with the goal of bolstering the site's appeal and relevance to a dynamic online audience.

Crucially, the strategy highlights the continuous financial commitment required for the sustained evolution of YorkDurhamHeadwaters.ca. Recognizing the website as the central hub of YDH marketing, allocating appropriate budget is imperative to fortify its efficacy in promoting stakeholders, ultimately driving increased economic impact.

An essential statistical fact underscores the importance of investing in websites: Research suggests that for every $1 invested in user experience (UX) design, businesses can expect an average return of $100 (Source: Forrester Research). This statistic vividly underscores the significant returns achievable through strategic investments in website optimization and enhancement.

Website Objective: Continue to develop an informative, functional and user-friendly website that serves as a dynamic hub for engaging content enhancing brand visibility and increasing online visitor engagement.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line: B2C Website	Lead
To create 5 seasonal campaigns in order to curate the user experience	# of Campaigns/refreshes	5		DM
Create a new interactive and engaging landing page for special product categories	# of pages	1		DM/MM
Conduct an annual SEO audit in order to ensure the website remains high in search ranking	# of audits	1		DM
Apply an Instagram favourite application to the road trip tool and automize seasonal updates for the tool.	#of tools	1		DM
Effectively track user conversion using google tag (test group) in order to isolate an industry average.	# of google tags	40		DM
Execute Keyword Campaigns on Google to elevate YDH.ca paid search ranking	# of campaigns	5		DM/MM

DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Digital Strategy stands as a key element in the B2C marketing plan for Central Counties Tourism (CCT), and is supported by a responsible and reasonable budget allocation. Acknowledging the impact of digital media on the consumer (our visitors) and recognizing it is a primary traffic driver to our consumer website and our stakeholders directly, the strategy and its components have been carefully shaped by data and research.

The Marketing Team has assessed its current tactics and content strategies, analyzed the performance indicators to measure effectiveness, and isolated what works and what doesn't. Simultaneously, the team has kept up with emerging **trends** by learning from industry experts, monitoring digital/tourism trends and networking with industry colleagues to ensure the team stays educated on the latest innovations.

The team will have a heavier focus on partnerships. Given **Meta's** new algorithms and the changing impact of boosted posts, which often yield less for more, the Marketing Team will partner with high-yield digital publishers. This collaboration aims to maximize spending and enhance community impact while piggy-backing on their reputation and audience trust which, in turn, will enhance our credibility. This comprehensive approach has led to a high-impact strategy geared towards boosting engagement and reinforcing online presence.

In summary, the CCT Digital Strategy is primed to elevate engagement, expand the YDH digital footprint, and foster stronger connections within the community. All these efforts aim to increase consumer awareness of stakeholders, driving visitation and boosting economic impact.

INFLUENCER AND EXTERNAL BLOGGER PAID PARTNERSHIPS

The CCT Team remains committed to expanding the collaboration between the YDH brand (and CCT stakeholders) and paid influencers and external bloggers. We're stepping up our engagement in this arena. Through partnering with this influential group, YDH amplifies its reach across diverse social media platforms. Leveraging their expansive followings, we showcase tourism offerings, significantly boosting brand awareness.

Why invest in this tactic? **Trust and Credibility**: These influencers wield substantial authority in their respective domains, fostering trust among their audience. Associating with them bolsters YDH's credibility through authentic endorsements, elevating the brand's reputation**. Cost-Efficiency**: Engaging with micro-influencers proves a cost-effective avenue, delivering impactful outcomes without exorbitant investments, making it a prudent choice compared to macro-influencers**. Engagement Enhancement**: Influencers' engaged audiences provide YDH with a thriving platform to generate heightened interest and discussions around our stakeholders' tourism products and experiences, resulting in increased engagement. **Precision in Targeting**: Collaboration with influencers specializing in distinct demographics enables the CCT team to precisely target desired audience segments, customizing messages tailored to specific tourism offerings. **Authentic Content Creation**: Influencers excel in crafting genuine, relatable content resonating with their followers. By collaborating, YDH gains access to authentic content that deeply connects with its target audience. **Measurable Insights**: Influencer campaigns yield measurable outcomes, offering comprehensive insights into critical metrics like engagement rates, reach, and conversions. This data-driven approach empowers CCT to make informed decisions for ongoing strategies, optimizing future endeavors.

The integration of influencer and blogger partnerships within the digital strategy not only augments the YDH consumer brand visibility and credibility, but also facilitates a more targeted, cost-efficient, and engaging approach to promoting our region's diverse tourism offerings.

IMPLEMENTING NEW TRENDS INTO OUR STRATEGY.

The Marketing Team has been deep diving into research and trends (especially the role that AI plays in content creation). We have combined our findings and the information gathered by the Manager of Digital Marketing at Social Media Week and we are excited to implement some of these cutting-edge trends into our strategy.

AI-Powered Creativity**:** We're diving headfirst into AI-driven content creation tools. This means streamlining our processes and empowering our team to create high-quality content faster than ever before. The team will be enrolled in training to leverage these tools effectively and efficiently. One of the interesting findings at Social Media week and was also quoted in the Artlist Trend Report, was from Paul Nguyen, Group Creative Director at Prime Video & Amazon Studios, who stated, *"I find myself drawn to work where I can clearly see the human touch…... With time AI will figure out a way to duplicate it, but for now, it's these distinctions that I look for."* So for CCT, currently there is no substitute for the magic that comes from human creativity and innovation. In a 2023 focus group, over 80% of the participants were able to identify the authentic creation, but AI does play a fun role as a co-pilot in many ways.

Strategic Risk-taking: Our approach involves a balance between innovation and brand stability. We're carefully selecting creators who align with our brand's vision while pushing creative boundaries. Collaboration is key as we explore surreal, attention-grabbing content and immersive experiences using AR tools.

Micro-influencer Engagement: We're focusing on building partnerships with micro-influencers who cater to specific, passionate audiences. This involves identifying influencers who resonate with the YDH brand values and leveraging their niche followings for maximum impact.

Cultural Diversity and Localization: Recognizing the cultural shift in Ontario, we're exploring the use of non-English music and charismatic influencers from diverse cultural backgrounds. This strategic move aims to break language barriers and expand our reach into new demographics.

Personalized Content Strategies: Understanding the importance of personalization, we're refining our content curation methods. We're using metadata, tags, and channels that align with the preferences of our target audiences, especially the Gen Z demographic.

By incorporating these trends into our approach, we aim to position Central Counties and the YDH brand as an innovative, culturally diverse, and personalized destination, ensuring our digital strategy resonates strongly with our audience in 2024 and beyond.

Research sources: Artlist Trend Report 2024, Creative Works at Google, AI21 Labs, Amazon Digital, Forbes, IAB Canada, Social Media Week.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line: B2C-Digital Strategy	Lead
Social Media Engagement: Complete quarterly YOY engagement growth comparison for all social channels for B2C, YorkDurhamHeadwaters.	% of engagement increases per channel	Facebook: 5% Instagram: 5% TikTok: 100%		MM
Social Media Referral: Complete quarterly YOY comparison for all relevant social channels directing to YorkDurhamHeadwaters.	# of unique traffic referrals per channel	Fb:15,000 Instagram: 1000		MM
Research and attend Content/Social media learning opportunity.	# of opportunities	1		MM
Content development: work with travel writers (YDH Bloggers) to create compelling articles for yorkdurhamheadwaters.ca that tell the story of the region, tourism businesses, products, campaigns and programs.	# of New articles	40		MM
To create a compelling series of reels for our social media platforms.	# of reels # of TikToks	40 24		MM
To work with high yield digital media publishers to produce online and social media campaigns	# of campaigns	2		MM
To create a series of paid influencer campaigns that support the YDH seasonal campaigns	# of paid campaigns	25		MM

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

MARKETING SUPPORT TOOLS (NEW)

Marketing support tools like graphic design, photography, video, and image banks are crucial for successful marketing for both CCT and Stakeholder initiatives. They create engaging visuals, convey brand messages effectively, and ensure consistency across campaigns. These tools boost brand visibility, tell the stakeholder story, enhance audience engagement, and drive conversions in a competitive market.

Objective: To create a robust and organized collection of shareable creative assets in order to support B2B, B2C, and stakeholder marketing and communication initiatives.				
Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line	Lead
Continue to develop our YDH interactive maps program in order to educate users on major product categories.	# of maps	4	Marketing Support Tools	DM/MM
Image Bank Tagging Program and Refresh	# of programs	1		DM/IBA
Continue to grow our photography/ video portfolio	#of photoshoots	12		DM/MM
Continue to grow our video bank	# of videos # of b-roll collections	2 2		DM/MM

EARNED MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Earned media (digital, television and print publishers) is a crucial and highly effective and measurable element of the marketing plan. Through our press release and media program, we are able to pitch targeted media and outlets with the goal of attaining their endorsement of YDH's tourism offerings. Not only does it boost our credibility and trust among potential visitors, it allows CCT to measure its impact through metrics like reach, engagement and ad value. Importantly, it introduces us to new audiences who value external media opinions, establishing us as an authentic and trustworthy destination in York Durham Headwaters.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line	Lead
Pan-Regional Monitoring – Create report in order to measure success in the following categories: impression reach, PR value and regional coverage.	# of reports	12 (monthly)		DM
Press release creation and distribution of the YDH What's On press releases and/or advisories in order to raise awareness of campaigns, offerings, and special products.	# of releases	48	Earned Media and Public Relations	DM
To effectively monetarily measure the success of the earned media and public relations program.	Earned media and impression value	4 million		DM

PAID MARKETING

In 2024/25, our emphasis at Central Counties Tourism is on paid marketing partnerships. This strategic approach enables us to maximize our budget by collaborating with larger tourism organizations and digital agencies. Leveraging their buying power and expertise will be instrumental in boosting website traffic and supporting our stakeholders. Simultaneously, we're intensifying our partnerships with association partners to broaden audience reach, ensuring a holistic approach to our growth strategy. Additionally, we aim to forge revenue-generating partnerships where possible, ensuring mutual benefit and sustainable growth.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line:	Lead
Partner with tourism businesses to raise awareness of their products, programs and events via the YDH Co-Op ad program in the Globe and Mail.	# of full page co-op ads	10	Partnership	DM
Partner with Destination Ontario and CTA in order to extend audience reach while leveraging dollars.	# of campaigns Leverage Value: $50,000	2 DO 1 CTA	Paid Marketing	DM/MM
Work with Ontario based tourism/interest publications and organizations to promote visitation to YDH	# of organizations	5	Paid Marketing	DM
Earned Revenue from Co-Ops	Value	$30000	Partnership	DM/BBM

B2B MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

The overarching goal of this strategic plan is to drive stakeholder traffic to the CCT website and maintain their engagement. By aligning with B2B marketing trends and leveraging insights from comprehensive analyses, CCT aims to create a compelling and personalized experience for stakeholders, ensuring sustained interest and participation in the stakeholder development and tourism growth initiatives of Central Counties Tourism.

RESEARCH

Central Counties Tourism (CCT) adopts a data-driven decision-making approach in developing its B2B marketing plan for the Headwaters, York, and Durham regions. The comprehensive analysis conducted by the marketing team incorporates social media engagement stats, direct stakeholder feedback, insights from the Industry Relations team, and symposium/networking events. Website analytics were utilized to identify member preferences and areas of engagement. A comparative analysis with other Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs) guided the identification of growth opportunities and new potential strategic focus areas.

B2B MARKETING TRENDS

In order to build the B2B plan, the Marketing Team also researched current B2B marketing trends. Some of our findings that we are incorporating into the plan are:

Personalized Communication: Our message will be communicated with a focus on understanding each stakeholder's business's unique needs and tailoring messages accordingly. We will be using our CCT directory to isolate each business grouping based on product offerings.

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

Video Marketing: Video marketing has evolved from a complementary tactic to a dominant force. CCT will leverage visual storytelling to deliver important content to stakeholders in an engaging and digestible way. This will be applied to social (reel) and web (video).

Integration of AI and Automation: Implementing AI and automation will enhance efficiency and open new growth opportunities. The automation of the Road Trip Planning tool on the backend will streamline B2C marketing applications for seasonal switchovers, easing the workload on the CCT Industry Relations team. AI will be utilized to assist with internal content creation (editing, etc.).

ENGAGING WITH INDUSTRY THOUGHT LEADERS

The CCT Marketing team aims to stay ahead of industry shifts in B2B marketing tactics and analytics. We will be closely monitoring industry blogs, social media channels, and attending webinars and in-person events to gain insights and predictions about emerging trends. Leveraging "thought leaders'" perspectives will ensure that CCT remains well-informed and adaptable in the B2B marketing landscape.

B2B MARKETING PLAN

Objectives: Launch and manage a focused and targeted "CCT Content/Article" campaign
Elevate brand presence and engagement
Optimize the CCT website to communicate our support for tourism stakeholders
Utilize media to share the stories of CCT stakeholder product experiences and events to targeted media in order to tell their stories and increase audience reach

Objective: Launch and manage a focused and targeted "CCT Content/Article" campaign, utilizing dynamic content to enhance engagement and spotlight CCT stakeholder programs, events, and experiences, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of our offerings in research, education, marketing, and funding opportunities.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line	Lead
Information Articles (Internal: Research, Marketing, Industry Equipping)	Information Articles	12	B2B Content	BBMM
Featured Article: External Articles	6 articles	6	B2B Content	BBMM
Employee (profile)	10 profiles	10	B2B Content	BBMM
Stakeholder Spotlight	# of Spotlights	6	B2B Content	BBMM
Create New CCT Program promotional Banners for Newsletter	Number of banner campaigns	1	B2B Graphic Design	BBMM
Maintain Newsletter engagement	Average Annual Open Rate	40%	B2B Content	BBMM

Objective: Elevate brand presence and engagement via a strategic social media plan, amplifying CCT's content, programs, and events to cultivate a dynamic online community and optimize audience reach and involvement.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line:	Lead
Creating a series of branded social templates for each content pillars: i.e.: marketing, research, partnership, industry events	Number of template programs	1		B2B / MM
Create a social media calendar that supports CCT programs and opportunities.	Number of Calendars	1		B2B / MM
Increase overall social engagement across all channels	Engagement Growth %: Instagram LinkedIn Facebook	Engagement Growth %:	Industry Equipping	B2B / MM
Grow social media audience	Number of Followers/Likes Instagram LinkedIn Facebook	Instagram: LinkedIn: Facebook:		B2B / MM
Research and attend Content/Social media learning opportunity.	# of opportunity	1		B2B / MM

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

Objective: Optimize the CCT website to communicate our support for tourism stakeholders. Use a creative and user-friendly approach to strategically showcase CCT's content, programs, and events, aiming to educate, raise awareness, and increase engagement. Ensure visitors gain a clear understanding of CCT's contributions to the tourism sector and are motivated to actively participate.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line:	Lead
Develop a landing page that provides marketing tools for stakeholders to support seasonal campaigns	Number of Landing Pages	1		BB / MM
Create a media room	Number of Rooms	1		BB / MM
Increase stakeholder engagement	% of engagement growth	5%		BB / MM
Increase the image bank and video portfolio for B2B marketing purposes	Number of Photoshoots Number of Videos	3 1		BB / MM

Objective: Utilize media to share the stories of CCT stakeholder product experiences and events to targeted media in order to tell their stories and increase audience reach. Share CCT programs, opportunities and success stories to targeted media and industry in order to raise awareness and increase program participation.

Description	KPI	Goal	Budget Line	Lead
Grow the stakeholder press release dissemination program	Number of press releases forwarded to press	50	Public Relations	BBMM
Create a CCT Release program that communicates CCT programs, and success stories to industry and media.	# of Releases	10	Public Relations	BBMM

Golf in Ontario

Objectives: Be the best practice example of pan-regional partnership through the Golf in Ontario Program
Realize at least $1.5M in economic impact across the province through the program

Golf in Ontario Growth				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Solicit new stakeholder partners to actively grow the program within YDH and the rest of the province.	# of new stakeholders	5	Golf in Ontario	ED
Support the marketing / branding efforts of the Golf in Ontario program to grow bookings	Economic Impact	$1.5M	Golf in Ontario	DM

Partnership: Ministry Allotment $379,000

Objectives   Foster tourism investment
               Further CCT's impact on tourism

Further CCT impact on tourism				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Solicit partnerships that encourage increased visitation and increased length of visit.	# of partnerships	25	Partnership	IRM
Encourage development of shoulder season products/experiences.	# of partnerships	4	Partnership	IRM
Work with pan-Provincial associations to further the regional impact for CCT members	# of association partnerships	2	Partnership	ED

Foster Tourism Investment				
Tactics	KPIs	Goals	Budget Line	Lead
Solicit partnership proposals from municipalities, BIAs, DMOs and regions that focus on supporting increased visitation, stakeholder capacity, destination development and other tourism-related projects.	# of mentions in B2B newsletters	4		IRM
	#of direct conversations with stakeholders	10		
	# of Partnerships	4	Partnership	
Support projects that advance Community Tourism Plan action items	# of Partnerships	4	Partnership	ED

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

Revenue & Cost Recovery

2024-2025 marks a necessary transition for CCT, stemming from the fact that in 2019 the Ministry reduced its contribution to the organization (and all RTO's) by 20%. Then COVID-19 hit and our organization was leaned upon for support by more organizations than ever. We delivered, and as we emerge from the other side of the pandemic, stakeholder engagement continues to grow, as does the costs to deliver more services to more organizations.

There has been no indication from the Government of Ontario that further funds to assist CCT grow provincial tax revenues through increased visitation and spending, so the only way the organization can continue to provide the quality services and expertise it is known for, is by looking at ways to recuperate some of its expenditures.

CCT will continue to deliver its core services as it always has, most of which are free. This section describes the current and new programs the organization will undertake to increase the amount of available funds to deliver more of its core services.

Augmented Reality Program – stretch goal of $100,000

This project was undertaken to provide stakeholders the ability to enhance experiences through the use of technology. It was built and tested in 2023-2024 and will be available for stakeholders to purchase by Q2.

What stakeholders are purchasing is a yearly membership and storage space on the server which will house their avatar and recorded scripts. Different levels of membership are available for different sizes and types of organizations. See the below chart for details.

Level	Description	Expected Clients
1	Up to three stories with a max total length of 9 minutes of content	Small Stakeholders
2	Up to 7 stories with a max total length of 20 minutes of content	Museums, Municipalities, Hotels, Conservation Authories
3	Up to 15 Stories with a max total length of 45 minutes of content	Large attractions, municipalities, conservation authorities, tourism associations
4	Up to 30 Stories with a max total length of 90 mins	DMO's, Provincial Associations, medium-large non tourism businesses
5	Up to 100 Stories with a max total length of 300 mins	Small wholesalers
6	Unlimited stories and length	Large wholesalers

Wholesalers are organizations that sit outside of the tourism industry (ex. Real Estate, Auto Sales) that will act as resellers to their industry partners. Tourism sectoral associations (ORHMA, Resorts of Ontario, other RTO's, etc.) could also potentially become wholesalers to bolster their income.

The use of membership vs sale is because there is an ongoing yearly commitment by the stakeholder to pay for storage of their content. CCT has outlined the following price matrix for the initial set-up and ongoing membership. First year pricing is higher because there will be some handholding as the stakeholders learn how to effectively and efficiently use the software.

Client Type		Initiation Fee (includes 1st year storage)	Yearly Storage Fee	Yearly Membership Fee	Total Yearly Fee
CCT Stakeholders	Level 1	$1,000	$90	$500	$590
	Level 2	$2,000	$200	$1,000	$1,200
	Level 3	$3,000	$450	$1,500	$1,950
	Level 4	$4,000	$900	$2,000	$2,900
Non - CCT Stakeholders	Level 1	$1,500	$90	$750	$840
	Level 2	$3,000	$200	$1,500	$1,700
	Level 3	$4,500	$450	$2,250	$2,700
	Level 4	$6,000	$900	$3,000	$3,900
Wholesalers	Level 5	$10,000	$3,000	$5,000	$8,000
	Level 6	$20,000	Total Storage * Rate	$10,000	

Once approved, stakeholders will only see the Initiation Fee and the Total Yearly Fee. We will not show how the ongoing membership fee is broken down.

While a stretch, especially since at the time of writing the plan the final product is not completed, the Executive Director believes there will be enough interest for various membership levels to reach a year one revenue of $100,000.

Tourism Symposium Sponsorship - $35,000

The last two tourism symposiums hosted by CCT have included municipal sponsorship. Not only does it offset the cost of the event, it helps grow attendance because the municipalities are pushing the information out to their stakeholders in addition to the communications efforts put in by CCT.

Ticket Sales - $6,000

In 2023, ticket sales for the symposium were $5,995. There are no plans to host other in-person workshops that will have ticketed sales, so expected revenues remain flat.

Research - $50,000-$80,000

There is a reason for the range for research revenue and that is because CCT's ability to provide data to places outside of the region is dependant on whether other RTO's hold a master license. In the past few years, Destination Canada has covered the cost of the license for the RTO's and have indicated that will no longer be the case. There have been talks with the Ministry about them purchasing a master license for the province but at the time of writing this plan, that decision has not been made. The final number will be placed into the budget once we know how many RTO's CCT will be able to provide data for.

General Sponsorship – stretch goal of $50,000

There is inherent value in the brand we have created, and more importantly, the people we reach and engage with – both on the consumer side and directly with our stakeholders. While not at all tested, CCT is going to go to market to try to find big organizations (banks, credit cards, auto makers, etc.) that want to be associated with travel and attempt to get them to become corporate sponsors for the organization and/or seasonal campaigns.

We will also look at ways for stakeholders to get out in front of more consumers, like creating a featured hotel partner opportunity or sponsored content opportunities that our outside of our core deliverables.

On the B2B side, CCT will create advertising/sponsorship opportunities for suppliers who want to reach CCT's stakeholders. This can include advertising on the B2B website, featured ads in the newsletters and sponsored content through social channels.

The staff is very cognizant of optics and the idea is to create opportunities that are tasteful and do not detract from the consumer and stakeholder experience.

Co-op Cost Offsetting - $8,200

The Globe & Mail co-ops are moving to partnership this fiscal and, as such, will not be considered a cost recovery item. However, CCT's program with Destination Ontario will be pay-to-play which will offset the cost of those campaigns.

Projected Revenue Summary

Tourism Symposium Sponsorship	$ 35,000.00
CCT Program Tickets	$ 6,000.00
Corporate Sponsorship	$ 50,000.00
Community Tourism Plans	$ 15,000.00
Co-Op Advertising	$ 8,200.00
Custom Environics Reports	$ 50,000.00
Augmented Reality Revenue	$ 100,000.00
Incremental Revenue Total	**$ 264,200.00**

Note: These anticipated funds are not reflected in the 2024-2025 Budget. As they are realized, staff will be providing project recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval.

Appendix I

Definitions

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

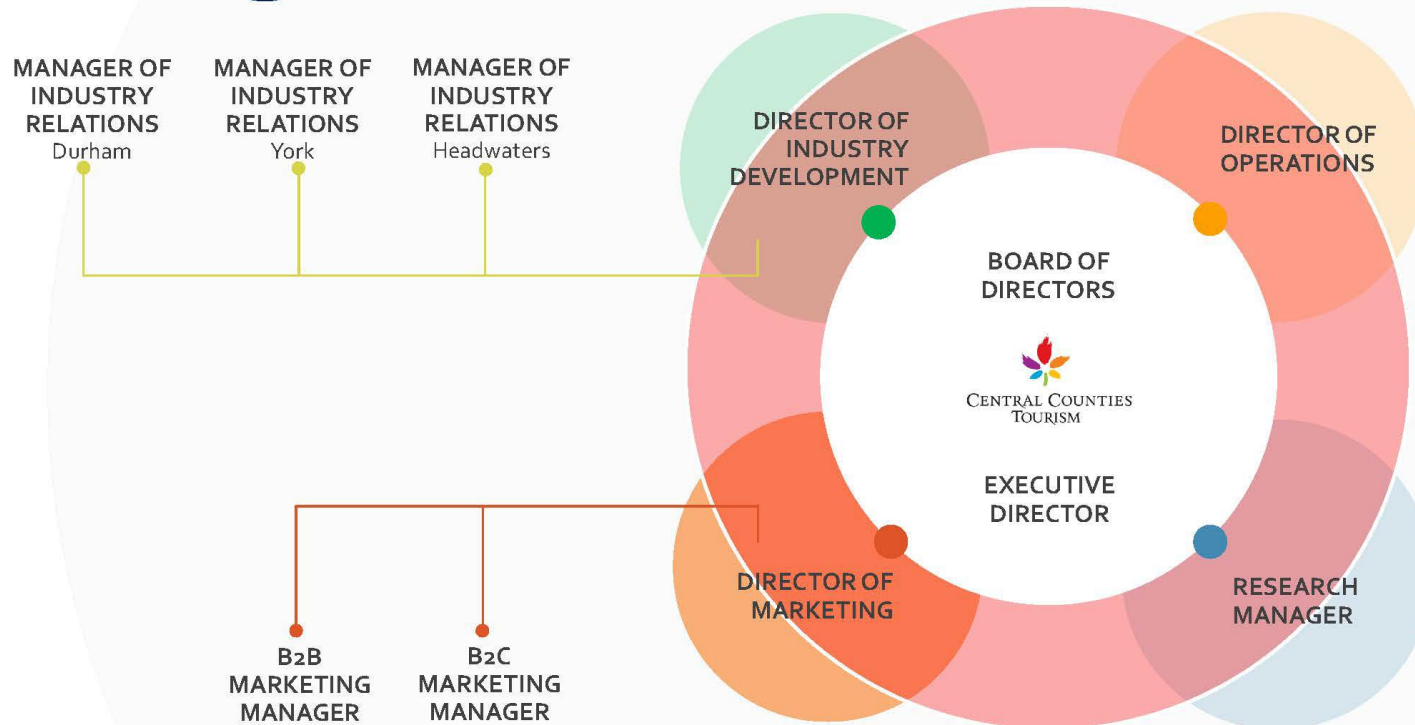|	
Objectives	Manageable, time-sensitive allocations of resources that move the organization toward the ultimate Strategic Direction. There is a clear link between each objective and a Strategic Direction. Objectives are the backbone of the yearly Business Plan and build on each other year-over-year.
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.
KPIs	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 five product categories identified as strengths for CCT. They are:

- Art Lovers
- Foodie Fanatics
- Adventure Seekers
- Family Fun
- Golf (Passionate Putters)

Leisure Market:

Visitors travelling for personal reasons, not as a group or for a sport tournament or business meeting/convention
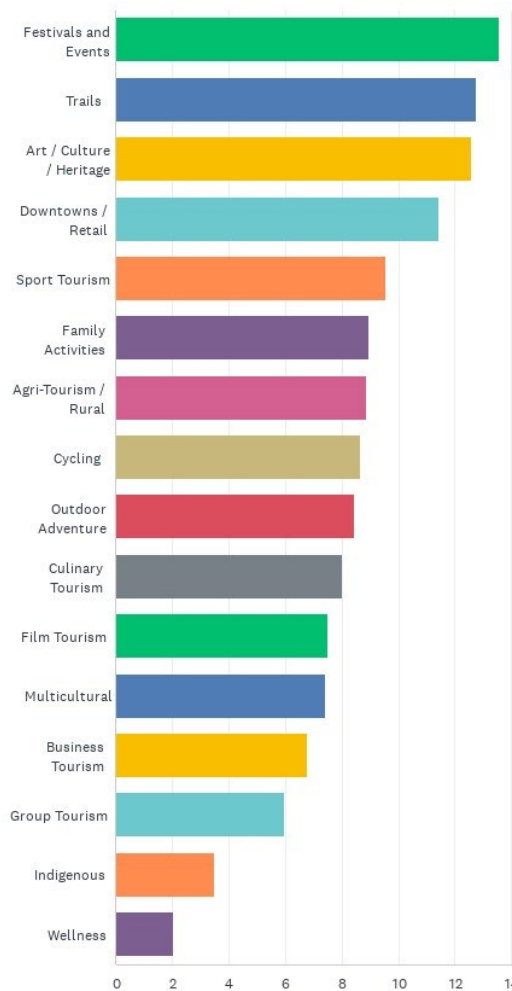
Acronyms

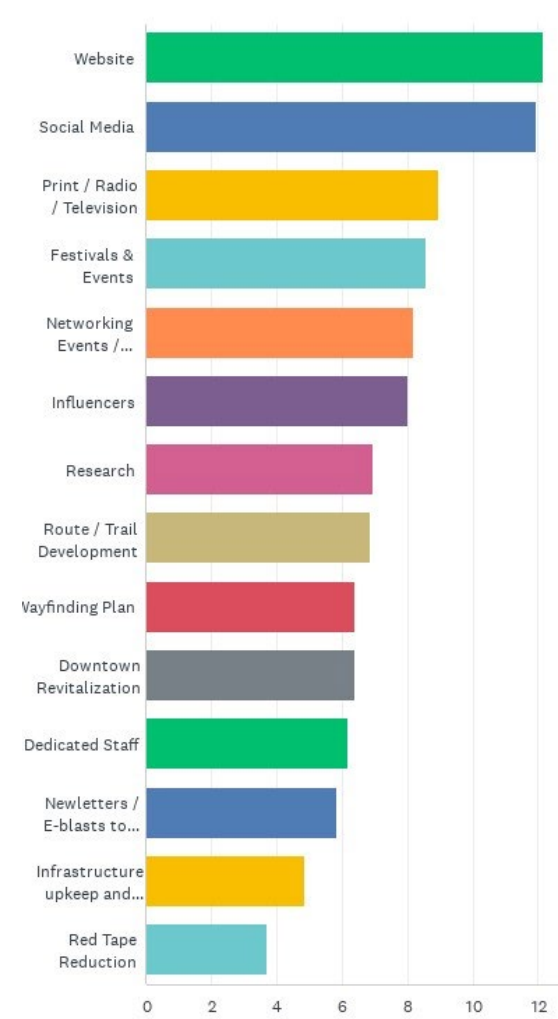|	
CCT	Central Counties Tourism
HTA	Headwaters Tourism Association
YRAC	York Region Arts Council
Durham	Durham Region Tourism
DeON	Destination Ontario (formerly Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation)
TIAO	Tourism Industry Association of Ontario
DC	Destination Canada (Federal Tourism Agency)
IDO	Investment Development Office (Ministry of Tourism)
Q(1-4)	Fiscal Quarters Q1 Apr-Jun, Q2 Jul-Sep, Q3 Oct-Dec, Q4 Jan-Mar

Organization Chart

MANAGER OF INDUSTRY RELATIONS
Durham

MANAGER OF INDUSTRY RELATIONS
York

MANAGER OF INDUSTRY RELATIONS
Headwaters

DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING

RESEARCH MANAGER

B2B MARKETING MANAGER

B2C MARKETING MANAGER

2024 Municipal Priorities to Grow the Visitor Economy (from CCT municipal staff meetings)

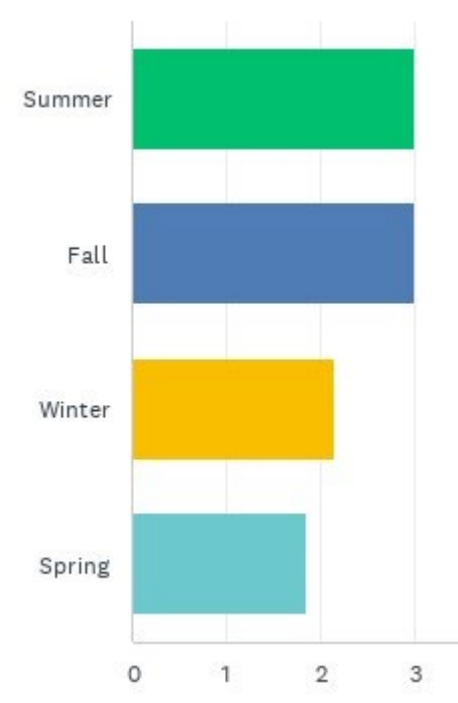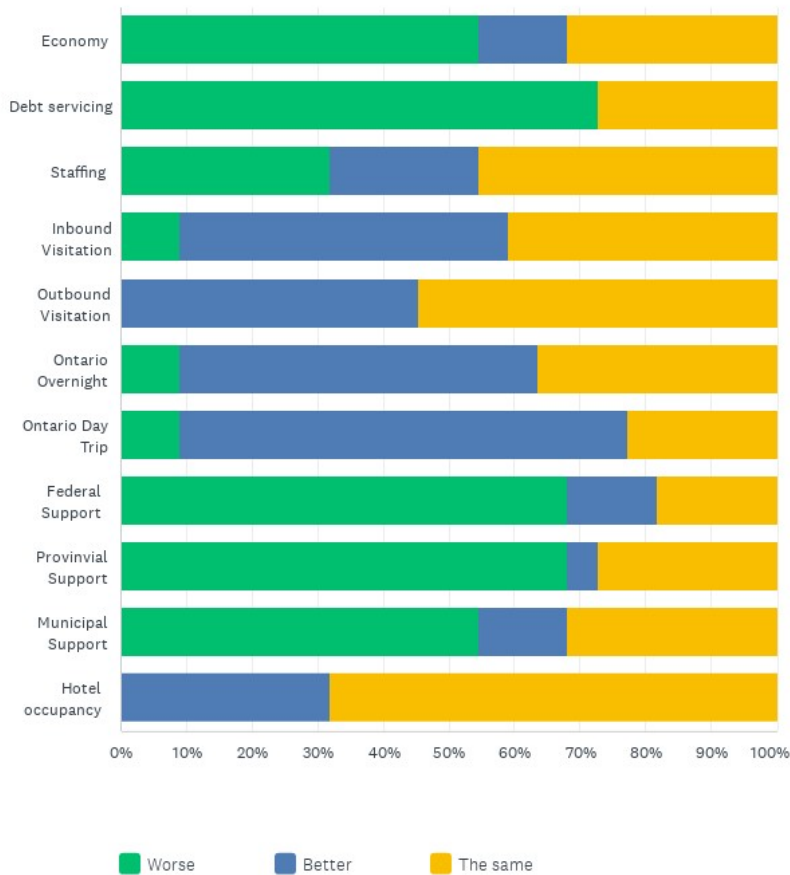Ranked Market Segments for Growth   Ranked 2024 Support Activities

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

Ranked CCT Supports
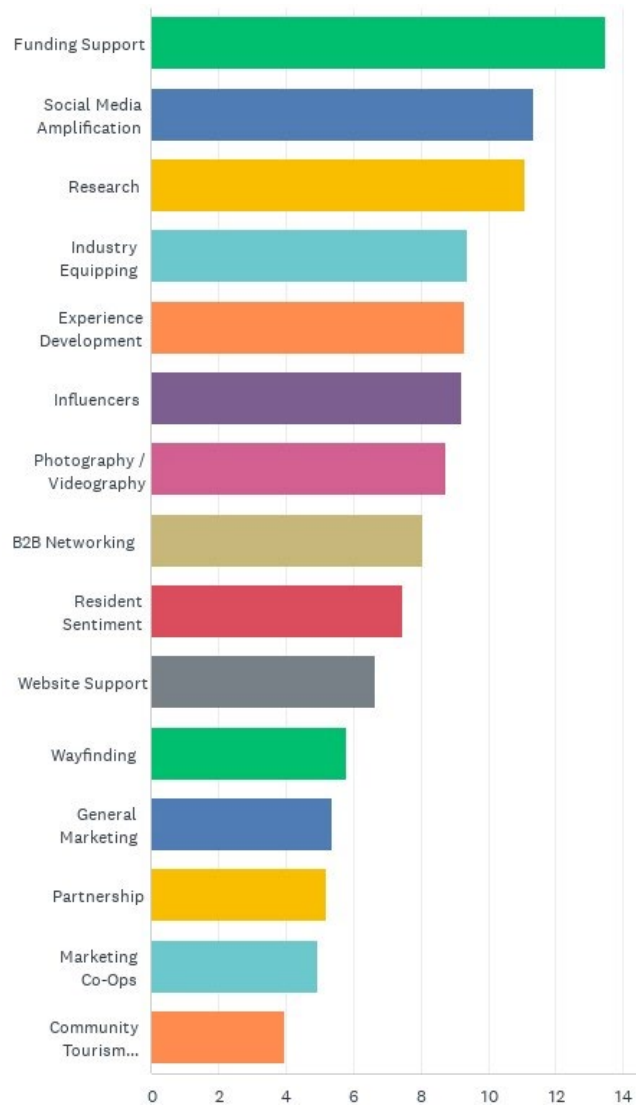
Ranked Seasonal Priorities

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

Results from the Board & Staff Assumptions Survey

Q1 Looking ahead to 2024-2025, please indicate if you think each of the following will be worse, better or the same.

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy

Q2 Compared to 2023-2024, please indicate if you think the following business challenges will increase, decrease or remain the same in 2024-2025

Increase   Decrease   Remain the...
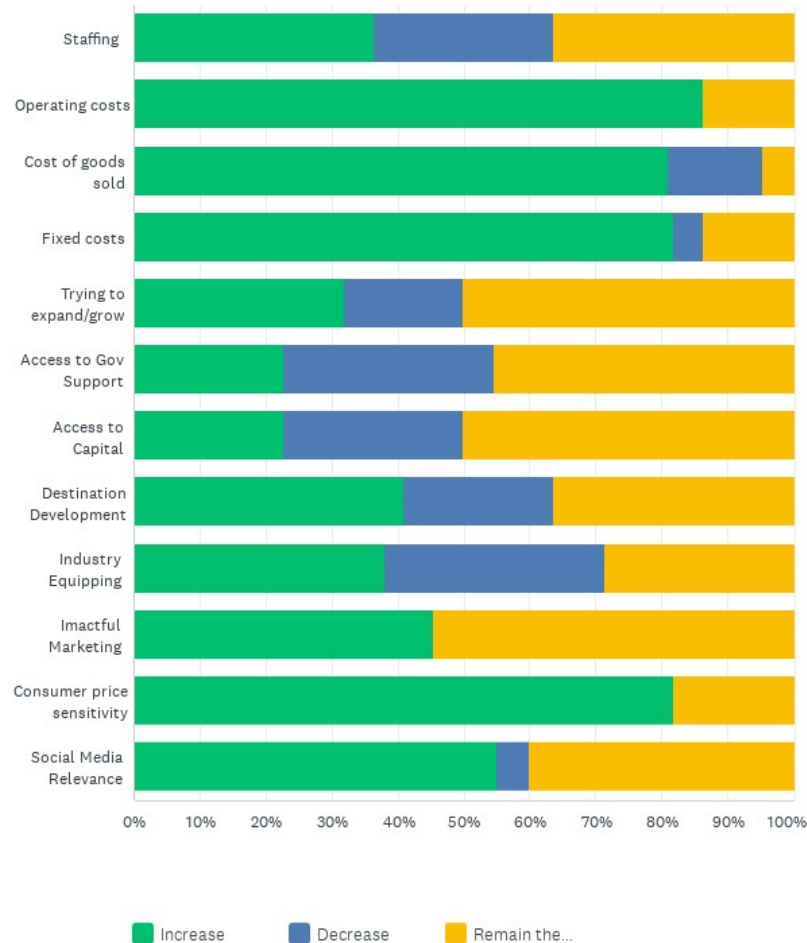
Q3 Given the climate you feel will be prevalent in 2024-2025, where do you believe the best opportunities lie for CCT to support and stakeholders to realize growth and success?

Central Counties Tourism aligns tourism resources to expand its stakeholder's ability to grow the visitor economy