FUNDAMENTALS OF DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

A Community Handbook

Maine

VISITMAINE.COM

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Introduction

Economic Importance of Tourism

Since the rapid rise of travel and tourism on the American landscape in the early 1950s, there is no denying that this sector has had a huge impact on our overall domestic economic vitality. The numbers tell part of the story as we look at the role travel plays in the U.S. economy.

Travel and tourism supports jobs in every state in the U.S. The travel industry includes airlines, cruise lines, motorcoach, attractions, lodging of all types, restaurants and dining, guiding, tours, leisure vehicle sales and service, seasonal and recreational activities, equipment sales, and much more.

- **As America's number one services export, the travel industry has added jobs faster than other sectors since the economic recovery began in 2008.**
- **The increase in jobs and revenue from the travel industry helps the U.S. compete globally.**
- **The travel industry generates $2.6 trillion for the U.S. economy, and generates $180 billion in tax revenues for local, state, and federal governments.**
- **Travel supports more than 15.8 million jobs in the U.S., both directly and indirectly. One in every nine American jobs depend on travel.**
- **In 2019, tourists spend nearly $6.5 billion in Maine and supported more than 116,000 jobs.**
- **U.S. travel jobs cannot be outsourced. They are place-based.**
- **Jobs in the tourism industry provide a path to the middle class for millions of Americans.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a bright spotlight on the importance of the travel and tourism industry to the U.S. and local economies, but also to the comfort, ease, and general sense of wellbeing of U.S. residents. People have come to depend upon these amenities including restaurants, lodging facilities, recreation and related services, and service workers to make their lives complete and satisfying and to support their own personal pursuit of happiness.

Maine Tourism Statistics

Maine's annual tourism statistics have been relatively consistent until the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. The money generated from the industry pumps significant dollars into our economy and is critical to the economic well-being of our state.

In 2019, visitors to Maine spent nearly $6.5 billion in Maine. Tourism supported more than 116,000 jobs and contributed more than $2.8 billion in earnings to Maine households, making it one of the largest industries in the state.

Because these numbers are impressive and the impact essential to Maine's quality of life, we must consider that Maine provides first-time visitors an introduction to all the beauty, bounty, and outdoor recreation that the state offers. That first visit often results in multiple future visits. Ultimately, those future visits can and do result in new residents and new businesses, which precipitate new construction, work in the trades, more tax revenues, healthier local economies, etc.

A number of well-respected studies advocate for using tourism visitation as an entry point, which is the most direct route to support the much broader economic development effort on the local level. This involves capturing new residents and new business ventures, as spelled out in the 2014 Oxford Economics Study, "Destination Promotion, An Engine of Economic Development."

"It is a common myth that tourism marketing promotes only tourism. In a fairly recent study (2016) of tourism campaigns in nine states, the research firm of Longwoods International demonstrated how each state's tourism promotion campaign created a 'halo effect,' lifting not only visitorship but also driving business development, real estate sales, purchase of second homes and even college recruitment." (Longwoods International)

How the Tourism Sector Works in Maine

State

The tourism industry in Maine is more complicated than in some other states, so it is important for business owners to understand how the various organizations and sub-groups impact the overall functioning of our service delivery system to visitors.
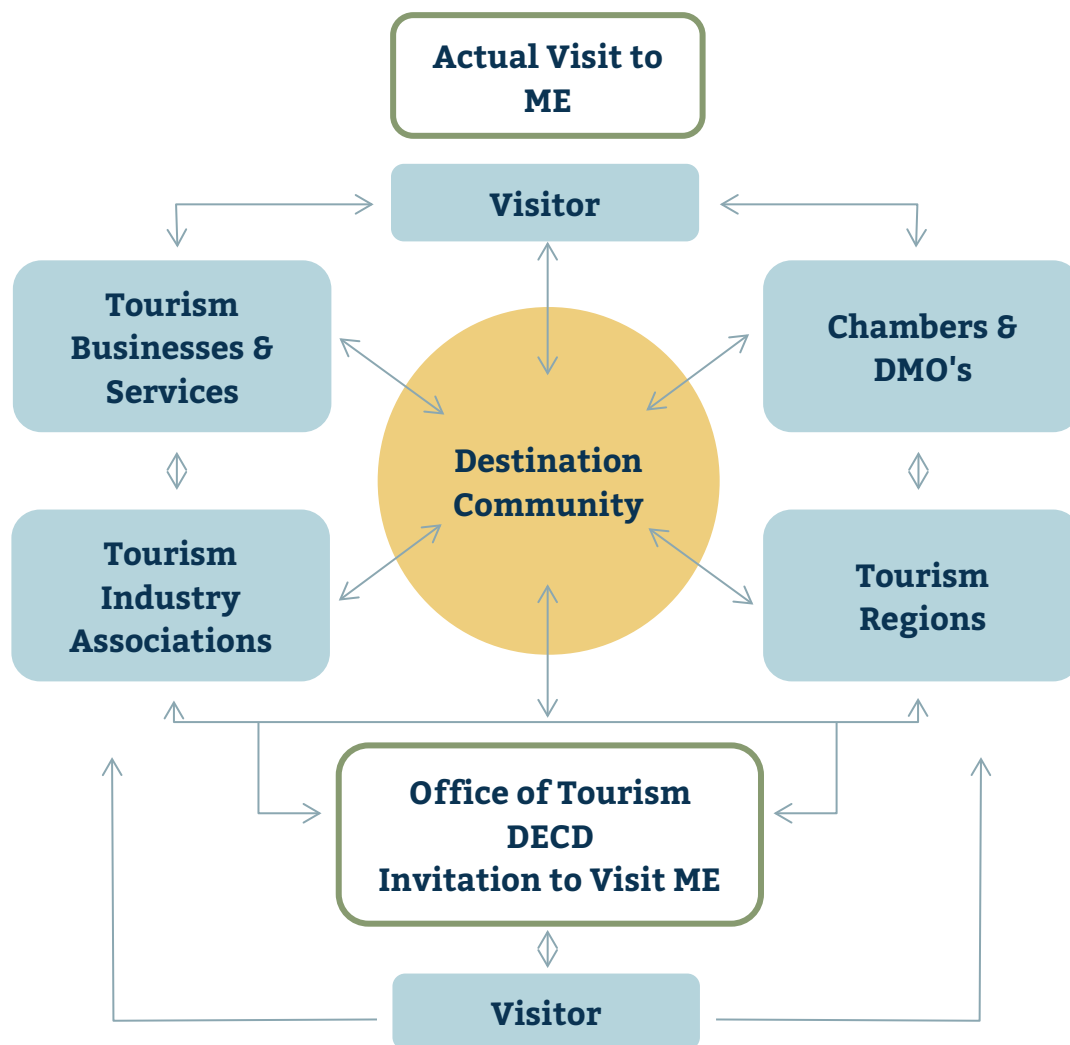
A potential visitor to Maine may interact with tourism industry associations, tourism regions, chambers of commerce and destination marketing organizations, or even tourism businesses and services before ever arriving in a destination. And all these groups interact with each other frequently. Often the visitor has many questions that require answers even before the decision is made to visit. When the decision is made to travel to ME, then visitors immerse themselves in the chosen destination.

The Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) and the various state tourism-related associations welcome and invite the involvement of business owners in industry gatherings such as association annual meetings, MOT stakeholder quarterly meetings, and the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism to name a few. Many of these organizations are currently holding zoom meetings that eliminates long travel times.

Involvement is key to getting to know industry colleagues and staying abreast of ever-changing visitor expectations. The Office of Tourism offers a variety of marketing tools and programs designed to support and expand Maine's tourism industry. Read through the list of resources below and make sure you are benefiting from all the available tools and information that can help advance the success of your business or organization.

See Appendix E for how you can engage with the Office of Tourism.

Regional

While being involved at the state-wide level is important and can help your business be in sync with trends and critical industry direction, it is even more important to understand and become involved with tourism on a regional and local level, especially if your business is located in a primary tourism destination area.

Every region and destination must make informed decisions regarding what they realistically can become. Those decisions come through long, hard, realistic introspection and analysis of geography, transportation routes, assets, business mix, and community capabilities. Those conversations require determination and persistent long-term work to enhance what exists and develop whatever critical components that are missing. The visitor desires an experience that is compelling, has the power to entice them to a destination, and to keep them satisfied while there for at least a week or longer.

Our destinations have many natural assets and attractions, but must keep access, infrastructure, and all working components up to date. The work of tourism destinations and development is never finished because visitors' desires and demands keep evolving. If destination areas fail to evolve along with those demands, the destination becomes obsolete and unattractive. The remainder of this workbook will offer some methods for accomplishing destination development on an ongoing basis within your primary destination area.

Resources Cited or Referenced:
- *Fact Sheet U.S. Travel and Tourism Overview*. Ustravel.org. U.S. Travel & Tourism Association, 2019. Web.
- *Research: 2019 Maine Office of Tourism Highlights*. MOTpartners.com. Maine Office of Tourism, 2019. Web.
- *Destination Promotion, An Engine of Economic Development*. Oxfordeconomics.com. Oxford Economics, 2014. Web.
- *The Halo Effect of Tourism*. Longwoods-intl.com. Longwoods International, 2016. Web.

Destination Development

Please note: This tool kit was created and finalized during the fall of 2020 during a global pandemic. COVID-19 is having a devastating impact on travel at this time and it will likely affect consumer preferences for the foreseeable future. Those impacts are yet to be fully realized and this document will be updated as necessary.

What is a Destination?

A Destination is a "place worthy of travel for an extended visit that has a critical mass of attractions, lodging, dining and services for visitors to stay comfortably enjoying an array of choices to satisfy them for an extended period of time. The place may be a locality, a town, or a region, but must be large enough to have sufficient services . . . and small enough to allow for multi-sector coordination." (Bruce Hazard, founder of Mountain Counties Alliance)

☀ Think: The Catskills and Acadia

The following contribute to a destination:

- **Attractions are the magnet that pull people to visit any destination. They can be natural, man-made, cultural, historic, human and/or capital investment resources like concert venues, arenas, etc. Within the destination, attractions should have the power to entertain and keep people for a lengthy stay. This ensures the community will benefit from the increased spending of overnight visitors, who spend three times more than day visitors.**
- **Most people require that their basic needs (food, lodging, safety, health etc.) are met to feel a comfort level to stay anywhere for an extended visit.**
- **Visitors expect choices in lodging, restaurants, pubs, entertainment and retail, which requires a destination to have clusters of these to satisfy various preferences.**
- **Quality marketing and promotional materials should be up-to-date and made available to visitors as needed.**
- **Infrastructure:**
  - **Transportation, roadways, walkways, trails and parks are important to visitors.**
  - **Guide services enhance the infrastructure listed above. Examples are Registered Maine Guides and tour services such as the Maine Brew Bus.**
  - **Emergency and medical services are necessary.**
  - **Informational services are needed by visitors 24/7 to bring together the entire experience. Examples include chambers of commerce, regional information centers and lodging staff.**

Levels or Types of Destinations

- **Primary destinations inherently have the criteria outlined previously, but not every community has the assets to be a primary destination!**
- **Secondary and tertiary localities are located within the proximate neighborhood of a primary destination or may be along the route to the primary destination. Those localities should partner with the primary destination to maximize passers-by for their own benefit.**
- **Businesses along the route can creatively develop reasons for visitors to stop, get out of their cars and spend money before they get to a primary destination. Things to consider include:**
  - **Be the best at what you do.**
  - **Create a unique experience that arouses curiosity.**
  - **Play on the theme of the primary destination.**

What is Destination Development?

Destination Development is the long-term grassroots process of convening a group of dedicated leaders – municipal, business, non-profit and residents – to pursue and implement a common vision and strategic plan.

Goal: To create a sustainable community that is economically, environmentally, culturally and socially pleasing to residents, existing businesses, and that has attraction power for new visitors, new residents and new businesses.

Process:

- **Inventory and evaluate all the systems within the community that impact residents, businesses, and visitors. This is a starting point for determining a common vision based upon the post-inventory analysis of strengths, gaps, priorities, attitudes, and needs.**
- **The systems are composed of:**
  - **Transportation, attractions, meals and lodging, retail opportunities, information, promotion, services, and amenities.**
- **Survey resident and business attitudes toward increased visitation.**

Community leaders should understand from the beginning that destination development is a long-term community effort that requires:

- **Leaders**
- **"Doers"**
- **Commitment – to the process and moving it forward consistently over time**

Without an intrinsic community desire for tourism, and a qualified group of committed people willing to work together to learn development strategies, success will be elusive.

What Prompts Destination Development

Everyone knows that change is inevitable. However, it is easy to fail to recognize the impact of change in our communities because we are so used to things as they are. Often it is not until some major catastrophic event grabs our attention and forces us to seek reasons why it happened that we come to grips with the serious need for a change in the way we look at and think about community.

The Butler Model, developed in the mid-1800s, recognized that resorts went through a very predictable series of phases over time. The tourism industry has discovered that these phases are as applicable to destination communities and businesses in general as they are to resorts. It is worth recognizing the phases to determine where your community might be in the natural progression.
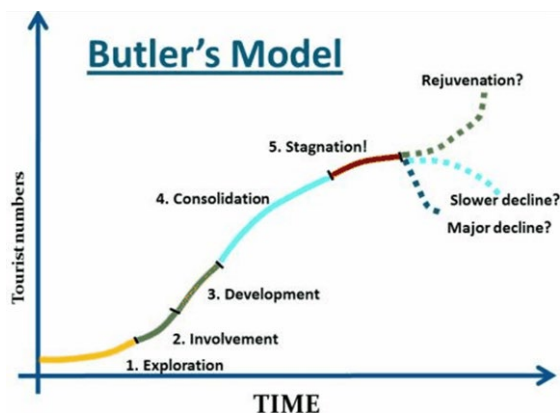

Think:
Millinocket – mill closure
Rangeley – ski resort closure
Moosehead – loss of multiple anchor businesses
Calais – border crossing station relocation

1. Exploration: In this stage a destination is being discovered by a few hardy adventurers seeking something different, who explore an area to find it has special qualities like natural beauty, culture, history, etc. They return home and tell people about this special place even though it has little or no infrastructure, services, etc. and is simply a pristine destination area without serious economic activity.
2. Involvement: Local people recognize increasing numbers of people are coming to their area. They begin to open businesses to provide for basic needs like, food, lodging, guides, transport.
3. Development: Larger companies see the emerging potential of a destination for resort development and begin to make investments in hotels, attractions, etc. The marketing effort to fill new properties causes the numbers of visitors to swell and job opportunities increase in tourism related services as well as construction and other services.
4. Consolidation: By this stage, the tourism economy may dominate the destination and many residents hold jobs in the industry. Depending upon the quantity of visitor influx, sometimes in this stage, some negative impacts can be seen.

5. Stagnation: By this time, competition, a loss of original pristine nature, failure to recognize economic impact of changes, negative social impacts and/or a major disruption, causes the numbers to level off and stagnate. Visitors find other places to spend their time, disappointed in the current experience. This is a threat to local businesses, services, and institutions.

6. Decline or Rejuvenation: Once stagnation sets in, there are two possibilities: decline or rejuvenation.
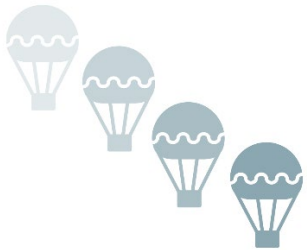
Decline can be slow and gradual, until someone recognizes that things have changed and attempts to figure out why. Former visitors are replaced by people seeking a cheap option as opposed to a quality experience.
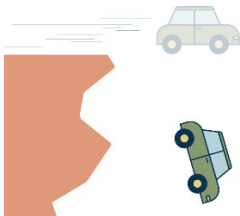
Or the decline can be dramatic with the immediate recognition of a major economic disruption like a mill closing or a COVID-19 crisis.

Rejuvenation sometimes involves a private injection of cash to create a new attraction to regain popularity.

It might be a rebranding exercise or new development to refresh tired facilities, designed to bring back visitors who have previously deserted the destination.

With no focus on rejuvenation, the total decline continues impacting residents and businesses through loss of services and critical institutions such as schools and hospitals, along with the necessary population for the community to survive.

Some Triggers for Major Disruptions and Decline:

Markets change but destinations remain static

Loss of one or more anchor businesses

Infrastructure changes that diverts major traffic flow;

A destination resort development relocates visitors from a traditional downtown destination;

Disruption in the tourism delivery system of a rural destination such as the closure of a key resort, restaurant, retailer, service provider causes the entire system to be impacted!

Destination Communities Often Experience Stages of Grief in Response to Disruptions Characterized by:

1 Denial and Isolation

2 Anger and Blame

3 Depression

4 Acceptance

5 Resolve to Act, Plan, Be Resilient

Communities must get to the final stage of acceptance and resolution (5) to be able to effectively work on a rejuvenation plan. At this point, the destination must begin to go through a destination development process to determine where their preferred future lies, to gain consensus among residents, businesses and leaders, and to outline a plan to take them into their new future.

General Steps in the Tourism Destination Development Process

First, it is important that the community understands the impacts of tourism development both positive and negative. Honest conversations with residents regarding their support, or lack of support, for tourism are critical and will bring about sustainability discussions. Gain community buy-in for tourism, based upon a clear understanding of the components for sustainable tourism.

Next, it is realistic to consider and discuss the investments - financial commitment and the time required - for successful destination development.

Potential business and organizational participants for community tourism planning and development must be chosen and agree to participate.

General Steps in the Tourism Destination Development Process

Organize & Assess Current Situation
- Organize ongoing tourism planning process with leadership team and community input
- Conduct an inclusive asset inventory for situational analysis

Facilitated Community Conversations *
- Determine your desired future
- Decide on critical areas of focus and goals
- Develop a general plan of action

Determine Professional Assistance Needed *
- Bring in technical expertise as required
- Evaluate funding options

Determine Marketing Direction *
- Assess your market to determine your target market(s)
- Develop a marketing plan based on the research

Maintain and Monitor Community and Tourism Metrics
- Monitor: inquiries, visitor counts, visitor satisfaction, traffic counts, park usage, etc.
- Indicators: population growth or decline, environmental factors, etc.

Tourism Management
- Information center operations
- Meetings
- Events

Evaluate and Reorganize
- Adjust plan as necessary
- Adjust marketing as required

**Generally covered in Community Destination Academy

Tourism destination development is a cyclical process that should be maintained and monitored over time so that a need for change can be identified through a set of metrics. Consistent attention to planning and monitoring can keep a community from being blindsided by subtle impacts of change over time and can help leaders recognize and act quickly to minimize the impacts of dramatic change.

Why is Destination Development Important?

Development work is essentially about getting "your house ready for company." Your "company" can be viewed as new residents, new businesses, and new visitors. This means looking at what you have as though you haven't seen it before and fixing the things that are broken, enhancing existing things, and adding new things. Community input is important to the discussion because all those things really matter to residents and businesses.

As residents and businesses take greater pride in their community for its sense of place, its vibrant downtown, beautification efforts, safety and integrated systems (i.e. wayfinding, transportation, emergency services) it makes community life a pleasure. These are some of the same qualities that attract new residents, new businesses and grow visitation.

At this point, the natural impulse may be to begin marketing. Prior to extensive and expensive marketing efforts, it is important to have completed the work of ensuring visitor satisfaction. Marketing is like sending out an invitation to special audiences to come visit for leisure, and perhaps consider this location as a possible home or a nice location for a business. To send that invitation before the community has prepared itself to receive new markets in the best and most welcoming way, is often an exercise in futility. When communities cannot put their "best face" forward, visitors often go away determined never to visit again, which totally defeats the purpose of any marketing efforts.

Are You Ready?

The disruption that has occurred often compels community leaders to begin working together in a more cohesive way that lifts them out of anger and depression to constructive dialog. As groups band together to develop a path forward, there are positive conversations and group participation mechanisms that often help communities get to the edges of visioning and solid concepts toward a long-term plan.

It is important to remember that every destination is different and in a different stage of development or rejuvenation. Therefore, there is not a "one size fits all" when it comes to community readiness or timing for a Community Destination Academy. Because of this, readiness factors are broad in nature.

Destinations that have completed some or most of the following steps usually exhibit readiness for more serious development work. Completion of this kind of work exhibits a commitment toward planning, even though specific areas may still be in progress.

- ☐ **Assets, businesses and community resources have been inventoried and documented.**
- ☐ **Assets, businesses and community leaders share a vision and are moving together toward a goal.**
- ☐ **Some previous strategic tourism and/or marketing studies exist as background materials.**
- ☐ **The capacity and determination to market exists and some market niches have been identified.**
- ☐ **Qualified local leadership is organized, roles are clearly defined and working groups are solidly in place.**
- ☐ **Community partnerships are evident with a willingness to work well together.**

- ☐ **There is tourism business and organizational capacity to develop new tourism product.**
- ☐ **There is a commitment to regional planning that is balanced and integrated.**

Resources Cited or Referenced:
- Hazard, Bruce. Whitepaper. Mountain Counties Alliance. 1995. Print.
- Gunn, Clare A. *Tourism Planning*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 1988. Print.
- *Butler's Model*. Adorngeo.com. Adorngeo, 2019. Web.

Resources Reviewed:
- Messer, Cynthia. *Community Tourism Development*. St. Paul: University of Minnesota Tourism Center, 2010. Print.
- Communities Strategies Group. *Rural Development Hubs, Strengthening Rural Innovation Infrastructure*. Aspencsg.org. The Aspen Institute, 2019. Web.

Organizing for Destination Development: Establishing a Baseline

## Importance of Key Organizations in Destination Development

The People

Having key people and organizations involved in the planning and development phases of Destination Development work is critical to accomplishing goals and seeing real results on the ground in any community.

A strong leadership team is imperative in moving forward cooperatively and meeting goals and objectives. Like a three-legged stool, there should be balance and equity from each leg.

A leadership team should consist of:
1. Municipal/Local Government
2. Businesses/Nonprofits
3. Community/Residents
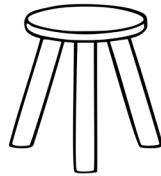
It takes this combination of people who are committed, forward thinking and able to move a concept into reality.

- **Chambers of commerce and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are focused on getting the word out about new programs, events, and activities. As marketers, to be most effective in their promotional efforts, they need to be kept informed of, or engaged in planning, for appropriately timed announcements.**

- **Municipal officials are focused on detailed planning, examining liability issues, determining how things will impact residents, taxes, etc. They need to have a strong partnership with the DMO, whose focus is marketing, to achieve maximum results.**

Those two descriptions illustrate the need for entities to work together to share their knowledge and resources. These groups need to be committed to convening, planning, discussing and shepherding the work until the goals established are fully achieved. Additional entities to consider are land trusts, a town planning committee, an economic development committee, a conservation group or some other entity that is determined and committed to outcomes.

Collaboration is Key

Organizations have board members and local/regional governments have elected officials that move in and out of slots after short periods of service, therefore, commitment to the long-term plan must come from organizational leaders and staff to ensure continuity, longevity, and succession.

Destination Development involves a continual long-term cycle of planning, implementing, marketing, and adjusting
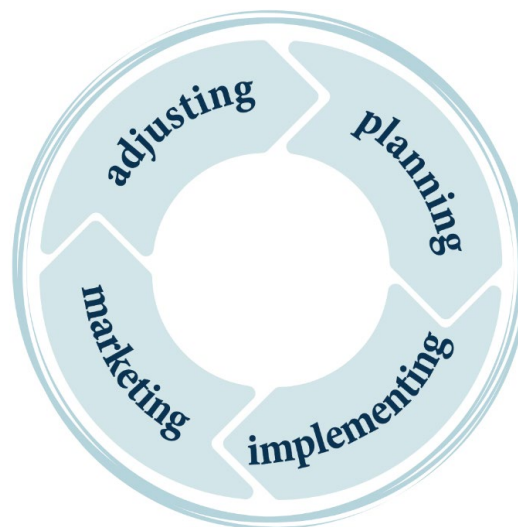
If communities are to keep in tune with trends and expectations of visitors, there must be a well-established collaborative community group that keeps the goals in sight over the long-term. When destinations fail to do this, they see diminishing returns in their attraction, lodging and restaurant metrics.

Building a Leadership Planning & Communication Team

Following are lists of community members representing different sectors. It's imperative to have a variety of stakeholders involved from both traditional tourism-associated entities and those you might not think of as stakeholders. The following list is a compilation of possible stakeholders. Not all communities will have representation from each of these entities.

Local Government
- Mayor/Town Manager
- Town Council/Selectboard
- Fire/Police
- Natural Resource/Public Land Mgr.
- Parks & Rec Director
- Planning/Zoning/Transportation
- Economic Development Person

Civic, Business, Non-Profit Groups
- Chamber of Commerce/CVB
- Hotel/Restaurant Assn
- Downtown Assn/Main Street Program
- Economic Development
- Business/Professional Clubs
- Event/Festival organizations
- Cultural non-profits

Local Businesses
- Hotel & Lodging Mgrs.
- Visitor Attraction Mgrs.
- Restaurant Mgrs.
- Theatre Owners
- Outdoor Recreation Outfitters
- Retail Owners
- Real Estate Agents
- Newspaper Editor/Writer
- Radio/TV
- Banks & Financial Institutions
- Hospital

Community Influencers
- Educators
- Religious organizations
- Indigenous Peoples

Building Your Working Groups

In every community, the workers vary depending upon the current partners at the table. In effective group functioning, partners may move in and out of meetings and projects depending upon their immediate capacity to be involved. Certain projects may be appropriate for a municipal committee, others might better fit into the mission of a conservation group or an economic development corporation.

Not all work has to be accomplished by the same group, as long as the group leaders coordinate and help to maintain continuity between the core leadership team and individual working committees so that everyone is working toward the agreed upon goals and allowing outcomes to be unified into a cohesive plan.

Anticipated and welcome committee fluidity helps to keep key people from total burn-out and ensures that many voices are heard in the process of decision-making and maintains forward momentum. This kind of flexible structure also allows those with specific expertise to join a group as appropriate. This type of assistance casts a broader net within a community and helps maintain goodwill and support of programs and projects. Contributions that are welcomed and accepted means more positive word-of-mouth at the local coffee shops, translating into greater community-wide understanding and support.

Assessing Your Destination

How does your destination currently measure up?
- **Survey regional and community attitudes**
  - **Is increased tourism desired?**
  - **How do residents feel about visitors?**
  - **How do businesses feel about visitors?**

For sample surveys – See Appendix C.

Inventory and Evaluate
Inventory and evaluate current infrastructure and systems that impact visitor experience
- **Attractions: Attractions have the power that draws visitors to specific destinations and fall into several categories:**
  - **Natural and Scenic**
  - **Cultural, Historic and Architectural**
  - **Recreational**
  - **Tours and Educational Experiences**
  - **Special Events**
  - **Agricultural Attractions**
  - **Health, Wellness and Lifestyle**

- Private Sector Services:
    - **Accommodations & Lodging**
    - **Food Service & Dining**
    - **Retail and Specialty merchandise**
    - **Miscellaneous Services**
    - **Infrastructure and Physical Environment**
    - **Physical Environment**

Inventory Worksheets - See Appendix A.
Once the inventory work is complete, use the worksheets in Appendix B to evaluate the condition of your attractions. Some will need work to make them more visitor friendly; others are likely ready just as they are.

Sustainability

The concept of sustainability has often been the center of confusion and controversy, mostly because definitions have been somewhat vague and difficult to interpret into practical terms, with some terms having over-lapping but different meanings. (Ex. eco-tourism and nature-based tourism). However, conversations about tourism sustainability in destination development discussions are fundamental to long-term planning and should be basic to the inventory and planning process.

Developing a sustainable tourism policy involves carefully analyzing possible alternative futures, thinking about responses to outside forces beyond local control, determining what to sustain, and evaluating various ways to reach the most desirable future.

Early mass tourism development efforts afforded economic opportunity but placed stress on infrastructure, resources, and society:
- **Rapidly growing world population**
    - **Affordable airlines made travel available to fast-growing middle class**
    - **Growth of affluence worldwide**
    - **Mass marketing**
    - **Rise of both domestic and international tourism (China, India, Mexico, Brazil)**
    - **Fueled desire to visit new places**

Early tourism efforts tended to be characterized by:
- **Short-term marketing goals**
- **Sales for quantity – high volume, high impact – "heads in beds" but low-yield ($)**
- **Environments that are artificial, homogenized, generic, formulaic**
- **Minimal long-term planning, and little thought for management of the visitor experience**
- **Results have often been:**

      o **Overcrowding in key locations; unplanned commercialization**
      o **Negative impacts on the landscape, resources and environment**

Sustainable tourism tends to be characterized by:
- **Longer term marketing goals**
- **Targeted marketing for higher-quality visitors – lower volume, low-impact, but higher yield ($$)**
- **Authentic, specialized, unique, and homegrown environments**
- **Planning for long-term tourism management**
- **Results: Unspoiled landscapes, locally owned businesses, historic buildings intact, walkable communities**

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism is about achieving a balance between environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism in a way that guarantees long-term benefits to the impacted local communities. This is sometimes referred to as the *triple bottom line* approach to tourism that includes returns on investment for the natural resource environment, the local economy among impacted stakeholders, and respect and preservation of the local culture and heritage.

David Beurle of *Future IQ* uses this working definition of sustainable tourism to mean that tourism:
- **"Is integrated with our local communities in a way that is respectful and functional;**
- **provides visitors with authentic, place-based, educational experiences that leave them feeling enriched and inspired;**
- **creates lasting financial and social benefits for local residents, businesses, and communities;**
- **is supported by public policies with organizational support and funding;**
- **and maintains, or contributes to, the health and vibrancy of our natural environment."**

Community leaders and planners need basic guiding principles for discussion and planning for tourism sustainability. Because things are constantly changing, it is also about recognizing that change will continue to occur and that communities must be prepared to adapt for change, but in a controlled, planned, and deliberate way. Keeping some of the following principles in mind throughout local discussion may help.

Sustainable Principles

(Outlined by Ed McMahon in Urban Land Magazine, 2015)

- Preserve and restore the historic story through buildings, neighborhoods, and landscapes.
- Focus on authenticity – uniqueness of the community story as it is rooted in local tradition.
- Ensure that tourism service facilities (lodging, dining, retail) are compatible with the authentic feel of the community.
- Resources need interpretation – education and interpretation help to effectively manage resources, instill respect and community pride, and strengthen sense of place.
- Protect community gateways since first impressions matter – inviting entry points and overall appearance either welcomes or discourages visitation.
- Attractive, well-organized wayfinding is important – sign clutter is ineffective.
- Walkability enhances the economy – the key to generating revenue and business sustainability is getting people out of their cars.
- Linking attraction sites offers a more worthwhile experience. One small community may not have the power to draw visitors but linked with others can rise to a higher level of interest.
- Tourism has limits and visitation must be managed – exceeding carrying capacity in a community, natural site, or experience will have negative results.

Here is an example of a Maine regional sustainability pledge that is an outcome of their CDA work:

The Mahoosuc Way (Towns of Bethel, Greenwood, Newry and Woodstock)
Pledge to Embrace Our Place

"The Mahoosuc Pledge helps us communicate our community values to newcomers and visitors. At the heart of our values, is a desire for a collective action to ensure we preserve this unique place. The Mahoosuc region is a working landscape in western Maine, with its natural resources providing recreational enjoyment and our livelihood for generations.

By offering the Embrace Our Place pledge, we are inviting you to be part of our shared experience here in the Mahoosuc Region. This pledge is part of our commitment to ensure these lands and ecosystems are able to be enjoyed for generations to come. We invite you to embrace our communities and way of life, today and into the future."

The Mahoosuc Way

Pledge to Embrace Our Place

HONOR THIS LAND

I PLEDGE TO: Honor this land, respect working forest traditions and local knowledge, and leave this place better than I found it.

EXPLORE WISELY

I PLEDGE TO: Consider my impacts, be careful what I do, and make smart choices about when and where I go.

SHOW RESPECT

I PLEDGE TO: Understand I am one of many people who use these resources, and to be kind and respectful to others.

CULTIVATE COMMUNITY

I PLEDGE TO: Embrace the shared experience of the region, and actively contribute to helping the Mahoosuc communities thrive.

BE CLIMATE CONSCIOUS

I PLEDGE TO: Reduce my unnecessary environmental impacts, reduce my carbon footprint, minimize my waste, and recycle and reuse what I can.

SPECIFICALLY, I COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING NEW ACTION:

_____

_____

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

For full details of the pledge go to MahoosucWay.com.

For a more detailed set of criteria for sustainability for hotels, tour operators, and destinations, go to the Global Sustainable Tourism Council at https://www.gstcouncil.org/gstc-criteria/ for their latest version 2.0 of performance indicators and standard destination guidelines (SDGs).

The discussion about sustainable tourism always includes community involvement, deliberation and coming to consensus, because that conversation must be an exercise in public choice. Gaining consensus around a desirable future is an exercise in sustainable tourism.

The following link is a guide focused on best practice approaches to sustainable economic development through tourism. http://whc.unesco.org/sustainabletourismtoolkit/how-use-guide

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Setting Vision, Mission, Goals

Once the inventory work has been completed, evaluated for clusters or groupings of similar businesses, strengths, gaps and priorities, the community then has a solid foundation to begin to determine their vision for their preferred future, to set goals and develop action steps to lead them toward a shared vision.

Visioning

Determining the vision of a destination is an exciting conversation that can also serve to motivate participants to action and accomplishment. Strength of a vision lies in it being shared across a broad sector of community who will perpetuate it. The process must:

- ✓ **Be facilitated – takes 2-3 meetings**
- ✓ **Involve a broad base of stakeholders**
- ✓ **Integrate various visions expressed in discussion**
- ✓ **Find common ground incorporating pieces of all visions expressed**
- ✓ **Should integrate recent community goals set within other group discussions**
- ✓ **Be shared widely among residents for support, more ideas and priorities**
- ✓ **Motivate the community to agree on the outcomes and work together to accomplish results**

Some questions to ask as part of the visioning process:

How do you want your destination to look in 5/10 years?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would you like to see happen? Change? Remain the same?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is an acceptable level of community change?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What type of tourism development fits with your image of your destination's future?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

In thinking about future tourism, what gets you really excited?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Prioritization

Throughout the small group conversations and work on visioning, a lot of discussion and brainstorming takes place. The notes from those work groups become the basis for building lists of ideas that can be incorporated into community. The facilitator will have the group establish their individual priorities to determine where the clusters of highest importance lie. That information can give rise to further discussion to build consensus around key priorities of importance. This is a very important step in the process of building out the vision.

Positioning

Tourism in the vision: Once the vision has been agreed upon, discuss where tourism fits with the vision.

- ✓ **How will tourism make things better?**
- ✓ **How might tourism run counter to the vision?**
- ✓ **How do we need to look at tourism differently?**
- ✓ **What types of tourism fit best within our vision?**

The vision positioning discussion should involve stakeholder comments regarding the various types of tourism their community is willing to embrace. Some areas have a solid cluster of trails for biking, trails for hiking, farm-to-table restaurants, art museums, cultural community clusters, educational institutions, etc. As those clusters stand out from the inventory work, it is important for the conversation to determine where to place focus, instead of trying to "be everything to everyone."

A solid focus on a unique community strength, will entice visitors drawn to that focal point who will be pleased and surprised to find all the other options available to further endear them to that destination.

Examples:

Austin, TX has many tourism options, including the river and waterfront, parks, fine restaurants, history, galleries, festivals, but the focus is MUSIC!

Napa Valley is known as wine country because that is their strength and their focal point. Everything revolves around wine, but there are other things to do and see as well.

So, what are some variables that might be used to position your destination for its key point of uniqueness? Some things to look at are:

Outdoor Recreation
Location/access
Indigenous culture History Ethnicity
Landmarks/icons
Season Personality/values
Natural Environment
Attractions Cruise
Emotional benefits & feelings
Legends Events People
Sport Nightlife Climate
Landscape
Wildlife Celebrity
Industry & local products
Culinary
Culture

Next Steps:

1. Draft a common vision from group feedback in the previous meetings and discussions.
2. Circulate for further input.
3. Revise the vision statement based upon any further input.
4. This final report becomes the basis for future action.

These community discussions are extremely important to lay a foundation for future actions. It is critical to capture as much of the conversation and suggestions as possible so that stakeholders feel they have been heard in the process. Discussion will not always happen in the specific order that you see here, but the larger topics suggested should be a part of the conversation to ensure that the key issues have been addressed.

Mission

From the previous discussions, a mission statement can be formed for the organization that will move the destination development effort forward. The mission statement succinctly explains the role of the organization in moving the vision to reality. What will the organization be responsible **to do** in broad terms to accomplish the vision? The answer to that question is the mission.

Examples:

- **The mission of _____ is to create a vibrant economy by promoting, developing, expanding our visitor industry.**
- **The mission of _____ is to stimulate economic growth by increasing visitor volume and expenditures.**
- **The mission of _____ is to target market for new visitor sectors and develop new experiences to satisfy them throughout their stay in our community.**

Setting Overall Goals for Tourism Development

With the vision and mission already articulated, conversation should flow easily into establishing goals to accomplish them.

Goals should be:

- **Consistent with the vision**
- **Developed in the larger destination development team**
- **Incorporate tourism directives captured in other recent community processes**
- **Realistic**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable within a specific timeframe**

Possible questions to ask:

- **How many more visitors does the community want to attract?**
- **What partnerships would make sense to develop tourism here?**

- **How many jobs do we want to create?**
- **What is the percentage increase of income needed for local residents?**
- **What season(s) do we want to develop?**
- **What infrastructure must be developed to accommodate a visitor increase?**
- **How many visitors are too many?**

From the goals established, the destination development team can identify
- **Action steps**
- **Timelines**
- **Assign tasks to team members**

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Maine Community Destination Academy Program

This program sponsored by the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT), the Maine Woods Consortium (MWC), and the Northern Forest Center (the Center) is based on a community's readiness and is by invitation.

Background

The Maine Office of Tourism researched several programs developed by other states to determine how they could offer more direct support to rural areas struggling to maintain and grow their tourism base. It was apparent from many listening sessions that most rural Maine areas are facing similar basic issues and need assistance to move from their current status to a higher level of visitor satisfaction performance.

**Maine Woods
High Potential Rural Destination Areas**
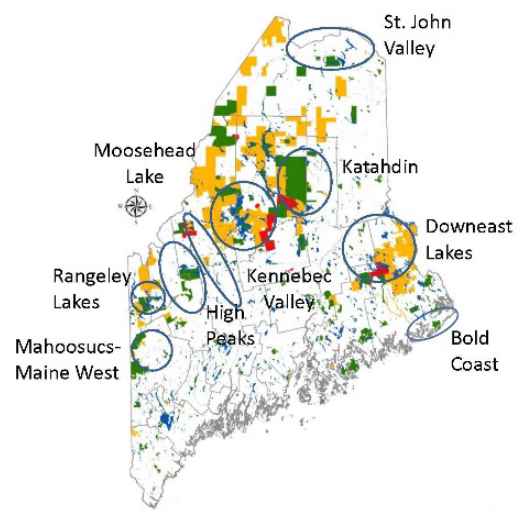
DESIRED OUTCOME: A network of Rural Destination Areas where recreational and cultural amenities, hospitality services, transportation infrastructure, dynamic events, and vibrant downtowns attract visitors, businesses and new residents.

- **MOT outlined a new program modeled after Oregon's Rural Tourism Studio**
- **MOT formed a partnership with MWC, a network of non-profits, businesses, and government agencies led by the Center and dedicated to advancing a "triple bottom line" approach (economy, environment, community) to enhance human and environmental well-being in the Maine Woods region. The area of focus encompasses the Maine Woods region of Oxford, Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis, Northern Penobscot, Aroostook, Washington counties**

A partnership was ultimately formed between MOT, MWC, and the Center to "pilot" the Destination Academy program in the Moosehead Lake region – an area that had made major

research investments in hiring a nationally known consultant to work with them to reposition their declining destination.

In total, three Community Destination Academies (CDAs) have been implemented by MOT and its partners:
- **Moosehead Lake region of Piscataquis County,**
- **Rangeley Lakes region of Franklin County,**
- **Bethel-Mahoosuc region of Oxford County.**

One of the outcomes of the early work is that the Northern Forest Center and Maine Woods Consortium have successfully leveraged private and public investments to deliver direct technical support to projects and businesses in these regions.

The CDA program is available to communities in the seven counties identified. Northern Forest Center has developed a version of this CDA program for northern Vermont and New Hampshire.

What is Community Destination Academy?

The Community Destination Academy combines professionally led workshops and training with financial and technical assistance to help communities strengthen the amenities and services that attract visitors – and visitor spending. The program is designed to help rural destinations move beyond marketing to focus on evolving visitor interests and providing a seamless, service-oriented experience from lodging and dining to outdoor recreation, cultural events, and shopping. While the program is grounded in the tourism and recreation economy, the approach supports amenities that contribute to local quality of life and help attract new residents and businesses.

Successful destinations require a unique level of cooperation among business, non-profit, and municipal stakeholders and a common set of skills, knowledge, and language to enable effective team-based project implementation. To this end, the CDA program is explicitly geared to serving multi-sector teams with participants expected to commit to the full series of workshops.

Purpose:

Community Destination Academy Goals:
- **Develop working cohorts of business, non-profit, and municipal leaders in high potential Rural Destination Areas.**
- **Build a common set of skills and knowledge for successful, long-term sustainable destination development.**
- **Support implementation of local development projects identified by program participants. Build confidence and a track record of successful collaborative project implementation as a foundation for ongoing product development and marketing.**

With these goals as guideposts, the Community Destination Academy includes the following elements:

1) **Leadership and Collaboration Skills Preparation & Training:** Upon request from local tourism and destination development leaders, a team from the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) and Maine Woods Consortium (MWC) works with local and regional partners to identify a "leadership cohort" to engage in the CDA program. If needed, a professional facilitator can work with this group to help them work together in an effective, collaborative manner. This thread runs throughout the entire curriculum to ensure cohesiveness in the outcome.

   CDA sessions involve investigating unique needs and interests of the local leadership group and shaping a training curriculum customized to their specific situation. For example, if an area expresses interest in biking, then experts in that field would be brought into the curriculum to help local volunteers understand the critical elements that bikers are seeking and how to accomplish a final product (experience) that will satisfy that market segment.

2) **Community Destination Academy Workshops (Phase I):**
   While each participating destination area is unique and encouraged to identify specific local training interests and goals, the core of the CDA program is built upon a broad core curriculum that is applicable to most Maine rural destination areas.

   Depending upon readiness factors and local needs, the program curriculum is tailored to the specific situation but typically involves a combination of:

   - **Understanding Travel and Marketing Trends**
   - **Assessing Current and Desired State of the Destination**
   - **Creating a Destination Vision**
   - **Creating Memorable Visitor Experiences Creating a Destination Plan**
   - **Turning Plans into Action**
   - **Finding the Money: Destination Financing for NGOs, Towns & Businesses**
   - **Selling Your Story: Destination Marketing**

3) **Financial & Technical Assistance for Local Project Implementation:** As part of the program, CDA participants determine a process for identifying one or more local projects that align with destination area goals, deliver value to multiple local stakeholders, and can be completed in a 6-month to one-year timeframe.

   A predetermined level of matching funds is provided to support team-based implementation of one or more projects that benefit their region in a visible and

impactful manner. In this way, the team building and leadership skills are put into practice in a very practical manner and the community sees an immediate outcome.

4) **Community Destination Academy Workshops, (Phase II):** Roughly six months to a year after the initial workshop series – and, ideally upon completion of a selected local project – MOT supports delivery of a follow-up workshop designed to enable participants to reflect on phase one learning and collaborative project completion. This session also serves to support other emerging local interests and opportunities.

Upon conclusion of the CDA program, the participating leadership team should be prepared to work together to implement additional destination development projects and seek grant funds for larger projects like tourism master planning, a public facility feasibility study and/or implementation of infrastructure projects, and business development.

To date the Community Destination Academy has led to successful and ongoing efforts to implement destination area projects ranging from rebuilding a downtown boardwalk along Moosehead Lake to implementation of a new regional wayfinding system in the Rangeley Lakes, and a broadbased sustainable tourism strategy to address potential overtourism issues in the Bethel-Mahoosuc region.

Most importantly, the program is building new teams of business, municipal, and non-profit leaders and providing them with the training and resources to advance to new strategies to meet the changing needs and interests of regional, national, and global travelers.

How Can a Community Secure a CDA?
Through the application process and preliminary discussions in community, the Partnership Team determines that at least most of these readiness factors are solidly in place and that the CDA process can build on the foundation that has already been laid.

Readiness Factors:
- **Loose definition of destination area, inclusive of key service centers**
- **There is an existing inventory of tourism resources, attractions, assets, businesses, and public/private services.**
- **Service Centers include a mix of attractions, lodging, dining, recreation, and services to satisfy visitor needs for a range of choices.**
- **There exists a critical mass of year-round, regional lodging, dining options and retail facilities.**
- **There is an organized, committed grass-roots leadership group with a mix of business, municipal and non-profit leaders.**
- **Demonstrate examples of innovative thinking among destination leaders.**
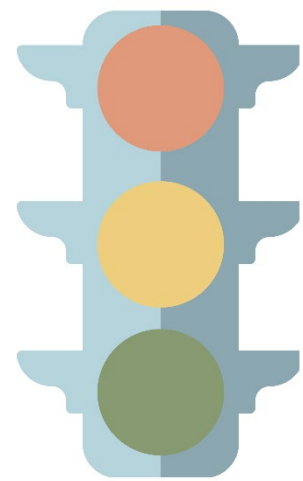
- **Demonstrate experience of finding financial assistance for destination projects.**
- **Show examples of engagement in board development, tourism training, development, visioning, master planning, etc.**

CDA General Format: Two - 1.5-day workshops held at least two weeks apart.

Content: According to local input; may include leadership training, teambuilding, financing, telling your story, product development, always includes project execution.

Who Should Attend:

Key LEADERS from (Think 3-legged stool)

- **Businesses**
- **Non-profit organizations**
- **Municipal staff and elected officials**

All three categories must be equally involved for true success in implementation.

Include in the sessions, but do not limit to the following:

Lodging, restaurant, retail, any tourism facing local businesses

Attractions and recreation providers

Cultural, historic, and other non-profit organizational leaders

Municipal staff and elected officials

School, Healthcare and Wellness

Land trusts, trails organizations

County tourism, economic development leaders

Regional tourism leaders

What Results Can You Expect?

Throughout the CDA, there are many conversations, "aha" moments and ideas that surface in public and private discussions. From these, the group is guided toward a few projects that meet the criteria established by the CDA Partnership. This practical measure creates a short-term success and demonstrates a visible outcome to the community through teamwork using CDA practiced skills.

Results will vary according to community needs and the CDA discussion. The local Leadership Team uses the detailed notes and the report from the CDA to determine the best project(s) to meet the specific community goals within the budget allowed. Some communities accomplish 2 to 3 projects, but it depends upon needs and costs.

Recommended Project Criteria:

- **Can be accomplished with an investment of $ (specific amount changes based on budget)**
- **The group must raise a match of 25% minimum**
- **Is highly visible to community/region**
- **Will impact multiple stakeholders**
- **Can be implemented within 6 months to 1 year of the CDA**
- **Can be used as public relations to community to show progress and the power of cooperation**
- **Carries the group in the direction of facilitating increased visitation.**

What Happens after CDA?

After Phases I and II of the CDA process, the local leadership team continues to meet to determine workable, visible projects, lay out timelines and usher that work to completion. The

Partnership staffers (MOT, MWC, NFC) continue to work with the local leadership team until the project(s) are completed or at least for a year.

Upon project completion, the group holds one final follow-up session to share results with all the original participants, to recap successes, challenges, lessons learned and to discuss next steps to be led by the local leadership team. At this session, often there are innovative ideas percolating in community and the conversation can be continued locally without the presence of the Partnership Team.

If specific challenges arise during the CDA process, the CDA partnership staff may recommend a tailored follow-up session based upon that expressed need, such as board training and development, social media one-on-one work with individual businesses, or some other need.

It is the hope of the Partnership Team that as the CDA process enters a local phase of continuation, that the local Leadership Team has begun to fulfill the purpose for the CDA and is moving on a positive path to continue toward more effective, collaborative results.

Overall Purpose:
- **To understand how community must prepare for future trends in visitation**
- **To work on concrete projects to move community in the direction of coordinated preparedness for more effective visitation – elevated visitor experiences that encourage longer stays, greater spending**
- **Ultimately lead to better informed and more effective tourism marketing efforts**

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS TOWARD SUCCESS: CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL DESTINATION

Community Destination Academy (CDA) has been developed to assist communities through determining their desired future, vision, goals, action plan and marketing direction. That is why a certain amount of readiness and community preparation is critical to the success and outcomes of the CDA.

A Successful Tourism Destination:
- ☐ **Has a unique identity.**
- ☐ **Is readily and cost effectively in alignment with your chosen target market segments.**
- ☐ **Has a critical mass of products and services of such significant quality to attract and satisfy the identified target market segments for an extended stay.**
- ☐ **Has worked to align infrastructure with the destination image.**
- ☐ **Has carefully planned to cover all essential services required by the visiting public.**
- ☐ **Has an available workforce and affordable housing to accommodate workers.**
- ☐ **Has developed a complete and integrated wayfinding system throughout the destination.**
- ☐ **Has a system for visitor information available 24/7 to assist and guide the visiting public.**
- ☐ **Shows evidence of strong business, community and governmental leadership, cooperation and synergy throughout the region.**

☐ **Is practicing succession planning to insure the continuation of the tourism development process.**

☐ **Offers continuous industry education to businesses and employees.**

☐ **Has a destination management/marketing organization (DMO) that is committed to securing long-term funding for marking purposes.**

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BUILDING THE EXPERIENCE

Product Development – Packages & Experiences

What is product development, and what's the difference between **packages** and **experiences?** Product development includes all the ways businesses and destination marketing organizations enhance a tourism commodity like a room, a meal, an activity, etc., to add value for the consumer. Historically, the tourism industry has marketed packages which are a single priced offering of a group of products such as lodging, meals, sightseeing activities, museums, outdoor recreation, sports, special events, and so on. Packaging focuses on combining the specific products you can usually purchase individually in a destination.

Packaging

In building a traditional package, industry providers bundle products. They look at a visitor segment that enjoys a specific activity or amenity and put that together with a place to stay, the activity, an event, and sometimes meals or other products.

It is generally not the hotel room, the bedding, the room service, the formal dining room or the balcony with a view that brings people back to a destination again and again. As important as those products are to personal comfort and satisfaction, it is more often the experience of meeting an interesting local, being immersed in a spectacular landscape, photographing a sunrise from a majestic mountaintop vista – those experiences that take root in both memory and emotion and compel guests to return.

Carefully crafted experiences capture the hearts and souls of visitors and help them to connect with an indigenous way of life, a unique local culture, a special geography, a personal story, an historic event, etc. that grips the imagination, stirs emotions and creates a personal connection within the visitor. The experience that creates an emotional connection becomes the memory that goes home with them and lives forever in their hearts and minds.

That connection equates to the way a guide personally took the time to carefully show you how to choose the proper fly, match it to the hatch, and securely tie it to your line, then patiently taught you how to cast again and again. After seemingly endless tries, you caught both the idea and that beautiful trout! Then he/she cooked that fish over the open fire showing you how to prepare it and add appropriate side dishes best suited to your outstanding meal. Then your guide shared the luscious goodness of that meal while pointing out the stars and constellations of the night sky while sharing personal stories of exploits about nature in the wild. That entire experience and the emotions you felt on that adventure live on in memory and pull you back to that special time over the years causing a deep longing to return and do it all over again.

An exceptional visitor experience thoughtfully combines physical assets – such as a building, a transport van, a boat – in a specific location with emotional interactions that create energy, awe, amazement, introspection. Exceptional experiences live on long after guests have left the physical premises.

The experience taps into uniqueness of places, people, stories and traditions through a common interest. Collaborations with small business or cultural sectors create an experience where a level of personalization is possible, along with showcasing unique authentic local gems. Though some elements are always the same, the emotional reactions and memories will always be slightly different in each individual experience.

Experiential visitation is built around impactful, sometimes life changing, meaning and value.

Value: the pricing reflects products, goods, services and experiences in combination, which is unique and cannot be duplicated. Thus, when creating experiences, businesses compete on the value of the experience and not on price.

Events: Celebrating a Destination's Culture and Driving Visitation

Historically, one of the most important things that a destination has done is to create signature events that draw visitors to experience something unique to local culture and offers great economic benefit to the destination. Events provide an opportunity for fun, food, education, entertainment and to bring residents and visitors together around a common shared experience. Additionally, well-planned events create a critical revenue stream for the lead organization.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, large-scale events are not happening in the usual way in the short term. However, this is an opportune time to be planning for new concepts that promote the image and culture of your community and have potential for growth over time. An event might begin as a virtual event and develop into a live gathering later, when the current situation normalizes. Or there may be room in the future organizational business plan for both virtual and live events.

An event provides only one time each year to prove to organizers that the planning was sufficient, that the marketing effort hit the target, and whether the concept was appealing or not. Flaws will show up very quickly as the event unfolds and the successes will be just as readily evident!

Remember: In business, the general rule is that it takes five years to expect a substantial return on investment. Expect no less time for growing and fine-tuning a successful event, in fact it probably will take longer. A new event is a start-up business!

Creating an event is very similar to creating a new business in the following ways:
- **Initial research is critical to finding a unique niche that resonates with community, regional culture, and target markets.**
- **Successful, lasting events usually begin small and grow over time.**
- **A carefully crafted "business plan" with staged growth should be developed specifically for an event.**

- A detailed budget must accompany the business plan to insure viability.
- Flexibility and contingencies must be built into all the plans and planning.
- Practice constant evaluation and adjustment with public and vendor input (surveys) each year.
- Exercise consistency and patience over a period of years if goals, measurements, and growth is obvious.
- Determine community/destination capacity.

Getting Organized

The organizing group should represent a cross-section of the community. Begin with key people who have the most to gain from success. Subcommittees can bring in residents with less at stake, but interest in volunteering and camaraderie. The overall planning committee should be around 15 people to allow for delegation of tasks.

Tip: If there is an established group that will benefit from your event concept, with engagement they can help with tasks, marketing, and your ultimate success.

Great Example: The International Seaplane Fly-in, now 43 years successful, was developed by a local business around the International Seaplane Pilots Association – a membership of pilots who love to get together, fly, compete, learn the latest in technology and talk about all things having to do with seaplanes. Moosehead Lake is the largest seaplane base in the East. Seaplanes continue to be a thrilling part of the heritage of northern Maine, which started with bush pilots transporting sports into the back country for hunting and fishing excursions long before roads existed. The fly-in event was never intended to be a spectator event, but was always planned
- **for pilots, to celebrate the heritage of their passion; and**
- **to stretch the summer season one more weekend beyond Labor Day.**

Think about other successful events with great longevity like the Lobster Festival, Clam Festival, Blueberry Festival, among others. These are indigenous to Maine culture and heritage each with an industry that supports the harvesting, production, distribution and marketing of these products, which helps make these events so successful.

Some DMOs have created highly successful events that have stood the test of time and have added to the organization's bottom line and sustainability. Consider the Whoopie Pie Festival in Dover-Foxcroft that grew to serve thousands of people in a single day event celebrating a well-loved Maine food item. The Kennebunk-Kennebunkport Chamber of Commerce has also been very successful with their Christmas Prelude event over the past several years. It is a shoulder

season event in a traditionally known summer destination that draws people to the community to celebrate the holiday season.

Whether planning a live event or a virtual event, there are some similar steps involved in the process.

A very large live event should follow a timeline that spans no less than 12 months and possibly as many as 24 to be properly prepared, especially if the marketing is expected to attract thousands from out-of-state. Logistics for a big live entertainment event requires a professional level of detail.

Virtual events, on the other hand, can be developed much more quickly and often prove to be successful in reaching a broader audience. Technology tools must be in place and well tested with practiced users to make these events successful. Technology for virtual events is constantly changing, therefore it is important to engage in careful research to be certain the tools you choose match your organizational needs. In recent months, many organizations are taking their critical fundraising efforts online with significant success.

The chart below is very high level but shows some of the common elements of planning for both types of events.

Planning a Live or Virtual Event

- **Pre-planning**
    - **Locations, times, entertainment, sponsors, incentives, website, forms, videos, solicit for needs, etc.**
- **Determine Site Location**
- **Support Services** *(only live event)*
    - **Medical care**
    - **Security**
    - **Weather contingency plans**
    - **Liability insurance**
    - **Parking plan**
    - **Recruit and train volunteers**
- **Communications Plan**
    - **Determine social platform**
    - **Promotional calendar**
    - **Invitations**
- **Establish a Budget**
- **Determine & Test Technology Tools**
- **Establish Sub-committees:**
    - **Promotion and Publicity**
    - **Entertainment**
    - **Food and Beverage**
    - **Fundraising**
    - **Arts/Crafts/Local Traditions** *(only live event)*
    - **Children's Area (only live event)**

- **Post Event Wrap-up**
  - **Thank sponsors and donors**
  - **Volunteer appreciation**
  - **Share results – what went right, what didn't, economic impact**

Attention to detail is the mantra in planning any event, whether live, virtual or a hybrid. Two of the biggest mistakes that event planners make are:

1) allowing too little time to plan and just jumping into the event;

2) not paying attention to the smallest of details so that absolutely nothing is left to guesswork.

Pop-ups and Activities

Other types of "events" that have gained in popularity over the past few years are **pop-ups**. They tend to be smaller in scale and are organized in a shorter time frame. Every pop-up event is unique and serves a different purpose and audience. Examples include:

- **Belfast Dinner on the Bridge**
- **Lost Kitchen Saturday Market and Lunch in Freedom**

Evaluate the Success of Your Event

An event, just like any other business, needs to be evaluated and/or invigorated to remain in touch with current consumer trends and expectations. Annual surveys and evaluations from all participants – entertainers, participants, audience, vendors, volunteers, etc. – will inform organizers regarding whether they are keeping their audiences engaged and satisfied on every level.

As part of the post event wrap-up, it is essential to evaluate your success. This can often be accomplished by answering just a few questions such as:

- **Did you reach your visitation goals?**
- **Did you increase followers and engagement from previous year? Utilize social media/Google analytics to determine audience engagement.**
- **Did your volunteer base increase? Decrease?**
- **Did you meet your projected earnings?**
- **Did revenue increase from previous year? Decrease?**
- **Did you meet your sponsorship goals?**
- **If goals were not met, what were the factors? And how can you adjust for the next year if this is an annual event?**

If the interest of your event seems to be waning and attendance and revenues are consistently on the decline, it may be time to revamp the schedule to create renewed interest, or it may be the

time to consider eliminating this event in lieu of another activity. Some events, not grounded in local culture, may have a shorter lifespan.

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OTHER FUNCTIONS OF A DMO

Visitor Information and Managing the Experience

Marketing is the inspiration that drives people to travel and is the primary function of a DMO, but the information about the destination is the "glue" that holds together the entire travel experience from beginning to end no matter how near or far visitors travel

Carefully developed visitor information, often referenced as collateral (brochures, rack cards, maps, etc.) is one of the critical pieces for managing the destination experience.

Visitor Information System

In the visitor information system, there are layers of services that could be likened to those nesting boxes often used to entertain young children. Visitor information services exist at various levels that must all be coordinated – each designed to fit within the layer above it – both in informational content and for distribution to the potential consumer.
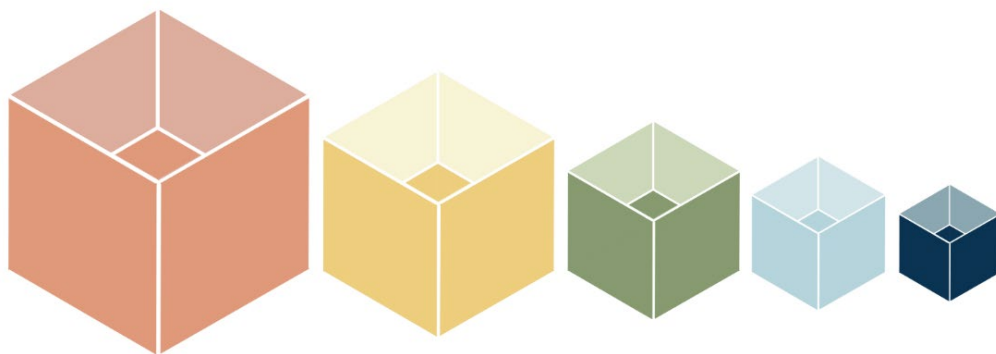
This results in a large and complex system of information distribution but is critical for a satisfactory outcome from a visitor perspective. The visitor should be able to enter the informational network at any level depending upon their previous research or familiarity with the destination. No matter where the visitor enters the system, statewide information should be available.

☐ Nationally –BrandUSA

☐ Multi-state organizations – Discover New England, Travel South

☐ Statewide – ME Office of Tourism, Statewide industry associations (such as Hospitality Maine, Maine Tourism Association, Maine Campground Owners Association, etc.)

☐ Regionally – Eight (8) regional tourism marketing organizations in Maine

Locally – chambers of commerce, CVBs, DMOs, Main Street organizations, and related service businesses contribute to visitor information as advertisers, providers and users of information services. Often, the professionals on the local level help to create the websites, maps, guidebooks, apps, etc., but they also distribute materials from their businesses as appropriate to their guests needs. Information services are a partnership between the business community and the Visitor Information Center.

- **Accommodations: hotel, motel, B&Bs, etc.**
- **Guided services**
- **Tour operators**
- **Travel agents**
- **On- and off-line publishers of visitor information**
- **Chambers of commerce, CVBs, DMOs, Main Street organizations**
- **Visitor information staff**

Local Tourism Suppliers Need:
- **Reliable information about visitor services**
- **Current information on events and activities**
- **Confidence to speak with guests using dependable, current information**

Local Tourism Suppliers Want:
- **To satisfy visitors needs quickly**
- **Ability to match guest expectations with appropriate experiences**
- **To be viewed as a reliable source**
- **To earn the trust of their customers**

Managing the Visitor Experience in the Destination

Managing the visitor experience in the destination begins with the first visitor contact with a destination on any level from state to local, which may be via the website, text, email, chat, social media, phone or, on rare occasions, through the mail system. That initial contact is usually an important part of the final decision-making process for the potential customer and will help them determine if they will choose this destination or another. Never underestimate the power of the initial contact, attitude and timeliness of the feedback and information provided.

An attitude of friendliness, knowledgeability, sincerity, and helpfulness in this interaction has the power to gain the customer in this early decision-making stage.

When visitors arrive at their chosen destination, they are often overwhelmed and confused by multiple activity options and almost too much information. They often seek out a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) staff person at the Visitor Information Center to help them sort through the clutter and to respond to their many questions. The DMO staff can help initiate a positive destination experience by asking appropriate questions to determine the visitor's wants and needs and by making recommendations that are appropriate to their situation.

Initial Visitor Needs:
- **Maps, guidebooks and directions**
- **Public rest rooms**
- **Accessible facilities information**
- **Transportation Information (public/private)**
- **Locations of ATMs, banks, currency exchange**
- **Interpreters (occasionally)**

Visitor Expectations:
- **A mobile-friendly website that is up to date**
- **Friendly & knowledgeable, staff**
- **Inspiration to explore & Authentic experiences**
- **Recommendations that are suited to their specific interests**

Visitor Information Centers

Visitor Information Centers (VICs), also known as Welcome Centers, play a huge role in orienting visitors to a destination. VICs are often staffed and can personalize information for the visitor in terms of their specific interests, such as arts, recreation, history, dining, etc.

The VIC is often the first stop upon entry and is usually equipped to meet several visitor needs. Some VICs also have picnic areas, play areas, walking trails, vending machines, local products, etc. These amenities help visitors unwind from their trip while they also orient themselves to a new destination.

VICs should always provide:

- Quality, current, accurate visitor information
- Kiosks or available information, even when closed
- Map of the destination
- Activities guide
- Friendly, warm, welcoming service

Some visitors will return to the VIC multiple times during a longer stay in a destination. That is a signal that the VIC staff is doing its job well and has gained the trust and confidence of the visitor. All critical decisions are not made on the first day of vacation. Activity options are often determined later, after the party gets settled and requires more detailed guidance.

VIC Operations Questions to Consider

What is the policy for accepting collateral into the VIC?

　　　　Only for members?

　　　　Only for tourism businesses?

　　　　Free for any business?

　　　　Monthly charge for businesses outside of tourism?

How does the VIC provide after-hours information?

What staff and volunteer training programs are necessary?

Has a budget been prepared?

Is there a business plan in place?

Information Technology

Travelers may arrive in destination at any time of the day or night. It is important to have some basic information available to them outside of regular business hours. Touch screen kiosks are one device that can be a helpful tool to provide information services after hours. Many kiosks have direct phone lines to connect visitors with lodging or other services.

As more and more travelers rely on their mobile devices for information, it is important for them to easily find businesses and information centers. DMOs and businesses should claim their business on Google and be sure their facility is properly listed on Google Maps.

Mobile apps can also help visitors navigate a destination area. Because systems vary, visitors should be made aware of any charges they might incur from the use of a mobile app. Most apps are free to the user and paid for by industry guides, hotels, and/or activity providers with whom the visitor interfaces.

Information Summary
- **Access to information throughout their visit is the ultimate key to visitor satisfaction.**
- **The DMO can facilitate the flow of information from destination products and service providers to visitors.**
- **DMO VICs are an important additional form of marketing for the tourism industry.**
- **VICs provide information but can also be a location to provide other goods and services.**
- **Technology can assist with after-hours information.**
- **Mobile apps can be useful as visitors move about a destination**

Making Visitor Centers Sustainable
VICs cost money to staff and operate. In a four-season destination area that operation can be a year-round effort that involves most of the things required to operate any office or home, including plowing in winter, sanding, trash removal, air conditioning or fans, and much more. To service both visitors and tourism businesses, revenue must be raised to supply all the needs of the center on an ongoing basis.

The reality is that if destination marketing organizations are to be successful, they will always have to look for innovative ways to draw visitors to their destinations and in doing so, they must also be creative in developing revenue streams from those activities.

Some Revenue Generation Questions to Consider?

☐ **Can you charge a commission by booking hotels, attractions, etc.?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you charge a commission by packaging and selling attraction packages?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you plan and implement special events that will produce income?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Do you have the capacity to create and execute a signature event?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you be a source for small meetings services?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you manage and charge local businesses for cooperative programs?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you sell maps, posters, guidebooks, etc. for a profit?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you sell local art and handcrafted items and charge a commission to the artists?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you charge local businesses for visitor survey data?**
_____
_____
_____

☐ **Can you offer and sell local tour guiding services?**

_____

_____

_____

☐ **Can you offer and sell refreshments or set up a vending machine?**

_____

_____

_____

☐ **Can you charge visitors and others for photocopying, email and internet use?**

_____

_____

_____

A few considerations in VIC site location:

- **Best located on the right side of the road for easy access from the vehicular travel lane; this location also allows vehicles to re-enter traffic without crossing lanes which is much safer on a busy street or roadway.**
- **If there is a key decision point from a travel perspective, the VIC should be located before that point so people don't travel far out of their intended way inadvertently.**
- **Plenty of parking space is required for SUVs hauling boats on trailers, large RVs often pulling cars, snowmobile trailers and seasonal equipment, etc.**
- **Some communities offer small, seasonal satellite VICs in high foot-traffic areas where visitors may go with additional questions while they are shopping.**
- **Carefully placed kiosks with collateral materials may supplement information services offered in the VIC throughout a large region.**

If your destination does not have a Visitor Information Center in place, you may need to consider finding partners, shared space, or embark on a feasibility study to determine location, traffic, and potential usage for a center of you own. This should not be viewed as a "build it and they will come" endeavor.

DMO as Contact for Small Meetings

Though meetings may look slightly different in the future as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many DMOs do function as the first point of contact for meeting planners who are seeking a physical venue for small meetings. Even with pandemic restrictions in place, a fifty in-person small meeting is still a viable possibility with proper social distancing, face coverings and hand sanitizing. Small DMOs often participate in introducing meeting planners to facility managers, helping with site visits, and the proposal stage until a facility is chosen. Then the facility or sales manager steps in when a contract seems imminent.

Qualifying Clients

Not every meeting or event is appropriate for a destination or for certain facilities, therefore it is important for efficiency that potential customers are "qualified" by the DMO in the initial contact. The qualifying process takes place by asking the meeting planner a series of open-ended questions. Following are some of the questions one might ask initially to help build a profile for the event:

- **When selecting a venue, what is most important to you?**
- **Could you tell me a little about the people who attend this event and what they will expect?**
- **At your last meeting, what were some of the things that went very well?**
- **What were some of the things that did not go well that you would like to avoid?**
- **What type of theme were you envisioning?**
- **What is the most important part of your event?**
- **What was the number of attendees at your last meeting?**
- **Where did you hold your previous meeting?**
- **Who is the primary contact?**
- **Will break-out space be required? If so, how many spaces for approximately how many people per group?**
- **How much free time are attendees allowed in your agenda?**
- **What do attendees like to do when they are not in meetings?**

There are many questions such as these that help to determine if this meeting/event is a fit for the specific destination. The responses to these questions help eliminate certain facilities and determine which properties deserve a site visit.

If the DMO chooses to get involved with live meetings and events, staff training is critical to ensure that staffers understand the steps in the meeting process and are completely qualified to

be the first point of contact. This will help ensure that the destination does not lose this important business segment.

Meeting work requires the staff of the DMO to become fully familiar with all possible meeting sites throughout the community and have detailed information to answer initial questions correctly. Meeting business can be lucrative and fill an off-season gap for facilities, so a well-trained, knowledgeable team is especially important.

Revenue for DMO Services

At times, there may be a role for the DMO to handle key elements of a meeting, such as welcome bags, registration, VIP gifts, tours, transportation services, etc. Aspects of the event might be handled by DMO staff to assist the planner and bring revenues to the DMO at the same time. For example, providing registration services can offer the DMO a revenue stream and ease the burden on the planner. Involvement depends upon the situation, but the goal of DMO staff should always be to make a positive impression on the event organizers so that they are inclined to bring business back to the community and facility in the future.

Resources Cited and Referenced:
- Strange, Jennifer, Brown, David, Solimar International. *Tourism Destination Management, Achieving Sustainable and Competitive Results*, *Online Toolkit and Resource Series*. USaid.gov. USAID, George Washington University, Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance, THEMIS, World Tourism Organization. Web.

Resources Reviewed:
- Marsh, Nicole, Ed. *Best Practices in Destination Management.* Assoc. of Destination Management Executives International, 2014. Print.

Marketing and Communications

Just like the upgrades you make to a physical location or attraction, the money you spend on marketing is an investment in the future of your destination/region. All marketing initiatives should start with a strategic marketing plan.

Like any good investment, your marketing strategy should yield a measurable return calculated by clearly defined measurements of success determined before implementation.

Planning Overview

Would you build a house without first consulting an architect? Of course not. How would your builder know what to build? A ranch? A Cape Cod? A mansion?

So why would you pay for marketing or public relations without first developing a plan?

Communications and marketing are expensive and can be time consuming. Countless marketing dollars and hours are wasted every year as companies and organizations rush to meet deadlines without considering any broader strategy. The temptation to get the "word out" or put out fires often comes at the expense of meeting long-term objectives with suboptimal returns and a glut of mixed messages.

Discovery and Analysis

Before diving into any marketing activity, it's crucial to have an understanding of your community's current situation. At this point, you have evaluated and inventoried and you have determined internal and external influences that may affect your community. All prior work will help mold and build your marketing strategy.

Create a marketing plan by gathering the key stakeholders in your community. Allocate three hours for a discovery meeting where you clearly define your overall goals as well as a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).

1. **Conducting a SWOT analysis** brings to light your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, allowing you to focus on maximizing opportunities and minimizing negative aspects.

2. **Conducting a competitive analysis** helps you understand how you measure up to your competitors. Through this, it's possible to identify what your competitors' communities offer to visitors that yours is missing, and what your community uniquely offers. Having this fleshed out will give your marketing plan the competitive edge it needs.

3. Any good marketing plan must be **research** based. While research studies can be costly for communities, the Maine Office of Tourism conducts statewide research throughout the year. The latest reports can be found at https://motpartners.com/research/.

4. **Identify the value you offer as a destination.** After assessing your current situation and considering your competitive landscape, the next step is clearly identifying the value you offer visitors as a destination. Look back at your inventory work and aspects of your community that make it a destination: the attractions, services, and necessary accommodations required.

5. **Determine your unique selling proposition.** Product positioning encapsulates defining who your audience is, their needs, and how your product – a great (you fill in the blank) destination – fulfills those needs. Taking a deep dive into who your visitors are, what they want, and how your attractions, services, and accommodations uniquely fulfill those desires will help you to articulate your positioning.

6. **Be honest.** Tell the truth about your destination. You are NOT all things to all people. You DON'T "have it all."

Once you understand your community's destination offerings, you must position those offerings in a way that makes them unique and superior to alternatives. What makes you special? What makes your destination like no other? To answer those questions, you need to have a clear understanding of your competitors' offerings. That's where the competitive analysis you did early in the process comes in to play.

Determine your Audience

Paint a picture of three or four of your audience personas. Give them a name and define their age, their income level, their occupation, and what media they consume.

Now flesh out a plan to target your personas and reach the stated goals. Establish strategies and tactics to better connect with them and engage them to build your brand. Pass the drafts around to get buy-in from your stakeholder group.

Set Objectives

Objectives should be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely). By having achievable and time-bound objectives, you are holding your plan tactics accountable for reaching these goals.

Example: Increase your Facebook page "likes" by 20% in three months. This is a clear, measurable goal using social media analytics, and has a timeframe tied to it to hold your marketing strategy accountable.

Timeline, budget, and measures of success

Include a timeline, a budget, and ways to measure success. Ultimately, your goal is to increase visitation to your destination and to grow your brand. You will need to be aware of and aligned with the required costs it will take to market your destination. The budget will determine which goals you can pursue, based on the costs of the tactics.

Measuring success involves monitoring and evaluating you Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs are data points that will give insight into the performance of your marketing. **(Example of a KPI: Increase the number of brochure requests by 15% the first year.)**
Having a goal like this allows you to make conclusions about marketing strategies' effectiveness and budgets can be re-allocated as needed to ensure high-performing results.

It is the reason why the objectives you set should be measurable—you'll want to see which strategies paid off, and which didn't. These results help you to prioritize areas that are working well so you can maximize your return on investment. For instance, if you are using Facebook advertising to drive traffic to your site to order a guidebook and you have not met your goal, you know you should try another means of reaching your target audience.

It's a lot of work to build the plan, but the more specific it is, the better you will be able to implement it for success.

Before you spend money on advertising, a new sign or website, take the time to plan. This investment is sure to give you a stronger ROI.

Message mapping

In today's world, brands are constantly competing to spread their respective messages to millions of global consumers. Any brand hopes to distinguish itself from competitors, breaking through the noise and reaching those consumers with a message that resonates.

The ultimate goal is to persuade the customer to buy, buy, buy. In the case of destinations, it's to visit, visit, visit.

Today's consumers aren't always the easiest to persuade. According to the "2019 Edelman Trust Barometer," barely one-third of customers (34%) trust most of the brands that receive their hard-earned dollars. Edelman's survey found that brand trust is a deal-breaker for more than 80% of consumers when they're considering a purchase.

This sounds like common sense: Trust the brand, and you'll buy/visit. But it's not so straightforward to establish that trust.

Brand trust is also increasingly valuable currency, given the rising purchasing power of a millennial generation that wants new and unique travel experiences. Nearly 85% of millennials don't appreciate traditional advertising because they don't trust the messengers.

So how do you establish trust? It takes baby steps.

The first and most important step is to map out the key messages that you hope will resonate with your target audience—that is, the consumer you hope will become a visitor. Unless you map out the right messages, you have no chance of ever persuading that customer to visit, visit, visit.

Ask yourself: If I don't know the right thing to say, how can I possibly say it?

In fact, a "message map" is the foundation of all public relations. The way PR experts see it, the message map includes a key message at its center that is 21 words in length, surrounded by the ancillary messages that naturally flow from it.

Why 21 words? Because it takes seven seconds to say 21 words out loud. If you are familiar with broadcast news, you know that reporters and editors love seven-second sound bites. Short and sweet!

The key message—at the center of the map—is used for much more than just a cable news interview. Companies can use that message for website copy, email newsletters, paid ads and much more. Basically, you use it anywhere and everywhere you are talking about the brand – your destination.

As you structure your key message, which goes at the center of your map, it's important to think about your target audience. Who are you trying to serve? Which customers are you hoping to acquire? Only by orienting your message to your most important audience will you be able to reach peak resonance.

One way to structure the key message is to use an "XYZ" statement. Fill in the blanks: "We do X, for Y, so they can Z."

A destination might say: Whoville provides vacation experiences (X) for outdoor adventurers (Y) so they can enjoy an abundance of recreation options (Z).

The "XYZ" approach forces you to think about your key deliverables and differentiators, not to mention the consumers who will ultimately buy whatever you're selling.

Throughout the message mapping process, it's best to look at yourself as the strategic hero ready to swoop in and save the day for your customers. Think about what keeps them up at night and how you can help bring them peace of mind. For example, your potential visitors are concerned about having limited vacation time and making the best possible choice in a vacation destination that will meet their needs and desires for a memorable experience.

Now, imagine the New York Times calls and asks you to discuss your destination in five minutes or less. What would you say?

Map out your key message, and you're on the right path to a successful interview. Fail to map it out, and you'll have quite a difficult time establishing trust and a succinct message. The message map is your hero strategy!
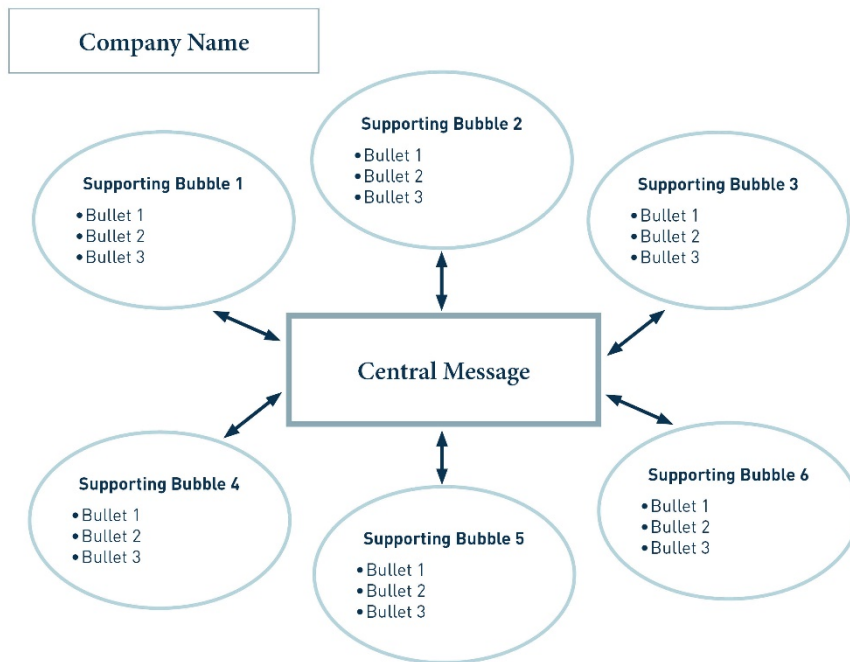
Website

A website is one of the most important assets an organization owns. It is often the first introduction your destination will have to a visitor.

Consumers are searching on their computers, and increasingly on their smartphones, for information of all kinds: a place nearby for lunch, the best economy lodging in an area, the dates an exhibit opens at a museum and on and on.
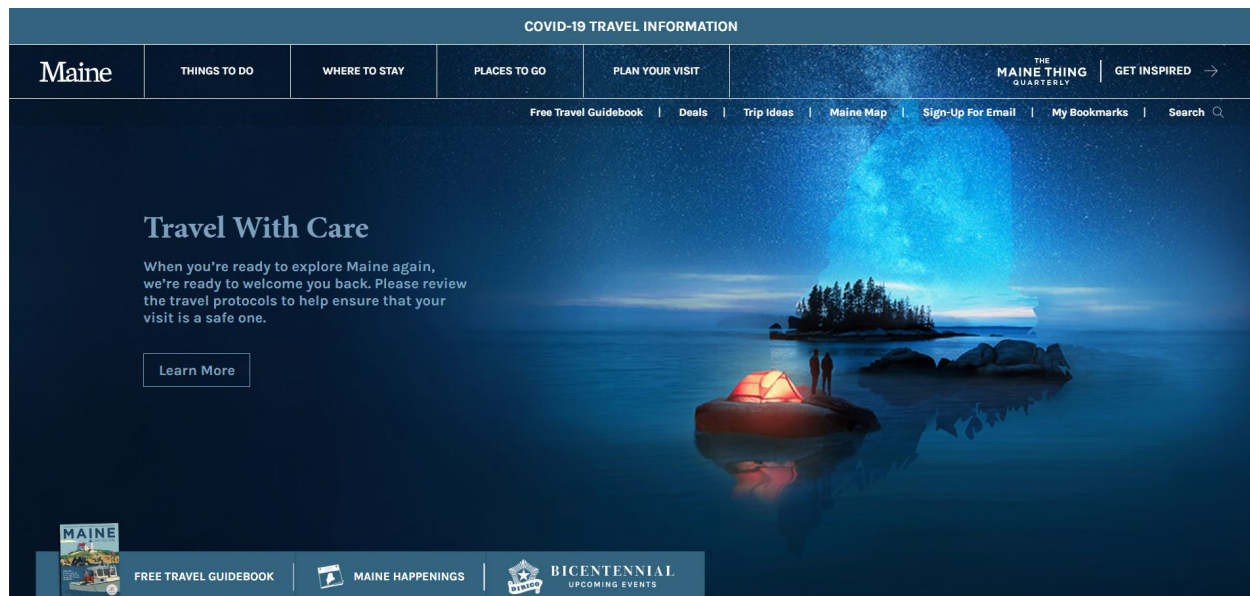
If your destination does not have a mobile compatible (responsive) website or it doesn't show up from simple Google searches you are missing a huge opportunity to present your destination in a positive light and tout the benefits it offers to its targeted audience.

The time and effort you put into building or improving your website so it is easily "findable" and relevant to the needs of your targeted audience is one of the most important activities in which you can engage. A website that offers valuable information and educates visitors about your destination will improve your credibility and reputation as a desirable destination.

List building

The customer list is a business or organization's number one asset. Maintaining a customer list will enable you to market directly to those who already have a proven interest in your destination. It's your opportunity to develop a relationship with these potential visitors so that you stay top-of-mind with them. It's important to tend to your customer list as you would tend to a garden.

Enabling those who visit your site to sign up for an e-newsletter on your website Home Page or offering them exclusive resources and information in exchange for their contact information are some of the ways you can use your website to help grow your customer list.
Other online tools, including social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, can help you engage your customers further so they feel they are part of your business and feel a sense of trust in what you say and do. Always remember, though, that the spirit of the Internet is to provide value to your followers, not to hard sell your destination at every opportunity. What you post on your social media pages should be educational, informative and engaging, not overly promotional. We will outline more information on this in the social media section.

Your website and your customer list are closely tied together. Past, current and prospective visitors will refer to your website for useful information that will enable them to learn more about what you have to offer. Value-added resources you can provide for your customers on your website can include resource articles on the best local hikes and how-to videos for casting a line. The more useful information you provide to your target audience, the more likely they are to feel a connection with your destination and want to visit. Regularly posting new information and resources will give them a reason to return to your website again and again, helping to facilitate a long-term relationship.

Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations

It's easy to become confused about the difference between advertising, marketing, and public relations since the terms are often used interchangeably. Though they are all effective ways of promoting a product, service or destination, each uses a different set of methods to generate results.

The most successful promotional endeavors use a combination of marketing, advertising, and public relations to generate responses from target audiences. When all three disciplines work in unison to deliver the same message, the results can be very powerful.

Marketing

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. — American Marketing Association
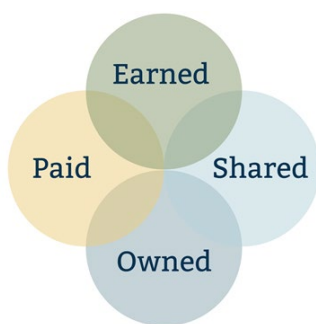
The PESO model identifies the four media types — **Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned** — and merges them together. This gives you a framework for maximizing opportunities or identifying gaps in your communication strategy.

Paid – Any paid advertising (print, digital, out-of-home, broadcast)
Earned – Public and media relations
Shared – Social media
Owned – Website, webinars, podcasts, videos and content created on your behalf

Think of marketing as a big umbrella and under that umbrella is everything included in the PESO model. Marketing encompasses all the activities and tactics used to reach your targeted audience in the most effect manner. Marketing begins with:

- **Researching customer groups**
- **Analyzing their needs**
- **Using the research to make strategic decisions on reaching the customer and building relationships with them through several touchpoints**

Advertising / Paid Media

- **Buy space (online, print, broadcast) to promote a product or service**
- **You have complete control**

Your research and marketing plan will guide your advertising. You know your audience. Is your audience getting information online, in print or through television and radio? Are you targeting potential visitors in Portland or Boston? Does your targeted audience read Backpacker or the Wall Street Journal, or do they rely on social media for their news? You will want to work with an agency that will consider all available research and the demographic or psychographic information of your targeted audience.

Since paid advertising is a costly marketing tactic, it may be beneficial to partner with another Maine destinations or reach out to businesses in your community that may be interested in partnering for co-op advertising opportunities.

It may be tempting to buy an ad in your favorite publication or website but be sure it fits in with your overall marketing plan and that you will see an optimal return on investment. A reputable agency will guide you through the process.

For the most part, one-off ads do not work!

Public Relations (PR) / Earned Media

Working through third parties to build:

- **Public awareness**
- **Support**
- **Excitement**

Elements of PR include:

- **Media relations – if you have a high-quality product or offering and the story angle is well presented, the media will listen. They are most interested in information on:**
  - **What's new**
  - **The best deals**
  - **What's "hot" or "the best" in a particular genre**
  - **Exclusive, distinctive attractions, services or products**
  - **Research or studies related to present day concerns or interests**
  - **Good human-interest stories**
  - **How a national trend is playing out at the local level**
- **Influencer campaigns – tap into an existing community of engaged followers. Influencers are specialists in their niches and have established a high level of trust and two-way communication with their follower bases. (HubSpot)**
  - **Their fans/followers have a great deal of trust in them**
  - **They tend to align with like-minded brands**
  - **Unlike travel media, they are often paid**
- **Speaking engagements**
- **Newsletters and e-newsletters – establishes ongoing communications with your targeted audience**
- **Planning special events / virtual events**
- **Creating fact sheets, etc.**
- **Planning contests/giveaways**
- **Drafting letters to the editor, position papers, guest columns**

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Earned media is not a new strategy, but it's more important today because of social media.

- **Print and broadcast coverage is now shared online:**
  - **Shares**
  - **Likes**
  - **Tweets and retweets**
- **Builds brand awareness**
- **Helps Google understand that your content is relevant and moves it higher in search engine results**

For destinations, key elements of a PR / Earned Media program involve:

- **Pitching newsworthy, timely and unique ideas to media and influencers**
- **Following leads**
- **Press and influencer visits**
- **Press events**
- **Responding to requests for information and fact checking**
- **Providing images and video to the media upon request**
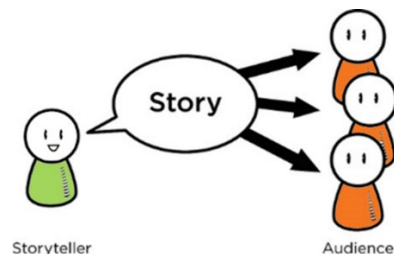
As you prepare to enter the world of PR, pay attention to the kinds of stories you see in media outlets and online that cover travel. The strategic marketing plan you have worked on has determined your audience and your differentiators. Now, you are ready to be the storyteller for your destination.

As you develop your marketing plan, be sure to refer to the most recent Maine Office of Tourism plan. You will want to align your plan and target markets with it.

Social Media Best Practices – Travel/Tourism

Quality over quantity is the guiding principle of social media. If you have limited resources, it is recommended that you concentrate on one or two platforms and do them well. First, identify your social media goals and target audiences, and then focus on the social media platforms that speak to those audiences. Your personas research that was part of your marketing plan will guide you through this. Here are the basic best practices for travel/tourism brands on social media:

Basic practices

- **Follow/like all partners' social pages. This includes businesses in your community, attractions, lodging properties, restaurants, and even media you have targeted as part of your plan.**
- **Be consistent, decide how many posts a week you will post (we recommend 3-5).**
- **Monitor posts daily and respond to both positive and negative comments.**
- **Update all bios (this is the section in your profile where you tell your audience who you are) to align with the vision and mission, link to your website whenever possible and, if space allows, reference other social media account links within the description/bio sections.**
- **Identify a hashtag to use in all bios, posts and on the website.**
- **Use identified hashtag and other trending hashtags related to travel or your destination on all social posts, but don't overwhelm followers with too many.**
- **Share all earned media results (magazine and newspaper articles, online and broadcast coverage) on all social accounts and tag the media outlet.**
- **Negative posts should be handled appropriately based on the comment. If profanity, slander or offensive language appear in the comments of a post, the comment should be hidden or removed. For other negative comments, always thank followers for their feedback and tell them you've responded in a direct message. It's always a good idea to take the conversation to a private direct message.**

Social Media Platforms

With many social media networks available it is easy to feel overwhelmed by which platforms make the most sense for your destination. The best way to choose primary, secondary and tertiary platforms for your brand is to first identify your goals and target audience(s) and see where your audiences spend time online. Focusing on one or two primary platforms is key to growing a following and producing quality content over quantity.

The social media platforms we are about to identify are best for travel/tourism brands. These social networks focus on connecting with people by building meaningful relationships through sharing stories, photos, videos and information with friends and family. While there are other platforms available, we recommend starting with the following.

Facebook

Facebook is one of the most popular social networking platforms for personal and business use. Facebook is a place to connect with others by sharing stories, updates, photos, videos and general news with those who follow or 'like' your page. Businesses and organizations use Facebook Business pages to showcase their brand, share updates and share events.

HootSuite 2020 demographics for Facebook

MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS	AGE*	GENDER**	TOP COUNTRY***
2.44 billion	25-29	75 % Women 63 % Men	India

Why should we promote our destination/region/area on Facebook?

Facebook is a great platform to build a fanbase of visitors and potential visitors. Sharing beautiful photos of places to see, things to do, where to eat, where to stay and links to your website and guidebook is great for travel inspiration. Also, encouraging engagement with return visitors to share their vacation memories and tips and tricks allow for two-way communication that builds trust with followers and is a resource for potential visitors

Instagram

Instagram, owned by Facebook, is another popular social network focused on photo-sharing. Instagram allows people, content creators and businesses to edit and upload photos and short videos through a mobile app. With Instagram primarily being a mobile app there is limited accessibility on a desktop computer. People share photos and videos with a caption and one or more hashtags. Hashtags are used to categorize photos in buckets. It is important to use a brand specific hashtag on Instagram, that way followers can use that hashtag, too. This is where user-

generated content comes in, followers will share their photos using brand specific hashtags. It is important to have a brand specific hashtag in the biography on the brand homepage. Example:
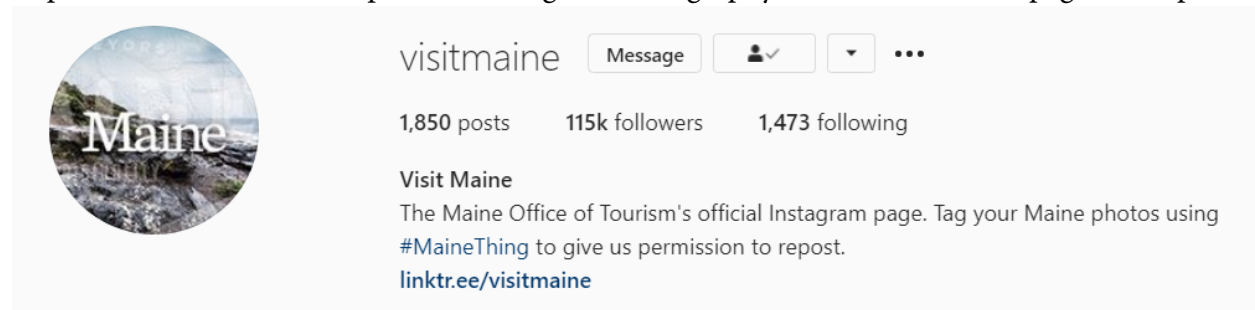
HootSuite 2020 demographics for Instagram

Why should we promote our destination/region/area on Instagram?
Instagram is one of the best social media networks for travel/tourism brands because its sole purpose is photos and videos. The best way to showcase a destination to potential visitors is to show experiences through photos and videos. Also, a brand specific hashtag is a great way to access user-generated content to share with followers. Sharing fans' photos builds trust and shows off experiences from the visitors' perspective.

Twitter
Twitter is a micro-blogging social network meant for messages to be sent quickly. It allows for quick and instant updates, breaking news and a place to network with media, similar brands, and followers.

HootSuite 2020 demographics for Twitter

Why should we promote our destination/region/area on Twitter?
Twitter is a platform to have a presence on to keep connected with industry news and media. There are many travel/tourism focused Twitter Chats where you can participate. Twitter chats are a great way to be part of a community of industry leaders.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a photo sharing site that allows you to create theme-based collections of photos called "boards". Boards are a way to organize and share ideas with others. Each "pin" is a photo or video that has a description and links to a website.

Why should we promote our destination/region/area on Pinterest?

Pinterest is a good choice for travel/tourism brands because it's all about photos, inspiration and each pin has longevity. The travel niche is well represented on Pinterest because this is the blogging platform that people use for planning purposes. While planning a trip, it is easy to save pins to travel-inspired boards. Use Pinterest to keep evergreen content that you want potential visitors to see year after year.

Hiring the right firm

Just like other components of the destination development process, the marketing of your destination cannot be done without professional guidance. By now, you understand that marketing is more than placing an ad or creating a brochure. We mentioned at the start of this section that marketing is an investment. To protect that investment and to ensure you are following a path that is sustainable and measurable, you will need help from a qualified marketing communications agency.

Remember the Dating Game show, where a single person had 15 minutes to ask three hidden bachelors or bachelorettes a series of questions before choosing the one to go out with? At the end of each show the winners blew a kiss to the audience and (hopefully) left for a fun evening.

Finding "the one" with all its excitement and stress is a lot like finding the right agency for your organization.

Here are some things to keep in mind when you're looking for a marketing partner:

- **Experience in your market**
  Hiring an agency is not **like hiring an employee, they need to be able to jump into the work without you having to train them on the travel industry or destination marketing. Experienced agencies will already have relationships with your target media outlets, advertising reps, current industry trends, and other travel and tourism clients.**
- **A great reputation**
  Your mother was right, who you associate with reflects on you – so be sure the agency you work with is reputable, reliable, and responsible. Check references and ask around, when it comes down to it, Maine is a small state and people know each other.
- **First Impressions**
  The agency you hire will need to know about your destination and your organizational structure. The very first meeting you have will be important for you to share as much information as possible and for them to take it all in.
  - **What was your impression?**
  - **How did you feel after the meeting?**
  - **Did they take over the conversation?**

- o Did they ask insightful questions, and did they listen to your answers?
- Cost/Return on Investment
  - o Understandably cost is one of the main factors in choosing an agency – but beware, sometimes you get what you pay for. Just like you may not want to go to the cheapest surgeon, you may not want to hire the agency with the lowest bid.
  - o Decide on your goals,
  - o Determine your benchmarks of success
  - o Ask for case studies on similar projects
  - o Ask for reference
  - o Look for the best return on your investment.

Request for Proposals (RFP)

An RFP is a document that serves as an announcement that a business, non-profit, or government agency is requesting services from a professional, in this case, marketing agency. They are doing so by a bidding process and have created an outline of requirements.

An RFP does not have to be an intimidating, voluminous document, but it does need to be clear and comprehensive. Here are the typical elements of an RFP:

- Cover letter – brief outline of the services you are requesting, the timeline of the process, when, where and how to submit proposals, information on a question/answer period, if there is one, and contact information for the person requesting the proposal
- Introduction – brief general overview of the project and your organization
- Scope of Services – list of all services you are requesting be handled by bidders. This can include things like strategic plan, website development, PR services, ad plan and social media
- Duration of Services – length of contract/agreement
- Budget – it is a good idea to include your budget, or a do not exceed amount, so bidders know what they can include in their proposals
- Contents of proposal – this is typically a list of what you want included in the proposal: Agency experience, staff bios, recommended tactics, references, measurement of success, etc.
- Scoring criteria – how each element of the proposal will be scored

A simple Google search will provide several examples of various RFPs.

Resources Cited or Referenced:
- Marshall Communications. *Marketing and Communications Chapter*. Marshallpr.com 2020. Web & Print.
- Forsey, Caroline. *How to Write a Request for Proposal*. Hubspot.com. 2018. Web.

Evaluating Destination Success Over Time

Throughout this destination development process, great effort has been made to:

- **Inventory and assess community assets**
- **Examine strengths, weaknesses, gaps and opportunities**
- **Develop a vision, mission, goals and action steps to accomplish agreed upon goals**

Through marketing and public relations planning the leadership team and destination marketing organization have carefully crafted the following:

- **A thorough, research-based marketing plan**
- **A social media strategy**
- **An invitation to targeted visitor markets through various media**

The destination marketing organization is prepared to manage the experience of guests by providing information services to help ensure a fulfilling visit. Another part of managing the destination is trying to ensure that growth is aligned with community core values, protection of resources – environmental and cultural – and that the economy remains viable. This requires clear communication and partnerships to manage the various aspects of a destination.

Determining Success

How do you know if you have been successful in reaching your goals? This is where you come to fully understand why the goals you establish must be **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic**, within a set **Timeframe** (SMART goals)! If you cannot measure what you hope to achieve, then you will never know if you were successful or not.

So, what were the key measures that community brought up in early discussions?
Examples:

- **Increase population by 20% within two years?**
- **Open five (5) new businesses in next six months?**
- **Increase visitation by 10% by end of this year?**
- **Increase retail sales by 15% over same month last year?**

The focal points of early group discussions are the measurements that should be tracked over time to determine if you are accomplishing the goals established.

It may take a few years before you begin to see things change in a positive direction. However, it is a proven fact that you will accomplish whatever has been your point of focus. If you get sidetracked, then your goals may suffer.

Every community will be quite different in terms of both goals and measurements, but here are a few examples of things you might consider:

1. **Goal: How much has interest in our destination increased since we began destination development work? Establish a base year (FY 2017) as a starting point and then track metrics forward.**
   Review:
   - **Social media: track increase in followers over months, years**
   - **Website visitation: look at page views, bounce rate, time spent per page**
   - **Trip advisor rankings: for key properties in destination, year by year**

2. **Goal: How much has visitation increased and are visitors spending more money? Track:**
   - **Visitor center traffic numbers – monthly, seasonally, annually**
   - **Local state park visitation – annual year over year**
   - **Meals and lodging taxable sales – monthly, seasonally, annually**
   - **Retail taxable sales – monthly, annually**
   - **Regional economic impact figures**

3. **Goal: Have we expanded our shoulder season visitation this year over last? Percentage?**
   - **Visitor center traffic numbers – monthly, seasonally, annually**
   - **Local state park visitation – annual year over year – only open spring-fall**
   - **Meals and lodging taxable sales – monthly, seasonally, annually**

4. **Goal: Is our school enrollment increasing or decreasing? Percentage increase or decrease?**
   - **Track enrollment by grade year over year to determine the health of a critical institution**
     - **Helps track families moving in and out of community**

You will note in these examples that many of these are already being monitored by some other organization or group. It is a simple matter of making a few calls and obtaining the data that you are seeking to record. You can then manage your own unique set of metrics for your own tracking purposes. For an example of a simple tracking spreadsheet contact the Destination Development Specialist at the Office of Tourism.

For organizations that have a sustainability focus and goals, you will find some ideas here to assist you in determining what metrics could be tracked.

Resources Cited or Referenced
- *Online Sustainable Tourism Toolkit, People Protecting Places*, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Heritage Convention. whc.unesco.org. UNESCO World Heritage, 2020. Web.

Additional Markets

International

Overseas markets are reached through international tour operators and U.S.-based receptive tour operators who receive a percentage of published rates to package and market your experience internationally.

While there are many advantages to reaching these markets, there are also many factors to take into consideration to reach those markets efficiently and effectively.

Advantages:
- **The international visitor stays longer and often travels geographically broader than the domestic visitor.**
- **The average European has a four to six-weeks paid vacation, thus has time to travel and vacations are a priority.**
- **International travelers spend more than domestic visitors.**
- **International travelers book months in advance and are not dependent upon weather conditions for travel.**
- **The average household income of international travers tends to be significantly higher than that of the average domestic traveler.**
- **New England tends to attract a more sophisticated international traveler, with disposable income, who seeks activity combined with the essentials - good food and lodging.**

Disadvantages:
- **It is expensive and time-consuming to market internationally on your own.**
- **Lacking cultural understanding, offensive social errors can be made unwittingly that impact sales effectiveness.**
- **The destination itself must be prepared to welcome non-English speaking markets by overcoming language and cultural barriers.**
- **To be effective internationally, one must learn and understand how to work with the travel trade chain.**

- **To work internationally, some financial concessions must be made to work with the travel trade to gain new markets for the long term.**
- **It is difficult to make an impact as a small single property or even as a single state in an international country, thus cooperative sales make for greater impact and more effective international marketing.**

Discover New England (DNE)

For the reasons above, five of the New England states work together to market New England as a region to overseas markets. This collaboration, under the umbrella of Discover New Englan, allows the states to pool resources for effective and impactful marketing to potential overseas visitors. DNE's primary efforts are in the UK and Ireland, and in secondary markets of Germany, Japan and Australia/New Zealand. MOT also markets to France independent of DNE.

For more information, go to discovernewengland.org.

INTERNATIONAL & GROUP TOUR BUSINESS CHAIN
Supplier → Trade Professional(s) → End User

YOU ARE HERE
(Accommodations, attractions, etc.)

↓

U.S. RECEPTIVE TOUR OPERATORS
(Contract with you for 20-40% off published rates)

↓

DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL TOUR OPERATORS
(Contract with you for 15-20% discount from your published rates)

↓

TRAVEL AGENCIES, AAA, WEB, Etc.
(Earns a 10% Sales Commission from your published rates)

↓

END USER …. Our Actual visitors
They should never pay more than your published rates!

Group Tour & Motorcoach

Group tour and Motorcoach are domestic markets that can have significant impact on communities in high season, but most especially in off-season months. These markets are only reached through the group tour and motorcoach companies that receive a percentage off published rates to package and market your experience for you to their own exclusive and targeted consumers.

Advantages:
- A tour operator will market and sell your package and property.
- Multiple people (30-50) are arriving and departing a property at a specified time, making staffing requirements easier to anticipate.
- This mode of travel has a significant impact on a local economy – gas, shopping, dining, lodging - for however number of nights a group remains in a community.
- Many people see motorcoach travel as a "greener", more efficient mode of travel, cutting down on carbon emissions by servicing many people in one vehicle.
- Often a tour guide travels with a group enhancing the experience by delivering background information and providing VIP access to certain attractions that visitors would not be able to enjoy traveling on their own.
- Motorcoach tours service student, family and senior travel markets, thus they can be targeted for very specific purposes if you have the product the markets seek.

Disadvantages:
- As property owner, you are trusting a third party to market and sell your package.
- If a tour operator fails to sell a tour, a facility could have a large room block vacant to sell to walk-ins at the last minute. To avoid this, a lodging facility can set deposits and cut-off dates.
- On occasion a time schedule is disrupted due to traffic, coach maintenance issues or something else that can disrupt the anticipated timeline and guest flow in or out of a property. Because a coach holds multiple guests, that can create problems for staffing and the property.
- There are specific expectations with group business: the driver is given free room and board, baggage handling by the property is expected upon arrival and departure (however, you do charge a per person fee), a greeting with general information is expected upon arrival, key cards should be ready upon arrival for rapid check-in, and a welcome reception is appreciated.

HOW TO WORK WITH THE MOTORCOACH MARKET

Accommodations:

- Your property should include at least 30 rooms.
- A minimum of 25 double/doubles and 2 singles (usually complimentary for driver and escort) may be required for each tour.
- Greet groups as soon as they arrive. Consider stepping on the bus for a welcome.
- Pre-registration is a necessity.
- Make sure baggage handling is swift and accurate.
- Several first-floor double/doubles are preferred.
- Indoor corridors are preferred, but not always required.
- Make sure your elevators are working properly.
- Be ready to host a welcome reception, if required.
- Some type of on-site breakfast is preferred or "package" with a local restaurant.
- Motorcoach parking and turning space must be adequate.
- A tiered pricing and flexible deposit policy are preferred.

Restaurants:

- Provide seating in small groups (four or six tops) rather than seating at long tables in a room separate from regular customers.
- The facility should be large enough to accommodate group dining during regular hours.
- A customized menu or limited regular menu is helpful.
- Adequate restrooms should be available to handle a group's arrival.
- Remember, groups must follow a schedule. It's important to have adequate wait staff to accommodate the group's schedule.
- Consider whether your location and availability are convenient for group tours.
- Motorcoach parking and turning space must be adequate.

Attractions:

- Have enough staff to handle each group.
- Speak clearly and distinctly.
- Have knowledgeable guides since tour members usually ask questions.
- "Hands-on" and interactive programs are preferred over a simple guided tour.
- Consider a special tour, something individuals would not normally see or do. Groups enjoy activities that individual travelers may not be able to access.
- Let the tour operator know what other group attractions are in the area.
- Remember, groups must follow a schedule so keep that in mind during tours.
- Motorcoach parking and turning space must be adequate.

Remember: Group Tour providers always seek new and unique adventures for their clients every single year!

How to be involved

The Maine Motorcoach Network (MMN) is an all-volunteer 501(c)6 non-profit organization founded in 2010 to promote group tours in Maine. The MMN mission is to increase the revenue to Maine businesses by promoting motorcoach and group travel to the State of Maine. It conducts targeted sales missions in Eastern U.S. and Canada, FAM tours within Maine and holds bi-monthly member meetings for networking. A Group Travel Guide is published every year and distributed to tour operators via the Maine Office of Tourism and awards an annual scholarship to a Maine college student pursuing a career in a hospitality or tourism field.

Request the *Guide to Hosting a Motorcoach Tour* from Maine Office of Tourism. Please see the Group Tour page on visitmaine.com.

For more information, contact Chiara Moriconi, MOT's Group Tour & Motorcoach liaison. Chiara.Moriconi@maine.gov, 207-624-9809.

Appendix A: Inventory

Adapted from *Community Tourism Development* (4th edition), by C.C. Messer, 2017, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Tourism Center. Copyright 2017 by University of Minnesota Extension. Adapted with permission.

After reviewing these inventory documents, please contact the Destination Development Specialist at the Office of Tourism for an editable WORD version of these documents for your own community use.

Inventory of Attractions

Directions: Please indicate your community's existing attractions in the left column. For more than one *beach*, for example, right click to insert rows below to name each asset and to record specific notes for each. Or, if you plan to print the worksheets, remember to add extra space to record assets and notes. Use the notes column to record any unique details, challenges, infrastructure needs with the attractions. There is space at the bottom of each sheet to add "other" attractions not already included.

X	Natural & Scenic Attractions	Notes
	Beaches	
	Bogs	
	Botanical Gardens	
	Caves	
	Cliffs	
	Climate	
	Coastline	
	Dark Sky	
	Desert	
	Fall Foliage	
	Farms	
	Forests	
	Harbors	
	Ice Caves	
	Islands	
	Lakes	
	Marshes	
	Mountains	
	Northern Lights	
	Ocean	
	Orchards	
	Parks (National, State, Local, Public Land, Land Trusts)	
	Rivers	
	Springs	
	Scenic Byways	
	Unique Natural Formations	
	Valleys	
	Waterfalls	
	Whitewater	
	Wildlife (Sanctuaries, Natural Settings)	
	Associated Activities: Sightseeing, Photography, Nature Studies	
	Other:	

X	Cultural, Historical & Architectural Attractions	Notes
	Archaeological Sites (Public and Sacred)	
	Art and Craft Galleries	
	Artist Studios	
	Birthplaces of Famous People	
	Burial Grounds/Cemeteries	
	Certified Historic Districts	
	Crafters and Makers	
	Dams	
	Designated Main Streets	
	Early Settlements	
	Exhibits	
	Foodways	
	Fortifications and Ruins	
	Government Buildings	
	Historic Homes	
	Historic Railroads	
	Historical Architecture/Landscapes	
	Historical Reenactments/Tours	
	Historical Societies	
	Interpretive Markers	
	Landmarks	
	Libraries/Special Collections	
	Lighthouses	
	Memorials	
	Military Installations	
	Monuments	
	Museums	
	National/State Scenic Byway	
	Native American Culture and Folklore	
	Public Arts/Murals	
	Public Gardens	
	Significant Bridges	
	Significant Local Traditions	
	Theaters	
	Trains	
	Unique Local Culture/Events	
	Universities or Colleges	
	Other:	

X	Recreational Attractions	Notes
	Archery	
	ATVing	
	Ball Games/Tournaments	
	Beachcombing	
	Biking (Road, Mountain, Fat Tire)	
	Bird Watching	
	Boating	
	Camping	
	Canoeing	
	Cliff Walks	
	Dog Sledding	
	Fishing (Freshwater and Salt Water)	
	Fossil Hunting	
	Golf/Disc Golf	
	Guided Experiences (Hunting, Fishing)	
	Hang Gliding	
	Hiking	
	Horseback Riding	
	Hunting	
	Ice Fishing	
	Ice Racing	
	Ice Skating	
	Kayaking	
	Kite Flying	
	Motorcycling	
	Mountain Climbing	
	Parasailing	
	Parks and Playgrounds	
	River Tubing	
	Rock Climbing	
	Rock Hunting	
	RVing	
	Sailing	
	Scuba Diving	
	Skiing (Cross Country)	
	Skiing (Downhill)	
	Skydiving	
	Snowmobiling	
	Snowshoeing	
	Spelunking	
	Surfing	
	Swimming	
	Tennis	
	Trap or Skeet Shooting	

	Water Skiing	
	Whitewater Rafting	
	Other:	

X	Entertainment & Sports	Notes
	Amusement and Theme Parks	
	Bingo	
	Bowling	
	Card Tournaments	
	Comedy Shows	
	Concerts/Music Festivals (Waterfront)	
	Cornhole	
	Darts	
	Drive-in Movies	
	Eating Contests	
	Escape Rooms	
	Gambling/Casinos	
	Harness Racing	
	Hayrides	
	Local "Oddities"/World Records	
	Planetariums	
	Pool	
	Professional Sports Events	
	Races (Auto, Motorcycle, Boat, Bicycle, Horse, Running, Skiing)	
	Rodeos	
	Rollerskating	
	Shopping	
	Souvenir or Curio Shops	
	Triathlons/Marathons	
	Video/Game Arcades	
	Water Parks	
	Other:	

X	Tours & Educational Experiences	Notes
	Bike Tours	
	Boat Tours	
	Brewery Tours	
	Cemetery Tours	
	Farm Tours	
	Ferryboats	
	Fish Hatcheries	
	Guided Tours	
	Guided Wildlife Tours	
	Industrial Plant Tours	
	Llama Pack Trips	
	Lobster Boats	
	Outfitted Tours	
	Photography Tours	
	Unique Local Experiences	
	Walking Tours	
	Whale Watching	
	Wineries/Tasting Rooms	
	Other:	

X	Special Events	Notes
	Air Shows	
	Animal Shows	
	Antique/Collectables Shows	
	Art Shows/Walks	
	Auto Shows	
	Country Fairs	
	Craft Shows	
	Fishing Derbies	
	Flower Shows/Festivals	
	Food Festivals	
	Hobby Shows	
	Holiday Celebrations	
	Maple Syrup Sunday	
	Pageants	
	Road Races	
	Other:	

X	Agricultural Attractions	Notes
	Agricultural Fairs	
	Christmas Tree Farms	
	Farm Produce Stands	
	Farmers Markets	
	Harvest Celebrations	
	Lumber Camps	
	Sugar Shacks	
	Tractor Pulls	
	U-pick Farms and Foraging	
	Other:	

X	Health & Wellness/Lifestyle	Notes
	Aromatherapy	
	Art Classes/Paint Parties	
	Beauty Treatments and Facials	
	Cooking Classes/Parties	
	Dance	
	Full-service Spas	
	Hot Tubs	
	Manicures and Pedicures	
	Massages	
	Meditation	
	Reiki	
	Salons	
	Saunas	
	Sweat Lodges	
	Yoga (Studios, Nature, Beach)	
	Other:	

Inventory of Community Services & Infrastructure

Directions: Please indicate your community's existing services in the left column. For more than one "Cafe", for example, right click to insert rows below to name each asset and to record specific notes for each. Or, if you plan to print the worksheets, remember to add extra space to record assets and notes before printing. Use the notes column to record any unique details, challenges, infrastructure needs with the service. There is space at the bottom of each sheet to add "other" services not already included.

X	Accommodations & Lodging	Notes
	Bed & Breakfasts	
	Campgrounds/ RV Parks	
	Condominiums	
	Farm Stays	
	Hostels	
	Hotels	
	Housekeeping Cabins/Cottages	
	Inns	
	Luxury Camping (Glamping)	
	Motels	
	Remote/Primitive Campsites	
	Resorts	
	Short-term Rentals	
	Sporting Camps (Includes Meal Services)	
	Wilderness Lodges	
	Other:	

X	Food Service & Dining	Notes
	Bakeries	
	Barbecues	
	Breweries	
	Cafes/Coffee Shops	
	Delis	
	Ethnic Restaurants	
	Family Restaurants	
	Farmers Markets	
	Fast Food	
	Fine Dining/ Gourmet Restaurants	
	Food Trucks	
	Grocery Stores	
	Pubs/Bistros	

	Take Out	
	Taverns/Bars	
	Wine-tasting Rooms	
	Other:	

X	Retail & Specialty Merchandise	Notes
	Antique shops	
	Art shops/galleries	
	Bookstores	
	Clothing Stores/Boutiques	
	Discount Stores	
	Drug Stores/Pharmacies	
	Flea Markets	
	Furniture Stores	
	Gift/Souvenir Shops	
	Hardware/Building Supplies	
	Popup Stores	
	Retail Factory Outlets	
	Secondhand Stores	
	Shopping Malls	
	Specialty Stores	
	Sporting Goods/Outfitting	
	Other:	

X	Miscellaneous Services	Notes
	Auto Rentals	
	Banks/ATMs	
	Charter Flights	
	Gas Stations/Auto Service	
	Information Kiosks	
	Libraries	
	Shuttle Services/Tours	
	Snow Plowing	
	Taxis	
	Other:	

X	Infrastructure & Physical Environment	Notes
	Airports	
	Ambulance Services	
	Benches/Rest Areas	
	Bicycle Lanes	
	Boat/Ferry Services	
	Broadband Internet/Cable	
	Charging Stations (Electric Cars)	
	Comprehensive Plan	
	Direction Signage	
	Downtown Appearance	
	Downtown Lighting	
	Electric power	
	Emergency Road Services	
	Fire Protection	
	Gas Service	
	Handicap Access	
	Landscaping	
	Local/County Roads	
	Major U.S. Highway	
	Medical Facilities/Hospitals	
	Other Mass Transit	
	Police Protection	
	Public Bus Services	
	Public Parking	
	Public Rest Rooms	
	Road Maintenance	
	Search & Rescue	
	Sewer/Waste Disposal	
	Sidewalks	
	Snow Removal	
	State Highways/Roads	
	Storm Drainage	
	Street Cleaning	
	Telephone Services	
	Tourist Information	
	Town Entrances	
	Traffic Flow Management	
	Trail Maintenance	
	Train/Railway Services	
	Trash Receptacles	
	Water Bottle Refill Stations	

	Water Supply				
	Other:				

Appendix B: Evaluation Documents

Adapted from Community Tourism Development (4th edition), by C.C. Messer, 2017, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Tourism Center. Copyright 2017 by University of Minnesota Extension. Adapted with permission.

Contact the Destination Development Specialist at MOT for an editable version for your use.

Evaluation of Attractions

Directions: Using the inventory sheets, record the attractions that apply to your destination under the corresponding category. Rate the attraction using the scales above each column. You may add as many rows as necessary to match your inventory list and print sheets off for ease of use, especially if you are using volunteers to assist with the work. These directions apply to the attraction evaluation sheets below.

Natural & Scenic	1= Heavily Distressed, Altered, Fragmented, Showing Heavy Impacts 2= Somewhat Disturbed, Fragmented, Showing Human Wear and Tear 3= Moderately Rehabilitated, Supports Habitats & Species 4= Pristine, Continuous & Undisturbed 5= Recommend No Development	1= Visually Unappealing, Neglected, Human Impacts 2= Distressed Landscape in Process of Repair 3= Landscape Well Maintained, Managed & Attractive 4= Landscape Elements are Naturally (Not Man-Made) Beautiful with Vistas, Mountain Peaks, Waterfalls, etc., Harmonious and Inspirational (Artists)	1= Local 2= Regional 3= State/National 4= International	1= No Recreational Opportunities 2= Some Opportunities Minimal/No Infrastructure/ Amenities/ Interpretation 3= Several Recreational Opportunities, Including Trail, Interpretive, and Amenities 4= Exceptional Recreational Opportunities & Amenities Including Interpretation	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Natural Qualities**	**Scenic Qualities**	**Significance**	**Recreation**	**Average Rating**

Cultural, Historical & Architectural	1= No Historical Relevance Apparent 2= Historic Aspects Negatively Affected 3= Historical Significance that Educates and Adds Another Dimension 4= Strong Interpretive Component	1= Minimal or Negative Cultural Significance (negative ex. Cock fighting) 2= Cultural Aspects Negatively Affected (Sacred Site) 3= Cultural Aspect Complements the Destination and Adds Another Dimension 4= Strong Interpretive Component	1=Inaccessible 2=Difficult to find & access; little to no signage 3=Accessible; can be found; some signage 4=Fully accessible; easy to find; good signage, parking, entry 5=All of #4 plus close to town/amenities	1= Local 2= Regional 3= State/National 4= International	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Historic Significance**	**Cultural Significance**	**Accessibility**	**Market Significance**	**Average Rating**

Recreational Attractions	1= Extremely poor; remove from service 2= Poor to fair 3= Good; needs work 4= Very good 5= Excellent; newly opened	1=Inaccessible 2=Difficult to find & access; little to no signage 3=Accessible; can be found; some signage 4=Fully accessible; easy to find; good signage, parking, entry	1= Local 2= Regional 3= State/National 4= International	1= Overused 2= Heavily used 3= Moderately used 4= Limitedly or not used	1= Single season 2= Multiple seasons 3= Year-round	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Condition**	**Accessibility**	**Significance**	**Utilization**	**Seasonality**	**Average Rating**

Entertainment & Sports	1=Poor, unsafe 2=Poor to fair 3=Good; needs work 4=Very good; safe, comfortable, clean 5=Excellent; newly opened	1=Inaccessible 2=Difficult to find & access; little to no signage 3=Accessible; can be found; some signage 4=Fully accessible; easy to find; good signage, parking & entry/ticketing	1=Local 2=Reginal 3=State/National 4=International	1=No services 2= Limited services 3=Multiple levels of service 4-=Full service	1=Single Season 2=Multiple Seasons 3=Year-round	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Condition**	**Accessibility**	**Significance**	**Level of Service/Amenities**	**Seasonality**	**Average Rating**

Tours & Educational	1= Needs Work 2= Average 3= Good 4= Superior	1= Lacks Authenticity 2= Minimal Authenticity 3= Somewhat Authentic 4= Authentic	1= Several Similar 2= Average 3= Regional 4= National	1= Passive 2= Some Interactivity 3= Very Interactive & Educational	1= Local/Adjacent Areas 2= Regional 3= Metropolitan (In-State) 4= Multistate 5= International	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Quality**	**Local Flavor**	**Uniqueness**	**Interactivity**	**Appeal**	**Average Rating**

Special Events	1= Needs Work 2= Average 3= Good 4= Superior	1= Lacks Authenticity 2= Minimal Authenticity 3= Somewhat Authentic 4= Authentic	1= Several Similar 2= Average 3= Regional 4= National	1= Passive 2= Some Interactivity 3= Very Interactive & Educational	1= Local/Adjacent Areas 2= Regional 3= Metropolitan (In-State) 4= Multistate 5= International	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Quality**	**Local Flavor**	**Uniqueness**	**Interactivity**	**Appeal**	**Average Rating**

Agricultural Attractions	1= Needs Work 2= Average 3= Good 4= Superior	1= Lacks Authenticity 2= Minimal Authenticity 3= Somewhat Authentic 4= Authentic	1= Several Similar 2= Average 3= Regional 4= National	1= Passive 2= Some Interactivity 3= Very Interactive & Educational	1= Local/Adjacent Areas 2= Regional 3= Metropolitan (In-State) 4= Multistate 5= International	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Quality**	**Local Flavor**	**Uniqueness**	**Interactivity**	**Appeal**	**Average Rating**

Health & Wellness/Lifestyle	1= Needs Work 2= Average 3= Good 4= Superior	1= Lacks Authenticity 2= Minimal Authenticity 3= Somewhat Authentic 4= Authentic	1= Several Similar 2= Average 3= Regional 4= National	1= Passive 2= Some Interactivity 3= Very Interactive & Educational	1= Local/Adjacent Areas 2= Regional 3= Metropolitan (In-State) 4= Multistate 5= International	
Attraction Name & Notes	**Quality**	**Local Flavor**	**Uniqueness**	**Interactivity**	**Appeal**	**Average Rating**

Evaluation of Community Services

Using the inventory sheets, record the services that apply to your destination under the corresponding category. For example, "hotels" would go beneath Accommodations & Lodging. Right click to add as many rows as are required to match your inventory list. In the following columns, rate the services on a scale of 1-4 or 5 using the key above each column. For the appeal column, consult a manager from the specific property involved for accuracy. In the notes section, record any details, potential markets, visitor demographics, problems or concerns.

	1= Barely Meets Current Needs 2= Meets Local/Regional Needs 3= Good for Current Needs and Growth 4= Can Handle Visitors for the next 5 Years	1= Poor 2= Fair 3= Good 4= Superior	1= No Variety 2= Fair (Needs More) 3= Good Variety 4= Excellent Variety	1= Local/Adjacent Areas 2= Regional 3= Metropolitan (in-state) 4= Multistate 5= International		
Service Category	**Quantity**	**Quality**	**Diversity**	**Appeal**	**Average Rating**	**Notes:**
Accommodations & Lodging:						
Food Service & Dining:						
Retail & Specialty Merchandise:						
Miscellaneous:						

Evaluation of Infrastructure Services

Please rate each service that applies to your destination using the key above each column on a scale of 1-4. Use the notes section to record any details, problems or concerns.

	1= Poor/None 2= Fair 3= Good 4= Excellent	1= Poor/None 2=Fair 3= Good 4= Excellent	1= Needs improvement 2= Fair 3= Good 4= Superior			
	Access/ Quantity	**Quality (Condition)**	**Staffing/ Facilities**	**Average Rating**	**Notes:**	**Priority Rank**
Airports						
Ambulance Services						
Benches/Rest Areas						
Bicycle Lanes						
Boat/Ferry Services						
Broadband Internet/Cable						
Charging Stations (Electric Cars)						
Comprehensive Plan						
Direction Signage						
Downtown Appearance						
Downtown Lighting						
Electric Power						
Emergency Road Services						
Fire Protection						
Gas Service						
Handicap Access						
Landscaping						
Local/County Roads						
Major U.S. Highway						
Medical Facilities/ Hospitals						
Other Mass Transit						
Police Protection						
Public Bus Services						
Public Parking						

Evaluation of Infrastructure contd.

	Access/ Quantity	Quality (Condition)	Staffing/ Facilities	Average Rating	Notes:	Priority Rank
	1= Poor/ None 2= Fair 3= Good 4= Excellent	1= Poor/None 2=Fair 3= Good 4= Excellent	1= Needs improvement 2= Fair 3= Good 4= Superior			
Public Rest Rooms						
Road Maintenance						
Search & Rescue						
Sewer/Waste Disposal						
Sidewalks						
Snow Removal						
State Highways/Roads						
Storm Drainage						
Street Cleaning						
Telephone Services						
Tourist Information						
Town Entrances						
Traffic Flow Management						
Trail Maintenance						
Train/Railway Services						
Trash Receptacles						
Water Bottle Refill Stations						
Water Supply						
Other:						

Resources Reviewed:
- Fermata, Inc. *Strategic Plan for Implementing the Maine Nature Tourism Initiative.* Augusta: Maine Office of Tourism. September 2005. Print.

Appendix C: Attitude Surveys

Adapted from *Community Tourism Development* (4th edition), by C.C. Messer, 2017, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Tourism Center. Copyright 2017 by University of Minnesota Extension. Adapted with permission.

Contact the Destination Development Specialist at MOT for an editable version for your use.

Resident Survey

1. Which of the following includes your age?
   __ Under 18   __ 18-29   __ 30-39
   __ 40-49   __ 50-59   __ 60-64   __ 65 or over

2. How long have you been a resident in Maine?
   __ 5 years or less   __ 10 years or less   __ 20 years or less   __ Entire life

3. Did you visit Maine before residing/moving here?   __ Yes   __ No

4. Which one of the following statements best describes tourism in your community?
   _ Non-existent: minimal to no tourism and that is unlikely to change
   _ Infancy: tourism is in its early stages but will surely grow significantly
   _ Adolescence: tourism is established with a long life ahead of it
   _ Maturity: tourism has likely reached its peak and will probably persist at this level for some time
   _ Decline: tourism has passed its prime and is on the way down

5. How much social interaction do you personally have with tourists in your area?
   _ Less than most other residents
   _ About the same as most other residents
   _ More than most other residents

6. My attitude towards tourists in my community is usually
   __ Positive   __ Negative   __ Neutral

7. Would you prefer more, or less tourism in your community than exists now?
   __ Much more   __ Some more   __ Same   __ Some less   __ Much less

Attitudes towards tourism

Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements. Check only one response and provide your honest opinion. In this survey, "tourists" refer to visitors to the community who live outside the immediate area.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Economic					
Tourism creates many well-paying jobs for residents					
Tourism creates jobs that have opportunities for advancement					
Tourism attracts more investment into the local community					
Tourism spending by visitors trickles down to local businesses					
Tourism is responsible for increasing the cost of living					
Tourism creates mostly low-paying jobs					
Tourism boosts sales of Maine-made products					
Tourism is a source of tax revenue for the state					
Tourism generates a lot of business for local companies during the busy summer and fall seasons which offsets lower demand in the winter and spring					
Tourism for business, meetings, and conventions increases Maine's reputation in the business sector					
Tourism beneficially increases land and property values					
Tourism attracts businesses to Maine					
Tourism has a vital economic role in Maine					
Maine's economy is too dependent on tourism					
Funds should be spent to promote tourism in Maine					
Only a small minority of my community benefits economically from tourism					

Tourism is an industry whose success I care about					
Maine should be promoted as a tourist destination					
Lifestyle					
Tourism is an industry that enhances residents' quality of life					
Tourism creates shopping, restaurant, retail, and entertainment opportunities for residents					
Tourism helps sponsor festivals, activities, and sports events for residents and visitors					
Tourism is the major cause of traffic problems					
Tourists crowd out residents in many good hunting and fishing spots					
Tourism disrupts the tranquility of my community					
Tourism has reduced the quality of outdoor recreation opportunities in my community					
Tourism causes over-crowding in the summer and fall seasons					
Tourism attracts new residents to move to Maine					
My household has a higher standard of living because of money tourists spend here					
Social					
Tourism creates a sense of pride in the community among residents					
Tourism makes me feel more connected to my community					
Tourism creates friction between local residents and tourists					
Tourism attracts more criminals to our community					
Tourism fosters collaboration between the private and public sectors to attract visitors					

Tourism "puts Maine on the map" and gives Maine positive recognition throughout the U.S.				
I would prefer that tourists visit our state but not move here				
The state government does a good job of balancing residents' and tourists' needs				
I feel like I have a voice in Maine's tourism development decisions				
Cultural				
Tourism causes a loss or distortion of our local traditions and culture				
Tourism revives and preserves our local traditions and culture				
Tourism encourages opportunities for cultural exchanges between residents and visitors				
Tourism provides opportunities to restore and protect historical venues				
Tourism encourages a wide variety of cultural activities like crafts, music, art, etc. in Maine				
Environmental				
Tourism is responsible for over-development				
Tourism helps sustain Maine's natural resources, parks, and cultural sites				
The environmental impacts from tourism are relatively minor				
Tourists create a burden on my community's services				
Tourism development encourages the conservation of natural resources				
Infrastructure				
The quality of public services (e.g. water and sewage, police protection, fire protection, emergency responders) have degraded because of tourism				
Improvements to roads and other public facilities are made because of tourism				
Communications and internet services have improved because of tourism				

Tourism spurs the expansion of aviation, rail, ferry, cruise, and other transportation services					
Tourism development is well-planned and organized					
The government should make infrastructure improvements to support tourism					
Local and state officials and politicians recognize the value and contribution of the tourism industry					

Comments

Please answer all questions as detailed and specific as possible.

1. What, if anything, would you say are some **positive aspects or benefits** of tourism in your area?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. What, if anything, would you say are some **negative aspects or downsides** of tourism in your area?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Please list any aspects of the community (places, events, etc.) that you do not want promoted as tourist attractions.

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. How do you imagine the future of your community and what role does tourism have in that future?

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. Please list any concerns you may have about tourism in your area that were not addressed in this survey.

   _____
   _____
   _____

Local Business Attitude Survey

Important: Businesses owners should complete both the Resident and the Business survey if they live in the local area.

1. Which category most accurately describes your type of business?
   __ Retail Sales   __ Accommodations   __ Manufacturer   __ Other:
   __ Wholesale   __ Food/Restaurant/Bar   __ Medical Service
   Sales
   __ Service   __ Attraction/Entertainment   __ Professional Office

2. Which category best describes your business structure:
   __ Sole Proprietorship   __ Partnership   __ Franchise
   __ Family Business   __ Corporation
   __ Other:_____

3. Is your business: ____ year-round   or   ____ seasonal?

4. If seasonal, in what months does the business operate? _____

5. What year was your business established in the community? _____

6. Please indicate the amount closest to your business's annual gross sales revenue:
   __ Less than $50,000   __ $50,000 - $100,000   __ $100,001 - $250,000
   __ $250,001 - $500,000   __ $500,000 - $1,000,000   __ More than $1,000,000

7. Are you a member of: The Chamber of Commerce   __ Yes   __ No
        A Local Tourism Bureau   __ Yes   __ No

8. How important is tourism to the success of your business?
   __ Very important   __Important   __ Somewhat important   __ Not important at all

9. What percentage of your gross sales revenue is attributable to tourism? _____%

10. Is tourism promotion in the best interest of your business?   __ Yes   __ No

11. Does your business distribute brochures highlighting local attractions?   __ Yes __ No

12. Are you willing to participate financially in local or regional tourism promotion?
    __ Yes   __ No

13. What types of new businesses would you like to see open in the area?

 __ Retail Sales   __ Accommodations   __ Manufacturer   __ Other:
 __ Wholesale Sales __ Food/Restaurant/Bar __ Medical Service
 __ Service   __ Attraction/Entertainment __ Professional Office

14. What type(s) of tourist attractions should be developed to attract visitors to the area?

 __ Historic Attractions __ Museums   __ Water Attractions __ Other:
 __ Amusement Parks __ Cultural Attractions __ Festivals
 __ Convention Centers __ The Arts   __ Recreation/Trails

15. What do you consider to be the **one most positive** factor impacting the development of your business?

 __ Market/Economy __ Adequate Space __ Modern Facilities __ Other:
 __ Competition   __ Transportation   __ Sanitary Facilities
 __ Regulations   __ Labor Availability __ Location

16. What do you consider to be the **one most negative** factor impacting the development of your business?

17. What type(s) of advertising do you use to promote your business?

 __ Tourism Guidebook __ State Tourism Marketing __ Social Media/Internet __ Other:
 __ Trade Shows   __ Radio and/or TV   __ Direct Mail
 __ Brochures/Flyers __ Newspaper   __ Co-op Advertising

Resources Cited and Referenced:

- BVK. *Maine Value of Tourism Study.* Maine Office of Tourism. 2015. Web.

Resources Reviewed:

- BVK. *Maine Value of Tourism Study.* Maine Office of Tourism. 2015. Web.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, USDA Forest Service, Northern Border Regional Commission. *Community Assessment for the Recreational Economy for Rural Communities.* Web.

Appendix D:
Tourism Industry Glossary

The tourism industry is filled with specialized language, programs, and acronyms. The following glossary may help decipher "tourism industry talk."

Adventure Tour – A tour designed around an adventurous activity such as rafting, hiking or mountain climbing.

Advertising agency – A specialized company that provides advertising services to destinations and businesses. May also be referred to as Marketing Agency.

Affinity Group – A group of people that share a common hobby, interest, or activity, or that are united through regular participation in shared outings. Also see preformed group.

American Bus Association (ABA) – A trade association representing motorcoach and tour companies, travel and tourism organizations, suppliers of bus products and services who work in partnership with the North American motorcoach industry.

Attraction – Any object, person, place or concept that draws people into a geography so that they may have an experience. The experience can be recreational, spiritual, or otherwise.

Brand – The brand is the promise made to the consumer of what you will deliver to them. It is the way the consumer thinks of a destination.

Channels of distribution – Travel products are sold through a variety of mechanisms. Products and services can be sold directly to the consumer (direct distribution) or through the various travel trade mechanisms (indirect distribution).

Charter – To hire the exclusive use of any aircraft, motorcoach or other vehicle.

Collateral – A marketing strategy that involves the use of various printed and online materials that communicate a brand, market position, product and service features, benefits to the customer, and for business partners. Includes pricing.

Commission – A fee paid to an agent for a transaction, a piece of business or a service. Commissions are paid to travel agents, tour operators and wholesalers in compensation for marketing and selling travel products and services to their specific markets.

Community-based tourism – A form of tourism in which a number of local residents have substantial involvement and control over tourism development and management.

Competitive advantage – A condition or circumstance that puts a company/product in a favorable or superior business position.

CVB – (Convention and Visitors Bureau) – The focus of a CVB is strictly tourism, individual visitors and meetings & convention business to fill in the seasonality of the visitor market. There are two CVBs in Maine - Portland and Bangor.

Cooperative marketing or promotion – When two or more organizations/businesses share the cost of a promotional program, as in advertising, promotions and public relations.

Cost per inquiry – The calculation of the cost of a promotional activity divided by the number of inquiries generated by that promotion. Example: if an ad cost $100 and 100 people responded to the ad, the cost per inquiry was $1.

Cost per thousand – The cost of an advertisement per thousand readers, viewers, or listeners reached through that specific media.

Cost per conversion – A calculation of the cost of a promotional activity divided by the number of bookings received. Example: if an ad cost $100 and four people booked a stay based on that ad, then the cost per conversion was $25.

Cultural attraction – An attraction of cultural origin as a manifestation of that culture without the original intention of serving tourism. May be tangible (building, landscape, object) or intangible (dance, music, art).

Demographics – A way to segment the larger market based upon age, household income, and other population statistics.

Destination development – The strategic planning and advancement of **defined** areas to support the evolution of desirable **destinations** for travelers, with a sole focus on the supply side of tourism, by providing compelling experiences, quality infrastructure, and remarkable services to entice repeat visitation.

A Destination Management Plan (DMP) – A business **plan** for building and managing the visitor economy for your **destination**. By sharing this plan with stakeholders, they can use it to help manage and invest in the **destination**.

Destination stewardship – Managing and supervising a destination for sustainability.

Direct mail – A method of advertising that involves the mailing of promotional materials directly to consumers or members of the travel trade.

Direct marketing – A broad term that includes all forms of marketing directly to the consumer and travel trade including direct mail, telemarketing and e-marketing among others.

DMO – (Destination Marketing/Management Organization) – An organization whose primary function is to attract visitors to a specific locale to enhance the local economy through the purchase of room nights, food and beverage, retail, visitor services, transportation, etc. DMOs come in multiple shapes, sizes and with a variety of names – state tourism offices, regional tourism groups, CVBs and chambers of commerce – who embrace this marketing mission. The organizational mission defines a DMO.

Double/Double – Refers to accommodations with two double beds in a room.

Ecotour – A tour designed to focus on preserving the environment, or a tour to environmentally sensitive areas.

Educational Tour – A tour designed around an educational activity, such as studying art.

Familiarization (FAM) tours – Tours organized by DMOs and CVBs at a free or seriously reduced cost for travel agents, tour operators, tour wholesalers/operators, travel writers, travel influencers and other industry suppliers who are capable of bringing large groups to a destination or providing important public relations.

Feasibility Study – An assessment of the practicality of a proposed plan or method.

FIT (fully independent tour/traveler) – Custom designed travel itineraries designed by travel agents or tour operators for travelers who do not wish to be part of a group tour but wish to have a fully planned travel experience.

Focus group – A small group of people gathered to participate in a discussion about a specific topic, usually moderated by a research professional.

Fulfillment – The process of delivering information to a consumer who has inquired about a tourism product (experience), often delivery of a brochure.

Group Leader – A individual who arranges packaged travel and tours for a pre-formed group (i.e.: senior citizen centers, a church, a club or individuals who work together or share a common interest such as skiing, history or sightseeing).

Interactive marketing – Marketing that engages the customer in a conversation and allows them to connect personally with destinations, products, services in an active manner. Interactive marketing includes websites, RSS feeds, social media, e-newsletters, blogs, e-blasts, etc.

Lead – A direct inquiry or referral from a potential new customer.

Lifestyle segmenting – A market segmentation approach that divides the market by lifestyle categories, such as types of media used, vacations taken, electronics owned, hobbies and activities enjoyed. (also see demographics)

Market analysis (research) – The study of the demand of a potential market for a product or service.

Market share – The percentage relationship of an organization's sales or number of visitors to total industry sales.

Market objective – A goal focused on a target market that a business/organization hopes to achieve. Objectives are results-oriented, specific to a target market, quantitative or measurable and time specific.

Market segmentation – The process of categorizing groups that share certain similar characteristics for marketing to them with appropriate products and services.

Motorcoach operator – Operators own motorcoaches and provide services such as charters, tours, sightseeing, scheduled service, school bus service, special operations, and/or local receptive operations.

National Tour Association (NTA) – A trade association of tourism professionals involved in the development and growth of the packaged travel industry.

Niche market – A percentage of the overall market that has a specific focus, such as adventure tourism, culinary tourism, etc.

OTA - Stands for Online Travel Agency. Online companies whose websites allow consumers to book various travel related services directly. They are third party agents reselling trips, hotels, cars, flights, activities, vacation packages, etc. provided by others.

Packaged travel – A tour that has been organized by a tour operator company, group leader or receptive operator. All aspects of the tour are arranged and coordinated – including travel, accommodations, overnights, attractions and itinerary.

Packaging – The combination of related but complementary travel and hospitality products and/or services into a single-priced offering to consumers.

Partnerships – Cooperative promotions or marketing efforts and other cooperative offerings made by travel and hospitality organizations.

Perishability – Something that cannot be regained if not sold, such as a hotel room, a ski lift ticket, tour seat, etc. This means once the date has passed, the sales opportunity is lost.

Positioning – How you describe the product you are selling to the market, determines your positioning.

Pre-formed group – A pre-existing collection of travelers, such as affinity groups and travel clubs, whose members share a common interest or organizational affiliation.

Primary research – Data collected for the first time through a variety of means such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.

Product/service mix – The grouping of services, facilities and products that a tourism organization provides to customers.

Programming – The development of special activities, events, programs to increase customer spending and/or to give added appeal to a package or other hospitality/travel service.

Psychographic segmentation – The market segmentation approach based upon psychological profiles of customers and their lifestyles.

Rack rate – The price a hotel charges for a room before any discounts. Sometimes set high and used to account for discounts.

Receptive tour operator – A local tour operator that manages products and services for incoming visitors and tours.

Response rate – The percentage of people surveyed who answer the questions of researchers.

Sales mission – A visit by an organization or group to a target market area, such as a state or country, to promote their destination or business.

Scheduled tour – A tour that is set in a tour operator's regular schedule of tour departures and that is often sold to the general public. Also called a public tour or retail tour.

Secondary research – Information about markets that is already published and available from various sources.

Sharing economy – An economic model defined as a peer-to-peer (P2P) based activity of acquiring, providing, or sharing access to goods and services that is often facilitated by a community-based on-line platform. Examples are Airbnb and Uber.

Site – A location of a unique feature; many sites could be within a single destination.

Stakeholder – A person, group or organization that has an interest or something to gain in a process.

Survey research – A form of primary research that asks specific questions of an audience and can be accomplished by various means, including telephone, internet, mail, interviews.

Tactical planning (actions) – The specific actions or activities included in an organization's marketing plan with specific information on timelines, budgets, and responsibilities.

Target market (audience) – A specific market segment selected by an organization for marketing messages to attract them.

Tour operator – A company or individual that operates packages or tours.

Tour wholesaler – A company or individual who plans, prepares, markets and administers travel packages, often combining services from several suppliers.

Trade show – Events where many segments of an industry come together to share information, usually including a component with individual booths that aim to sell specific travel/hospitality opportunities.

Travel agent – A person or business who sells and reserves the services of suppliers to individual and/or group customers and receives a commission for this effort.

Travel experience – An experience is the result of combining an activity with a situation, plus resources, which together cause an event that creates an emotional reaction in an individual that becomes a memory. The combination of these components equals an experience.

Travel trade – Travel agents, tour wholesalers and operators, corporate travel managers, incentive travel planners and convention/meeting planners.

Triple bottom line – Returns on investment that are economic, social and environmental.

Visitor profile - A combination of demographic, psychographic, and spending patterns that characterize a specific group of consumers.

Wayfinding – A term specific to assisting people determine their current location and how to reach their desired destination within the larger geographic context. Wayfinding can include a variety of means, such as maps, signage, online directional programming, free-standing kiosks, logos, etc.

Appendix E:
How to Connect with the Maine Office of Tourism

☐ **MOTPartners.com**
Stay updated on the Maine Office of Tourism's annual Marketing Plan, 5-Year Strategic Plan, Advertising Program and Creative Materials, plus Visitation Fact Sheet and industry-related Research, with useful information on Maine visitor spending, demographics and interests, to help you understand your audience; all this and more at MOTPartners.com.

☐ **VisitMaine.com**
Add your FREE tourism Business & Event Listings to VisitMaine.com, the state's primary online resource for tourism. Connect through the PARTNER LOGIN tab at MOTPartners.com.

☐ **Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership Program**
The MOT grant programs provide funding for targeted tourism marketing efforts within the state of Maine. Special Event and Tourism Enterprise Marketing Grants make it possible for smaller organizations to partner with the MOT to move projects to the next level. Learn more at PROGRAMS & SERVICES on MOTPartners.com

☐ **PR Partners Program**
Our PR Partners program helps bring print, digital and broadcast travel and lifestyle journalists, photographers, bloggers and international tour operators to Maine to connect with our state's hospitality industry and travel experiences. Download the online application under PROGRAMS & SERVICES/PR at MOTPartners.com.

☐ **Social Media**
Connect and engage with the Maine Office of Tourism through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube. Follow/Like/Engage with us: @VisitMaine #mainething.

☐ **Maine Tourism Partner News**
Our monthly industry newsletter will keep you up to date on tourism industry research, MOT activities, and collaborative marketing opportunities. Email Jennifer.Geiger@maine.gov to receive the monthly email in your own inbox.

☐ **Governor's Conference on Tourism**
Attend the annual conference for professional development, training & networking opportunities tailored to your needs. Stay up to date with trends in tourism and align with the MOT marketing plan to enhance your own outreach efforts. Details at mainetourismconference.com.

☐ **Maine Film Office Website**
Create free listings for your business or property on FilmInMaine.com. You can list your business in the Production Guide, or property in the Locations Library, so productions scouting Maine can find you.