



2019 - 2020 Marketing Plan

Marketing Objectives

Prince Edward County, the 1000 Islands region and the Rideau Canal are world renown brands and are well known in places outside Ontario and the rest of Canada. Regional Tourism Organization 9 (RTO9) is working with key stakeholders and partners within the Tourism Industry in the region to collectively market South Eastern Ontario as a top destination of choice for visitors to Ontario from the rest of Canada and the world. Kingston, Belleville, Cornwall, Brockville and Gananoque are 5 populous destinations within South Eastern Ontario that offer unique and engaging experiences.

RTO 9 consumer marketing is designed to put the emphasis back on these destinations and to support these destinations through joint marketing campaigns. These marketing initiatives can include existing products or services or new tourism products that enhance the region's diversity of tourism attractions.

The following is a list of Destination Marketing Organizations that we will be supporting and promoting key messages and brands in 2019-20:

- Prince Edward County
- Bay of Quinte
- Land O' Lakes (County of Frontenac and Lennox and Addington)
- Kingston
- Gananoque 1000 Islands
- Brockville
- Cornwall and SDG Counties (United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry)
- Rideau Canal World Heritage Site

We encourage cross-destination-promotion throughout RTO 9 and encourage partnerships with all levels of governments, non-governmental organizations and tourism businesses.

Destinations

01 Prince Edward County

Prince Edward County is not only interested in increasing visitation to its destination on the “shoulder” seasons, but to also retain investors and entrepreneurs. PEC’s current target markets are Young Families, Active Retirees, and Millennials from the GTA, Ottawa, Montreal, and Eastern Quebec. PEC recognizes that although the PEC website is updated, it is in need of some engaging content to attract target markets. To do this, PEC will be blogging and reaching out to other social media influencers to guest write and produce content for the site. This is to help increase engagement and following on their social media pages as well as increase PEC e-newsletter reach. To achieve their goals for targeting their audiences PEC hopes for more inquiries regarding relocating and accommodation statistics. They’re currently in need of more data and resources to do this.

02 Bay of Quinte

Bay of Quinte’s main focus for this year is to grow tourism and travel trade in the off-season months (fall and winter). BOQ plans to do this by increasing content and providing key audiences with more live videos feeds, engaging videos, and blog postings. The social channels they will be using to grow engagement will be Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. From increasing engagement across these channels and therefore collecting more data, Bay of Quinte will use this to make informed marketing decisions. The Bay of Quinte measures their performance from increases in their overnight stays, sports tournament economic activity, travel trade activity, and general information from visitor centres.

03 Frontenac County and Lennox and Addington

Both Frontenac County and Lennox and Addington will partner with RTO 9 to complete their upcoming marketing initiatives. These two destinations have identified key target markets as vacationing families seeking cottage experiences and active adventuring seeking markets. Both areas have unique yet similar attractions and outdoor experiences such as: camping, hiking, paddling, and fishing. To target their secondary market, both organizations will obtain followers or customers through product development with support on social media and content marketing. Lennox and Addington is creating more content marketing initiatives through blog content, whether created in-house or by hiring outside help. Frontenac County wishes to partner with RTO 9 to help secure blog content as well as updating photos. Both destinations are looking for more partnerships opportunities with neighbouring destinations to increase exposure i.e. Tourism Kingston and Kingston Accommodation Partners. These destinations are not only looking to be a main visitation for their target markets but also be a day trip destination for those visiting other destinations.

04 Kingston

Kingston has recognized that their core target market is millennial minded visitors who are seeking authentic experiences from Canada. Their secondary target market is business travellers, and mature adventure seekers. Whether they are Canadians or International visitors, Kingston has something for everyone. The convenient location between Toronto and Montreal with an easy to access destination helps draw in more visitors. Kingston prides itself in offering authentic storytelling experiences backed by support of popular attractions that motivate their target market. Kingston will continue to increase their social media traffic across existing channels as well as develop new channels such a “WeChat.” Recognizing that content is their key driver for initiating social media engagement, Kingston will continue developing content to grow channels as well as utilizing what they currently have, such as video assets. Growing social media channels will continue to rely on organic traffic as well as paid advertising such as Google Search, Display, Retargeting, and paid investments on social channels. Measurement of success will rely on attraction attendance, visitor centre traffic, tour bus counts, overnight stays, event economic impact, visitor spending, and website traffic.

05 Gananoque 1000 Islands

Gananoque has expressed an interest in creating their own content and continuing with a social media strategy. They will be addressing their marketing initiatives by hiring a freelance writer and social media strategist to look after their content and social feeds. They will be launching a series of blogs on attractions and events in the 1000 Islands. They plan on investing into Facebook advertising (including boost) and Google Ads.

06 Brockville

Brockville will be continuing to target Family Memory Builders and Active Mature Couples with their unique attractions such as the Aquatarium and the Brockville Railway Tunnel. Brockville will decrease print spending and will focus efforts on digital advertising and promotion engaging audiences more through live videos, videos, and imagery. Currently, Brockville operates on 3 social media channels: Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and would like to increase their reach and engagement on these channels by introducing the WeChat App. Brockville would like to increase social media engagement by launching a digital marketing campaign with a focus on native advertising. The largest part of their campaigns will be executed through targeted digital ads, but each will be supported with some traditional advertising as well. For the Family Member Builders, Brockville is looking at billboards in the Ottawa area. For the Active Mature Couples, Brockville will be planning some newspaper print ads and direct mail. Brockville is planning on updating their website to include

more content to show why Brockville matters and what makes Brockville unique. The measurement from all marketing efforts would include an increase in year over year changes in website visits, overnight stays, festival attendance, and visits to the tourism office.

07 Cornwall and Stormont Dundas & Glengarry Counties

Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry (the Counties) have agreed to partner with the City of Cornwall and RTO9 in any future marketing plans. Both organizations are willing to work together on their marketing initiatives and plan on collaborating into the future. Both destinations recognize that they need the human resources to help launch their digital marketing initiatives. The Counties has decided to hire a summer student to assist in Social Media Marketing.

08 Rideau Canal World Heritage Site

Regional Tourism Organization 9 (RTO9) in collaboration with the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, The Town of Smiths Falls, Parks Canada and 2 other Ontario Regional Tourism Organizations 10 and 11, built, launched and promoted a new Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage Site website. This visitor-focused, responsive and user-friendly website will help promote Eastern Ontario tourism attractions and businesses, along with its towns and villages and allow tourists to learn and plan their visit prior to arrival. We will continue to strategically combining and mobilizing dollars for maximum results. Over the next few months, we will be translating content.

Sector Campaigns

Sector Campaigns

Along with supporting our DMOs and DMPs in RTO 9, we will be in market with a cruise sector campaign; 2019 Fall 1000 Islands Cruise Campaign.

FALL

2019 Fall 1000 Islands Cruise Campaign; to bring together cruise operators within RT09 for a joint marketing campaign, that would highlight the cruising product in the region and initiate a collaborative marketing campaign to build partnerships amongst the cruise lines in the 1000 Islands and to sell cruise packages.

RT09 has identified Quebec and Northern New York state, as two markets that have potential for growth in the region based on a steady increase we have seen in our analytics. Through a collaborative effort between RT09 and industry partners, out of Province markets are attainable, whereas no one entity could reach these markets on their own. Cruise operators within RT09's region cater to hundreds of thousands of visitors each year during the peak season, this campaign will help drive traffic to the shoulder seasons. This holds true for our accommodation partners, who are also looking to grow their off-season visitation. This campaign will be designed to attract the 35-44-year-old with no children and a higher disposable income, as well as the 45-54 years old that are empty nesters and again have a higher disposable income and enjoy travel outside of the busy summer season, looking for 2 or 3-night getaways. This campaign is designed to raise the awareness of the Ontario brand along with boat cruising in the 1000 Islands destinations.

RT09's close proximity to both the USA and Quebec provides an advantage for the region to target both of these markets. With the Canadian dollar averaging between 31-35% to the US dollar, Ontario is an affordable destination for our US visitors. In 2019-2020 the RT09 will augment its sector campaign by bringing into the region key social media influencers along with paid social media efforts to help create audience and directing customers to RT09's destinations.

We will continue promoting RTO 9's destination through a series of short destination videos that will live on our consumer site and our South Eastern Ontario YouTube Video channel. These videos will be broadcast in whole or in part to help cross promote all destinations throughout the region; showcasing these videos at visitor information centres including Thousand Islands International Tourism Council Visitor Centre on Interstate 81 coming into Canada.

Contesting

We will be deploying 4 seasonal contests driving consumers to fill a quick survey/ballet to receive additional information from RT09 and its destinations featured in the contest. Each contest will highlight at least 2 destinations and feature tourism products and services.

Consumer Marketing

South Eastern Ontario, as defined by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport as Region 9, will work towards creating an engaging marketing strategy with memorable and authentic campaign themes to help increase tourism receipts in the region.

Key Performance Indicators

- Increase number of referrals to partner websites by 2%
- Increase social media engagement by 5%
- Increase website traffic to our French consumer site by 10%
- Increase number of video views by 5%
- Increase email subscriber database by 10%
- Increase Social Traffic to website by 10%

*Please refer to Social Media Content Plan

Activities	Timelines
Continue to increase social media engagement	Q1-Q4
Continue to develop monthly consumer e-newsletter	Q1-Q4
Develop 4 contests to increase email subscriber database (one per quarter)	Q1-Q4
Continue to develop video assets and images for use in regional marketing	Q2-Q3
Work with DMOs/DMPs/Partners to align messaging and promotion of the region	Q1-Q4
Launch French and English videos throughout the summer using Facebook and YouTube ads	Q2-Q3

Secondary Target Markets

Quebec

Initiate marketing campaigns in the Quebec market to test ongoing research, establish best practices and promote the region to new travellers. i.e. Spring Cruising campaign, launch French WAI Videos

Performance Measures

- Implement Spring Cruising campaign, track and report performance of campaign
- High performance blogs translated and posted on French web pages and promoted through social media
- Execute Quebec Market Influencer FAM and obtain 2 earned media stories targeting the Quebec market
- Launch French WAI Videos
- Increase website traffic to our French web pages from Quebec by 10%.

Activities	Timelines
Implement Cruising campaign, track and report	Q2-3
Identify high performance blogs	Q1
Translate high performance blogs and promote on social media	Q1-Q4
Develop Quebec Market influencer FAM tour to obtain earned media	Q1-Q2
Launch French WAI Videos	Q2-Q3
Test the Quebec market through targeted marketing campaigns	Q2-Q3

New York State

Initiate marketing campaigns in New York State to test ongoing research, establish best practices and promote the region to new travellers. i.e. 3 RTOs Fall Motorcycling Campaign

Performance Measures

- Execute New York State Influencer FAM with 1000 Islands Partners including Brockville, Gananoque and Kingston
- Partner with Thousand Islands International Council on joint marketing campaigns i.e. Spring Cruise Campaign and Fall Motorcycling Campaign
- Partner with Attractions Ontario to create awareness of the 1000 Islands region with an Attraction Passport cover switch out and drop in the Toronto market
- Increase website traffic from New York State by 10%.

Activities	Timelines
Develop New York influencer FAM tour	Q2
Partner with Thousand Islands International Council on joint marketing campaigns	Q1-Q2
Attraction Passport cover switch out and drop	Q1
Test the New York market through targeted marketing campaigns	Q2-Q3

Consumer Engagement Strategy

Consumer Engagement Strategy

Acquire earned media and increase destination and/or sector awareness in key target markets

Performance Measures

- Commission 2 new stories from influencers in target market areas (i.e. boat cruise and motorcycle blogs)
- Create 6 new destinations blogs (one blog every two months)
- Increase travel media shows attendance including destination partners participation
- Support and promote new products and tourism services

Activities	Timelines
Engage influencers (local and regional) to help promote the region	Q1-Q4
Work with DMOs/DMPs to promote the region at strategic travel media/consumer trade shows	Q1 - Q4
Effectively support and promote new products and tourism services	Q1 - Q4
Develop a Travel Media strategy	Q1

Alignment & Partnerships

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Ensure alignment of messaging and promotions between DMOs/DMPs/Partners and provide opportunities to market with Destination Ontario both inside and outside of the province.

Performance Measures

- Increased partnerships with DMO/DMPs/Partners including Destination Ontario
- Partnered with 2 RTO on a marketing campaign
- Send images to Destination Ontario for storage on Ontariotravel.net

Activities	Timelines
Build upon shared media and content assets	Q1 - Q4
Partner on strategic joint media buys	Q1 - Q4
Align with the Ontario Travel brand and seek new opportunities for alignment	Q1 - Q4
Invest in strategic media buys with Destination Ontario	Q1
Propose partnering on a TIPP application to target Quebec and/or Upper New York State	Q1
Collaborate with 2 other RTOs on a campaign with shared assets	Q2-Q3