



FY15 IOWA TOURISM OFFICE PLAN

PART I FY15 OVERVIEW

MISSION

Grow the state's economy through travel expenditures

GOAL

Become the trusted resource to provide inspiration and information to potential travelers

SITUATION

1. Major redesign completed on traveliowa.com making it the hub for FY15 strategies
2. Shift from marketing to content marketing increases the need to integrate work among digital, social and public relations tactics
3. The tourism industry may be unaware of the breadth of the Iowa Tourism Office's programming and unsure of how to participate in it

OBJECTIVE

Create and curate content that:

- Serves the traveler
- Inspires more travel to and within Iowa
- Increases awareness of travel opportunities
- Provides resources and programming that serves and supports Iowa's tourism industry

STRATEGIES

1. Reach our target and niche audiences with new, inspiring and unexpected creative highlighting niche interest areas across channels (digital, social, public relations, Iowa Travel Guide)
2. Build a campaign effort around a theme that embodies Iowa's brand: escape to the unexpected

TARGET AUDIENCES

PRIMARY: Women with children under the age of 18

SECONDARY: Niche audiences based on content (outdoor enthusiasts, foodies, etc.)

MESSAGE STRATEGY

Iowa offers a unique variety of unexpected attractions, events and experiences that will leave travelers both surprised and satisfied

MEASUREMENT

Evaluate strategies and tactics to identify the most useful data and measurements necessary to effectively evaluate the success or failure of each tactic

PART II

CONTENT MARKETING

The Iowa Tourism Office is the state of Iowa's official tourism marketing organization. We exist to tell our state's story – through multiple channels and to multiple audiences – in a way that inspires them to choose Iowa as their travel destination. We continue to evolve from a model of merely marketing to a model of content marketing, in which each of our strategies is purposeful and integrated with other strategies in our plan. The content planning team consists of the Public Relations Manager, Social Media Manager and Digital Marketing Manager. This team will meet at least every other week to coordinate work and manage the master “content calendar.” On a monthly basis, the content team will meet with the Research Manager and Iowa Tourism Office Manager to review search engine marketing terms and optimize them based on performance and integration with the content plan.

OBJECTIVE

Integrate Travel Iowa's work products so that content can be leveraged and utilized on multiple platforms

STRATEGIES

1. Maintain a master content calendar and conduct biweekly content team meetings
2. Identify channel distribution and format of content
3. Shift focus to website and social promotions/contests
4. Plan content three-four months in advance of its launch
5. ZLR Ignition continues its role as managing editor of content plan
6. Repurpose content from traveliowa.com and the Iowa Travel Guide for use on social and in media relations

TACTICS

1. Create content (See Work Products portion of plan)
2. Curate content:
 - Work with the tourism industry to create, collect and publicize words, photos and video for more inspiring content
 - Identify partnerships with third-party content providers:
 - Travel publications/media
 - Bloggers
 - Photographers
 - Videographers
 - Tourism Industry

PART III WORK PRODUCTS

► IOWA TRAVEL GUIDE

OBJECTIVE

Create a publication that inspires people to choose Iowa as their vacation destination and gives them information necessary to plan their trip

STRATEGY

Develop compelling content in the Iowa Travel Guide that encourages interaction and exploration of Iowa destinations

TACTICS

1. Host a social media contest that allows users to select the cover of the 2015 guide
2. Inspire people to choose Iowa including 12 pages of niche editorial content
(Integrate this content with public relations and digital efforts)
 - Candy Makers in Iowa
 - Beat the Heat in Iowa
 - Extreme Travel
 - Sports Teams in Iowa
 - Unique/Quirky Destinations
 - Distilleries

► SOCIAL MEDIA

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase social channel likes and engagement
2. Collect traveler email addresses for further communication
3. Connect users to traveliowa.com or partner sites

STRATEGIES

1. Increase the number of social promotions and ways to engage our audience
2. Continue to strengthen social channels to increase engagement and strengthen industry relationships
3. Invite bloggers to submit relevant content to support the blog and increase readership

PROMOTIONAL TACTICS

JULY *Beat the Heat* (Facebook)

Award one of three waterpark prize packages to three randomly selected followers who use #BeatTheHeat when posting about how they stay cool in summer

SEPTEMBER *Fall In Love* (Facebook)

Use promoted posts on Facebook to drive potential travelers to newly created, romantic fall web content

NOVEMBER *Cabin Fever* (Facebook)

Promote the mix of cabin rental options for late fall retreats through posts and photography

DECEMBER *Travel Guide Cover Contest* (Facebook)

Engage Facebook users to vote for and ultimately decide which image/design will become the cover of the new Iowa Travel Guide

JANUARY *#HackMyHoliday* (Twitter)

Award a unique, travel-related prize each day to a randomly selected individual who Tweeted using #HackMyHoliday

FEBRUARY *FY15 media campaign* (Facebook & Twitter)

Unveil one of four new advertisements each day, along with other fun and quirky content on various social media platforms to create excitement around the new campaign

MARCH *Pie Bracket* (Facebook)

Spin-off of basketball play-off season with a food-focused bracket/competition in which Facebook users vote for their favorite Iowa pie

SOCIAL CHANNEL TACTICS

INSTAGRAM

Work with professional photographer partners to grow the audience

FACEBOOK

Purchase advertising to grow the audience

TWITTER

Purchase promoted posts to grow the audience

More frequently retweet and leverage partner content

PINTEREST

Increase communication with the tourism industry about opportunities to submit content

GOOGLE+

Share existing content to increase readership on blog and traveliowa.com

BLOG TACTIC

Launch GoodBlogs platform that encourages blog writing, sharing and reading

► DIGITAL OBJECTIVES

1. Create a website that inspires people to choose Iowa as their vacation destination and gives them information necessary to plan their trip
2. Increase traffic to, time spent on and engagement at traveliowa.com
3. Connect travelers to partner sites
4. Collect traveler email addresses for further communication

STRATEGIES

1. Enhance current content by adding highly engaging photos and videos and entice users to spend more time on the site
2. Create quick, easy one-step ways for users to send/share content via social plug-in or email addresses

3. Continue to expand niche interest area content/itineraries
4. Continue to push updates that enhance core functionality, eg., design, navigation and search
5. Perform additional usability testing

TACTICS

1. Hire photographer to acquire additional images
 - FY14 usability testing said users want more images
 - Photographer posts images to Travel Iowa's social channels
 - Enhance Get Inspired pages on traveliowa.com
 - Photos will be used in the media center and image gallery
 - Photos can be shared via social plug-ins
2. Produce new videos that focus on storytelling
 - Use on traveliowa.com to enhance listings, itineraries and Get Inspired pages
 - Supplement blog with multimedia content

► EMAIL/CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

OBJECTIVES

1. Manage marketing strategies to acquire quality consumer leads
2. Increase engagement with existing and new leads

STRATEGY

Deliver dynamic content via email based on traveler's specific interest areas

TACTIC

Provide e-communication that encourages audiences to interact with content and ultimately choose to travel to Iowa

► PUBLIC RELATIONS

OBJECTIVES

1. Inspire writers to travel to and write about Iowa's destinations
2. Raise top-of-mind awareness of Iowa among travel writers/bloggers and related media
3. Leverage content created for travelers to make it applicable to travel writers/bloggers and related media

STRATEGIES

1. Target niche publications and writers/bloggers to maximize use of existing content as story starters
2. Increase and maintain regular contact with travel writers/bloggers and related media
3. Host two familiarization tours annually
4. Enhance the media center at traveliowa.com
5. Implement regular, targeted e-communication tactics

TRAVEL WRITER/BLOGGER TACTICS

1. Continually identify targeted media and pitch as least 20 hours/month
2. Create and update pitch content online and print collateral
3. Schedule visits to mid-size market media who have a natural interest in Iowa
4. Create custom media kits to hand-deliver
 - Bethany, Cameron and St. Joseph, MO
 - Lincoln, NE
 - Rockford, DeKalb, Aurora, Naperville, IL
5. Strengthen existing, regular media partnerships and identify new ones
 - KCCI-TV, Des Moines
 - WMT, Cedar Rapids
 - KFXA, Cedar Rapids

TOUR TACTIC

Create niche FAMs to cater to specific interest outlets

MEDIA CENTER TACTICS:

1. Create easy-to-view, downloadable pitch sheets
2. Provide quick access to sample itineraries
3. Create photo gallery and terms of use statement/policy that captures email addresses for future communication
4. Give media the opportunity to sign up to receive continued communication
5. Rotate content at least quarterly to anticipate seasonal requests

E-COMMUNICATION TACTIC

Provide e-communication that educates and inspires writers/bloggers and related media about destinations

► PARTNERSHIPS

OBJECTIVES

1. Create partnership initiatives that use third-party participation to increase the reach of the Iowa Tourism Office
2. Offer a range cooperative partnership opportunities that help the tourism industry reach potential travelers

STRATEGIES

1. Establish relationships with entities that have resources of value to the Iowa Tourism Office and the traveling public
2. Create a task force to assist the Iowa Tourism Office in creating the Cooperative Partnerships Program

TACTICS:

1. Implement the Cooperative Partnerships Program
2. Feature partners in social media campaigns
3. Represent partners at Iowa Welcome Centers

► PAID MEDIA

OBJECTIVES

1. Raise awareness of Iowa's tourism and recreational opportunities among women with children and connect those women planning trips for their families to Iowa's online planning resources
2. Increase visits to traveliowa.com
3. Increase Iowa Travel Guide orders

STRATEGIES

1. Evaluate the performance of last year's media efforts to strategically purchase in FY15
2. Surround the target audience with the Iowa tourism message at key points throughout their day utilizing both traditional (mass awareness) and digital (niche/targeted) advertising
3. Use cost-effective online media to further demographically target the audience and generate clicks to the website
4. Focus advertising efforts in the surrounding states in the areas with the largest number of prospects to efficiently reach those most likely to travel to Iowa
5. Use co-op advertising to promote the local tourism partners and further target secondary audiences
6. Flight a majority of the advertising campaign (broadcast/online pre-roll/direct mail) around the spring/summer travel time frame
7. Run keyword search campaigns year-round to have a presence throughout the year and capture those looking for getaways and experiences where Iowa would be a good fit

MEDIA TACTICS

1. Television Advertising (Broadcast)
 - Chicago
 - Minneapolis/St. Paul
 - Kansas City
 - Omaha
2. Online Advertising
 - Socialmoms Network
 - Spotify
 - Google
 - YouTube
 - TripAdvisor
 - Pandora
 - Better Homes & Gardens
 - Bing
 - Expedia
 - Hulu

3. Print Advertising (all print advertising is part of the FY15 Cooperative Partnerships Program)

- AAA Living
- Family Fun
- Iowa Outdoors
- Midwest Living
- The Iowan
- Group Travel Leader
- All Recipes
- Better Homes & Gardens

► CALL CENTER/FULFILLMENT

OBJECTIVE

Continue to improve an effective, reliable, timely, measurable system for fulfilling traveler inquiries for information about Iowa

STRATEGIES

1. Effectively marry the call center, CRM and fulfillment vendor to provide the Iowa Travel Guide
2. Continue to work with the fulfillment vendor to identify new, more streamlined opportunities to deliver print or digital content to the traveler

TACTICS

1. Monitor the call center staff and hear their suggestions for improvements
2. Maintain a relationship with the fulfillment vendor to seek their guidance on concerns and areas for improvement
3. Continue to learn how the CRM (Simpleview) can enhance the process

PART IV INDUSTRY RELATIONS

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide resources and programming that serves and supports the tourism industry
2. Effectively communicate partnership opportunities and the work of the Iowa Tourism Office to the tourism industry

STRATEGIES

1. Include relevant/helpful industry information in email marketing back to the industry
2. Establish partnerships with the industry to create and curate content

TACTICS

1. Participation in industry events and meetings
2. Creation of task forces and committees to guide the Iowa Tourism Office's work
3. The E-Traveler newsletter
4. Targeted, personal outreach

PART V GRANTS

OBJECTIVE

Offer grant programs that meet the greatest needs of Iowa's tourism industry and helps them develop and market their products

STRATEGIES

1. Work closely with the Vision Iowa Board to successfully implement the program
2. Work closely with Iowa's convention and visitors bureaus to successfully implement the Regional Sports Authority District Program
3. Work closely with the Iowa tourism industry and the Iowa Tourism Grants Committee to successfully implement the Iowa Tourism Grants Program

TACTICS

1. Vision Iowa/CAT Program implementation
2. Regional Sports Authority District Program implementation
3. Iowa Tourism Grants Program implementation