

# IEDA Marketing Research and Plan Overview

August 2020

## Situation Analysis:

COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on the tourism industry. In order to recover from the pandemic and to reinvigorate the state's economy, the Iowa Tourism Office is currently focusing its efforts on instilling consumer and traveler confidence. Though we are temporarily pivoting to focus on inspiring travel when it is safe to do so, the research for the This Is Iowa campaign remains as the foundation for our marketing efforts. We will continue to pursue the state's need to attract more people – visitors and residents – to both explore within and to relocate to Iowa. The multi-phase research study, which informed the development of the This Is Iowa campaign, remains valid. Most people outside Iowa simply don't know enough about the state to form an accurate opinion. Current perceptions of Iowa are outdated, but overall neutral, and can be shifted by sharing facts. Sharing information about Iowa's tourism attractions and business-friendly attributes equally increased favorability toward Iowa, interest in visiting and considering Iowa as a place to live. Therefore, IEDA's integrated marketing campaign will continue to deliver consistent messaging about Iowa's benefits for travelers, residents and future residents with a focus on coming to Iowa when it is safe and the time is right.

Key Findings from the This Is Iowa campaign research:

- Tourism is critical – two-thirds of U.S. adults say they have seriously considered moving somewhere after visiting.
- Current perceptions of Iowa are outdated (e.g., hyper rural, farming only, corn only, no diversity), but overall neutral (46%) and they can be shifted by sharing facts.
- Respondents react most favorably to facts about Iowa's landscapes and recreation, business environment, workforce and education.
- Most important, Iowa can provide what adults say are the critical factors in deciding to move to a new place: job opportunities, affordable housing, recreation and low crime.
- After learning more about Iowa, three-fourths said they feel much more/somewhat more positive about Iowa. Additionally, more than two-thirds say they are likely to consider visiting Iowa (67%) and half (53%) said they might consider moving to Iowa.

## Target Audiences:

Based on the research, the consumer target audience has been divided into three sub-segments, recognizing that those at different life stages have different motivators and access information differently.

- Adults living in Midwest states, including Iowa, or with an affinity/connection to Iowa plus stretch markets, such as San Francisco, Detroit, Dallas and Denver

<b>Sub-Segment</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Media Consumption</b>
<b>Young adults</b> (Gen Z and Millennials ages 22 to 29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looking to start and/or grow their career and to experience new things</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tech innate, use multiple screens, communicate with text and images</li></ul>

<b>Young families</b> (Millennials and Gen X ages 30 to 39)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want to make family memories and find work/life balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoys traditional media accessed differently (e.g., podcasts, Hulu)</li> </ul>
<b>Middle aged adults</b> (Gen X and Boomers ages 40 to 55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have disposable income and may recommend Iowa to younger generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most likely to use traditional media; Facebook is go-to social media outlet</li> </ul>

**Strategic Framework:**

<b>INSIGHT FROM OUR TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	My perception is my reality (and my perceptions are out of date)
<b>WHAT WE WANT THEM TO BELIEVE</b>	Iowa is more than meets the eye
<b>IMAGINE IF WE COULD</b>	Reveal the REAL Iowa
<b>MAGNETIC IDEA / STRATEGY</b>	Change the vantage point for our target audience so they can see Iowa “beyond the crop”

**Messages:**

The research found facts about Iowa’s tourism attractions and business-friendly attributes both equally increased favorability toward Iowa, interest in visiting and considering Iowa as a place to live. This reinforced the plan to roll-out one integrated marketing campaign with consistent messaging about Iowa’s benefits.

Messages will be focused around the topics best received in the research – affordability (of travel and cost of living/doing business), economic viability (of communities and careers), natural beauty (for visiting and quality of life) and culture & lifestyle (from art to festivals, breweries and restaurants).

As a result of COVID-19, messaging will incorporate a more inspirational tone and instill confidence in Iowa as a destination when it is safe and the time is right.

To see examples of IEDA’s marketing messaging and tactics, click [here](#)