



Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

Parrsboro-Joggins Area, Nova Scotia
November 2010



Opportunity Assessment

INTRODUCTION

In July of 2010, an Opportunity Assessment of the Fundy Shore region of Nova Scotia was conducted, and the findings were presented in a two-and-a-half hour workshop in October. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of the region and communities - how they are seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public washrooms, overall appeal, and the region's ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the Opportunity Assessment, we looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project. The town and surrounding area were "secretly shopped." Any person looking to relocate their business, industry, or residence will come to your community as a visitor first. Tourism is the front door to all your economic development efforts.

Once potential visitors find information about your region, are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Assessment, we reviewed your visitor website and print marketing materials.

A typical community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)

- 2) Websites
- 3) Brochures and printed materials
- 4) Publicity (articles)
- 5) Word of mouth - the most effective means

We searched the internet for activities, requested and reviewed printed materials, and looked for articles and third-party information. As we prepared for travel to your community, we searched both commercial and organizational websites promoting the area, state tourism websites, and read travel articles and guidebooks.

The marketing assessment determined how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the region would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a two-hour drive - or from further away. The question on most visitors' minds is: What do you have that I can't get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities falter is when they merely provide "lists" of what the community has, whether it's truly "unique" or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, shops and restaurants, plenty of lodging, golf, outdoor recreation, historic downtowns, scenic vistas, etc. Of course, nearly every visitor can do these things closer to home. So, what makes your area worth the trip?

Always promote your primary lure first - what makes you worth that special trip. THEN, promote your diversionary, or "complementary" activities.

Would you go to Anaheim, California, if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knotts Berry Farm mind that Disneyland gets all the glory? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with those secondary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities benefit.

In a nutshell, the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment looks for what makes your region worth a special trip, or a great place to live, or to do business. Do you give a reason for visiting, and do you provide enough information to make it easy to plan a trip? Are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the region, looking at enticements from highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public washrooms, visitor information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The communities benefit from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site Assessment includes a candid look at private businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the communities first about possible restraints, future plans, or reasons why the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the communities, leading them to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the area's tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the region's ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a community-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and provincial agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) will not be successful if the tourism effort is not community-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are aware of but can't mention or bring up without paying a political price. Local politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.





While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities - that cater to their interests - in your region? Do your communities have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises - otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into the area. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the region, we have looked at all of these issues, developed some suggestions and ideas the area can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when the communities import more cash than they export. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash - often referred to as "leakage." Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more cash than you export, you have a positive "balance of trade." Communities with successful tourism programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the

community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors - providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your city park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboretums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these - but, you also want to entice them into your shops, your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&B's, and hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your region, you need to have places for them to spend it - you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.

THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism. However, when friends and family come to visit, do your residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally?



Or do they head to a neighboring part of the province? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

2. Business travel

The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do “after hours” while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or “diversions,” not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think Disneyworld, Disneyland, San Antonio’s River Walk, Banff, to name a few.

3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities - things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the

“live music-theater capital of the world.” This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year. The primary “lure” is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local





highways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.

2. Getting people to stop

The first priority of developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the region would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in one of your communities – buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there's a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.

3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing neighboring activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip.

Visitors don't care about city limits or county lines – so market the broader package and you'll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. ALWAYS promote the primary lure first, then the location. If I want to go see Andy Williams, I don't care whether he's in Muskogee, Oklahoma or in Branson, Missouri. People by the millions head to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Sell the activity - the experience - THEN the location.

LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not - you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.

Historic downtowns provide ambiance - they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's in the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.

Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado capital. But here's

the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or vegetable?

Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. But to the vast majority of potential visitors, it's not a reason to make a special trip.

BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST

Why should a visitor come to your community if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it – a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and





produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.

Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise – just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising efforts. Like, “Pinch yourself, you’re in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent.” This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you’ll see that in being unique, you’ll become a greater attraction.

CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your region, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor

information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing arts), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc.

The important point is to group these businesses together to create the “critical mass” in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the critical mass – the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the area, spend money, and go home. Tourism is nearly a \$650 billion dollar industry in the U.S., nearly \$75 billion in Canada, and supports millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism



provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and it creates a basis for a unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community's downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others – new businesses will see the community as a visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful region.

NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report will provide your region with many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue in the communities and becomes a springboard for the region, enhancing its tourism industry, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.

This report offers a first step in reaching that goal. To fully realize the benefits of this assessment, the communities should take these findings and suggestions, discuss them and evaluate them, and develop a plan for implementation.



A detailed “Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan” builds on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and community input to develop a unique brand and implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today.

The next step in the planning process is interviewing local stakeholders, providing public outreach, and reviewing past and current planning efforts. This determines where you want to go as a community.

The third step involves research, feasibility and market analysis, and determining your brand - what you are or hope to be known for.

Then comes the “development” portion of the plan or the “how to get there” program: determining what product development initiatives need to be undertaken to reinforce and grow the brand. This also includes defining the roles of the various local organizations. Brand-building takes a village - everyone pulling in the same direction, each with its own “to do list.”

Finally, there’s the detailed marketing plan: how and when you will tell the world who you are and what makes you special: the place to live, work and play.

This Branding, Development & Marketing Plan should be an “action plan” as opposed to a “strategic plan.” You want a to do list, by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

For every recommendation the following elements should be detailed:

1. A brief description of the recommendation

2. Who would be charged with implementation

3. When it would be implemented

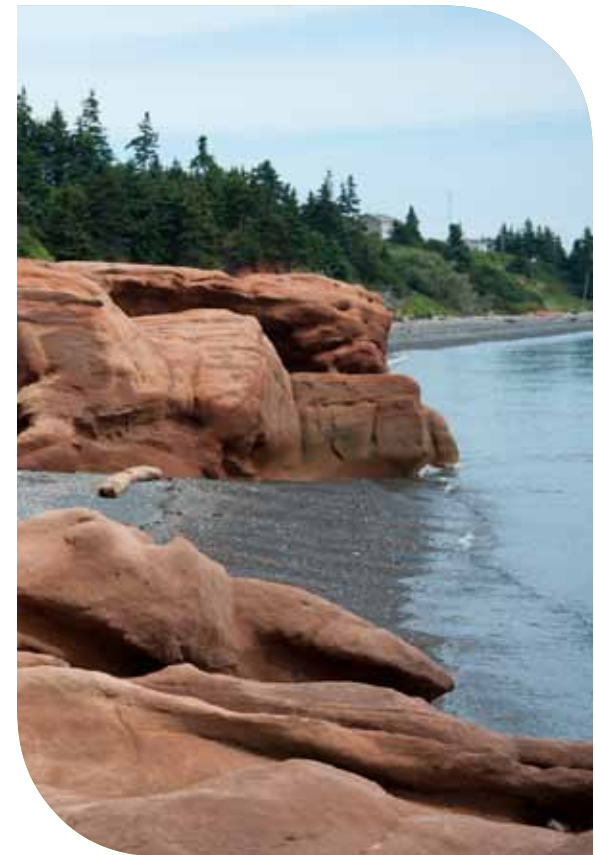
4. How much it will cost

5. Where the money will come from

6. The rationale for making the recommendation

The recommendations should provide all the necessary steps for your region to be successful in attaining its goals of a more diverse economy with an enhanced tourism industry and to become a more attractive and enjoyable area for both visitors and citizens.

If you move forward with the development of the Action Plan and hire outside services, always hire the most qualified team you can find (issue a request for Statement of Qualifications), then negotiate the scope of work and cost with them. If you are not able to reach an agreement, then move to number two on your list. A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together to enhance the region, building its unique image in the minds of visitors and residents alike. The result of your efforts will be a prosperous, enjoyable environment in which to live, work, and visit.





Findings & Suggestions

Tourism is an Economic Development Activity

The object is to have people come, spend money, then go home. The whole idea is to import more cash than you export.

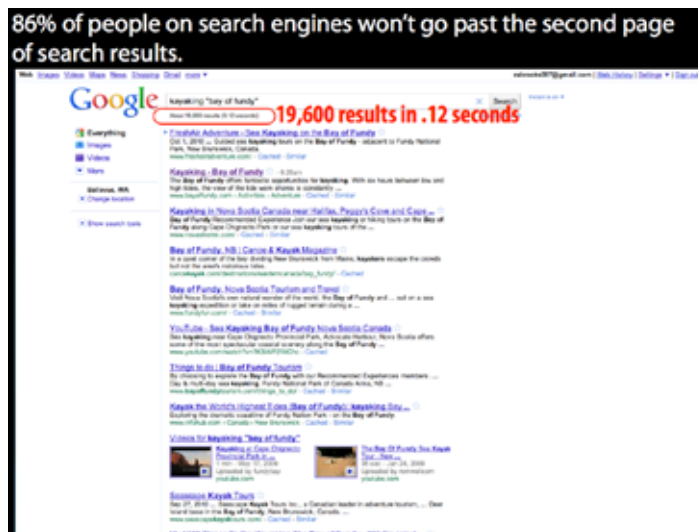
90% of tourism industry businesses are small business.

Two Main Ingredients of Change for Travel

1. The Internet has Changed Everything

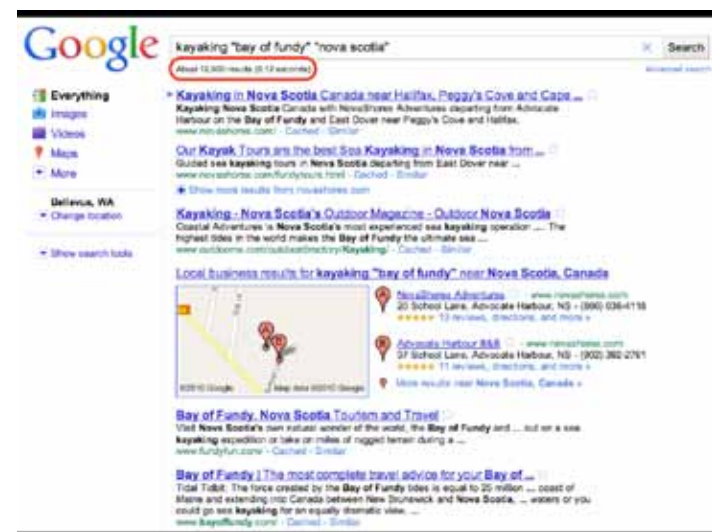
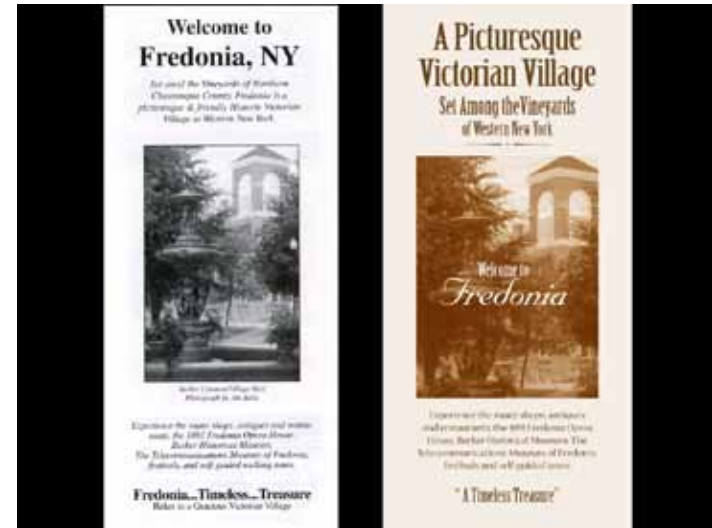
- 75% of Canadian households now have internet access.
- 90% access the web at work, school, local library, etc.
- 94% use the internet to decide where to travel, where to live, where to work, where to establish a business.
- 70% are frustrated with travel planning on the web. They have a hard time finding the information needed to plan their trip.

People search first for the activity, then the general location. Location is always second to the "primary draw" such as "Kayaking Bay of Fundy." Kayaking first - the activity - the




the general location, "Bay of Fundy."

People want experiences - note the brochure for Fredonia NY (top right). Which one catches your attention? The one



on the right, of course. It promotes the experience first; the experience of spending a day in a picturesque Victorian village set among vineyards. Then it tells you the location: Fredonia. The experience creates a picture in the mind of the prospect.


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[illegible]

Because of the internet, the playing field has been leveled. Every place has the same opportunity to be on the first page of search results - every place has the ability to reach millions of people.

A search for “kayaking Bay of Fundy” yields 19,600 results (opposite page bottom left). Since most people won’t go past the first page of search results, it’s critical to be on that first page. Nearly 88% of people using search engines never go past the second page of search results.

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Suggestion: The internet should be your top marketing priority, yet 88% of community-based promotional organizations spend more on printed materials than on the web. They have it backwards. If you want new businesses, residents or visitors, it starts in front of a computer screen.

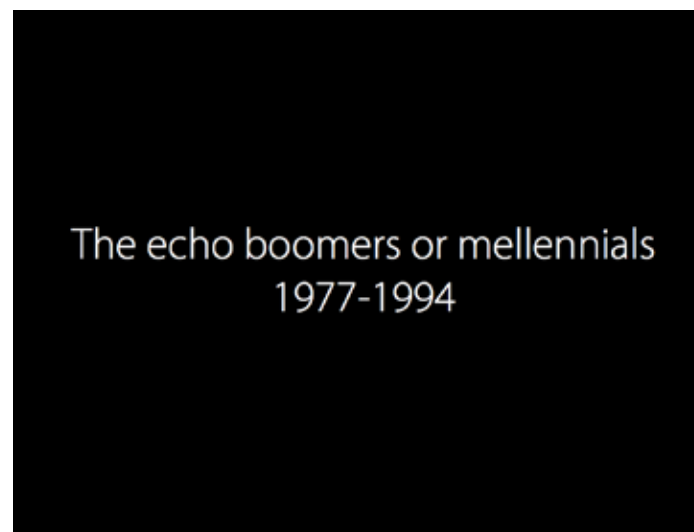
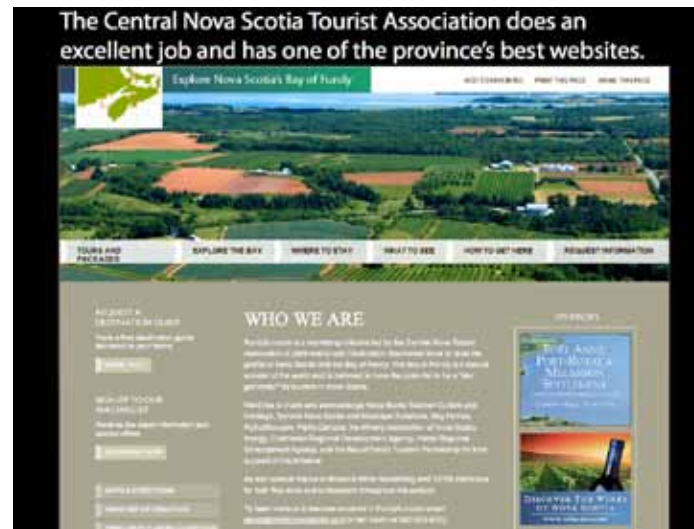
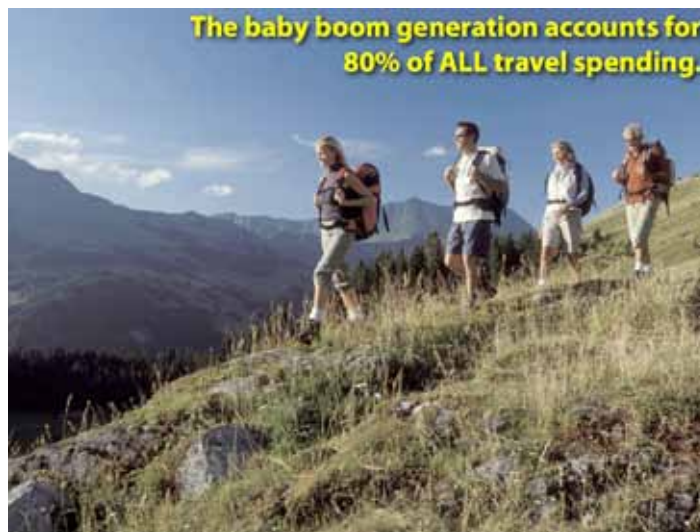
We found that the Central Nova Scotia Tourist Association's website, www.fundyfun.com, is excellent. Good job!

2. The Travel Demographic is Changing

The baby boom generation, those born between 1946 and 1964, accounts for 80% of ALL travel spending.

Baby boomers control 70% of North America's wealth, and travel is of top importance to them. They are interested in:

- Culinary tourism: Visiting chefs, restaurants, education
- Art: Artists in action, learning new hobbies, education
- Ethnic events: European, Scandinavian, Cajun, Indian
- Home & Garden: Education, training, garden tours
- Public markets, farmers markets



EXPERIENCES EMBRACED BY ECHO BOOMERS

- **Culinary** tourism: Visiting chefs, restaurants, education
- **Art**: Artists in action, learning new hobbies, education
- **Ethnic** events: European, Scandinavian, Cajun, Indian
- Public **markets** - add entertainment
- This is the age of third places.

The "First Place" is the place we live. Home.



The Echo Boomers (the children of the baby boomers) are interested in many of the same things (top left), with the addition of entertainment.

DDI surveyed 400 successful communities, and one thing really stood out: The towns with "third places" were considerably more successful than those without.

Successful "third places" attract people because, besides being beautiful spaces, they're full of life and activity. There's things to do. People of all ages want those "third places" now more than ever.

A top priority should be to create "gathering spaces" in a pedestrian friendly setting - places where people like to congregate because they can be comfortable in attractive surroundings, there's a focal point and things to do.

The heart and soul of every community, besides its people, is its downtown. If locals won't "hang out" in your downtown, neither will visitors.

The "Second Place" is the place we work



The "Third Place" is the place we go to hang out. Downtowns are back. Bring yours to life.



Nova Scotia towns that do a good job of creating third places include:

- Halifax (waterfront, Argyle Street dining district)
- Mahone Bay
- Lunenburg
- Baddeck
- Wolfville

What makes a good "Third Place"?

- Evening hour activities - 70% of all consumer spending takes place after 6:00 pm
- Shopping and dining - critical mass of like businesses grouped together
- Gathering areas - plazas
- Activities and entertainment

Suggestion: Both baby boomers and echo boomers have a lot in common (top right). Take advantage of this and meet their needs: Provide specific information about activities; post videos, review photos on your websites; create gathering places, and bring them to life with activities and entertainment!

Downtown areas are crucial partners in your tourism efforts. Visitors like to spend the night where there are things to do after 6 pm.



The challenge: Competition has never been more fierce.

The big question visitors ask: What do you have that I can't get (or do) closer to home? Whatever it is that sets you apart, hang

CORE ATTRIBUTES of both groups

- Independent with high expectations
- Want specifics, not generalities. Think activities, not places.
- They are moving into downtowns - the hub of activity.
- They look for videos, photos, third-party reviews. Trip Advisor.

The art of setting yourself apart from everyone else



your hat on that. Communities are being forced to specialize - to be known for something specific - in order to stand out from the competition. The days of generic "all things to all people" marketing are over.

1
You MUST jettison the generic

97%
of **all** community-based
marketing is ineffective.



The Five Things You Need to Do to Win in this competitive climate.

Jettison the Generic

We are exposed to nearly 1,200 marketing messages a day. We ignore everything that doesn't directly appeal to us. This has created a situation where 97% of ALL community-based marketing is ineffective.

Don't try to be all things to all people. Don't try to have "something for everyone." People are looking for something specific that appeals to them.

In your marketing materials, if you can replace the name of your community with any other community, and the message still rings true, then it's too generic, and you're losing sales.

Does this ad (bottom right) make you want to go to Parkdale? Could this text be written about any place in Nova Scotia? Actually, it wasn't written for Parkdale - it was written for Nelson, BC. It's so generic, and ineffective, that it could be about anyplace in just about every province. If it can fit anyone - toss it and start over.

Suggestion: Promote your primary lure. Find your niche, and promote it like crazy.

Saskatoon (top left) doesn't try to target everyone with their marketing efforts - they want to appeal to their niche - hunters. It's effective!

We worked in the Kootenay Rockies area of B.C., assessing a series of towns, and asked our secret shoppers to request marketing materials from them. They received five pounds of materials (top right and bottom left).

After they looked through all the materials, we asked them if they would make a special trip to the Kootenays. They all said no. The materials all promoted the "outdoor recreation"/"beautiful vistas" and "something for everyone." Our secret shoppers could get all that closer to home. Nothing stood out as making them different or special.

Then we showed them a magazine article (bottom right) about the six hot springs, all located in the area. After reading the article, nearly all of our secret shoppers planned trips to the Kootenays! The



collection of hot springs set the area apart - they couldn't get those closer to home, and they were very appealing.

When visitors go to the Kootenays for the hot springs, they also take advantage of the outdoor recreation, shop in the little



towns, and do all the other activities that are promoted in the marketing materials. The hot springs are the lure to entice people to visit. What sets you apart from everyone else and makes you worth a special trip? Hang your hat on that.

Towns:	The brand:
Castlegar	The provisioning headquarters
Creston	Farm Fresh Market Town
Nakusp	The hidden gem
Slocan	Hunting & Fishing
Nelson	Queen City of the Kootenays
Crawford Bay	Artisans village
Silverton	Hub of the Slocan Valley

NOTE: These brands are “sub-brands” or “diversionary brands” to the primary lure - the “Hot Springs Getaway.”

Avoid these words & phrases:

- Explore
- Discover
- Outdoor recreation
- Unlike anywhere else
- So much to see and do
- The four season destination
- Where the seasons come to life
- Historic downtown
- Center of it all
- Best kept secret
- We have it all
- Experience...
- Visit (name of town)
- Beauty & heritage
- Naturally fun
- Gateway
- Close to everywhere
- Right around the corner
- Your playground
- So much history
- Purely natural
- The place for all ages
- ...and so much more!
- Home away from home
- A slice of heaven
- It's all right here
- Recreation unlimited
- The perfect getaway
- The place for families
- Start your vacation here
- Recreational paradise
- Take a look!

For the Kootenay Rockies, their overall brand, based on their primary lure, is “The Hot Springs Getaway.” Each of the towns and communities set themselves apart with their own “sub-brand” (top left) based on their specialty. Nelson is the “Queen City” because it has nightlife and entertainment.

Narrow your focus, and promote the primary lure. The narrower your focus, the stronger your success will be.

Many destination marketing organizations resist promoting their primary lure and insist on marketing themselves as having “something for everyone.” Membership organizations want to make sure all their members are happy and “included” in the marketing, so they become as generic - and mediocre - as possible. Nearly everyone claims to have something for everyone - so who cares? When your marketing messages are generic, no one benefits - it's a recipe for ultimate failure. When you promote your primary lure, everyone wins.

Avoid generic, overused words and phrases - these don't set you apart at all (top right).

A few Central Nova Scotia tag lines:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Town, Big Heart • Your Route to World Class Attractions • Explore the World's Highest Tides • Discover [name of county] • Discover [name of community] • Discover [name of attraction] • Gateway to Nova Scotia • Lot's to see and do! • From our mining past to a greener future • Seaspray, Sunshine & Sandcastles • A place to relax and have some fun • Phenomenal! • Best kept secret • Four Seasons Retreat • You will find it all here! • The hub of Nova Scotia

Do any of these taglines (bottom left), which we found used in central Nova Scotia, make you want to go there? Even “Explore the world's highest tides” is too generic - the Bay of Fundy is

You **MUST**
jettison
the
generic

huge, and many communities in two provinces can claim to have the worlds highest tides. So why should we visit your area of the Bay over other places and over New Brunswick?

Jettison the generic. Jettison means to throw goods overboard to lighten a ship. Generic means general, not specific.

Suggestion: Look at your taglines and logos. Look at your brochures and website. Read your introductory text. If it can fit anyone, toss it and start over.

This list (top left) of commonly promoted assets could be from just about anywhere. Can you tell which of the towns promote which assets? Probably not. That's the problem - everyone promotes the same list. You need to promote that which makes you truly unique.

Give the province something specific to market - not just the same old lists!

It's not hard to come up with the unique experiences people can find in Nova Scotia (top right). See what each of these communities are known for?

The name of your community needs to be synonymous with your brand - with what you are known for. For example, Halls Harbour and the lobster pound.

We have:	What town is this?
• An historic downtown	Tidnish
• Fine restaurants	Amherst
• A variety of lodging options	Parrsboro
• Theater and/or music	Yarmouth
• Specialty shopping	Cape George
• Whale watching	Lunenburg
• Galleries, antiques	Mahone Bay
• Museums	Windsor
• Lakes, rivers or beach nearby	Pictou
• Trails and trail systems	Antigonish
• Hiking and biking	Dingwall Harbour
• Special events	Sydney
• Provincial park nearby	Ingonish
• Camping	Cape Canso
• Fishing	Halifax/Dartmouth
• Golf	Cape Chignecto
• Kayaking, canoeing	
• Outdoor recreation	



To succeed, you must have product - activities. Things to do, not just things to look at, not just ambiance, not just amenities, not just a pretty logo or clever slogan. The product must support the brand.

Pick your passion. You'll find it in Nova Scotia

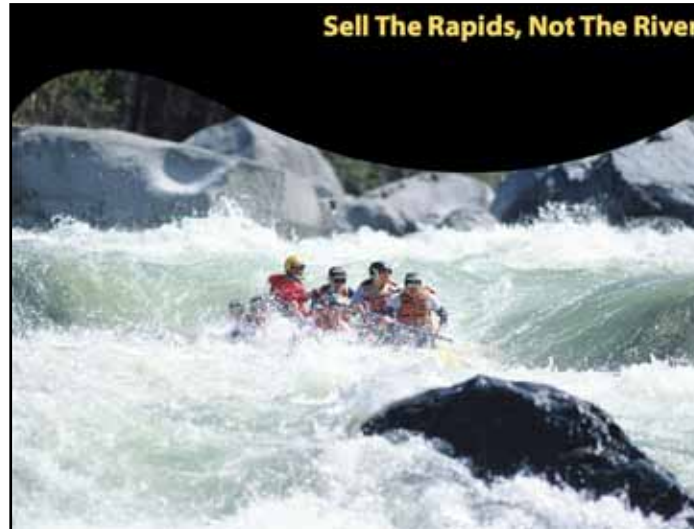
Acadian culture	Cheticamp, Grand Pre Historic Site
Artists in action, galleries	Ingonish Art Trail - Cape Breton
Cape Breton sound (music)	Cabot Trail - Baddeck
Dining & entertainment	Halifax
Farm experience	Ross Farm - New Ross
Fossils	Joggins
French culture/history	Louisbourg
Hidden Gem (art)	Bear River
Hiking	Skyline Trail, Cape Split
Kayaking	Bluenose Coast, Cape Chignecto
Lighthouses	Peggy's Cove, Cape d'Or...
Lobster meal	Halls Harbour
Nova Scotia history	Annapolis Royal
Scallops	Digby
Tidal bore rafting	Maitland
Village shopping destination	Mahone Bay
Whale watching	Digby Neck - Westport
Wineries	The Wolfville/Grand Pre area
World Heritage Site	Lunenburg, Joggins Fossil Cliffs

Product development includes:

- Wayfinding signage (connecting the dots)
- Kayak tours, rentals, whale watching - activity vendors
- Restaurants: breakfast, lunch AND dinner
- Provisioning shops
- Gathering places & life after 6:00
- Things to do that are immersive (hands on)
- Educational opportunities
- Parking, 24 information, public washrooms
- **Shoulder season activities**

Success revolves around experiences:
Based on activities
NOT things to look at.

Sell The Rapids, Not The River



Suggestion: Always promote the activity first, then the location, then the secondary activities, and then the ambiance. When you look at the white-water rafting photo (top right), you immediately focus on the people in the raft. It makes you imagine what it's like and provides an emotional response.: "Wow! That looks like fun!" or even "That looks scary!" It evokes emotion. If the photo just showed the river, it wouldn't spark your imagination nearly as much.



Don't these families look like they're having fun? (bottom left and right) You don't even need to see the entire lake or the entire waterslide to know that this place would be fun to visit. The power of photography is much greater when people doing activities are included.

One more time: these photos sell activities before they sell the location or amenities. We imagine ourselves in photos where we see other people. Scenic vistas only last a few minutes. Then what?

These photos (top left and right) show activities first, and the location and scenery is in the background. Don't they make you want to go there?

Having entertainment and activities in your downtown cores is a great way to attract more people and encourage them to spend time there. Asheville, NC encourages street performers and musicians (bottom photos). The entertainment makes downtown Asheville full of life, and people flock there. People want activities, and entertainment helps provide that.

Start with your weekends during the peak summer months: Friday and Saturday evenings, perhaps even Sunday until noon or so.



4
Politics is the killer
of any branding effort

This area needs it's own unique brand

Including a name:

- Cape Chignecto peninsula
- Fundy Upper Peninsula
- Nova Scotia's Golden Triangle (Amherst, Cape Chignecto, Portapique)

This does NOT mean you should start a whole new organization or another region.

This Parrsboro-Joggins area needs its own brand and its own name, besides the "Fundy Shore." The Bay of Fundy is so large, and so many communities promote themselves as being on the Bay of Fundy, that it isn't a unique designation. What does

5
You must "deliver on the promise"

Success revolves around being known for something specific. Because of that, not everyone in the community is going to like it. If you decide to focus your efforts on the fossil experience in Joggins, there will be people who'll say, "We have so much more than fossils ... we have hiking trails and a great cafe and some unique shops. I don't think we should brand ourselves around fossils. In fact, we have something for everyone."

A by-product of brands "for the people" is the committee that compromises and kills a potential brand home run. That's why you never see statues of committees in public parks; you see brave leaders.

There are only three killers of any branding effort:

- Local politics
- Lack of champions
- Lack of money

A brand is a promise - the promise of an experience. If Joggins' brand is about fossils, then visitors will expect to have a remarkable experience on the beach, in the interpretive center, and in the town that focuses on fossils.

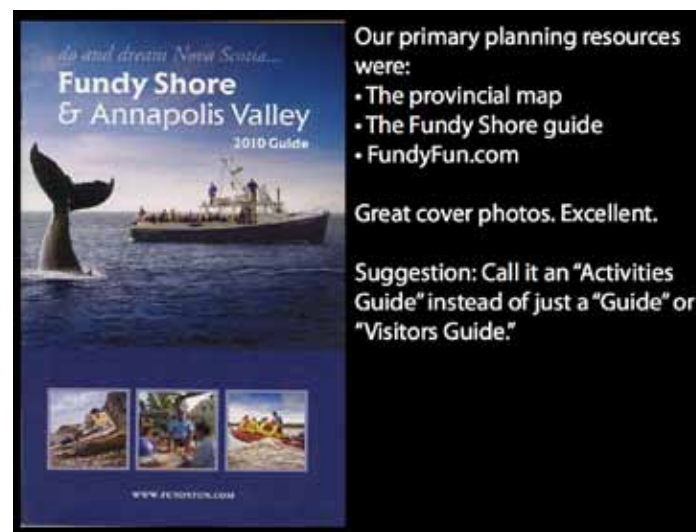


this area offer that is outstanding and unique?

Suggestion: *The Cape Chignecto peninsula*, perhaps? After all, Cape Chignecto is one of the provinces best gems.

We primarily used the Fundy Shore & Annapolis Valley 2010 Guide to help us in traveling the area. We loved how it included specific highlights - not-to-be-missed activities! Great job!

Other suggestions: Include additional specific information, like operating hours, downtown information (with photos), and itineraries.



- Other organizations, take note:
- Photography throughout is excellent. Always show people in activities.
- The Guide is organized by activities & includes seasonal information. Great job!
- This area (left) is the area we assessed on this trip.
- The biggest problem in Nova Scotia - **DECENT MAPS!** Develop some!

On virtually every trip to Nova Scotia our biggest challenge was getting a decent map with details, rural roadways (to some of your best hidden gems), and NO dark shading.

Suggestion: Consider adding another page about downtown areas within the region. The number one activity of visitors is shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting, and seeing photos of a downtown shopping and dining area will help pull visitors into the towns where there are typically more spending opportunities.

- "Top 5" approach is excellent.
- Suggestions:
 - 1) On photos (or in a caption) tell us where we can get more info.
 - 2) Add open hours where possible.
 - 3) Add info about downtown areas with photos.
 - 4) Itineraries!

Suggestions:

- 1) Replace the map with something more usable, or do several smaller-area maps.
- 2) Add more practical information useful to visitors.

Suggestion: Avoid marketing counties. Have you ever gone anywhere because it was a county? “The Cape Chignecto Peninsula” sounds better.

One of our greatest, continuing challenges was finding a good, usable map. There was either no detail at all (top right) or the map's detail was so tiny it was impossible to read without a magnifying glass (the provincial maps).

Suggestion: Encourage visitors to explore more than just the highways. Provide some maps that show details including smaller scenic drives and that are easy to read. Some of the best of what the province has to offer are off the beaten path.

This small Parrsboro brochure (bottom left) is nicely produced and has a very good map of the town. It lists some of the town's amenities, describes its location, and gives a brief history and overview of some of the things a visitor could see in the area. But it doesn't really provide us with a reason to visit. Promote specifics - what great restaurants are in town; what are some not-to-be-missed attractions. Show photos of people downtown having a great time. Start with WHY we should visit, before you simply tell us what's there. "Small Town, Big Heart" could fit any one of 200 other towns in Nova Scotia and doesn't really say anything



As a general information piece about the history and background of the county, it's fine. As a visitor's guide it doesn't have much practical information and very few specifics.

Always sell the experience more than facts and figures.



Descriptions are good, but the map presents a great opportunity for more detail.

The general perception is that you don't want people to ever leave the primary highways to explore the area.

Why?



Suggestions:

- 1) We are interested in people more than buildings, structures or empty beaches. Always show people enjoying activities.
- 2) Jettison the Generic. Tell us WHY we should visit, not just who you are (Small Town. Big Heart.) What makes you worth a special trip?

about Parrsboro - what it is that sets you apart. It doesn't bring a picture to mind - what to expect once we arrive.



3) Avoid lists. Showcase your best restaurants, not just that you have eight (we never could find that many).

4) Once again, focus on activities, not buildings and structures.



This was the best of the brochures we acquired. If we would have had the time, we would have done this - for sure.

Excellent job.

We saw in a brochure a "one of a kind shop" at Bass River, so we started our tour there. Stop #1.



Visitors want specifics, not generalities. The easier you make it, the more likely you'll close the sale.



Suggestion: Provide itineraries. (sample, top right) Make it easy for people to plan a trip by giving them specific things to do, places to visit, places to eat, and what to expect. Provide itineraries for families, couples, and friends. Develop one-day, two-day, and three-day itineraries.

When we visited the region, we put together our own itinerary, using the many different brochures and information we received (bottom right) but most visitors won't spend the time and effort we went through to create our own itinerary. As we drove through the region, we also kept a look-out for signs that would point us to any other not-to-be-missed sights.

On the following pages, we'll highlight (with stars) the places we saw and things to do that are definitely some of the region's "best-of" attractions. ALWAYS promote your "anchor tenants" - the best of what you have to offer. Everyone will benefit.

In one of the brochures we saw there was a "one-of-a-kind shop" in Bass River (bottom left).

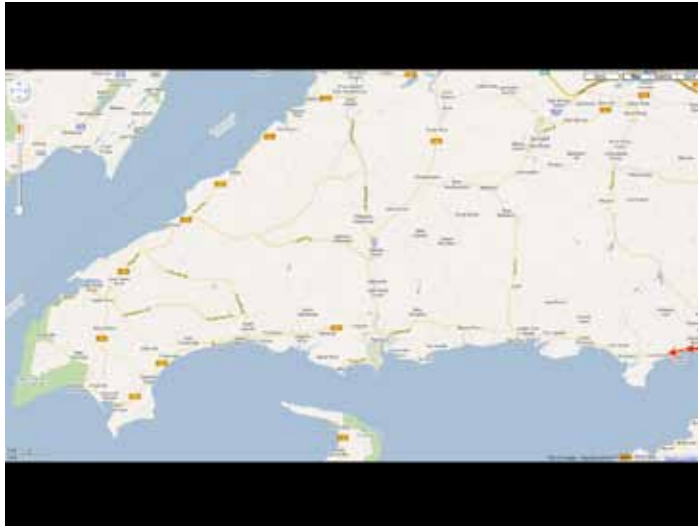


The Bass River General Store (top left) is an old-fashioned store with an eclectic mix of just about everything. Going up the old worn staircase is an experience in itself.

The Joy Laking Gallery looks like it's wonderful (bottom right). The brochure was gorgeous and made us want to go there.

Suggestion: A number of galleries and artists' studios don't have specific open hours, but just say "open by chance." Sometimes that's unavoidable, but many visitors feel uncomfortable approaching if they aren't sure if it is, in fact, open. They feel like intruders. It would be better to have a flag or removable sign that says "Open - Come on in!" and put it out by the road when you DO want people to stop by.





We decided to see the Dutchman's Cheese Farm. Great signs. Looks like a great place for families with kids.



We continued traveling west along the highway (top left shows the route). The Dutchman's Cheese Farm is promoted in brochures, and their signs along the highway did a good job of making us want to visit.

As we approached and entered the farm (bottom photos), we thought it looked very run-down and we were disappointed in our first impressions. The highway signs seemed to oversell the actual attraction, starting at the gateways sign (bottom left).

Suggestion: Redevelop the sign. The landscaping is nice, but we were having doubts about the attraction.



The closer we got, the worse it looked. We walked through the grass and saw some animals in this dilapidated building.



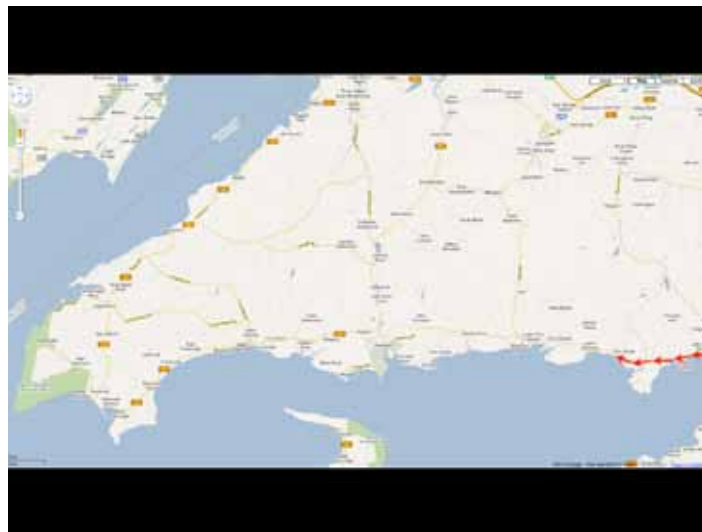
Inside the shop (top left) it was very nice, and the staff was pleasant and helpful. The cheese was great.

The sign outside (top right) promoting trails, gardens, animals and a cafe didn't tell us where they were - all we saw was the shop and a variety of un-welcoming outbuildings.

Suggestions: To become more of an attraction, consider cleaning up the grounds and landscaping. Keep the signs clean and fresh. If there are animals for visitors to see, make sure the barn area is well-maintained, and post directional signage to help visitors find the gardens, trails, animals, etc. The potential is here, but we couldn't really qualify it as a "best of" attraction.

As we continued on our way, we stopped into the Cobequid Interpretive Centre (bottom right) and talked to the staff about the Economy Falls Trail, which sounds like a beautiful hike.

... and we bought some cheese. The shop - for the most part - is very nice.



We never found the cafe, the trails, the gardens & more! Overall - a great place for cheese, but not ready for families or as an attraction.



Great job at the interpretive centre. Sounds like there are some great trails - one leading to a waterfall. Very nice and helpful.



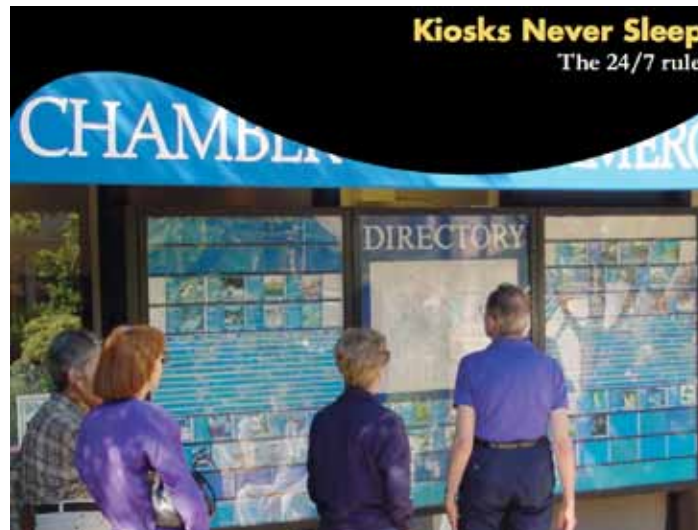
★ Suggestion: Add exterior brochure distribution. Definitely worth a stop.



Suggestion: Consider developing something along this line that can be placed throughout the area.

Perhaps two or three per year up to about 20 of them.

Make sure they include brochure distribution.



The interpretive center (top left) had some very nice displays about the area, and the staff was very friendly and helpful.

Suggestion: Be sure to include outdoor brochure holders.

Visitors don't just travel during business hours, so it's critical to provide visitor information around the clock and seven days a week. Provide outdoor brochure holders so visitors are able to take information with them.

These examples of outdoor visitor information are from Ashland, Oregon (top right); Teton Valley, ID (bottom left); and Moses Lake, WA (bottom right). The one in Moses Lake doesn't include brochure distribution, but it does show a number of "must see" attractions in the area.

This visitor information kiosk in Kingsport, TN (top two photos) is built to reflect the local architecture. It has a weather-proof brochure holder (top right). There is a \$5 per month charge to include your brochure, and that fee pays for maintenance, keeping it stocked, and to help fund construction of the next kiosk.



The gazebo (bottom left) was built by volunteers from a kit for Beatty, Nevada. A local craftsman was hired to build the information display and brochure holders inside the gazebo.



A very good place to post visitor information is at public washrooms. This display and the brochure holder (bottom right) are on public washrooms in Gig Harbor, WA.



Visitor information centers (top right and left) can offer the information visitors need 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Ideally, place visitor information kiosks at different locations throughout the region. The more that travelers see there is to do, the longer they will stay and the more money they will spend. Every site should cross-sell to other sites, attractions and amenities. In this example they actually sell ad-space next to the brochure holders. That funding keeps it stocked and maintained.

★ Good job here. Nice quaint little store.



Time for lunch! So far, we've used up half a day (coming from Halifax).



The Glooscap Country Bazaar was a great little shop. They do a good job of getting your attention, with the A-board sign and large flag. Very inviting!

As we continued down the road (bottom right), we decided to stop for lunch.

Mo's Cafe is one of the "Top 5 Locals' Picks" from our Guide, so we decided to stop in for lunch (top left). It did look like a favorite spot for locals - it was busy! The food and service were good.

After lunch we headed to Parrsboro, the largest town in the area, and where we had booked our lodging for the week.

Gateways into town provide a sense of arrival and should increase the perceived value of the destination. When visitors see a "welcome" sign for a community, they tend to immediately form a judgment of the community based on the gateway sign and the area surrounding it. Gateways should always be placed where it creates a first, best impression - not necessarily at the city limits.

Parrsboro's gateway sign is attractive and quaint, but the sign clutter and surrounding area doesn't provide a good impression. Instead you're greeted with a lot of sign clutter.

Suggestion: Remove seven of the signs! Keep the weeds cut down and consider a small landscaping project - maybe a

We decided to eat at Mo's Cafe, which was good. Good job with the flags, half-barrels. Suggestion: Add hanging baskets - in season.

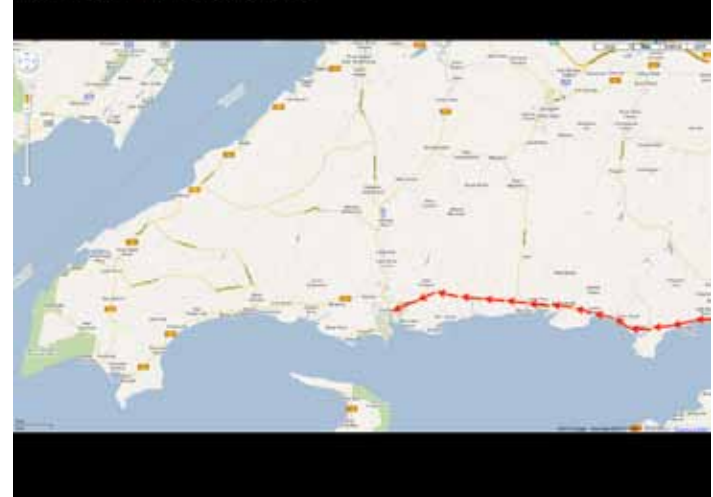


This is the community's primary gateway. Not a good first impression. Suggestion: Remove 7 signs.



planter box beneath the welcome sign to finish it off. What you see after these "welcome" signs is very discouraging and gave us no reason to even venture into Parrsboro.

Time to head into Parrsboro.



Always put your gateway signs where you'll make the first, best impression. This is what you see right after the welcome sign.



Suggestion: Work with these property owners on a clean-up program, or on installing some cedar fencing along here.



We started having second thoughts on whether this would be the right place to stay as our hub community.



What's your first impression of Parrsboro? Suggestion: Move the gateway sign to another location closer to town.



Suggestion: Some cedar fencing and street trees - along with some weed removal - would hide the worst eyesores in this entire region.



The commercial area immediately following Parrsboro's welcome sign gives a very, very poor first impression of the town.

Suggestion: Consider moving the sign to a location AFTER the commercial area. Another alternative is to change the sign to read "Parrsboro welcomes you - ahead 2 k/m." In essence this says "don't judge us yet, you still have two kilometers to go." Visitors almost always judge the book by the cover.

Suggestion: Screen unsightly commercial areas that are along the highway with cedar fencing and shrubs or trees. Keep the weeds cut or removed.

This is one of the most unsightly entrance areas to any community in the province. We understand that this is an industrial area, but even so, it can be screened or have the welcome and gateway signs positioned AFTER people are through this area. Once again, always put your gateway signs where you will make the first, best impression.

Granny's (top left) looks like a nice place.

Suggestion: Remember to keep the weeds cut next to the highway - that's the first thing travelers see. Add a few hanging baskets, or planters.

The wayfinding signs caught our attention (bottom left). If visitors end up frustrated while trying to find key attractions and amenities, many will simply say one word; "Next" - and they're gone. A comprehensive wayfinding system is very important for every community. Parrsboro is one of the very, very few communities that actually went to the time and trouble to install wayfinding signs. Great job! These helped us immensely and we spent more time and money in Parrsboro as a result.

Suggestion: Drivers don't have time to read long lists on wayfinding signs, so never put more than five items on any one sign.

Good signage, window boxes. Suggestion: Also manage the weeds along the highway - your first impression. Instead of "open daily" post your hours and just "open."



We decided to set up our "base camp" in Parrsboro. It seemed to have the largest selection of lodging options, food, gas, etc.



We were thrilled to see actual "wayfinding" signs in Parrsboro.

Suggestion: Never post more than five items on a directional sign.

- Lodging
- Attractions
- Information
- Golf course
- Beaches

Real Men Don't Ask For Directions
The rule of wayfinding





A wayfinding system includes:

- Vehicular directional signage
- Pedestrian wayfinding
- Pole banners, by town, often by season
- Visitor and downtown information
- Gateways and entry points

Be sure your wayfinding signs are large enough to be spotted and easy to read. General rule of thumb: 1 inch tall lettering for every 12 feet of viewing distance. This is as much a science as it is an art.



Oak Harbor, WA, (top left and right) has developed an effective system with blue signs for community services and gray signs for visitor amenities and attractions. They have a nautical theme reflecting the harbor brand.

Other examples of good community wayfinding signs:

- Modesto, CA (bottom left)
- The Woodlands, TX (bottom right)

Using the “Key” signs for attractions is a great idea and could work very well, but the system needs to post more information and to have better follow-through.

Suggestion: Work with the Province to update the “Key” sign system, so that each sign includes enough information to help visitors:

- 1) The key stating an attraction
- 2) Name of the attraction
- 3) Directional arrow
- 4) Distance

Only use an Open or Closed sign if its put up and taken down on a daily basis.

- 5) Operating hours (if consistent)

The key system is a good one, but is - for the most part- very poorly maintained and very few signs are complete with all four elements. This should be a top tourism priority for the province.



Is the telephone pole the attraction? How's this sign working for you? Have a person spend six months inventorying these.



We had some time before check-in, so we decided to do one of these loop tours, perhaps around an attraction. Only 11 km.



The Key system definitely needs work. As it is, it leads to a lot of visitor frustration.

There's room for improvement with other signage as well. The "loop" sign (top right) typically shows that there is a loop you can drive around. In fact, it's a dead end road.

Likewise, this cryptic sign should be replaced with a "dead end" sign (example, bottom right). Sometimes the graphics lead to confusion!

Hmmm. Where is this taking us? We hope there's something out here. Should be a nice scenic loop tour.



Suggestion: Change this to "dead end" or change the sign graphic.



The Fundy Geological Museum looks like a wonderful attraction, and it is promoted as one of the top attractions in the region (top left and right). We were disappointed that it was closed for renovations - particularly during the peak tourist season.

The unique geology and abundance of fossils are features that really set the region apart from the rest of Nova Scotia. The museum is an important part of that and ties all those features together, providing visitors with an introduction to the region's geological past and an invitation to stay and explore the area.

The museum also creates a terrific "bookend" between Parrsboro and Joggins - getting thousands of travelers to take the shore route between the two communities, increasing local spending.

We found the Fundy Geological Museum. Suggestion: Consider ground cover so we can read the lower parts of the sign. Or raise it.



Suggestion: Add brochure distribution. Make your information work 24/7.

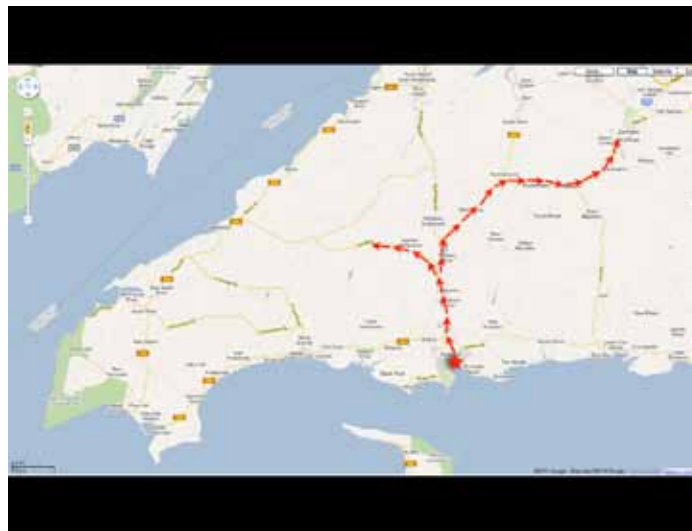
A great visitor information center. But the interpretive center was closed for remodeling - in the middle of your peak season????!!



The Parrsboro Mansion was the highest rated, was reasonably priced so we stayed here.



Locals said this was “the” place to eat in Parrsboro. Good food, exceptionally slow service. They sent people home early.



We stayed in Parrsboro and ate at several restaurants while there - a couple of them had terrific food (top left). Unfortunately, visitors were coming back into Parrsboro at around 7 pm after spending the day exploring the area, yet the restaurant sent some staff home because business was slow at 6:30. We met many Europeans, who typically eat at 9:00 pm. Restaurants need to learn to stay open later, particularly during the peak season months.

On the way to Springhill, we passed the Sunshine Inn. These folks do a terrific job. It's spotless, well maintained, very nice.



The Sunshine Inn was spotless, exceptionally well-maintained, had oodles of curb appeal and looked very nice. It was also pretty busy - a sure sign that beautification and curb appeal do translate to increased sales. Great job.

Love the flowers, a paved parking area, outdoor seating...



As we explored the region, we drove around the peninsula, first heading out Highway 2 towards Springhill. It was a very pleasant drive.

With lodging facilities, as well as restaurants, golf courses, and wineries, 70% of new sales are based on curb appeal. For motels, it's critically important that the landscaping and building are well-maintained and attractive. Who would want to spend the night in a motel that looked bad? The Sunshine Inn (bottom left and right) does a great job of looking attractive and appealing. Good job! Other motels, take note!

When we got to Springhill, we saw the miners' museum, and it didn't look as though it was open.

Suggestion: Always post your hours so it's obvious you're open, or at least showcases WHEN you enter. Most visitors won't stop if they're not sure.

From the street it's hard to tell where you go in, and there are no signs showing operating hours. So we wandered outside. While we were looking around, we met Russ who told us where to start our guided tour.

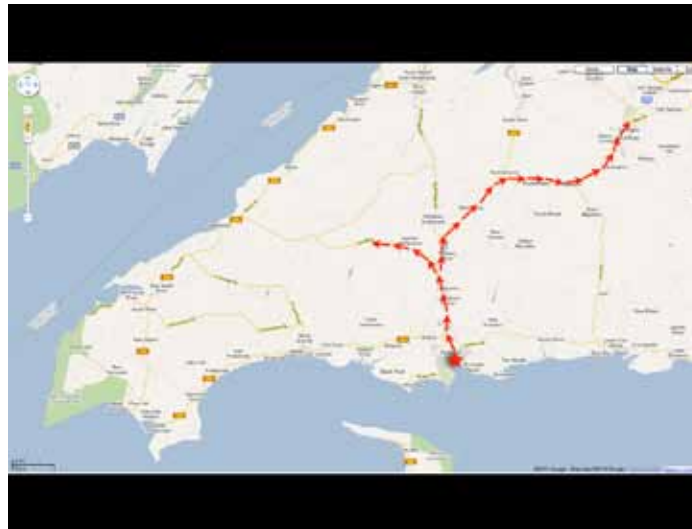
The museum displays (top right) told the stories about the mining disasters, and we became fascinated. We had no idea there was a tour of an actual mine, so when we found out, we decided to go along.

We were hesitant, but the mining tour was incredible. It brought to life the experience of working in the mines, and we will never forget it. This tour is worth a special drive from Halifax and is a not-to-be-missed attraction. And it's something we'd actually do a second time. It was surprisingly good. Far better than we expected.



On the way out we handed in our number - and were told who we were during the mine disaster. This is a MUST SEE experience.

8 ★★

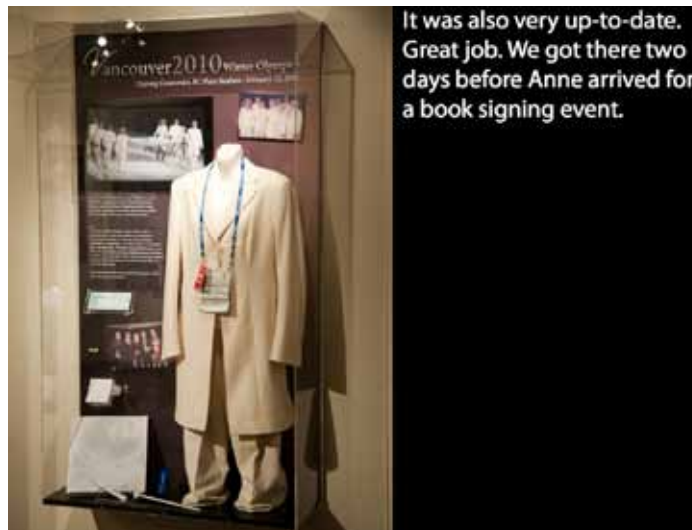


We also stopped into the Anne Murray Centre in Springhill (bottom left and right). It was excellent! This is one of the very best centres featuring a music star that we've ever seen. It's first class all the way and is worth a visit even if you're not a big Anne Murray fan.

Springhill has two very good attractions and they should be included in the "Cape Chignecto Peninsula" marketing efforts. By adding Springhill to the mix, you can make the area a true "loop tour" and it will add another day to any visitor's extended stay in the area.

While in Springhill we stopped into the Anne Murray Centre.

9 ★★

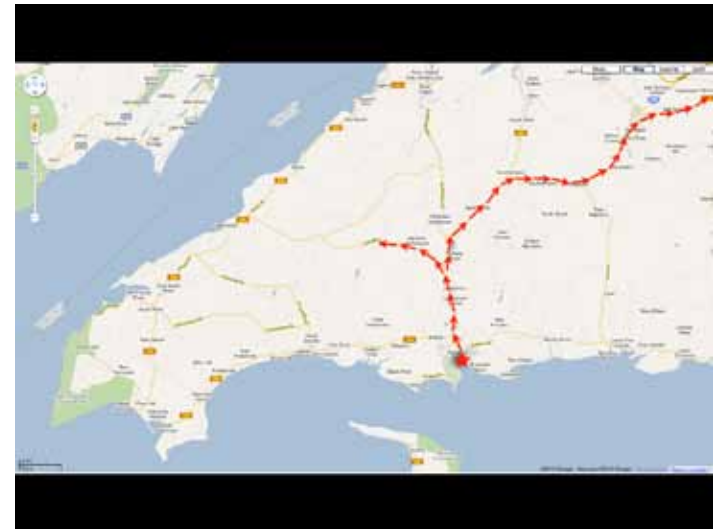


It was also very up-to-date. Great job. We got there two days before Anne arrived for a book signing event.

We drove through downtown Springhill, but we didn't see anything else that was really appealing to visitors. So we continued on our way out to Joggins.

The maps we had weren't detailed and directional signage was sparse, so we ended up missing our turn to Joggins (bottom left), and had to turn around and go back.

We didn't see much else to do in Springhill, so we decided to head to Joggins.





We saw the sign for the Maccan Tidal Wetlands Park, but passed it to get to Joggins before the tide came in.



On our way, we approached the Heritage Models Folk Art Museum and the Maccan Tidal Wetlands Park, but we knew the tide was coming in and wanted to get to Joggins.

Neither of these attractions were included in the Guide, so we didn't know what they were about or whether or not they were worth stopping for.

Suggestion: Add to the signage the activity or activities (if any) i.e. hiking trails, viewing areas, boardwalks, etc.

This might be a good itinerary "Optional Stop" but we lost time getting lost (no maps) so we passed it.



The maps can be placed inside the park next to parking areas, rather than along the roadway where there's no real place to pull over and get out to review the signage.

We entered Joggins from the east, so we arrived at the visitor information center before we saw the beach and interpretive center.

The VIC (bottom left) was very nice, and the staff very helpful and had lots of information about the tides, the fossils, and where to eat while in the area.

Suggestion: The Interpretive Center and accompanying signage are in need of paint and exterior maintenance. Both are looking rather tired. When Joggins receives its UNESCO status, it will be important that the visitor center live up to the "world class" designation.

The town of Joggins was attractive (bottom right), but didn't seem to have any place for a visitor to spend time and money, other than in the interpretive center.

We also started to see these signs, which are exceptional and really showcase the area. Suggestion: Mow the grass every few weeks.



A good visitor information center in a good location. Nice staff. Since we came in the "back way" we needed directions.



We didn't get a chance to drive these roads - but saw nothing in the literature showcasing anything in these rural areas.



A cute little town, but we didn't see a lot of opportunity for spending time or money in town.



Although we did note the marketing for Advocate Harbour.
Suggestion: "Restaurants. Lodging. Shopping. Attractions."



This is a fantastic "book end" to the Cape d'Or experience and one of your key "anchor" attractions.



It looks like visitors are being encouraged to head over to Advocate Harbour (top left) for their restaurants and shopping - 35 kilometers away.

Suggestion: Never more than five lines on any one sign. This sign includes 12 lines of text. Instead of listing every business, list the categories: Restaurants, Shops & Galleries, Lodging, and then Attractions. Include a brochure holder that would list the individual businesses, a teaser paragraph about each, and operating days and hours.

The theater does an excellent job telling the story - in a way that's captivating for both adults and kids.



Interpretive guides provide tours. They are very good.



It was about 11:30 before we arrived at the Fossil Cliffs. The entrance sign is very nice.

Joggins Fossil Cliffs and the interpretive center are outstanding, right down to the LEED certified construction and maintenance. We loved the walk through time as you descend down the steps to the beach.

The guides on the beach are excellent too. This is definitely a top "must visit" attraction in the region!

The whole experience at the Fossil Cliffs was fascinating and a lot of fun. This is an outstanding experience for people of any age. Unfortunately, we arrived about an hour before the beach was closed due to incoming tides, but we did have enough time to visit with guides and other visitors.

We had lunch at the cafe, which turned out to be very good. The seafood chowder was terrific.

As you develop itineraries, visitors should plan on spending three to four hours at the site, which will translate to increased spending (meals, drinks, gifts, etc.)



A terrific hands-on experience. Visitors should plan on staying two to three hours - and plan around the tides.



Our guide was great, though wasn't too sure why we were taking pictures of her instead of the fossils.



A real Nova Scotia gem. We also had lunch at the cafe - great seafood chowder. Very, very good staffing at the Centre.



We then headed down the coast.



The coastal drive between Joggins all the way to Cape Chignecto Provincial Park is an attraction in itself.



We continued our “loop” drive, heading southwest down the coast.

Suggestion: The drive is beautiful, and can be promoted as part of the experience - an attraction in itself (top right).

Cape Chignecto is a top-notch park (bottom left and right) and a great attraction. The fact that it is community-run is a real testament to the people in this area.

Even for non-hikers, this is a must-stop attraction and spending an hour here (plus time for those who want to hike the trails) is well worth the stop.

The fact that the provincial park is community managed is a testament to how much people care for this park. It's magnificent.



Nice information centre, good people, nice gift shop.



The beach should be promoted for its driftwood, and for its very unusual rock formations (top left). They really set this beach apart from others in the province.

Suggestion: The Guide includes the kayaking as one of the top five adventures in the region, and that's wonderful. Promote Cape Chignecto Provincial Park for its outstanding beaches as well as for the kayaking. Can we rent a kayak somewhere? Are there guide services here locally?

On to Cape d'Or, and on the way we passed the Wild Caraway (bottom right). The description in the Guide makes this restaurant sound like one not-to-be-missed, so we're sorry our timing didn't work out so that we could sample their fare. It looks like a very nice place and local residents raved about the exceptional food.

Suggestion: The restaurant should be featured in the Taste of Nova Scotia guide, which (if we remember right) didn't include any eateries in this area of the province.

Suggestion: We spent an hour at the park, but it's worth a return visit for the hiking and exploring (add half a day to the itinerary).



From Cape Chignecto, we headed to Cape d'Or.



We did pass a museum - we'll check this out when we concentrate on Parrsboro.



The Wild Caraway was highly touted, but it was closed on the day we were coming through, so we missed it. An "anchor tenant."



These signs are terrific. Not too sure what or where the “Eco Tour” is or goes.



Suggestion: These “eco tour” signs need to be removed. We could find no maps, no information, some are missing, all are in poor condition. They don't really seem to serve a purpose.



Cape d'Or. Great little visitor center - with a broken washroom door. (I had to spring Jane from her cell). A stunning spot.



Wow! One of the province's Must See destinations. The other “book end” to the Joggins Fossil Cliffs. Plan on two hours here.



The Cape d'Or signs are very nice - the photo is stunning (top left). And the actual site lives up to it! Cape d'Or is a fantastic spot and is one of Nova Scotia's iconic sites alongside the Peggy's Cove lighthouse.

As we assessed the region, we saw many of these Fundy Shore Ecotour signs (bottom left). We never saw any promotional literature about the Ecotour, and the signs are suffering from lack of maintenance.

Suggestion: Remove the signs. They don't seem to perform any function, and they've become an eyesore rather than a helpful icon or resource.

The trail from the parking lot to the lighthouse is very steep, but worth the effort!

Suggestion: Consider adding a lookout platform or two along the pathway. Add additional benches to make it easier for people of all ages to manage the climb back to the top.

Cape d'Or is really an exceptional site - particularly if you can catch it on a nice day as we did.

Suggestion: Post a sign about the restaurant at the top of the hill and at the actual restaurant (top left). There was absolutely no information about it. Let people know it exists, when the operating hours and days are, if you need reservations, the type of food, etc. We would gladly have come back just to have dinner here but we had no idea whether it was operating, when, what days, etc. If we had not been told there was a restaurant there, we would have never known.

We ended up back in Parrsboro, and had dinner at the Harbour View, which seems to be a favorite of locals for their home-style food. The restaurant is lacking in curb appeal, and we wouldn't have eaten there if it hadn't been recommended by local residents.

Suggestion: Add some trees, shrubs, and keep the weeds down. Make the restaurant shine (bottom right).

We were told the restaurant was closed - we assumed permanently - and there was nothing stating it was ever open, or even exists.



We never could find the eight restaurants in Parrsboro, but we did find the Harbour View - supposedly a local favorite. We had dinner here.



Because it was getting late, we headed back to Parrsboro. We'll double back tomorrow to see Advocate Harbour, which looks nice.



The place was busy, staff was good, the food was ok.



We then went back to visit Advocate Harbour and the southern shoreline communities.



Suggestion: Signs should always be perpendicular to the road. Always use a contrasting background - dark blue in this case.



Suggestions: Add some lattice under the deck, put out some Catlina umbrellas so we can see there's outdoor dining. Pull us in!



The umbrellas here add some appeal. Suggestion: Add some planters to complement the hanging baskets.



The next day we retraced our steps see Advocate Harbour and the southern shoreline communities (top left).

It seems that very few restaurants and shops make the effort to pull customers in by enhancing their curb appeal. Weeds don't make an inviting entry, and do nothing to entice visitors. Curb appeal is very important, and studies show that 70% of first-times sales come from curb appeal. Have you ever uttered the words "that looks like a good place to eat"?

Beautification, including lattice panels to screen certain areas (under decks for instance), planters, trees, umbrellas, flowers, and decorative signage, can have a dramatic impact on a storefront's appearance. And it is an investment with a terrific return!

Spencer's Island is a must-see attraction, and we found it charming. The restaurant looks inviting (bottom right) and the lighthouse with its museum were fun and very interesting. The story of the Mary Celeste is one to capture anyone's imagination and heart! A great story, well told.

Suggestion: There is too much sign clutter around Spencers Beach - with the numerous Fundy Shore Ecotour signs and off-premise signs. Reduce the number of signs here so they don't interfere with the scenic beauty and confuse visitors.



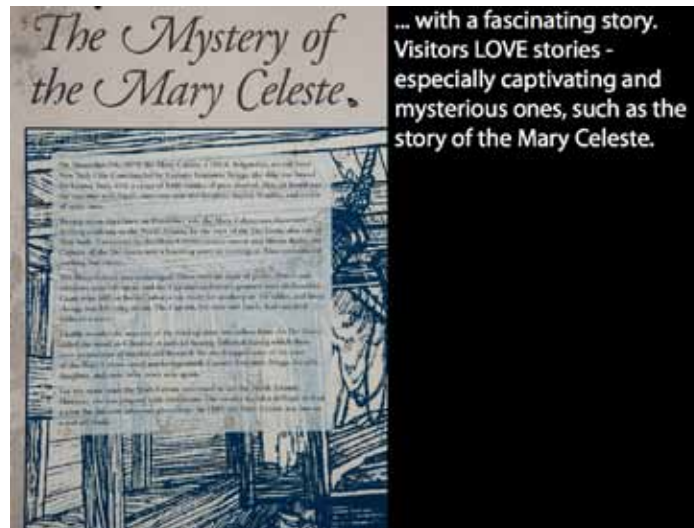
We then headed to Spencer's Island. This Eco Tour sign is in good shape. Still have no idea if there's a map or itinerary that goes with it. We asked - no one seemed to know.



A beautiful spot.



Suggestion: In such a scenic area, limit the number of off-premise signs. We certainly want the Beach Cafe to succeed, but it already says there's a restaurant on the public sign.



... with a fascinating story. Visitors LOVE stories - especially captivating and mysterious ones, such as the story of the Mary Celeste.

Internationally, the average museum visit lasts between 20 and 40 minutes. But if you can engage the visitor by giving your exhibits a personal touch, telling stories, sharing the lives that were intertwined with your exhibits, you can fascinate your visitors and keep them much longer. Not only that, they'll go home and tell their friends and family how much they enjoyed the museum and the town.

The Mystery of the Mary Celeste is a great story, and the little museum at Spencer's Island does a good job telling it.

The museum in the lighthouse was a treat. Very nicely done.



★ Spencer's Island was a real treat. Is that the island out there? Definitely worth the stop. Plan on an hour hear.



The campground looks wonderful! What a location! A very popular spot. Every campsite was full.

Suggestion: Tell us about Spencer's Island. Does anyone live on the island? Can you visit it? Is it public or private? What makes it special (if anything).

We found another place to spend money - at the Sun, Moon, Stars Gift Shop. It was a cute and charming shop (top left).

Heading back to Port Greville, we noticed the colorful pole banners! (bottom left) They add a festive ambiance to the area, and really give the feeling of this being a "unified" destination. Good job! Make sure you keep them maintained.

The Age of Sail Heritage Centre (bottom right) is also included in the Guide as one of the top five heritage and cultural attractions. And rightfully so! It was very good and told some great stories.

While there, we stopped into the Sun, Moon, Stars Gift Shop. Quaint and small - the kids were minding the store. They were very nice.



We then headed to Port Greville.



On the way back (the night before) we did stop in at the Age of Sail Museum. They were gracious and let us hang around after closing time.



The museum is very well done, great people, and some terrific stories are told here. Plan on an hour here. Watch the Cape Horn video. Fascinating. I ordered a copy when I got back home.

18 ★★



Well done. Tell as many stories as you can.



The cafe at The Age of Sail was closed, so we didn't have a chance to try it. We were grateful for the public washrooms - they are few and far between! We arrived close to closing time, but staff was very gracious and told us to take whatever time we wanted. Does it get any better than that? Great people.

Suggestion: The Port Greville Lookoff is very nice (bottom left). We noticed that the term "lookoff" is used for these viewpoints - consider using "viewpoint" instead. Lookoff sounds too much like "fall off" and that's a negative.

Suggestion: Consider "viewpoint" instead of "look off." Sell the experience. Something about "look off" seems negative.



Are these signs allowed? **Suggestion:** If so, consider a directory instead of nine signs, creating sign clutter. We ignored them.



Beware of sign clutter! (bottom right)

Suggestion: Eliminate it where possible. Don't allow off-premise signage. Instead, consider a directory sign at these intersections.

When visitors see this many signs, they tend to simply ignore them all. It would take several minutes to read through all of these.

We saw many beautiful and beautifully landscaped homes in Port Greville.

The Shaw Country Market is a real gem (top left and right). It's in the Guide as one of the top five one-of-a-kind shopping places. It's the kind of store you could make a visit to every day, even if just to socialize with the locals. Great finds in every nook and cranny. Having a post office and visitor information here was very handy.

Suggestion: Consider creating a book along the lines of the one for Door County, Wisconsin, "101 Things To Do in Door County." Instead, call it "The Hidden Gems of the Cape Chignecto Peninsula." Include those gems that local residents know about and love.

Pat from Shaw market wrote down some of her favorite spots (bottom left). One of them was this lookout spot where you can see Cape Split (bottom right). Include places like this in a "Hidden Gems" book.

Shaw Country Market is a great store. And they ship! This whole area is short on spending opportunities, so this was nice to find.



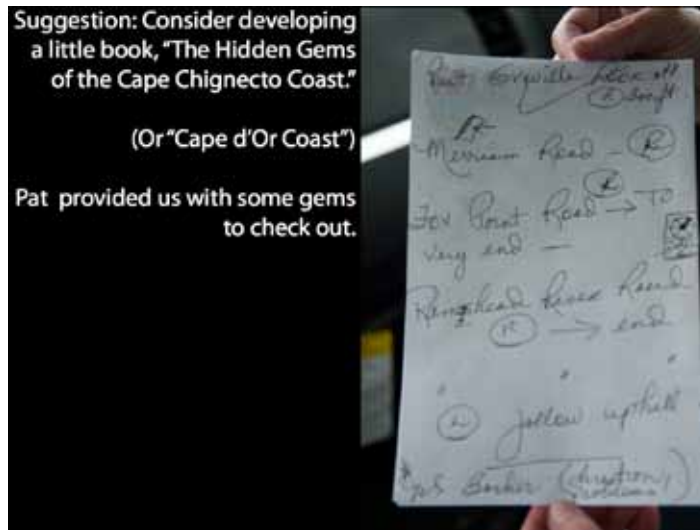
Very nice store. A local hangout. Post office. Shipping point.



Suggestion: Consider developing a little book, "The Hidden Gems of the Cape Chignecto Coast."

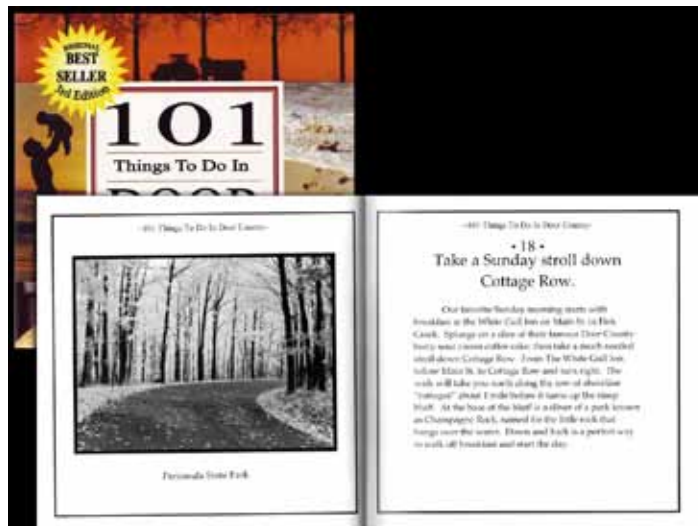
(Or "Cape d'Or Coast")

Pat provided us with some gems to check out.



A great place to actually see Cape Split.





The homes here are beautifully maintained. There seems to be a lot of community pride in Port Greville.



Door County, Wisconsin is seeing a lot of success with the privately developed publication, "101 Things to do in Door County" (top left). This little book is full of ideas for visitors to do, in exquisite detail. Each page has a new little adventure with a photo. Research showed that more than 80% of the people who purchased the book planned repeat visits so they could experience more of the gems and itineraries featured in the book.

A great sign, but the shop was never open during our three days in the area - at least the closed sign never came down that we saw.



Another exceptional gallery. People are four times more likely to buy art when they meet the artist. That makes this a great shop.



This art gallery (bottom right) was special in that the artist was there working. That's a great selling point. Visitors love meeting the artist.

Suggestion: Add additional planters or shrubs to hide the foundation and soften the building. The parking area can use some patching.

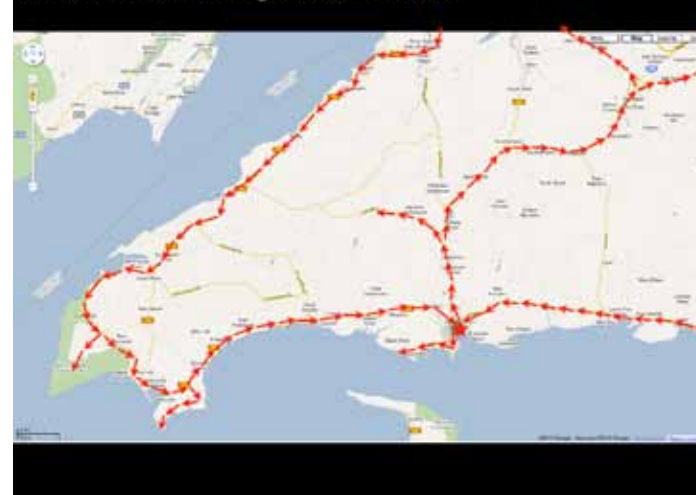
The pole banners are stunning! (top left) It wasn't easy, but we took pictures of most of them.

On our way back to Parrsboro, we stopped at the Ottawa House. It looked as though there was a meeting being held there by a local organization.

The site is gorgeous, and we could see that renovation was still in progress.



We then started heading back to Parrsboro.



We decided to go check out the Ottawa House Museum.



It's obvious that people have put a lot of time and effort into the museum, but it seems to be more of a local hobby than an attraction.



There are lots of artifacts and collections, but few stories of what life was really like here. To win, you must tell engaging stories.



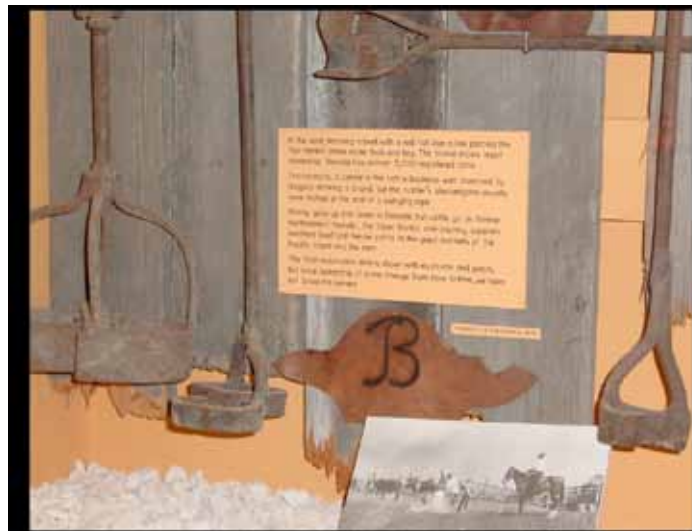
Great Stories Make the Campfire Memorable

The rule of stories versus artifacts



The museum had displays of antique furnishings and artifacts, but they weren't in context of people's lives. What makes historical places meaningful for most people is when we can hear or read the stories about the people who lived here. What was life like here? How bad did storms get? How cold was it in the winter? What did they do for a living? How were children educated?

One museum that does an excellent job of telling stories is the Northeastern Nevada Museum (bottom right and left).



Included in their displays are interesting stories about the lives and times of the people who used the artifacts.

Suggestions: Move away from the display of artifacts, and use them in context of what life was like here. Pay a visit to the Grand Pre Museum to see how good the stories are at pulling people into the history.

We felt like we were intruding on a private club while at the Ottawa house.

The old branding and cattle-rustling days are brought to life with exhibits and the story of Crazy Tex Hazlewood who confounded lawmakers for weeks by wearing his special shoes (top left) when he was stealing cattle. Visitors are fascinated by his story.

The Rock & Mineral Shop and museum (bottom left) has a large dinosaur outside that makes a terrific photo opportunity. It was fun to see all the different rocks and fossils for sale here.

We weren't sure if Tysons' was a retail shop or corporate office (bottom right). Make it clear on your sign - if a retail shop, promote what it is you're selling and invite us in.



Crazy Tex Hazlewood

Museum notes:

1. The average museum visit lasts between 20 and 40 minutes.
2. If you can captivate the visitor for two hours, spending will increase.
3. Museums **MUST** learn to tell stories, not just display artifacts with facts and figures.
4. No offense, but visitors don't really care who donated various items.

Nice Rock & Mineral Shop and museum. The photo opportunity make this worth a stop.



We weren't sure if this was a corporate office, or a retail shop. Looks like offices in a home. Suggestion: If it's a store, say so. What are you selling?



We did see the Interpretive Site near the Harbour View Restaurant.
Suggestion: Add more visitor information. Lot's of wasted space.



These are very helpful, but some don't connect all the way through.
Suggestion: Follow them (with a non-local) to make sure they connect the dots.



Suggestion: Take advantage of the boards at the interpretive site near the Harbour View Restaurant (top left). Use it to put up visitor information.

Suggestion: With any of your existing wayfinding signage, make sure it leads all the way to the actual destination (top right). It's easy to point in the general direction once, and think that's sufficient. But you need to "connect the dots" entirely to each destination.

The Ships Company Theatre is right up there with Joggins Fossil Cliffs, Cape d'Or Lighthouse. An anchor for the area.



How great is this? Had we not been hard at work, we would have stayed just to experience a performance here.



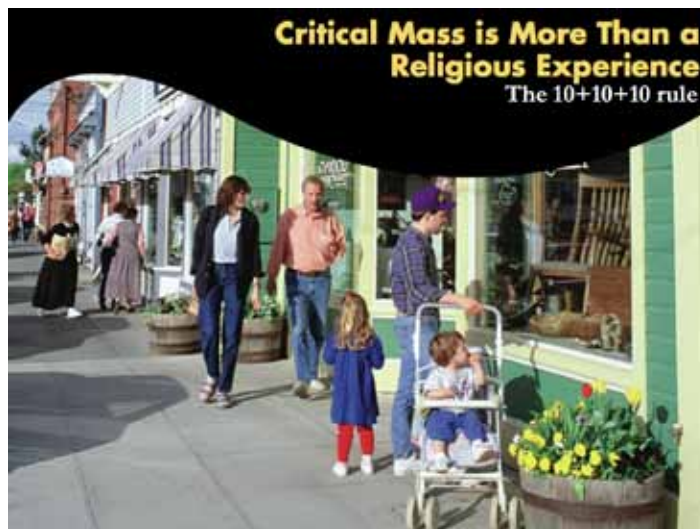
We weren't able to see a production at the Ships Company Theatre (bottom right and left) while in the area, but we looked around the theatre and reviewed the marketing materials. What a wonderful facility and a great asset for the area! Definitely a must-visit attraction and worth a special trip and an overnight stay from Halifax and beyond.

Downtown Parrsboro

Shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors, and where 80% of all non-lodging visitor spending takes place. That shows how important downtowns are to your visitor industry!

Successful downtowns need to have a “critical mass” of like businesses. This would include a minimum, in three lineal blocks:

- TEN places that sell food: soda fountain, coffee shop, bistro, cafe, fine dining, family restaurant, wine store, deli, bakery, confectionery.
- TEN destination retail shops: galleries, antiques, home accents, outfitters, collectibles, books, kitchen supplies, garden, etc.
- TEN places open after 6:00 pm: entertainment, theater, performing arts, bars and bistros, specialty shops, dining, open air markets, etc.



Some of the merchants in Parrsboro do a great job - and this one does. The building could use some paint, but the flowers say a lot.



When like businesses are congregated together, the attraction can be powerful and dramatic.

Great building. Thanks for the Trompe l'oeil murals in the windows! Suggestion: Would be a great arts incubator. Live/work space.



Good job here as well. Suggestion: Watch those weeds, use a different door stop, paint the shop & foundation, add some planters.



Curb appeal is an investment with a tremendous return. People like to spend time in beautiful places. That's why dressing up your storefronts is so important.

Good job!



"From Away" is the showcase business in Parrsboro in terms of curb appeal. A great shop.



Some of the shops in Parrsboro do a very good job of creating nice curb appeal (top two photos).

Note how this building and sidewalk (bottom right) look very stark, cold and uninviting.

Suggestion: Always soften the transition between the building facade and the sidewalk with planters, pots, and benches.

Perhaps this is a work in progress.

Suggestion: Have merchants head to Mahone Bay. They've set the standard for small towns in the province.



Other shops could do a lot to really make Parrsboro a showcase community.



Suggestion: Make downtown the kind of place where people love to spend time - a gathering space. Do this with more seating - small tables and chairs, more benches, and more street trees and planters.

Suggestion: Add visitor information downtown including brochure distribution.

Consider adding some information at the discovery center. It's best to place visitor information in locations where visitors can also spend money - downtowns are ideal. When visitors stop to get information, they're tempted to go into a neighboring shop, or grab a snack or bite of lunch.

Suggestion: Consider using an existing gazebo to house some visitor information (bottom left and right) as the example shown earlier in this assessment for Beatty, Nevada. Make them more than just a community bulletin board. This way they become economic development tools.





Great idea!

Suggestion: Include the date so we know this is actually for "today." We weren't sure how often it's updated.

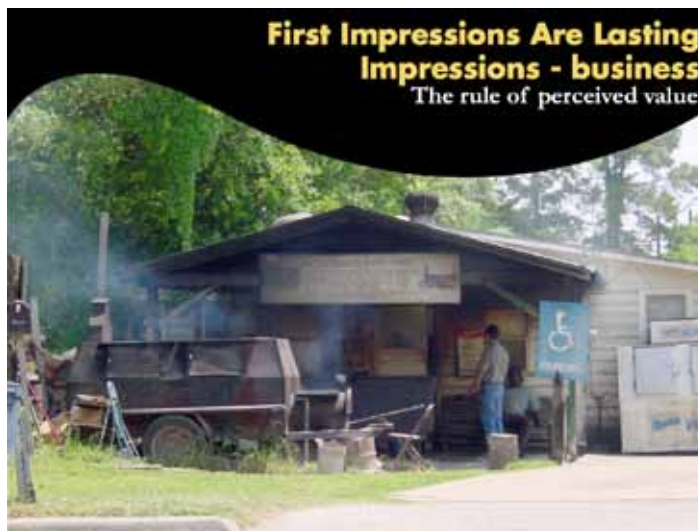


Interesting statue. Looks rather tired and run down.

First impressions are lasting impressions. Enhancing curb appeal is the number one strategy to entice customers into your shops.

People are attracted to beautiful places - have you ever stopped at a restaurant because it "looked like a good place to eat"? Or been drawn into a retail shop because of the attractive outdoor displays?

Potted flowers, shrubs, and hanging baskets can turn a stark-looking street into a welcoming destination.



First Impressions Are Lasting Impressions - business
The rule of perceived value



First impressions don't just apply to gateway signage, but even more important for retailers. What is your first impression of First Impressions Pottery (bottom right) located in Gatlinburg, Tennessee?

This florist shop (top left) has an amazing outdoor display - designed to attract customers into the store. This was in Minnesota in October.



Florists get it. They know how important this effort is. Great job here in Lake City, MN.

This natural foods store (top right) looks like a wonderful place to shop.



Winner of the "Best Curb Appeal in Downtown Lake City."

Exceptional. The interior is also exceptional.

Sisters, OR (bottom left) has worked hard to beautify their town and develop critical mass. Their garden club makes sure merchants take care of the gardens downtown. As a result, they have the highest retail sales per capita of any town in Oregon. Population: Just 1,100.



The merchants in Jonesborough, TN (bottom right) always have beautiful outdoor displays. This autumn display includes mums and pumpkins, and they always have plenty of benches. All of these communities saw increased spending as a result of their beautification efforts.



The Downtown Idea Book
Ideas to increase your bottom line



Suggestion: Make the entries to your businesses look inviting. That begins at the sidewalk - not just once inside the door.

This shop in Grass Valley, CA (top left) uses silk flowers to create a beautiful entryway.

The Great Smoky Mountain Art Trail provides many appealing shops - this gift boutique (top right) is decorated with flowers, trees, ribbons and outdoor furniture. Just imagine what it's like inside!



Beautification doesn't have to only include planters and hanging baskets. Look at Maggie Mae Mercantile's display (bottom left). Select store merchandise is artfully arranged, and the large "open" flag invites customers inside.

This shop owner in Blaine, WA, (bottom right) says that the twenty minutes it takes her to set out her displays each morning is well worth the effort. She had been afraid she would have to close her business, but when she started putting out the displays, so many more customers were attracted into her shop that she has been successful ever since.

Suggestion: Restaurants should post their menus outside, as this one in Banff, Alberta does (top left). When the menu display is as nice as this one, you can bet they lure customers inside. It's an investment, not an expense.



Suggestion: Create invitations, not rejections. "Closed" signs are another way of saying to a customer, "Go away." Instead of sending a rejection, post signs like these (top right). Tell customers WHEN you will be open. Invite them back.



This great shop in Wickford, RI (bottom right) has a sign on its door that states, "Public Restrooms are located behind Brooks Pharmacy." Rather than saying "No Public Washrooms" or "for customers only," they let people know WHERE they can find them.



Suggestion: Don't just send customers away - help them by letting them know where to go. Where are the washrooms in Parrsboro?



Think benches.**Success Begins With a Good Architect**
The rule of Planning

Suggestion: Women account for 80% of all consumer spending. What do you notice about the photo top left? The men are waiting outside the shops. If you provide benches, you'll encourage increased shopping.

The bottom line:

- Develop one, two and three-day itineraries - with specifics right down to places to eat and what dishes to try at the restaurant.
- Promote your "anchor tenants." Restaurants, activities, retail shops.

Promote Your Anchor Tenants
The mall mentality rule

Example: Ottawa, Illinois, one and a half hours southwest of Chicago, (bottom right) produced a brochure to specifically promote their anchor businesses - "The Best of Ottawa" - each page includes one or two photos and descriptive text about a shop, and activity, or a restaurant, that visitors couldn't find closer to home. They sent copies to each household in town to use when visitors came, plus they had a copy distributed to each car entering the nearby state park, which was very popular with Chicagoans.

Ottawa's brochure (top left and right and bottom left).

Within six months, Ottawa's hotel occupancy rates increased by more than 30%, and their downtown shops were actually getting more business, not just from visitors, but from locals as well.

It's important that the brochure NOT look like a bunch of ads. Use an advertorial format; include lots of photos with specific, descriptive text. Use strict criteria - these businesses must truly be the best.

Remember - this is about bringing more cash into the region!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead

History isn't a point in time. Today is the day you can start creating new history for the Parrsboro-Joggins Area or, "The Cape Chignecto Peninsula."





PARRSBORO-JOGGINS AREA

Marketing Materials Assessments

Fundy Shore & Annapolis Valley 2010 Guide

This 120-page booklet packs a lot of information and encompasses a large region, from Amherst and Cape Chignecto, around Minas Basin, and west all the way to Brier Island. The Bay of Fundy is this region's defining feature. Both areas we are assessing are included in this guide. In this section, I'll look at the Fundy Shore that includes Parrsboro, Port Greville, and Joggins Fossil Cliffs.

The large cover photo is incredible! It really pulls you in and makes you want to experience that whale watching adventure.

Suggestion: Change the name to 2010 Activities Guide. Consider changing the text to yellow – yellow attracts the eye.

The photography throughout is wonderful! Good job! The "Welcome" text is a good introduction to the guide and Nova Scotia.

Suggestion: Add a few teaser phrases about the specific activities visitors could enjoy while there – nothing too long, but just touch on a few specifics.

Good information about traveling to Nova Scotia.

Suggestion: The guide needs a good map. The only map is so small it's not very helpful. Consider doing a map of each area to go with its section, so that it can show more detail.

Tide charts – excellent!

The section highlighting specific attractions and activities during the four seasons is very good. It gives a good flavor of each season. Again, good photography!

The Do & Dream page introduction to the four separate eco-zones included in the guide is very nicely done. The brief description of each zone paints a picture and tells visitors what they can expect to experience, in a nutshell. Immediately following is 10 Don't Miss Attractions encompassing the whole region – with a photo for each – very nice.

The Scenic Seacliffs & Geological Wonders section includes the area we are assessing. Again, a detailed map of just this region would have been very helpful. This section includes the Top 5 Photo Opportunities; the Top 5 Outdoor Activities; the Top 5 Locals' Picks; the Top 5 Festivals & Events; the Top 5 One-of-a-kind Shopping; and the Top 5 Heritage & Cultural Attractions. More options in those categories are included in the back of the guide as well.

These Top 5's made it very easy to see what there was to see and do in the area – it was wonderful! The descriptions are excellent, although I think some could even be more glowing. Some of these attractions exceeded our expectations.

Suggestion: Add open hours where possible.

Suggestion: Consider adding another page about downtown areas within the region. The number one activity of visitors is shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting, and

seeing photos of a downtown shopping and dining area will help pull visitors into the towns to spend money.

Suggestion: Add some two- and three-day itineraries based on type of vacation, such as a couple's retreat, or girls' weekend getaway, or family outdoor vacation.

Discover Cumberland County 2010 Visitors' Guide (A publication of the Amherst Daily News)

This newsprint publication with a glossy cover includes all of Cumberland County north to Tidnish, east to Malagash, south to Parrsboro and Advocate.

Suggestion: A gateway is something people pass through to go somewhere else. Consider using a different tagline than "Gateway to Nova Scotia." The tagline should embody what makes Cumberland County unique.

Suggestion: Replace the map. The current map is very difficult to use.

The publication is a collection of pieces about different attractions and topics of the region, including a lot of history and background. It doesn't provide the type of practical information visitors would need to plan their trip, but it is an excellent resource for visitors to learn more about the area.

Cumberland County – Fundy Shore Fundy Shore Drive

This small, color glossy brochure provides a map over most of the interior pages, with a directory of some attractions and services. Text on the opposite side does a good job of describing some of these attractions.

Suggestion: Make the map more detailed. There's room to add more detail to the highways and that would be so helpful.

Parrsboro

This small brochure is very nicely produced and has a very good map of the town. It lists some of the town's amenities, describes its location, and gives a brief history and overview of some of the things a visitor could see in the area.

Suggestion: Change the cover photo to one that includes some people enjoying themselves in Parrsboro. The photos are too static and don't really do a good job of showcasing the town. "Small Town. Big Heart." What does that mean? It doesn't really say anything about the town – most small towns claim that their town is one of the friendliest you could find. Consider using a different slogan that helps portray the unique qualities of Parrsboro.

Suggestion: Promote a few of the best shops and restaurants specifically.

Ship's Company Theatre – Live Theatre and Music 2010 Season

This attractive full-color accordion-fold brochure promotes the live theatre in Parrsboro. It includes the upcoming season schedule with fantastic descriptions of the plays and concerts, information about the theatre, drama camps, memberships, ticket information – everything a potential visitor needs! It's very well done.

Ottawa House

This one-color rack card features a very nice photo of the Ottawa House, and describes the museum, genealogical research facilities, and beaches surrounding.

Suggestion: The only description of what a visitor will see in the museum, besides the beautiful views, is this: "Ottawa House is now a museum devoted to exhibiting and interpreting part of Tupper's life, as well as the seafaring, lumbering and social history of the Parrsboro Shore." Consider highlighting a few of the very interesting things in the museum specifically. For example, some tools and how they were used. And, are there any fascinating stories told about Sir Tupper (I'm sure there are!) – tell one or two short stories to intrigue and interest people, and make Sir Tupper a real person.

Choose Your Adventure

This full-color rack card is very compelling. I love the face of the card – the dirty hiking boots and the clean crocs. The reverse of the card describes two different trail adventures, and the text does an excellent job of selling them. This is very well done.

Age of Sail Heritage Centre

This two-color rack card is very understated. It is classic in appearance, with no photos, only a sketch of a sailing ship. It's attractive and provides all the information a visitor would need to plan for a visit. If funding becomes available, a rack card with photos could showcase even better what this excellent, fascinating museum has to offer. Consider highlighting a few of the specific exhibits, to provide more of a teaser.

Anne Murray Centre

This rack card does an excellent job of promoting the Anne Murray Centre. The yellow text at the top grabs your attention, and the photo of Anne Murray does the rest! Great teaser rack card for a truly wonderful attraction!



Kayak the Bay of Fundy

Day-tours from Advocate Harbour Nova Scotia

This tri-fold brochure does a great job. The cover, showing two kayakers laughing and paddling among the spray, makes me want to go kayaking! The rest of the brochure describes the tours, highlighted with great photos, and it provides the details a visitor needs to plan the trip. Good job, and I wish we had time!

Suggestion: If funding permits, consider developing a full-color brochure and include some stunning photography of the area.

Joy Laking Gallery

This tri-fold full-color brochure is a work of art itself. It's a pleasure to read through it, and does a great job of promoting the artist and encouraging visitors to come to her gallery or visit her website. Beautiful work.

Welcome To Portauisque, Bass River, Economy, Five Islands

This one-color brochure doesn't grab your attention, but it does a great job of letting visitors know what's in the area and how to locate it. The map inside is very good and easy to use. The key includes numbers circled with or without shading to indicate local businesses or stops of interest, so it's simple to use. The descriptions of each numbered location are very good.

Suggestion: Make sure businesses include their operating hours.



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