



Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

YARMOUTH & ACADIAN SHORE - NOVEMBER, 2013

ROGER BROOKS
International



Opportunity Assessment

INTRODUCTION

In July of 2013, Roger Brooks International performed an Opportunity Assessment of the Yarmouth & Acadian Shore, Nova Scotia, and the findings were presented in a two-and-a-half hour workshop in October. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of the area - how it is 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 community'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 towns 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 area, 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, tourism websites, and read travel articles and guidebooks.

The marketing assessment determined how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the area 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 the Yarmouth & Acadian Shore 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 community worth a special trip, or a great place to live, or to do business. We look for details, details, details. 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 area, looking at enticements from the 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, their effectiveness, their helpfulness in finding attractions, and if they over-sell or under-sell the experiences.

The area benefits 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 area’s ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a region-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 region-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 area? 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 town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or they simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

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

SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when the community imports more cash than it exports. 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 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 community, 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 in your community. 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 community? 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

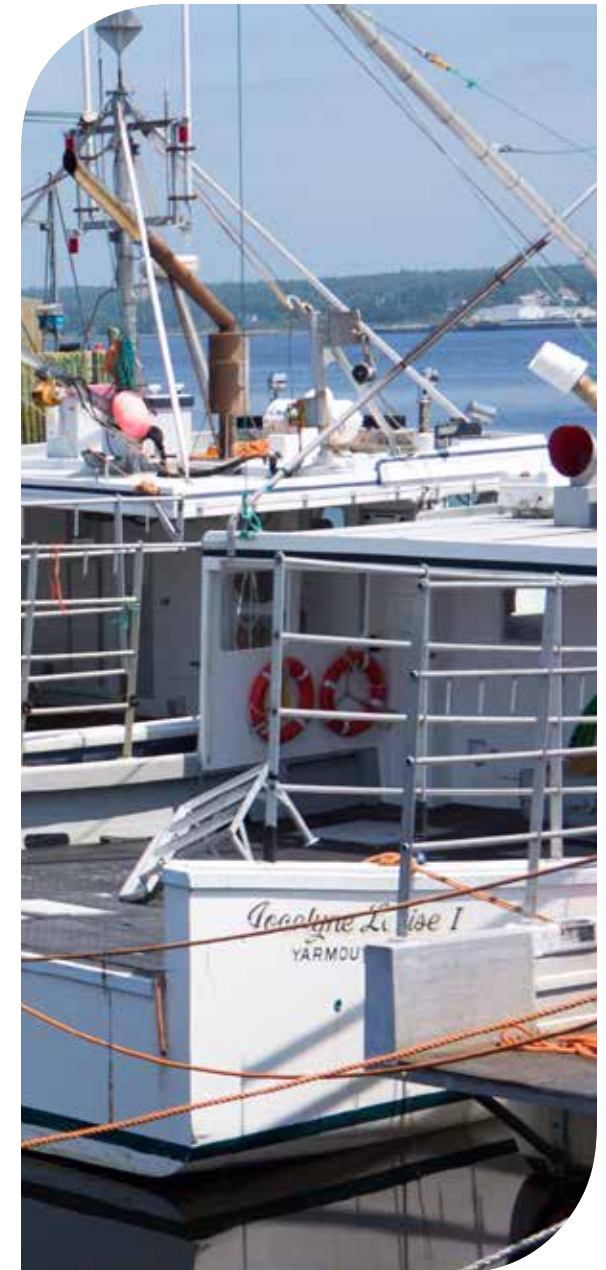
The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do "after hours" while in the area. 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 or freeways 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 community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community – 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 Jann Arden, I don't care whether she's performing in Ontario or Alberta. People by the millions head to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always 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. For local heritage to be a major attraction, it needs to combine activities with ambiance, and it needs to be pervasive throughout the area.

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 community, 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, washrooms, 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 community, 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 creates a basis for 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 community.



NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report will provide many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue in the communities and becomes a springboard for the communities in enhancing their tourism industries, 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 plan could build on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and local input to develop a unique brand and implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today. RBI's BrandCamp program could help build your branding plan from the ground up - with local input, brainstorming, research, and creative planning. We would work with you to guide you through the process, helping create a plan that has local champions and community buy-in.

The next step in the planning process would be to provide public outreach, and review past and current planning efforts. This would determine your goals as a region.

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 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.

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

A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together to enhance the communities, building their unique images 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





Yarmouth & the Acadian Shore
Assessment Findings & Suggestions

ROGER BROOKS International



Suggestion: Consider some English for visitors - if it's open to the public.

We weren't sure if the museum was still open. Suggestion: Remove signs to the museum. If operating, make it obvious. Add "Open" signage, hours, days and beautification.



The primary goal of tourism development is to increase the amount of cash that is "imported" into the community. Fortunately, many of the same ingredients that make a destination attractive to visitors, also make the community attractive to residents and new business development - and investment - making it a better place to live, work, and play.

This is not just about tourism, but tourism is the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts. During this assessment, we examined 60 key elements about the Yarmouth and Acadian Shore region.

We started our Yarmouth and Acadian Shore adventure in Woods Harbour, heading north. When we reached these signs (top right), we saw that all the attractions seemed to be in the opposite direction! Suggestion: Add a few attractions and amenities to give visitors a reason to head to Yarmouth.

It's hard to tell if the Samuel Wood Historical Museum (bottom left) is still operating. Leave no doubt - entice visitors inside with some planters, repainted signs, and an "open" flag.

Good job with the flag and use of the sign for events. Consider adding English.

Beautiful spot. Impeccably maintained.



Suggestion: English? Particularly on the readerboard.



Suggestion: The orange square - consider "OPEN"



We just "had" to check it out. Great first impression.



We drove down into West Pubnico, and we were thrilled with what we found! The Research Centre and Museum (top left) looks wonderful. It makes us want to go inside.

Le Village Historique Acadien (top right, bottom left and right) was a wonderful treat. Consider adding English, especially to the readerboard (top right) for the menu items.

The entry for Le Village (bottom right) is very inviting. It is beautifully

landscaped and looks professional and very nice.

Very nicely done.



Simply fantastic people: This IS and WAS the home of their families.



Suggestion: Perhaps a readerboard of upcoming events? Demonstrations?



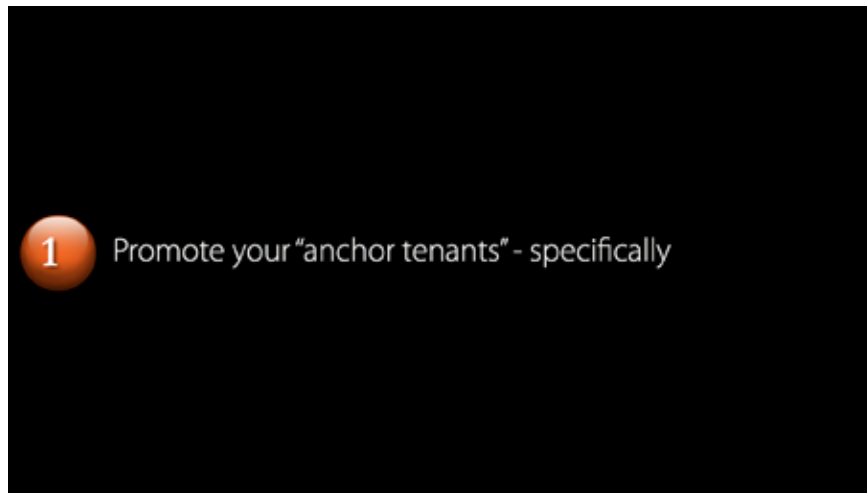
We thoroughly enjoyed visiting Le Village. The displays were excellent, and the costumed staff were wonderful. With most of the costumed interpreters being descendants of the Acadian settlers who actually lived in the village, the experience took on a personal quality that's hard to find in a historical attraction.

We enjoyed visiting the houses, tasting the dishes that were prepared over the fire in the traditional way (strawberry jam, cookies, rappie pie), and talking with the interpreters. We learned a lot about how the people lived and worked.

Demonstrations we saw included:

- Blacksmith
- Salt fish preparation
- Fisherman (tending nets, demonstrating lobster traps)
- Cookies baked in one of the homes
- Making strawberry jam over a wood stove

Does it get any better than this?



The restaurant at Le Village was very good (top left), and the entire setting (top right) is spectacular.

Le Village Historique Acadien is one of the best “museums” we’ve seen, and it should be promoted as one of the area’s “Best Of” attractions.

Promote your “Best Of” attractions, amenities, shops and restaurants. Make sure they are experiences visitors will be able to find and enjoy. They should be something visitors would go out of their way to visit - and they’ve got to live

up to expectations. They are your “anchor tenants.”

Alpena, Michigan created a “Best Of” brochure featuring their “anchor tenants” - things visitors couldn’t get closer to home (bottom right). They used strict criteria to select their best of’s.



Here's a sample criteria for developing a list of your "Best Of's":

- Highly regarded (80%+ positive peer reviews, TripAdvisor, Yelp, regional publications.
- Good curb appeal.
- Open at least May through October (to start)
- Open until at least 6:00 pm.
- Open six days a week.
- Unique to the region.

At the back of this report we'll show you our ideas for some of the "Best Of's".

Market your best:

- Restaurants (5)
- Retail shops and galleries (5)
- Activities (5)
- Attractions (3)
- Scenic drives (2)
- Photo opportunities (they need to be really special!) (3)

Suggestion: Consider interpretive panels describing the various vessels.



Suggestion: Explain the color floats, the colored ropes, etc. Educate the non-fishing folks!



Suggestion: Have harbour staff pick up the trash perhaps daily or at least once a week.



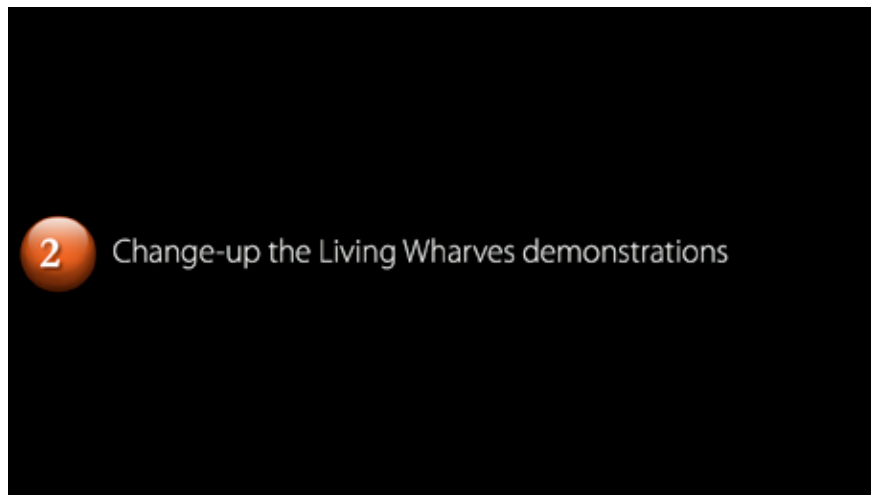
The restaurant looked good. Nice appeal. Suggestion: Get rid of weeds at the entrance.



After Le Village, we drove further down West Pubnico to Dennis Point. We were told by locals about the "Living Wharves," and we saw in the Yarmouth & Acadian Shores Visitors Guide about the demonstrations. That is fantastic! The brochure gives locations and times for each of the demonstrations, which is excellent.

Consider posting signs and interpretive panels right at the wharves as well. These signs could give information about the demonstrations, and when they will happen next. Interpretive panels could explain some of the features and

equipment we see at the wharves, as well as give information about the fish that are harvested, the working conditions, and some history of living the life of a fisherman. That would make the wharves an attraction even when the demonstrations aren't being held, and it would invite visitors back.



Chances are pretty slim that you can get visitors to plan their trip around a three-hour window one day a week.

Typically Dennis Point will be a stop on a much broader itinerary.



A "complementary activity." Thought we should check it out.

Some additional ideas for the Living Wharves:

- Informational kiosks/interpretive signs
- Guides - perhaps some of the restaurant staff could serve as guides to the wharves? Could be a new revenue source plus tips.
- On call demonstrations? Call when there?
- People will pay for this type of guided experience and/or demonstrations. We would have!

We saw the Pubico Point Wind Farm, and it piqued our curiosity! (bottom right)



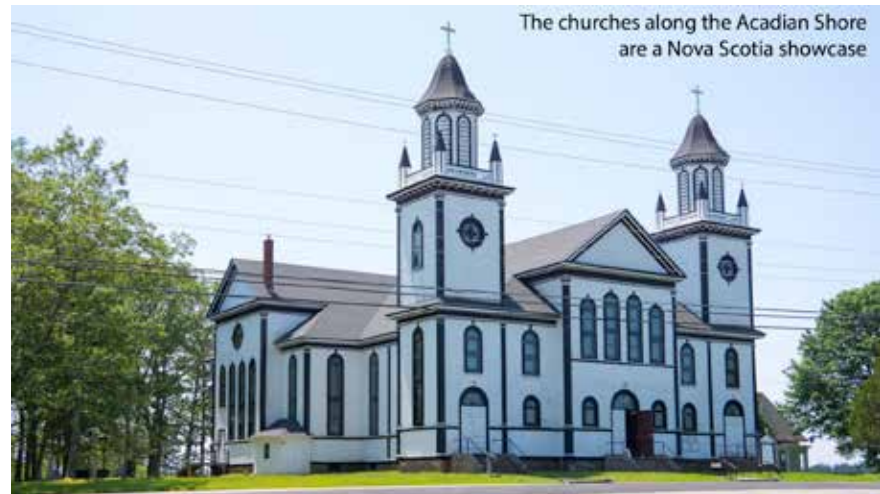
We'd never been up close to one of the giant windmills in a modern wind farm! Very likely not many people have. We took the opportunity to see them up close, and it was a great educational experience (top right and left).

We saw the sign for the Lobster Co. (bottom left), so we drove in to take a look. We couldn't find any more information (bottom right), but it made us wonder if this could become an attraction or retail sales for the public.

Suggestion: Remove this sign. What purpose does it serve?



With a few interpretive signs and perhaps a tour once or twice a day - could be fascinating.



We saw this production facility (top right) and wanted to learn more about it - it could be developed into a fascinating experience for visitors. Could tours be developed? Interpretive displays?

This view of the windmills (bottom left) is gorgeous - the look surreal above the fog.

Some of the most beautiful sites to see along the Acadian Shore are the churches (bottom right). There are so many different styles and so much history.

Idea: Create a set of tour routes. The churches would be one idea.



Rocco Pt. Chapel & Trail

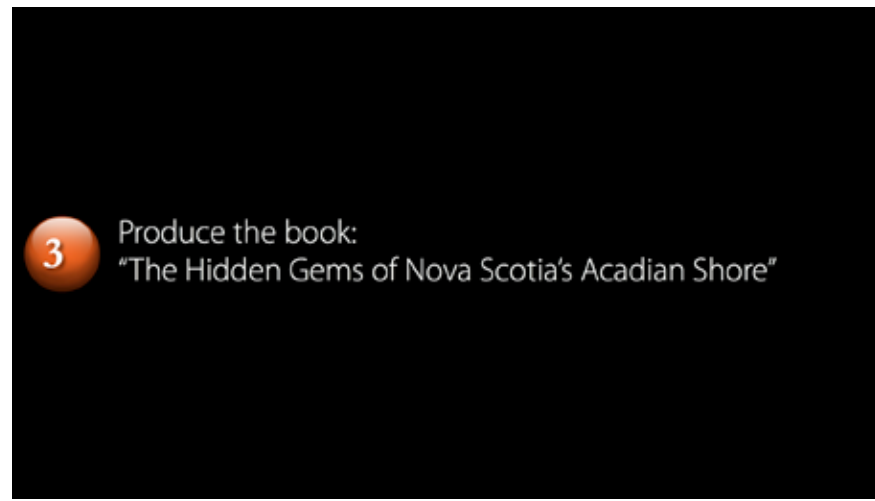


One of the Acadian Shores "Hidden Gems" - and a real gem at that!



Consider creating different types of tour guide brochures, each with a separate focus. A tour of the churches of Yarmouth and Acadian Shores would be excellent (top left).

We found the Rocco Pt. Chapel & Trail (top right and bottom left and right). What a beautiful setting. The interpretive displays are very good. We really enjoyed this spot - it is definitely a "gem."



A gentleman in Door County, Wisconsin created a small book "101 Things to do in Door County," (top right). It was privately produced and for-profit, and it has become one of the best promotional pieces ever for Door County. Each page features a short itinerary of something special to do in Door County - something only locals would really know about. It gives specifics, such as a specific restaurant with a specific dish to order, a street to walk along at a specific time of day, a specific shop to visit, etc. With 101 different things to do, visitors need days and days to be able to enjoy everything.

Create one of these books for Yarmouth & the Acadian Shore - The Hidden

Gems of Nova Scotia's Acadian Shore. It will entice visitors to the area and keep them busy, so they will stay longer and spend more money, while enjoying the area even more.

We saw the Argyle Township Courthouse & Archives (bottom left), but the signage was too small to easily see what it was. Consider adding better signs. The Firefighter's Museum (bottom right) has nice planters, and a flag - which helps attract visitors. Be sure to clean up the weeds along the front of the building. When open, consider opening the front doors and putting a piece of firefighting equipment outside - it'll draw people in.

Suggestion: Develop better wayfinding to the lighthouse.



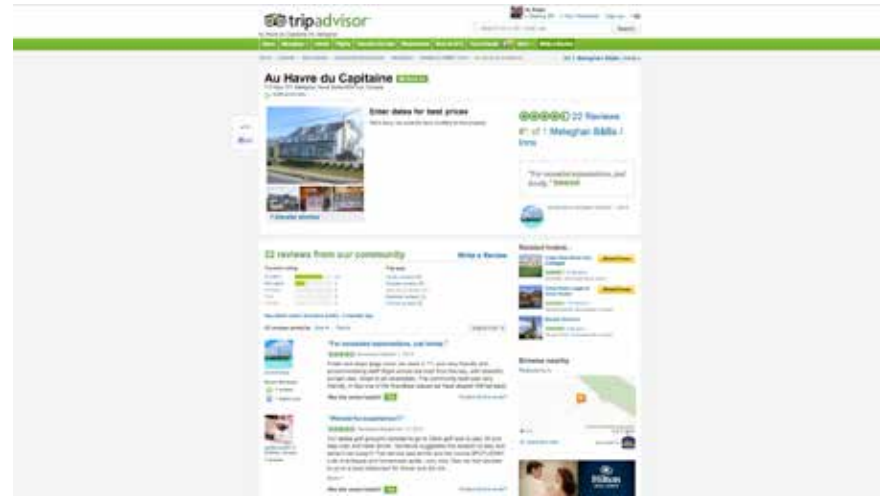
We went out to see the Cape St. Mary lighthouse (top right). On the way, we weren't always sure which way to go (top left) - add wayfinding.

St. Alphonse Church (bottom left) is another of the beautiful churches to be found along the Acadian Shore.

June Deveau's Studio (bottom right) has some of the best signage we've seen. Attractive, the flags really catch your eye, an arrow, and an open sign. Good job!



Looks great. Suggestion: Add a few lounge chairs to the "porch."



Not too sure what the purpose of this. Is the radio station open to the public for tours?



Looks like a nice business. Suggestion: What is it? Add signage. Make it obvious.

This hotel (top left) looks awesome. Consider adding a few lounge chairs to the porch - it would just be a nice touch. It's obvious a lot of travelers also think this hotel is very nice - TripAdvisor reviews (top right) are excellent.

More and more travelers are looking at peer review websites to get information for travel planning. Make sure those visitors can find your businesses and attractions, and don't underestimate the power of peer reviews. Visitors trust peer reviews far more than they trust ads. Merchants should monitor their reviews on TripAdvisor and Yelp! and respond to the

reviewers - especially if they receive a negative review. Showing you listen and care will go far in raising your status in visitors' eyes.

Businesses should be sure to provide enough signage to tell visitors what they sell and what their hours of operation are. Make your shops welcoming and inviting.



A terrific gateway sign in a great location. The tagline is a little generic though.



Suggestion: Re-install the missing elements (bottom). Anything in Weymouth?



Another stunning church along the Acadian Shore (top left)!

The churches of the Acadian Shore should definitely be included as "Best-Of's" for the region.

Gilbert's Cove Lighthouse (top right) is spectacular as well - another "Best-Of."

We drove north to Weymouth (bottom left), then headed back south along Highway 1 to take a closer look at the community of Clare.

Be sure signage is well-maintained (bottom right).



Suggestion: Work to keep the weeds down and the lawn mowed.



Suggestion: Redo the Cape Forchu signs - the "light station" does not have to be literal.



St. Bernard Church (top left) is gorgeous! We heard there are music concerts held at the church during the summer - if possible, add a small sign with information about these concerts, or include specific information on the Nova Scotia Backyard website - times, dates, performances.

This is such a stunning spot! (top right) Definitely a "Best-Of."

Curb appeal accounts for up to 70% of first-time purchases at shops and restaurants. The importance of beautification can't be overstated, so be sure to

maintain the outward appearance of shops, restaurants, and attractions. Keep lawns mowed and weeds away (bottom left).

Consider using the term "lighthouse" for Cape Forchu. It has a greater appeal than the term "light station." And visitors are looking for the lighthouse (bottom right).



Cape Forchu Lighthouse is another stunning, "Best-Of" site! (all photos on this page). Our experience there was great - and we could tell all the other visitors were enjoying their time as well. The interpretive displays were excellent, the cafe and gift shop were great.

Great sign! Looks like it's open to the public. Suggestion: Add an "open" sign and/or hours.



Suggestion: Open to the public? Where? When?

Idea: Lobster picnic basket, cracked & ready to eat. Full retail! A business opportunity.



Driving back to Yarmouth from Cape Forchu, we saw this sign for Stanley Lobster (top left). The sign gave us the impression that it was open for retail sales, so we went and checked it out.

If Stanley Lobster does retail sales (top right), we didn't see where the shop might be. If so, add signage to direct visitors; if not, make it clear on the sign by the highway that it's wholesale only. Consider retail sales - there are a lot of visitors driving along the route to Cape Forchu, and there would be a lot of interest in things like ready-to-eat lobster picnic baskets!

The shop "At the Sign of the Whale" (bottom left and right) is wonderful. It is the type of shop visitors would drive an hour or more out of their way to visit - it's definitely another "Best-Of"! The sign is excellent, and the art is varied and beautiful.



Frost Park in Yarmouth (top left) is beautiful. There were a lot of people enjoying it while we were there, and the maintenance crew was hard at work keeping it looking nice.

While in the area, we stayed at Ye Olde Argyler Lodge (top right). It was very nice, and we found it through the reviews on TripAdvisor (bottom left). The restaurant at Ye Old Argyler was very good and always busy - their burgers are their specialty, and a lot of locals come for the special burger night. Definitely another "Best-Of".

This sign (bottom right) for Le Village Historique Acadien has all the information it should! Be sure all your "keys" have this information: The key, the name of the attraction, an arrow to show the direction, and the distance. Consider always putting the "key" at the top, with the name under.

Suggestion: Each sign should have 1) key 2) name of attraction 3) arrow 4) distance.



Another great gem for the "Hidden Gems" guide.



Open? Closed? If operating, make it obvious. Add hours, days, months. Invite us back!



Suggestion: Photograph each of these, then make a to-do list of fixes. This one: Straighten.



Some sign clutter could be eliminated (top left) if the "key" sign included all the information about Le Village Historique Acadien: Key, name of attraction, arrow, distance.

Hipson's Creek Stone Bridge (top right) is a beautiful little "hidden gem."

When visitors drive past an attraction, and it's not obvious it's open, they are more likely to drive past and not take a chance. It's questionable if this museum and gallery (bottom left) is open. Be welcoming and inviting!

Encourage visitors to stop! Add an "open" sign, operating hours, and some beautification. Imagine how much more inviting this would look with pots of flowers beside the door, a bench, and the weeds gone.

Make a list of all of the Acadian attraction signs (bottom right), photograph each one, and list what needs to be fixed. They should all have the name of the attraction, an arrow, and the distance. This one just needs to be straightened.



Suggestion: Add an arrow to the sign - and distance. What museum? The logo is too small.



Suggestion: What? Where? How far? Remove this sign since it offers no information.



Suggestion: What is Butte-de-la-Croix? English?



This museum (top left) does a great job of inviting people in and showing that they are open.

When we reached this attraction sign (top right) we really wondered what the four sites were and how far away they were. We think we only found three of them.

Consider adding English translations to each of the signs (bottom right).

Suggestion: Consider "Sport Fishing Hall of Fame" above the words Musée / Museum



We drove out to the Wedgeport Sport Fishing Museum (all photos this page). Most of the displays were the hall of fame - photos of people who had been fishing from Wedgeport. Consider adding more interpretive information for people who aren't familiar with fishing. Tell stories about fishermen, their way of life, and how the various items on display were used.

Suggestion: A great location for visitor information



We drove into Yarmouth and explored the town and waterfront area. This gathering space on the water (top left) is very nice and would be a great spot to add visitor information. Even though Yarmouth has a large, excellent visitor information center close to the ferry terminal, it's still important to provide visitor information kiosks (unmanned) in other locations as well.

This gazebo with visitor information (top right, and bottom left and right) is in Beatty, Nevada. Kiwanis/Rotary bought a kit to construct the gazebo for \$12,000, and a local craftsman constructed the interior display and brochure

holders for \$3,500. It's located next to the visitor information center to make visitor information available around the clock.

Suggestion: Build several of these in various locations where visitors can also spend money at a shop, cafe, restaurant, etc. Provide space for lots of brochures, and charge perhaps \$5 per month to host each type of brochure. This funding can help with maintenance and stocking of the brochures, as well as building a fund to construct more visitor information kiosks.

4

Develop 24/7 365-day visitor information with brochure distribution



Since visitors don't just travel during business hours, offering information around the clock is important. Include brochure distribution.

Visitor information kiosks can offer the information visitors need 24 hours a day/7 days a week. They should cross-promote activities, events, attractions and amenities. The more visitors 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.

The visitor center in Oxnard, California (top right) provides visitor information

in several brochure holders on their door. Note how the bench and pots create a welcoming ambiance.

In North Platte, Nebraska (bottom left and right), their VIC offers brochures in weather-proof holders, so visitors always have access to information.



Suggestion: Another opportunity for visitor information - and a photograph or two or three.



This kiosk in Cape May, NJ (top left and right) is one of our favorites: It has light, shelter from the weather, ample room for brochures and displays, and it fits the ambiance of the locale.

Although the vast majority of visitors do their travel planning online, once they arrive, visitors want to find local information and have a brochure in hand to refer to. Bentley University's Center for Marketing Technology found that:

Only 32% of travel decisions prior to traveling are made using brochures. (#1 resource - internet; #2 resource - friends.)

81% of travel decisions while traveling come from looking at brochures (#1).

Brochures are still important.

This monument in Yarmouth (bottom right) is gorgeous and creates a beautiful gateway into downtown Yarmouth.

An overall good first impression.



Suggestion: Work with merchants on including blade signs. What's in these shops?



5

Yarmouth needs a focus. What's your brand?



Our overall first impression of Yarmouth was good. The streetscapes are very nice (we like the hanging baskets from the lightposts), and Frost Park is beautiful. We ate at Rudder's Seafood for dinner and enjoyed the awesome views and delicious fish and chips.

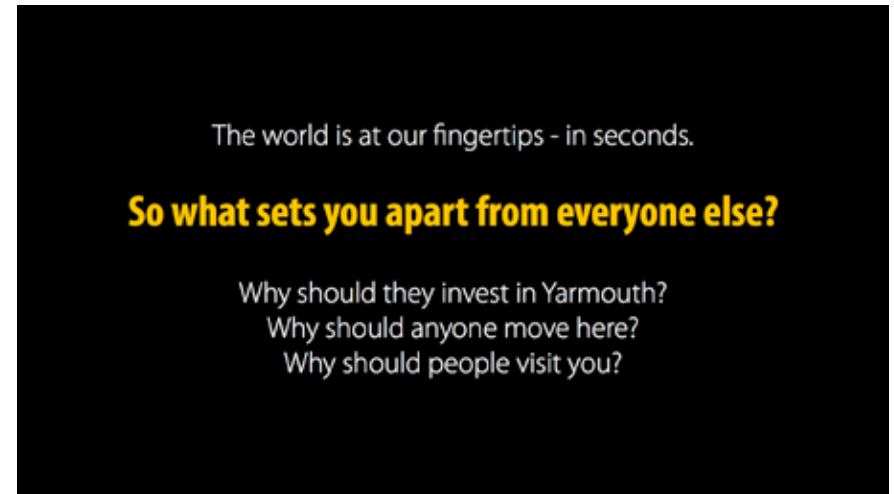
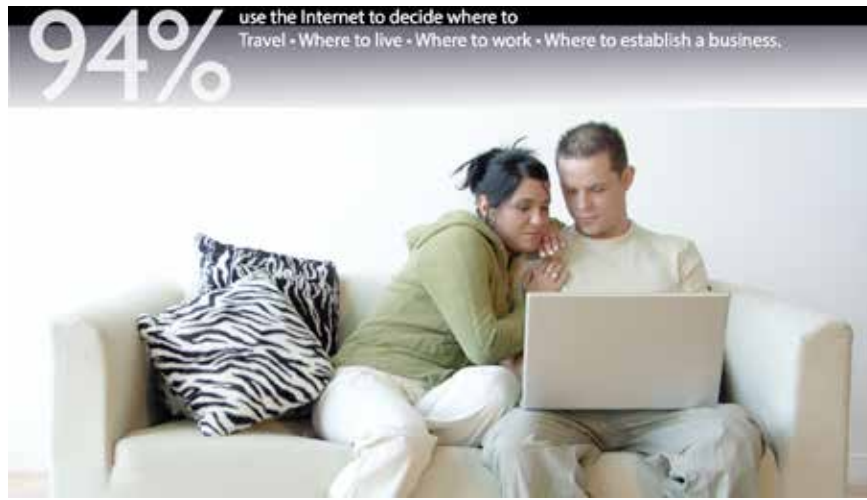
As we walked down the streets, we couldn't tell what was in most of the shops. Add blade signs (perpendicular signs). They should be a consistent height and size, and be professional and decorative.

We also found that there weren't a lot of shops and restaurants that would attract visitors and keep them interested for long. Yarmouth needs a focus

- a brand - something that makes them stand out from the crowd and gives people a reason to want to visit, live and work there.

Why do communities need to have a unique focus to attract visitors, businesses, and investment? The world has changed dramatically over the past 20 years - people have incredible access to more information than ever before.

Every community, every destination is at our fingertips in a fraction of a second.



94% of people with internet access use the web to help them decide where to travel. When they search, they search for activities first - what they are interested in doing. Then they look at the location. Location is always second to the "primary draw" - that one thing that puts you on the map.

We are overwhelmed with advertising messages. The average person is exposed to nearly 5,000 marketing messages a day. This has created a situation where 97% of community marketing is ineffective. Why? Because we filter out everything not directly appealing to us. We notice those things that cater to

our interests specifically, and we tend to ignore the rest.

The question: What do you have in Yarmouth that I can't get, or do, closer to home? You want to set yourself apart from everyone else so that you stand out from the crowd.

Whatever makes you different or better is what you want to focus on. And remember - nearly every place in Nova Scotia has fishing, waterfront views, history, museums, unique shops, seafood, trails, and outdoor recreation.

1

Don't get hung up on logos and slogans -
they are NOT brands.

2

A brand is a perception
What people think of you - not what you say you are.

3

Successful brands have a narrow focus

**YOU MUST
JETTISON THE
GENERIC**

Seven important points about branding:

Logos and slogans are not brands. They are just marketing messages used to support and promote the brand. Disneyland's slogan is "The happiest place on earth." Do you go to Disneyland because of their slogan? No, you go there because of your perception of the experience you'll have once you get there.

Brand identities - or logos - make up 2% of a brand, but they get 98% of the political attention when being developed. But, you say, I thought our logo was our brand! Nope. A brand is a perception. Perceptions build the brand through

visual cues, the people and attitudes, word of mouth, and publicity.

Successful brands have a narrow focus - they are not generic. A generic "we have something for everyone" message is not a brand. To win, you must find your niche and promote it like crazy.

4

Brands are built on product,
not just marketing.



5

Never, ever use focus groups

A brand is also a promise - that you will deliver on that perception. To do that, you need the product in place that will provide the experience. Successful branding is built upon product -- product provides the experiences that fulfill the brand promise.

For example, Jefferson, Texas, with 125 antique dealers - one for every 20 residents - has become the antique capital of Texas, attracting crowds from hundreds of miles away to shop and stay at their B&Bs (top right).

Jackson, Wyoming (bottom left) is another good example. It is home to 110

galleries and western living shops, attracting nearly four million visitors a year. They have defined their focus, and they have encouraged the growth of "like" businesses. The more you have to offer, the further people will come, and the longer they will stay.

Never use focus groups to help develop your brand or brand identity. Focus groups get together to discuss the brand, and they will try to please everyone, and you end up with a "something for everyone" brand. You cannot do branding by public consent.



You never "roll out" your brand until you can "deliver on the promise"



Great brands always start with a plan

1. Discovery

Where you are today through the eyes of a potential investor, resident or visitor.

Your S.W.O.T. analysis
This assessment is your baseline to work from.

2. Ask the locals:

Where do we want to go?
When someone mentions Yarmouth five or ten years from now, what will be the first thing that comes to mind?
What will they say?

You never "roll out" a new brand. It must be earned. Make sure the product is in place that fulfills your brand promise, and gradually introduce your new identity and marketing of the new brand.

Great brands always start with a plan. We've outlined the steps to take to develop a successful branding plan:

1. Discovery. This assessment is part of that - showing where you are today.
2. Input from the locals - ideas, goals, visions for the future.

3. Research & feasibility:

Which of all the ideas that come from the local input makes the most economic sense?

4. Develop the Action Plan:

How to get there.

The Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan

5. Sell it

NEVER, ever, ever, ever make the mistake of asking "is everyone ok with this?"

The decision should be based on feasibility not local sentiment.

The BrandPromise
The botanic arts city



One critical point to remember about branding your community: This is about cash. You want to use your brand to promote economic development - to bring more cash into the town, help your businesses thrive and create jobs.

3. Research and feasibility: Review previous plans done for the community to obtain valuable insights and objectives; look at demographics and competition. Analyze the brand ideas to determine what makes the most sense - what is the most feasible direction.

4. Based on the research, input, and feasibility, develop the steps to take to reach your goal. Lay out the product necessary to create to bring the brand to life and the marketing efforts to communicate the brand to the world.

One good example is St. Albert, Alberta.

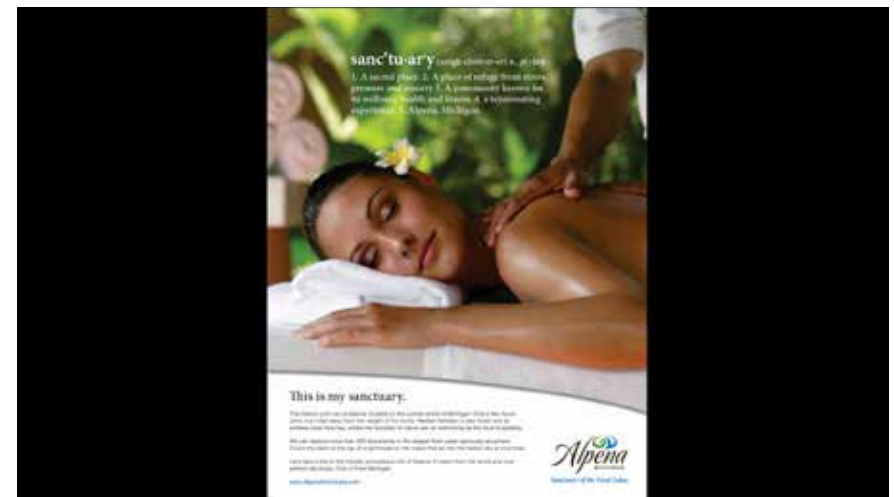


St. Albert, a suburban city of Edmonton, has a population of 61,000. It has been known for having the highest taxes in Alberta, and its challenge was that it wanted to become more than a bedroom community. It wanted to stand apart from Edmonton, generate new economic development, and attract more visitors.

Based on St. Albert's assets and challenges, research and input from locals, they wanted to be known as a town focused on botanic arts and how that can lead to self improvement. We helped them create their "cultivate" brand. "Cultivate the artist in you." "Cultivate your dreams."

The city decided that with a focus on botanic arts, they would help downtown businesses "look" the part. They developed a grant program to assist businesses with outdoor beautification. The coffee house (bottom left) was one of the first with their makeover. They changed their name, added lots of planter boxes, and used umbrellas to help define their space (bottom right). The business owner was thrilled that his business increased 400%.

If you talk the talk, you must walk the walk. Product development is the key to success!



Alpena, Michigan is another example. The town wanted to attract more visitors, but they felt they had no focus. Looking at their assets, they were the home of the only freshwater marine sanctuary in North America, with a beautiful waterfront harbor and lots of paved trails through town. They were very seasonal, and people in their market weren't interested - there was more to do in Traverse City.

Alpena determined to focus on their town as a sanctuary. They are becoming the Sanctuary of the Great Lakes - a sanctuary for the mind, body, and soul.

They are developing events, retreats, and more ways to live up to that brand. Their marketing materials are shown above, reflecting their unique focus.

Find your greatest asset and find a way to leverage it throughout the community.



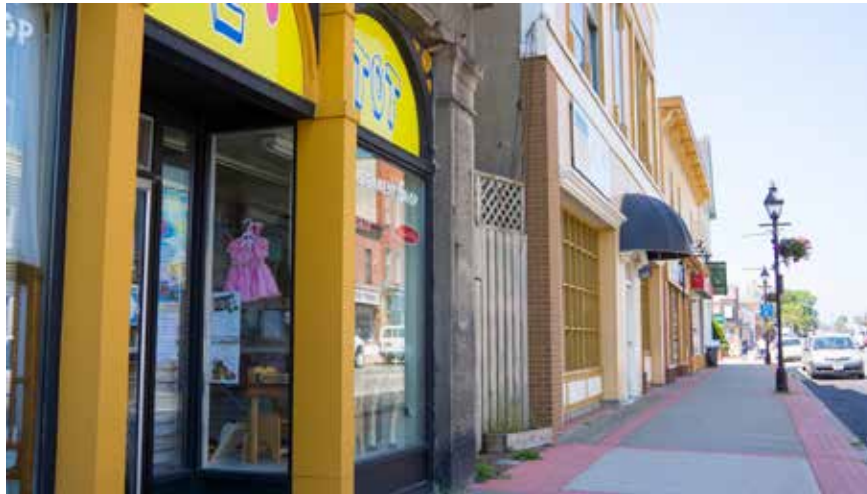
Another great case history is Devon, Alberta, a town just outside Edmonton. They were previously known as the former home of Champion Oil, which did nothing to increase tourism or help economic development.

Because of the efforts of two “champions,” Devon decided to focus on biking, and they have become Bike Town Alberta. With miles of paved trails for all levels of experience, plus a new Mountain Bike Skills Park in the works, Devon is doing a phenomenal job with their brand development. They have brought their brand to life throughout town, with beautification that embodies the

brand.

What's even better, the youth of the community are 100% behind the new branding effort and work towards its continued success.

You have to be first, different, or clearly the best. Devon was the first, and they now own the biking brand.



Signs placed perpendicular to the building allow drivers and pedestrians to read them easily, even from a distance. Note the use of blade signs in Nantucket, MA (top left).

Can you tell what shops are in most of these buildings (top right and bottom left)? Retail signage should always promote what you sell first, then the name of the store.

Perpendicular signs are seen ten times more frequently than facade-mounted

signs.

The most successful downtown shopping districts use blade signs. They have been shown to increase retail sales by as much as 35%.

They should be a consistent height and size, and they should be decorative and in keeping with the ambiance of downtown. Good blade signage eliminates the need for merchants to put out sandwich board signs.

Good job Sandy's. Suggestion: benches, planters, beautification. Make downtown inviting!



People love to spend time in beautiful surroundings. Great curb appeal accounts for 70% of first-time sales at retail shops, restaurants, and lodging facilities - beautification is an investment with great returns. Sandy's (top left) does a good job with their beautification.

Fredericksburg, Texas (population 12,000) hosts nearly three million visitors annually and is the most visited small town in Texas. Visitors drive from Dallas, Houston and San Antonio - hours away - to spend weekends in this charming town (top right). Merchants got together to purchase a quantity of large pots, potting soil, and plants, and they beautified their whole downtown. Their

plants are mostly evergreens to last throughout the year. Consider doing what Fredericksburg did: start a merchant beautification program. Work together to buy the pots, soil and plants.

Women account for 80% of all spending. When shopping with their spouses or significant others, women will be able to spend more time shopping if there are plenty of benches for the guys - or just to rest on themselves (bottom left).

The Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (bottom right) does a nice job with the planters and ART window murals. Benches should be placed up against the building facing the sidewalk - consider adding more.

You have beautiful architecture to work with.



Great job here! Note: Yellow always pulls the eye.



Suggestion: Hanging baskets at each side of the door, large pots underneath each basket.



Yarmouth has some amazing architecture. Adding beautification helps soften facades and creates a welcoming ambience.

This building (top right) has nice window displays, but consider adding planters with flowers outside under the windows as well.

These yellow chairs look great (bottom left). Is there a different location to put the garbage can?

This shop (bottom right) is a fun building, but it still looks very stark. Add hanging baskets, pots of flowers.



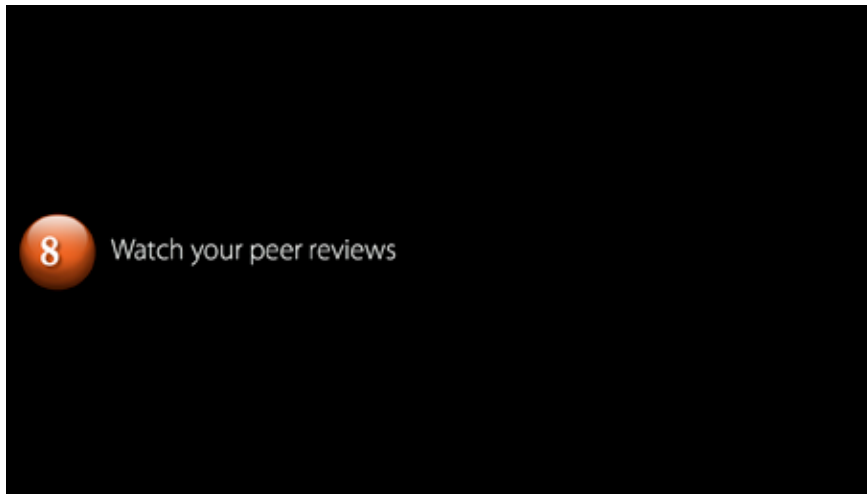
An good first impression. Suggestion: work to make this a showcase.

The visitor centre in Yarmouth is excellent! Very nice looking building, and the staff is knowledgeable and helpful.

The drive from the ferry terminal (bottom right) gives a good first impression, but make sure to keep everything well maintained: keep the weeds away, the landscaping fresh, and the signage easy to see and read.

So far, we've found quite a few attractions and shops that make it on our list of the very best of Nova Scotia's Acadian Shore:

- Le Village Historique Acadien
- Churches of the Acadian Shore
- Gilbert's Cove Lighthouse
- Eglise Saint Bernard Church
- Cape Forchu Lighthouse
- At the Sign of the Whale Gallery
- Waterfront Gallery
- Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
- Shackwacky



More and more travelers are looking at peer review websites to get information for travel planning. Make sure those visitors can find your businesses and attractions.

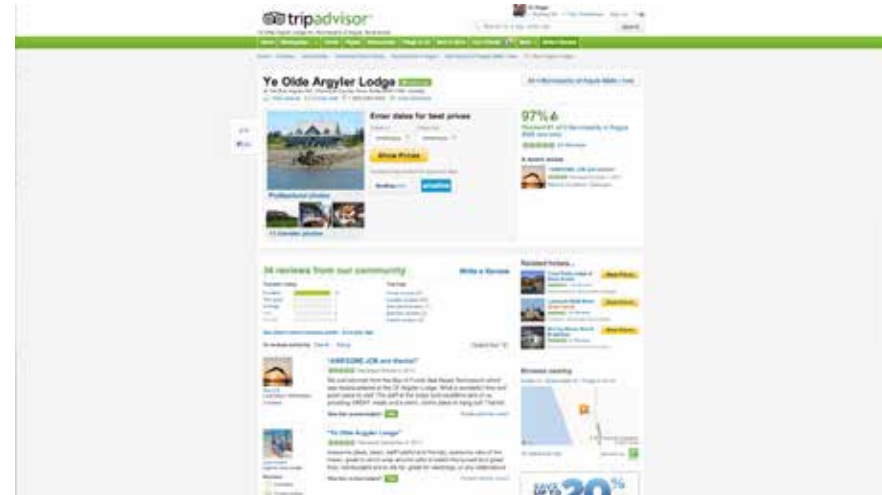
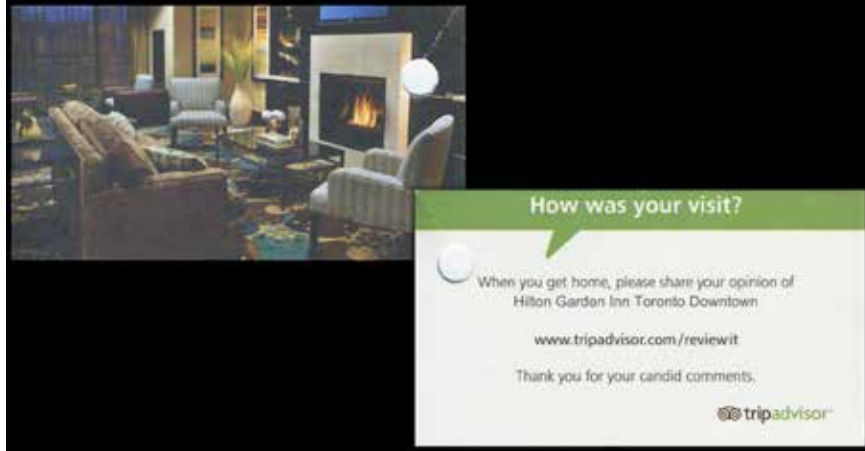
Provide the information to peer review sites such as TripAdvisor and Yelp! about your locations and businesses. You can set up the information yourselves - a customer doesn't have to do it, and it'll be much easier for your happy customers to post a good review.

It's critical that merchants, restaurants, and lodging facilities monitor peer

review sites and make a response if necessary. And it costs nothing to reply to a review, but it shows people you care. Rodd Grand Colony Harbour Inn has done a good job responding to customers' reviews on TripAdvisor.

When you receive accolades from TripAdvisor, another peer review site, or a magazine or travel writer, let the world know about it! The Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site in Baddeck (bottom right) has this sign posted in their entry hall.

Suggestion: Ask your customers to post reviews. Print cards like this one.



Feel free to ask your customers to post a review - first make sure they are happy with your service. Peer reviews are more important than ever before. Consider printing business-card size cards (top left) to hand out to customers who have had a good experience reminding them they can post reviews.

We stayed at Ye Olde Argyle Lodge while in the area - and we made our choice because of their excellent TripAdvisor reviews (top right)

Make sure your tourism organizations are adding content to TripAdvisor. It

does take time, but it's a free service. The folks at TripAdvisor want to be more than just a review site for restaurants and lodging establishments. They are working hard to become the go-to source for planning a trip to just about anywhere. They want the site populated with attractions, activities, photos, and resources.

Old World Bakery (bottom right) attracted us because of its name and the stone building. It would be even more appealing with a good blade sign (so it doesn't get missed), and tables and chairs outside in season.



Suggestion: Paint the building - make it a work of art. Make it fun.



Suggestions: The simpler, the better. We saw "Fisheries Museum"



The Old World Bakery is great (top left). We wished there were some tables and chairs outside!

Sip Cafe (top right and bottom left) has outdoor dining, which is great. Make the ambiance more appealing by painting the building - perhaps a mural. A couple Catalina umbrellas would make it more intimate.

We looked for the Fisheries Museum and saw the wayfinding sign (bottom right). We couldn't read the words in the fish graphic. Be sure to make your wayfinding signage simple and easy to read.

Where is the fisheries museum? Suggestion: "Sweeney Fisheries Museum." Consistency.



We found the W. Lawrence Sweeney Museum (top left), but we weren't sure if that was the Fisheries Museum. Be consistent so that visitors aren't left confused.

Yarmouth has many beautiful historic homes (top right, bottom left and right). We saw in the Visitor's Guide that there is a Yarmouth Sea Captains' Homes and Mercantile Heritage Walk with 28 points of interest, but we didn't find a brochure about it. Consider making it more of a defined tour with a brochure, and possibly a painted line along the sidewalks defining the route, with small

plaques or signs at each historic home. You could also use QR codes at each special site to provide more information, or you could develop a smartphone app for the self-guided tour.



Suggestion: Include in the guide the significance of the Acadian star on homes.



Suggestion: Invest in a wayfinding system. Signs like this are far too small to be noticed.



We found the golf course, which looks very nice (top right).

Make wayfinding a priority.

A good wayfinding system includes the sizes text should be to be easy to read from the appropriate distance. Wayfinding signs should also be decorative to fit your brand.



Develop the "critical mass" needed to be a destination. Successful downtowns need to have a "critical mass" of like businesses grouped together. 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, confectionary.
- TEN destination retail shops: galleries, antiques, home accents, outfitters, collectibles, books, kitchen supplies, garden.
- TEN places open after 6:00 pm: entertainment, theater, performing arts, bars

and bistros, specialty shops, dining, open air markets, etc.

Think of antique malls, food courts, gas stations. People are attracted to the choices. This is referred to as "clustering" and every successful downtown does this. Sometimes you have to orchestrate the effort. Begin with the property owners - not the tenants. It only takes one-third buy-in to see results.

Just start with one or two blocks downtown - make it a showcase.



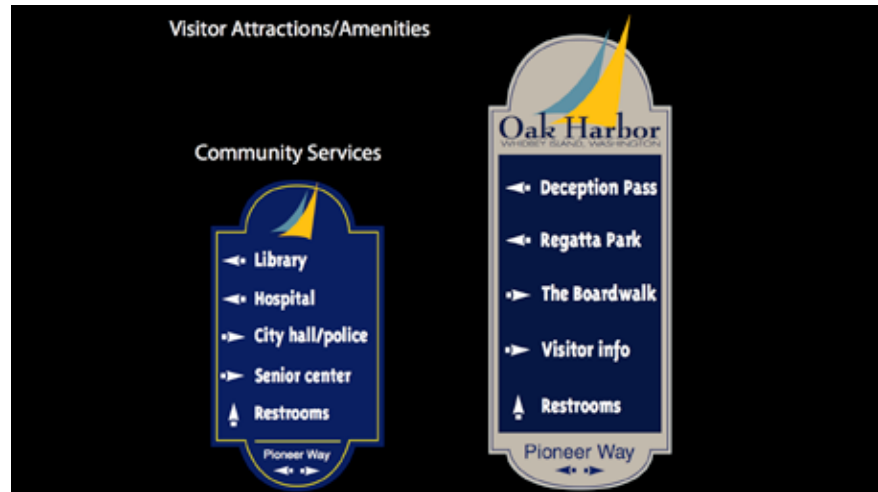
Halifax has a great example of the power of critical mass - clustering of like-businesses. Consider Halifax's Argyle Street (top right and bottom right and left). Within 2.5 blocks, there are 22 restaurants. It has become a major gathering spot rivaling the waterfront, and has become "the" place to hang out. The restaurants are all doing very well, and a new convention centre will soon be built there.

It is frequently necessary to orchestrate the effort to achieve critical mass. In the case of Argyle Street, one of the restaurant owners led the effort to recruit more restaurants.

It helps a downtown become successful if the property owners and merchants develop the "mall mentality." They are working together, and the success of one helps the others succeed as well.

10

Work on developing a wayfinding system



Wayfinding helps people find what you have to offer, and it should always “connect the dots” all the way to the destination. A good wayfinding system will always lead people to the town center, which is critical. You don’t want to only provide wayfinding to direct people out of town.

Yarmouth and the Acadian Shores should develop and implement a regional wayfinding system that includes the town. Developing a wayfinding system is an investment, not an expense.

Connect the dots to your attractions, amenities, and local services through a professionally produced directional and gateway signage system. Appleton, WI uses this decorative wayfinding (bottom left) to help both visitors and residents. Pittsburg, CA (top right) uses a similar style system. Oak Harbor, WA (bottom right) has slightly different sign types for community services and visitor attractions and amenities.

Note how these signs promote the communities’ brands, as well as their attractions and amenities.



Modesto, CA (top left) has a wayfinding system that fits their sunny ambiance.

Barrie, ON recently developed a new wayfinding system. Their community signage design (top right) changes to their downtown design (bottom left) once reaching their downtown core.

Kalamazoo, MI supplements their wayfinding signs with decorative pedestrian maps for their Mall District downtown (bottom right).



French Lick, IN (top left) provides pedestrians with wayfinding that is decorative and colorful. The finial on top fits their French background.

Wayfinding should be a priority - and it needs to be professionally designed. It is a science as well as an art. It plays a role in your branding efforts and is a major component in marketing. Good wayfinding helps visitors (and locals) have a positive experience in your community and increases local spending. It can help build community pride.

When we saw this sign (bottom left) we had to laugh. It looks like it's asking "Which way?" When providing wayfinding, point people in one direction - the best route for them to follow.



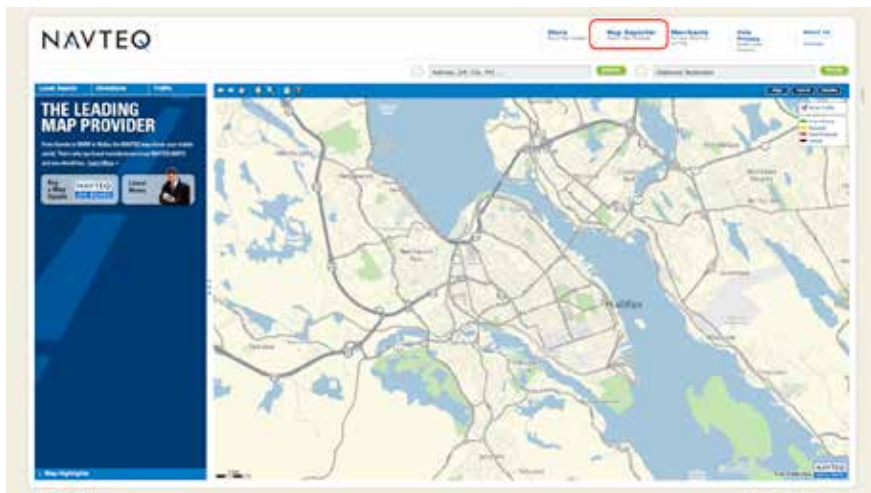
11 Make a list of all of these suggestions, decide which ones should be implemented, then hand out assignments and follow-up with them.

This, and the following suggestions can become your Action Plan!

12 Work with GPS mapping companies to get info updated (Businesses, services, and attractions)

We've heard that the ferry will be coming again next summer! That is great news. In the meantime, don't neglect the ferry terminal. Keep the weeds taken care of so Yarmouth doesn't look like a town on its way downhill. Put up signs promoting the return of the ferry to build anticipation.

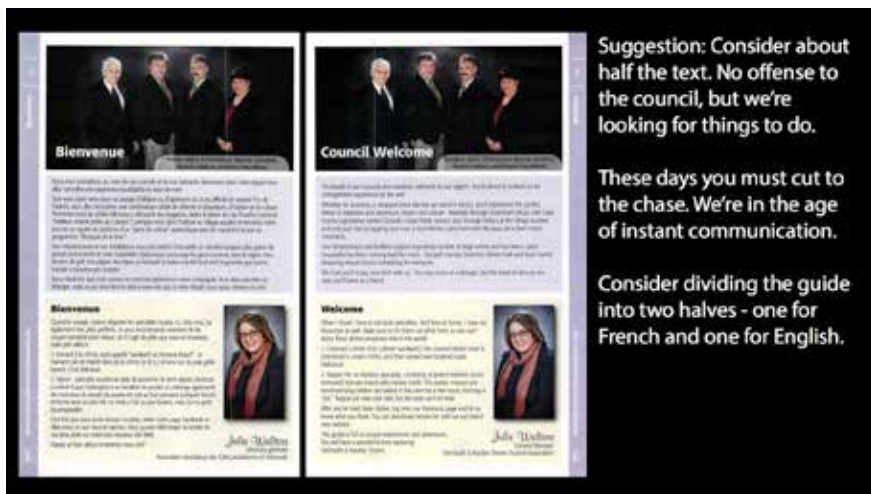
We looked at our Navigation System to see what attractions, restaurants, and shops were included from the region. 20% of people now use navigation systems - on their smart phones, built into new cars, and as separate devices such as Tom Tom, Garmin, and Magellan. It's important to make sure all your businesses, services, and attractions are included and locations are correct.



Suggestion: Use just one knock-your-socks-off photo. Always include people in your photography.

We relate to people more than places or scenic vistas.

Idea: Cape Forchu Light Station.



Suggestion: Consider about half the text. No offense to the council, but we're looking for things to do.

These days you must cut to the chase. We're in the age of instant communication.

Consider dividing the guide into two halves - one for French and one for English.



Suggestions:

1. Consider "Pick your season: with one page each for five seasons. Include specifics.

2. Good photography, but could go up a notch. Photos really are worth a thousand words.
- Always show people enjoying activities
- Make sure they say "Wow! I want to go there!"

Suggestion: Work with GPS mapping companies to update information about your region. Get volunteers with various units to test locations: lodging, restaurants, shops, attractions, and more.

Navteq handles the maps for Garmin, Lowrance, NDrive, as well as for web-based applications such as Yahoo! Maps, Bing Maps, Nokia Maps and Mapquest, and for radio: XM Satellite Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio. Navteq's main competitors are Google and the Dutch Company Tele Atlas, which was purchased by TomTom. TomTom provides data for TomTom and Apple's iOS 6 "maps." Google maps provides its own data. The appropriate URLs

to add information to GPS databases:

- NAVTEQ: mapreporter.navteq.com
- Tele Atlas: mapfeedback.teleatlas.com
- Google Maps: www.google.com/placesforbusiness

Suggestion: Change your guide to: "Your Activities Guide to the Acadian Shore." (top right)

3 Where will my partner and I have the best dining experience?

1 Where should we go for some nightlife?

Where can we get gourmet items for a picnic?

2 What is the one thing we MUST do while here?

Where can I get the best dessert? Name the place AND the dish.

Where can I take the best picture that says I was really there?

Where can I get something locally made? A gift or great souvenir?

Community Profile

Yarmouth & Acadian Shore
It's home to four distinct communities. Make sure to visit all four during your stay.

Clare
Home to the largest Acadian community in Nova Scotia, Clare is a picturesque town located along the shore of Clare Lake. It's a beautiful area with a rich history and a vibrant community. Make sure to visit Clare during your stay.

Yarmouth
The hub of southwestern Nova Scotia, Yarmouth boasts an historic downtown and splendid waterfront, complete with shops and restaurants.

Antigonish
Home to the largest Acadian community in Nova Scotia, Antigonish is a picturesque town located along the shore of Antigonish Lake. It's a beautiful area with a rich history and a vibrant community. Make sure to visit Antigonish during your stay.

St. John's
The heart of southwestern Nova Scotia, St. John's boasts an historic downtown and splendid waterfront, complete with shops and restaurants.

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The heart of southwestern Nova Scotia, St. John's boasts an historic downtown and splendid waterfront, complete with shops and restaurants.

Suggestions:

1. "Pick your season, Pick your passion" instead of by geographic location.
2. Then create sample itineraries promoting your Best Of's in each category - in geographic order.

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Suggestions:

3. Sell things we can do and that will deliver on the promise: "largest Acadian community in Nova Scotia." Where are they? Where are the Acadian shops & restaurants - beyond just historical attractions.
4. Avoid the generic "the hub of Southwestern Nova Scotia, Yarmouth boasts an historic downtown and splendid waterfront, complete with shops and restaurants." Instead, give us one or two "must do's" in Yarmouth that make it worth a special trip.

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Suggestion:

5. Put the Calendar of Events in the back of the guide, not the front.

Make sure your photography makes people say, "We have to see that!"

Pick your season:

- November - January: Winter Solstice
- February - March: Romantic escapes
- April - June: Spring fling
- July - August: Summer fun
- September - October: Fall color

Pick your passion:

Engage locals in creating "itineraries from locals."

- Girls' weekends out

- Kids & family
- Wheels: driving & riding enthusiasts
- On the water
- Hook & bullet fans (fishing & hunting)
- History & Culture
- Photography, wildlife & site-seeing
- Romantic escape
- The environment: hiking, kayaking, canoeing

[illegible]

Suggestions:

6. Lists don't provide the details we need in order to make a decision on what to see or where to go. These can go in the back of the guide.

Tell me WHY I should go see the Bangor Sawmill.

7. Skip the phone numbers.

8. All of this should be developed into sample itineraries. Visitors are looking for specifics.

9. Always showcase the Best Of's and then "While here you might also want to visit the Fisheries Museum on the waterfront. Plan on spending an hour..."



Suggestions:

10. Instead of the generic text, tell us WHY we should visit the "best" galleries along the Acadian shore.

What does Galerie La Rose au Vent showcase? What is it?

11. Instead of phone numbers and website addresses, how about seasonal info or hours of operation.



Suggestions:

12. Where do we find the music?

Remember that visitors won't know where the Roadside Grill is, or when on Tuesday music is played there. Is it year round?



The Day Trips are great.
- Insider tips (awesome!)
- "Specially selected shops" is terrific.

Suggestions:

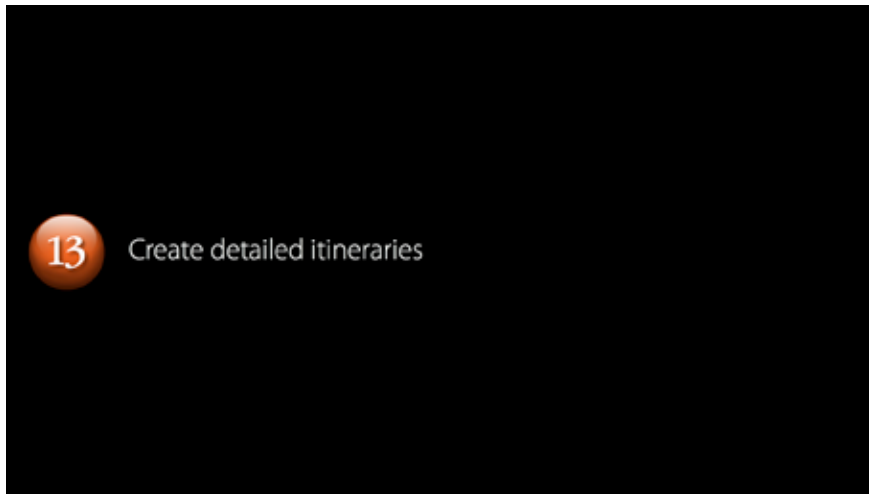
1. Start with beginning & ending locations.

2. Look at the text: would you go there if this was in another area of the province?



The map in the guide (top right) is difficult to use. A map such as the Bluenose Coast map brochure (bottom left and right) is an easier format to use, especially while driving.

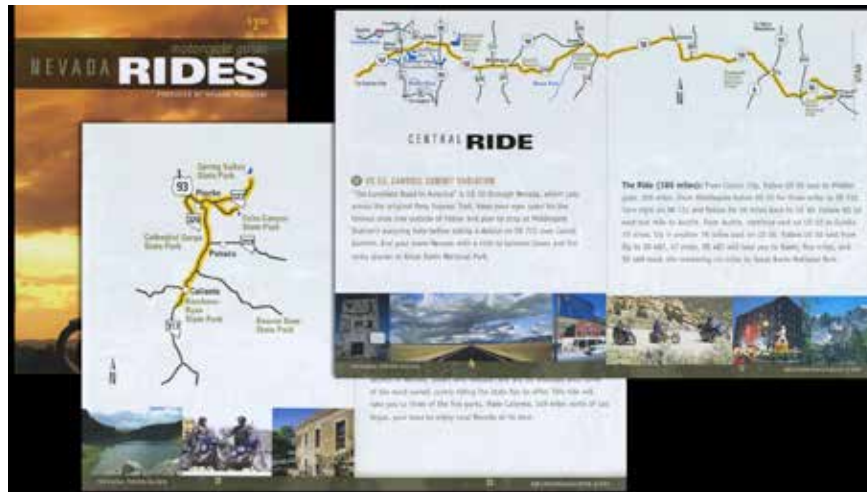
As we were leaving Nova Scotia, we came across a larger format map brochure of Yarmouth and Acadian Shores which was much easier to use. It had considerably less detail than the map in the guide.



One feature to emulate from the Bluenose Coast map brochure (top left) is how each page of one side is devoted to a specific small area, and it includes "Must Do's" and "Hidden Gems."

Create specific, detailed itineraries. Find local writing talent and local club members to help write up itineraries.

The Muskegon, Michigan CVB has some excellent itineraries on their website that can serve as good examples (bottom right).

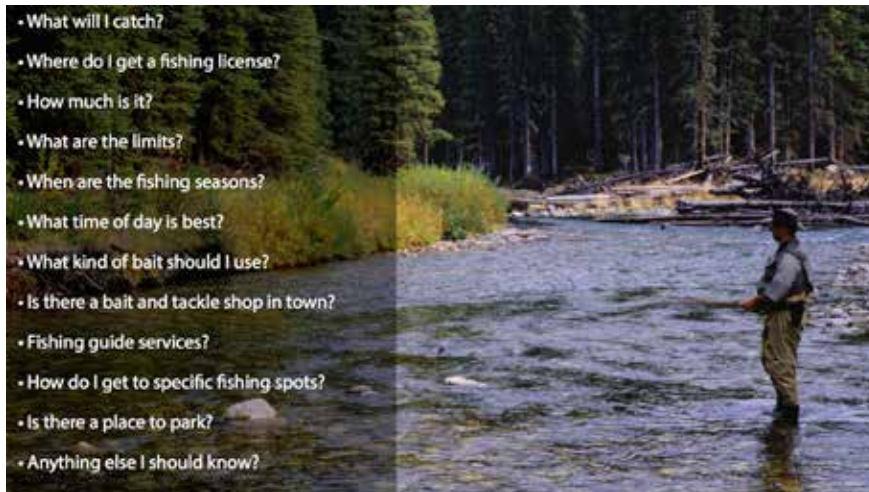
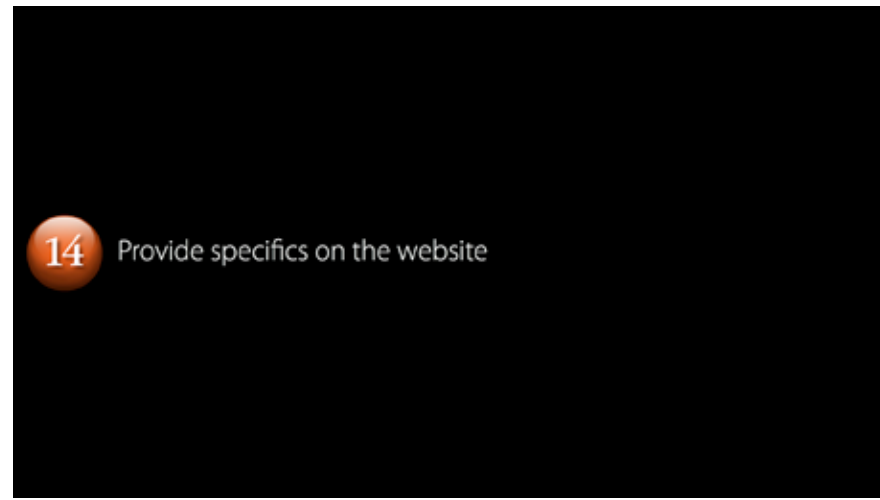


Detailed itineraries can be an excellent sales tool - they show potential visitors a variety of things to do, organized to be easy to follow, and with directions and specifics so that visitors can get the most out of their time. Good itineraries also help potential visitors imagine themselves doing those activities, and that's the first step to getting people to commit to making a visit.

Itineraries can be organized by mode of travel (example bottom left), education (top left), shopping and dining, culture, adventure, and more. They can

also be designed for different groups of people: families, seniors, couples, girls weekends, etc. And they can be designed for one day, two days, and more.

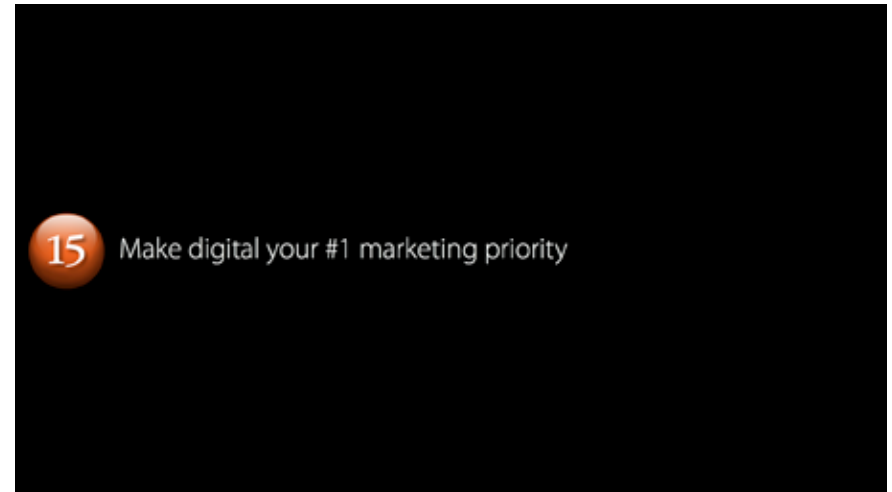
Create itinerary booklets. The cost to produce would be about \$2 each. Distribute them at local outlets and stores that cater to the type of enthusiast each itinerary appeals to.



Ideas for Itinerary Booklets:

- Motorcycle tour routes
- Biking
- Kayaking and canoeing
- Photographers' showcase
- History and culture tour
- Foodies Guide to Yarmouth and the Acadian Shore
- Art lovers' tour

This is the age of specialty marketing. Market the area to specific groups, such as BMW owners, through their publications. Write articles and itineraries that cater to their interests. These groups and clubs are always on the lookout for new material and new experiences for their members.



88% of destination marketing and economic development organizations spend more on printed materials than on internet marketing. They have it backwards. The web should be your number one marketing priority. But remember: It must be good enough to close the sale.

Take advantage of YouTube. The world watched 1.46 trillion YouTube videos in 2012 - and its popularity is growing. Post short, fun videos (30 seconds to 2 minutes). Invite visitors to post their videos of fun times they've had on the Acadian Shore as well.

Website suggestions: novascotiabackyard.com

- Edit the text - it's a bit text heavy. Bullet points work well on websites.
- Add video content whenever possible. Videos sell! (30 secs to 2 min.)
- Promote the Best Of's by area:
 - Bluenose Coast
 - South Shore
 - Yarmouth & Acadian Shore
 - Bay of Fundy and Annapolis Valley
- Add photography showing people enjoying experiences UNIQUE to the area.



What to do:

- The Hidden Gems of the Acadian Shore
- The Very Best of Nova Scotia's Acadian Shore
- The Yarmouth & Acadian Shore Activities Guide
- Yarmouth & Acadian Shore Field Guide (map)
- A "knock-your-socks-off website"
- Yarmouth & Acadian Shore Field Guide app

Our "Very Best of the Acadian Shore" list:

- Le Village Historique Acadien
- Churches of the Acadian Shore
- Gilbert's Cove Lighthouse
- Eglise Saint Bernard Church
- Cape Forchu Lighthouse
- At the Sign of the Whale Gallery
- Waterfront Gallery
- Art Gallery of Nova Scotia
- Shackwacky
- Old World Bakery

You have a tremendous opportunity to become one of Nova Scotia's premier destinations!



Additional notes regarding the Yarmouth & Acadian Shore Marketing Assessment:

Yarmouth and Acadian Shores Official Guide 2013

The Welcome page is very well written and informative, but it could be cut back to only ½ page of text, making it more likely visitors would read it all. The guide does a good job highlighting a few of the specific attractions (Cape Forchu Lightstation, the Village Acadien, and the Musique de la Baie's kitchen parties), and that helps create a good "feel" for the area right away – much better than generalizations. We suggest moving the local specialty food items to their own section – it's great information, and we'd love to see this topic expanded – it's worth having a full page (or two) dedicated to local cuisine.

Consider dividing the French and English portions into two sections – they could be front and back, where there are two covers and the brochure flips over to reveal the other language. The map could remain in the center of the brochure. With the languages combined as they are, the brochure is more difficult to use. Also consider, if possible, making the guide in a larger size to better accommodate all the information for the large area.

The photography is very good, although some of the photos are too small to be as effective as they could be.

Most of the information is provided in the form of lists, and not enough details are included to make planning easy. For example, the Museums, Archives & Universities section doesn't give me a reason why I would want to visit a particular museum. Why would I want to go see the Bangor Sawmill? What is there that makes it worth the drive? Include brief descriptions so visitors will be motivated to drive the distance to see the attractions. It's great to include the web address when it's available, but not every visitor travels with their laptop, or has Internet access while on the road. A little teaser text will get them interested.

Be careful not to use generic text. The Artists, Artisans and Galleries section begins: "Our artists take their inspiration from many forms, including the natural world, our rich pasts and the everyday life of our people today." Isn't that true of nearly every artist? What makes the Yarmouth and Acadian Shore artists truly unique?

The lists of artists, artisans and galleries should also include a brief description – not just their name, address, phone number and web address. Tell visitors

why a gallery should not be missed – what do they have to offer? What type of art does a particular artist specialize in?

One of the most unique characteristics of Nova Scotia is the wealth of culture. Nova Scotia's music is world-wide acclaimed. Yarmouth and the Acadian Shore is an important part of this, and including the "music" section is great. However, how do visitors find the music? Provide specific information about where to find the music, what it is like, and who they might see. Remember that visitors don't know where the Roadside Grill is, or when on Tuesday music is played there. While we were in the area, we found no indication anywhere that we would be able to listen to live music somewhere, and the guide didn't provide enough information to help us find it.

The "Day Trip" sections are good, and including the "Insider's Tips" is great. Be sure to tell visitors where to start their day trip – the guide just includes "stops" but doesn't tell you where to begin or what road to drive on.

The shopping section, with the "specially selected local shops" is great. Promoting your best shops specifically is excellent.

The section on the Living Wharves is also very good. There is information about why we would want to see them, where, and when. In fact, we think it would be very helpful to have signage at each of the wharves with this information too – and cross-sell the other wharves.

We tried using the map when we were in the area, and it was very difficult. In order to find out what a dot means, it's necessary to flip through to one of two different pages, scan for the right color and category, and hopefully find the number. The text is almost too small to read, and we gave up trying. The map should be redone so it's less complex and easier to use.

The trails section provides good information to help visitors find the trails and know how long and/or difficult they are, but the trails don't have any descriptions. Readers are referred to another brochure available at the VIC, but even a one-sentence description of the trails could be enough to entice visitors.

The Inland section should include more details for the "stops" as well. Give specifics.

It's great to see a "Hidden Gems" section! These could also use a bit more description and directions to locate them. The address helps people who have navigation systems, but most visitors don't have them.

It is good to see the number of dining options and lodging facilities available, and the information provided is good, although, here again more description would be helpful. What type of food is served? Are they open for breakfast, lunch, dinner? Do they have one or two specialties?

We suggest organizing the guide a little differently to make it more user-friendly. Roger always suggests “Pick your season, then pick your passion.” Start with the seasons: Four sections, one for each season, with a summary of what a visitor can expect during that season, and what activities are available at these times.

Follow that with the “passions” – things visitors would love to do, such as:

- Golf
- Water sports
- Hiking/biking
- Shopping: Art, Galleries, Crafts
- Culture and Museums
- Culinary

Also include some of the regions “best-ofs” – the best the region has to offer – your true highlights and things people would drive two or more hours to see and do. Creating a “best-of” brochure would be an excellent addition to your marketing – but if you can’t do a separate brochure, be sure to include your best-ofs in the guide itself, with an even more detailed version on your website.

Describing your best-of attractions (or shops or restaurants) will give people reasons to visit. These should be your “anchor tenants.” The Village Acadien is definitely one of your best attractions, and it should be promoted more prominently. We were amazed at what a wonderful attraction it is – the people bring it to life and make it personal and very memorable. The Forchu Lightstation is another – it is amazing!

Use third-party endorsements whenever possible. If a local artist, musician, shop, restaurant or an attraction has been written up in a magazine or received a glowing review, include that to help promote the area.

Add some itineraries as well. They can be two-day, three-day, or week-long itineraries, with specific activities, locations, and timeframes. Include where to eat, what specialty food item to order, where to catch the best sunset view, where to get gourmet picnic fare and where to enjoy the picnic. Where to

find the music, and what to expect – what will a kitchen party be like? Specific details are what people want to read in travel magazines because it helps them visualize and plan their trip – include that same detail in your guide, and you’ll attract more visitors who will spend more money, which is the primary reason to promote tourism.

www.yarmouthandacadianshores.com

- This website opens with nice photos and a clean look.
- What it lacks is a clear differentiation – what makes this area unique and special? Creating an identity is much more than having a distinct logo. What makes this area worth a special trip? That’s what is not readily apparent in this marketing effort.
- The dining section does lean towards promoting the unique, talking about the prevalence of fresh seafood, although all of Nova Scotia is well-known for excellent seafood. One suggestion would be to feature photos of food, rather than photos of the outside of each restaurant. Perhaps including a photo of the restaurant is a good idea when it is in a particularly unique or beautiful location; showing the ambiance is a good thing. But show the food – and people enjoying the food.
- The shopping section needs more information. Highlight some of the best shops, galleries, etc. Shopping, dining and entertainment is the top activity of visitors – you want to tempt your visitors with great photographs and specific information about shops. The benefit of tourism comes from when visitors spend money in your community.
- Consider adding itineraries based on a target market or theme – families, road trippers, girl’s weekends, etc.
- The section about the Region is very good. Thank you for putting in a section about the Acadians! This was very well done.
- Also, the section on Musique de la Baie is great. It gives detailed, specific information about where to find the Acadian music and Acadian food. In fact, this restaurant information should also be included in the dining section.



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