



# Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

**SOUTH SHORE - NOVEMBER, 2013**

**ROGER BROOKS**  
International



## Opportunity Assessment

### INTRODUCTION

In July of 2013, Roger Brooks International conducted an Opportunity Assessment of the Nova Scotia's South Shore, and presented the findings in a two-and-a-half hour workshop in October. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of the South Shore 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 South 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 and their effectiveness. We also use the marketing materials as we travel through the area, determining their usefulness in finding attractions, and to see if the attractions live up to their promise.

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 –

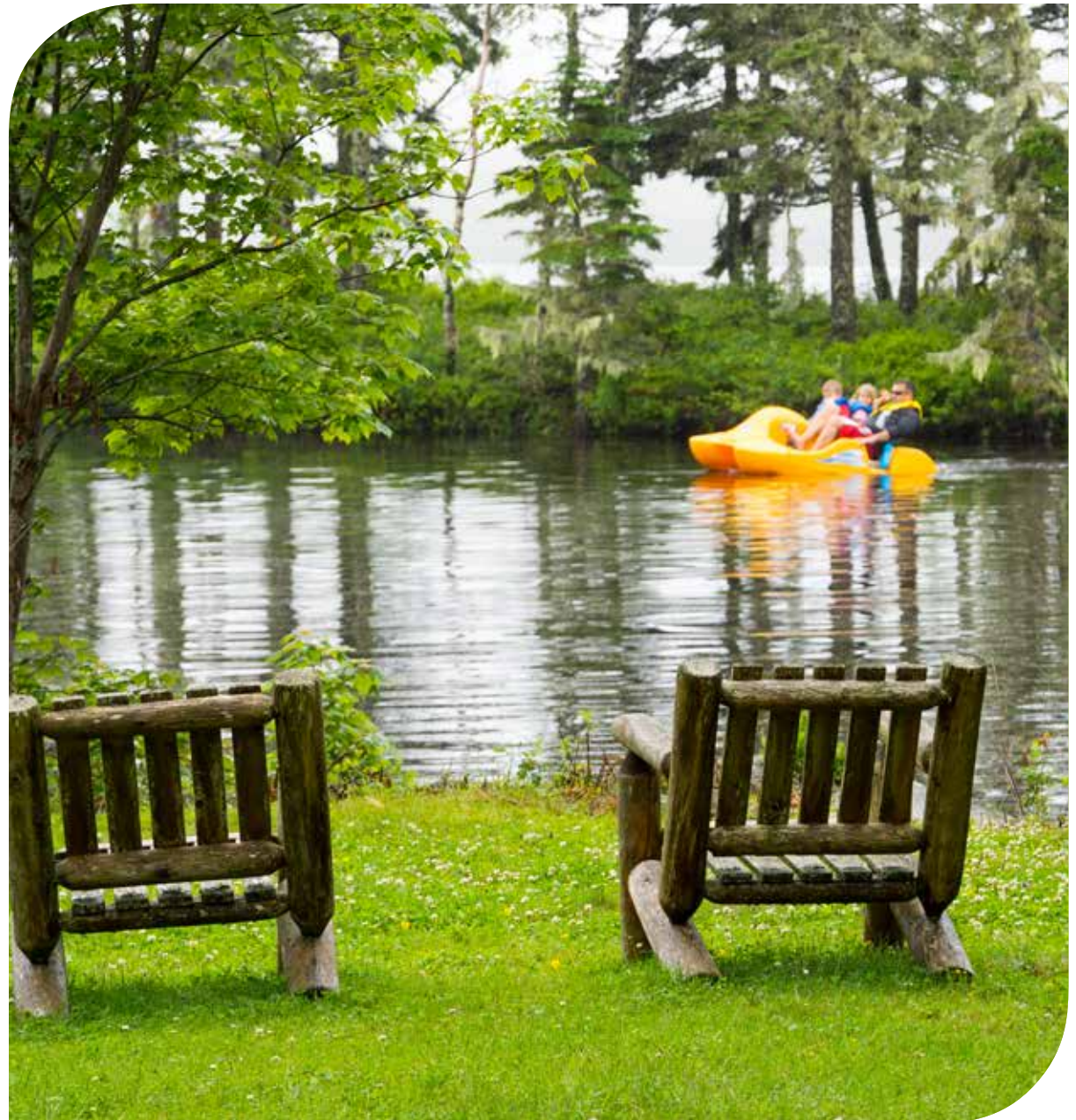


the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

### **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 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 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.

A 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.

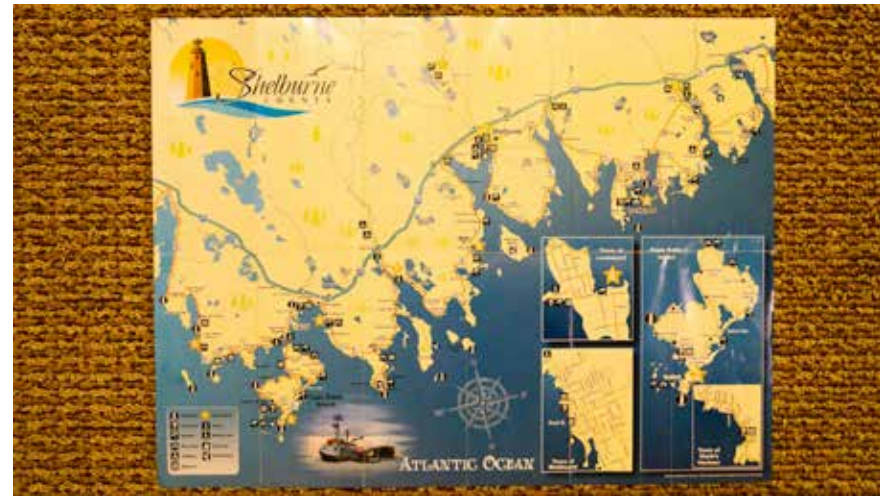




# Findings & Suggestions







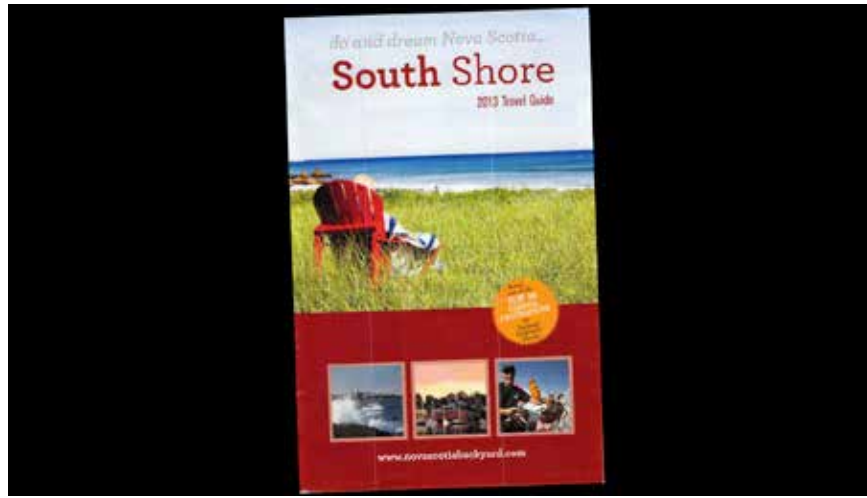
The primary goal of tourism development is to increase the amount of cash that is "imported" into the community. Fortunately, many of the same ingredients that make a destination attractive to visitors, also make the community attractive to residents and new business development - and investment - making 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 South Shore region of Nova Scotia.

Make it easy, first, to find the South Shore and second, to navigate throughout the area by promoting and directing people to your attractions, amenities and services through effective wayfinding.

We used several different marketing pieces to help us navigate the area and locate attractions: The South Shore 2013 Travel Guide, the Shelburne County map brochure (top right and bottom left and right, Explore Queens County, and Discover Shelburne County. They each had different approaches to helping visitors.





Since the South Shore area contains many attractions and includes Queens County, Shelburne County, Lunenburg County, and part of the Halifax Municipality, it can be a real challenge to market! To cover this territory for the assessments, we performed the Bluenose Coast assessment separately from the rest of the South Shore, and this report covers the south west portion.

Even with the territory divided, this section of the South Shore has many attractions, and many different marketing pieces (top right).

Our experience:  
Day One

We headed out to find Port Medway (bottom right).



Wait a second. I thought we were already in Port Medway.



Great sign. Suggestion: Now provide wayfinding to each.



Good wayfinding - and we wanted to try to stay on the "Lighthouse Route." We came to this wayfinding sign (top right) which showed Port Medway straight ahead, and right turn to Beach Meadows, with shopping, museums, and restaurants. We looked forward to checking it out!

Still following the signs (bottom left), but it looks like we still have 2K to go before we reach Port Medway. The Lighthouse Route sign doesn't indicate if the route is straight or to the right (or both).

Nice welcome sign (bottom right), and it tells us what we can see in Port Medway - good information! It wasn't as easy to find the Old Meeting House and Cemetery, so continue the wayfinding signage all the way to the destinations.



In business? Open? Suggestion: Make it obvious you are open. Planters, better signage, lighting. Remove the plastic in the windows.



A beautiful spot!



Suggestion: Give the lighthouse a little TLC (paint).



Suggestion: Print some of these and put in a brochure holder. Good map!



We saw the Ocean Breeze (top left), but it didn't have an "open" sign, and we couldn't tell if the lights were on - we didn't know if it was open. Businesses should try to make it obvious when they're open, and welcome customers. An "open" or "welcome" flag perpendicular to the building would be great. A planter beside the door would also create an inviting entry.

Port Medway is a beautiful spot! Very nice welcome sign (top right).

This posted map is excellent (bottom right) and would be great for visitors to

be able to take with them. Consider printing them and have them available in a weather-proof brochure holder.

Medway Head? Hmm. Probably not a good idea. Suggestion: Add a sign noting the distance.



Suggestion: Add better signage to help visitors find all the lighthouses.



We considered turning around here.



Where the heck is East Berlin? Is this it? Where are all the shops, museums & restaurants?



We saw from the South Shore brochure that another lighthouse was nearby - Medway Head - so we decided to try to find it. The road was unpaved, and we drove and drove, and wondered how far we needed to go (top and bottom left). Much of the road was full of potholes, so it should be graded, or else this lighthouse shouldn't be promoted. When we finally found it (top right), we felt that it was worth the drive.

distances and road conditions (if poor) on the signs as well.

We continued on our way, heading towards West and East Berlin (bottom right). We thought the sign for this turn said there were shops, museums, and restaurants.

Suggestion: Add signage for the lighthouses - many of them are difficult to find, and sometimes they aren't even noted on any highway signage. Note





It looks like the shopping, museums and restaurants are here! (top left) We remembered the sign we saw promoting them before we reached Port Medway (top right).

So we continued on - still looking for more shops, and the restaurants and museums.

This sign caught our attention - a pottery studio (bottom left). But the driveway led far into the woods (bottom right). To help visitors, be sure to add a distance to your sign if your shop or studio can't be seen from the road.



Excuse me? Did we do something wrong?



Suggestion: Remove all of those nice signs. This was very frustrating. Does anyone maintain this? If so, it's summer season. Get to it!



When we reached this fork in the road, we were very confused (top left). We found a parking lot, a "No Turning Area," and an overgrown boardwalk. What happened to the restaurants, shops and museums?

When signage or marketing builds an expectation that isn't fulfilled, visitors are let down. Be sure not to over-sell what you have. Are all those nice signs old? Overly hopeful? They need to be removed.



Very few coastal view corridors along Highway 3 between Petite Riviere and Liverpool.



Suggestion: A great place for visitor information.



And a beautiful beach.

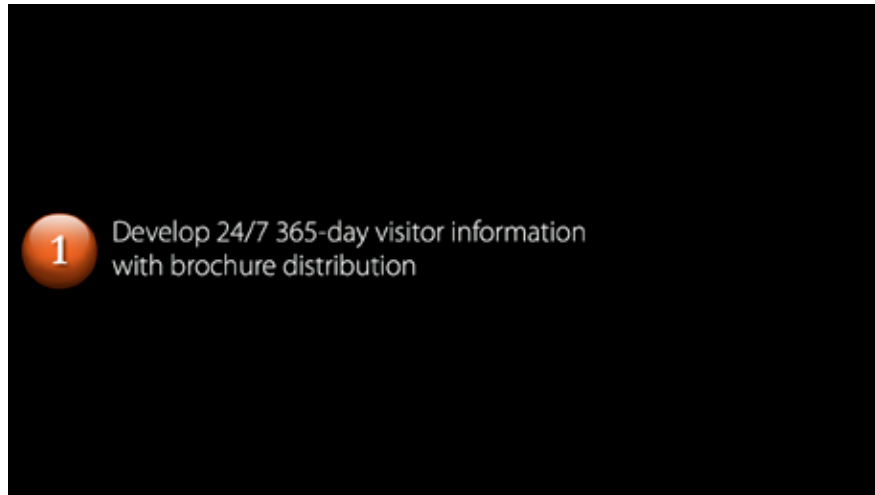


This looks like a terrific community asset. Not too sure what it is, but it looks very nice.



We continued along our route from Petite Riviere to Liverpool. This drive doesn't have many coastal views or any particular attractions besides Port Medway.

When we drove into Brooklyn and Liverpool, our first impressions were very good. The park and beach (top right and bottom left) are gorgeous. This gazebo would be a great place to add some visitor information - a display and weather-proof brochure holder.



Liverpool has a very nice visitor information centre (top left), but no access to visitor information after hours.

A simple outdoor brochure holder kept stocked with information would remedy that.

This gazebo in Beatty, Nevada (bottom left) was built by volunteers from a kit, and a local carpenter built the interior displays and brochure holders.

Banff, Alberta has portable visitor information kiosks (bottom right) that they set up in season throughout town.

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.





In the Central Bruce Peninsula in Ontario, visitors can get information after business hours from this simple weather proof brochure holder (top left).

Mahone Bay has one of the most attractive visitor information centres (top right). On either side of the door are weather-proof brochure holders.

This attractive visitor center in Oxnard, California (bottom left) has brochure holders right on the front door for after-hours accessibility.

In North Platte, Nebraska (bottom right), their VIC offers brochures in weather-

proof holders, so visitors always have access to information.

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.

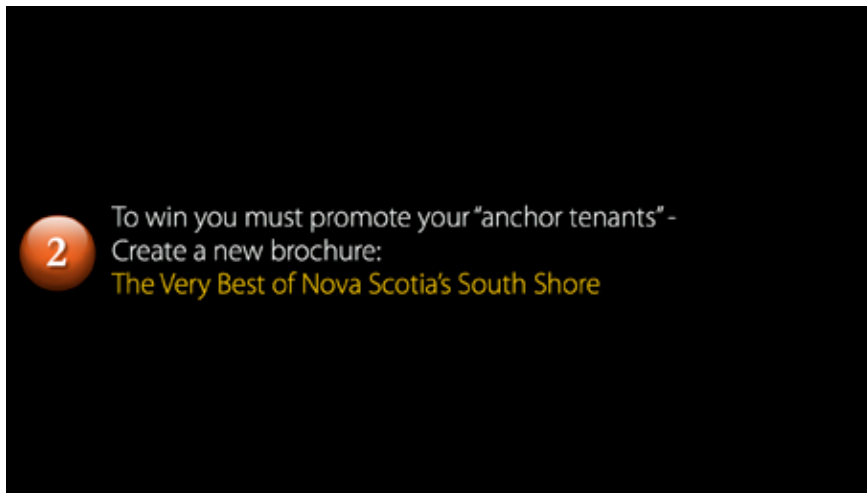


The Blacksmith Shop and Museum looks great! (top left) The wagon and flags really add to the character and appeal.

The signs in front of these shops (top right) look great - especially with the landscaped planter. Good job promoting what you have to offer: Hostel, Internet, art gallery, apparel, studio, collectibles, crafts, quilts. There are almost too many words to read if you're driving past - consider shortening the sign even more: Hostel, internet, art, apparel, collectibles, crafts, quilts. Be sure to make note of any upcoming events.

We drove down St. Catherine's River Road to Kejimikujik Seaside Adjunct Park (bottom left and right).





Kejimikujik Seaside is a gorgeous park. The interpretive displays (top left and right) are excellent. Consider adding a weather-proof brochure holder for the Kejimikujik Visitor Guide - it is such an excellent publication. It has good information about the facilities and trails at the Seaside Adjunct as well as a wealth of information about the inland National Park and Historic Site. It would encourage visitors at Seaside to also go to the inland park.

Consider creating a new brochure for the South Shore that promotes the very best attractions, shops, amenities, activities, and restaurants. Your “very best” are your anchor tenants - and they should be promoted specifically. People will come for the anchor tenants, and while here, they’ll also visit your other businesses, attractions, and amenities.



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

Here's a sample criteria:

- 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 South Shore.

At the back of this report we'll show you our ideas for some of the "Best Of's." Kejimikujik National Park Seaside is one of our picks.

- 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)



Be sure to include distances on signs from highways to parks. This was 8.5km from the hwy.



Suggestion: Have this map printed and put in a brochure holder.



Suggestion: Add open hours to the sign for Ocean Kayak Tours & Rentals and the Surf Shop (opposite - bottom right). Also consider adding a brochure holder and brochure describing the tours and rentals.

We continued driving along Highway 103, making sure to leave the highway to drive down each of the peninsulas. We drove down to Thomas Raddall Provincial Park (top left and right). Add distances to the signs on the highway, so that visitors don't get discouraged and turn back - 8.5km seems like a long way when you're not sure where you're going. It is a very nice park, and the

trail system is well signed. Consider printing the map and having it available in a brochure holder.

We also drove down Highway 3 to East Sable River, and then down the west side of Sable River (bottom right).



Listed as an attraction. Public? Private?



Now what? Suggestion: Add signage, distances, amenities - anything to help us. We left.



Looks like a nice little town.



Suggestion: If you've got it, use it.



We looked for the Sable River Swinging Bridge - included as a Hidden Gem in the Shelburne County map/brochure. We found the parking lot, which was empty, and we weren't sure where to go from there (top left and right). Suggestion: Add more information on signs to let visitors know where to go, if there is a charge, if there are amenities, etc.

a parade. It looks like a very nice fishing village, and the murals are great (bottom left and right).

We continued along Highway 3, heading to Lockeport, which was highly promoted for its famous beach, festivals, murals, and historic walking tour. We were looking forward to seeing the town, and we were lucky to arrive during





The parade was fun (top left), and there were vendors selling lots of food. Everyone was having a great time.

The Little School Museum (top right) is charming!

The Crescent Beach Centre (bottom left and right) is a nice visitor centre, but could use some repainting to keep it looking fresh.

The beach looks great - it was a wet day, though, so we weren't able to get out there and enjoy it.



After Lockeport, we headed northwest, back up the peninsula (top left), and then south into the next peninsula (top right). We saw the Sandy Point Lighthouse (bottom left), and continued on to Shelburne.

Shelburne's gateway sign gave us a very good initial impression of the town (bottom left). Founded in 1783 - so much history!





What a stunning lighthouse! The prettiest one in Nova Scotia!



Washrooms! Promote them on your maps!



Back in Liverpool, one of the first things we wanted to do was to see Fort Point Lighthouse, and we were not disappointed! It is stunning! And the landscaping surrounding the lighthouse is absolutely gorgeous! It is definitely one of the South Shore's "Best Of's."

We loved some of the historical ambiance we found - like this soldier in front of the historic home (top left).

The number one reason visitors stop is to use washroom facilities - so promote

them! Mark them on your maps. And if you put public washrooms in a location where visitors can spend money, visitor spending will increase. If travelers need to stop to use the washrooms, then while they're stopped, they are likely to want a snack, lunch, or visit a shop.





The museum in the lighthouse is terrific. Where else can you turn the crank on a hand-held foghorn? (top left) Interactive displays like this are fun and memorable. People always want activities - not just things to look at.

The interpretive displays (top right) are excellent, and the grounds are lovely. The roses were very fragrant that time of year.

The trees and houses in the neighborhood around the lighthouse are beautiful (bottom left). And the fire hydrants are great - what fun! (bottom right)





Another beautiful historic home, ornamented with a fun painted fire hydrant (top left).

We visited the Queens County Museum (top right and bottom left), and enjoyed the experience - especially the ghosts! They really helped bring the history of the town to life.

Liverpool has some great buildings downtown (bottom right). Downtown has a lot of potential for becoming a greater destination.





We went through a number of shops and museums in Liverpool, including the very interesting Sherman Hines Museum of Photography (bottom right).

Some of the architecture is stunning.





Downtown wasn't very busy, and there were plenty of available parking spaces, so we wondered why have meters? Consider taking them out - when downtown parking becomes more in-demand, you could reconsider charging for parking.

More than ever before, towns need to find a focus - a brand. Times are changing, and more communities are losing their core industries upon which they were founded, so they need to find a "second act" to stay economically viable. But competition for new industry, visitors and residents is fierce.

People are now overwhelmed with advertising messages. On average, about 5,000 marketing messages each day! This has created a situation where 97% of community marketing is ineffective. Why? Because we filter out everything not directly appealing to us.

The question: What do you have in Liverpool that I can't get, or do, closer to home? With the world at our fingertips in seconds, what sets you apart from everyone else? You must set yourself apart; you need to stand out from the crowd.

1

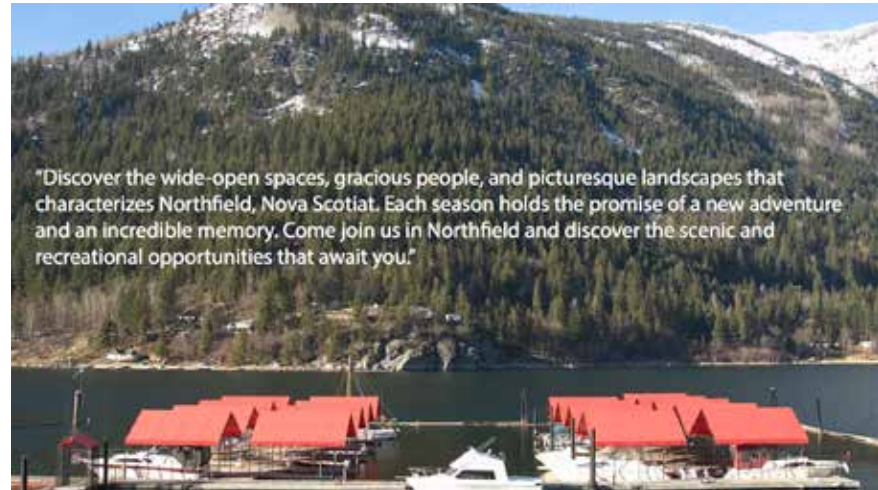
Don't get hung up on logos and slogans -  
they are NOT brands.

2

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

3

Successful brands have a narrow focus



Here are the seven things to do and know to successfully brand your town.

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. "We have something for everyone" is not a brand. Too often communities try to promote themselves using generic words and phrases, like the text in the photo bottom right. But if your marketing messages can fit anybody else, they aren't effective. You need to have a narrow focus and stand out from the crowd to get noticed. Find your niche and promote it like crazy. Don't just market what you have; market what makes you different.



4

Brands are built on product,  
not just marketing.



**City** Jefferson, Texas  
**Population** 2,500  
**Brand** Antique Capital of Texas  
**Foundation** 125 antique dealers  
**Results** Now the B&B Capital of Texas



**City** Jackson, Wyoming  
**Population** 12,000  
**Brand** The home of Western Living  
**Foundation** 110 galleries & western living shops  
**Results** Nearly 4 million visitors a year

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.

Planning for success is key - with a strong "brand" and retail focus. For example, Jefferson, Texas, with 125 antique dealers, has become the antique capital of Texas, attracting crowds from hundreds of miles away to shop and stay at their B & Bs.

Jackson, Wyoming has 110 galleries and western living shops, attracting nearly 4 million visitors a year. These towns 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.

6

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

7

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 the foundation to work from. Your baseline.

**2. Ask the locals:**

Where do we want to go?  
When someone mentions us five 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.

Base your brand on its feasibility - not just local sentiment. Brands are meant for economic development, not just to feel good. The way to develop a successful brand is to start with a plan.

The steps to creating a successful branding plan start with assessing where you are today. This assessment is a very good starting place. Look at your assets, liabilities, strengths and weaknesses.

Next comes community outreach - one of your greatest assets is your people, so you want to ask them for their ideas, thoughts, input.



### 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.

### 5. Sell it

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

The decision was based on feasibility not local sentiment.



Research is another important step in the process of developing a successful brand. Find out about your competition. Look at the feasibility of the branding ideas. Will they attract business, investment, visitors? How much will it cost? What makes the most economic sense?

Based on everything you've learned so far, you can start developing an action plan - this includes product to be developed or enhanced, as well as marketing. After coming up with your plan, you're ready to start working on the "look and feel" of your brand - your logo.

Then, you can go out and get support for the plan. Generate enthusiasm. Sell the idea. There are always going to be people who don't like it, because it has to be specific; it has to be focused to be successful. But it'll be based on feasibility - not just local sentiment.

One successful example of a city that developed its new brand is St. Albert, Alberta (bottom right).



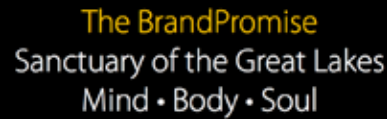
St. Albert, a suburban city of Edmonton, has a population of 61,000. It has been known for having the highest taxes in Alberta, and its challenge was that it wanted to become more than a bedroom community. It wanted to stand apart from Edmonton, generate new economic development, and attract more visitors.

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!



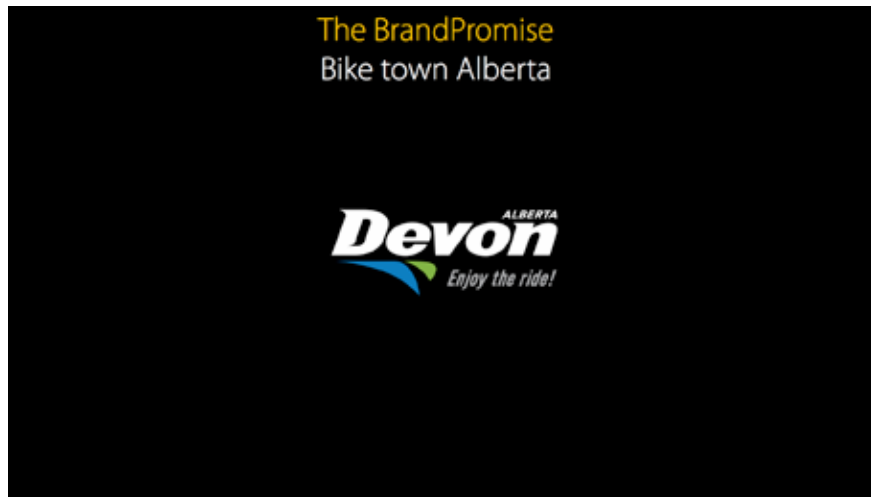


Alpena, Michigan is another example. The town wanted to attract more visitors, but they felt they had no focus. Looking at their assets, they were the home of the only freshwater marine sanctuary in North America, with a beautiful waterfront harbor and lots of paved trails through town. They were very 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.

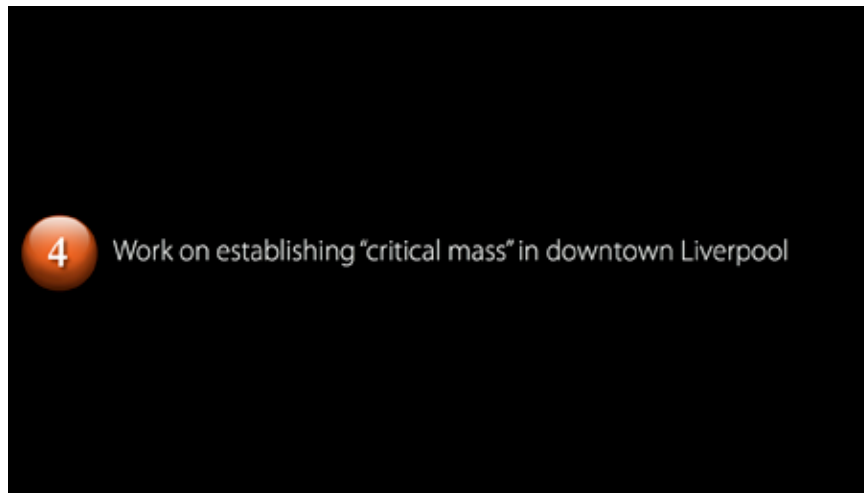
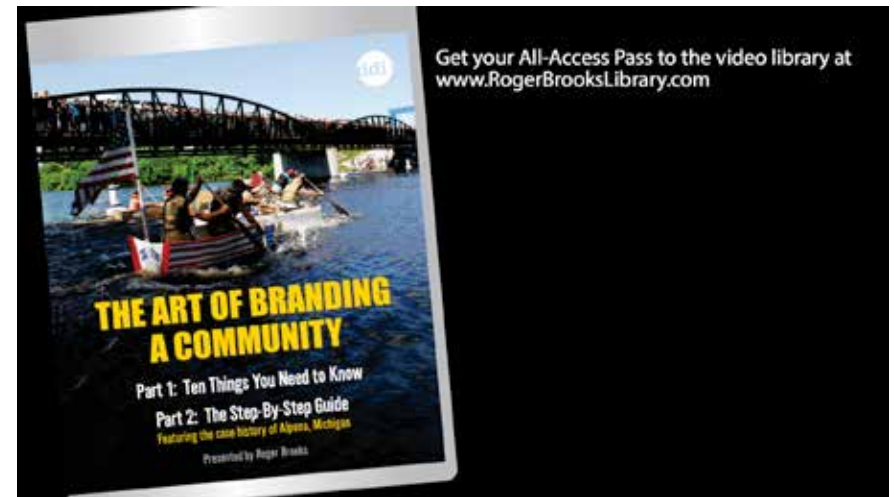
Because of the efforts of two “champions,” Devon decided to focus on biking, and they have become Bike Town Alberta. With miles of paved trails for all levels of experience, plus a new Mountain Bike Skills Park in the works, Devon is doing a phenomenal job with their brand development. They have brought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





Some of Devon's champions are shown above (top left).

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, 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, and all the shops do more business when they are clustered together.

Downtown shops need to develop the "Mall Mentality": Open consistent hours and days; like-businesses grouped together; open evening hours; work together to have greater success.



Food courts (top left) are another example of clustering like-businesses. They have a critical mass of restaurants, which attract many more people than one or two lone restaurants would.

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.





More notes and impressions while in Liverpool:

We weren't familiar with Maud Lewis, so we didn't know what this place was (top left). Add signage to let visitors know what they can see here. We've since learned about Maud Lewis and her charming art (and her diminutive house).

The Rossignol Cultural Centre looks like a very nice facility (top right). The variety of museums is astonishing - and the Outhouse Museum must be one-of-a-kind!

The brewery (bottom left) was recommended by a local as a good place for lunch. It wasn't open, however, even though the signs said it was.

Suggestion: Clean up the exterior to give more curb appeal. Add some beautification. Be sure to take down "open" signs when you're closed.

This looks like a great museum.



Suggestion: Rentals? Sales? Tours? Hours? Add color to the building. Pull us in!



We were very surprised how underutilized the waterfront was. A GREAT opportunity!



The Hank Snow Museum looks wonderful (top left).

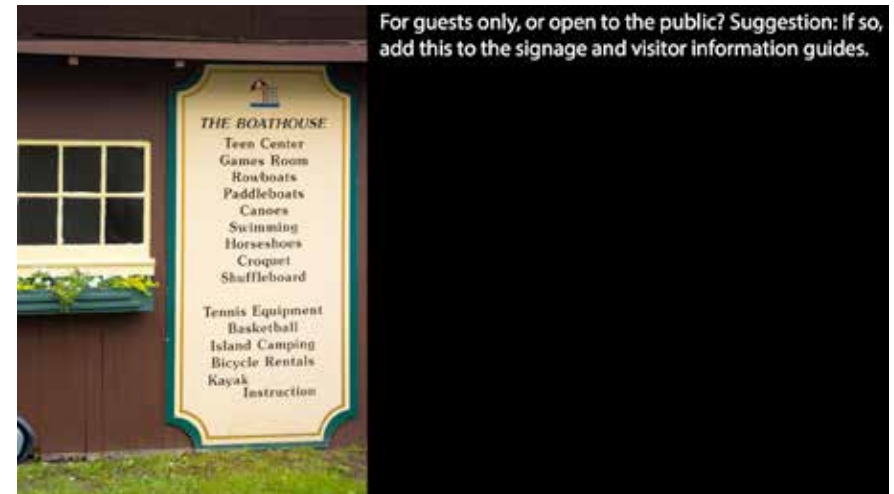
Liverpool Adventure Outfitters (top right) looks like it might be a great place to go to for a kayaking trip. Not sure if they do rentals, sales, tours? Add more signage to let people know exactly what is offered and what business hours are.

It looks like the waterfront in Liverpool might present some great opportunities worth exploring! Nothing attracts visitors more than activities

on a beautiful waterfront.

We checked out the Whitepoint Resort (bottom right). Driving in to the resort gave an excellent first impression.





The resort itself looks gorgeous. The landscaping, upkeep, even windowboxes on the cabins - all looks very nice.

We looked the resort up on TripAdvisor, where it is ranked #2 of 2 hotels or B & B's in the area. With so few other lodging facilities, the ranking doesn't mean much. We also looked at guest comments, with most being excellent and very good. There are always going to be some negative reviews, and we found that Whitepoint management is very, very good about responding courteously to any negative comments. Good job!

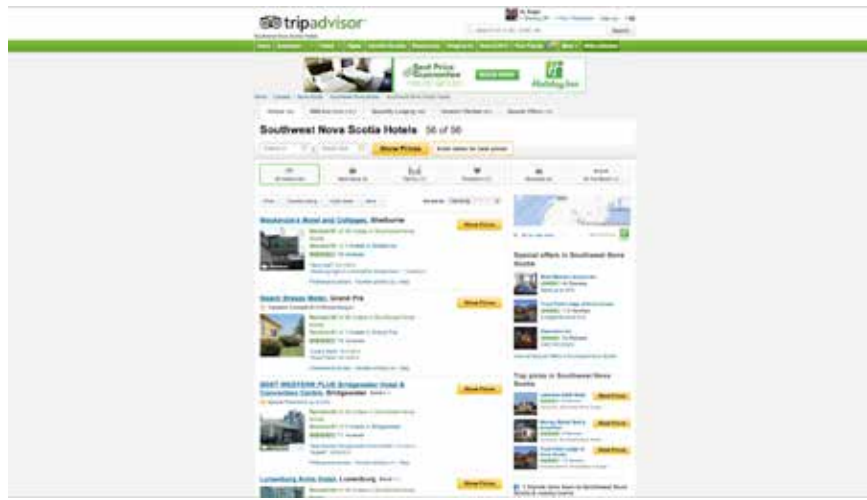
Fantastic curb appeal.



As we headed towards Port Mouton, we stopped at the Quarterdeck Grill at Summerville Centre (all photos this page). What a gorgeous setting, and great curb appeal! The entrance really invites you inside.

Beautiful beach as well. Quarterdeck Grill is definitely on our list of the South Shore's Best.





We looked at TripAdvisor for reviews of the Quarterdeck Beachside Villas and Grill, and they were very good. So, what should we do, but go ahead and have dinner (top right). It was very good.

Suggestion: Add wayfinding (bottom right) to make it very easy to see where Historic Dock Street is located.

We headed to Shelburne, and our first stop was the Tourist Information Centre (bottom left). The staff was very helpful. The Centre is in an excellent location - right at the beginning of Dock Street.

Suggestion: Wayfinding - "Historic Dock Street" with an arrow to the left.



Suggestion: Just do "all museums" - Historic Dock Street IS a museum and a single experience.



Historic Dock Street is a fantastic attraction! The ambiance is perfect, the setting is gorgeous, and the museums are excellent. Consider setting one price for "all museums," rather than individual prices for separate ones (top right).

What a great place!

We went to the Dory Museum and learned about how they are made (bottom left), and we went into several other museums along Dock Street. The County Museum was excellent (bottom right), and the little shops were a lot of fun to visit.





Suggestion: Instead of "museum complex" promote it as "Shelburne's Historic Dock Street."



Other museums? Another charge? Part of the one ticket? Another reason to keep it simple.



It's a very scenic street (top left), and history permeates every inch. We learned quite a bit about the history of Shelburne, and it was fascinating.

The term "museum complex" sounds kind of industrial - make it sound more fun by promoting it as "Shelburne's Historic Dock Street" - after all, the entire street is almost a museum.

We weren't sure if every museum was part of the museum complex. Make it easy for visitors by keeping the pricing as simple as possible - all museums for one price.

We thought this was open to the public, but apparently not. If so, let us know.



Suggestion: After 10:00 am (during the peak season) this would be a pedestrian boulevard. Even the modern signs should be removed.



The Osprey Arts Centre looks wonderful (top left). We weren't sure if it was open, and if there were exhibits to see, or if it was only for performing arts. Consider making the signage a little more clear.

Cooper's Inn (bottom left) looks wonderful. According to TripAdvisor (bottom right) a lot of other people think so too.

Suggestion: Every day after 10:00 a.m. during the peak season, turn time back on Dock Street. Close it to vehicular traffic, and have costumed interpreters walk around, performing their tasks. (There are already costumed interpreters in some of the museums.) Expand the historic experience. Visitors will love it!



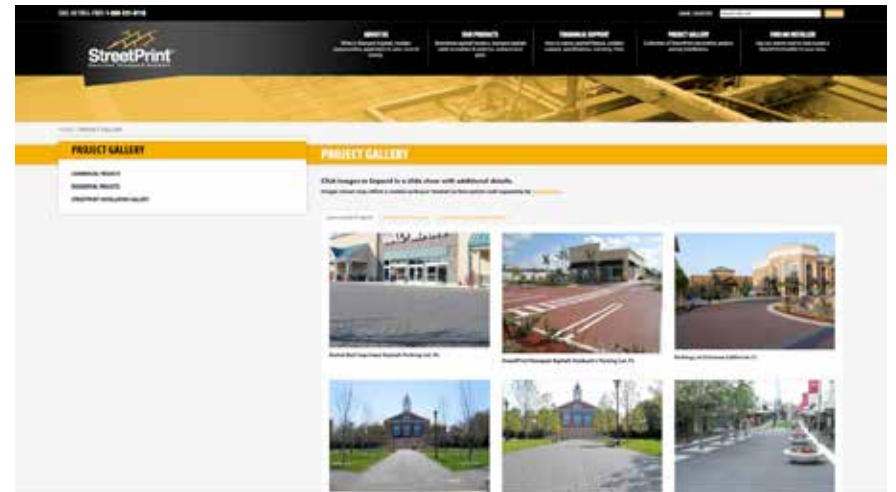
Suggestion: Why up on piers? Add some interpretive signage. What is this?



Suggestion: We noticed many buildings in various stages of disrepair. Don't let this happen!



This is one of Nova Scotia's very best historic gems.

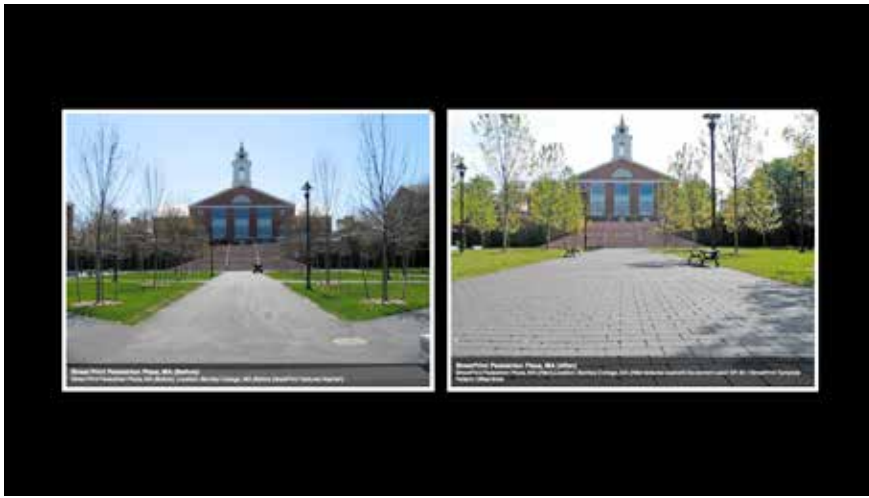


We were very curious about this historic building (top left). It would be wonderful if you could put up an interpretive sign explaining what it is and why it was built on piers.

Do everything you can to keep these wonderful historic buildings in good repair and well maintained (top right).

Shelburne's Dock Street is definitely one of the South Shore's Best Of's.

Dock Street would have an even more authentic historic appearance if the street (and side streets) were made of paver stones. A much less costly alternative would be to use StreetPrint to "stamp" the design of paver stones right into the existing asphalt (bottom right). StreetPrint can create any design, any color, right onto existing asphalt, and the road is drivable immediately afterwards. They are a company located in Vancouver, BC.



Another example of StreetPrint's work (top left) showing asphalt "stamped" to look like pavers.

A local suggested we try Charlotte Lane for lunch (top right), and we are so glad we did. The shop was great (bottom left), and the food was excellent (bottom right). Our impressions of Shelburne were very good!

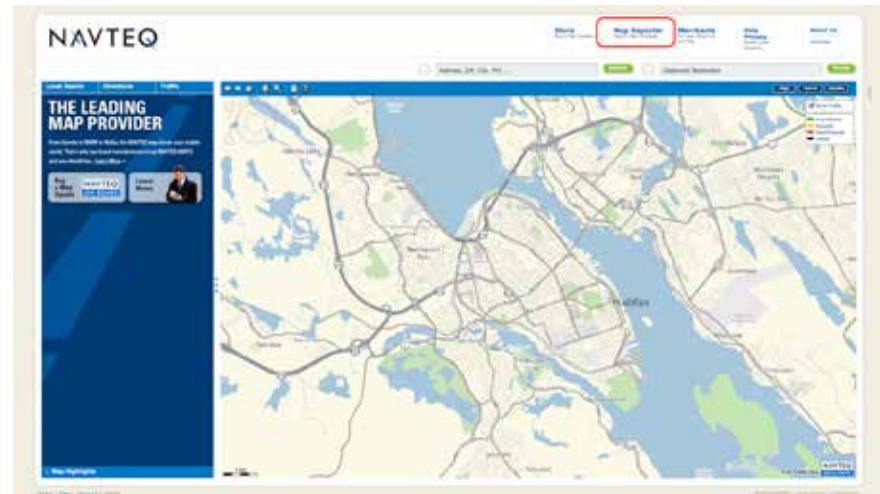
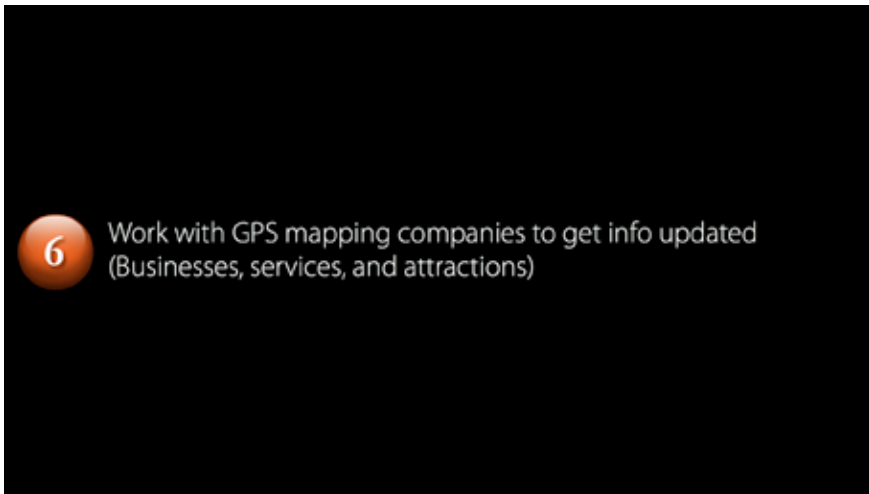
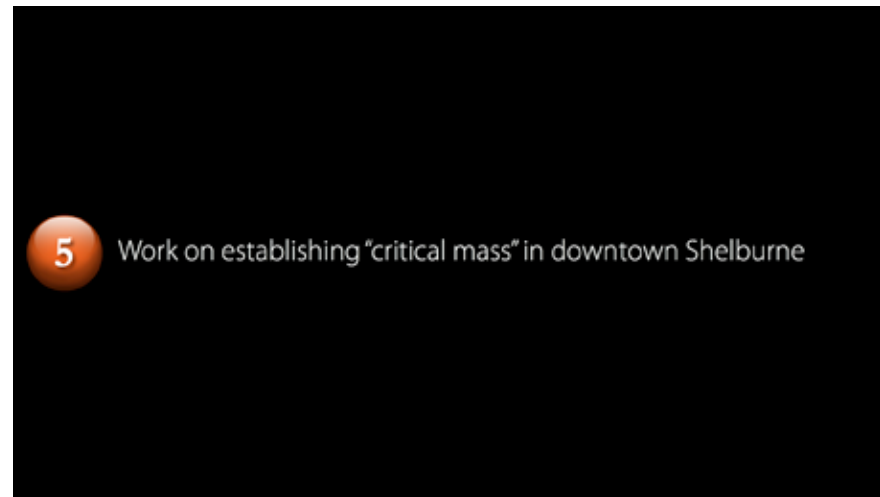




Downtown Shelburne - up from Dock Street - was surprisingly lackluster (top left). It has tremendous potential to be a thriving downtown destination.

Bistro 138 looks great and was very highly recommended (top right). Both Bistro 138 and Charlotte Lane would make it onto our Best Of the South Shore list.

It's easy to miss the sign introducing Dock Street (bottom left and right). Reconfigure the wayfinding and placement of the sign so that it can't be missed.



Again, the term “museum complex” sounds industrial - not like a beautiful historic destination. “Historic Dock Street” has a much stronger appeal and should be used consistently on signage (top left).

Work to create a critical mass of destination shopping, dining, and entertainment in downtown Shelburne. You’ve got the attraction of Dock Street - help expand that appeal into downtown. Consider starting small - just with two linear blocks, and work with the property owners and business

owners on beautification and orchestrating the business mix to include visitor retail and restaurants with outdoor dining.

We looked at our Navigation System to see what attractions, restaurants, and shops were included. 20% of people now use navigations 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: 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 Farmin, 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](http://mapreporter.navteq.com)
- Tele Atlas: [mapfeedback.teleatlas.com](http://mapfeedback.teleatlas.com)
- Google Maps: [www.google.com/placesforbusiness](http://www.google.com/placesforbusiness)

The next day we drove out to Kejimikujik National Park (top left). Along the way, we were surprised at the number of services and businesses available - none of the marketing materials indicated there were any shops, gas, or food available. It would be good to promote these small businesses so people can plan on buying lunch, snacks, gifts, or gas on their way to the park.



Suggestion: Provide 24/7 visitor information.

Some of the businesses along the highway to Keji Park looked very appealing. They do a good job! For example, Race Trac Gas (previous page) looks awesome. The Hollow Log Cafe (top left) is charming. Heritage House is very nice, and the Whitman Inn is beautiful and has received very good reviews on TripAdvisor (bottom left).

The Visitor Centre inside the park is very, very nice. Staff was helpful. Add visitor information outside as well, with weather-proof brochure holders, so that people who arrive after the Centre is closed will still have access to information.



Gorgeous! What a beautiful area, with great facilities.



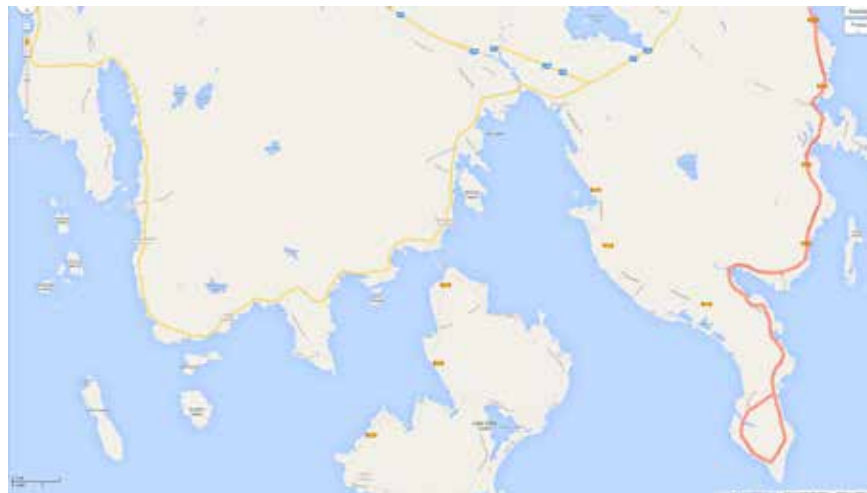
Suggestion: Post a readerboard with upcoming presentations, performances. Invite us back!



Kejimikujik Park lived up to all our expectations - it's a beautiful park and has top-notch facilities. The wayfinding is excellent throughout the park as well. We wished we could stay for several days, canoeing and hiking!



Suggestion: Same here!



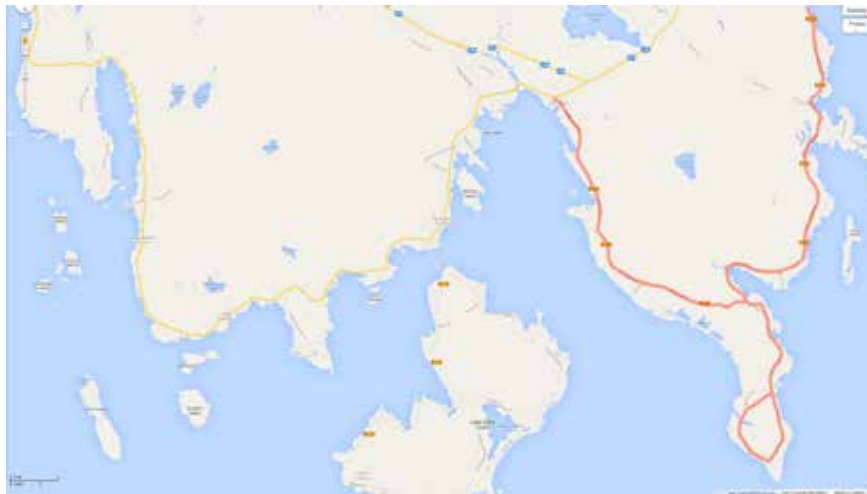
It would be helpful to put up signage showing upcoming events to be held at the gathering spots (top right).

Kejimikujik National Park is another Best of Nova Scotia's South Shore.

We headed back to the beach, and continued driving along the Lighthouse Route southwest of Shelburne - along Highway 3 (maps top right, bottom left). The Shelburne County map/brochure lists an old railway trail across the bridge over the Clyde River, but we weren't able to find it.

We continued south to find the lighthouse at Baccaro (bottom right).





The fog was fairly thick, but we kept looking for the lighthouse, when a large structure loomed above us (top left). Not the lighthouse, though. We did finally find it (top right). There wasn't really much else to see along Highway 3 between Shelburne and Barrington besides the Baccaro Lighthouse, the monument at Port La Tour, and the nice beach at Sandhills Provincial Park, and there were very few spending opportunities.

Our first impressions of Barrington were good (bottom right). The Visitor Information Centre sign is very cute.



We saw the sign for the Old Meeting House Museum (top left), but with the location of the sign, we weren't sure where it was. We knew it couldn't be this building (top right). We also weren't sure what Lighthouse Lunch was - a restaurant? Of course, we saw the beautiful lighthouse (bottom left) which we really enjoyed.

When we noticed this building (bottom right) we knew this had to be the Old Meeting House. Suggestion: Add a sign to make it obvious, and create a walkway from the parking area to the meeting house.





### The 12 best historical attractions in Nova Scotia

- Celtic Music Interpretive Centre - Judique
- Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic - Lunenburg
- Fort Anne/Port Royal National Historic Site - Annapolis Royal
- Fortress of Louisbourg - Cape Breton/Louisbourg
- Grand-Pre National Historic Site - Grand Pre
- **Historic Dock Street in Shelburne**
- Le Village Historique Acadien de la Nouvelle-Ecosse - Pubnico
- Memory Lane Heritage Village - Lake Charlotte
- **Old Woolen Mill Museum in Barrington**
- Nova Scotia Museum of Industry in Stellarton
- Sherbrooke Village - Sherbrooke
- Cape Breton Miners Museum - Glace Bay

The old Court House in Barrington (top left) looks like a nice, historic building.

We wanted to find the Barrington Old Woolen Mill Museum, and we found the parking area and footbridge across the river (top right). There had been so much rain that the river was raging. There are also public washrooms with outdoor access - be sure to promote them!

We thoroughly enjoyed the Old Woolen Mill! The costumed staff showed us all around, explaining how everything works. It was very interesting and

enjoyable. This museum is definitely worth being a "Best of" attraction!





Suggestion: Always promote the experience first, the organization in small letters - if at all.



We also stopped by a few other historical attractions in the region, including Fort St. Louis (top right and left), and the Black Loyalist Heritage Museum (bottom left and right).

Suggestion: For Fort St. Louis, the monument isn't visible from the parking area, so it would be good to put up an interpretive display with a picture of the monument where drivers can see it. That will entice them to get out of their cars and walk in to take a look.

Visitors aren't usually all that interested in a heritage society, but they are interested in historical sites and museums. Always promote the experience first, then you can make mention of your organization (bottom left).





Suggestion: A great location for some visitor information.



We drove out to Cape Sable Island (top left) - across the causeway (top right).

Clark's Harbour's welcome sign is very nice (bottom right).

At the entrance to the island is this little beach park (bottom left), and it is very nice (even on such a foggy, wet day). Consider adding some visitor information here, such as brochures in a weather-proof brochure holder. The interpretive displays are great.

Suggestion: make sure you maintain signs at least once a year. Add distance to the sign.



Suggestion: This looks like a popular spot. If so, grade the road every few months in summer.



We drove all around the island - unfortunately the fog was very thick that day, so we weren't able to see as much as we wished.

The Seaside Heritage Centre (top right) is very nice! We looked at the Cape Sable website and felt very welcomed and encouraged to see the sites around the island. We drove out to The Hawk and wished the fog wasn't so dense! We weren't able to see the lighthouse or the drowned forest, but we looked at them on the website, and they are wonderful.

For the Cape Sable website ([www.capesableisland.ca](http://www.capesableisland.ca)), consider using more bullet-points in the text, to make it easier for viewers to find what they are looking for. Also, add more and larger photographs.



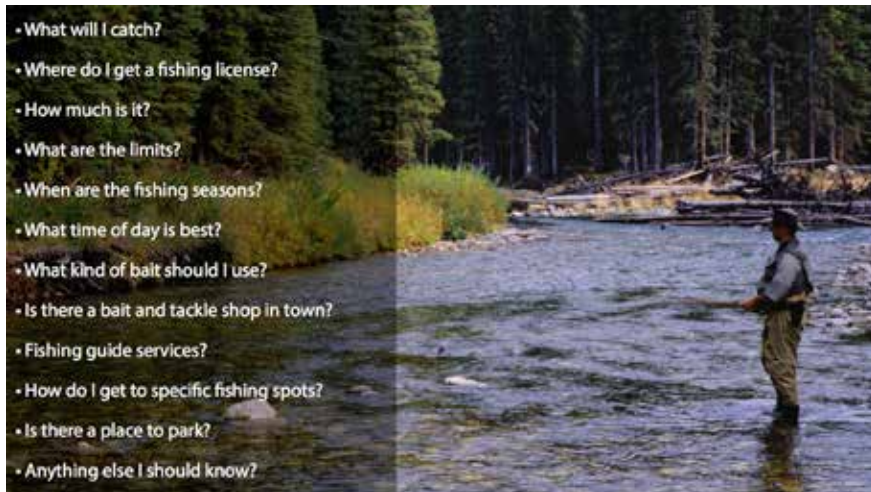
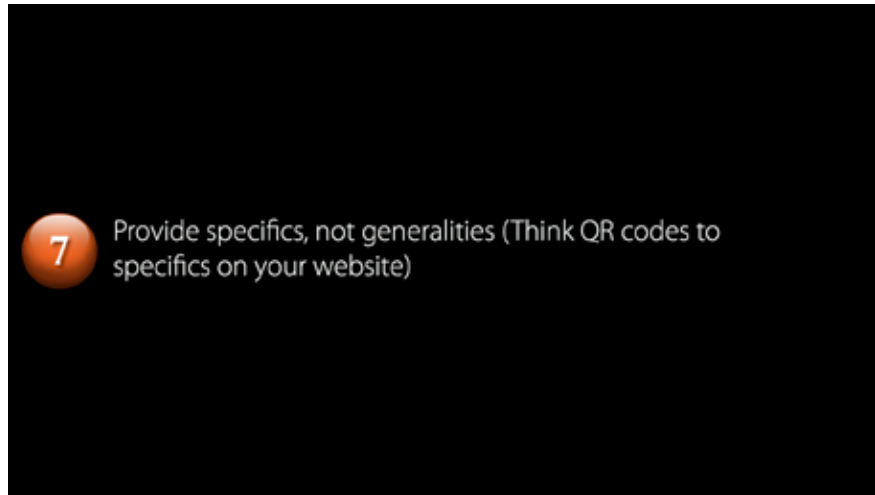


We saw the Archelaus Smith Museum (top left), and after leaving Cape Sable Island, we continued driving west towards Shag Harbour (top right).

We saw the Chapel Hill Museum and Sea Tower (bottom right) and the UFO Museum in Shag Harbour (bottom left).

Museums capture visitors' interest when they tell stories or bring the history to life rather than just show artifacts. Making displays interactive helps capture visitors' imaginations, and builds a connection between the location and the

visitors. Some great ways to help bring history to life is to have costumed interpreters - either to guide the visitors or to actually take on the persona of someone from history; to have interactive displays, where visitors can actually spin yarn, or learn how to make the knots for a fishing net, or taste some freshly baked delicacy from the era; to tell the story on displays from the viewpoint of one historical person who lived there - making it very personal. There are lots of possibilities - these are just a few ideas.



The South Shore is a huge area with a variety of fascinating attractions! The following are some ways to enhance the marketing of the area.

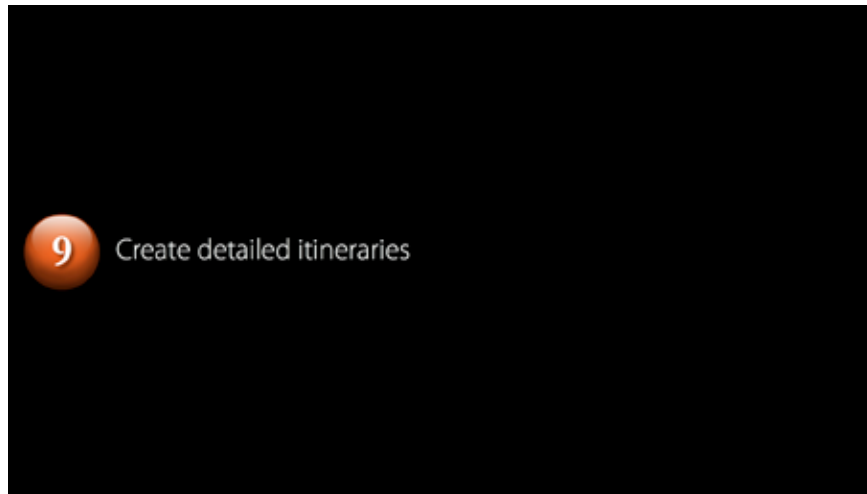
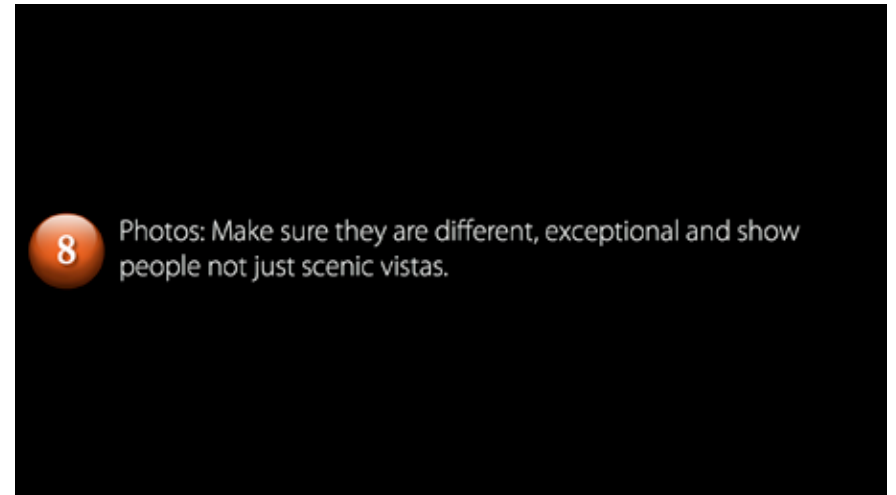
Provide specifics, not generalities. Visitors need to be able to answer certain questions before they can enjoy your area. Specific information helps them get the most out of their visit, shows them what you have to offer, and helps keep them in town longer. For example, someone wanting to fish in your rivers needs to know answers to the questions shown bottom left.

Be sure to include enough detail so visitors are able to do your “must do” activities.

The Economusée brochure (bottom right) is a good example of how a brochure can provide specifics.

Using QR codes on your websites and in your brochures helps visitors find the information they need. Be careful not to overuse links to other websites - once they leave your website, they may not return.

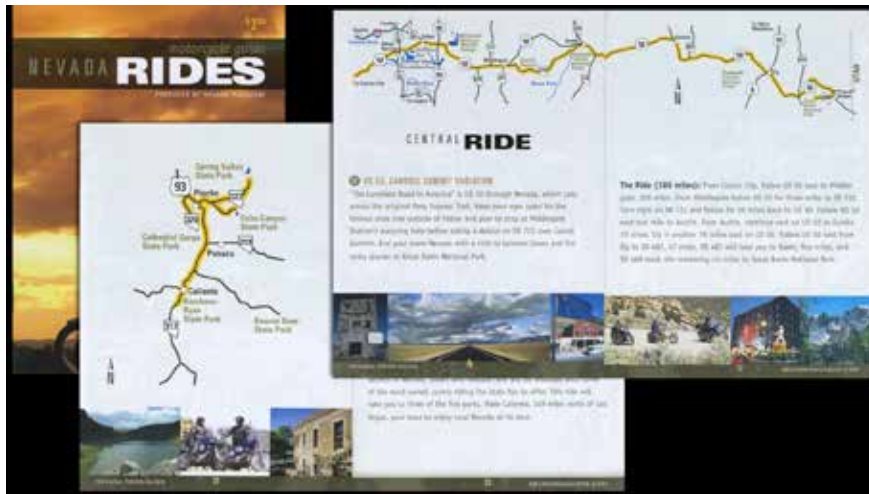




Plenty of great photography does more to promote your location than even the most well-written text. Pictures really are worth a thousand words. Make sure your photos show people enjoying activities specific to your location. Scenic vistas are nice, but not as powerful as when they include people having fun.

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).



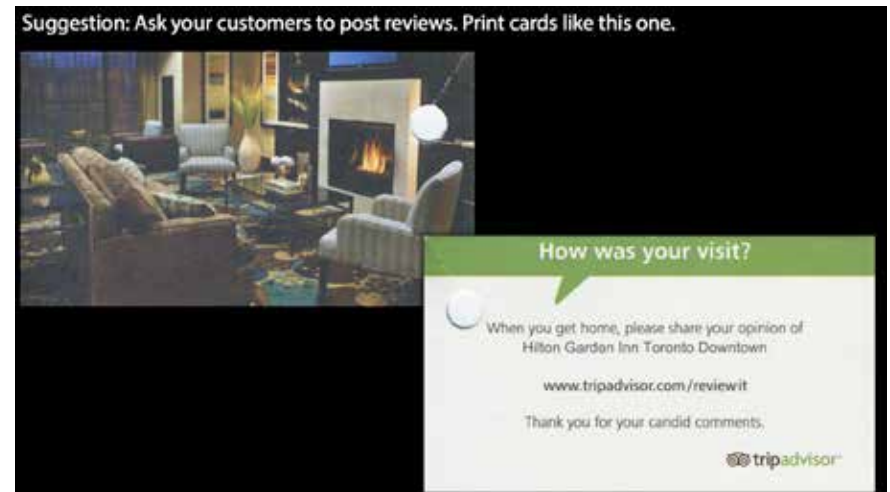
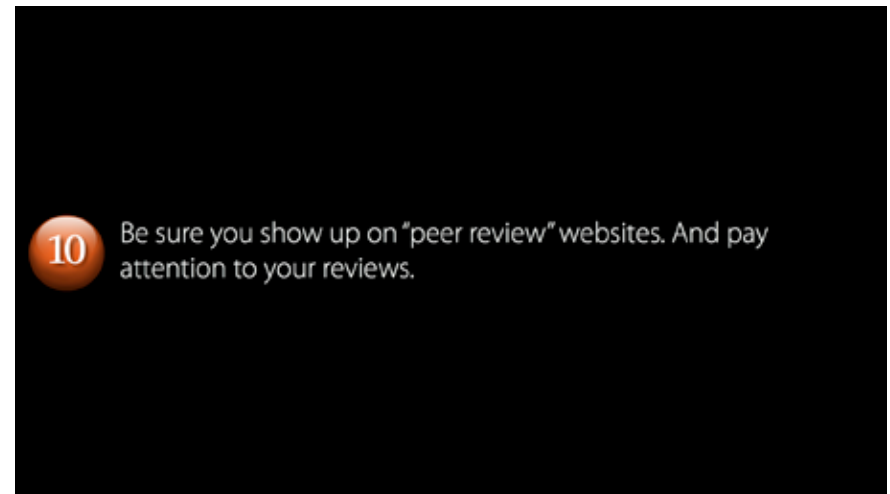
Detailed itineraries can be an excellent sales tool - they show potential visitors a variety of things to do, organized to be easy to follow, and with directions and specifics so that visitors can get the most out of their time. Good itineraries also help potential visitors imagine themselves doing those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





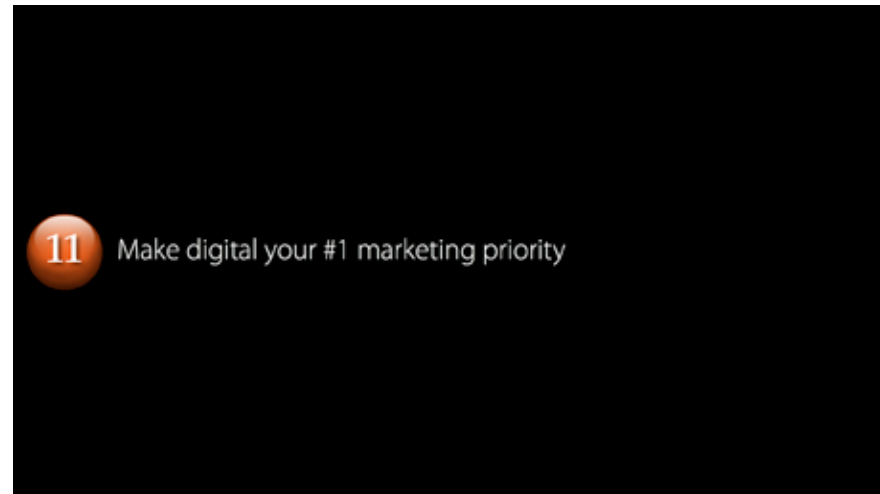
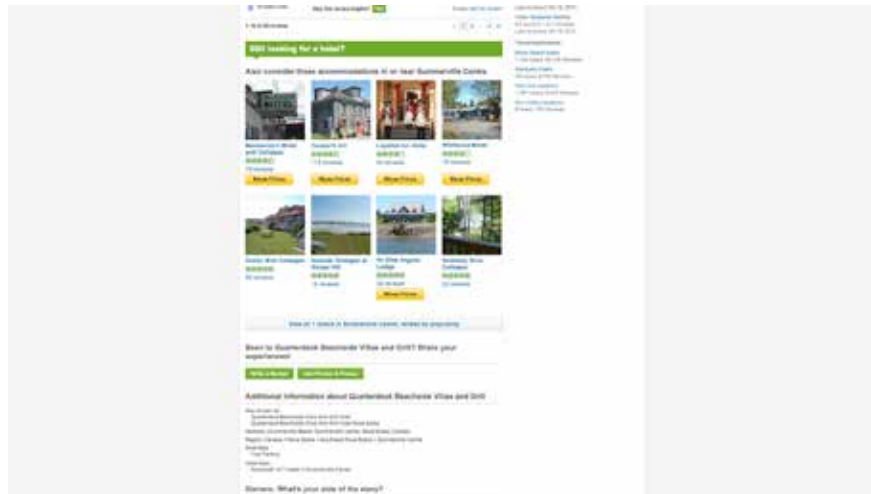
#### Ideas for Itinerary Booklets:

- Motorcycle tour routes
- Biking
- Kayaking and canoeing
- Photographers' showcase
- History and culture tour
- Foodies Guide to the Bluenose Coast
- Art lovers' tour

86% of consumers trust peer reviews. Less than 35% trust ads. It makes sense to pay close attention to peer review websites for communities and businesses.

First of all, make sure you show up on peer review websites. If you don't, add information about your business or community. This will make it easier for customers to post their reviews.

When you have an excellent standing, be sure to let the public know! (bottom left).



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. 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.

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.

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.



## Your marketing dollars at work:

- 45%: Internet/website/social media/apps/peer reviews
- 20%: Public relations, media - brand building
- 20%: Advertising - to drive people to your website
- 10%: Collateral materials
- 5%: Outdoor, trade shows, other marketing avenues

## 12 Website suggestions



Make your itineraries super-specific right down to which shops to visit, which places to eat - including specialty dishes, time spent at each place, etc.

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 South 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.

13

Include spending opportunities in brochures and maps.

Suggestion: Promote more spending opportunities. The primary benefit of tourism comes when visitors spend money.



This is a good detailed map. Suggestion: Add icons for gas, food, shops.



14

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





## Additional notes regarding South Shore Marketing Assessment

### • Lighthouse Route

As the “Lighthouse Route,” it would be good to have signage and directions telling how to find the lighthouses. The Do and Dream South Shore Guide does have good information about lighthouses – telling which lights are accessible to the public; which lights have grounds open to the public; which lights are near the shore or on a point; and which can be viewed on boat tours. The guide doesn’t tell how to find them though, or where to get more info about boat tours to see the lighthouses. Make it easier for people to find them with wayfinding and more info on websites and in the guide.

Consider creating a Lighthouse Treasure Hunt – find them all.

### Websites:

#### Shelburne County

[www.discovershelburnecounty.com](http://www.discovershelburnecounty.com)

- The Shelburne County website has a different look and feel, BUT, what makes Shelburne County unique and worth a special trip? There has to be a way of differentiating and promoting what makes each community/area special.
- There is also a lot of copy on many of the pages. People won’t usually read very much online, unless they are particularly interested. You have to hook them in with great photography and strategically placed copy. Rely on your photos, not words, to do much of the selling.
- The dining section merely includes a list of restaurants, although it is entitled “Culinary Experiences.” Making it about experiences is great, but the list-marketing strategy falls flat. This is a great opportunity to promote those

restaurants that will truly offer a culinary experience, particularly one that is unique to the area. Focus on those restaurants to help build your brand and differentiate your community from your neighbors. Offer more details, such as a specialty dish.

- The navigation gets a little confusing in the Sea and Explore section. The Sea and Explore page (which I think is supposed to mean “attractions,”) has photos with titles, such as On the Water, Lighthouses, etc. My first thought was clicking on any of them would bring you to a new page with attractions and activities that fit that category. However, clicking on any of the titled photos merely provides you with an enlarged version of the photo. That could prove frustrating for people who want more information.
- The descriptions of many of the activity/attraction categories are heavy on copy and low on great photography. Again, photography is key – show, don’t tell. Shorten the descriptions - use bullet points - and let the photos speak for themselves.
- The Hidden Gems category is a good idea, but here’s another place to add some photography to make the list more appealing. Don’t go overboard so the page winds up being too long; but adding some photos here and there will help add interest and visual appeal.
- After visiting Shelburne, we were disappointed to look at the website and see very little mention of Dock Street. We felt that Dock Street was a fabulous experience, and it really differentiates Shelburne from other towns. It should be promoted specifically, with several great photos.



## Region of Queens Municipality

[www.regionofqueens.com](http://www.regionofqueens.com)

- The navigation is fairly corporate and complex. There are a lot of categories, with many subcategories. It might work to simplify the site architecture by using pages that take the place of some of the navigation categories – for example, “Active” could be a page with icons or photographs to choose from, listing the subcategories, rather than it being all listed as part of the navigation structure.
- Rather than listing everything there is to offer, focus on details and what makes the region unique. For example, if I want to spend a day shopping with friends, a list of the shops isn’t enticing - it’s just a list, and only tells me the names of the stores. But if the shops are organized by what they sell, with short descriptions of their specialties, along with a photo, they would be much more interesting. Beyond that, if the shops were put together into an itinerary for a day or two, combined with good lunch and dinner locations (with enticing menu items), it would be very easy to become interested in shopping in your town.

## Do and Dream Nova Scotia ... South Shore

### 2013 Travel Guide

Excellent photography throughout! Nova Scotia is gorgeous, so it’s not hard to find beautiful scenes to photograph. And most of the photos do include people enjoying activities – that’s very good.

Organization of information is very good. The General Information is helpful, and I like seeing your information about “smoke-free places,” and “Information for drivers.”

“Explore our Four Seasons” is a good section. Consider adding a line or two at the beginning of each season describing the weather to expect. Be sure to include specific information about each activity – most give a web link for further info, but a few don’t. For example, where can I find out about canoeing the Medway River – is there an outfitter that provides those excursions?

“Don’t-Miss Attractions,” which says that it includes top picks for attractions, shopping and dining, primarily includes museums. The shopping pages specifically promote only the Economusée Network, and there are only three shops included in the Guide. The benefit of tourism is when visitors spend money – that’s really the entire reason to try to bring more tourists to your area. Communities, governments, and organizations receive the benefits from tourism when visitors spend money at shops, lodging facilities, restaurants, and paying attractions. So you want to encourage shopping!!! That means more than the members of the Economusée network, although they are a great network. But there are only four artisans in Nova Scotia that are part of the Economusée network – when you send visitors to their website for more shopping information, it’s not helping them find artisans, craftspeople or shopping, and with so few promoted, it appears that Nova Scotia hardly has any shops!

We suggest you broaden your scope in the shopping category. Private enterprise needs to be promoted – without it, there are no tax dollars to help fund local government, museums or visitor organizations. We suggest that you create a “Best Of” guide that includes the most unique shops, activities, and restaurants, and have the criteria for their selection not be based on if they are a member of a certain organization, but be based on the following criteria (or similar):

- They must be different than what your target market can get closer to home. They must be unique to your area. (Local artisans almost always fit this category.)
- They must have good curb appeal.
- They must be open at least 6 days a week.
- They must be open until at least 7:00 pm at least two days a week.
- They must be highly regarded by third parties – such as TripAdvisor, Yelp, or a magazine feature, or contest.

For the Do and Dream South Shore Travel Guide, include as many of these “best ofs” as you can. Make it clear to visitors that the South Shore has LOTS of wonderful shopping. Because it absolutely does!

The “Great Taste” pages in the guide are good – we love the recipes!

Shining a Light: the South Shore’s Lighthouse Route: We love how this section tells visitors which lighthouses are accessible, and which are not. Thank you! This section’s information is good. Consider expanding it to include directions on how to find these lighthouses. We tried to find many of them, and to say it was challenging would be an understatement. One of our suggestions will be to improve the wayfinding signage to the lighthouses that are accessible.

We like how the guide then goes into different sub-regions of the South Shore. That definitely makes it easier to navigate.

Top 5 Photo Opportunities: Most of these are good ideas, but remember that a photo opportunity should be a specific location, rather than a general village or park. Pinpoint the specific spots.

It is a great idea to include a recommended scenic drive. We took the drive along Route 329 along the Aspotogan Peninsula Loop, but we weren’t sure why it was so strongly promoted. It is scenic, but we didn’t find it to be more scenic than the rest of the highways along the South Shore region – they’re all scenic! We understand this is a popular bike route, which is great. But there are no places at all for visitors to stop and spend any money. If there were a vendor’s cart, even, at the halfway point where bicyclists and drivers could get a lemonade, sandwich, or ice cream, that would be good – along with a few picnic tables.

The Top 5 Outdoor Activities: Provide more specific information about how a visitor can take advantage of these activities. For example, where do you find the ferry to the Tancook Islands? Is there a restaurant there, or should we pack our own lunch? What about restrooms? What days and how often does the ferry operate? For the Drowned Forest, let visitors know that they should check the tides to make sure it will be visible when they arrive.

Top 5 Locals’ Picks: Add more details to make it easier for visitors to appreciate these great picks by the locals. For example, when is the Hubbards Farmers’ Market open? Some visitors may not have access to the internet when they’re traveling, so the website address, while important to include, shouldn’t be the only way a visitor can get the information they need.

Oak Island is included as a Locals’ Pick. We drove out to Oak Island and discovered “No Trespassing” signs and felt that we’d better get out of there fast! Should you really be promoting this? If the only way to go there is to arrange for a private tour, include that information in the guide – both the fact that the island is only open for people who have arranged tours in advance, plus a phone number to call for the tour, because if you just follow the signs to Oak Island, you won’t find any mention of tours.

The sections for the Top 5 Festivals & Events are good – dates are included, locations, and good teaser text. Likewise the Top 5 Heritage & Cultural Attractions. One note – when providing phone numbers, always include the area code. Most visitors don’t know what it is.

The section about Beaches and Provincial Parks provides good information



about the parks, and it's well organized.

You refer people to specific websites for more information about the trails – do you also have a printed guide to the trails? Good job on the trail descriptions and how to find most of them.

Since your partners' directory is just information about your members, it is really not very helpful for visitors. For example, you only have five restaurants for the entire area. Does that tell visitors that you hardly have any dining options? Yes. Visitors don't care if a restaurant is a member of your organization – they just want to be able to find a good place to eat. Membership politics can kill the tourism industry. Find a way to be inclusive. Promote your "best of" restaurants – using pre-set criteria, such as reviews and ratings – not memberships.

One section to consider adding to the guide is itineraries. They should be two-day, five-day, and longer itineraries designed for specific groups – couples (romance), family fun, bicycling groups, etc. They need to include specific information – down to specific places to eat, driving times, times spent at attractions, etc. More of these types of itineraries should be included on the website as well.



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