

Strategic Marketing Plan and Organizational Review
Destination Southwest Nova Association



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Steering Committee

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Submitted by:

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Glossary

Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this report and are defined as follows:

Annual Action Plan - Developed by DSWNA marketing team before the end of each calendar year for the next year is the annual “marketing game plan” and defines the details, the specific tactics, the partners and cooperative offers as well as the annual budget and staff responsibilities the organization will dedicate to marketing.

Core Experiences - Areas where Nova Scotia has unique and authentic strengths that provide a competitive advantage. They are areas that respond to consumer demand and have potential to support growth for the tourism industry. Nova Scotia core experiences fall under six themes: 1. Seacoast, 2. Cuisine, 3. Outdoor, 4. Culture, 5. Heritage and 6. Urban. (Note: These core experiences are consistent with the six themes that ACOA-Tourism Atlantic identifies: 1. Coastal Experiences, 2. Culture, Entertainment and Heritage, 3. Sightseeing and Touring, 4. Outdoor Activities, 5. Experiential Accommodations, and 6. Major and International Events).

Demand Generators - Tourism assets that in and of themselves motivate a visit – #1 reason for visiting the destination. (Also called “primary motivators” and/or “primary lures”).

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) - The combined functions of destination marketing organization and regional tourism industry association (RTIA).

Marketing Strategy 2011-2013 - Outlines the high level goal, objectives, targets and strategic directions that DSWNA follows over three years to achieve its marketing goal.

Member(s) – Industry Stakeholder(s) who support and uphold the goals and objectives of DSWNA and pay a base participation membership fee which includes a basic listing of company/organization to be included on the website (with a reciprocal link only) (subject to approval by By-law change).

Partner - A member who actively participates/engages in any additional DSWNA marketing programs (subject to approval by By-law and related change).

Region(s) - There are three geographical regions in the DSWNA area: South Shore, Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley, Yarmouth and Acadian Shores

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic Marketing Plan and Organizational Review for Destination Southwest Nova Association

January 2011

In light of changes to the travel regions, organization management and declining partnership engagement, Destination Southwest Nova Association (DSWNA) embarked upon a strategic planning process in the spring of 2010. Recognizing the need to strengthen its leadership role within the industry, value to partners and clarify its mandate, role and relationships with partners in the region the organization hired Turizm Inc. to develop a strategic marketing plan. This document presents the resulting strategy.

Strategy Goals and Objectives

The primary goals of this strategic plan are to:

- Set priorities; goals and objectives for a three to five year period, and
- Provide future direction to strengthen all facets of the organization in order to grow the tourism industry in Southwest Nova Scotia.

The objectives in developing the plan focused on three deliverables:

1. An organizational and operational structure that effectively engages and leverages partners ensuring the achievement of the strategic plan.
2. A multi-year marketing strategy that effectively leverages and engages partners and market opportunities.
3. An Evaluation Framework to Measure Performance of DSWNA and recommendations to better communicate with the industry.

Approach and Methods Used

In order to effectively develop a DSWNA marketing strategy and organizational review, seven methods were used to develop the plan:

1. Secondary research: including a review of existing DSWNA internal documents as well as reports and studies relevant to the Region.
2. Key Informant Interviews: with key stakeholders.
3. Additional (Secondary) Interviews with staff, government officials and other stakeholders.
4. Three Industry Workshops: to solicit industry input in each of the three Regions of South Shore, Yarmouth and Acadian Shores, Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley.
5. Online Input: using an on-line survey targeted at DSWNA partners and members.
6. Best Practices Review: profiling three successful destinations.
7. Site Visits: three site visits to the Region were conducted from July-September.

Findings from these elements formed the key inputs to the marketing strategy and organizational review.

Marketing Strategy

The tourism marketing situation reveals that DSWNA has a great deal to work with, both in terms of resources and products. Some of Nova Scotia's most recognized demand generators ("must see" attractions) are in the area, including Peggy's Cove, Lunenburg, the Bay of Fundy and others identified in the report. When coupled with on the ground resources (partners, staff, momentum) there is a great deal of potential.

Tourism snapshots provided in the report shows declines in all areas during the past four years, in visitation, revenues, occupancy rates, museum attendance and visitors counseled. The exception appears to be 2010, which is a bright light with visitation and revenues to the Province up 1%. The SWOT assessment for Southwest Nova Scotia pinpoints areas of concern and opportunity.

Within this context, the marketing strategy for 2011-2013 has a goal of increased revenues of 3 percent per year over the next three years, representing an estimated \$7.2 million in incremental revenues per year.

Overall marketing objectives are to:

1. Increase target market awareness of the region as *must-see* in Nova Scotia
2. Encourage visitors to travel south of Halifax and move them throughout the region
3. Use technology effectively and appropriately
4. Offer new reasons to attract members and support to DSWNA
5. Measure progress and success.

Key target markets are identified as:

- **Nova Scotia**, primarily Halifax Regional Municipality and surrounding areas
- **New Brunswick**, primarily Saint John and Moncton
- **Ontario**, in close partnership with Nova Scotia Tourism in efforts lead by Nova Scotia Tourism
- **Non-Resident Visitors** travelling the province, an Intercept Strategy

DSWNA must work collaboratively with Nova Scotia Tourism to profile the three Regions in provincial marketing efforts that reach the **Quebec, Western Canada** and **U.S. markets** and to develop relationships with **key influencers**—tour operators, travel trade specialists and travel media—with limited investment.

Marketing principles and tactics are presented in the report and highlighted in the strategic recommendations summarized below. The marketing strategy is formulated on the concepts of: 1. Describing and Organizing the Experience, 2. Get Them Here!, 3. Keep Them Here!, 4. Partnering, and 5. Measuring Progress.

Organizational Review

The purpose of the organizational review is to assure DSWNA's ability to achieve its marketing goals. The review focused on operational policies, practices and programs.

DSWNA operates using the Carver governance model. With a 15 member Board, an Executive Director works with marketing and communications coordinators, Executive Assistant, partnership and sales person and research/website/internal communications person.

Overall findings show that the Policy Manual needs to be reviewed and more rigorously followed by the Board. Moreover a new Executive Director has inherited a discouraged membership and is working toward bettering the situation along with filling vacated staff positions. Roles and responsibilities need to be more clearly understood and processes within the organization streamlined so that staff are working more efficiently as a team. Recommendations for improved Board processes and DSWNA business practices are summarized below.

Recommendations

Marketing Strategy Recommendations

Marketing Plan

M-1. Board accepts Guiding Principles, Goals, and Objectives.

M-2. Board and Marketing Committee accept recommendations.

M-3. Marketing Committee begins refining Positioning statement.

Describe and Organize the Experience

M-4. Marketing Committee builds Experience Inventory.

M-5. Marketing Committee updates Experience Inventory.

M-6. Organize Professional Image Bank.

Get them Here!

M-7. Marketing Committee develops annual plan/budget.

M-8. Task Force develops Co-op Marketing Plan.

M-9. Contracts professional Media Buyer.

M-10. Re-Develop Destination Website.

M-11. Bilingual Website Application.

M-12. Website Mobile Application.

M-13. Social Media with NST.

M-14. Social Media Incremental effort.

M-15. Develop Single Destination Guide.

Keep them Here!

M-16. VIC Task Force implements DSWNA VIC Network Strategic Plan.

M-17. Source partner in Halifax for Visitor Servicing.

M-18. Deliver key info to provincial VICs.

M-19. Develop Cross-promotions in VICs.

M-20. Cross-promotions Forum.

M-21. Define Intercept tactics.

M-22. Deliver Packaging/ Experience Workshops.

M-23. Organize *Recommend The Southwest!* Program.

Partner. Partner. Partner.

M-24. Develop Partnership Plan SOPs.

M-25. Seek business partners for Halifax profile.

M-26. Organize Relationship Management.

Measuring Progress

- M-27. Measure Stakeholder Satisfaction
- M-28. Measure Key Marketing Tactics
- M-29. Measure Destination Awareness
- M-30. Measure Increasing Revenue
- M-31. Report on Measurements
- M-32. Use Results for Planning

Organizational Review Recommendations

Board of Directors

- BD-1. Comply with the specific requirements of the Policy Manual.
- BD-2. Update the *Compliance Schedule/Check List*.
- BD-3. Review the DSWNA Board of Director's Governance Policies.
- BD-4. Define "Qualified Nominees" for the Board of Directors.
- BD-5. Create performance expectations for the Executive Director.
- BD-6. Monitor organizational and Executive Director performance as scheduled.
- BD-7. Communicate performance expectations and progress reporting to stakeholders.

Executive Director-Operational Performance

- ED-1. Implement a planning regimen.
- ED-2. Establish a detailed operational plan to achieve organizational objectives.
- ED-3. Align the planning process to the organizational objectives.
- ED-4. Incorporate the Board of Directors expected annual results as objectives in the business plan.
- ED-5. Develop the operational strategies, programs and specific activities necessary to achieve these results.
- ED-6. Allocate responsibilities and resources to each staff member to achieve the expected annual results.
- ED-7. Monitor performance of each program and staff member.
- ED-8. Modify programs as necessary.
- ED-9. Manage operational programs, human and financial resources and reporting.
- ED-10. Establish MOU's with each area/sector association and major partners.
- ED-11. Revise the operational structure to reflect organizational goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities.
- ED-12. Inform staff of operational goals and staff responsibilities.
- ED-13. Establish excellence in business practices and formalize operational policies.
- ED-14. Update and maintain Human Resource standards and policies.
- ED-15. Establish Training and Development as an organizational priority.
- ED-16. Establish monthly budgets and cash flows and report YTD (year to date) budget monthly.
- ED-17. Establish Marketing, Partnerships and Communications Committees.
- ED-18. Institute mandatory weekly staff meetings and regular reporting (face-to-face or Skype).

1. Introduction and Background

From its inception in 2004, Destination Southwest Nova Association (DSWNA) has faced the challenge of serving tourism operators in a large area made up of three DSWNA Regions: South Shore, Yarmouth and Acadian Shores, and Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley. In 2010 the challenges have been compounded by the economic downturn in 2008 and cancellation of the Yarmouth-Bar Harbor, Maine ferry.

2004 represented the realization of a vision for a tourism industry collaboration in Southwest Nova Scotia. The board of directors and staff of the individually operated organizations of Evangeline Trail Tourism Association, South Shore Tourism Association and Yarmouth County Tourism Association merged into one regional tourism industry association called Destination Southwest Nova Association. Evolving over the past few years, the organization has experienced difficulty in being able to clearly articulate and communicate its mandate and performance. As a result, membership and support have not fully reached expected levels of engagement thus affecting financial resources.

After moving from a travelway focus to a regional focus that is reflective of the Nova Scotia Tourism approach, Destination Southwest Nova is organizing its product as three regions, South Shore, Yarmouth and Acadian Shores and Fundy Shore & Annapolis Valley.

Since its inception, while the organization continues to undertake and manage a number of marketing and developmental initiatives, DSWNA's efforts to unify industry members and partners around a strategic plan and tactics to generate measurable outcomes have been a challenge.

In 2010, in light of declining tourism revenues, memberships and overall engagement in DSWNA, the Board of Directors have acknowledged the need to undertake a research based Strategic Plan for the organization that would clearly articulate goals, objectives, measurables.

The face of tourism in Nova Scotia, and indeed in Southwest Nova Scotia is changing rapidly. The global economic situation has changed our customers and the way they view travel. Transportation to and from this region is more challenging than ever before and our neighbours are becoming increasingly important as our guests.

With the aim of representing the tourism sector in the Southwest area of Nova Scotia, DSWNA is the "feet on the ground" for NSTCH. But recent years have been tough.

- The economic impact of the tourism sector for the region declined from \$370 million to \$344 million, down 9% from 2004 to 2008
- Industry marketing investment in programs offered by DSWNA declined 50% from 2009 to 2010
- Visitors counseled at VIC's throughout the region declined significantly from 2004 to 2009; Yarmouth -59%, Digby -31% and Peggy's Cove -18% respectively. Visitors counseled at local VIC's within DSWNA dropped 12% from 2007 to 2008.

The change and challenges of 2010 and beyond, demand that DSWNA leaders be relevant to the stakeholders they serve and be confident in the strategic path they walk. Destination Southwest Nova Association (DSWNA) is at a critical crossroads.

The relevance of the organization needs to be re-established with a go-forward marketing strategy that positions the Region as a compelling Nova Scotia destination – one that is worth the visit.

This document presents a Strategic Marketing Plan and Organizational Review for DSWNA. The report first outlines the objectives and approach used in its development; the marketing strategy is then highlighted, followed by the organizational review. Relevant primary and secondary research findings are referenced within each relevant section. Finally the strategy concludes with specific recommendations for DSWNA, along with a timeline and estimated costs associated with each element.

2. Objectives in Developing the Plan

There were three key deliverables required by the Steering Committee for the strategic plan:

1. Assessment of and recommendations to strengthen the DSWNA
Organizational and Operating Structure
2. Development of a **Market Opportunities/Marketing and Partnerships Plan** with particular attention to recommending partnerships
3. An **Evaluation Framework** for measuring performance

3. Approach and Methods Used

The work to develop a fresh strategic direction involved an examination of:

- DSWNA marketing efforts
- Governance options
- Roles, relationships, priorities of the leadership, staff and stakeholders
- Aligning marketing efforts and organization/governance options with the organization's strategic goals, objectives and priorities

These elements were analyzed using seven methods:

- i. **Secondary research**, including a review of existing governance model, bylaws, annual reports, job descriptions, standard operating procedures and relevant studies. In addition the expectations of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage (NSTCH) in relation to the organization were reviewed. Success

measurements since the organization's inception in 2006 were "mapped" to assess progress since then. A complete list of sources is found in Section 8: (*Research Resources*).

The study team also reviewed numerous research and independent studies with recommendations and conclusions that were relevant for the issues and challenges being addressed in the Strategic Marketing Plan and Organizational Review for Destination Southwest Nova Association.

- ii. **Key Informant Interviews** revealed perspectives on the existing Governance model, nineteen (19) one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders were conducted. An interview guide was developed to ensure consistency of information and vetted with the Steering Committee.¹

- iii. **Additional (Secondary) Interviews** were completed with 15 individuals as well as with the Executive Director, all staff, Visitor Information Centre (VIC) contacts with NSTCH and TIANS, and service providers, to gain additional perspectives on the organization. The end of season VIC managers meeting, was also attended.

- iv. **Industry Workshops** were conducted in each of the three Regions on October 19, 20 and 21. These input sessions included a Session Agenda and Workbook and conclusions are assembled in a summary report. These components are included in a separate document entitled, **Summary Report DSWNA Stakeholder Input Session Workshops, DSWNA Strategic Plan**, October 2010.

- v. **Online Input Tool** was developed using Survey Monkey to give anyone with ideas and thoughts an opportunity to be "on the record". A reminder to participate was send to the DSWNA database three times, resulting in over 90 responses. The on-line survey was vetted with the Steering Committee.¹

- vi. **Best Practices Review:** Three successful Canadian destination marketing organizations and TIANS were profiled and key learnings assembled to form a picture of governance success for DSWNA in the future. These methods were used to develop the "meat" of this report, Section 4: Marketing and Section 5: the Organizational Review in the pages that follow.

- vii **Site Visits:** A Site visit was conducted to each of the three regions.

¹ The results of both the Interviews and On-line Survey are summarized in Appendix D. Detailed results and copies of the Interview Guide and On-line Survey are available at the DSWNA office.

4. Marketing

4.1 Situational Overview: Marketing

In formulating the marketing strategy which follows, it is clear that DSWNA has a great deal to work with – both in terms of product and resources. Some of Nova Scotia’s key demand generators are located in the Region (e.g. Peggy’s Cove, Lunenburg, Bay of Fundy) and there are resources and momentum in the Region.

Most of the resources required to deliver and measure an effective marketing plan for the destination are available to DSWNA today.

- There is strength on the ground now. A critical mass of mature, experienced and knowledgeable operators is active.
- Many are working together and developing promotional and product resources.
- Municipalities appear to understand the value of tourism and are willing to compete for visitors. Municipal participation in workshop consultations and interviews was enthusiastic and straightforward and they express interest in partnering further.
- Financial resources are available, although finite.
- Major partners like the Province of Nova Scotia and Bay Ferries have supported efforts in the past.
- A powerful, year round provincial Visitor Servicing network exists.
- Professionals in online and offline marketing development and management are available to the association.

As noted in the Approach section of this report, key inputs to the marketing plan were findings from consultations with industry and DSWNA stakeholders (three industry workshops, online survey and stakeholder interviews)². Summary results from the online survey and interviews are included in Appendix D.

DSWNA stakeholders are clear and united in their expectations that to benefit industry operators in the region, the organization must be marketing focused and effective in those efforts. See sections entitled “Top Goals and Priorities” and “Top Marketing Priorities” from the report **DSWNA Stakeholder Input Sessions/Workshops: October 2010** and Appendix D for details. In fact, DSWNA is today very active in marketing. Much of the activity that consumes the organization’s time and energy is marketing and marketing related. The stakeholders of DSWNA, however, express a lack of confidence in the marketing efforts resulting in decreasing partnership participation and an expressed sense that there is little evidence of success.

² Results from consultations were delivered and presented to DSWNA in November 2010. Workshops are reported in a separate report, **DSWNA Stakeholder Input Sessions/Workshops: October 2010**.

The questions posed by stakeholders below surround whether current activities are the best marketing priorities.

Are the current choices the best ways to invest precious marketing money and utilize resources?

Are current marketing efforts effective in motivating visitation to the region?

Are they measured so we can learn from them?

Is industry clear about how they can participate?

Can the industry participate in them with confidence and enthusiasm?

Some of Nova Scotia's most recognized demand generators -- the must see attractions and appealing experiences -- are located in the DSWNA area. Nova Scotia Tourism has for decades promoted Peggy's Cove, Lunenburg, Bluenose II, the Acadian experience in Southwest Nova Scotia and Grand Pre (among others) as key reasons to travel to this province. More recently the experiences of the Bay of Fundy and of the Annapolis Valley's wine and cuisine products are presented as demand generators in provincial materials. Workshop participants also recognized these and other demand generators in their "Top Must See and Do's" when people travel here.

The destination's tourism experiences and infrastructure align with the provincial tourism brand described here:

Nova Scotia is North America's original maritime culture where visitors will be captivated by our old world charm and new world pulse, which have been shaped by the sea and the spirit of our people.

Nova Scotia Tourism (NST) works with six Core Experiences (listed and defined by NST below) to attract visitors to this province.

- **Seacoast** – coastal parks and beaches, coastal drives and trails, Cabot Trail, tides and Bay of Fundy, lighthouses, seaside communities
- **Outdoor** – hiking, whale watching, nature experiences
- **Culture** – music, fine art and craft, founding cultures, festivals and events, way of life
- **Cuisine** – Food (dining) and wine, agri-tourism
- **Heritage** – UNESCO world heritage sites, built attractions, living traditions, genealogy, founding settlers
- **Urban** – cities by the sea, Halifax, Sydney, unique towns, spas, shopping, weekend entertainment.

Quintessential Nova Scotia thrives in the Southwest area and visitors' have opportunities to enjoy ALL of the provincial Core Experiences here. Specifically some of these in each DSWNA Region are identified in Table 1. As shown, several products in the Region qualify as leading demand generators.

Table 1: Core Experiences in DSWNA Regions

(As identified by Workshop Stakeholders, Fall 2010)

NS Core Experiences	Region			
	South Shore	Yarmouth & Acadian Shores	Fundy Shore & Annapolis Valley	All Three Regions
Seacoast	Peggy's Cove	Cape Forchu Lighthouse	Tidal experiences of the Bay of Fundy	A critical mass of lighthouses within a limited distance
	Hidden stretches of sand beaches			Festivals celebrating seafaring & fishing traditions
Outdoor	Kejimkujik National Park		Outstanding, interpreted whale-watching from an island setting	
			Coastal hiking Cape Blomidon, Cape Split	
Culture		Acadian genealogy and "route to your roots"		Signature cultural/heritage festivals and events
		The Churches of Acadian Nova Scotia		Seaside festivals of music, crafts
Cuisine	Recognized cuisine unique to local areas of Mahone Bay, Lunenburg		Annapolis Valley agriculture, vineyard & wine experience	Local and fresh food markets/ roadside and weekly
			Digby scallops	
			Recognized cuisine unique to local areas of Grand Pre, Wolfville	
			Seafood experience of Hall's Harbour	
Heritage	UNESCO Lunenburg	Acadian Village in Pubnico	Cultural landscape of Grand Pre	
	Life and legend of Bluenose and Bluenose II		Annapolis Royal	
	Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic			
	Story of Birchtown			
Urban	Downtown water-front experiences of Lunenburg, Mahone Bay, Shelburne		Historic Town of Annapolis Royal	
			Unique shopping, food, accommodations of Wolfville area	

Over the last several years, DSWNA has changed and re-directed its own point of view for marketing and the inconsistency has resulted in lost opportunities for destination awareness and industry engagement. For example in 2010, when the Explore our Shores campaign was executed in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the call-to-action was *Southwest Nova Scotia*. Meanwhile in the same markets, literature, visitor servicing and the association's website presented the destination most often as three regions. Generally the organization defaults to marketing the location(s) rather than experience.

Transportation access is critically important in tourism. Since the cancellation of the direct ferry access to Maine in 2009, the destination is accessible to its priority markets from New Brunswick via ferry to Digby, by air through Halifax International Airport and when service is available through Yarmouth Airport, and by primary highway and secondary roads. In recent months, significant transportation change has consumed the association and operators and is a critical future consideration for Southwest Nova Scotia.

DSWNA has a lot of work to do in the years ahead. There are transportation and product challenges. And there are outstanding opportunities as products in which the destination is eminently qualified to lead—Bay of Fundy, wine, cuisine and farm-fresh product and a critical mass of outstanding UNESCO-designated experiences-- begin to gain momentum.

The resources for tourism marketing success are available to DSWNA. The association's go forward marketing priorities must be to:

- **clearly identify its marketing objectives,**
- **focus and channel its energy and that of its members,**
- **make some key decisions around positioning,**
- **nurture strong partnerships,**
- **measure results of its efforts,**
- **communicate effectively.**

Implemented and measured with discipline, this marketing strategy will be an important tool for focusing the energy of DSWNA over the next three years.

4.1.2 Tourism Snapshots

Introduction

The tourism overviews provided in this section are prepared using data available from the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP), ACOA-Tourism Atlantic, Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage and from DSWNA. Information includes data from the most recently completed Nova Scotia Exit Survey in 2004.³ Preliminary

³ As this report is written (November 2010) the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is about to release a comprehensive Exit Survey, including regional breakdowns. The preliminary results were not material to the recommendations of this report and have not been included.

information was available to us from the 2010 Exit Survey currently being analyzed by Nova Scotia Tourism. It was not however definitive enough as we write this report to include information in the report.

Inevitably 2010 will deliver some anomalies and “twists” in terms of the visitor profile to Nova Scotia as a result of the loss of the direct US ferry services from Yarmouth.⁴ The uncertainty around the loss of the ferry service and confusion about a future, is a reality for operators in all three regions in the Southwest area. The outcome was felt in 2010 and will continue to resonate throughout the region. The marketing recommendations contained in this marketing strategy are relevant regardless of the ferry go-forward position.

a) Tourism Snapshot: The Future (source: Nova Scotia 2011 Tourism Plan)

According to information presented in the *2011 Nova Scotia Tourism Plan* (November 2010) economic forecasts indicate favourable conditions for the tourism industry in the year ahead. The Conference Board of Canada predicts 2011 economic growth of 3 percent for this country and as Atlantic Canada and Ontario continue to deliver the majority of visitors to Nova Scotia and the Southwest region, this is promising.

Continued economic doldrums in the United States combined with an apparent lack of interest in travelling to Canada, economic crisis in target countries overseas and limiting air access issues make international predictions less optimistic for 2011.

With intense competition for traveler wallets and the emergence of new destinations, the visitor is empowered by technology and is researching far and wide before making those all important decisions about personal and leisure time.

b) Tourism Snapshot: Atlantic Canada

Relevant highlights from Atlantic Canada as we build a plan for Southwest Nova Scotia:

- **Residents** traveling throughout their home province are the biggest source of overall tourists in each and every province in Atlantic Canada
- **Maritime residents** travelling within the region comprise the biggest non-resident travel market in each of the provinces, including Nova Scotia
- **Canadians who travel to the Atlantic region** are more often from Quebec and Ontario than anywhere else in the country (the least from Saskatchewan). Over the two years from 2006 until 2008 more than 11 percent of adult Canadians (2.6 million) from other provinces took an overnight trip to Atlantic Canada. More than 74 percent of those almost 2 million trips were for pleasure
- Canadian pleasure travelers visiting the region tend to be older and more educated than the average Canadian traveler. These visitors prefer vacations at culturally distinctive destinations and experiences that offer novelty
- They are above-average users of the internet for planning and booking travel.

⁴ As the report is written, 2010 visitor numbers and economic impacts are not finalized and the impact of the loss of the ferry service is incomplete and remains anecdotal at this point.

- They are also above-average consumers of travel media.⁵
- The repeat visitor rate in Atlantic Canada is the highest in Canada
- **Residents of the United States** are less likely to travel to Atlantic Canada, or anywhere in the country for that matter, than ever before as the intentions of Americans for Canadian trips has been falling for five years. Of the US residents who do make the trip, however, 70 percent are affluent (household income of \$75,000 or more), well-educated, and professionals. They travel to enjoy a unique experience and are active while travelling.⁶
- **Residents of the United Kingdom (UK)** are most often the “long-haul” visitor to Atlantic Canada. Canada is in fact the fourth most popular long-haul destination for UK visitors and about one-third of the research respondents had travelled to this region. UK travelers most often travel between May and October and enjoy the scenery, the space and “the adventure” of this regional destination. Within Atlantic Canada, Halifax is the most popular destination with St. John’s and Charlottetown close behind. Regular year-round scheduled and seasonal charter air service is available to the region.⁷
- Travel to and through Canada’s four Atlantic Provinces by those who live outside the region occurs, with some variation by province, between mid-June and mid-October annually.
- Out of region visitors travel to one or more provinces during a trip and stay the longest in relation to the distance and the mode by which they have travelled to the region i.e. the farther the trip, the longer the stay.
- Traditionally the primary mode of travel to the region is “rubber tire” - car, motor coach, recreational vehicle and motorcycles. Visitation by air has increased over the period 2004-2010.

c) Tourism Snapshot: Nova Scotia 2004-2009

What happens to the province directly affects the region.

Here are some insights on Nova Scotia visitation:

Non-Resident Visitation

Nova Scotia Visitor statistics indicate that between 2004 and 2009: (See Figure 1)

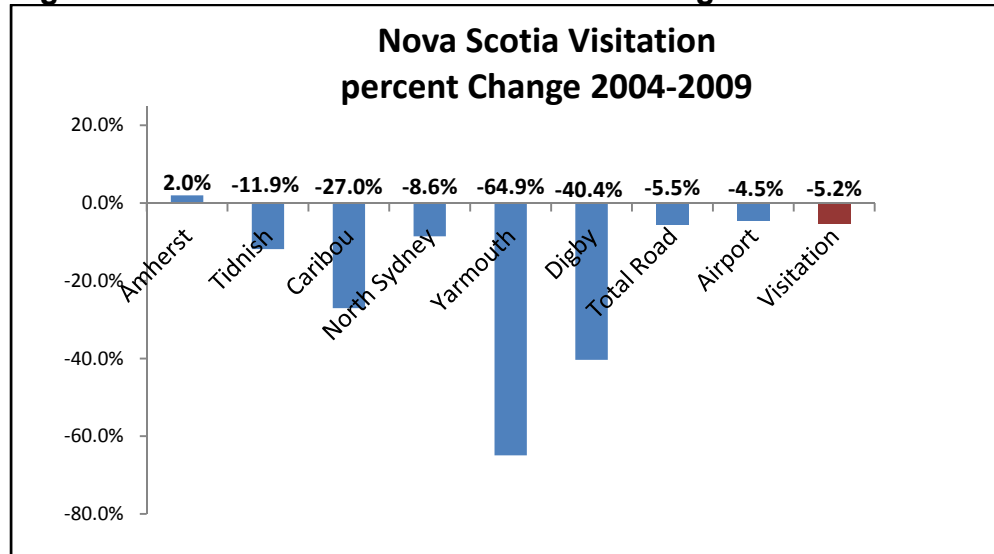
- Overall non-resident visitation has declined by 5.5 percent from a high in 2004 of 2.2 million visitors to 2.1 million in 2009
- Almost 60 percent of non-resident traffic to NS continues to arrive by rubber tire – auto, motor coach or RV
- Traffic entering through Amherst has increased by 2 percent
- Traffic at entry points of Yarmouth and Digby have decreased significantly, by 65 percent and 40 percent respectively
- Air traffic has declined in 2009-2010 but as a result of a drop in business travel.

⁵ Canadian Travel Activities and Motivations Survey (TAMS), Canadian Visitors to Atlantic Canada, February 2008

⁶ Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership Research 2009

⁷ Global Tourism Watch, Canadian Tourism Commission: Year 1 2008

Figure 1 Nova Scotia Visitation Percent Change



Source: Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage

The Non-Resident Visitor to Nova Scotia

- The majority of non-resident tourists (some 50 percent on average) are “neighbours” and travel from Atlantic Canada, primarily New Brunswick
- Canadians from outside the region visit most often from Ontario, Western Canada and then Quebec
- Overall since 2004, visitation to Nova Scotia from Western Canada had increased by 21 percent yet declined in 2009 and again in 2010 by 7 percent
- Since 2000, visits from the United States have fallen by 42 percent which in real terms means 135,000 trips. The numbers for the ferry service between New England and Yarmouth reflects this trend
- Up until recent years, US visitors have predominantly travelled from New England. The *Nova Scotia Visitor Exit Survey 2004* first revealed a shift where there were more American visitors to the province from outside New England than New Englanders
- Overseas visitation to Nova Scotia comes mostly from the United Kingdom and Germany.

2009 Non-resident Visitation Highlights:

- In 2009 visits to Nova Scotia were up 1 percent overall compared to 2008
- Visitation from Atlantic Canadians increased by a percent and from Ontario by 5 percent
- Visitation declined from Western Canada and Quebec
- From the US visitation declined by 3 percent and overseas declined 6 percent
- Activity in the accommodation sector declined provincially with room-nights sold down 4 percent
- Compared to 2008, activity within the regions either remained on par or declined.

2010 Non-resident Visitation:

- Until the end of October 2010, Nova Scotia is reflecting a 1 percent increase in non-resident visitor traffic for a total of 1.7 million visitors
- Road Traffic is up 3 percent and air arrivals are down 2 percent
- Increases have been experienced from Atlantic Canada(3 percent) and Ontario (1 percent)
- Visitation from the US dropped 2 percent
- Overseas visitation fell by 8 percent

Resident Travel in Nova Scotia

Resident Nova Scotians traveling within this province have considerable economic impact on travel and will factor into the success of the tourism and seasonality of a region.

- Almost 2 million overnight trips were taken by residents within the province in 2006
- Nova Scotians made 4.5 million day trips within the province in 2006
- The Annapolis Valley, the Northumberland Shore including Truro, and the Halifax Regional Municipality are the top areas of interest for traveling Nova Scotians.

d) Tourism Snapshot: Southwest Nova Scotia

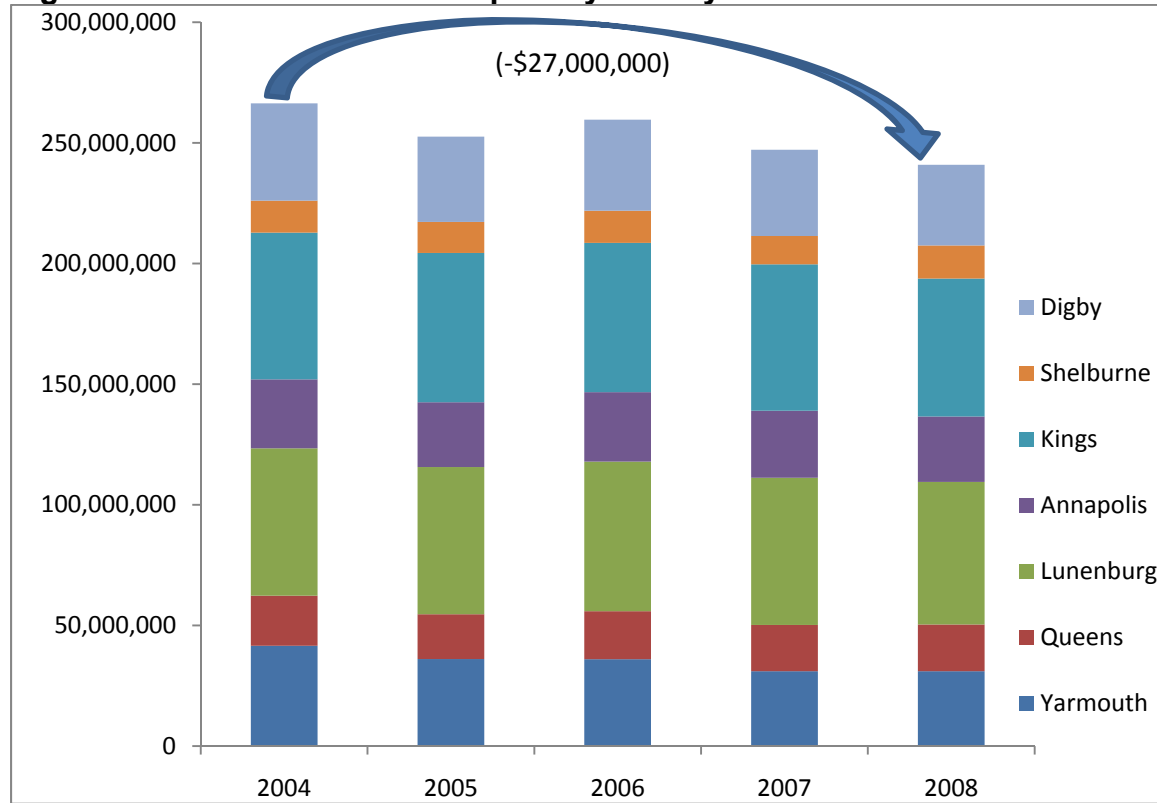
Destination Overview

The information included in this report is drawn from the regional details extracted from the *2004 Nova Scotia Visitor Exit Survey (VES)* and from results reported by Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage. In 2004 VES results about most of Southwest Nova Scotia were reported as the *Annapolis Valley* (Kings, Annapolis and Digby Counties and a portion of Hants County) and the *South Shore* (Yarmouth, Queens, Shelburne and Lunenburg Counties). Revenue detail is extracted from Nova Scotia tourism statistics and is reported by county.⁸

In 2004, total tourism revenue in the seven counties that make up the Southwest region amounted to \$267 million and employed 6,800 people directly and indirectly (see Figure 2). By 2008 revenues had dropped to \$240 million—a loss of \$27 million-- overall employing 5,700 people.

⁸ As previously noted the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is completing the province's first year-round Visitor Exit Survey (VES) of non-resident visitors to Nova Scotia. Results of that VES will be available in the coming months and will provide fresh information on visitation and visitor motivations.

Figure 2: Tourism Economic Impact by County



* A portion of Hants County was included in 2004 VES but is not reported separately.

Destination Results 2006-2010

Please note that in some instances detailed information for 2010 was unavailable as this report is written. Specific information is outlined in Table 2 .

- From 2006-2010 fixed roof occupancies in the three regions have remained on par in the 40 percent annualized range with Nova Scotia’s rural occupancy (less Halifax). Fixed roof occupancies are highest in South Shore region and generally lowest in Yarmouth and Acadian Shores
- Campground occupancies are available from 2006 until 2009. Campsites sold fluctuated from year to year yet on average are 35 percent for South Shore and 44 percent for Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley. Occupancies during the period peaked in both regions in 2008
- Nova Scotia Museum attendance has dropped 9.5 percent from 2005 to 2009
- Visitation entry points of Yarmouth and Digby dropped 57.5% from 2004-2009
- Visitors counseled at the provincial VIC’s in Yarmouth, Digby and on the Princess of Acadia dropped 30% from 2006-2009.

Table 2: Historical Picture of Visitors to the DSWNA Region

Category	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Regional Occupancy Rates					
Fundy Shore/Annapolis Valley	37%	38%	35%	35%	36%
South Shore	41%	41%	41%	37%	37%
Yarmouth /Acadian Shores	39%	33%	34%	35%	32%
Rural Occupancy-less Halifax	40%	41%	40%	39%	37%
Campground Occupancy					
South Shore	34%	35%	37%	34%	50%
Fundy Shore/Annapolis Valley	44%	42%	46%	40%	40%
Nova Scotia Museum Attendance by Region					
Fundy Shore/Annapolis Royal	54,900	54,300	55,400	55,600	49,800
South Shore	101,100	122,500	131,100	123,100	112,500
Yarmouth/Acadian Shores Total	19,200	12,800	17,100	18,200	18,000
Total	504,400	532,200	529,200	538,200	479,400
%change previous year	-12%	6%	-1%	2%	-11%
Visitors Counseled/Entry Points-N.S. Visitor Information Centres					
Portland	0	4,500	3,300	3,200	0
Portland CAT	0	5,700	3,700	4,100	0
Bar Harbor	18,000	9,700	7,500	6,800	0
Digby	16,800	16,100	15,600	13,900	15,800
Princess of Acadia	12,200	9,200	6,600	7,500	11,400
Yarmouth	17,200	14,400	13,300	11,300	9,000
Visitation Entry Point					
Yarmouth	43,900	38,200	29,500	26,100	0
Digby	28,700	30,500	25,700	20,600	27,600
Halifax International Airport	645,200	668,000	681,700	607,600	601,700
Visitation-Point of Origin/Mode of Transport/Change from previous year %(Estimated)					
Air					
Atlantic Canada	-1%	0%	15%	-14%	11%
Canada	5%	7%	4%	-10%	-1%
United States	-13%	-5%	-6%	-19%	2%
Overseas	-2%	-5%	1%	-6%	-7%
Total	1%	4%	2%	-11%	-1%
Road					
Atlantic Canada	1%	-1%	-2%	3%	2%
Canada	0%	1%	-3%	6%	3%
United States	-5%	-9%	-21%	-10%	-5%
Overseas	-2%	-5%	1%	-6%	-5%
Total	0%	0%	-5%	6%	2%
Total Non-Resident Visitation/ Change from previous year%					
Atlantic Canada	1%	-1%	-1%	1%	3%
Canada	1%	3%	-2%	1%	2%
United States	-8%	-7%	-15%	-3%	-2%
Overseas	-2%	-5%	1%	-6%	-7%
Total Non-Resident Visitation	0%	1%	-3%	1%	1%

Annapolis Valley: Non- Resident Visitation (2004 VES)

- Of total non-resident visitation to Nova Scotia, 33 percent visited the Annapolis Valley area
- Of those visitors, 47 percent were from Atlantic Canada; 20 percent from Ontario and there were more Americans from outside New England than New Englanders (20 percent overall)
- 60 percent of the visitors were on a leisure trip
- 29 percent were visiting friends and relatives
- 66 percent of visitors were between the ages of 45 and 64, travelling most often as couples.

South Shore: Non- Resident Visitation (2004 VES)

- Of total non-resident visitation to Nova Scotia, 37percent visited the South Shore
- Of those visitors, 30 percent were from Atlantic Canada; 24 percent from Ontario and there were more Americans from outside New England (21 percent of visitors)than New Englanders
- 64 percent of the visitors were on a leisure trip
- 28 percent were visiting friends and relatives
- 64 percent of visitors were between the ages of 45 and 64, travelling most often as couples.

2010 Non-Resident Destination Information

From January to September 2010, regional activity in Nova Scotia's accommodations sector reported more room-nights sold in all regions except the South Shore (-1 percent), Yarmouth and Acadian Shore (-13 percent) and the Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley (-4 percent). Provincially, room-nights sold is on par year-to-date.

Resident Visitation to Southwest Nova Scotia

In 2006 Nova Scotia compiled a report on travel patterns of Nova Scotians within the province...and the scope of activity is significant. Of 6.5 million annual trips the Fundy Shore, Annapolis Valley and the South Shore are popular for day-trips and overnight visits. It is significant that 41 percent of Nova Scotians are travelling for leisure purposes. Forty percent (40 percent) are visiting friends and relatives.

Travel by Residents in Nova Scotia-2006

6.5 Million Total Trips

1.97 Million Overnight Trips

4.54 Million Same Day trips

Figure 3: Resident Visitation by Region

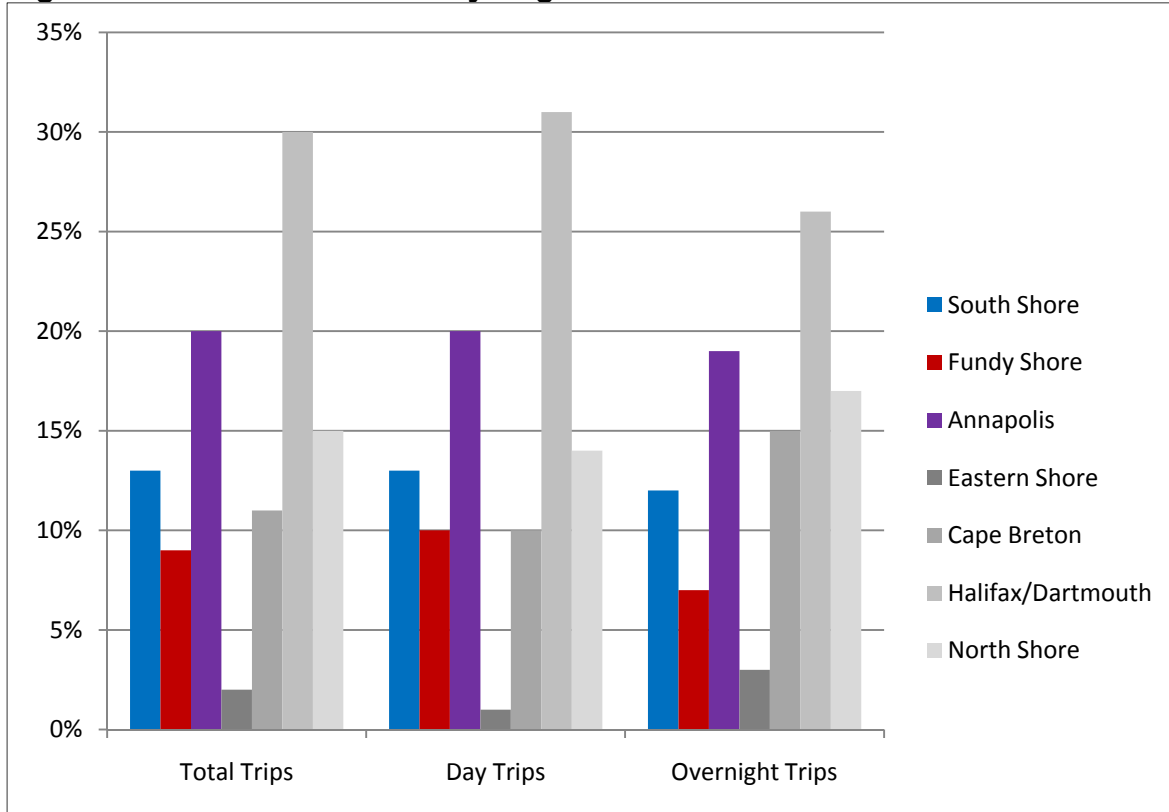
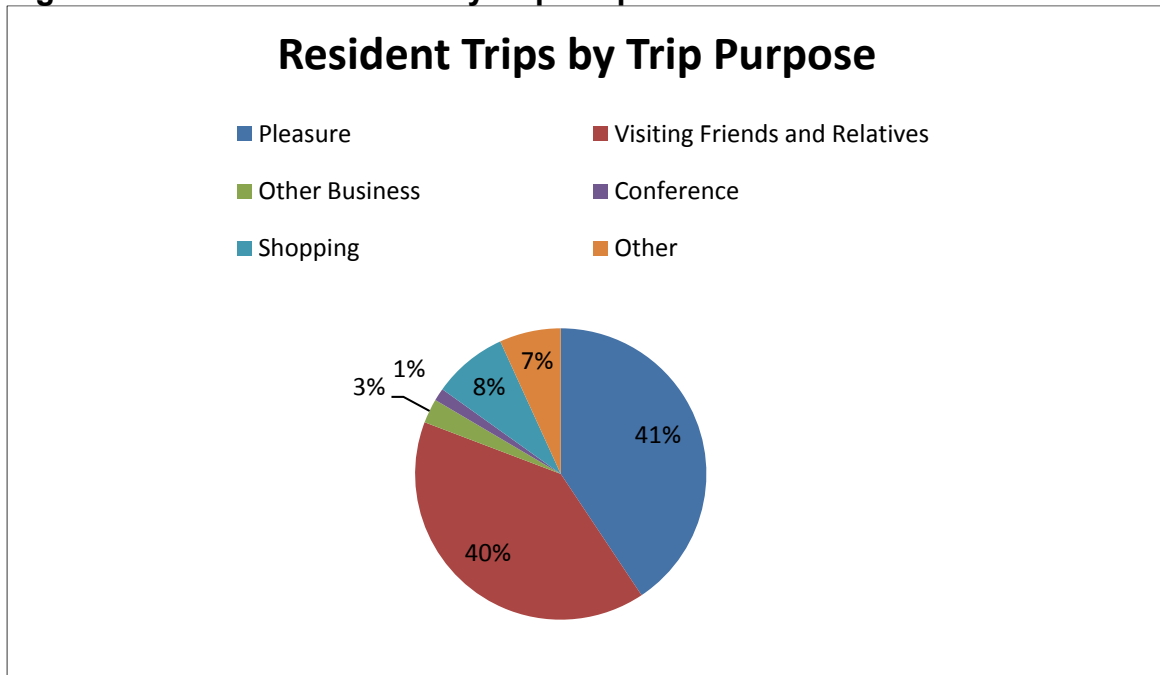


Figure 4: Resident Visitation by Trip Purpose



4.2 Marketing Strategy 2011-2013

4.2.1 Overview

The DSWNA Marketing Strategy is built and organized to be realistic, achievable and measurable. It emphasizes understanding the customer, the motivations of the customer and the products and experience the region offers the customer. It articulates priority activities for the next three years. It emphasizes getting “back to basics” and establishing the key processes required to make a marketing program work effectively.

The **Marketing Strategy 2011-2013** outlines the high level goal, objectives, targets and strategic directions that DSWNA follows over three years to achieve its marketing goal. It is based in customer focused research and outlines the strategic framework within which the organization makes marketing decisions on what to do....and establishes the strategic thinking to help DSWNA decide what not to do.

The **Annual Action Plan**, developed by DSWNA marketing team before the end of each calendar year for the next year is the annual “marketing game plan” and defines the details, the specific tactics, the partners and cooperative offers as well as the annual budget and staff responsibilities the organization will dedicate to marketing. The action plans takes the strategic directions and puts them to work in the marketplace each year.

Included in this report are recommended tools to measure progress and success in the Section titled **Measure Progress**. Appendix A offers the organization a detailed over three years Critical Path and budgetary considerations for implementation of the strategy.

The three-year Strategic Marketing Plan emphasizes four critical elements:

1. Feature “experience” front and center. Understand the iconic, recognized and differentiating *Nova Scotia demand generators* which exist in the destination and those which are growing in popularity. These demand generators will serve to lure and pull visitors into the region and form the signature experiences around which Southwest Nova Scotia will build a network of compelling reasons to keep visitors in the region and spending money
2. Provide cross-promotions and compelling reasons to explore throughout the region. “Connect the dots” between demand generators with experiences, activities, packages and itineraries to keep visitors engaged in the destination
3. Organize this information by region so the visitor can understand it in the provincial context
4. Harness and channel existing tourism resources for common effort and maximum impact.

Cooperation, focus and leveraging resources are themes of this report.

The marketing plan demands collaboration, participation and partnership involvement from tourism operators in all sectors, organizations and every municipal unit throughout Southwest Nova Scotia. Collectively the industry must embrace the Marketing Strategy and focus on overcoming the challenges, realizing the opportunities and achieving the resulting economic benefits inherent in the effort.

Collaboration is an umbrella theme – a “must have” -- to become a successful tourism destination. The alternative is a non-cohesive industry duplicating efforts and attempting to compete rather than cooperate with colleagues and neighbours for common benefit. Operators, local businesses, municipal governments and leaders must be prepared to work for the greater good even if the visitor finds an operator’s offer in the next county more suitable - this time around.

All boats float on a rising tide. Communities and regions that are successful destinations have found a way to view the world as “we” and not “me”. This takes discipline and leadership.

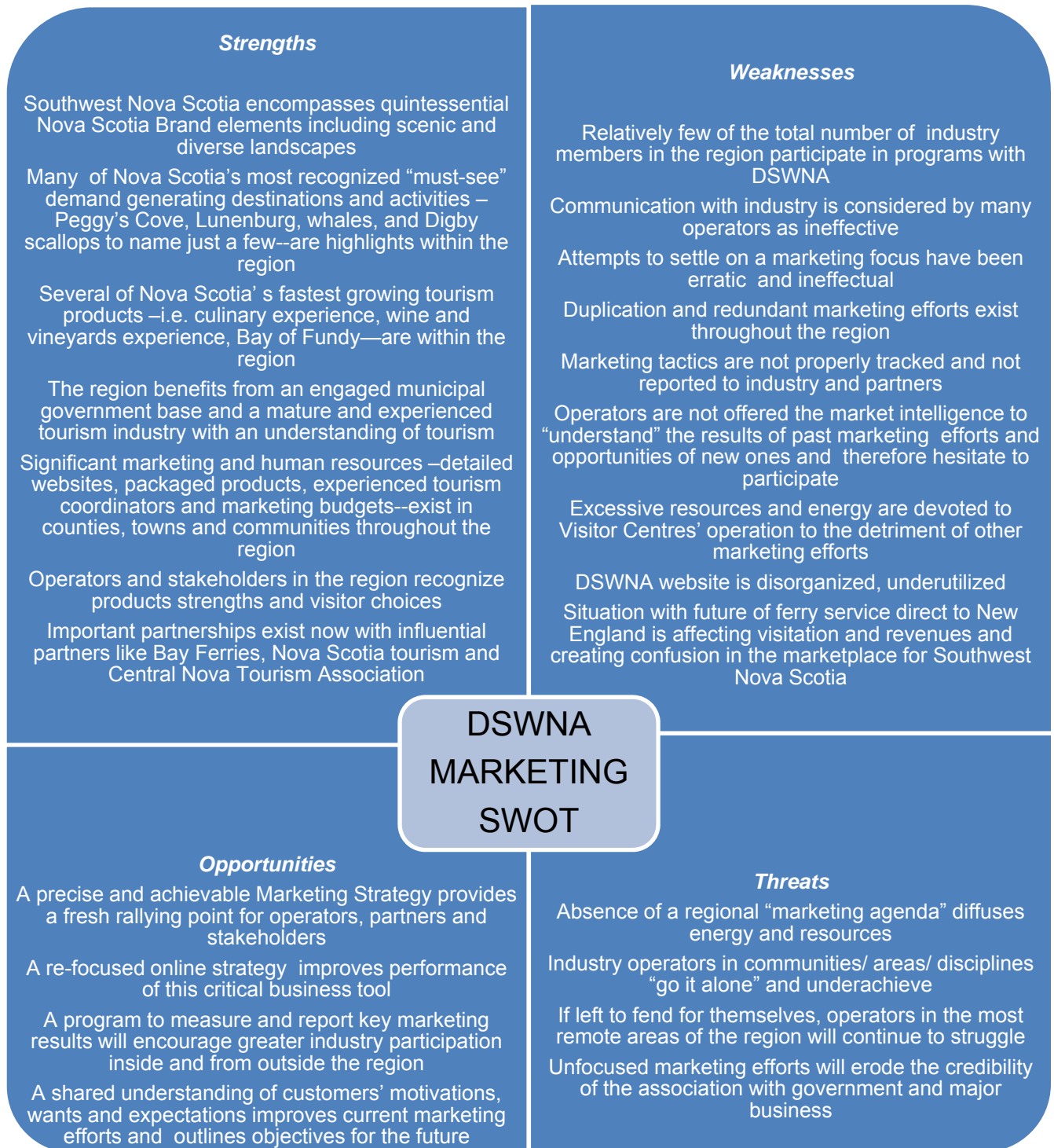
Focus is key to success. As a region DSWNA must shed its political correctness and no longer strive to be all things to all people. Focus on priority markets, the most strategic of marketing efforts and partnership is essential.

In 2008 combined tourism revenues in this destination reached almost \$240 million.
When the tourism industry in Southwest Nova Scotia achieves a 3 percent increase per year in revenues between 2011 and 2013, this will amount to more than \$7.2 million a year in incremental revenues. Marketing efforts of DSWNA can influence that important growth. That’s worth working for!

4.2.2 Marketing SWOT: Destination Southwest Nova Scotia (2010)

An assessment of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) helps us organize key internal and external environmental factors that impact the strategic directions, the marketing actions and the results of marketing efforts. This SWOT assessment is an important input for generating the strategic marketing recommendations in this report.

Figure 5: SWOT Analysis



4.2.3 Marketing Principles/ Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Marketing Plan of DSWNA is formulated using four Guiding Principles:

Guiding Principles

- **Collaboration is Paramount.**
Harness the available critical mass of industry operators, visitor experiences, enthusiasm and expertise for tourism, funding partners and key marketing partners to achieve marketing goals.
- **Focus for Results.**
DSWNA cannot be all things to all people. Its core activity is marketing. To execute effective marketing efforts DSWNA must focus on visitors' expectations, priority markets and precise strategies to optimize opportunities.
- **Leverage and Collective Effort.**
Significant marketing resources exist in this region and outside, to support the region. Focus on channelling all existing efforts in a common direction, incrementally adding as required and avoiding duplication wherever possible.
- **Communication is Critical.**
With customers, among the industry and in relationships with stakeholders and marketing partners' relevant communication of strategic direction, partnership opportunities, results and success measures must be precise and proven effective.

Strategic Marketing Goal 2011-2013

Increase visitation and visitor spending throughout the regions by 3 per cent, representing an estimated \$7.2 million in incremental revenues per year, from 2011-2013.

Strategic Marketing Objectives 2011-2013

To achieve the strategic goal of a 3 percent increase the strategy will be delivered through five key objectives.

1. Increase target market awareness of the region as *must-see* in Nova Scotia
2. Encourage visitors to travel south of Halifax and move them throughout the region
3. Use technology effectively and appropriately
4. Offer new reasons to attract members and support to DSWNA
5. Measure progress and success.

Key elements of each of these objectives will be measured for progress and success. Measures to gauge and report the progress and success of each objective is outlined in this report in Section 5, Measuring Progress.

4.2.4 Priority Markets 2011-2013

During the November 18-2010, Semi-Annual Meeting *Marketing Update*, DSWNA identified as its:

Primary Markets:

- New Brunswick – Moncton and Saint John
- Nova Scotia- Halifax and Area

Secondary Markets:

- Ontario
- Quebec
- New England States- Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire
- European –Germany and the UK

Assessment of key visitor data and environmental scanning tells us:

- Direct ferry link to Maine had been in serious decline and is at best today, in hiatus
- Direct ferry service with New Brunswick at Digby, although less capacity, is growing year-round and in usage
- Nova Scotians have proven motivation in travelling south of Halifax for day and overnight trips
- Atlantic Canadians travel to the destination significantly more frequently than visitors from Ontario and the United States
- Ontario visitation is significant
- US visitors are more often not New Englanders
- Marketing dollars are limited and demand strategic investment.

Focus marketing dollars for results!

Selection of priority markets involves analyzing market information and choosing the key areas in which to dedicate finite core and partner marketing dollars -- where you can expect measurable success.

For 2011-2013 DSWNA should concentrate marketing efforts on the Priority Markets of:

- **Nova Scotia**, primarily Halifax Regional Municipality and surrounding areas
- **New Brunswick**, primarily Saint John and Moncton
- **Ontario**, in close partnership with Nova Scotia Tourism in efforts led by Nova Scotia Tourism
- **Non-Resident Visitors** travelling the province, Intercept tactics

Although Southwest Nova Scotia has enjoyed traditional affiliations with the U.S. market, visitation numbers and access issues demand reassessment of proactive marketing activity there. Nothing is sacred. Even the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) has tempered its approach to the U.S. market and has withdrawn from what have formerly been core activities (e.g. U.S. consumer advertising).

In its 2011-2013 marketing efforts DSWNA should work collaboratively with Nova Scotia Tourism to:

- Profile regions in provincial marketing efforts that reach the **Quebec, Western Canada and U.S. markets**. DSWNA will cooperate where possible with limited investment. Select opportunities with major partners may arise to reach the U.S. market. None is a given and each must be assessed closely and objectively
- Develop relationships with **key influencers**—tour operators, travel trade specialists and travel media to impact markets. This should also be done with limited investment.

4.2.5 Major Marketing Focus 2011-2013:

In the five years since its inception, the association has yet to clearly establish a consistent point of view on what “it is”, what it offers and what it represents to visitors. Often the association has defaulted to emphasizing geographic location in marketing—“Southwest Nova Scotia” or “Destination Southwest Nova” and/or three regions – rather than concentrating its marketing on the lure of the place... the demand generators and winning experiences offered throughout the destination.

DSWNA must align its marketing strategy with Nova Scotia Tourism for success. It works. Capitalize on it! Nova Scotia Tourism, with conviction and consistency invests in promoting Nova Scotia’s brand and core experiences in provincial marketing. DSWNA needs to loudly and fearlessly align with the province and promote its primary lures and most recognized experiences—several of which are Nova Scotia icons and central to the Nova Scotia experience—to lure visitors to the region.

Once on the Southwest turf, the focus of association marketing efforts is to keep visitors in the destination, move them throughout the regions and offer many compelling reasons to stay longer and spend more.

Nova Scotia Tourism uses the system of seven provincial regions to organize and assist visitors’ research, access and purchase its Nova Scotia experiences. DSWNA must leverage this approach and organize its information around the three regions in the destination – Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley, Yarmouth and Acadian Shores and South Shore. This orientation assists visitors to research, access and purchase tourism experiences by organizing information by region that capitalizes on provincial initiatives.

We recommend that DSWNA continue its ground-breaking partnership with Central Nova Tourism Association to offer visitors “the complete” Bay of Fundy experience and continue to serve it up in a comprehensive and collective format—by region—that visitors understand. This effort on the part of both organizations deserves recognition and is a best practice example of thinking like “we” rather than “me” to maximize the potential of the visitor experience.

In all future marketing efforts DSWNA should:

- Feature “experience” front and center, particularly the iconic, recognized and differentiating Nova Scotia must-see demand generators in the regions and those

which are growing in popularity. These key motivators will pull visitors into Southwest Nova Scotia

- Organize this information by region
- Provide cross-promotions and compelling reasons to explore the destination; “connect the dots” between demand generators with market-ready experiences, activities, festivals, special events and “hidden treasures” (secondary motivators) delineated through packages, touring “loops” and itineraries to keep visitors in the region and spending money
- Harness existing tourism resources for common effort and maximum impact.

4.2.6 Market Positioning

Clear market positioning is customer focused and is at the core of the integrated marketing efforts employed to encourage increased visitation and visitor spending. Positioning defines what the region does and does not represent in the minds and the experience of the visitor. The positioning statement articulates the deliverable “promise” to the customer and defines the special “space” that the region will fill in a visit to Nova Scotia. The positioning must be understood and embraced by the industry who will deliver it and be precise enough to guide the tourism industry to develop leading product and services.

The working positioning statement which follows requires in-depth review with regional industry and Nova Scotia Tourism for effective execution AND balance with customer information for relevance. We propose a Working Positioning Statement for DSWNA marketing efforts 2011-2013 for the purposes of discussion.

Working Positioning Statement

SouthWestern Nova Scotia is the province’s must -see region where the experiences of Nova Scotia’s most quintessential and recognized, emerging and exciting attractions and activities motivate prolonged stays and exceed visitors expectations.

Work should begin immediately with regional tourism stakeholders, partners and Nova Scotia Tourism to refine the positioning statement. The effort to refine the positioning statement can serve as a tool with which DSWNA can explain its marketing point of view, gain feedback and build consensus.

4.2.7 Strategic Marketing Activities 2011-2012

For the purposes of executing the DSWNA Marketing Strategy, priority strategic marketing activities are categorized into five key activities:

1. ***Describe and Organize the Experience***
2. ***Get them Here!***

3. *Keep them Here!*
4. *Partner. Partner. Partner.*
5. *Measure Progress*

The priority strategic marketing activities are outlined in the pages that follow. A critical path that plots the efforts over 36 months and a high level budget are included in Appendix A.

An Annual Action Plan, with an online and offline advertising component and offers for co-operative partnership marketing, must be developed by the DSWNA Marketing Committee before December 31 of each year once the provincial tourism marketing plan and provincial partnership offers are available. The DSWNA annual plan will be built based upon results from the year prior and industry/ partnership feedback.

The priority strategic marketing activities are described below.

1. Describe and Organize the Experience

Southwest Nova Scotia is rich with iconic attractions, signature events and unique Nova Scotia experiences. It also offers a wealth of market-ready experiences that although less recognized are aligned with the core visitor experience identified by Nova Scotia Tourism. The experiences happen throughout the year. They are indoors and outdoors, determined by nature, landscape, weather and harvest and season. They are individual events and clusters of activities.

In this report in **Situational Analysis: Marketing**, in the review of Core Experiences we provide a table that outlines some of the demand generators offered by the destination, by Core Experience. Much of the industry input for this report and Nova Scotia Tourism visitor information supports this information. It is not a definitive list but an important place from which to begin an on-going Experience Inventory.

As the basis of a strong marketing program DSWNA must clearly understand what the visitor to Nova Scotia and the region wants and expects and importantly what the region is selling to satisfy that. All experiences are not created equal in customers' minds. It is critical to assemble an inventory objectively and with the benefit of all the research available.

Experience Inventory

DSWNA Marketing Committee should begin immediately to assemble an in-depth database, an Experience Inventory, for use in marketing efforts beginning in 2011. The inventory will validate and catalogue compelling demand generators that serve to attract visitors to the destination. It should also identify secondary motivators that engage visitors, to keep them here and move them around.

Ultimately the Experience Inventory database must be categorized by theme, by travelway, by season and by level of market readiness. Motivators must be rich with the kind of experience that creates a memory and supports the Nova Scotia brand. As Nova Scotia tourism says a great experience is about "*learning something by doing*"

something with someone who lives here". Documenting the level of market readiness will not only assure that experiences are effective as revenue generators but will help everyone involved to fill in gaps helping to enhance the experience.

Nova Scotia Tourism plans in 2011 to build an inventory of signature Nova Scotia experiences and to spend time on Acadian content. DSWNA must participate with enthusiasm in that effort, ensuring that experiences available only and best in Southwest Nova Scotia are in that all-important mix.

Dig deeply for differentiators. To be special, demand-generating experiences differentiate themselves as precisely as possible as available only in this region so they are tough for others to duplicate.

They speak in a relevant way to customers. For instance, when marketing to largely Acadian New Brunswick it is not compelling to offer that Yarmouth and Acadian Shores (YAS) has "a rich and living Acadian culture". So does New Brunswick. However to pinpoint the fact that a genealogy offer, a "route to Acadian roots" can be found here and that a critical mass of majestic Acadian churches dating over centuries are open for viewing speaks with more relevance to target visitors motivations. These are differentiators in the YAS Acadian experience that can only be found and experienced in this one place and make it worth the visit for a New Brunswick resident with Acadian roots and/or interests.

Throughout Atlantic Canada the tourism industry references the broad term "coastal experiences" as demand generators. But for purposes of marketing, that "coastal experience" must be described more precisely in terms of differentiators that only the Southwest destination can offer. Describe what a visitor's coastal experience in this destination means such as "sailing aboard legendary Bluenose II from its homeport, Lunenburg" or "the mystique of Brier Island surrounded by whales".

To assemble the Experience Inventory, work from customer focused research that is available:

- 1) Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage has rich and the most in-depth information. Connect with the department and review all relevant studies and resources, some of which specifically identify reasons why visitors travel here. Experience Nova Scotia: A Toolkit available from Nova Scotia tourism at <http://gov.ns.ca/tch/tourism/experience-toolkit.aspx> is a valuable resource. The Product Development Division, Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is the first point of contact.
- 2) Work with research/study information available within and about the destination. Yarmouth and Acadian Shores, Shelburne County, Wolfville and Area and Bluenose Coast to name just four have studies and asset assessments in hand that identify key and secondary demand generators. Mine these for information and compile a desktop review of insights.

- 3) Engage DSWNA members, involve the partners who are tourism specialists and talk with tour operators and planners for additional sources. For instance, the *Bay of Fundy Interpretation and Attraction Development Plan* and local destination development suggestions generated for communities by Roger Brooks'. Destination Development Inc. will impact this inventory over time. Mine these for information.
- 4) Ask your visitors! Generate a short Visitor Survey that can be delivered simply online, at Visitor Centres and major attractions in the region each year, beginning in 2011. Ask visitors what motivates them to come and to stay. And what would they like to do the next time. The results of the survey will inform annual planning.
- 5) Be alert to all changes to the information in the Visitor Survey from year to year.
- 6) Share the information in the Experience Inventory with partners and operators at least once during the year when industry operators are preparing their individual offers for the coming year.
- 7) Ensure that Nova Scotia tourism is part of this development so the province can populate its marketing information with information from a rich and descriptively detailed regional inventory. Consistent use of the experience information will increase awareness.

Input for the Experience Inventory on the must-see demand generators of Southwest Nova Scotia is detailed in the report from industry consultations held in three locations while preparing this report. In Appendix D is the chart of experiences from which content was drawn for advertising the *Explore our Shores 2010* campaign.

No inventory of experiences in Southwest Nova that we have been able to access, clearly articulates:

- The most motivating reasons to travel to the region
- The differentiators that separate generic product from appealing experience.

The association needs to work with research and an unwavering customer focus and create a rich and deep Experience Inventory that makes the demand generators of the region be truly unique, tough to duplicate and stand above the crowd.

The job is never done! Revisit the Experience Inventory on a regular (at least annual) basis as a priority of the DSWNA Marketing Committee. Make adjustments, additions and tweaks as on-going research requires.

It is this Experience Inventory and the database of experiences catalogued by theme, region, season and level of market readiness that will serve as a root source from which DSWNA will build and circulate "What's Happening NOW" updates on a weekly basis to VICs and regional operators and post them prominently on the website.

Image Bank

DSWNA must strive to develop a bank of professional images to describe/ illustrate with precision all demand generators and as many secondary motivators as possible in all appropriate seasons and contexts for consistency of use in online and offline marketing efforts. The association has access to an admirable image bank now and can work with Nova Scotia tourism, regional partners and industry operators to build it. For maximum impact, key partners should use the core images selected as well, leveraging awareness. Negotiate this with them.

Based on what images are currently available of demand generators, it may be necessary for DSWNA to coordinate or collaborate on a controlled shoot in 2011-2012.

2. Get them Here!

Delivering visitors to Southwest Nova Scotia and making credit cards snap is the goal of this Marketing Strategy. With finite dollars and a focus on results, the association must choose not only the markets it targets but also the ways in which it speaks to those markets—its priority marketing tactics-- and where it will seek cooperative industry investment. In this strategy, online and offline marketing activities are fully integrated with consistent messaging, creative approach and offers and key tactics are measured.

According to Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC) 95 percent of travel decisions are made based on emotion (only 5 percent are rational decisions) so it is critical that the experiences of the Southwest destination be described in its marketing tactics as consistent with the Core Experiences of the provincial tourism Brand –for important leverage—and differentiated to be uniquely available and delivered here.

Online Marketing Priorities: Website

Nowhere in the marketing arsenal can the emotion of the region be better described and adjusted for effectiveness than online. DSWNA should make its priority marketing tactical effort for 2011 to re-organize its destination website as its primary marketing tool.

Currently www.destinationSouthwestnova.com is a hybrid website attempting to add value to participation in the association and attract visitors simultaneously. It is doing neither with precision. DSWNA has access to professional expertise and experience. The organization, as the 2011 marketing priority, should work with professionals to execute a customer-focused website re-development plan and create an online “conversion machine” for operators in the region.

The percentages quoted may vary, however it is clearly recognized that the vast majority of visitors -- estimated to be more than 80 percent -- use the internet as a major source of travel research and decision-making. Internet users are familiar with useful websites. They know how to seek information and can be lured to explore a site that appears when they need it and “speaks to them” with crisp, well-articulated and targeted messages, creative approaches, logical navigation and a clear call to action.

A website with profitable on-ramps for the industry and appropriate profile for communities will serve to raise the credibility of DSWNA as a tourism leader, providing opportunities for the region to grow.

A re-organized website will:

- Focus on demand generators and experiences. Basically the site will lead with the destination's strongest, most compelling and proven demand generators unique to each region. It will be populated with a network of secondary motivators and itineraries, packages, operator and partner information and links and tactics to cross-promote the region and keep visitors on the site leading them to sales. Present the lure before the location.
- Be customer focused! Today both the site name and search engine identification present the site as a DSWNA association-focused website. A new website and its search engine identification should clearly reflect the site as profiling Nova Scotia's must-see experiences in Southwest Nova Scotia and a not-to-be-missed visit. Present the priority information visitors are seeking--the demand generating experiences and unique propositions of visiting Southwest Nova Scotia --first and foremost on the site.
- Be organized to offer users the opportunity to explore the site by experiences offered throughout the destination or regionally while always connecting and cross-promoting experiences in regions to encourage travel throughout the destination.
- Use a URL on this destination website that speaks to the message in the positioning statement...something, like www.mustseenovascotia.com . This would also be the identifying name for the site on search engines. We are not recommending that DSWNA necessarily abandon the existing URL www.destinationSouthwestnova.com. There is online equity in it. However DSWNA should use a more expressive vanity URL as a call to action in all customer-facing materials.
- Have logical and prominent onramps—links-- for operators and regional associations to capture information, visitor attention and do business through online presence, links and advertising opportunities. In each case a link must be reciprocal allowing the visitor to return to the core, destination site at will and continue virtually visiting the region.
- Link, link, link the re-organized destination with municipal sites and those of partners and stakeholders in each region and throughout the destination for online leverage
- Ensure that all appropriate and available linkages are made with www.novascotia.com
- Ensure that packages, itineraries and special offers presented in the destination site are cross-pollinated with www.novascotia.com. Nova Scotia tourism provides the details and assistance on how to do this.

- Make it simple and enjoyable for a customer assembling and buying a trip to download materials. The destination website is the best location to offer visitors information on niche products and experiences for which there is market-ready critical mass. Rather than print a birding map or a list of lighthouses that can be visited, offer the information online. It is easy to update and with skilled online links can be circulated far more broadly and descriptively than a printed map or listing.
- Offer online advertising opportunities
- Make the databases that feed the website be the central repository and root source of ALL information and updates on Southwest Nova Scotia tourism. An update to the content of this site, updates all tourism databases.
- Include tactics to:
 - o capture names for a database to future marketing efforts
 - o profile on-going activities and events by posting on prime home page real estate “What’s happening NOW” updates online weekly
 - o Use visitor testimonials
 - o Incorporate video for more online interaction
- A password protected location on the site will serve as a tool for member information and communication.
- Arm the site with web tracking and measurement tools.
- A priority for 2012 is a bilingual version of the site. Bilingual New Brunswick is a primary market of close proximity and will respond to online materials in French. Quebec is a market that Southwest Nova Scotia will address with Nova Scotia Tourism as the lead, and which also will respond to French-language marketing efforts. Also a bilingual version of the website is important to reinforce the authenticity of the Acadian language and the culture in the destination. An important element of the experience of the destination is Acadian...and use of French materials serves to legitimize that.

DSWNA should use the destination website as the primary call to action for ALL marketing efforts, for visitor servicing and industry engagement. It becomes the online forum where “the reasons” to visit the region and the logistics of “how to” do that come together.

Ensure the website is highly visible!

The website must be professionally developed to best achieve web prominence and visibility. The most motivating and useful of websites is less than effective if the marketplace is not attracted to it. DSWNA should commit in the site re-organization plan to comprehensive search engine optimization (SEO) and a plan for creating beneficial web links. Optimization efforts will be supported by a strategic online and offline advertising program with a clear focus of driving traffic to the site.

Online Marketing Priorities: Mobile Application

The provincial travel website www.novascotia.com promises in 2011 to have a fully optimized mobile site. Proper, well-positioned links from www.novascotia.com to the DSWNA website and to regional operators included in the DSWNA website will provide access to the Southwest region by mobile application.

In 2012 the Marketing Committee should move to work with Nova Scotia Tourism and generate a complementary mobile site appropriate to the region's needs.

Online Marketing Priorities: Social Media

Social media activity is high on the radar screen these days and opens new promotion vistas to DSWNA if managed properly. It takes careful management and, attention to detail and updating. Social media is powerful. It is also demanding and unforgiving media. An out of date blog or unattended, untimely Face book page can harm the reputation of a destination. We recommend that in 2011, DSWNA focus on re-organizing and optimizing its destination website and participate fully with Nova Scotia tourism lead on provincial initiatives for social media.

Review the resources available in preparation for 2012 and consider expanding social media efforts as a region.

Where industry members within the destination are active in social marketing request that the destination website URL be included on these individual social media efforts.

Online Marketing Priorities: E-Campaigns/Travel Club

The re-organized destination website will proactively offer website visitors' the opportunities to participate in the destination's Travel Club and receive up-to-date information and offers from operators throughout Southwest Nova Scotia. It is critical that this database identify as precisely as possible the prime interests and motivations of these club "members" for niche marketing opportunities and that the database be current.

It is always less expensive to retain a visitor than to earn a new one. This database should be considered one of the most important to the organization.

Electronic marketing campaigns should also be considered independently and with partners and will be part of the online advertising assessments considered in developing the Annual Action Plan.

Advertise Strategically

There are myriads of options open to advertising tourism to target markets. Online and offline opportunities exist. Some are traditional, some innovative and they change on a daily basis. DSWNA devotes much of its budget annually to a marketing program which includes significant advertising and promotion. The association needs to be confident that the money invested on behalf of its members is well placed for return on investment.

Until such expertise exists within marketing personnel of the association, DSWNA should use the services of a professional media buyer once a year as the Marketing Plan is developed, to assist in recommending the best strategic advertising options to support the marketing strategy and the annual action plan. Media buyers are available in Nova Scotia and can assemble an advertising mix to best advantage for budget available.

A media buyer weighs media options, recommends from a broad range of options and provides to marketing decision makers the history and the potential of each buy. Professional media buying skills will assist the Marketing Manager in making informed and objective advertising decisions to support the Annual Action Plan.

Effective advertising will be critically important, as DSWNA begins to build its credibility by offering members and partners well-researched and profitable co-op advertising opportunities.

This Marketing Strategy anticipates that the re-organized destination website is the primary call to action for all marketing efforts. The website is the forum in which visitors can view and purchase the experiences and the industry offers available in the regions and where cross-promotional efforts are most effectively applied. Search engine optimization (SEO) and an effective link program will drive traffic to the website. Optimization efforts will be supported by a strategic online and offline advertising program with a clear focus of driving traffic to the site.

Decisions on advertising placement that will drive traffic to the website should be made based upon:

- The ability to reach target markets in online and offline environments
- The ability to reach SELECT niche interests within the target markets where demand generators in the Southwest region dominate; including the Vineyard/Wine Experience and others that will become evident in the Experience Inventory
- The frequency and therefore target market exposure offered such as a high-frequency online or print opportunity
- The ability to intercept and influence visitors who are in Nova Scotia -- perhaps with strategically placed outdoor (billboard) advertising, airport exposure or in-room hotel opportunities
- The opportunities for co-operative marketing efforts with Nova Scotia tourism, with industry operators and with major partners
- Appropriate seasonal opportunities that support operations and offers
- Ability to be effectively measured in a timely manner. Advertising to target markets is good...but some advertising is more effective than others. Tactical measurement and professional advice will help with these decisions
- Available budget.

Speak directly to your customer!

In representing such a broad geographic area, DSWNA has often defaulted in developing creative components for advertising that are politically correct so that operators rather than customers can “see themselves” in the advertising. Too often this happens to the detriment of speaking clearly and with pointed relevance to the customer. The strategy proposed here -- taking priority demand generators to target markets to attract attention and offering the full gamut of experiences in online fulfillment—challenges operators to think “we” and not “me” and to commit to using the right bait to hook the fish....and then share him at the dinner table!

Co-operative Marketing

Co-operative marketing between a DMO and its membership is an effort in strength in numbers. It is a critical element of the Marketing Strategy that, when executed with skill, “works” for the organization at a number of levels. Cooperative marketing:

- Generates an important source of funds to take Southwest tourism to the marketplace and it offers the visitor insights and sometimes “samples” of the scope and range of a destination.
- It leverages important provincial tourism dollars and at times, additional sources of funding.
- A solid co-op offer adds credibility to an organization and instils confidence in the membership; it provides a point of reference among members who otherwise might not find one.
- When results of a successful program are evident it generates much needed incremental and beneficial support from municipalities.

Since its inception, DSWNA has provided a cooperative marketing offer for which support has decreased in recent years, hampering the organization’s ability to grow. There is no process in place to measure co-op marketing results. In developing this report therefore we gained insights from key informant interviews and industry consultations.

DSWNA Marketing Committee should recalibrate its process for executing co-operative marketing beginning in 2011; it should focus on giving the membership strategic, profitable, innovative and affordable co-op offers and all-important information for decision-making.

To generate a successful co-operative marketing program beginning in 2011 DSWNA will undertake that:

- Operators are consulted to ensure that cooperative offers are relevant, affordable and appealing to operators before they are finalized and circulated
- The DSWNA cooperative marketing offers leverage and are incremental to provincial partners’ offers
- Central Nova Tourism Association is consulted and partners in relation to collaborative offers that will be made to operators in Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley

- DSWNA acquires professional marketing and media buying advice to ensure that the best information and options are in play when the co-op plan is built and media decisions are made
- The objectives of the overall Marketing Strategy and therefore the complementary objectives of the co-operative offer are understood and appreciated by industry operators
- Each and every offer presented to the industry is aligned with the overall strategy, is timely and affordable
- All offers are well-positioned, integrated and cost effective...that the cooperative offers are the best possible to achieve the objectives against target markets
- Measurements and input from partners and stakeholders, rather than anecdotal information, drives the media and tactical choices
- Each tactic is measurable and that industry feedback is an element of that measurement
- Online and offline media options are available and are integrated
- A range of offers are available at a range of cost levels
- At least one offer is available per season
- Detailed information on the performance of the media options is presented when the co-op options are presented
- Barring exceptions and unanticipated opportunities, ALL co-op offers are presented to industry as a package giving operators as much opportunity as possible to make thoughtful decisions
- Results of the cooperative marketing efforts—positive and negative—will be reported in a timely manner
- The results of cooperative marketing in one year are widely communicated to inform decisions for the following year.

DSWNA represents a large area with an experienced and well-resourced industry. With a fresh approach to its cooperative marketing, industry operators will profit and the organization can become a best practice in cooperative marketing.

Collateral

There remains a place in a marketing program for printed collateral material for distribution directly to potential visitors in trade show venues, at points of visitor servicing and in response to online requests. Operators and communities continue to view printed collateral – primarily guide books--as important and valid elements of an overall marketing program and profitable advertising venues.

Consistent with the themes of the Marketing Strategy and the destination website, DSWNA should move to produce a single destination guide. As this is probably impractical for 2011, it should be planned for 2012 and beyond. The guide, under one cover, profiles the demand generators and individuality of each region, by region, and serves to cross-pollinate information and offers among regions, to move visitors throughout the destination.

A single destination guide will reinforce to visitors that the three regions are in fact a single “destination”. Information and advertising in this guide will offer operators in all regions broader reach and visitor distribution. It offers more opportunity for expanded distribution to the partnership with CNTA on Bay of Fundy. Bilingual elements to support Yarmouth and Acadian Shores, Grand Pre and any other appropriate segments of the guide are not precluded in any way by this format and should be included as appropriate and measured for effectiveness.

A successful destination guide:

- mirrors the organization of the website with demand generators front and center and the “connective tissue” of cross-promotions and itineraries and packages throughout, organized by region and under one cover
- offers significant buy-in for industry operators
- profiles itineraries, packages and cross-promotional offers to keep visitors in the region and moving throughout the region
- highlights the key and secondary motivators of the region
- is creatively consistent with website and advertising
- refers the reader to the destination website for niche opportunities, product updates and new offers.

Additional collateral requirements – information on DVD and memory sticks or printed hand-out materials will be defined as elements of the Annual Action Plan.

Trade Shows

During 2009 and 2010, DSWNA dedicated significant dollars—plus association and industry time, energy and collateral-- to participation in trade shows to reach target markets. Appropriately chosen, they give operators an opportunity to interact with target markets, potential visitors an opportunity to sample the destination and provide useful networking opportunities for the local industry. Trade shows are also face-to-face opportunities to collect contacts for future business. Trade Shows, however, are not all created equal and consume precious association resources for tough-to-measure results.

It should be considered that in 2011, DSWNA limit its trade show participation to consumer shows only offered within Nova Scotia and southern New Brunswick where:

- Opportunities exist to interact with priority target markets
- Objectives of the show can be measured with an online contest or special offers
- Opportunities exist to intercept visitors already in the province

The contacts gathered at trade shows by all participants should be shared for appropriate and timely destination follow-up and inclusion in databases, based upon the customers' approval. The results from the measurement of these 2011 trade shows will be used to formulate trade show participation recommendations in 2012 and beyond.

At trade shows all banners --three to six banners in total or one/ two each per region – should carry a major image of a demand generator with the lure more prominent than the location on the banner. The call to action on each would be to the newly re-organized website.

Meetings and Conventions Opportunities

The destination can benefit from the business of meetings and conventions in two ways:

- by operators' hosting meetings in the region
- by offering pre and post meeting activities and packages to delegates attending larger meetings throughout the regions and in near-by Halifax.

DSWNA can be a facilitator to help support the sector until a time when a comprehensive Meetings and Conventions strategy might be required. The association's role in supporting meetings and conventions should be defined with direct involvement of the industry.

Many operators within Southwest Nova Scotia are today actively involved in the business of meetings and conventions, at a variety of levels. Experience, expertise and partnerships exist in the region. DSWNA should coordinate a meeting with these operators to assess how the association can assist in supporting the meetings and conventions sector and work with that input to build its activities. The association might consider a *Meet Here!* section on the destination website and review opportunities to promote meetings in a coordinated and cooperative way.

DSWNA has a growing inventory of travel packages offered online, some of which would be appropriate to offer as pre and post meeting travel opportunities for delegates to meetings. The association should review with Destination Halifax, opportunities to position packages and offers for the attention of inbound meeting delegates to the city.

DSWNA should also facilitate a meeting with key Destination Management Companies (DMCs) in the Halifax area to investigate further opportunities for the destination's operators in the meetings and conventions sector.

Cruise

Several ports within the jurisdiction of DSWNA have an expressed interest and have/ are participating in development of the cruise sector. Certain businesses and

attractions, such as Grand Pre National Historic Site, have investigated becoming shore-excursions for Halifax cruise stops.

Over the course of the Marketing Strategy, we do not see an active role for DSWNA in Cruise unless as a forum for reporting on individual port and operators activities and any new opportunities that might surface.

Creative Continuity

For the purposes of maximizing the awareness of DSWNA in the minds of visitors it will be critically important that the “look and feel” of the materials used to execute the Marketing Strategy and the Annual Action Plan have as much continuity as possible. Core images, select demand motivators, fundamental elements and calls to action need to be as consistent as possible from one media application to another. The same DSWNA “look and feel” needs to be executed in the website, in all advertising and promotional materials online, offline and in print.

DSWNA needs to work closely with Nova Scotia tourism on this look and feel so that the look and feel:

- Consistently supports and therefore leverages provincial materials while focusing on a distinctly differentiated Southwest Nova Scotia message
- Can be integrated by Nova Scotia tourism into appropriate provincial materials.

In past marketing, DSWNA often used the media supplier to provide the creative and to generate ads and online banners for placement. We recommend that once the “look and feel” for DSWNA marketing is established, the Marketing Committee sign off on a Creative Brief for DSWNA which can be provided to suppliers as they prepare creative elements. The Creative Brief outlines the core expectation of DSWNA in terms of creative development, provides key images and any taglines and ensures a level of continuity in production.

A Creative Brief outline is included in the Appendix B.

Media Relations

Third party endorsement of a destination can be worth its weight in gold and visitation. Cooperation with media relations is, in fact, a contractual obligation of the association’s core funding agreement with Nova Scotia tourism. As a key element of its marketing efforts, DSWNA should continue to work with Nova Scotia tourism on media familiarization programs...as frequently as possible within target markets.

DSWNA should identify a finite annual budget for media relations in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and attempt wherever and whenever possible to profile appropriate industry operators and motivators in those media efforts.

Results of media efforts in which DSWNA participates should be reported to members and stakeholders on a regular basis including the editorial value of the project. Media relations planning for every Annual Action Plan should consider the results of efforts the prior year.

3. Keep Them Here!

Attracting visitors to the region, keeping them here and moving them around to increase length of stay and visitor spend are inherent in the association's Marketing Goal. There are four primary activities on which the organization must focus to keep spending visitors in the area:

- Disciplined operation of visitor information centres (VICs)
- Packaging the experience
- Industry commitment and involvement
- Cross-Promotion.

Disciplined Operation of Visitor Information Centres:

VICs continue to play a role in tourism marketing. Although some 80 percent of visitors seek destination information from the internet, many, although in decreasing numbers, continue to research and adjust travel decisions on site. Well-positioned, multi-use information centres with skilled and knowledgeable counselors can influence travel and drive incremental revenues. Tourism operators, members and local municipalities continue to expect from the association a visitor servicing/ information distribution component. Measuring the *results* of visitor servicing on tourism, rather than simply reporting bald numbers of people who walked through the doors or signed a guest book is difficult....everywhere.

In addition to the provincial centres, 67 individual VICs are operating seasonally across Nova Scotia. In 2010, DSWNA managed the operation of 25 regional VICs while at the same time provincial centres operated in Yarmouth, Digby and Peggy's Cove. Meanwhile, the number of visitors counseled at centres is decreasing year over year and the value of many centres is in question.

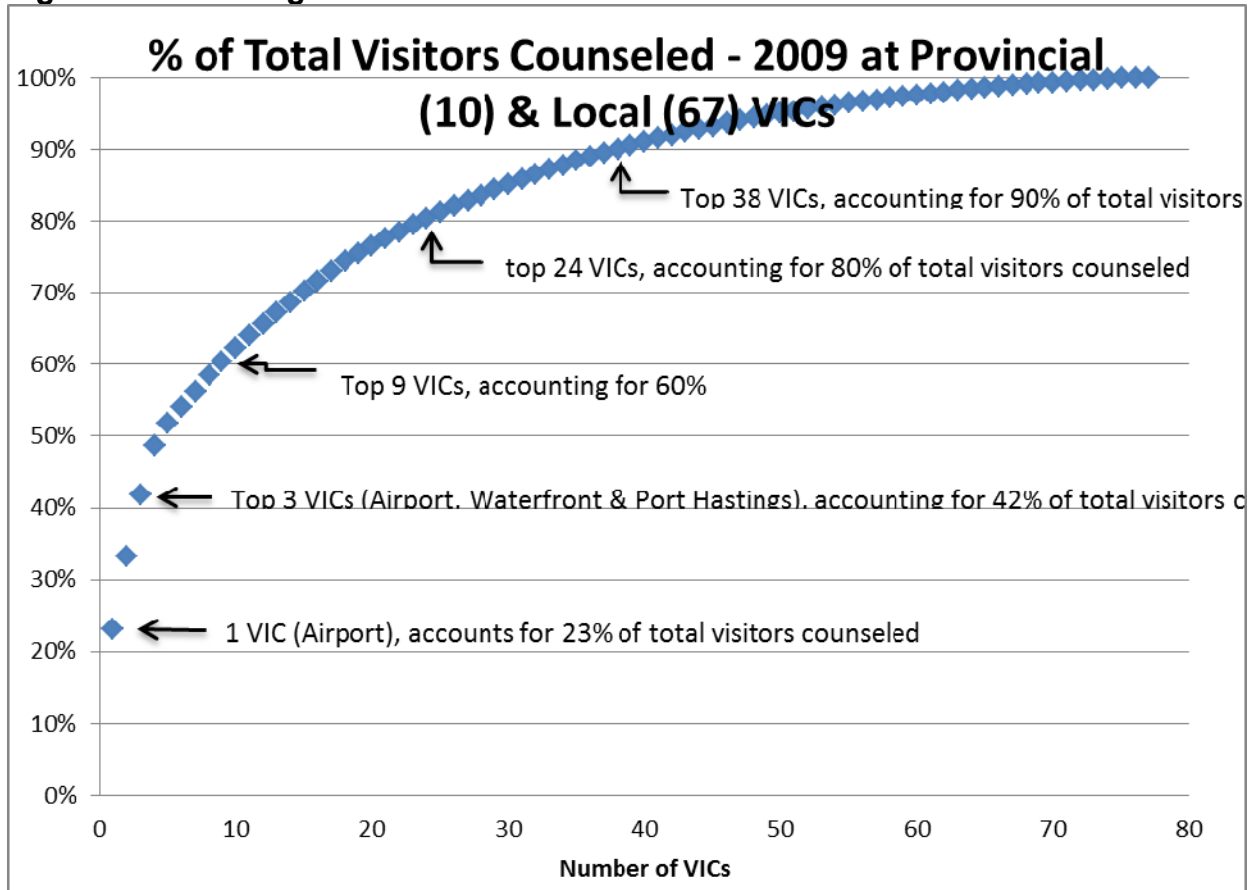
Recent provincial information indicates that 90 percent of the visitors counseled in all of Nova Scotia in 2009 were welcomed in 38 of the 70+ VICs open. VIC rationalization must be a priority across Nova Scotia.

DSWNA has done an admirable job in VIC administration and management and is acknowledged by the province as a leader in this area. Operating visitor centres is labour intensive and time consuming business.

Although operators expect a certain level of service and funding partners assist DSWNA with the costs of staffing, maintenance and operation of VICs, inspections, training, familiarization and management is never cost-neutral to the association. VIC operation always "costs" DSWNA time and energy that could be devoted to more measurable marketing efforts. Immense human resources and share of mind are annually consumed with hiring and training staff, gathering industry collateral and daily visitor "maintenance".

It is the responsibility of DSWNA to balance the effort invested in staffing and managing VICs with the anticipated results.

Figure 6: Percentage of Visitors Counseled 2009 At VICs



Source: NSTCH

In the association's own VIC Network Strategy Plan the objective is "8-12 strongly supported VICs that are positioned in strategic locations." DSWNA should begin immediately a process to satisfy its stated objectives in relation to VICs. The association should strike a VIC Task Force with Terms of Reference to begin a rationalization of the organization's involvement in the operation of visitor centres.

The association's VIC Task Force should use the *Nova Scotia Visitor Information Services Strategy (December 2003)* and the visitor servicing expertise within the department of Tourism Culture and Heritage as the starting point from which to develop the criteria for this rationalization and assessment. Suggested here are some criteria above and beyond those recommended in provincial materials which DSWNA can use to assess and rationalize its VIC network. They include:

- VIC contribution to the overall destination Marketing Strategy
- Visitors counseled and pattern of visitation at VICs over the past five years;
- Months of operation
- Proximity to a provincial VIC
- Proximity to a destination demand generator

- Strategic positioning within the region and destination
- Opportunities for cross-promotions and strategic partnerships
- Local/ regional support

In regard to the DSWNA effort in visitor servicing, these actions are also recommended:

- Assess the viability of sourcing an appropriate Halifax-based partner to establish a year-round information location for Southwest Nova Scotia in a prime location in Halifax. An objective of this strategy is to move residents and non-residents south of Halifax and keep them here.
- The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) which continues to manage HRM visitor servicing, could be approached for shared partnership presence in a VIC location in Halifax and in Southwest Nova. During the summer months, DSWNA could consider a kiosk presence or information card on the Halifax waterfront boardwalk positioned in proximity to the docking location in Halifax for Bluenose II.
- Aim to “test-drive” a partnership in 2012 that will position the demand generators of Southwest Nova Scotia directly in a high traffic area of Halifax. It will serve to encourage HRM visitation and to intercept travelers already in the province. The new Halifax Seaport Market on the waterfront may provide a year-round visitor servicing opportunity which would not demand full-time staffing. A partnership that would offer profile to the destination on Spring Garden Road would attract attention. The Spring Garden Area Merchants Association would be the place to start.
- DSWNA should ensure that those operators that currently have partnerships for market presence in the HRM, be encouraged to connect/include in that offer the destination website of DSWNA.
- *Non-Residents Already Travelling* the province is identified as a Target Market of DSWNA. Considering that the provincial VIC system counsels the majority of visitors in Nova Scotia and in Halifax, DSWNA should focus on Nova Scotia provincial VICs as a prime Intercept tactic. DSWNA should:
 - o Ensure that the prime provincial counseling tool, www.novascotia.com is ripe with fresh information on the region
 - o Consider advertising prominently and with frequency on the digital screens positioned in provincial VICs
 - o Regularly and proactively—at least once a week-- send to staff at provincial VICs and staff at Check InNS the “What’s happening NOW” updates that are posted online weekly
 - o Participate fully in familiarization programs that involve provincial counselors
- Consistent with DSWNA’s commitment to maximizing revenues and customer focus, ensure that destination VICs are open and available when visitors need to use them, at least until 8pm every evening during July, August and September. The hours of operation of all VICs managed by the association should be adjusted to extend later into the evenings even if this means opening at a later time in the day beginning.

A VIC that closes at 6pm during key months is missing most of the opportunities to direct visitors to accommodations, dining and activities. It's estimated that more than 70 percent of visitor spending occurs after 6pm every evening. DSWNA's VICs should serve as *best practices* and adjust hours of operation in 2011

- DSWNA will use the re-organized destination website as the root counseling tool for its VICs. Visitors will be urged to follow this site for fresh ideas and new information
- Consistent with the objective of keeping people in the destination and cross-promoting from region to region, every visitor counselor managed by DSWNA must be well trained and conversant on all key and secondary motivators, festivals, activities/ attractions and operations on all three regions. A test of comprehensive destination knowledge should be a condition of employment
- Visitor Centres operated by DSWNA are prime locations for cross-promotional activities and space should be allocated in each for proactive cross-promotion of sister regions, prime destination demand generators and upcoming festivals and events throughout the destination.

Critical Steps in Rationalization of VIC's:

- Board to establish policy directive as part of DSWNA visitor servicing strategy. Direction should include VIC review process and criteria for rationalization and review, roles/ responsibilities and timelines
- Consult with Nova Scotia tourism regarding objectives and timelines
- Consult with all municipal partners to explain the decision
- Staff to implement the board directive reporting back to the board
- Establish schedule of VIC's to be closed
- Execute a communications strategy for the duration of the rationalization process explaining the decisions made and the role and services that will continue to be distributed to all stakeholders

Packaging the Experience

Southwest Nova is a geographically large and complex region with worthwhile visitor offerings. Strategically the destination should choose to highlight the most recognizable demand generators – the proven crowd-pleasers—to attract visitation to the area. It must, with equal enthusiasm, invest in an on-going program of in-depth packaging around core experiences as the connective tissue helping visitors understand the opportunities of moving throughout the region.

For 2011, DSWNA should aim to deliver:

25 new multi-operator, multi day packages built around provincial core experiences, bookended if possible with demand generators

- four new multi-day itineraries for each region
- four new travel “loops” per region

Each offer must be market ready to the new provincial standard (under development now in the Product Development Division) and prepared to have “on the shelf” by spring 2011.

DSWNA should work with the Nova Scotia tourism, Product Development Team and use at the outset *Experience Nova Scotia: the Toolkit* and facilitate a series of industry workshops to generate these new offers. Each package/ itinerary/ travel loop should involve operators directly in their development and should offer experiences and opportunities to reach deeply into the tourism resources of the area.

The way in which an itinerary is described, written and illustrated with images is critical to its ultimate appeal. As an added feature of these workshops Nova Scotia tourism can support with scripting assistance.

Industry Participation and Involvement

No one has greater contact with the visitor and therefore a better opportunity to influence spend and length of stay than tourism operators themselves and their frontline and service staffs. Every tourism operator, municipal employee and tourism related business in Southwest Nova Scotia should be armed with up to-date information as ammunition to help ***Keep Them Here!***

DSWNA should extend the concept of the provincial *Open Door* program to operators throughout the destination. The association can initiate a program where industry operators are encouraged to “test drive” and sample the products, the menus and attractions available in throughout the regions in order to recommend them first hand to visitors....a *Recommend The Southwest!* program.

From mid-May until mid-June discounts on experience trials and products and/ or complimentary “samples” are made available by DSWNA operator members to other DSWNA operator members simply with the presentation of a business card.

DSWNA, on its password-protected industry micro-site, will list the *Recommend The Southwest!* Program participants’ online, register and detail their offers. Reservations would be required. Everything from deep discounts on signature menu items to “friends and family rate” on overnight stays and complimentary admission to attractions and museums should be included. It’s powerful and influential to have an industry colleague in Annapolis Royal recommending to the visitor “...you just can’t miss...” a particular opportunity in Shelburne.

The “What’s happening NOW” updates of timely and fresh information on activities, festivals and events in the region—the same list used on the website and posted prominently at visitor centres -- be circulated by fax/email to all member operators, municipal units and Chambers of Commerce throughout the region. Recipients will be encouraged to copy, post and circulate the information to visitors and to proactively encourage a visitor to “...take a whale tour on Brier Island...” or “...you can’t miss tonight’s concert on the waterfront in Lunenburg...”

Cross-Promotion

There are many opportunities for cross promotion throughout the destination--- operators and attractions of like-interest should cross-promote across regions to keep visitors intrigued and moving around the destination.

Think how powerful it would be for Lunenburg as a UNESCO World Heritage Site to cross-promote with Joggins Fossil Cliffs to promote Grand Pre and its world-class (hopefully soon to be UNESCO!) story and vice versa.

What a statement if Annapolis Valley wines and South Shore spirits were featured in every dining room in Southwest Nova Scotia with a tent card or bottle hanger attached to promote vineyard tours and wine shop visits...and the favour was returned in the wine shops. What beneficial opportunities for downtown Mahone Bay to encourage visits to Annapolis Royal and the Apple Blossom Festival to partner with the Festival Acadian de Clare in a promotion to share the wealth.

The options for natural partnerships of interest are vast. Perhaps they begin only as web links, and grow from there. DSWNA is positioned to broker the first of them and then facilitate the interaction that will follow. Plan to have six significant and active regional cross-promotions as best practices by 2013.

DSWNA should facilitate a forum to bring operators together and explore these simple, but influential and mutually beneficial cross-promotions.

Attracting visitors to Southwest Nova Scotia needs strategic marketing. The industry itself however has an important role to play in keeping visitors engaged in the experiences of the area and informed of what to do and where to go next . Make this happen!

4. Partner! Partner! Partner!

Partnerships are critical to the success of the DSWNA business plan, the Marketing Strategy, Annual Action Plan and to the credibility of the association. There is strength in numbers. A critical mass of money and momentum channelled appropriately can achieve business goals and common understanding. Shared objectives generate support and shared success is contagious.

Partnerships which contribute to building experiences, taking them effectively to market and building goodwill and enthusiasm for tourism in the region are referenced throughout this Marketing Strategy.

DSWNA requires partnerships at a number of levels:

Operator Partnerships

Beyond a collaborative attitude and shared goals partnerships among member operators are critical in so many ways; participating on committees, in packaging efforts,

cooperative marketing and recommending each other to visitors to name just a few. Many of them have been identified in this report in a number of sections.

Destination-Wide Partnerships

Partnerships with local and community based tourism associations of common interest, museums and cultural organizations, business networks and boards of trade/ chambers of commerce—and there are many in Southwest Nova—who are committed to growing tourism and whose resources can be channeled for greater impact are critical. These organizations are the stewards of vast detail on the resources, the abilities and the ambitions of local areas and operators. They have money to contribute, websites to link with and local colour and “hidden treasures” to share. And each one carries influential weight with local decision-makers and funding agencies.

Building strong links and partnerships with each and all of these tourism organizations should be a priority as DSWNA focuses on a partnership plan and each existing partner should be approached directly to discuss the DSWNA new strategic directions before the end of 2nd quarter- 2011.

Key destination-wide partnerships include:

- Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage is a critical partner for DSWNA and its members. NSTCH contributes:
 - o Fundamental expertise and funding sources for core operations and marketing
 - o The Brand lead around which experiences of Southwest Nova Scotia can rally
 - o Research visitor information and trends
 - o Key motivators/messages and images used consistently in provincial tourism information, extending reach, relevance and credibility

Details (including success measures) of all expectations and collaborations with the province for tourism efforts, for cultural activities and for relationships with provincially operated museums in the destination, should be embedded in agreements that are revisited annually.

- Municipal partners are pivotal and dynamic partnerships for DSWNA. Municipalities support the organization financially, promoting local operators and generally supporting the business of tourism and to spread the word about the value of Destination South West Nova Scotia as an organization. Present association objectives to municipalities once a year and report back once a year, with any requests for assistance clearly articulated and results reported. And importantly do this in tandem with the local tourism associations who can persuade municipal cooperation.
- Economic development agencies such as RDA's that fund initiatives and support association efforts need to know the strategic direction of DSWNA as a course of doing business. They are partners required to keep the tourism agenda alive and growing throughout the region.

- Partnerships with operators of demand generators are critical to success. Leading marketing efforts with the destination's demand generators will be key to the success of the Marketing Strategy. It is important, therefore, that the individuals, organizations and departments that operate them must "be in the game" and share the expectations in relation to those demand generators.

Strategic Partnerships

Strategic partnerships are built around common objectives to address an identified and shared need. Strategic partners can be nurtured with traditional and non-traditional tourism collaborators. For DSWNA there are some key strategic partners. This list with focused effort and new opportunities, will increase.

- DSWNA shares jurisdiction for the Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley region with Central Nova Tourism Association. As previously discussed, the two destinations are working on new and cooperative ways to ensure visitor needs are understood and met. This is a best practice of choosing customer focus over turf protection and it is a leading example of developing a signature demand generator along that coastline.
- Major businesses recognized within the tourism sector like transportation partner Bay Ferries Limited, and someday soon, the Yarmouth Airport Authority are key to opening markets and doors to additional partners.
- There is a new and unique opportunity for instance for DSWNA through Bay Ferries to partner with the DMO in Saint John, New Brunswick if shared parameters can be identified.
- Potential partnerships for visitor servicing are proposed in **Disciplined Operation of Visitor Information Centres**.
- Identify key Southwest Nova Scotia-rooted businesses who are operating in target markets, particularly Halifax, and who may be approached to open doors for regional tourism through their networks. Companies such as the wineries and their market gate operations, seafood buyers and producers and boat builders are just some of the companies who could link the re-organized destination website to their homepages and perhaps include the website URL in their marketing materials.

Partnership Plan

As elements of a go-forward Partnership Plan DSWNA should adopt the following as Standard Operating Procedure:

- Include the partnership contribution— in money, time and energy-- of operator, destination-wide and strategic partners in the Annual Action Plan for purposes of context
- Jointly-sign a letter of agreement with each partner outlining the scope, details and expectations of partners in each project, to ensure common understanding
- Include terms and conditions around measurements and evaluations in the letters of agreement
- Report in a timely manner the results of shared efforts
- Acknowledge the contributions of partners in industry communications and formally “thank” partners in writing each and every year

Partnerships are valuable business arrangements and they are rooted in trust, confidence in ability and respect. DSWNA must assign time to create relationships with its partners by communicating with partners for more than the transaction of contracting business but also to:

- o Acknowledge partner contributions to the organization
- o Review the partnership on a regular basis seeking feedback on the logistics and the details of partnership operations
- o Discuss joint issues that affect both partners in a timely manner to avoid misunderstandings and promote trust.

Nurturing and maintaining critical partnerships that support and profit the association must be the responsibility of the Executive Director who involves the President and members of the Board as required. The Executive Director reports to the Board on the status and health of all partnerships on a regular basis.

5. Intercept Tactics

In sections throughout this report tactics are recommended that would “intercept” visitors who are already in the province, encouraging them to travel to Southwest Nova Scotia. For purposes of clarity intercept tactics are assembled here.

They include:

- Intercepting and influencing visitors who are in Nova Scotia with strategically placed outdoor (billboard) advertising, airport advertising exposure or in-room hotel opportunities
- Aim to “test-drive” a partnership in 2012 that will position the demand generators of Southwest Nova Scotia directly in a high traffic area of Halifax. It will serve to encourage HRM visitation and to intercept travelers already in the province. The new

Halifax Seaport Market on the waterfront may provide a year-round visitor servicing opportunity which would not demand full-time staffing.

- A partnership that would offer profile to the destination on Spring Garden Road would attract attention. The Spring Garden Area Merchants Association would be the place to start.
- DSWNA should ensure that those operators that currently have partnerships for market presence in the HRM, be encouraged to connect/include in that offer the destination website of DSWNA.
- Work to position pre and post meeting and conference travel packages available from operators in Southwest Nova Scotia with those delegates travelling to meetings in the destination and/or in Halifax.
- Considering that the provincial VIC system counsels the majority of visitors in Nova Scotia and in Halifax, DSWNA should focus on Nova Scotia provincial VICs as a prime Intercept tactic. DSWNA should:
 - o Ensure that the prime provincial counseling tool, www.novascotia.com is ripe with fresh information on the region
 - o Consider advertising prominently and with frequency on the digital screens positioned in provincial VICs
 - o Regularly and proactively—at least once a week-- send to staff at provincial VIC and staff at Check InNS the “What’s happening NOW” updates that are posted online weekly
 - o Participate fully in familiarization programs that involve provincial counselors

6. Measure Progress

“If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it”.

Each of the tactics associated with the Marketing Strategy can be measured and used as a tool to assess progress, evaluate attitude, adjust the plan and use as reporting tools. The consulting team however has committed to providing DSWNA with tactics that are realistic, deliverable, affordable and practical. Therefore diligent measurement and reporting against Marketing Objectives is concentrated on four priority areas as the most valuable and achievable for the next three years.

We recommend that measures focus on:

- satisfaction of stakeholders
- effectiveness of key marketing tactics, especially co-operative marketing and partnership tactics
- measuring awareness of Southwest Nova Scotia as a travel destination
- measuring new business booked from the marketing effort.

It is important to objectively review evaluation and measurement and to report results regularly to the membership, project participants and the broader community of stakeholders.

Measure satisfaction of stakeholders:

Stakeholders in this case are considered industry partners, member operators, municipal units and community organizations benefiting from marketing efforts.

Current Marketing Tools

DSWNA currently has an inventory of marketing tools: a destination website, regional guides and maps, a cooperative marketing program, advertising programs, trade show participation and social marketing efforts. Throughout the course of developing this report, the consulting team was unable to source measurement plans or evaluations that would reflect the *effectiveness* of these marketing tactics and tools and their relative impact compared to other years.

Some information on the metrics around the website was gleaned from Google Analytics and in the report on the *Explore Our Shores* projects. However, effectiveness through conversion analysis or evaluation with partners was not readily available.

To measure:

- Correlate the number of current DSWNA members actively involved in the organization's efforts – e.g. website/ committees / workshops and annual meetings – in 2011 with the number actively involved in 2013
- The membership and all partners of DSWNA are annually surveyed by anonymous online questionnaire (in November each year) beginning in 2011 to establish a baseline and again in 2012 and 2013. Everyone should be asked quantitative and qualitative questions regarding results of marketing efforts from their standpoint and the processes with which they are delivered by DSWNA
- Monitor change in open/close dates of industry operators and local businesses.

Measure effectiveness of key marketing tactics and cooperative marketing efforts:

In order for effective measurement, tracking techniques are best designed into marketing tactics in the creative development and production stages rather than bolted on later. Industry operators involved with cooperative marketing efforts will be expected to track and report the level of business booked from cooperative efforts.

To measure:

- Ensure the redeveloped destination website is equipped with appropriate tracking mechanisms and tools that can be reported on a regular basis. Tracking can help adjust the website as required to measure results
- Ensure operators and partner websites linked to the site are equipped to measure requests and leads from the DSWNA website and report to DSWNA
- Track requests and leads from marketing and cooperative marketing efforts using unique calls to action
- Track direct response to advertising online and offline

Measure awareness of the region as a travel destination:

The most effective but expensive way to identify level of growing awareness is pre and post awareness research in the marketplace. This tactic is not recommended due to

cost instead use measurement tactics from which DSWNA can extrapolate change in awareness. It will be important to gather information at the outset of the project to establish a baseline from which to measure progress.

To measure:

- Work with strategic attractions, festivals and events to monitor and report attendance at key activities in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Ensure that those reporting are located throughout the Destination, in all three Regions
- Work with Nova Scotia tourism to gather awareness information from their focus groups, website requests and other provincial monitoring systems
- Gather all media coverage of the destination from Nova Scotia Tourism and partners
- Always ask the customer! As part of the annual survey, DSWNA will ask about destination awareness

Measure increase in business booked by operators:

In order to accurately measure new business booked as a result of this effort there must be a credible baseline of information.

It is recommended that DSWNA approach 5 key operators and attractions in each region who are association members (total of 15) and who can be expected to actively participate in marketing efforts to help with this evaluation. Each member operator must establish as a baseline their percentage increase/ decrease in gross revenues over the last two years, 2009 and 2010. This effort will help the association gauge the results of its efforts to influence a 3 percent increase in tourism revenues in each year.

Against this baseline, operators will:

- plot the change in business on an annual basis from 2011 to 2013
- Identify the new (not repeat) business secured, its size and value
- Track the impact of the elements of the marketing plan in which they are involved on new and sustained business.

DSWNA must also work with the Research Division at Nova Scotia Tourism to gauge the measureable change in overall revenues to the region, using 2010 as a baseline year.

All measurements/benchmarks should relate to marketing, financial and operational goals. A summary of key measurables (also known as benchmarks and/or key performance indicators) is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Measurables, Benchmarks

(also known as Key Performance Indicators)

Benchmark/Measurable	Measurement Tool/Source
Marketing and Sales Measurements	
Visits to Region (Resident, non-resident, entry points)	Provincial statistics
Revenues by Region	Provincial statistics
Website inquiries, tracking measures	Web contractor
Visitor Satisfaction	Periodic visitor surveys
Range/Number of Products/Experiences Offered	DSWNA counts
Media Analysis	Media buyer
Number of opportunities offered to stakeholders	DSWNA counts
Market Share	Provincial statistics
Awareness of Southwest NS as a travel destination	Periodic visitor surveys
Effectiveness/Return on Investment (ROI) of key marketing tactics	Varies by Tactic
Stakeholder satisfaction with marketing efforts	Periodic stakeholder surveys
Destination Measures	
New business booked from specific marketing efforts	Stakeholder survey
Number of businesses opening/closing (per year)	Yearly environmental scan
Opening and closing dates of industry operators/ Local businesses	Yearly stakeholder surveys
Occupancy rates (fixed roof and campsites)	Provincial reports
Museum visits	Provincial reports
VIC visits/visitors counseled	Provincial & DSWNA numbers
Operational Measures	
Successful staff recruitment and retention	Turnover
Staff satisfaction	Period staff surveys
Staff educational and training frequency, development	Training programs attended
Organization "morale"	Periodic staff surveys
Staff productivity	Tactics undertaken, follow-through
Teamwork	Extent to which it occurs
Computer/E-mail/CRM/Database system utilization	Extent of use.

4.2.8 Communications

Throughout this report three type of communication efforts are identified, outlined and required for success. A communications plan, incorporating internal and external is an integral piece of the association's annual business plan and appropriate performance measures are defined as part of that plan.

Communications with Customers is articulated in the Marketing Strategy and Annual Action Plan. These are online and offline tactics and methods and direct interaction with customers, designed to connect at various stages of their visitor experience... to bring them here and move them around the region.

Internal Communications within the DSWNA organization—among the Board of Directors, senior staff, with staff members and contractors-- is articulated in the recommendations associated with the Organizational Review. They involve setting and communicating goals and objectives and reporting on their progress, regular and relevant meetings and performance reviews. Success with internal communications is as much about corporate culture as it is about executing communication tasks. Solid internal communications cannot “be legislated”. DSWNA, from the Board Chair down through the organization, must respect the roles and input of all team members and fluid communications will follow.

Elements of *External Communications* –the ways in which DSWNA communicates with everyone “outside the office” such as with members, partners, stakeholders and strategic investors are identified in this report in discussion of Co-operative Marketing and Partnership efforts.

Never under-estimate the extent to which the quality of external communications reflects upon the caliber of an organization and the confidence with which its efforts are held and supported. It is important for the health of the organization to develop and manage a Communications Plan that integrates the way in which “it speaks to” those important to the livelihood of its members.

During key informant and secondary interviews and in consultations and online surveys stakeholder dissatisfaction (at one level or another) was expressed with the way in which the association now communicates. All information gathered, whether prompted or offered with prompt, is anecdotal. DSWNA should undertake immediately to ask its stakeholders specific questions about the quality, usefulness and relevance of all current communication tactics in order to tweak and/or re-cast them in the years ahead.

In all its future communication DSWNA must ensure that:

- *Communication is relevant and regular.* Every newsletter does not have the same relevance for a member, a stakeholder and for a strategic partner. In fact, there are times when the same positive message delivered to one person will be considered counterproductive by another. Ensure that one-size-fits-all communications are not sent “just because its time” to everyone, regardless of relevance. Regular communication is good as long as it is relevant
- *Communication channels.* The way in which you communicate must be relevant and comfortable for the receiver. There is little sense in advertising an annual meeting in the local papers if the potential participants communicate by email.
- *Be comprehensive.* Whenever possible, provide a comprehensive picture all at once. Don’t expect a business industry partner to decide among co-op offers if they are delivered one at a time or a municipality to cobble together “the value of tourism” from several newsletters.

- *Databases are critical.* The member, partner, stakeholder and strategic partner databases may be used collectively as invitation or Christmas card lists, but are otherwise ALWAYS discreetly managed and updated. The communication to individual databases is deliberate and controlled.
- *Communication is regular.* With relevant information, regular communication is a good thing.
- *Never assume your messages touchdown the first time.* Communication planning is about ensuring that messages are not only relevant and delivered in the best way, but that they are frequent and followed-up. We would never expect that one ad in the Toronto Star would reach the Ontario market and drive home the message.
- *Follow-up is important.* Ensure that important deadlines or partner offers are followed up personally
- *Face-to-face relationships* are communications tactics. DSWNA acknowledges this and needs to implement it. As part of a communications plan the organization must identify those critical to connecting, funding and supporting programs and nurture relationships with them.

DSWNA should identify an existing staff member or contract an individual with communication skills and technical ability to be the point person responsible for internal and external communicating on behalf of the association. The senior marketing position is responsible for customer communications; the two must work in collaboration on communications around co-operative marketing and partnership marketing.

Communications is a management function and therefore the communication specialist, as with the marketing specialist must report to the Executive Director.

5. DSWNA Organizational Review

5.1 Overview

The purpose of the Organizational Review is to assure DSWNA's ability to achieve its goals. Governance and operational policies, practices and programs must be effective and efficient. Only with commitment, determination and passion, at the board and staff level, will DSWNA perform to the satisfaction of its stakeholders and provide industry leadership within the region. Effectiveness and efficiency are necessary to achieve excellence in governance and operations.

Founded in 2004, the region represented by DSWNA includes the South Shore, Yarmouth and Acadian Shores and Fundy Shore and Annapolis Valley Regions.

DSWNA operates with a policy governance model, the **Carver Governance Model** which designates the responsibility for defining purpose, objectives and policy for the organization to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director and staff are responsible for achieving the prescribed results as established by the Board of Directors.

Strategic Governance

Expertise and experience tells us that "Association governance exists to identify and achieve organizational mission, goals and strategic outcomes. Associations are most successful when they are driven by strategic plans that clearly define expected end-results (outcomes), using a governance structure that is sufficiently plan-focused, flexible and depoliticized to produce those results."⁹

The Carver Governance Model¹⁰

According to the Carver Model, policy governance enables:

- Focus on the larger issues
- Delegation with clarity
- Control of management without interference
- Evaluate progress and achievements
- Leadership

The Carver model uses "Ends" and "Means" terminology

The "Ends" are the intended results of effort for the benefit of stakeholders and their relative value within the purpose of the organization.

The Board does not produce "Ends"; it defines them

Everything else is a "Means"

The board delegates its authority to the General Manager who is responsible for achievement of the desired results

Accountability remains with the Board of Directors

⁹ www.associationforum.org/resources/practice

¹⁰ Carver Policy Governance Model in Non Profit Organizations by John Carver and Miriam Carver
www.carvergovernance.com

5.2 Situational Analysis

The role and responsibility of the DSWNA Board of Directors is to gather industry performance data and input from stakeholders to develop policies and provide direction and performance expectations to the staff. The Executive Director and staff are responsible for achieving those results under the authority granted by the Board.

In the case of DSWNA, the Executive Director was appointed in 2010 and has inherited the current operational practices of the organization.

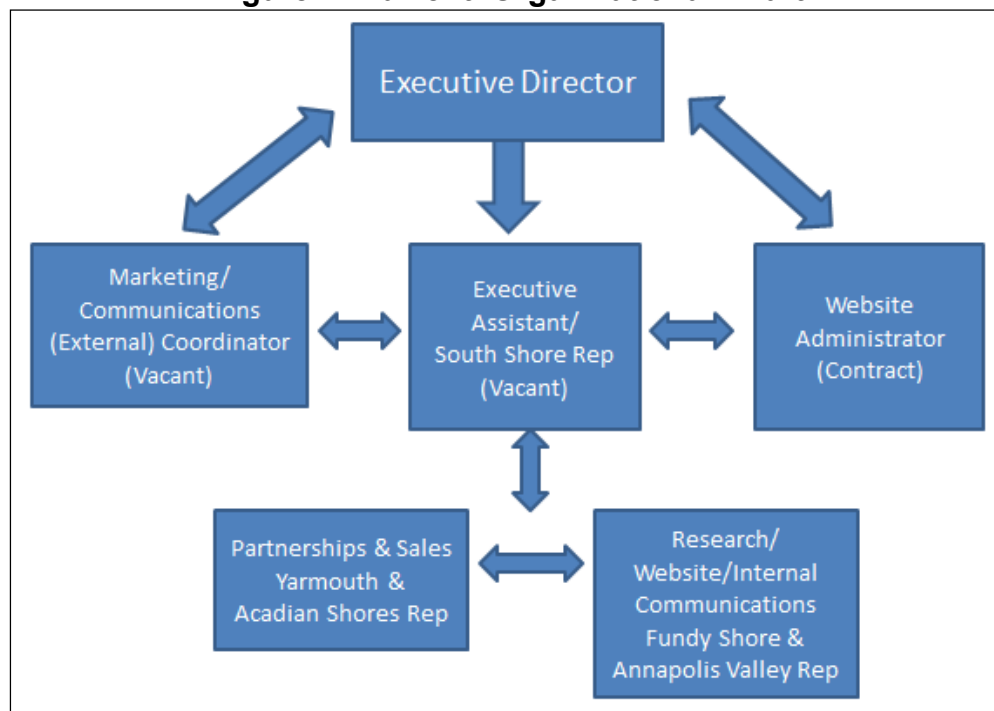
The operational structure of DSWNA is determined by the Executive Director and directly affects its ability to perform effectively. There are currently five full-time positions at DSWNA :

- an executive leader, the Executive Director
- Marketing Communications Coordinator
- Executive Assistant
- Partnership and Sales
- Research/ Website/Internal Communications.

Each of the key positions has responsibility for relationships with a travelway. Two positions have been vacant for the past several months. While DSWNA is in the process of filling these positions, these vacancies have severely hindered effective performance of the organization.

The chart which follows was provided by DSWNA (see Figure 7) and illustrates the current organization.

Figure 7: Current Organizational Chart



The head office is located in Lunenburg and is the only administrative office maintained by DSWNA. It is the base for the Executive Director. Staff operates from home offices.

Information gathered from interviews conducted for this report indicates that:

- Business practices have been introduced spontaneously
- The roles and responsibilities of each staff person have changed over time and job descriptions have not kept pace.
- There are no educational or training programs used to align skill sets with responsibilities.
- Performance objectives, expectations and regular evaluations for staff are lacking.
- Staff member roles/responsibilities are not clearly understood by other staff members.
- There are no regularly scheduled staff meetings or internal communication regarding progress on organizational objectives

5.3 Progress and Performance

5.3.1 Governance-Board of Directors

“Effective governance includes structure, roles and business practices. Effective management practices should be adopted. There should be transparency in the governance and operational functions. Accountability must be well defined”.

www.associationforum.org/practice

Effective organizations are built and nurtured. Their key components include a structure appropriate to need, vision from a Board of Directors, leadership from an executive leader, clearly understood expectations of stakeholders and a plan that can make it happen.

In reviewing the governance of DSWNA the consulting team:

- distilled information to paint a picture of effective governance that helps an organization grow
- reviewed Best Practices of four similar DMOs in Canada striving to achieve the same core results
- identified gaps that surfaced between this information and the current operation of DSWNA and made specific recommendations to improve the operation.

The DSWNA organizational review included the role of the Board of Directors and the structure and operations of the organization to provide recommendations for improvements that will assist the association to grow.

Role of Board of Directors

The Board is empowered by and accountable to the stakeholders and is responsible for the governance of the organization. Responsibilities of the Board as described in the DSWNA *Policy Manual* include:

- Obtaining partnership input
- Strategic leadership
- Organizational performance
- Structured monitoring of the Executive Director

Strategic planning is a Board function. Directors act on behalf of the stakeholders in their relations with the staff.

The Board is responsible to:

- Understand what stakeholders want and reflect it in organizational purpose
- Achieve the organizational purposes and delegate its authority to the Executive Director
- Define success and prioritize the value of each desired result
- Monitor progress towards organizational goals.

The focus of an effective Board is on the objectives of the organization

All organizations included in the Best Practices Review had Board of Director responsibilities as described in the DSWNA Policy Manual. Secondary research also supported these responsibilities.

5.3.2 Objective-Driven Operational Structure

The operational structure of DSWNA, its policies and practices, directly determines its ability to achieve the objectives and purposes of the organization and represent the interests of the association's stakeholders.

The authority for achieving results lies with the Executive Director. Accountability for results remains with the Board of Directors.

The Executive Director is expected to provide the leadership, common goals, staff engagement and pride of membership that achieves the expectations of the Board who represent the members. Policies are established for operating an organization and the business plan developed by the Executive Director is the guide for the work of the organization.

Success for the stakeholders of the organization is determined by:

- Quality of the business plan
- Ability of the team
- Resources available
- Monitoring of progress performance.

5.3.3 Best Practices Review

Four Best Practices were selected to serve as models for governance for DSWNA: Destination Halifax; Island East, PEI; Tourism Saskatoon and TIANS.

Details are included in Appendix C. Each of the Best Practices we reviewed demonstrates common best practice features:

- All are driven by an engaged board of directors
- Objectives and progress reporting are communicated to stakeholders
- Roles, business plans and performance reviews are directly related to organizational objectives
- Performance measurement and progress reporting are integral elements of the governance and operational programs
- Marketing programs are effective, engage the partners and deliver measureable results
- Strong relationships are supported by stakeholder engagement and relevant communications
- Partnerships are valued

5.3.4 Expectations For DSWNA

Into the mix for the governance discussion it is important to add the expectations of stakeholders. Stakeholders expect excellence in the business practices adopted by the organization and utilized by the Executive Director.

- Stakeholders seek leadership and enhanced organizational effectiveness particularly within the marketing function
- Stakeholders specifically identify relationships and stakeholder engagement as weaknesses
- Leadership is expected by the stakeholders and it is implicit in the Regional Tourism Industry Association status
- Leadership is expected by strategic partners such as NSTCH in the annual Partnership Agreements

Recommendations

As an organization with significant responsibility and expectations, DSWNA has been struggling to achieve its mission. Based upon the information gathered for this report, Outlined below is a list of important actions that the Board of Directors should undertake to improve DSWNA.

The Carver Governance Model, implemented as intended, is an effective governance model for DSWNA. The Policy Manual clearly articulates the Role of the Board of Directors and is actionable. The delineation of duties between the Board and the Executive Director/Staff is clear, as is the responsibility for operational decision making, internal relationships and the requirement for performance measurement.

DSWNA should continue to work with the Carver Governance Model and use the process that it offers to help the organization operate effectively for the benefit of stakeholders. The Board of Directors must develop/adopt the appropriate policies to achieve the organizational objectives. The Board must then comply with the policies.

Recommendations for improved Board functioning include:

- Review DSWNA Policy Manual on a line by line basis to assure that the policies reflect the current values and interests of the stakeholders.
- Comply with the policies and schedules outlined in the Policy Manual .
- Include self-evaluation as part of the policy review process.
- Review the terms of reference of the Policy/Bylaws Committee and activate it to support the Board's policy development
- Seek stakeholder input on organizational goals on an ongoing basis.
- Update compliance efforts using the Compliance Schedule/Check List or its revision at each board meeting
- Define Board skill set and experience requirements to identify the preferred qualifications for board nominations
- Comply with Strategic planning cycle/schedule including the monitoring provisions for the Board of Directors as included in the Policy Manual.
- Create short and longer term results and the performance requirements for the Executive Director.
- Schedule monitoring of organizational performance, including performance reviews of the Executive Director
- Communicate organizational performance expectations and progress reports to the stakeholders
- Adopt specific board policies to improve Collaboration and Engagement, Relationship Development, Communication and Organizational Effectiveness. Specific suggestions are included within this study.

5.3.5 Partnerships vs. Memberships

- The DSWNA Policy Manual identifies specific roles for “partners”. The research to develop this report indicates that there is confusion among stakeholders between the terminology of “members” versus “partners” and participants were not clear of their status ...a “member” or “partner”?
- Partnerships cannot be established without relationships. Mutual expectations must be established. Expectations must be defined. The relationship agreement should include purpose, objectives, respective responsibilities, communication elements, performance expectations and designated contacts within each organization.

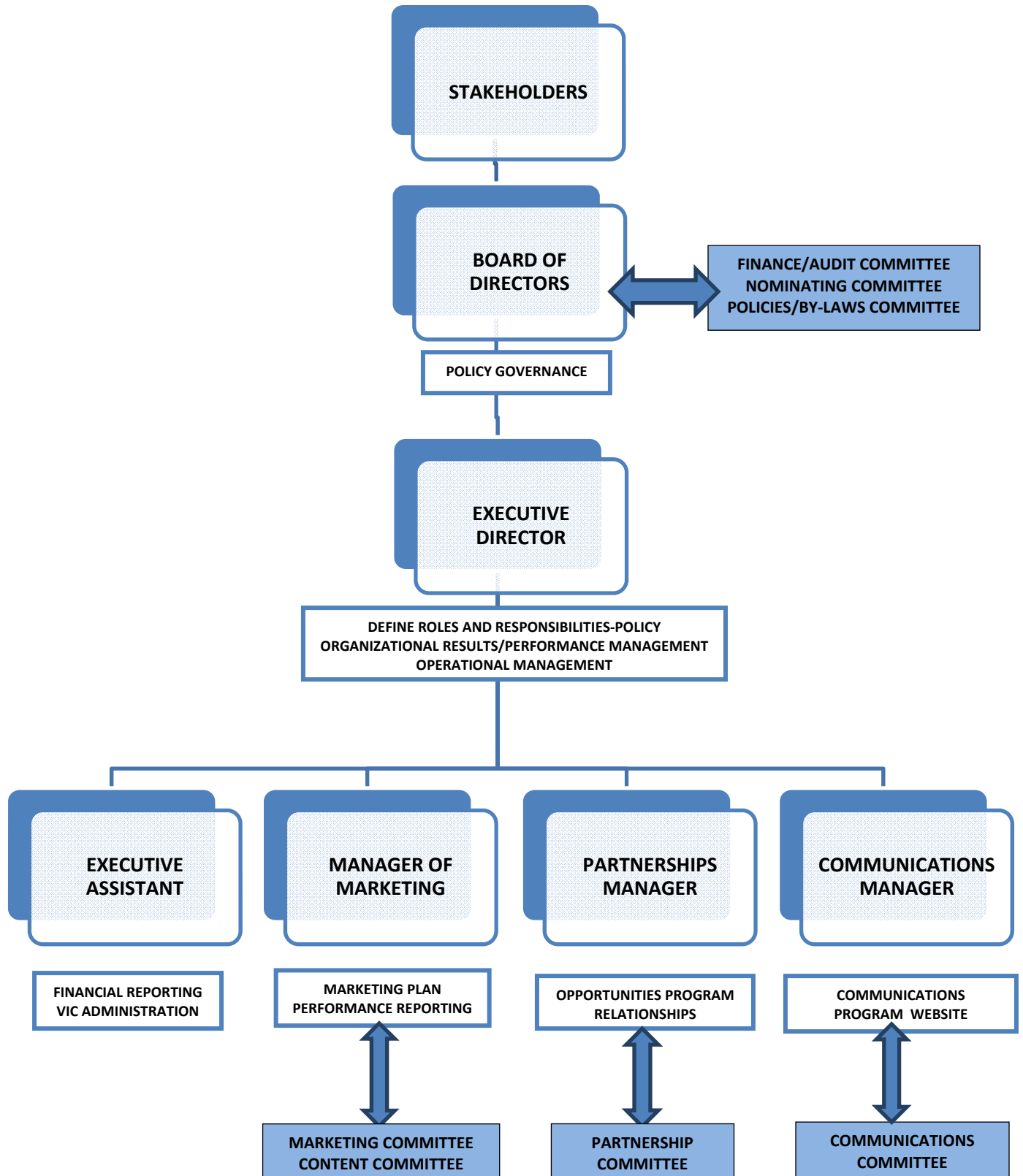
5.3.6 Business Practices

- The business practices adopted by DSWNA reflect policies that formally establish the processes and practices for planning, and resource deployment in the operation of the organization. Management Best Practices require a clear mission and strategy, leadership by example, demanding but realistic targets, a communicative management style, and clear and careful strategic planning.
- Strategic and financial planning, benchmarking and performance monitoring are management tools of the trade.

The following Proposed Organizational Chart (Figure 8) reflects organizational objectives and the primary responsibilities of each position. Committee reporting is also indicated. Each job description should reflect skill set and experience, qualifications and any professional development support required. Weekly reporting will be a necessity. The adequacy of travel budgets should be reviewed.

Figure 8: Proposed Organizational Chart

(See addendum page 89).



Revenue Generation

The greatest opportunity for revenue growth is from stakeholder participation in marketing programs.

With the budget challenges at all levels of government it would be optimistic to expect significant growth from federal or provincial coffers. Municipal contributions represent an opportunity if DSWNA can increase municipal engagement in tourism. Assistance with services such as website content and customer servicing support would be helpful. Cutbacks in funding for VIC's may result in reduced levels of municipal investment. Improved relationship and partnership activity could also strengthen the municipal partnerships.

An effective marketing and product focus should increase membership and partnership activity. Volume media purchasing, contract rates and effective cost recovery in marketing and visitor servicing efforts should strengthen the bottom line. Web related revenues should improve with the restructured website. An on-line gift shop could be managed by an association member.

Sponsorship and fundraising should generate \$25,000+/annum and create social opportunities that will improve relationships. Hospitality suppliers would be eager to participate in golf tournaments and association events. These services could be contracted out. An expanded Travel Club could also generate revenue opportunities.

As the association's marketing and operations activities improve there will be an opportunity to offer premium based services and support.

Performance Measurement

Performance measurement has been a missed opportunity for improvement. Google analytics has only been used for the last year. Traditional dashboard statistics indicate that the website is not satisfying the needs of visitors. Lower than expected page views, page visits, time on site and a bounce rate in excess of 50% reinforce the recommendation to overhaul the current website. Google Analytics used should be fully implemented to gather site engagement and conversion data including benchmarking and market segmentation. The Executive Director has initiated the process to accumulate performance data. Email performance should also be analyzed as well as published visitation, occupancy and attendance data distributed by NSTCH.

Performance data will provide input for reporting to stakeholders, directors and staff.

The website developer can provide the support and direction to establish specific goals and data collection requirements to provide measureable progress reporting and communication direction.

Once the data collection process has been established the analysis can become an integral element of the key performance reporting.

Performance and Stakeholder Engagement-Regional Offices

The management strategy using Home offices instead of Regional offices has been considered. Community schedule and travel notice/personal appointment options have been included as alternatives.

The strategic objectives and resource commitments have been considered including:

- Home office/Central Office (current status)
- Regional Offices (previous status)
- Community Schedule (community visitation schedule using public facilities)
- Travel Schedule (personal appointments with stakeholders included in staff and director travel schedules)

The strategic objectives that are impacted include:

- Stronger relationships with stakeholders
- Higher participation in marketing programs
- Best use of financial and human resources to the benefit of the stakeholders

A simple survey was sent to Workshop attendees and those interviewed during the Key Informant process. A decision to establish regional offices would increase organizational expenses and create additional responsibilities for the various staff positions and the Executive Director. The benefit of improved stakeholder/community relationships and increased participation in DSWNA marketing programs was also considered.

The survey provides a clear indication about engagement with almost all indicating that they would meet with a DSWNA representative in their office. Two thirds or more of respondents supported the regional offices and/or options to improve relationships and increase participation in marketing programs. The survey suggests that the options are a less expensive means of achieving similar results. Planning, performance management and regular reporting will address staff effectiveness.

Recommendation: Regional offices in addition to the head office are not considered a strategic necessity at this time (as identified by stakeholders in **Appendix F**). Community visitation schedules could be added to improve relationships and engagement with stakeholders.

5.4 Governance Performance Measures

DSWNA progress and performance reporting and accountability must be achieved.

Recommendation:

The Annual Report presented to the Annual Meeting should include:

- Compliance Statement signed by the President indicating that all requirements of the Association Policy Manual have been reviewed and satisfied. Exceptions should be indicated
- Performance towards specific organizational goals
- Program performance
- Objectives for the following year-quantitative and qualitative
- Quarterly performance reporting to stakeholders
- Monthly progress reporting by Executive Director to the Board of Directors indicating performance on annual targets
- Annual operations audit of planning, human relations and resource application management
- Bi-annual survey of members to identify progress in marketing, partner and communications programs.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Marketing

M-1: Guiding Principles

The Strategic Marketing Plan of DSWNA is formulated around the Guiding Principles of:

- **Collaboration is Paramount.**
- **Focus for Results.**
- **Add Value at Every Turn.**
- **Communication is critical.**

M-2: Priority Markets

DSWNA focus its marketing dollars and energies for measurable results and concentrate its marketing efforts on:

- **Nova Scotia**, primarily Halifax Regional Municipality and surrounding areas
- **New Brunswick**, primarily Saint John and Moncton
- **Ontario**, in close partnership with Nova Scotia Tourism in efforts lead by Nova Scotia Tourism
- **Non-Resident Visitors** travelling the province, an Intercept Strategy

DSWNA work collaboratively with Nova Scotia Tourism to profile the three Regions in provincial marketing efforts that reach the **Quebec, Western Canada and U.S. markets**. DSWNA will cooperate where possible with limited investment. Select opportunities with major partners may arise to reach the U.S. market. None is a given and each must be assessed closely and objectively.

DSWNA work collaboratively with Nova Scotia Tourism to develop relationships with **key influencers**—tour operators, travel trade specialists and travel media—with limited investment.

M-2: Major Marketing Focus

In all future marketing efforts DSWNA should:

- Feature front and center, the experiences offered visitors, particularly the recognized and appealing *Nova Scotia must-see's* which exist and are growing in popularity. These key motivators will pull visitors into the region. Organize this information by travelway.
- Provide visitors with cross-promotions and compelling reasons to explore throughout the region. “Connect the dots” between key motivators with experiences, activities, packages and itineraries to keep visitors in the region and spending money
- Harness existing tourism resources for common effort.

M-3: Working Positioning Statement

Work should begin immediately with regional tourism stakeholders and Nova Scotia Tourism to refine the Working Positioning Statement_which we propose as:

SouthWestern Nova Scotia is the province's must -see region where the experiences of Nova Scotia's most quintessential and recognized, emerging and exciting attractions and activities motivate a prolonged stay and exceed visitors expectations.

M-4: Experience Inventory.

The DSWNA Marketing Committee begin immediately to assemble an in-depth Experience Inventory for use in marketing efforts beginning in 2011. The inventory should catalogue compelling Key Motivators that serve to attract visitors to the region and Secondary Motivators that engage visitors, to keep them here and move them around. The Inventory must describe how experiences differentiate themselves as precisely as possible. The Inventory must be categorized by travelway, by theme and by season.

M-5: Update the Experience Inventory on a regular (at least annual) basis as a priority of the Marketing Committee. Make adjustments, additions and “tweaks” as on-going research requires.

M-6: Organize a professional Image Bank.

Marketing Tactics

M-7: An **Annual Action Plan**, with an online and offline advertising component and offers for partnership marketing, be developed by the DSWNA Marketing Committee before December 31 of each year once the provincial tourism marketing plan and cooperative offers are available. This plan would be based upon results from the year prior and incorporate recommendations from marketing professionals accessed by DSWNA.

M-8: Cooperative Marketing. The DSWNA Marketing Committee make an immediate priority to recalibrate its process for executing co-operative marketing beginning in 2011, and focus on giving the membership strategic, profitable, innovative and affordable co-op offers and all-important information for decision-making.

M-9: Contract with a professional media buyer to ensure the best information is available in making online and offline advertising decisions for the Annual Action Plan and the offers to industry in co-operative marketing.

M-10: Destination website: DSWNA make its priority marketing tactical effort for 2011 to re-organize its destination website as its primary marketing tool and use the professional expertise it has on contract and develop a customer-focused website re-development plan to create a “conversion machine” for operators in the region.

DSWNA use this destination website as the primary call to action for ALL marketing efforts, for visitor servicing and industry engagement and that DSWNA commit in the

site re-organization plan to comprehensive search engine optimization and a plan for creating beneficial web links.

M-11: Bilingual Website: By 2012, DSWNA should add bilingual elements to its destination website.

M-12: Website Mobile Application: The provincial travel website www.novascotia.com promises in 2011 to have a fully optimized mobile site. Proper, well-positioned links from www.novascotia.com to the DSWNA website and to regional operators included in the DSWNA website it will provide access to the Southwest region by mobile application.

In 2012 the Marketing Committee should move to work with Nova Scotia Tourism and generate a complementary mobile site appropriate to the region's needs.

M-13: Social media activity is high on the radar screen these days and opens new promotion vistas to DSWNA if managed properly. It takes careful management and attention to detail and updating. Social media is powerful. It is also demanding and unforgiving media. An out of date blog or unattended, untimely Face book page can harm the reputation of a destination. We recommend that in 2011, DSWNA focus on re-organizing and optimizing its destination website and participate fully with Nova Scotia tourism lead on provincial initiatives for social media.

M-14: Review the resources available in preparation for 2012 and consider expanding social media efforts as a region.

M-15: DSWNA produce a single destination guide consistent with the themes of the Marketing Strategy and the destination website. As this is probably impractical for 2011, it should be planned for 2012 and beyond. The guide, under one cover, profiles the demand generators and individuality of each region, by region, and serves to cross-pollinate information and offers among regions, to move visitors throughout the destination.

M-16: Visitor Servicing- DSWNA should strike a Task Force immediately to begin a review of the organization's involvement in the operation of Visitor Centres and proceed to implement VIC Network Strategy Plan.

Use the *Nova Scotia Visitor Information Services Strategy (December 2003)* as the basis with which to develop the criteria for this rationalization and assessment.

Consistent with DSWNA's commitment to customer focus, ensure that VICs are open and available when visitors need to use them, at least until 8pm every evening during July, August and September.

M-17: Source an appropriate Halifax-based partner to establish a year-round information location for Southwest Nova Scotia in a prime location in Halifax. Aim to "test-drive" such a partnership in 2012.

M-18: Considering the provincial VIC system counsels the majority of visitors in Nova Scotia and in Halifax, DSWNA should focus on Nova Scotia provincial VICs as a prime Intercept tactic. DSWNA should:

- Ensure that the prime provincial counseling tool, www.novascotia.com is ripe with fresh information on the region
- Consider advertising prominently and with frequency on the digital screens positioned in provincial VICs
- Regularly and proactively—at least once a week-- send to staff at provincial VIC and staff at Check InNS the “What’s happening NOW” updates that are posted online weekly
- Participate fully in familiarization programs that involve provincial counselors

M-19: Visitor Centres operated by DSWNA are prime locations for cross-promotional activities. Consistent with the objective of keeping people in the destination and cross-promoting from region to region, every visitor counselor managed by DSWNA must be well trained and conversant on all key and secondary motivators, festivals, activities/ attractions and operations in all three regions. A test of comprehensive destination knowledge should be a condition of employment

Visitor Centres operated by DSWNA are prime locations for cross-promotional activities and space should be allocated in each for proactive cross-promotion of sister regions, prime destination demand generators and upcoming festivals and events throughout the destination.

M-20: DSWNA should facilitate a forum to bring operators together and explore these simple, but influential and mutually beneficial cross-promotions. The options for natural partnerships of interest are vast. DSWNA is positioned to broker the first of them and then facilitate the interaction that will follow. Plan to have six significant and active regional cross-promotions as best practices by 2013.

M-21: *Non-Residents Already Travelling* the province are identified as a Target Market of DSWNA and considering the provincial VIC system counsels the majority of visitors, DSWNA should focus on Nova Scotia provincial VICs as a prime Intercept Strategy.

Additional Intercept tactics are available to DSWNA and all should be investigated and integrated into Annual Action Plans as appropriate.

M-22: Packaging: DSWNA should aim to deliver 25 new multi-operator, multi day packages built around core experiences, four new multi-day itineraries for each travelway and four new travel “loops” per travelway to have “on the shelf” by spring 2011.

M-23: DSWNA should extend the concept of the provincial *Open Door* program to operators throughout the destination. The association can initiate a program where industry operators are encouraged to “test drive” and sample the products, the menus and attractions available throughout the regions in order to recommend them first hand to visitors....a *Recommend The Southwest!* program.

M-24: Partnership Plan- As elements of a go-forward Partnership Plan a number of Standard Operating Procedures be developed to formalize the relationship between DSWNA and its partners and to ensure that cooperation is acknowledged and results shared.

M-25: DSWNA should work with industry operators, Southwest-based businesses operating in Halifax and with strategic partners to generate profile in the priority market Halifax area.

M-26: DSWNA take the time to create relationships with its partners by communicating with partners for more than the transaction of contracting business. Nurturing and maintaining relationships with partners that support and profit the association must be the responsibility of the Executive Director, who includes the President and members of the Board as required. The Executive Director reports to the Board on the status and health of all partnerships on a regular basis.

M-27: Use measurement tools provided and measure Stakeholder Satisfaction.

M-28: Use measurement tools available and measure key marketing tactics.

M-29: Measure destination awareness in cooperation with partners.

M-30: Use measurement tools provided and measure change in revenues into the regions.

M-31: Use the information from these measures as tools to report progress to members and partners, to build the Annual Action Plan and to offer members the opportunity to review their complementary marketing decisions using information and data rather than anecdotal information.

M-32: The results from measurements are used by DSWNA in planning for each year's marketing efforts, for long term planning and for developing partnerships with stakeholders.

6.2 Organization

Board of Directors

The Carver Governance Model, implemented as intended, is an effective governance model for DSWNA. The Policy Manual clearly articulates the Role of the Board of Directors and is actionable. The separation of duties between the Board and the Executive Director/Staff is clear. The responsibility for operational decision making and the internal relationships is defined and performance measurement is required.

BD-1: Comply with the specific requirements of the Policy Manual.

BD-2: Update the Compliance Schedule/Check List at each board meeting.

BD-3: Review the DSWNA Board of Director's Governance Policies on a line by line basis to assure that the policies reflect the current values and interests of the stakeholders.

BD-4: Define "Qualified individuals" in reference to nominees for the Board of Directors. Qualifications should include industry experience and skill sets.

BD-5: Comply with the Policy Manual requirements to create short and longer objectives for the Executive Director including monitoring provisions.

BD-6: Monitor organizational and Executive Director performance as scheduled and detailed in the Policy Manual.

BD-7: Communicate performance expectations and progress reporting to the stakeholders.

Executive Director - Operational Performance

ED-1: Implement a planning regimen designed to generate strategies, policies and programs to achieve operational objectives. Implementation should include monitoring and performance measurement.

ED-2: Establish a detailed operational plan to achieve organizational objectives.

ED-3: Align the planning process to the organizational objectives.

ED-4: Incorporate the Board of Directors expected annual results as the objectives of the business plan.

ED-5: Develop the operational strategies, programs and specific activities necessary to achieve these results.

ED-6: Allocate responsibilities and resources to each staff member to achieve the expected annual results.

ED-7: Monitor the performance of each program and team member.

ED-8: Modify the programs as necessary.

ED-9: Manage the operational programs, the human and financial resources and the reporting to achieve the desired results.

ED-10: Establish Memorandums of Understanding with each area/sector association and major partners within the region clearly outlining respective roles and responsibilities.

ED-11: Revise the operational structure to reflect organizational goals and objectives including the roles and responsibilities of each staff position.

ED-12: Inform each of the staff of the operational goals and the responsibilities of each team member.

ED-13: Establish excellence in business practices and formalize operational policies.

ED-14: Update and maintain Human Resource standards and policies to reflect current operations.

ED-15: Establish Training and Development as an organizational priority. Leadership, management and skills training should be included. Mentoring should be considered.

ED-16: Establish monthly budgets and cash flows. Report YTD budget and cash flow measurements.

ED-17: Establish the committee requirements of the Executive Director based upon the planning process. The Executive Director should determine the committees required such as Marketing, Partnerships and Communications.

ED-18: Institute weekly staff meetings (face-to-face or Skype). Planning, performance management and regular reporting will resolve any questions regarding individual performance.

Table 4: Policy Manual–Board Responsibility Examples

GP-2.3 Governance Process-Board Job Contributions
Assurance of organizational performance through structured monitoring of the Executive Director as outlined in policies on Board-Executive Director Relationship (September 14, 2007)

Examples of specific policy development

2.3a) Review Nova Scotia Tourism , Culture and Heritage Key Indicators monthly as released

2.3b) Review monthly financial statements as provided by the Executive Director including comparison to period budgets for the month and year to date

2.3c) Review monthly Executive Director’s report including the measureables for results that the Executive Director is expected to achieve

BC-4.1 Monitoring ED Performance-Board ED Relationship

The Board will instruct the ED through written policies which prescribe the organizational Ends to be achieved

The board will develop policies instructing the ED to achieve certain results, for certain recipients at a specified cost.....

Examples of policy implementation

4.1a) Increase regional visitation not less than the increase experienced province wide

4.1b) Expand annual marketing program to include social marketing elements and provide quarterly measurements of effectiveness

4.1c) Establish a VIC Task Force..

7. Conclusion

Specific recommendations are provided including marketing planning, experience development, marketing plan implementation, visitor servicing, partnerships and marketing measurement. These recommendations are summarized in the Critical Path and Estimated Costs shown in Appendix A.

The Governance and Organizational sections iterate the responsibilities of the Board of directors and specific requirements to improve organizational effectiveness.

Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined to develop effective relationships. Organizational objectives, short and long term, must be established, communicated and performance measured.

Stakeholders expect the marketing strategy to be supported by an efficient plan and implementation with regular progress reporting. Partnership programs must support organizational objectives and provide compelling visitor communication options. Relationship development must be supported by well-developed and meaningful communications. Operational performance is improved with effective business planning and practices.

Organizational effectiveness is an evolution.

The resources are adequate and the opportunity for significant improvement exists.

The marketing strategy, ably implemented, will be successful.

This strategic plan provides a roadmap for DSWNA for the next three years.

With passion, a plan and communication the relevance of DSWNA will be reestablished.

8. Research Resources

(1)2010/2011 Partnership Agreement between Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage and DSWNA
(2)DSWNA Business Plan 2009-2012
9 Key Best Practices/Most Admired Talent Management Fundamentals-successfactors.com
A Review of business Planning-Treasury Board of Canada-tbs-sct.gc.ca
Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP), ACOA-Tourism Atlantic and Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. Information includes data from the most recently completed Nova Scotia Exit Survey in 2004. 11
Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership Research 2009
Atlantic Canada, February 2008.
Best Practices-hrcouncil.ca
Business Practices LLC-www.best-in-class.com
Canadian Travel Activities and Motivations Survey (TAMS), Canadian Visitors to Carver Policy Governance Model in Non Profit Organizations by John Carver and Miriam Carver-www.associationforum.org/practice
Complete Toolkit for Boards-www.managementhelp.org
DSWNA Policy Manual
Global Tourism Watch, Canadian Tourism Commission: Year 1 2008
Governance Management Work-www.iog.ca
HR Best Practices/Benchmarking/HR Metrics-succesfactors.com
HR Toolkit-www.hrcouncil.ca
Nova Scotia 2011 Tourism Plan
Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage
Performance Management Research Review of Best Practices-www.insala.com
Policy Governance Model www.carvergovernance.com
www.associationforum.org/resources/practice

A list of primary sources is included in Appendix E.

¹¹ As this report is written (November 2010) the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage is about to release a comprehensive Exit Survey, including regional breakdowns. The preliminary results were not material to the recommendations of this report and have not been included.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Critical Path and Estimated Costs

Table A-1: Recommendation Summary, Timeline and Estimated Costs

Activity	Timeline - Critical Path												Estimated Costs			
	2011				2012				2013				2011	2012	2013	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
MARKETING PLAN																
Marketing Planning																
M-1. Board accepts Guiding Principles, Goals, and Objectives.	■															
M-2. Board and Marketing Committee accept recommendations.	■															
M-3. Marketing Committee begins refining Positioning statement.		■														
Describe and Organize the Experience																
M-4. Marketing Committee builds Experience Inventory.	■	■														
M-5. Marketing Committee updates Experience Inventory.						■			■	■						
M-6. Organize Professional Image Bank.	■					x			■	■				\$3,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Get them Here!																
M-7. Marketing Committee develops annual plan/budget.	■					■			■	■						
M-8. Task Force develop Co-op Marketing Plan.	■															
M-9. Contracts professional Media Buyer.	■					■			■	■				\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
M-10. Re-Develop Destination Website.		■	■	■		■								\$15,000	\$2,500	\$2,500
M-11. Bilingual Website Application.						■	■	■							\$5,000	
M-12. Website Mobile Application.						■	■	■							\$5,000	
M-13. Social Media with NST.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	\$1,000		
M-14. Social Media Incremental effort.						■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		\$2,500	\$2,500
M-15. Develop Single Destination Guide.	■					■				■	■					
Keep them Here!																
M-16. VIC Task Force rationalizes VIC operation.					■	■	■									
M-17. Source partner in Halifax for Visitor Servicing.		■	■											\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

Continued...

Table A-1: Continued

Activity	Timeline - Critical Path												Estimated Costs		
	2011				2012				2013				2011	2012	2013
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4			
M-18. Deliver key info to provincial VICs.															
M-19. Develop Cross-promotions in VICs.													\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
M-20. Cross-promotions Forum.															
M-21. Define Intercept tactics.													\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
M-22. Deliver Packaging/ Experience Workshops.															
M-23. Organize <i>Recommend The Region!</i> Program.													\$500	\$500	\$500
<u>Partner. Partner. Partner.</u>															
M-24. Develop Partnership Plan SOPs.															
M-25. Seek business partners for Halifax profile.													\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
M-26. Organize Relationship Management.															
<u>Measuring Progress</u>															
M-27. Measure Stakeholder Satisfaction															
M-28. Measure Key Marketing Tactics															
M-29. Measure Destination Awareness															
M-30. Measure Increasing Revenue															
M-31. Report on Measurements															
M-32. Use Results for Planning															
Subtotals - Marketing Costs													\$35,011	\$32,012	\$22,013

Continued...

Table A-1: Continued

Activity	Timeline - Critical Path												Estimated Costs		
	2011				2012				2013				2011	2012	2013
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4			
ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW															
<u>Board of Directors</u>															
BD-1. Comply with the specific requirements of the Policy Manual.															
BD-2. Update the <i>Compliance Schedule/Check List</i> .															
BD-3. Review the DSWNA Board of Director's Governance Policies.															
BD-4. Define "Qualified Nominees" for the Board of Directors.															
BD-5. Create performance expectations for the Executive Director.															
BD-6. Monitor organizational and Executive Director performance as scheduled.															
BD-7. Communicate performance expectations and progress reporting to stakeholders.															
<u>Executive Director-Operational Performance</u>															
ED-1. Implement a planning regimen.															
ED-2. Establish a detailed operational plan to achieve organizational objectives.															
ED-3. Align the planning process to the organizational objectives															
ED-4. Incorporate the Board of Directors expected annual results as objectives in the business plan.															
ED-5. Develop the operational strategies, programs and specific activities necessary to achieve these results.															
ED-6. Allocate responsibilities and resources to each staff member to achieve the expected annual results.															
ED-7. Monitor performance of each program and staff member															

Continued...

Table A-1: Continued

Activity	Timeline - Critical Path												Estimated Costs		
	2011				2012				2013				2011	2012	2013
ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW (cont'd.)	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4			
ED-7. Monitor performance of each program and staff member															
ED-8. Modify programs as necessary.															
ED-9. Manage operational programs, human and financial resources and reporting															
ED-10. Establish MOU's with each area/sector association and major partners.															
ED-11. Revise the operational structure to reflect organizational goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities.															
ED-12. Inform staff of operational goals and staff responsibilities.															
ED-13. Establish excellence in business practices and formalize operational policies.															
ED-14. Update and maintain Human Resource standards and policies.															
ED-15. Establish Training and Development as an organizational priority.													\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
ED-16. Establish monthly budgets and cash flows and report YTD budget monthly.															
ED-17. Establish Marketing, Partnerships and Communications Committees.															
ED-18. Institute mandatory weekly staff meetings and regular reporting (face-to-face or Skype), rather than regional offices.															
ED-19. Adopt definitions that specified in the Glossary.															
ED-20. Do not establish regional offices. Planning, performance management and regular reporting will resolve any questions regarding individual performance.															
Subtotals - Organizational Costs													\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS by Year													\$42,511	\$39,512	\$29,513

Appendix B: Creative Brief

DRAFT for Illustration ONLY

Creative Brief: Destination South West Nova Scotia

Ad for: xxx Publication/ Date/ Ad size

Objective

The objective of the 2011 DSWNA advertising is

Preliminary Positioning Statement for the Region

SouthWestern Nova Scotia is the province's must -see region where the experiences of Nova Scotia's most quintessential and recognized, emerging and exciting attractions and activities motivate prolonged stays and exceed visitations expectations. TBC (To be confirmed)

Preliminary Tagline

TBD (To be determined)

DSWNA Target Market for this Application

(For example)

- **Nova Scotia**, primarily Halifax Regional Municipality and surrounding areas
- **New Brunswick**, primarily Saint John and Moncton

Images Used

(For example)

- Lunenburg Waterfront
- Shopping Streetscape with People
- Festival

Mandatory Elements include

(For example)

- Use of xx and xx and xx Key images
- "look and feel" consistent with www.mustseenovascotia.com
- Border colour

- Call to action to.....
- Content copy that reflects.....
- Use of partner's logo in upper right hand corner....

Appendix C: Best Practices Review

Best Practices Examples

- Destination Halifax-Pat Lyall
- Island East, PEI-Patsy Goetel
- Tourism Saskatoon-Andrew Turnbull
- TIANS-Darlene Grant Fiander

DSWNA Best Practices Review

The purpose of the Best Practices Review was to compare the key learnings of governance success with organizations in comparative situations for future direction to DSWNA.

The Best Practice examples each provided insight into the application of policy governance to achieve organizational objectives, performance focus, stakeholder relevance and leadership. Tourism Saskatoon has satisfied the requirements for international designation as a DMO. It has become a resource for the provincial industry and is regularly consulted by industry and other sector organizations. Island East is a one person show with many of the staff functions undertaken by steering committees. With limited resources stakeholder support is achieved through engagement and support of common goals. Destination Halifax has matured as an organization responding to the expectations of its stakeholders. Innovation and consistent reporting/communication have maintained their relevance and leadership with their stakeholders. TIANS is a provincial tourism association that has defined its role and responsibilities and evolved developing partnerships and programs that respond to stakeholder needs. Engagement and consistent performance reporting have strengthened their relevance to the sector.

The criteria for the Best Practices Review provided a benchmark for measuring roles, performance expectations, policy implementation and progress reporting. Credible and consistent communication establishes relevancy and reinforces leadership.

Despite differences in objectives and circumstance

- All are driven by an engaged board of directors
- Objectives and progress reporting are communicated to stakeholders
- Roles, business plans and performance reviews are directly related to organizational objectives
- Performance measurement and progress reporting are integral elements of the governance and operational programs
- Marketing programs are effective, engage the partners and deliver measureable results
- Strong relationships are supported by stakeholder engagement and relevant communications
- Partnerships are valued
- Leadership is supported by stakeholders

Best Practices

The criteria selected for the best practice examples are integral to the effective operation of a DMO. Critical components of the governance/management and marketing activity process are identified.

The Best Practices examples selected reflect organizations with similar objectives to DSWNA.

Intention vs. Execution

It is important to ensure that a DMO has the systems and processes in place to effectively execute on its intentions and the documentation that is in place.

Selection

The best practices selected have policy governance and three of them have destination marketing as a primary objective. The criteria considered are described below.

Governance

Governance elements determine the organizations ability to achieve objectives and satisfy stakeholder expectations. These include:

Director Role/Engagement

The best practices use policy governance models that have been adopted and are satisfying the expectations of stakeholders

- By Laws/Policy Guidelines
- Roles/Responsibilities.

Expectations/Accountability/Communications

The organization has engaged its stakeholders creating identifiable objectives and has communicated the results of its efforts

- Short/Long Term Objectives
- Progress Reporting
- Performance Reviewed/Communicated to Stakeholders.

Planning/HR/Financial

The planning function generates the tasks and assignments to achieve the organizational objectives and monitor progress

- Business/Operational Planning
- Roles/Performance Reviews.

Marketing Activities

Marketing direction and leadership is the primary expectation of the stakeholders.

The marketing programs provide direction, engage the partners and deliver measureable results

- Marketing Objectives Established-Short and Long Term
- Marketing Strategy Articulated and Communicated
- Marketing Tactics Measured
- Marketing Tactics Reported.

Relationships

The best practices rely upon strong relationships, ongoing stakeholder input and regular progress reports

- Relationships and Expectations Defined-Within/Outside the Region
- Communications Program.

Partnerships

Partner relationships are clearly defined and program results consistently communicated.

- Mutual Expectations
- Performance measured and reported.

Leadership

Best practice organizations provide strategic direction and support to achieve stakeholder expectations

- Relevancy.

A summary of the best practices review is shown in **Table C-1**. As shown, all the organizations reviewed employ the techniques identified as necessary for a “best practice” organization.

Table C-1: Summary of Best Practices Review

	Best Practice Examples			
	Destination Halifax	Island East, PEI	Tourism Saskatoon	TIAN5
Governance				
Governance elements determine the organizations ability to achieve objectives and satisfy stakeholder expectations				
Director Role/Engagement				
• Bylaws/Policy Guidelines	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Roles/Responsibilities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Expectations/Accountability/Communications				
• Short/Long Term Objectives	✓	✓	✓	✓
Progress Reporting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Reviewed/Communicated to Stakeholders	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning/HR/Financial				
• Business/Operational Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Roles/Performance Reviews	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing Activities				
Marketing direction and leadership is the primary expectation of the stakeholders.				
• Marketing Objectives Established-Short and Long Term	✓	✓	✓	N/A
• Marketing Strategy Articulated and Embraced	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Marketing Tactic Measured	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Marketing Tactic Reported	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Relationships				
• Relationships and Expectations Defined-Within/Outside the Region	✓	✓	✓	✓
• Communications Program	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnerships				
• Mutual Expectations	✓	✓	✓	✓
Performance Measured and Reported	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leadership				
• Relevancy	✓	✓	✓	✓

Appendix D: Summary of Key Findings: Key Informant Interviews and On Line Surveys

A summary of results from the Key Informant Interviews is shown in Appendix D-1. The highlights of the on-line survey are provided in Appendix D-2. A power point presentation of the complete results as well as copies of the Interview Guide and On-line Survey are available at the DSWNA office.

Appendix D-1: Summary of Key Informant Interviews

In total 35 interviews were conducted: 19 with key stakeholders identified by the Steering Committee as well as an interview with the Steering Committee and 15 with additional stakeholders.

Table D-1: Picture of Key Informants and DSWNA Programs Participated In

Demographics	Key Stakeholders (n=19)	Secondary Interviews (n=15)
Length of time involve in DSWNA (# Yrs)	6 yrs avg.	7 yrs avg.
Partner/member? (yes/no)	13 yes	9 yes
Board member/past board member (Y/N)	6 yes	9 yes
Type of business/Org	5 Accom; 5 F&B; 1 Trans. 4 Govt; 1 F&E 6 Other	Accom 6; F&B 4; Govt 2, Attract 5, Oth 2
Location of business/organization:		
- Fundy Shore/Annapolis Valley	5	3
- Yarmouth/Acadian Shores	6	4
- South Shore	5	6
DSWNAS programs in 2010.		
Website	9	10
Trade Shows	11	10
Broadcast, radio and television	2	3
VIC displays	6	7
Collateral	5	4
Newspaper advertising	4	3
Broadcast emails	2	3
Participated in DSWNAS programs in 2009	8	7

Table D-2: Membership in Other Organizations and Key Benefits of DSWNA

Organization	Key Stake. (n=18)	Secondary (n=15)
➤ TIANS	12	9
➤ DATA	2	2
➤ HANS	-	2
➤ YASTA	2	-
➤ Discover Shelburne	-	2
<u>DSWNA Benefits Compared with other Organizations</u>		
Cited by Key Stakeholders		Cited by Secondary Interviewees
- DSWNA is doing poorly (3)		- DSWNA – More marketing opportunities (3)
- DSWNA is doing well (2)		- DSWNA is doing better (2)
- Larger Reach with DSWNA (3)		- Better Communication from DSWNA (2)

Organization's Purpose

The vast majority of respondents (21 out of 35) believe the organizations mandate should stay "as is". Eight did not know. All agreed that marketing tactics need to be "ramped up" in order for the organization to be effective.

Table D-3: What Does DSWNA Do Well?

Key Stakeholders (n=18)		
➤	Markets a big area	3
➤	Communication (includes networking)	5
➤	VICs	2
➤	Input into DD Guide	1
➤	Represents area well	1
➤	No response/don't know	6
Secondary Interviews (n=15)		
➤	Marketing and Promotion	3
➤	VICs	2
➤	Engaging the 3 Regions	1
➤	Generate \$\$ for partnerships and programs	1
➤	Website	1

Table D-4: How Could DSWNA be Improved?

	Key Stakeholders (n=18)	Secondary (n=15)
➤	Strategy and Focus	4
➤	Marketing (more/better)	3
➤	Communication	3
➤	Less VIC focus	3
➤	Partnerships	2
➤	Board made up of Industry (all)	2
➤	Promote the 3 Regions	1
➤	More lead time for deadlines	-
➤	Less staff	1
➤	Sub-brand	1

Table D-5: Effectiveness of DSWNA in Supporting Your Business/Organization

	Marketing/PD	Key Stakeholders	Secondary Interviews
	<i>(1=Not at all Effective; 7=Highly Effective)</i>	Avg.	Avg.
i	Providing Partnership opportunities for cooperative marketing	4.4	4.6
ii	Providing affordable marketing opportunities	4.0	4.9
vi	Visitor servicing through the V.I.C.'s	4.0	4.8
v	Visitor servicing through the website	3.8	3.9
iii	Providing effective marketing initiatives	3.8	3.6
iv	Building a regional brand	3.6	3.0
Collaboration & Engagement			
viii	Communication with members and org.	3.3	3.6
vii	Uniting tourism stakeholders	3.2	3.1
ix	Engagement with industry stakeholders	2.8	3.5
Organizational Effectiveness			
xv	Being an industry leader representing N.S.	4.2	3.8
x	Attracting visitors to your organization/Bus.	3.8	3.8
xiv	Sourcing and leveraging funds	3.4	4.3
xi	Generating VIC and web inquiries about your organization	3.0	3.7
xii	Providing training/education	3.0	3.6

Appendix D-2: Summary of On-line Survey Results

In total 90 individuals responded to the on-line survey. Sixty three percent (62.8%) are members of DSWNA.

Figure D-1: Sectors Represented

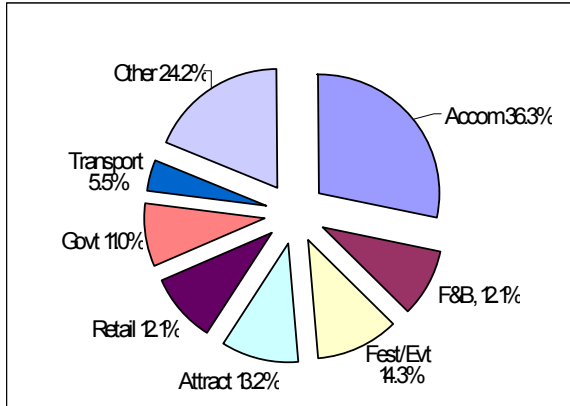


Figure D-2: Respondent Region of Origin

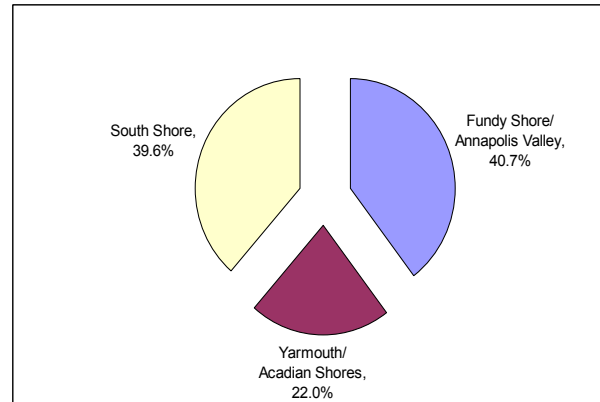


Figure D-3: Participated in DSWNA Programs in 2010

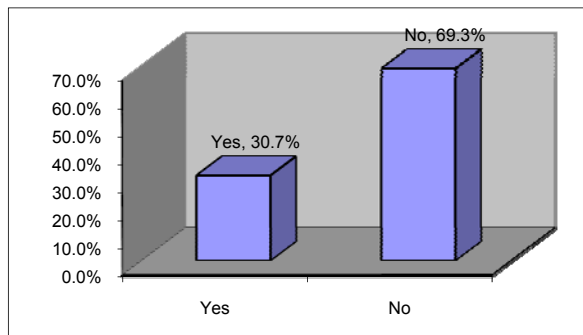


Figure D-4: Organization Purpose: Should it be Different?

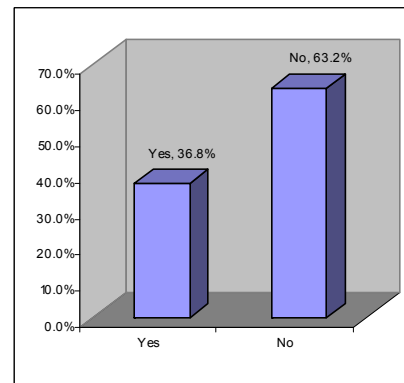


Table D-6: What Does DSWNA Do Well?

✓	Marketing the Region (including: website, guidebooks, Festivals/Events) (14)
✓	Communication with members (8)
✓	Don't know (4)
✓	Visitor Services (3)
✓	Workshops, Networking (2)

Table D-7: Effectiveness of DSWNA in Supporting Your Business/Organization (On-Line Survey)

8. Marketing Effectiveness of DSWNA (n=37)	Score
<i>(1=Not at all Effective; 7=Highly Effective)</i>	
Providing Partnership Opportunities for cooperative Marketing	4.7
Visitor Servicing Through VICs	4.5
Providing Effective Marketing Initiatives	4.1
Providing Affordable Marketing Opportunities	4.0
Building Regional Brand	3.4
Collaboration/Engagement Effectiveness of DSWNA (n=36)	
Communication between DSWNA and members/orgs.	4.1
Engagement with key industry stakeholders.	3.8
Uniting tourism stakeholders in Region around common goals	3.2
Organizational Effectiveness of DSWNA (n=35)	
Source/Leverage Funds	4.0
Being Leader representing NS as a Destination	3.7
Attract Visitors to your Org/Bus	3.0
Generate VIC/website inquiries about your Or/Bus	2.9
Provide Training/Education Opportunities	3.4
Provide Business Opportunities/Generating \$	3.1

Table D-8: In General, How Could DSWNA be Improved (n=36)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More/better targeted marketing (6) ➤ Accountability, Visibility, Measurement (4) ➤ Plan, Set Goals (3) ➤ More communication (2) ➤ Greater outreach (2) ➤ Market by Region (2) ➤ Create Awareness (2) ➤ Area too Large (2) ➤ More Professional Board (2) ➤ Product Development (2) ➤ Do not Duplicate Province (2) |
|---|

Table D-9: Advertising Content Chart: Explore our Shores Campaign 2010
Newspaper ads and advertorials (main images)

Type	Yarmouth & Acadian Shores	South Shore	Fundy Shore	Experience
Advertorial	Acadien			Culture
Ad		Rissers Beach - Camping		Family, Outdoors
Advertorial			Wine	Food and wine
Ad	Mavilette Beach			Seacoast, beaches
Advertorial		Seafood and F&Es		Food and wine, Culture
Ad			Upper Clements Park	Family
Ad	Cape Forchu Light Station			Seacoast
Ad		Bird watching - Cape Sable Island		Seacoast
Ad			Keji	Outdoors
Ad	Cycling - Chebogue Loop			Outdoors
Ad		Dock Street, Shelburne		History
Ad			Annapolis Valley Historic Gardens and historic Inns	History
Ad	Musique de la Baie			Culture, music
Other options	Arts and Crafts	Folk Harbour Festival - Lunenburg	Hall's Harbour	
	Seafest 2010	Chester Race Week	Dining hot spots	
	Westport Tuna Tournament	Whirligig and Weathervane Festival - Shelburne	Annapolis Valley shopping	
		Sea kayaking - Lower Prospect	Canadian Deep Roots Music Festival	
		Hiking - Ovens Natural Park	Digby Scallop Days	

Appendix E: List of Those Interviewed

Primary Interviews: Key Stakeholders

Name	Organization
Suzy Atwood	Discover Shelburne County
Elizabeth Cromwell	Black Loyalist Heritage
Trudi Curley	Bluenose Coast
Don Downe	Warden, Lunenburg County
Jeff Gushue	Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Yarmouth
Mike Gushue	Digby/Annapolis Regional Development Authority
Owen Hamlin	Festivals and Events
Renee Leblanc	Digby Pines
Mark MacDonald	Bay Ferries
Terri McCullough	Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership
Karen McKay	Rodd's Grand Hotel, Yarmouth
Danny Morton	White Point Beach Resort
Larry Peach	Acadian Shores Interpretive Centre
Angela Saunders	Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic
Judy Saunders	Old Orchard Inn
John Somers	Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage
Paul Stackhouse	Annapolis Royal Destination Marketing
Hanspeter Stutz	Grand Pre Winery
Fred Whalen	Warden, Kings County

Secondary Interviews

Suzy Atwood	Shelburne County Tourism Manager
Tony Dorian	Instructor, NSCC Yarmouth
Andrew Fry	Information Officer, Parks Canada
Timothy Gillespie	Owner, www.shelburnecountytoday.com
Donna Hatt	Director of Marketing, White Point Beach Resort
Jeanette Joudrey	Executive Director DSWNA
Brenda Maxwell	President Discover Shelburne County
Dan Meyers	General Manager, Radisson Suites
Allen Nelson	Owner, Water Street Lighthouse B&B
Gregg Paul	General Manager, Upper Clements Parks
Ken & Nancy Petrie	Marketing, Atlantica Hotel and Marina-Oak Island
Marc Phillips	General Manager, Annapolis Basin Conference Centre
Melissa Robinson	General Manager, Best Western Liverpool
Mike Smith	General Manager, Lunenburg Yacht Club
Lillian Stewart	Director, Parks Canada Fort Anne Historic Site
Diane Theriault	President, Digby Area Tourism Association

Interviews**Staff:**

Executive Director
Marketing
Communications/VIC
Sales
Executive Assistant

Additional Interviews

Kevin Estey	IT Contractor
Andy McLellan	VERB Interactive
Susan Tilley Russell	STR Consulting
Joyce Mingo	CNTA
Melissa Robinson	Chair-DSWNA Marketing Committee

VIC's

Bob Boyd	NSTCH
Sadie Frye	NSTCH
April Hannah	NSTCH
Lisa Dahr	TIANS HRC

Appendix F: Questions Asked of Stakeholders Regarding DSWNA Regional versus Home Offices

	Questions Asked Regarding Regional vs. Home Offices	Yes	No
1	Do you think that regional offices would assist in creating stronger relationships with stakeholders?	68.0%	32.0%
2	Do you think that regional offices could increase participation in DSWNA marketing programs?	64.0%	36.0%
3	Do you think that regional offices would be an effective use of organizational resources?	62.5%	37.5%
4	Do you think that establishing community schedules would improve stakeholder relations with DSWNA?	65.2%	34.8%
5	Do you think that establishing community schedules would increase participation in DSWNA marketing program?	60.9%	39.1%
6	Do you think that establishing community schedules is the best use of organizational resources?	60.9%	39.1%
7	Do you think establishing a travel schedule would improve stakeholder relations with DSWNA?	75.0%	25.0%
8	Do you think that establishing a travel schedule would be the best use of organizational resources?	63.6%	36.4%
9	Do you think that establishing a travel schedule would be the best use of organizational resources?	60.9%	39.1%
10	Would you visit a regional office?	83.3%	16.7%
11	Would you with a DSWNA representative in a regional location?	88.0%	12.0%
12	Would you make an appointment with a DSWNA representative in your office?	92.0%	8.0%

* Informal survey conducted in early January 2011. Of 61 stakeholders asked to respond, 25 completed the survey. Responses received as follows: South Shore: 12; Fundy Shore/Annapolis Valley: 9; Yarmouth and Acadian Shores: 4.

Addendum to Proposed Organizational Chart (see page 58)

Committee Notes-Proposed Organizational Chart

The Proposed Organizational Chart is organized on a function basis.

Marketing Manager, Partnership Manager and Communications Manager.

Each of Marketing, Partnerships and Communications is a fundamental organizational priority.

General

All Committees report to Executive Director.

All Committees are advisory.

The purpose of each committee is to encourage engagement, input and feedback within a functional responsibility.

Each committee should be provided with specific annual objectives as part of the business plan.

Committee members are stakeholders-appoint their own chairperson.

Staff person is ex-officio member of the respective committee and resource.

One manager person could have more than one responsibility.

Specific

Marketing Manager

Reports to Executive Director

Primary Responsibilities-Marketing activities of DSWNA

-Implement recommendations of Strategic Plan as approved by the Board and Executive Director

-Annual Marketing Action

-Annual Partnership Program

-Performance Measurement of Marketing Activities.

Partnership Manager

Reports to Executive Director

Primary Responsibilities--Stakeholder Relations

- Implement recommendations of Strategic Plan as approved by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director
- Develop relationships with individuals, organizations and municipal units
- Coordinate relationships and agreements with stakeholders
- Performance Measurement of relationship objectives.

Communications Manager

Reports to Executive Director

Primary Responsibilities-Stakeholder, Partner and Member Communications

- Implement recommendations of the Strategic Plan as directed by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director
- Coordinate database development and messaging
- Program and performance reporting
- Performance Measurement of communications activity.