

3-YEAR MARKETING PLAN

Rightside Design Group

JULY 2021 - JUNE 2024

PREPARED FOR:



OSCODA AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
GOAL SETTING & 3-YEAR MARKETING PLAN

PREPARED BY:

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ISSUING /EFFECTIVE DATE:

BOARD REVIEW OF PLAN DRAFT : 5-10-21

Executive Summary |

The Oscoda Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (OACVB) approached the Rightside Design Group (RSDG) to develop a targeted strategy for multi-year marketing for the greater Oscoda region of Michigan. After holding a series of planning sessions with the board and interested stakeholders, along with completing a stakeholder survey, that data and discussion was combined with various tourism resource data points, including but not limited to: MEDC (Michigan Economic Development Corporation – Travel Michigan) Tourism Economic Reports, ESRI, Google Trends, and more.

This plan is designed to communicate goals and initiatives of the organization which will help to create clarity, focus and direction within the OACVB stakeholder groups regarding the potential for the organization. This plan is meant to be a “living document” and roadmap for decisions made by OACVB staff and stakeholders. To maximize the effectiveness of this plan there should be an annual review of the priorities and project goals outlined.

The Brand Position |

Mission: The Oscoda Area Convention & Visitor’s Bureau is a non-profit corporation dedicated to identifying and attracting tourists to the Greenbush-Oscoda-AuSable area through direct marketing efforts and to advocate pro-tourism legislation at the regional, state, and federal level.

Brand Position:

Oscoda: 4 Seasons...Naturally

The perfect time is any time to visit Oscoda. In every season, we welcome you to kick it in high gear for some outdoor adventure or simply sit back and relax. Whatever sort of escape you crave, look to the “*Sunrise Side*” of the mitten to experience Michigan the way nature intended.

When you are ready, just hop in the car and before for you know it, you’ll find yourself in **Oscoda**.

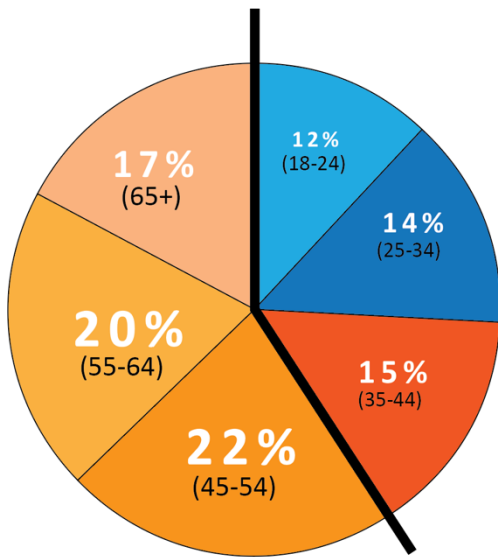
Markets & Traveler Profile Information |

Traveler Profile – General:

The typical Greenbush-Oscoda-AuSable traveler is an “empty nester”, from a household income range below \$49.9K, that is traveling with their partner.

Age Makeup – General:

59%
Age 45+



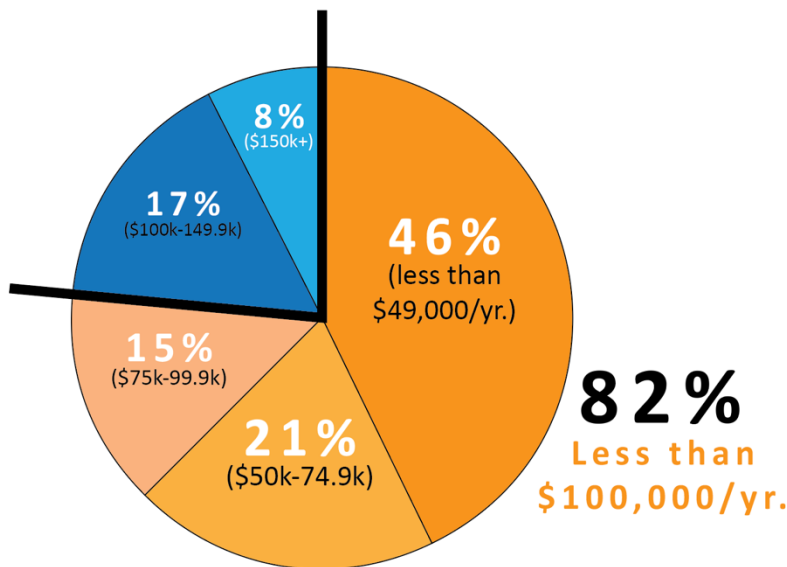
This age makeup is not surprising to the region, as the primary market advertising segment for larger DMO regions (in a broad sense) and the makeup of the Pure Michigan target market traveler has historically been females age 45+. In addition, the overwhelming majority of your traveler profile is “married with a partner” (57%).

Relationship Status Profile:

- Married with a Partner: 57%
- Single/ Never Married: 26%
- Divorced/Widowed/Separated: 16%

Household Income – General:

From our findings and understanding that many of your travelers originate from Michigan – where the average household income level is \$57,000/year (2019 data), your household income averages for your traveler are projected as follows.



Understanding that more than 82% of your prospective travelers earn \$100,000/year or less, will aid in making calculated marketing decisions on how to and where to market to these age and household income groups. In addition, since we understand that the “empty nesters” are a primary traveler demographic, the following illustrates the household makeup of the traveling group:

Traveling with Children:

- No Children under the age of 18: 59%
- Children 6 to 12: 24%
- Children 13 to 17: 18%
- Children under age 6: 13%

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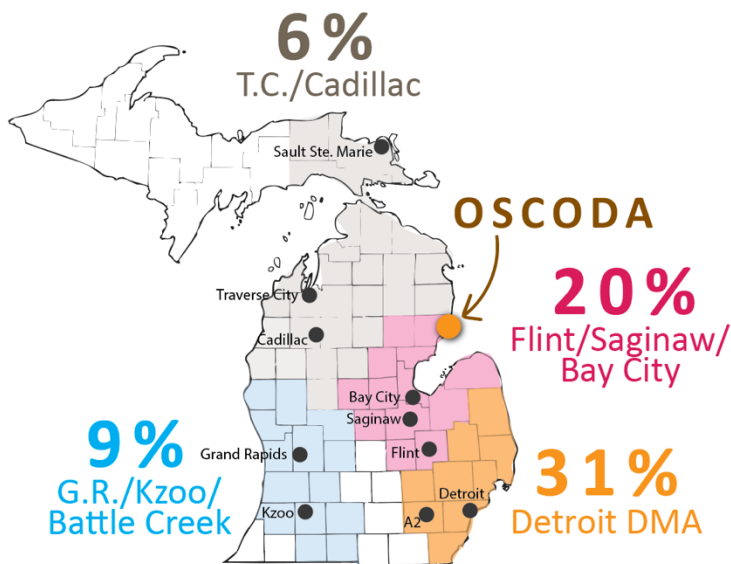


Opportunity/Observations:

This information furthers our ability to target travelers that fit your typical demographic profile when building digital media audiences. Your marketing strategy will target your typical traveler type, but also frame opportunities for growth of audiences that you may not typically reach, like families with young children (age 12 and under 37% of traveler group), by telling a more expanded story of the amenities that attract that audience type.

Geographic Regions:

It is our belief that the majority of trips in 2020 originated from in-state, this data supports that this is typical for your region even pre-pandemic. The majority of your visitors are traveling under 2.5-3.0 hours to reach your destination, 84% of them are traveling by car.



Understanding the cities of origin will help us when optimizing your digital reach. Short road trip messaging indicating ease of access to Northern Michigan amenities can help to develop justification for more frequent travel.



Expanded Market Information & Demographics:

The 3-year planning process revealed a wide variety of target market and demographic information beyond the summary data provided here and can be made available through the OACVB.

Source Data: MEDC Regions 3 2019 Michigan Travel USA Visitor Profile (670 overnight travelers surveyed) | OACVB Member Survey 2021 (11 respondents)

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Overall Marketing Goals of the OACVB | 2021-2024

The following illustrates the high-level marketing goals of the OACVB for the 2021-2024 marketing plan duration.

GOAL #1: Grow Seasonal Market/Economy

Position: Although beaches and water activities clearly drawn visitors to the region in the warmer months, significant challenges facing the tourism industry in the Greenbush-Oscoda-AuSable region were identified as:

- Low occupancy in shoulder seasons
- Competition with adjacent markets
- Low marketing exposure

Opportunity: Focus marketing efforts on OACVB identified traveler profiles offering affordable accommodations for those looking to explore the area for the first time in the shoulder seasons. The marketing message will tell the story of an “Up North” adventure closer to home.

Assessment: The OACVB will establish a return on investment (ROI) strategy for the project goals outlined in this plan that will allow the stakeholders to understand the value and reasoning behind the marketing spend. These project goals are some of the more dynamic in the plan and should be reviewed annually and modified on a case-by-case basis as new opportunities present themselves.

GOAL #2: Leverage Technology

Position: Although the OACVB has a nice start to the website, additional opportunities exist to tell an expanded story about the authentic experience of visiting the region through digital and technological communication tools.

Opportunity: Expand upon digital assets to improve the user experience and deepen the quality of outreach allowing marketing efforts to reach a qualified audience with a meaningful marketing message. Development of digital assets can allow users to connect with the resources needed to plan a memorable vacation or inspire a return in a season in which they have never visited.

Assessment: Analytic review of technological assets will happen dynamically between contractors and the OACVB stakeholders at a determined frequency to track effectiveness of the medium and sustainability as part of the overall plan – technology must be right-sized to be a sustainable investment to keep asset(s) up-to-date and “tourism ready”.

GOAL #3: Build Member Relations & Local Collaborations

Position: In order to grow support and improve understanding of the efforts of the OACVB organization, an outreach strategy needs to be implemented.

Opportunity: Develop initiative to educate both active lodging partners and leadership within community organizations to ensure an understanding exists of the benefits offered by the CVB structure to the community in building the tourism economy.

Assessment: Outreach efforts will be reviewed annually along with the developed assets to determine overall effectiveness to stakeholders.

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PROJECT GOALS OF THE 3-YEAR MARKETING PLAN

Each high-level goal will be accompanied by project goals, designed to aid in the success of the overall plan. The projects will be outlined with an approximate timeline and brief overview of the objective. The project goals are designed to be fluid and flexible, and there is often organizational enlightenment and marketing discovery found in each project goal (from start to finish) – therefore close communication between contractor(s) and the organization will optimize the success of each project area.

The following will illustrate where the anticipated project plans will land in the 3-year planning process.



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OVERALL GOAL #1: Grow Seasonal Market/Economy

PROJECT GOAL #1: Grow Content/Asset Inventory

Tell a user driven, experiential story of the Oscoda experience in all seasons.

Anticipated Project Timeline:

>>-----ongoing project – all years – developed based on approved content schedule ----->>>>



Assets to be Developed:

- **Blog Stories:** Develop 3-4 new blog stories per season based on a content outline that can coordinate with other promotional efforts.
- **“Top 5 Finds”:** Develop as a digital and printed asset for stakeholder partners to directly distribute to in-market travelers in the region (*this can also serve as content focus areas for the blog stories and seasonal newsletters*).
- **“Accessible & Affordable”:** Targeting price point marketing that will motivate travelers. Understanding the demographic makeup of the traveler, having a price focused messaging when possible, will help showcase the value of the trip aligned with the amenities offered. This could include:
 - Rooms “starting at” and package pricing offers
 - Showing proximity to targeted DMA regions (3.0hr. drive distance) to quality assets (beach, attractions, etc.)

Growth Opportunities with Increased Assessment:

- **Mapping & Self-Guided Tours:** Self-guided tours and maps are some of the most requested and most popular content in most DMO regions. The following is a list of potential mapping and distribution points for consideration if an increased assessment is considered:
 - Water Access/Paddling (river/float maps): interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - Beaches: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - Hiking/Biking Trails: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - ORV/ATV: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - Fall Color Tour: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - Brews & Food: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - Historic Sites: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - Arts & Culture: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
 - Shopping/Boutiques: interactive map on website + digital .pdf download + onsite print asset/brochure
- **Public Relations Efforts/Earned Media:** Having a concentrated P.R. effort to promote seasonal assets and offerings (events, specials, etc.) are highly complementary to paid media strategies.

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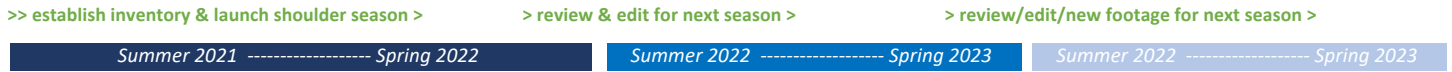
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PROJECT GOAL #2: Optimize Current Video Library / Expand where there is opportunity

Anticipated Project Timeline:



Assets to be Developed:

- **Edit Existing Inventory:** The OACVB has a quality library of footage, now the editing of this footage is needed to correspond with the desired target market and medium to be used. The project team should align video content along with the content calendar and identify a budget to coordinate edits and expansion of video across applicable markets. (Example: a 6-10-minute-long form video needs to be edited down to a 5 second YouTube pre-roll clip, or 60 second optimized Facebook promotion, etc.) – emphasis on editing budget to support the shoulder seasonal occupancy efforts.

Growth Opportunities with Increased Assessment:

- **Gather new video inventory:** This should be discussed in year 2 and 3 after we have established a base for our video in the first year of the program – a full assessment of the prior video marketing should be done to review effectiveness before establishing a shot list for future inventory.
- **Expanded video reach with targeted influencers in the region/Midwest:** This would be assets available for promotion on OACVB channels and will also be developed and delivered to the followers of the contracted video provider(s).

PROJECT GOAL #3: Optimize OACVB Vacation Guide to align with distribution and target market strategy

Anticipated Project Timeline:



Developing/E

Expanding the Vacation Guide: The OACVB’s current guide is highly regarded as a valuable asset for the community. The following highlights recommendations on how to grow and expand on this guide:

- **In-Market Content Expansion:** Establishing the content calendar for other digital and marketing efforts will allow the project team to identify and create new content for future vacation guides. This content could focus information from blogs, target market landing pages, “top 5 finds”, etc.
- **Distribution:** Establish a local, regional and statewide/Midwest region distribution strategy and tailor content/print quantity to this need.

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Growth Opportunities with Increased Assessment:

- **Expand Guide Efforts through in-market and out-market targeted distribution/delivery:**
 - Increased assessment and/or partnership structure could allow for development of an annual a content driven guide(s) focused on experiences of the region in each season, local photography, advertorials, etc.
 - **Out Market Guide** – External distribution focused on experiential content to grow interest in Oscoda as a vacation destination
 - **In-Market** – Focused on area businesses and things to do once you arrive
- **Expand local delivery and distribution through “mobile visitor center kiosks” at OACVB partner locations (lodging properties and tourism based businesses)**

PROJECT GOAL #4: Traditional Media Optimization

Audit traditional media outlets annually, to ensure budget optimization with available resources. All traditional media outlets should have some identified return on investment strategy in place to be considered as part of the marketing plan/approach.

Anticipated Project Timeline:

>>-----ongoing project – all years – developed based on approved content schedule WITH established Return on Investment (ROI) metric ----->>>



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OVERALL GOAL #2: Leverage Technology

PROJECT GOAL #1: Website Content Optimization

Expanding to current website footprint to include popular attraction focused assets.

Anticipated Project Timeline:

>>-----ongoing project – all years – developed based on approved content schedule ----->>>>



Assets to be Developed:

- **Seasonal Landing Pages:** Develop targeted landing pages on DMO website to give travelers a quick glance at what top offerings is available for each season – these seasonal pages include TOP LEVEL assets offered in that season that will capture the targeted demographics - these will be promoted through digital channels to target demographics
- **Blog Stories:** Develop 3-4 new blog stories per season based on a content outline that can coordinate with other promotional efforts (*also listed in Project Goal #1, Overall Goal #1*)
- **Expanding Content Depth:** Focus on user experience and engage prospective and onsite travelers with resources such as; art installations/sculptures, theatre/art venues, farmers markets, live music, restaurants, bars, concerts, guided hikes/outdoor adventures, art fairs, outdoor recreation, general attraction, beaches, etc.
- **Expanding Content Market Segments:** Understand how the in-market travelers and prospective both use and interact differently with the website and scale and tailor content accordingly based on seasonal content schedule.

Growth Opportunities with Increased Assessment:

- **Website Rehabilitation/Development:** Build a new Oscoda.com website with a full CRM integration (Customer Resource Manager) to manage leads, and customers, offer contesting and new lead/customer acquisition, etc.

PROJECT GOAL #2: Digital Media Strategy/Marketing

Understanding that travel is driven through online booking, searching and social sharing, the OACVB should structure a comprehensive digital marketing plan to promote its newly developed assets as part of this plan.

Anticipated Project Timeline:

>>-----ongoing project – all years – developed based on approved content schedule ----->>>>



Assets to be Developed:

- **Social Media Strategy – On-Page (Facebook/Instagram):** Organic posts, on the feeds of the social channels need to engage travelers at a frequency of 2-4 times/week following a content calendar that will allow organic and paid posts

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to complement one another and build the following to the page(s).

- **Social Media Strategy – Paid Promotions (Facebook/Instagram):** In conjunction with the on page/organic posts, a paid promotion will occur at various times throughout the season targeting identified demographics/travelers. Paid posts could include but are not limited to: events, contesting (email database building), specials, assets (outdoor, beaches, etc.) and remarketing/targeting. – this will also follow the content calendar.

Growth Opportunities with Increased Assessment:

Increased Assessment would allow the OACVB to experiment with broader reach and greater frequency of the above listed project elements and also provide possible inclusion of the following:

- **Google Advertising/YouTube Advertising:** Intent based search, display, remarketing and video ads would be coordinated with the content calendar.
- **Other digital:** Secondary social media networks (LinkedIn, Pinterest, etc.) can be considered along with 3rd party display advertising digital and sponsored content ads.
- **Seasonal Newsletter/Existing Customer Outreach:** Giveaway promotions and opportunities for existing lead outreach for seasonal offerings.
- **Crowd Riff:** A digital asset management software to source and manage user generated content developed for DMOs to help build photo inventory and engage with users.

OVERALL GOAL #3: Build Member Relations & Collaborations

PROJECT GOAL #1: Increase Stakeholder Education & Communications

Develop initiative to educate active lodging partners to ensure an understanding exists of the benefits offered by the CVB membership.

Anticipated Project Timeline:

>>-----ongoing project – all years – first year development of assets and communication strategy ---->>



Assets to be Developed:

- **“One Sheeter”** - Awareness piece describing your organizational function, purpose, and benefits.
 - Member page on website highlighting benefits and opportunities
 - Printed for inclusion with welcome packet
 - Partnership opportunity marketing

- **Annual Marketing Report** – To be distributed to members and community partners and shared at annual meeting.
 - MEDC data
 - Goals & Initiatives
 - Annual marketing priorities
 - Collaborative opportunities

- **Optimize Marketing Alignment with Members**
 - **Marketing Alignment:** Identification of shared opportunities
 - **Member Online Presence:** Encourage all properties to have websites or Facebook pages to link from OACVB assets
 - **Direct Booking:** Establish book now buttons that click to properties that allow online bookings

Growth Opportunities with Increased Assessment:

- **Marketing Summit:**
 - Marketing Update – what we are doing
 - Target Markets – who we are reaching
 - Marketing Together
 - Website optimization - What story does your website tell?
 - Online booking – How travelers make buying decisions
 - Social media – Free advertising
 - Reputation Management – 2-way communication with your guests
 - Divide & Conquer: How to save marketing dollars by piggybacking on our efforts

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PROJECT GOAL #2: Increase/Establish Community Collaboration Efforts

In order to grow support and improve understanding of the efforts of the OACVB organization within the region, an outreach strategy needs to be implemented for community organizations to ensure an understanding exists of the CVB structure by the community in building the tourism economy.

Some of the above-described assets to be developed would be applicable to this efforts as well.

Anticipated Project Timeline:

>>-----ongoing project – all years – first year development of assets and communication strategy ---->>



Assets to be Developed

- **Event Sponsorship**
 - **Landing Pages:** Sponsored event landing pages to promote high visibility local events that attract tourists
- **Marketing Partnerships:** Establish criteria for tourism aligned businesses with structured opportunity for guide and web listings, and social promotion/sponsorships.
- **Community Boards/Committees:** Collaborating in the development of local asset planning.

Growth Opportunities with Increased Assessment:

- **Reevaluate Staffing Needs**
- **Event Sponsorship**
 - Establish sponsorship criteria
- **Oscoda Brand Development:** Spearheading efforts in local brand development and marketing.
- **Develop Local Tourism Economy:** Creating a comprehensive approach to growing the tourism economy.

----- **END OF DOCUMENT** -----

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