RTO 9

2018 – 2019 Marketing Plan



2018 – 2019 Marketing Plans

RTO9 Regional Tourism Organization (RTO9) will no longer be in market as the brand "The Great Waterway" but rather working with each destination within the RTO9 to get their messages out. Prince Edward County, the 1000 Islands region and the Rideau Canal are world renown brands and are well known in places outside Ontario and the rest of Canada.

Concurrently, RTO9 is working with key stakeholders and partners within the Tourism Industy in the region to collectivelly market South Eastern Ontario as a top destination of choice for visitors to Ontario from the rest of Canada and the world. Kingston, Belleville, Cornwall, Brockville and Gananoque are 5 populous destinations within South Eastrn Ontario that offer unique and engaging experiences.

RTO9-Regional Tourism Organization Consumer marketing is designed to put the emphasis back on these destinations and to support these destinations through joint marketing campaigns. These marketing initiatives can include existing products or services or new tourism products that enhance the region's diversity of tourism attractions.

The following is a list of Destination Marketing Organizations that we will be supporting and promoting key messages and brands in 2018-19:

- Prince Edward County
- Bay of Quinte
- Land O' Lakes (County of Frontenac and Lennox and Addington)
- Kingston 1000 Islands
- Gananoque 1000 Islands
- Brockville 1000 Islands
- Cornwall and the Counties (United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry)
- Rideau Heritage Route

OBJECTIVES

Our overall objectives for the fiscal year is to build recognition on all destinations by assisting in sharing their message amongst our audience. How this will look, will be to promote events, blogs, and to engage with our audience. We will continue to build a strong and consistent online identity tailored toward our target audience and our partners within the industry. This will involve maintaining a consistent brand tone and messaging on all platforms, increasing awareness around the South Eastern Ontario brand through scheduled and regular posts, and engaging with our audience. This will involve continuous analysis of our efforts, progressing based on our findings to evolve our online identity and position.

Performance on these channels and our website will be evaluated at the end of each month to assist in reporting on milestones.

- Increase number of click thrus to partner websites by 20%
- Increase social media engagement by 20%
- Increase number of video views by 15%
- Increase email subscriber base by 5%
- Increase social traffic to website MoM by 10%
 - > How many of our followers from social are visiting the website?
 - > What is the overall percentage coming from social, which channels?
 - > Which landing pages or content are driving leads?

TACTICAL PLAN

Below is a tactical plan of how we will be using our social media channels including: the frequency of posts, high-level types of content, objectives, key metrics, and tasks.

Twitter

Frequency: 1-2 x Daily

Content: Blog content, Instagram post, RT,

Objectives

- Increase Impressions by 20% each month
- Add 100 followers to the total count by the end of Q4 2019

Key metrics

- Followers
- Mentions
- RTs, Likes, Hashtag usage
- Referral traffic to website

Tasks & Strategy

- Listen and respond to relevant conversations to build engagement and industry thought leadership.
 After all, social media is about being social.
- Tweet weekly shout-outs to new followers, RT, and mentions
- Pin best performing posts to the top of the profile (blogs etc)
- Reach out to the people mentioned in blogs and premium content. This may involve a little digging but the payoff is effective and helpful in increasing impressions!
- Post blog post multiple times throughout the week at different times
 - Make each post uniquely engaging and exciting with focus on effort of copy. "Did you see our recent post on" Quote an interesting line
- Be Active on the Right #Hashtags
 - > Use Hashtagify to find hashtags related to the one you're trying to target
- Follow new and interesting accounts to connect with
 - > Are they relevant to us?
 - > Are they active?
- · Use Emojis in copy to boost engagement
 - Capture more attention by conveying an emotion and idea around a post even before a person has had a chance to read it

- Post GIFs
 - > Source existing GIFs or create new ones on GIPHY (you can also customize them with captions)
 - > Turn existing videos into GIFs and compress them for sharing.
 - Use Boomerang to shoot our own video-GIFs on our phones
- Continue curating local news and events that are relevant to the area
- Continue to curate and re-tweet posts from DMO's to help boost partner social media accounts
- Continue to nurture relationships with influencers outside of RTO9 (Ex: Ottawa Road Trips)
- Spend more time engaging with followers interact with community (boost impressions and engagement)
- Double up on Instagram and Twitter post.
 Anytime a post is made on Instagram, it should be linked to Twitter as well.
- Engage with followers by asking the audience to participate in a 'Twitter Poll' similar to what Destination Ontario has been doing.
- Connect and share more post from Destination Ontario's Twitter ambassador for our region (@OntarioBrittny

Instagram

Frequency: 1-2 x Daily

Content: Beautiful nature, intriguing locations, and experiences.

*Note: Most rapidly growing channel for engagement and followers in the tourism industry.

Objectives

- Increase Impressions by 10% each month
- Add 350 followers to the total count by the end of Q4 2019

Key metrics

- Followers
- · Impressions
- · Likes/ Comments
- Mentions (@ and #)
- Total Post "saved"

Task & Strategy

- Campaign images for organic post appear choreographed and unnatural (when models are in the frame) and likely feel less 'authentic' when perceived by the audience
- · Utilize photo library for photography uploads.
- Continue to post unique, off the beaten path or out of the ordinary content
- Continue to inspire users with frequent post showing the beautiful photos of the area.
- Develop a series of short video assets for use on social media channels.
- Mention our regions DMOS and tourism operators in post wherever possible to show our continued commitment to tourism organizations in the region.
- · Continue monthly branded experience theme weeks.
- Traveler-driven content, Facebook & Instagram Live, behind the scenes footage.
- · Long form post for blogs.
- Continue to develop positive interaction with key Instagram influencers.

- Continue to incorporate the "hashtag list" into every post (refer to TGW Social Media Style Guide)
- Follow relevant accounts.
- Increase the use of Instagram Stories for experience blogs. Find opportunities to utilize more video content- when in the field, etc.
- "Where Are We?" live stories in different destinations to boost awareness of location and experience blog to come.
- Increase community engagement by bringing back a monthly photo challenge.
- Engage with followers and hashtag users more often (liking, commenting)
- Organic post that support campaigns need to be more 'spur of the moment." Less scripted and more personalized.
- We will categorize and store user generated photos.

YouTube

Frequency: Monthly/quarter (as needed) **Content:** Longer length videos showcasing destinations, experience blogs.

Objectives

- Establish Brand Awareness for destinations on YouTube channel with a 15% increase in video views by the end of Q4
- Gain 25 subscribers by the end of Q4 2019

Key Metrics

- Subscribers
- · Total # of Videos on Channel
- Total Views
- · Ave. View Duration
- Likes
- Dislikes
- Shares

Tasks & Strategy

- Provide videos descriptive names to support SEO.
- · Include relevant hyperlinks after description.
- · Create Destination specific playlist.
- Link videos to social media accounts (Twitter and Facebook)
- Remove (or archive) video content that is outdated, irrelevant to us or does not fit with our new direction. Any video that features one destination and their product will be made available to the destination through a link etc.

Facebook

Frequency: 1-3 Daily

Content: Destination updates, events listings, blog posts, contest announcements,

Objectives

- Increase Impressions by 3% by the end of Q4 April 2019
- Add 600 Likes/Followers to the total count by the end of 2018/19

 Increase Engagement on post by 3% by the end of Q4 April 2019

Key metrics

- · Page follows + likes
- Comments, likes and shares
- Industry partners participation
- · Referral traffic to website

Tasks & Strategy

- Respond to posts, reviews and questions in a timely manner
- Include images in posts whenever possible to increase engagement
- Continue sharing local news and events that are relevant to the area and TGW as a whole
- Engagement on posts, and shared posts from other DMO's and businesses show high engagement.
 Recommend we continue to curate post from these areas and share them on both main channels (FB/Twitter)
- Continue to curate and monitor DMO sites, social media channels and local news sources for relevant and well written content.
- Invest more time in community engagement continue to utilize the rolling events calendar

- Allocate more time to interacting with other pages and community.
- Feature user created content to be more "community centric," and leave a positive impact.
- Keep contest within four seasons featuring two destinations per contest. Clustering so many contests into a short window of time, may only serve to distract the audience and attract segments that are only in it for the incentive itself and not benefit the conversion we want to see.
- Continue to promote and boost blog post and outbound content
- Use the Facebook PIN function to pin the most recent events update blog to the top
- · of TGW FB page

Tools

Primary tool: Hootsuite

Hootsuite is a social media management tool designed to help you keep track and manage multiple social media networks from one centralized hub. Hootsuite will allow us to take advantage of better scheduling features and optimize out time. It will help manage the attention between all four channels. It can enable us to keep track and manage what people are saying about your brand and help respond accordingly.

RTO 9 DESTINATIONS

01 Prince Edward County

www.visitpec.ca

"No matter what the season is – a visit to The County is time well spent. The island culture thrives during the off season with festivals, ice skating and ice fishing. Make it more memorable and pare it with excellent cuisine and wine from area wineries. Spend time antiquing, boutique shopping, watching local theatre or visiting one of the five museums."

Prince Edward County is not only interested in increasing visitation to its destination on the "shoulder" seasons, but to also retain investors and entrepreneurs. PEC's current target markets are Young Families, Active Retirees, and Millennials from the GTA, Ottawa, Montreal,

and Eastern Quebec. PEC recognizes that although the PEC website is updated, it is in need of some engaging content to attract target markets. To do this, PEC will be blogging and reaching out to other social media influencers to guest write and produce content for the site. This is to help increase engagement and following on their social media pages as well as increase PEC e-newsletter reach. To achieve their goals for targeting their audiences PEC hopes for more inquiries regarding relocating and accommodation statistics. They're currently in need of more data and resources to do this.

Outdoor Activities

- Cycling: Millennium Trail, Great Lakes
 Waterfront trail
- · Sandbanks
- · Frontera Farm Camping: Luxury Camping
- · Wellington Outdoor Ice Rink
- · Public Skating in Picton

Tours and Sightseeing

- · Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory
- · Prince Edward County Lavender Farm

Food and Drink

- Countylicious, The Great Canadian Cheese Festival, TASTE Community Grown, Wassail, County Terroir, and Maple in the County.
- · Taste Trails
- · From the Farm Cooking Classes
- · 40+ Wineries
- · Multiple Breweries

- 5 Local Museums
- · Art Trails: over 19 galleries and studios
- Regent Theatre

RTO 9

02 Bay of Quinte

www.bayofquinte.ca

"The region is known as the Walleye Capital of the World and boasts some of the best Walleye fishing around. If you're not an angler, there's still tons to do; raise your glass and find your favourite flavour of craft beer or cider on a Quinte Craft tour, take in a play or enjoy one of the winter festivals."

Bay of Quintes' main focus for this year is to grow tourism and travel trade in the off-season months (fall and winter). BOQ plans to do this by increasing content and providing key audiences with more live videos feeds, engaging videos, and blog postings. The social channels they will be using to grow engagement will be Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. From increasing engagement across these channels and therefore collecting more data, Bay of Quinte will use this to make informed marketing decisions. The Bay of Quinte measures their performance from increases in their overnight stays, sports tournament economic activity, travel trade activity, and general information from visitor centres.

Outdoor Activities

- Walleye Capital of the World" Ice fishing is popular
- · Multiple Conservation areas and trails to explore, ski, snowboard on.
- · Provincial Park: Sandbanks
- · Golf Courses

Tours and Sightseeing

- · The National Air Force Museum of Canada
- · Glanmore National Historic Site

Food and Drink

· Bay of Quinte Craft - http://quintecraft.ca/

- Vibrant, artistic community with various theatre venues for performing arts, live music from popular musicians, and amazing local music
- · Shorelines Casino Belleville

03 Land O' Lakes

www.travellandolakes.com

"With over 5000 lakes, you could visit a different lake every day for 13 years! Now imagine those lakes frozen over and covered in a fresh layer of glistening white snow. It's a true winter wonderland and a sight to see."

Both Frontenac County and Lennox and Addington will partner with RTO 9 to complete Land O' Lakes upcoming marketing initiatives. These two destinations have identified key target markets as vacationing families seeking cottage experiences and active adventuring seeking markets. Both areas have unique yet similar attractions and outdoor experiences such as: camping, hiking, paddling, and fishing. To target their secondary market, LOL will obtain followers or customers through

product development with support on social media and content marketing. Lennox and Addington is wanting to create more content marketing initiatives through blog content, whether it's from themselves or outside help. Frontenac County wishes to partner with RTO9 to help secure blog content as well as updating photos. Both destinations are looking for more partnerships opportunities with neighbouring destinations to increase exposure i.e. Tourism Kingston and Kingston Accommodation Partners. These destinations are not only looking to be a main visitation for their target markets but also be a day trip destination for those visiting other destinations.

Outdoor Activities

- Over 5000 Lakes, Provincial Parks and Wildlife reserves along with a myriad network of offroad Trails for the Outdoor Enthusiast
- · Dark Sky Viewing Area

Tours and Sightseeing

- L&A County Dark Sky Viewing Area: Star Gazing. The darkest region in the area, known as the 'Dark Peninsula' many would say this is the best view of the night sky and the Milky Way.
- · Hell Holes

Food and Drink

· Multiple Breweries

04 Kingston

www.visitkingston.ca

"On the picturesque shores of the St. Lawrence River lies the historic city of Kingston. Home to impassioned curators and creators, a place that embraces new ideas – it's authentic, vibrant and never stops surprising. No matter the season; downtown brims with activities, festivals, shops and eateries. And as Kingston boasts more restaurants per capita than nearly any other city in Canada; make sure to come hungry."

Kingston has recognized that their core target market is millennial minded visitors who are seeking authentic experiences from Canada. Their secondary target market is business travellers, and mature adventure seekers. Whether they are Canadians or International visitors, Kingston has something for everyone. The convenient location between Toronto and Montreal with an easy to access destination helps draw in more visitors.

Kingston prides itself in offering authentic storytelling experiences backed by support of popular attractions that motivate their target market. Kingston will continue to increase their social media traffic across existing channels as well as develop new channels such as "WeChat." Recognizing that content is their key driver for initiating social media engagement, Kingston will continue developing content to grow channels as well as utilizing what they currently have, such as video assets. Growing social media channels will continue to rely on organic traffic as well as paid advertising such as Google Search, Display, Retargeting, and paid investments on social channels. Measurement of success will rely on attraction attendance, visitor centre traffic, tour bus counts, overnight stays, event economic impact, visitor spending, and website traffic.

Outdoor Activities

- · Kingston Buskers Rendezvous
- Confederation Park for Great Views and Activities
- · Springer Market Square Has Got It Going On
- · Multiple Farmers Markets
- · Little Cataragui Creek
- · Waterfront
- · Water sport activities
- · SCOTT Aquapark
- · Rock climbing
- · Boat, Cycling, Motorcycle

Tours and Sightseeing

- · Kingston Walking Tour
- · Agnes Etherington Art Centre
- Military Communications and Electronics Museum
- · Museum of Health Care
- · Martello Alley
- · Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre
- · Original Hockey Hall of Fame
- · Maclachlan Woodworking Museum
- · Queen's Archives
- · Millers Museum of Geology

04 Kingston Continued

Food and Drink

- · Kingston Food Tours
- · Beer and Bites Tour
- · County Sips Wine Tour
- Culinary Adventure Co: Canada's largest and best rated culinary adventure company.
- · Kingston and Gananoque Beer Tours

- · MacLauchlan Woodwork Museum
- · Fort Henry National Historic Site
- · Bellevue House National Historic Site of Canada
- · Canada's Penitentiary Museum
- · Fairfield House and Park
- · PumpHouse
- The Kingston Frontenacs the local OHL junior ice hockey team.
- · Plenty of pubs, nightclubs, lounges and live music
- · The VR Hut
- · Improbable Escapes
- · Lumina Borealis
- · The Isabel: Queen's Art Centre
- · The Grand Theatre
- · Indoor Rock Climbing
- · The KROCK

05 Gananoque

www.1000islandstourism.com

"Gananoque and the 1000 Islands is world-class destination with spectacular scenery, breathtaking water views and endless things to do – no matter what time of the year you visit. Featuring two world famous UNESCO designated sites including Frontenac Arch Biosphere and Rideau Heritage Route and amid the spectacular scenery of lush woodlands, rock and cobalt-blue water, the 1,864 islands that make up the 1000 Islands truly lives up to its reputation as a one of the most beautiful places on earth."

Gananoque has expressed an interest in creating their own content and continuing with a social media strategy. They will be addressing their marketing initiatives by hiring a freelance writer and social media strategist to look after their content and social feeds. They will be launching a series of 8 blogs on attractions and events. They plan on investing into Facebook advertising (including boost) and Google Ads.

Outdoor Activities

 "Winter Wonderland" Cross Country Skiing, Snowshoeing, Vanridge ATV Tours and Trails, Skydive Gananoque

Tours and Sightseeing

- · 1000 Island Tower
- · 1000 Islands Helicopter Tours
- · Boldt Castle
- · Singer Castle
- · Gananoque Boat Line cruises
- · Rockport Cruises

Food and Drink

· Brewery

- · The Thousand Islands Playhouse
- · The Springer Theatre
- · The Firehall Theatre
- · Casino
- · The Arthur Child Heritage Museum

06 Brockville

www.brockvilletourism.com

"Don't let the cooler weather slow you down, Brockville has tons of fun things for the entire family both indoor and out. Start your trip at the Aquatarium, Brockville popular, interactive discovery center devoted to sharing the history, ecology and culture of the 1000 Islands. From there you can head out to Fulford Place Museum and see the home of a prominent wealthy Canadian family who made their fortune in the late 1800's selling "Pink Pills for Pale People". There are also tons of opportunities to go sledding, skating or cross-country skiing."

Brockville will be continuing to target Family Memory Builders and Active Mature Couples with their unique attractions such as the Aquatarium and the Brockville Railway Tunnel. Brockville will decrease print spending and will focus efforts on digital advertising and promotion engaging audiences more through live videos, videos, and imagery. Currently, Brockville operates on 3

social media channels: Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook and would like to increase their reach and engagement on these channels by introducing the WeChat App. Brockville would like to increase social media engagement by launching a digital marketing campaign with a focus on native advertising. The largest part of their campaigns will be executed through targeted digital ads, but each will be supported with some traditional advertising as well. For the Family Member Builders, Brockville is looking at billboards in the Ottawa area. For the Active Mature Couples, Brockville will be planning some newspaper print ads and direct mail. Brockville is planning on updating their website to include more content to show why Brockville matters and what makes Brockville unique. The measurement from all marketing efforts would include an increase in year over year changes in website visits, overnight stays, festival attendance, and visits to the tourism office.

Outdoor Activities

- · Brock Trail
- · Movies in the Park
- · Rotary Park Splash Pad
- · Cruises and Castles
- · Thousand Islands National Park
- · Skywood Eco Adventure Park

Tours and Sightseeing

- · Brockville Railway Tunnel
- · 1000 Islands and Seaway Tours

Food and Drink

- · 1000 Islands Tasting Tour
- · Farmers Market

- · Underwater Sculpture Park
- Brockville Arts Centre
- · Brockville Ghost Walks
- · Brockville Museum
- · Aquatarium
- · Fort Wellington National Historic Site
- · Fulford Place NHS

07 Cornwall and the Counties

www.cornwalltourism.com

"Explore an era past in this region that was originally known as Upper Canada. Detour off the main road and take a historical trip to one of the oldest surviving building in Ontario; Sir John Johnson House National Historic Site. A visit to this area wouldn't be complete without stopping into Cornwall for great theatre, galleries, shops and dining."

Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry (the Counties) have agreed to partner with the City of Cornwall and RTO9 in any future marketing plans. Both are willing to work together on their marketing initiatives and plan on collaborating into the future. Both destinations recognize that they need the human resources to help launch their digital marketing initiatives. The Counties has decided to hire a summer student to assist in Social Media Marketing.

Outdoor Activities

- Alight at Night Alight festival: Upper Canada Village
- · Pumpkinferno: Upper Canada Village
- · Glengarry Highland Games
- · Ice Skating
- · Multiple outdoor rinks
- · Skiing
- · Two Creeks: Conservation Area
- · Apples and Art Studio Tour

Tours and Sightseeing

- · Upper Canada Migratory Bird Sanctuary
- · Johnsons Antiques
- · MacHaffie's Flea Market

Food and Drink

· Rurban Brewing

- · Sir John Johnson House National Historic Site
- · Upper Canada Village
- · Aultsville Theatre
- · Historic Cornwall Jail

08 Rideau Heritage Route

www.rideauheritageroute.ca

"The Rideau Heritage Route follows the historic Rideau Canal as it winds its way through charming countryside from the shores of Lake Ontario in Kingston toward Canada's capital on the Ottawa River. Quaint, heritage villages welcome with warm shops and delicious country fare. This UNESCO World Heritage site is a great place to explore, no matter what season we're in."

Rideau Heritage Route recognizes that they need a major update on their website and plan on partnering with RTO9 to contract a design and implementation plan for an updated and responsive site. They are currently focused on the Le Boat campaign but have identified that they need human resources in order to help them with their marketing initiatives.

Outdoor Activities

- · Rideau Canal
- Multiple Parks & Conservation Areas: snowshoeing, skiing, etc

Tours and Sightseeing

- · Rideau Tours
- · All Lockstations

Food and Drink

- · Scheuermann Vineyard & Winery
- · Wendy's Country Market

- · UNESCO
- · World Heritage site
- · Multiple studios and galleries
- · The Blockhouse

BRANDED EXPERIENCE CAMPAIGNS

Along with supporting our DMOs and DMPs in RTO9, we will be in market with 2 sector campaigns; Spring 1000 Islands Cruise Campaign and Fall South Eastern Ontario Theatre Campaign

SPRING

1000 Islands Cruise Campaign; to bring together cruise operators within RTO9 for a joint marketing campaign, that would highlight the cruising product in the region and initiate a collaborative marketing campaign to build partnerships amongst the cruise lines in the 1000 Islands and to sell cruise packages.

FALL

South Eastern Ontario Theatre Campaign; to bring together Theaters within RTO9 for a joint marketing campaign, that would highlight performing arts products in the region and initiate a collaborative marketing campaign to build partnerships amongst the Theaters in South Eastern Ontario and to help direct theatre ticket sales.

RTO9 has identified Quebec and Northern New York state, as two markets that have potential for growth in the region based on a steady increase we have seen in our analytics. Through a collaborative effort between RTO9 and industry partners, out of Province markets are attainable, whereas no one entity could reach these markets on their own. Cruise operators within RTO9's region cater to hundreds of thousands of visitors each year during the peak season, this campaign will help drive traffic to the shoulder seasons. This holds true for our accommodation partners, who are also looking to grow their off-season visitation. Additionally, theaters will help push shoulder season traffic in the fall.

Along with families, this campaign is also designed to attract the 35-44-year-old with no children and a higher disposable income, as well as the 45-54 years old that are empty nesters and again have a higher disposable income and enjoy travel outside of the busy summer season. They are looking for 2 or 3-night getaways, within a 3-hour drive. This campaign is designed to raise the awareness of the Ontario brand along with boat cruising in the 1000 Islands destinations as well showcasing the performing arts in various theaters in South Eastern Ontario. RTO9's close proximity to both the USA and Quebec provides an advantage for the region to target both of these markets. With the Canadian dollar averaging between 31-35% to the US dollar, Ontario is an affordable destination for our US visitors.

In 2018 - 2019 the RTO9 will augment it's branded experience campaign by bringing into the region key social media influencers along with paid social media efforts to help create audience and directing customers to RTO9's destinations.

We have recently completed 8 destination videos that will live on both our consumer site and the South Eastern Ontario YouTube Video channel. These videos will be broadcast in whole or in part to help cross promote all destinations throughout the region; showcasing these videos in OTIC/ONroute Centres and visitor information centres including Thousand Islands International Tourism Council Visitor Centre on Interstate 81 coming into Canada. All RAW data from the photoshoot has been disseminated and delivered to each destination for use in other marketing and branding initiatives.

Additionally, we will be deploying 4 Seasonal contests driving consumers to fill a ballet to receive additional information from RTO9 and its destinations featured in the contest. Each contest will highlight at least 2 destinations and feature tourism products and services. Our goal is to increase our consumer database by 20% for email marketing campaigns and newsletters, and to promote additional contests throughout the year.