



Marketing & Brand Assessment

for the Seneca Nation

Salamanca, New York
October, 2009



SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENT

During the summer of 2009, the Destination Development International (DDI) team was asked to visit three territories the Seneca Nation hopes to eventually develop or improve, and to look at the “branding” - or perceptions - of the Nation’s visitor-oriented assets.

The ultimate goals of this effort are to:

1. Attract development and investment into existing underdeveloped Seneca Nation properties.
2. Create new jobs and small business opportunities, so there is additional diversification from gaming, the primary revenue generator for the tribe.
3. Attract additional visitors to new and existing activities, attractions, and businesses on tribal lands, thus increasing revenues for the Nation and its people.

BACKGROUND

Destination Development (DDI) has assisted more than 800 communities, most of them rural, in 42 states and throughout Canada over the past 25 years. In Western New York, the DDI team has worked extensively throughout both Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties over the past three years. This included Community Assessments of the Onoville Marina and area, Olean, The “Amish Trail” from Randolph to Gowanda, the town of Salamanca, and all of Chautauqua County. DDI also facilitated the development of a Branding & Marketing Action Plan for the Chautauqua County Tourism Bureau, which is now being implemented.

DDI has also worked with several Native American tribes, primarily in Washington State, South Dakota and Oklahoma, so the team has some background in working with tribes and various tribal enterprises.

In July, Marueen Barrett and Roger Brooks of DDI spent a week working with the Seneca Nation Tourism Development staff, visiting three tribal territories (Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Oil Spring) and other tribal enterprises, including the Highbanks Campground.

On Wednesday, July 1st, Roger Brooks (DDI CEO) hosted two workshops, “The Art of Branding Communities,” and an Assessment Findings presentation of what we noted while being taken on a tour through the three territories, along with initial development and branding ideas.

On Thursday, July 2nd, a meeting was held in the Tribal Council Chambers where DDI recapped the findings, initial suggestions, and the importance of branding in this new age of tourism and economic development.

This report and initial recommendations is meant to be a conversation starter - not all the answers. Its purpose is to discuss the power of tourism, branding, and the need for product development, followed by things you can do today, to make a difference tomorrow.

WHY TOURISM?

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in all 50 U.S. states, even in these tough economic times, and is a \$740 billion industry nationally.

New York State is the third most visited destination in the U.S., and is a \$53 billion industry. The industry generates \$7 billion in state and local taxes and creates 684,000 jobs with a \$27 billion payroll. While New York City and Long Island account for nearly 80% of the state’s travel spending, that still leaves \$10.6 billion. In the Chautauqua/Allegany region, which includes Cattaraugus County, tourism is one percent of the



total. While that number can certainly be improved upon, it still adds up to \$511 million in annual visitor spending. The question that immediately comes to mind is, "Is the Seneca Nation seeing a good share of this?"

While we don't know the specific answer to this question, we're quite sure there's a lot that can be done to capture more of this spending.

TOURISM IS YOUR FRONT DOOR

The advantage of tourism goes far beyond just having people come, spend money, and go home. It is also the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts. Anyone you hope to attract to develop new industry, open a retail shop, hotel, build new homes, or move a business to the area will come first, as what? A visitor. Is this a place they would want to live? Does it have a high quality of life? Good education? Good recreation? A vibrant downtown? Does it have a good feeling?

If they are here to work with the Seneca Nation, they will undoubtedly look at the Casino, spend time in downtown Salamanca, most likely look at the Highbanks Campground, perhaps visit the museum. This would all be part of the vetting process to determine whether or not this is a place they can invest and feel comfortable that they will see a return on that investment.

While it may not be fair, visitors (not just tourists, but site selectors, investors, property developers, financial institutions, etc.) almost always "judge the book by its cover." Its first impression. As we are fond of saying, the heart and soul of any community, besides its people, is its towns, its tourism assets, and its businesses.

Sometimes it takes someone from the outside to come in, take an honest look at what you have and

what it says about you - exactly what we did during this and previous visits - to see how you stack up to other areas in Western New York, or Pennsylvania, or compared to other Indian Nations.

THE THREE INGREDIENTS OF CHANGE

1. The industrial revolution is over. Nearly every town in America was founded on either a natural resource or transportation. This is certainly true of nearly all Native American tribes, going back thousands of years. Tribes were established along trade routes, or where natural resources were abundant. Modern communities have been developed along rail lines, major interstates, primary waterways or ports of call. Thousands of communities sprang up around agriculture, mining, fishing, timber and manufacturing. And as these resources were depleted, towns began to die. And there are still "ghost towns" in the making.

Many in Western New York, including Salamanca and dozens of others are "hanging on" looking for a direction. In most cases, they are looking for new industry, but the industrial revolution is over. The days of new big industry are gone in rural America.

This has created a situation where, every year, another 1,500 communities in the U.S. and Canada are working to diversify from their core economies. And nearly every one of them is looking to tourism as part of the answer.

That means that every three years another 4,500 communities are trying to attract visitors and their money.

2. The Internet has leveled the playing field. In the old days (as far back as the 1950s and 60s), families planned the all-important two-week summer vacation. Mom and Dad loaded up the station wagon

and the kids, and headed off to places they read about, or to where the grandparents or relatives lived. Those days are also over. This is the era of weekend getaways, and shorter more frequent excursions. Nearly 70% of all getaways are planned within three weeks of when they depart.

But the biggest change of all has been how they decide where to go. Enter the Internet. A full seventy-five percent of American homes now have Internet access, and of these, a full ninety-four percent use the web to decide where to go. That's 19 out of 20 people.

But what is most fascinating about this is that people no longer care about places, but are looking for experiences. We open up our favorite search engine (Google accounts for more than 70% of all searches) and we look for activities first, then the location. For instance, we type in "fly fishing western New York," or "Casinos New York" or "Casinos New England." We search for "horseback riding Western New York," "Native American culture in New England."

We have entered the age of experiences and have totally moved away from geography-based tourism. We look for the activity that most caters to our individual wishes, and THEN the location.

The internet has leveled the playing field. We used to go to places we read about, we knew, or had been to before. But now we can simply find whatever our heart desires, in a few minutes, without ever leaving the living room. We look for things to do, not places to visit.

But, once we type in "Casinos in Western New York" THEN we look to see which one is closest to home. So, the experience is first, location is second. And in these tough economic times, if we can do the same activity closer to home, why go somewhere further away?

This leads us to the most important question of all: "What do you have, Seneca Nation, that I can't get or do closer to home if I live in Buffalo? Rochester? The Finger Lakes? Pittsburgh?"

What sets you apart from everyone else? What makes you worth a special trip? How are you different, or so much better, that makes you worth a special trip?

This is why we are now in the Era of the Brand, which is the art of setting yourself apart from everyone else.

This is exactly why ninety seven percent of community-based (or tribal-based) advertising is ineffective. Everyone is saying the same things and are not creating "points of differentiation."

How is the Seneca Allegany Casino different, or better, than the Seneca Niagara Casino? How is the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum in Salamanca substantially different or better than the Iroquois Indian Museum in Howes Cave, NY; or the Seneca Museum in Seneca Falls, NY; or than the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC or New York City?

To win, you must be somehow different, or clearly better (by third party endorsement - not self proclaimed) than the competition. Especially in a time when people are staying closer to home. And finally, how does what you have to sell make you worth a special trip? Why should we go to you when we can have a similar experience closer to home?

The internet has changed everything and has leveled the playing field, which brings us to another key point. When we search for activities that cater to us individually, we rarely go past the second page of search results. Do you? You have the same opportunity as everyone else to show up on the first page of

search results, but this requires the purchase of key words, and search optimization - something everyone is working on doing.

Most importantly, 70% of online visitors are frustrated trying to find the activities they are looking for. Why? Because we are busy promoting geography - cities, towns, counties, tribal lands - while these folks are looking for activities - not places.

When we go to Google or Yahoo! and search for "fishing in western New York" does the Highbanks Campground show up on the first page of search results? When we look for "Campgrounds (or camping) in Western New York" can we find the campground?

And if you do, is your website good enough to close the sale? If you aren't different (there are hundreds of campgrounds to chose from), how are you better? Does your website showcase the fact that you are worth driving past closer campgrounds to get to yours because it's clearly nicer or better?

In this new age of tourism, you have three choices:

1. You have to be significantly different from your competition - those located between you and the primary markets you are hoping to attract.
2. You need to be clearly better - and you MUST deliver on that "promise" that you are, indeed, better. This is why you have to have third-party endorsements that say it for you.
3. You can fold 'em. This is why so many towns, attractions, and activities spend every cent they have on marketing, yet still go out of business or struggle for survival. Competition has never been more fierce for the visitor dollar. It's now survival of the fittest and best branded. There are more casinos out there than

ever before, and every one of them wants a piece of your business. This is why even Las Vegas has been working hard to become “the world’s entertainment capital” and has gone back to its roots as “sin city.” Gambling no longer differentiates them from everyone else doing the same thing. The same goes for recreational activities, sports, concert venues, and even museums.

Welcome to the era of the brand.

3. The travel demographic has changed.

In the U.S. alone 350,000 people each month turn 50 years old. That means every three months, there are another million 50 year olds out there. Is that scary or what? And this will continue for another six years. And that’s just when they turn 50. They won’t retire for another 15 years after that!

This is the baby boom generation. The youngest are 45 and the oldest are now 64. This is a trend that is just starting and a group you need to pay attention to for the next 25 years. This is not a flash-in-the-pan demographic shift. This is a long-term phenomena.

This group of people is in its peak earning years, and they account for nearly eighty percent of ALL travel spending. That’s right, eighty percent!

They control seventy percent of North America’s wealth. And the number one leisure activity of these 85 million American’s is travel.

The baby boom generation will also inherit nearly \$10.4 trillion from their parents, who were the best savers in American history. The boomers? The worst. The good news: They’re spending that money, and travel is at the top of their wish list.

The oldest boomers are now empty nesters and most feel their careers came before family, so they’ve vowed to spend more time with their grandkids - meaning you’re going to see a surge in grandparent/grandkids vacations and getaways.

Some interesting facts about boomer travel are important to you in your planning efforts:

a) The peak months for boomer travel happen to be April, May, September and October. Not July and August. Communities MUST get out of the Memorial Day to Labor Day mindset if they want to tap into this eighty percent of travel spending.

b) They want to learn things. Once again, travelers want things to do, not things to look at. The Quinault Indian Nation, on Washington’s Pacific Coast, has done a good job hosting open-pit salmon bakes where visitors actually help prepare the fish, stake it, filet it, and cook it over an open fire.

The Cherokee Heritage Center in Tahlequah, Oklahoma is a place where you can learn to play Stick Ball, or can try your hand at blow darts, or shooting a bow and arrow.

Southwestern tribes are teaching basket weaving, pottery arts, and other Native American skills. Some teach the art of leather work, and the Navajo Indians teach thousands the art of jewelry design using silver and turquoise.

- c) The top activities and learning experiences include:
- Culinary travel (authentic cuisine, education)
 - Art: bead work, pottery, baskets, leather, etc.
 - Gardening: The fastest growing hobby in North America.
 - Ethnic events: Pow Wows, tribal feasts, dances, gathering of Nations, harvests



- Open air markets: Native crafts, foods, organically grown produce, fine art, and hand-crafted goods.

d) Boomers will pay extra for quality. The top fifteen percent of lodging properties, in terms of quality, command a full eighty five percent of leisure traveler business. This goes for RV parks, campgrounds, B&Bs, and hotels. A full eighty five percent of these folks decide where they are going to go, before they settle on a budget. While they want good deals, especially these days, they still want quality and are willing to pay more to get it.

e) They want things to do after 6:00 pm. People spend the night where there are things to do during the evening hours. Seventy percent of ALL spending takes place after 6:00 pm. Are you open?

If we're out horseback riding, fishing, visiting museums, riding or hiking trails, we're not spending money. We do that at the end of the day, or just before we head out. In fact, the number one activity of visitors, in the world, is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. It might not be the reason we visit, but while there, it's the top activity. In fact, this is where eighty percent of visitors spending takes place.

This is exactly why each Disney resort has a Downtown Disney right next door - to capture that eighty percent. This is where Salamanca can be a strong partner with the casino and any tourism developed in the region.

Currently the only town in Cattaraugus County doing a good job of creating places for people to hang out is Ellicottville.

THE BOTTOM LINE

1. You must develop and market activities, not places, not territories. Visitors want things to do, not just things to look at. This applies to museums as well.

2. The Internet should be your top marketing priority. Your site MUST be good enough to close the sale. Yet eighty-eight percent of destination marketing organizations spend more on printed materials than on the web. They have it backwards.



3. Stealing Ford's slogan, "Quality is Job One." This holds true with your attractions, amenities, and activities. People are looking for quality.

THE FOUR TIMES RULE

People will travel to a destination if the activities that cater to them, will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there. For instance, if you want to attract residents of Buffalo, an hour and a half away, do you have six hours of activities, that cater to them (4 x 1.5 hour drive)?

Would you drive all the way to the Galleria Mall in South Buffalo to pick up one item, or would you also do some other shopping and errands while there? This is the FourTimes Rule. We all live by it, whether we realize it or not.

The same applies to visitors. What do you have that makes you worth a two hour drive (eight hours of activities)?

When you have eight hours of activities, you'll also get an overnight stay as opposed to just a day trip. Overnight visitors spend three times that of a day visitor. Those are the people you ultimately want to



attract. They stay in your hotel and B&B facilities, then frequent your restaurants and museums. And they'll spend time in your casinos and card rooms.

The more you have to market, collectively, the further people will come from and the longer they will stay. This is why it's important that the Seneca Nation partner with Cattaraugus County, and why Cattaraugus, Allegany, and Chautauqua Counties need to partner together.

You'll also be a lot more effective as one loud voice than as a bunch of small singular voices in attracting visitors into the area.

Besides the casino with its dining and entertainment, currently the Seneca Nation has little that can attract visitors from more than an hour or two away. This is why product development is critical and why lake-oriented activities will be important.

JETTISON THE GENERIC

To win, you must jettison the generic. You simply cannot be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they have "something for everyone"? No, we go where there is something for us - something that appeals to us personally. The narrower your focus, the greater your success will be.

You must always promote the primary lure - that one thing that sets you apart from everyone else and makes you worth a special trip. Visitors typically only spend four to six hours a day with the primary lure. They spend the other eight to ten hours with complementary activities - things we can do closer to home, but will do while in the area. And at the top of that list, once again, is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

You must jettison the generic in everything you do. Read your marketing materials. If you can take out the name of your town, your campground, or casino and can plop in anyone else's campground, town or casino and it still rings true, then you just lost a sale.

Avoid using these words and phrases in your marketing efforts:

- Explore
- Discover
- Outdoor recreation
- Unlike anywhere else
- So much to see and do
- The four season destination
- Where the seasons come to life
- Historic downtown
- Center of it all
- Best kept secret
- We have it all!
- Experience...
- Visit [name of town or facility]
- Beauty and heritage
- Naturally fun (anything with the word natural in it)
- Gateway
- Close to everywhere
- Right around the corner
- Your playground
- So much history
- Purely natural
- The place for all ages
- ...and so much more!
- Home away from home
- Something for everyone
- A slice of heaven
- It's all right here
- Life pure and simple
- The perfect getaway
- The place for families
- Start your vacation here
- The ultimate escape

- Your weekend getaway
 - Recreational paradise
 - Take a look!
 - Unique (now means just like everyone else)
- If it can fit anyone, anywhere, then toss it.

You must "Jettison the Generic" in order to win. As the Seneca Nation, what sets you apart from everyone else, including other tribes? The Quinalt Nation is known for its seafood. They have a line of products labeled "Quinalt Pride Seafoods." The Lakota People in South Dakota are known for their horsemanship.

The Navajo Indians are known for their jewelry (silver and turquoise) and pottery.

The Micmac People in Canada's Atlantic Provinces are known for their hand made bark canoes.

Other tribes might be known for leather work, specialty foods, tapestries, basket weaving, beadwork, and other goods that create revenue streams and set them apart from everyone else. Casinos do not do this. There are few tribes left that don't have casinos, and now there are so many, in 48 of the 50 states, that this is no longer a point of differentiation. In fact, many tribal casinos are now going out of business because they've become a dime a dozen. So even in the casino business, each is looking for point of differentiation:

- Boxing matches
- Concerts
- World-class dining (renowned chef)
- Spas
- Art schools
- Galleries
- Specialty games
- Setting or location: on a beach, river or mountain top

THE ART OF BRANDING THE SENECA NATION

Here are the ten things you need to know about branding:

1. A brand is a perception. It's what people think of you. When someone says "Seneca Nation" what's the first thing that comes to mind? Salamanca? Jamestown? Niagara Falls?

When they visit a place that is owned or operated by the Seneca Nation, they will often judge the Seneca people by what they see or who they meet. It may not be fair, but it is a reality.

These perceptions are developed through:

1. Visual cues
2. The people and their attitudes
3. Word of mouth
4. Publicity

Drive through the Highbanks Campground and put yourself in the shoes and eyes of a visitor. What does it say about the Seneca Nation?



2. Logos and slogans are not brands. They are just marketing messages and graphics used to help promote the brand. Do you go to Disney World because their slogan is "The Happiest Place on Earth"? No, you go there because of your perceptions of the theme park. The slogan simply reinforces the perception.

3. Branding is the art of setting yourself apart from everyone else. That one thing that makes you special, or that one activity I can't enjoy closer to home. Brands cannot be all things to all people. Volvo built their brand around safety, differentiating themselves from the other auto brands.

4. Brands are earned - good or bad. You never "roll out" a brand. You earn it. Because brands are perceptions, they are thoughts about you, and it takes time for people to know what those are. This is why you use public relations to build your brand, and advertising to maintain your position.

Public relations is how you develop those third-party perceptions. Advertising is what you think of yourself.

5. All successful brands are built on product, not marketing. Volvo was, indeed, the safest car out there - not just according to them, but the National Transportation Safety Board, Consumer Reports and by other third-party sources. Volvo just jumped on it and capitalized on it - to this day. But it was built on a strong foundation of safety.

6. A brand is a promise. Disney works very hard, with its "cast members," to deliver on the promise that it really is the happiest place on earth. To win you MUST deliver on the promise.

7. Your location is not a brand. Something for everyone is not a brand. You cannot build brands on complementary or diversionary activities. Historic

downtowns are not a brand. They are the setting. Brands revolve around activities - not things to look at. You drive a Volvo, you don't just look at it.

8. You cannot do branding by public consent. And you NEVER use focus groups. The more public the process, the more generic it will be. To get around the politics of branding, you build your brand on feasibility, not just public sentiment. This is about cash, so feasibility is rule number one.

9. Politics is the killer of any branding effort. Have an independent third party, with no local politics to play, help facilitate the effort. At the end of the day, it's about finding that one thing that sets you apart. Someone might say the brand for the Seneca Nation should be about art, another one might say it's the lake, and someone else might say it should revolve around hunting and fishing. While all of these are elements of the Seneca Nation, you must narrow your focus down to one key item that puts you on the map.

It doesn't mean that one thing is all you have to offer, but it IS what puts you on the map. Volvo is more than just a "safe" car, it also is luxurious, has a powerful engine, has comfortable seats, and a great stereo system, but it's safety that sets them apart from everyone else.

The Navajo Tribe certainly has more skills and activities than just jewelry and pottery - but that's what puts them on the map and makes them worth a special trip - from all over the world. It's also made Santa Fe the third largest arts community in the United States.

10. You must have brand champions - those who are willing to take a few hits to narrow the focus, and who will work to gradually get buy-in from the community. No successful well-branded community was ever developed without champions, or those who pioneer the effort.

To win, the Seneca Nation MUST find that one thing that really puts the tribe on the map, and sets it apart from other tribes all over North America. The casino is a great regional draw, but what else?

Secondly, the Nation MUST look at the perceptions it creates when we are away from the casino: In Salamanca; when we visit the museum; when we drive into the Highbanks Campground. All of these things foster a perception - what people think of the Seneca Nation.

As is true with most Native American tribes, many people start with a somewhat negative perception. This is not just with the Seneca's but with tribes throughout the country. While it may not be fair or right, there are general perceptions, or stereotypes that have to be addressed:

- High alcoholism
- High unemployment
- Lack of desire to work - on the public or casino dole
- Poor quality in terms of community development
- Rugged internal politics
- Lack of focus

While, hopefully, none of these apply to the Seneca Nation, some of what you see when you visit the Seneca/Salamanca area fit some of these stereotypical elements, which then fosters a less-than-stellar brand.

The following is what we saw during our visit, along with some suggestions on things you can do to today, to make a difference tomorrow.

Some of this may not be politically correct, and may make some people very uncomfortable, but it is an honest look at the area through the eyes of a visitor. We were not told what to say, nor did we talk to any Tribal Elders first.



Brand Assessment Findings & Suggestions

Outside of the Casino, the Highbanks Campground is one of the Nation's key tourism assets. This is a perfect example of how stereotypes or perceptions are often developed.

When visiting the area, there are three primary camping choices:

1. The Onoville Marina, operated by Cattaraugus County.
2. The Alleghany State Park.
3. The Highbanks Campground.

Two years ago the Destination Development team assessed the Onoville Marina, providing dozens of suggestions - things they could do to "raise the bar" and improve the product.

The county and marina management have worked very hard and have already implemented most of the suggestions made in the Findings & Suggestions Report.

When visiting with marina management this past summer we learned that, in spite of it being a time of economic hardships, they had the best year they've ever had. Their efforts created a terrific return on that investment.

Of the three camping choices, the Highbanks Campground is a distant third in terms of quality, staffing, and overall appeal.



It starts with the staffing. We secret shopped the campground during our visit in July (during the peak visitor season). When we drove up to the entrance gate, two young girls wearing t-shirts and shorts and smoking cigarettes, without even getting up from their chairs, raised a hand to us in the "halt" position.

When we informed them that we just wanted to take a quick look at the campground and would come right back out, and that we were there on Seneca Nation business, they said we could not go in without a special permit or pass.

So, we had to have the car waiting behind us back up, get out of the way, so we could back up and go in the office to get our special permit.

When we went into the office, the gentleman inside said to simply go in, there are no special permits and to just tell the girls he said we could go in.

So we got back in the car, proceeded to the gate where the two girls were obviously disgusted with us, and him, for letting us in. Once we were inside, one girl got in a golf cart and proceeded to follow us around the campground.

Even on previous visits, the customer service and personnel at the Campground were less than friendly. Not one single time (in four visits) did anyone greet us, say "welcome," or even make any effort to help us feel welcome. We felt like we were an imposition on their time rather than a guest.

The attitude wasn't much better at the casino, where we were followed around by security guards because I had a camera with me. Front desk personnel would not give me a price to stay there, and when I insisted, the price was astronomical. I heard them give the next guest a price that was about two-thirds less, because they were a club or casino member. The attitude was very poor.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Hospitality training

Start with some customer service training. Get your front line employees to realize that every time someone comes into the casino, Museum, or Highbanks Campground, or any another Seneca Nation enterprise, that a portion of the money they leave behind will end up in that employee's pocket. In fact, their paycheck depends on it.

There are four elements to good customer service:

- a) Greet the guest. Say "welcome" or even "Hi, thanks for stopping by." Disney calls their employees "cast members" and their primary focus is to make every single guest feel like a king or queen.
- b) Ask how you can help them. "What can we do for you today?" or "How can we help you?"
- c) Do everything you can to make them comfortable and feel welcome. Use their name once they hand you a credit card, check or fill in a registration form. "Thank you Mr. Brooks for staying with us." Marriott has one of the highest customer loyalty programs in the world. Employees must ALWAYS call the customer by name once they know it. Not doing so can result in termination.
- d) Invite them back once they leave. "We hope you'll stay with us again. How was your stay? Anything we can do to make your stay more enjoyable next time you visit?"

2. Purchase the film "The Guest."

It's a fairly expensive 14-minute training film (\$795) that is fun, entertaining, and concentrates on the four elements listed above.

The Guest can be purchased by going to www.mpc-films.com. This is a great film that can be "checked out" and used not just for tourism but for employees and staff at other Seneca Nation offices, enterprises, and facilities.

Do NOT expect your front line employees to come to a workshop to learn how to be better hosts. Instead, take it to them. Set up a computer, large screen (or projector) and speak to the campground staff in a meeting - no longer than 30 minutes - or museum staff, or casino staff, etc.

This is not meant to be a preaching session, but a way to change behaviors. When an employee realizes that every customer they see will probably hand them cash or a credit card, and that a portion of that ends up in their paycheck, they all of a sudden become important.

Another option is to have someone come in (like a DDI Hospitality Training Expert) and actually spend a week going from location to location, office to office, holding the 30-minute customer service training exercise.

3. Create a bonus program

When an employee at any Seneca Nation enterprise gets a "good report," give them a bonus. I have read that one airline has a program where passengers get comment cards and flight attendants start with five points. When they get a good report, they get an additional point. If they get a negative report a point is taken away. If you get three negatives, you are warned, and on the fourth you are terminated. If you end up with ten points, you are given a merit raise, based on the good comments and customer service you are providing.

Perhaps something along this line could be developed so there is financial incentive to do a good job. This is an investment, not an expense. It's far cheaper to bring

back customers than to always go out and find new ones. To bring them back, you must make them feel welcome, that they are special, and that you actually do want them back.

4. No smoking

Almost nothing is more unprofessional than smoking while on the job and on duty - especially in front of customers. It was difficult to find an employee at the campground who WASN'T smoking in the office, at the gate, or while working the grounds.

5. Purchase uniforms

The people that work at state and federal parks, and even most private campgrounds, wear uniforms. It helps guests identify who works there, it makes it look like a professionally run operation, it presents and air of authority, and it makes the employee feel more professional.

This is the same rationale as to why casino floor employees often wear uniforms, why security wears uniforms, and why front desk people at hotels - and at the casino - are dressed professionally. The same applies to the campground.

6. Lose the attitude

Nearly every experience we've had with front-line Seneca enterprise employees, over several years, has been poor. There's been a general "we couldn't care less" attitude, and this becomes a "brand" or "perception" of the entire Seneca Nation. It may not be fair, or even right, but this is how stereotypes are developed.

7. Invest in a maintenance program

Millions of dollars are being spent to keep the casino a first-class facility, and to make it better. It doesn't look as though the campground and other tribal facilities are given anything to improve their product - or even maintain it. The Highbanks Campground is - in our

opinion - in terrible shape and must be an embarrassment for the Seneca Nation.

While the pool at the campground is nice, most of the other facilities are poorly maintained, or are in desperate need of upgrades or repairs.

Make sure there is a maintenance budget. Before you build new things, make sure what you have is in good repair.



8. Invest in maintenance

- a) Pressure-wash the mold off of the restrooms.
- b) Patch the roads to the marina. They are dangerous for boat owners.
- c) Air out the cabins. Most smell so strong of must and mildew that many are probably unsafe places to stay.
- d) Get rid of institutional looking chain link fencing that blocks the views of the lake. Instead use wrought iron fencing (they make vinyl versions that require less maintenance).
- e) Don't allow campers to stay beyond 30 days. This is a standard practice of campgrounds all over North America. There were campsites at Highbanks with old trailers covered in algae, with trash piled up around them, that make the place seem downright scary and unsafe. In fact, passengers in our car locked the doors as we traveled past a few of these. Remember, women account for 70% of all travel decisions. If they don't feel safe or cringe at the sight of some of these long term "tenants," - that's not going to help you increase business.

The top 15% of accommodations, in terms of quality, command 85% of the leisure travel business. This includes RV parks and campgrounds. How are sales at Highbanks? The State Park and Onoville Marina had one of their best seasons ever. But they are both investing in their product - and it shows.

At the Onoville Marina (three photos, right) they repainted the restrooms and improved their overall appearance, they added new playground equipment, they added visitor information, doubled their





efforts in making the lawn areas greener and more weed-free. Their customer service has improved, and so has employee morale because they are now proud of what they have to maintain and improve.

9. Or shut it down

Our recommendation is that if the Seneca Nation is not willing to invest some substantial funds in the Highbanks Campground, then shut it down. You can train your staff to be the best customer service employees in the Northeast, but at the end of the day if you don't have a product that can "deliver on the promise" you will be better off shutting it down than fighting a losing proposition. If you want it to succeed you must:

- a) Redevelop the road-way system through the campground.
- b) Develop an attractive way-finding and signage system throughout the grounds. (See photos, notes, next page)
- c) Invest in the marina and attract vendors to it:
 - Paddle boat rentals
 - Power boat rentals
 - Create a home for a fishing guide or two

- Create sufficient moorage for customer boats
- d) Move the big trash dumpster away from the marina, or put up a cedar fence around it to screen it. (See photo, next page)
- e) Make sure the boat ramp is in good repair. The same goes for the docks.
- f) Remove all campers, trailers, and trash that have been in campsites for more than 30 days. Do NOT allow blue tarps.
- g) Tear down old cabins that are no longer habitable.
- h) Invest in existing cabins that can be salvaged. Air them out, paint them, add light fixtures, replace rotten decking, etc.
- i) Put some inventory in the campground store. There is very little there, forcing campers to travel quite a distance to get supplies.
- j) Work on trimming trees, cutting back weeds, pressure washing restrooms and the pool deck. Keep gathering places swept and clean.

All in all, the Highbanks Campground is a "start over" proposition in terms of fixtures, facilities, buildings, and customer service. In fact, nothing we saw in the three Seneca territories presents the Nation in a worse light than this campground. Do you, as a Seneca Indian, want to be judged by this? Put yourself in the shoes of a guest. Drive into the campground and look around. It is a reflection on you - fair or not.

Additional comments and photos are on the following page, but nothing can showcase the campground better than actually seeing





it for yourself. Take a look from the eyes of a customer.

10. Push the state and county to improve the freeway visitor information center

The Interstate-96 Cattaraugus County Visitor Information Center is a beautiful facility, with tremendous views, in a great location.

But once inside there are a few things that need improvement:

- a) There is a flat screen television (previous page) that shows soap operas and TV shows, when it should be showing a video that sells visitors on why they should spend some time in the county, rather than pass through.

A video can promote the state park, the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, New York's Amish Trail and a host of other activities. Nothing sells more than photos and video.

- b) Add some interpretive signage about the stained glass windows (previous page) and the Native American art that adorns the floor of the center.

11. Maintain the Oil Spring site.

We understand that Oil Spring is a sacred site, yet it seems as though this is an overlooked,



under-maintained site that needs some care. Start by moving around the entrance gates into the “park” (below).

This is a stunning historical site that should be maintained and cared for. The grounds (see photos next page) look pretty well maintained, yet the entrance makes it look as though it’s been totally abandoned. This is a terrific story in a spectacular setting that should be properly maintained.

But perhaps the biggest challenge of all is working with the private businesses on tribal land, who perpetuate a “negative perception” of the Nation far more than do the tribal enterprises - like the Highbanks Campground. They need to “raise the bar” to a higher standard.

This is just one of dozens of examples (bottom center photo).

12. Work with businesses located on tribal lands.

Suggestions, in this example, might include:

- a) Trimming the weeds around the mail box and sign post.
- b) Getting rid of the portable sign (there’s nothing readable on it).
- c) Getting rid of the proliferation of plastic banners and commercial sandwich boards.
- d) Making the stores more inviting - a half-barrel or two (or more) of annual color or even evergreen shrubs.

Quick Facts:

- a) Up to seventy percent of first time sales come from curb appeal. That’s right - 70%.
- b) Women account for 80% of all spending - local and visitor spending. What are you doing to make them feel safe, and welcome?

- c) Curb appeal sets the bar for you as a Nation, and creates that first impression where you are “judged.”

13. Limit the use of temporary signs.

We suggest the Nation initiate an ordinance that limits the use of plastic banners, portable signs, and sandwich boards. Here are some ideas on what the ordinance could include:

- a) No more than two plastic banners or sandwich boards at any single location or business.
- b) No more than one portable sign on any one premise.
- c) Sandwich boards, plastic banners (this includes vinyl), and portable signs can only be used for special sales and events.
- d) The above signs can only be used for two weeks at a time, and no more than four times a year.
- e) They are only allowed by special permit, and with penalties for exceeding the time limits or for using them for non-allowed purposes.



When we assessed the Onoville Marina, the cigarette shops in the area had, collectively, more than 100 plastic banners, temporary signs, portable signs, and sandwich boards plastered all over the various properties. It made such a beautifully scenic place look like a third-world country.

Quick facts:

- a) Travelers have between four and eight seconds to read signs. They can read between eight and 12 words in that time. How are they supposed to read through five, ten or sometimes 30 signs?
- b) After ten days, commuters ignore signs they’ve already seen. When you add new signs, they just get lost in the clutter and are also ignored.
- c) The Seneca Nation could spend millions of dollars marketing the three territories, the casino, and shops owned by members, but none of that effort can get a visitor to walk into a shop and say, “Here’s my credit card.” The merchant has to do that. If any tribal enterprise or small business says, “What

are you doing for me?” we typically respond with, “What are you doing for yourself to pull customers in the door?”

Why do you think the casino spent millions of dollars on water features, excellent curb appeal, beautiful wayfinding signage? Because it gets customers attention, looks like a great place to spend time, and is inviting. Other businesses need to follow suit.

We all travel. Have you ever said these words: “That looks like a nice place to eat.” We all judge the book by its cover. It’s often the only thing we have to go on.

Even signs like this (bottom left) do nothing to pull customers into the gas station. The readerboard portion of the sign isn’t even being used.

14. Remove abandoned buildings

There are numerous empty, abandoned buildings scattered on tribal lands that create the perception that this is a financially struggling tribe and community. Get rid of the remnants of old plastic signs, banners and flags.

15. Maintain the lakefront homes

We understand the Seneca Nation owns several homes around the lake. Unfortunately, they were the homes with unmowed lawns, weeds growing in planter beds and gardens, paint peeling off the structures, etc.

Hire Boy Scouts, youth organizations, or even just a landscape maintenance company to maintain these structures so they do not fall into further disrepair. Once again, this sets a poor image for the Nation, creating ill will between the tribe and non-tribal

residents who live along the lake. As is true in all residential communities, you are only as good as your neighbors.

16. Lease lakefront homes to a rental agency

The lake is a beautiful weekend retreat. Consider leasing the homes to a vacation rental company, who will maintain the properties, can rent them out, and will share a percentage of the rental fees with the tribe.

IN A NUTSHELL

Over the past several years we’ve had the pleasure of assessing nearly all of both Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties. For the most part, we always knew when we were on tribal lands because of the proliferation of smoke shops, plastic banners, temporary signs, sandwich boards, abandoned buildings, and poor quality in terms of curb appeal. Like many other visitors, perhaps we unfairly stereotyped the



The power of beautification. The Nic-L-Inn has invested in their landscape and overall curb appeal. That effort, along with good food, has made it more than just a local restaurant, but an actual attraction. People travel great distances to eat here. There are three primary elements that can make a restaurant or retail shop successful: Good food (or a good selection of products); great ambiance (curb appeal); or great characters (the people who work and run the enterprise.)

The Nic-L-Inn has good food, an exceptional ambiance, and the service is good as well. Success.

tribal territories, but when being toured through the three areas by tribal staff, the perceptions still rang true.

If the Seneca Nation wants to attract new investment into these properties, or attract new visitors, it must invest in more than just the casino. Our first impressions were that the casino is priority number one, and that is where the money is going. Everything else is a distant second and gets no funding, nor any attention.

17. Develop a first-rate museum

In fact, nowhere is this more true than at the museum. What should be a showcase for the entire world is a static, underfunded museum that is far too small and does little to really promote the history, culture and future of the Seneca-Iroquois Nation.

We've had the pleasure of visiting nearly 40 Native American Historical Museums, and this one is easily near the bottom of the list in terms of investment and really telling the story of this great people. Like the Highbanks Campground it's a "start over" proposition. We understand there are efforts to develop a new museum that better reflects the history and culture, and we hope that an adequate investment will be made in that effort.

18. Play up the water

Water is the biggest draw of visitors in the world. While the tribe owns much of the reservoir, including substantial waterfront properties, they are not being used to the Nation's advantage at all.

When it comes to new development projects, the lakes and reservoir should be at the top of the list. Waterfront golf, waterfront lodging, waterfront

activities - boardwalk, retail, boat rentals, pier fishing, etc. could be developed.

The Seneca Nation has miles of rivers running through its territories, "owns" the reservoir, and has incredible sandy beaches along the shores of Lake Erie - all prime real estate that is not being leveraged at all for future development, or even for tourism.

Currently, when it comes to tourism, outside of the casino, the Seneca Nation has little to offer in terms of product.

This is why your tourism development staff must concentrate on finding the "hidden gems," creating a "Best of the Seneca Nation" guide, and developing itineraries that also encompass more than just tribal-land activities.

They must also champion the cause for product development. Remember that all successful brands are built on product, not just marketing.

MARKETING

19. Let casino guests explore

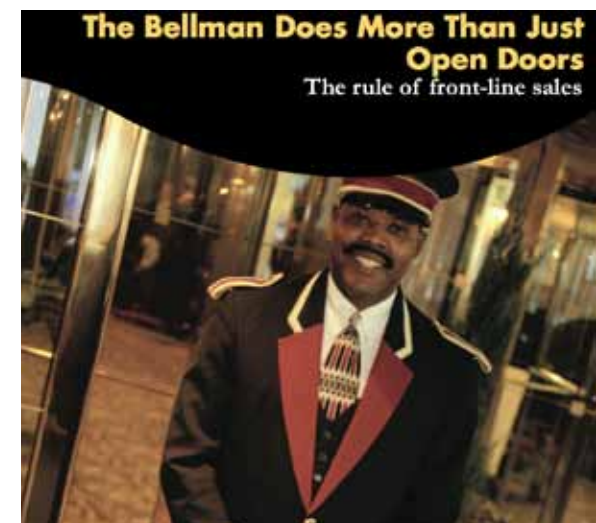
The casino must get rid of the "lock the doors once they come in" mentality. In speaking with local residents and businesses, this was a common complaint. While we don't know if it's founded in fact, it's still a perception that plagues most tribal casinos across the country. In most cases, it's actually a true statement. Even casino visitors want more than just slot machines. They need periodic breaks. This is why casinos, including those in Las Vegas, add dining, shows, and concerts. Even in Vegas they want visitors to leave and explore, as long as they come back.

20. Spread your wings

You've read the FourTimes Rule (earlier in these suggestions), and in order to get visitors to travel a distance and make the area their ultimate destination, you must work with non-tribal partners.

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further people will come and the longer they will stay. Currently the Seneca Nation is short on attractions outside the casino. But working with the county and other non-tribal organizations, you can build strength in numbers.

To win you MUST promote not only the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, but also the two museums in Salamanca and other historical attractions in the area. You must promote local events, even if they are not Seneca Nation events. You must jump on the Cattaraugus County bandwagon - even promoting the Amish Trail.

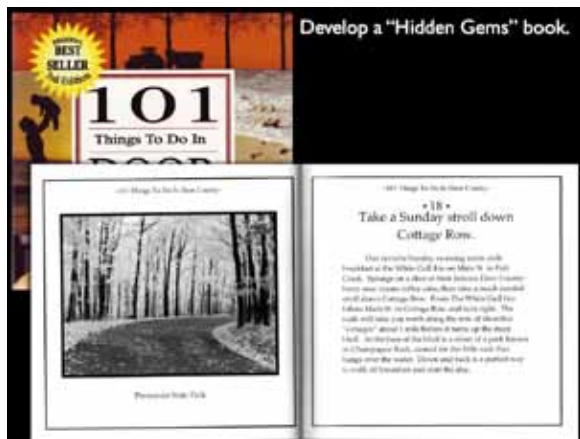


Why should you do this? Because the ultimate goal is to get visitors to spend the night in your local hotels. They might spend the day experiencing the Amish Trail, but at the end of the day, they will eat in your restaurants, sit in front of a slot machine at the casino, shop in your stores, and stay in one of your hotels, whether at the casino, the Holiday Inn Express or another.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors. Additionally, you will be far more effective as one loud voice than a bunch of small, barely heard, voices.

21. 2010 is the “Getting Ready” year

Following are several suggestions that can make a big difference in your marketing efforts. As in any marketing endeavor, there is a “getting ready” effort. Developing itineraries, finding the “best of” businesses and activities, and developing the “hidden gems” that will keep visitors in the area longer and will bring them back more often. These things take time to develop, but once developed, they will result in a much stronger marketing effort.



Develop a “Hidden Gems” book.

Additionally, this gives you time to work on customer service issues that need to be addressed before you begin an even stronger marketing push.

22. Develop the “Hidden Gems of the Seneca Nation”

This would be a small book, perhaps five inches square that would be full of neat little places to see, or things to do, that would only come from the locals. They can include a great dish at a small little diner, a scenic spot worth a special trip, or an activity that’s not on everyone’s radar.

This is patterned after Door County, Wisconsin’s “101 Things to do in Door County.” The author initially printed 5,000 copies, but it has been so popular that he is now in his fifth printing. Books are sold for \$12, and the retailer makes a 50% markup. Surveys show that more than 80% of visitors who buy the book plan multiple repeat trips to Door County as they make their way through the various “gems.”


In this case you certainly don’t need 101 things to do, but instead focus on the hidden gems. The Oil Spring site would be one of those. It’s not a major attraction, but a great little side trip while visiting the area.

We’ve included a copy of the Door County book with these suggestions to use as a guide. The Hidden Gems come from local residents, so it’s a great way to bring the community into the process.

23. Work with hoteliers on loyalty program

The ultimate goal of any tourism effort is to make you the destination - as opposed to being just a day trip or pass-through stop-over. When people do spend the night in Salamanca, hotels need to work to bring those customers back. It can be as simple as sending a follow-up thank you note (see sample next page), perhaps offering a discount to repeat visitors. A hotelier in Bend, Oregon slides a “Things To Do” sheet under each door each morning (see next page). It includes ideas of things to do that day, plus a weather forecast. They’ve been doing this for years and they have a 90% loyalty index - 90% of visitors that stay with them once, stay with them every time they visit the Bend area. It’s always cheaper and easier to bring back existing customers than to always work to find new ones.

In my 25 years of travelling nearly 300 days a year, only once did a hotel ever send a thank you note inviting me to stay with them next time I’m in the area. It won my loyalty. Nearly every hotel asks for your contact information, but rarely do they ever use that information to bring the customer back.



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February 2004

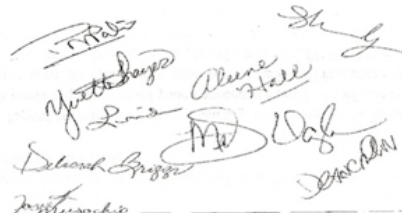
Roger A Brooks
 Destination Development, Inc.
 711 Capitol Way So., Ste. 504
 Olympia, WA 98501

Best Western Lake Conroe Inn knows that you have worked hard all year and now you deserve a treat. We would like to wish you a very Happy New Year by offering you one night in a king size room for the special rate of \$50.00 plus tax! That's \$30.00 off the regular rate! (Please add \$5.00 plus tax for two queen size beds. Holidays excluded. Subject to availability.) This offer is only valid Sunday through Thursday until February 29, 2004, so hurry in while there's still time!


Don't forget we have a meeting room big enough for up to 30 people, making us the perfect place for all your corporate needs! All of our rooms include: one king size or two queen size beds, desk, coffeemaker, refrigerator, microwave, iron & board, hairdryer, alarm clock, FREE high speed Internet access and a FREE copy of *Texas Sporting Journal*. Start your day off right with our FREE deluxe continental breakfast and end it by watching a stunning sunset over beautiful Lake Conroe from our Jacuzzi, which is warm all year round!

Thanks you for your patronage, we look forward to having you soon!

Happy Holidays from the staff of Best Western Lake Conroe Inn!



This letter must be presented at check-in to receive this special offer!



Good Morning July 30, 2005

Have a WONDERFUL Day in Central Oregon!

Central Oregon Weather Forecast

Tuesday Sunny and warm High-71 Low-55	Sunday Sunny and warm High-71 Low-55	Monday Sunny and warm High-68 Low-55
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What to do today...

—GOLF on our own. Enjoy the views and restaurants that surround Bend for an all-day!

—Visit the Shops in Bend's Old PMB District and catch a movie at the Old PMB 10. Shows include, or check out the Working Wonders Children's Museum, open 10 am to 5 pm. Thursday thru Sunday. For more info call 360-450-0000.

—Visit the High Desert: Please join us for a special event. Open 9 am to 5 pm everyday. For more info call 360-475-0100.

Create "things to do" ideas. Be specific. Create loyalty.



Good Morning October 18, 2004

Have a WONDERFUL Day in Central Oregon!

Central Oregon Weather Forecast

Tuesday Sunny High-71 Low-55	Sunday Sunny High-71 Low-55	Monday Sunny High-68 Low-55
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What to do today...

—GOLF on our own. Enjoy the views and restaurants that surround Bend for an all-day!

—Visit the High Desert: Please join us for a special event. Open 9 am to 5 pm everyday. For more info call 360-475-0100.

—Visit the Shops in Bend's Old PMB District and catch a movie at the Old PMB 10. Shows include, or check out the Working Wonders Children's Museum, open 10 am to 5 pm. Thursday thru Sunday. For more info call 360-450-0000.

These are just two examples of what lodging facilities can do to bring visitors back. These little touches are inexpensive and create loyalty to the property by the customer.

24. Retail Hint! Hint! cards

In Sisters, Oregon (population 1,100), a popular summer destination, a small jewelry store struggled to get customers during the fall and winter months. They found a novel idea that cost just pennies, and brought them customers all year long. Faced with the dilemma that most visitors come to the area only during the summer months, and are not thinking of Mothers Day, Fathers Day, Valentine's Day, anniversaries, or even Christmas, (hundreds of "lookie-loos" a day) and buying very little merchandise. The merchant created a small index card titled "Hint, Hint" that is given to the potential future customer. They could then purchase the items at a later date and have them shipped in time for the holidays, Mothers Day, a birthday or anniversary.

The store owner also asks customers if they'd like to be notified by e-mail when new jewelry pieces come in. Each piece photographed and added to the website.

In visiting with this merchant, she noted that nearly 70% of her sales come after the customer leaves, and that her holiday sales have nearly tripled. In fact, she has customers that came in her store once, for perhaps 20 minutes, during the summer, and have been her customers for years following that one quick visit.

The cards fold over and are about 3.5" wide by about 5" tall. They fold to about a business card size.

The cost of these small index cards is less than a penny apiece.

25. Sell things to do, not places

In all your marketing efforts, it is important to promote activities before places. People are looking for things to do, not things to look at. So make sure you promote activities and THEN where they happen to be located. For instance, while the Alleghany Reservoir is a fantastic destination, the reservoir is just a place - a large lake. The draw is boating on the lake. Or fishing. Or water skiing. Always promote activities over places.

Tampa, Florida (top right) promotes the Museum of Science & Industry, the Florida Aquarium, and the Lowry Park Zoo - THEN the fact that these are all located in Tampa. These, by the way, are activities you can't enjoy in Orlando, the state's primary destination. The location is always second to the activity.



Hint Hint

Create future customers, long-term customers.

If you'd really like to know.....

"these are a few of my favorite things"

item#	description

the Jewel

P.O. Box 847 • Hwy 20 & Ash • Sisters, Ore 97759

ring size _____

(541) 549-9388



26. Tell stories

People want to hear stories, not just look at artifacts. In your museums we are far more interested in what life was like - the stories that bring us into the culture and connect us to the people.

The average museum visit across America lasts between 20 and 40 minutes. But if you can captivate the visitor for two hours, spending will increase. It will be time for lunch, dinner, a snack, or time to do some shopping.

Museums MUST learn to tell interesting and fascinating, even humorous stories and avoid simply displaying artifacts with facts and figures.

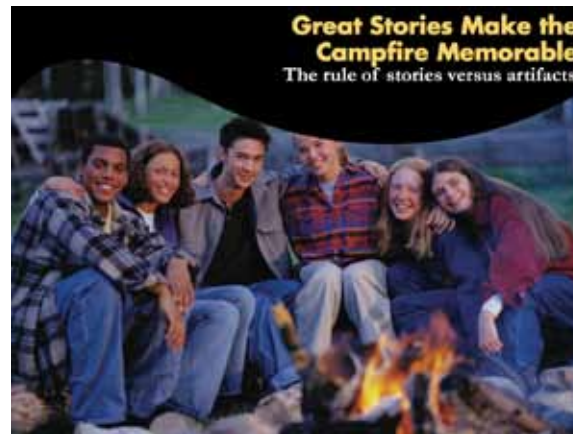
27. Promote your “anchor tenants”

People will come out of their way to eat at a great restaurant, or to get the best cinnamon rolls you can get in Western New York.

Just like a mall, you must have anchor tenants and you must promote them specifically. You cannot let local politics kill your efforts.

Create a “Best of the Seneca Nation” guide to your best places to eat, best places to shop, and your best activities. You might have three of each, or even fewer, or you might have half a dozen.

Ottawa, Illinois created a Best of Ottawa brochure, and they saw their overnight stays increase dramatically. Have a third party come in and determine which businesses qualify as a “best of” so that local politics will not dictate who gets chosen.



In Ottawa, here is the vetting process they used:

- The business had to be open six days a week, including weekends
- They had to have good curb appeal
- They had to be open until at least 7:00 at night
- They had to be highly regarded by someone other than themselves

Of course you can create your own vetting process, but this might serve as a guide. Each business was invited and each paid \$400 to be included in the “Best Of” guide. With that funding, 20,000 copies were printed and distributed to local hotels, visitor information centers, and in retail shops that were featured in the guide. A copy was also sent to local residents with a note that said, in essence “The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and family. We hope you’ll hang onto this Best of Ottawa Guide so that when friends and family visit you, you will show them the best of what Ottawa has to offer. Because we believe that every dining room table should be a concierge desk.” By promoting the best of what the community had to offer, I’m told overnight sales nearly tripled - within just 90 days.





The New Zion Missionary Baptist Church Barbecue in Huntsville, Texas may not look like much (top left), but GQ Magazine rated is one of the top 10 places in the world, worth flying too, to eat. People come by the bus load to Huntsville to have barbecue in this little shack. It is Huntsville's "anchor tenant" and makes them worth a special trip. While there they will do other activities as well.



28. Develop partnerships

Work with other local museums and the county in creating partnership opportunities. Three museums in Tacoma, Washington pooled their marketing dollars and promoted all three museums, making them worth the drive (the FourTimes Rule). This increased their visitation, while saving them money.

In Olympia, Washington, just down the road from Tacoma, their 11 museums got together and created the South Sound Heritage Attractions Guide (see next page). The result was that the museums were able to cut their marketing costs by nearly half while almost tripling their attendance.

As noted earlier, the more you have to offer, collectively, the further people will come and the longer they will stay.

This is the power of partnerships. While these examples used museums, the same type of guide can be used for restaurants, lodging facilities, activities, and retail shops.

In this case, you might design the brochure, but each museum pays for its panel. Then a map is created to create an itinerary a visitor can use to visit all 11 of the museums.



29. Develop detailed itineraries

Visitors are looking for specifics, not generalities. This is the age of detailed itineraries. Create them by categories:

- History & Culture (museums, historical sites & attractions, Native American arts, Amish)
- Shopping & Dining
- Sports & Recreation (Golf, biking, ATV, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, etc.)
- The Environment (Birding, hiking, photography, wild life viewing)
- Entertainment (casino gaming, concerts)
- Events
- By mode of travel (RV, motorcycle tours, tour bus, private auto)

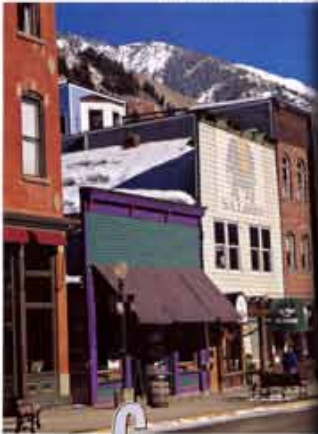
Develop half day, full day and two-day itineraries. Don't worry about county lines, and don't squeeze the entire itinerary into the three Seneca territories. Visitors don't care about boundaries. Make sure you include professional photography, specifics (right down to a specific dish in a specific restaurant), operating hours, and maps.

Below, and on the next page, are a few examples you can use as a guide. These can be posted on your website, can be printed and given to overnight guests as well.

<p>[9:00 a.m.] Grab a breakfast of espresso and fresh baked goods at Presti's Bakery & Cafe (12101 Mayfield Rd; 216-421-3030) in Little Italy. Order a selection of the fine Italian cookies and pastries to go—choices include lady locks, cannoli, and biscotti—then window-shop the art galleries on Mayfield Road.</p> <p>[10:00 a.m.] Take in the best of Cleveland's cultural offerings at the museums clustered around Wade Oval. Start with the Cleveland Museum of Art (11150 East Blvd; 216-421-7340; www.clevelandart.org), which exhibits major works from many periods. "We don't have the largest collection, but it's definitely one of the finest," boasts museum staffer Deana Novotna, who came to Cleveland from Deano Novotna, who came to Cleveland from Hungary in 1956; Novotna's countryman, architect Marcel Breuer, designed the museum's north building in 1971. Next, head to the Cleveland Botanical Garden (11030 East Blvd; 216-721-1600; www.cbgarden.org) to view flora and some fauna—frogs, butterflies, birds, lizards—from a Madagascar desert and a Costa Rican cloud forest, in the striking Glasshouse, a modern take on a conservatory.</p> <p>[12:30 p.m.] For lunch, Fire (13220 Shaker Sq; 216-923-3473; www.firefoodanddrink.com) is a favorite of locals and critics, who praise its lively atmosphere and reasonably priced meals—everything from chesesturgers to duck confit, with mushroom vinaigrette.</p>	<p>After lunch, make time for some shopping in the boutiques of Shaker Square, a quaint outdoor shopping center built in the 1920s.</p> <p>[2:30 p.m.] Wander through West Side Market (1979 W. 25th St; 216-664-3387; www.westsidemarket.com; Mon., Wed., Fri.-Sat.), a boisterous food market where over 100 vendors sell endless varieties of specialty foods, from portobello mushrooms to "all-natural" poultry.</p> <p>[4:00 p.m.] Prepare for the evening at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum (1 Key Plaza; 888-764-7625; www.rockhall.com), the tribute to rock music housed in architect I.M. Pei's striking glass-and-steel pyramid (photo). Don't miss: the interactive music-history consoles, which play top songs and interviews with artists.</p> <p>[5:30 p.m.] Time to scout out where to have dinner. Worth a visit: the Warehouse District's most ambitious new restaurant, XO (500 W. St. Clair Ave.; 216-861-1919), which pleases with its elegant chocolate-and-cream decor and entrees of thyme-roasted wild bass or pork chops served with apple-and-quail-cheese strudel.</p> <p>[7:30 p.m.] Make your way to recently restored Severance Hall (11001 Euclid Ave.; 216-231-7300; www.clevelandorchestra.com)</p>	<p>for stirring performances of Tchaikovsky, Wagner, and other greats by the renowned Cleveland Orchestra.</p> <p>[10:30 p.m.] Tuck in at the intimate Baricelli Inn (2203 Cornell Rd.; 216-791-6500; www.baricelli.com), an 1896 brownstone converted into a seven-room European-style hotel that features a fine-dining restaurant and a gourmet-cheese boutique. An alternative local lodging: the 60-room Gladden House Inn (1901 Ford Dr.; 216-231-8900; www.gladdenhouse.com), centered around the 1910 Gladden mansion on the campus of Case Western Reserve University. (Note that the inn is currently undergoing some renovation.)</p> <p>TOP EVENT Great Rib Cook-Off Cleveland will pull out all the stops for its May 27-31 Great American Rib Cook-Off & Music Festival, celebrating National Barbecue Month. Competitors travel from all over the U.S. to compete for "greatest ribs" and "greatest sauce" in America. Expect dozens of booths, live national bands, and all the barbecue you can eat. 440-247-4386.</p>
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great drives**Peak Performance**

From his Audi RS 6 supersedan, **Stephan Wilkinson** surveys canyons, caravans, and an infamous cannibal



The San Juan Mountains loom over Telluride (top); a 1950s convertible in the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb (right); cottonwoods bloom amid sand dunes (below).



moths, beetles, and flies that are impressed in rock. Thanks to the wonders of plate tectonics, Colorado has the only known fossil record of the tsetse fly, which of course has long since decamped to equatorial Africa.

On Route 24, I cross the 9,500-foot-high Wilkerson Pass (misspelled, I learned at age three that it's W-i-l-k-i-n-s-o-n, dammit), and suddenly, to the west, are the real Rockies. Pikes Peak and its ancillaries are part of the Front Range, but the Continental Divide runs through the snowcapped mountains far ahead, across a flat, broad valley. "Welcome to Chaffee County," the sign says. "Now this is Colorado." It's absolutely right; there's something very specific and Coloradoan about the view. This isn't the cactus-dotted desert of so much of the Southwest, though that familiar landscape isn't far away. This terrain is vivid, and constantly changing, from forested mountains to luxurious grasslands. The road becomes arrow-straight, and the overpowered Audi rumps.

Route 24 takes the Audi to Leadville, at just over 10,000 feet the highest incorporated city in the country and only 2,000 feet lower than La Paz, the highest city in the world. Just thinking about it makes me short of breath. The National Mining Hall of Fame & Museum in Leadville gives me the whiff by making plain what a horrifying form of labor mining was—and still is. Upstairs, the walls are hung with portraits of men who became rich thanks to mining. Downstairs are dioramas, exhibits of old equipment, and a simulated mine, all hints about the lives of stoic men scratching like mules through the earth.

I'm entering Aspen through the back door—narrow, beautiful Colorado 82, which is closed in the winter. It's a regional road, winding over 12,000-foot Independence Pass and then down, down through a magnificent forested gorge.

In front of me is a silver Mercedes SUV with local plates and an ML430 badge that says it's packed in a V8. The driver, eager to show this flatlander how to handle a Colorado mountain road, steams off, cackling the boxy Benz through its inviting corners. I effortlessly stick the RS 6 up his tailpipe, and after five miles he pulls into a turnout and waves me by, no doubt wondering how on earth a midsize sedan with Michigan plates can do that. (Hint: Skeptics should note in their rearview mirror the underbelly of the big oil-cooler inlet below the Olympic-rings grille, flanked by two brake-cooling ducts.

With 45 horsepower more than even a Z06 Corvette, it's not your commuter-dad Audi.) Aspen, my day's destination: It's easy to make fun of a town that can be regarded as either an island of conspicuous consumption or an oasis of taste and quality, depending on your point of view. Either way, it's a place where the cops drive Saab squad cars and wear designer jeans, and thin, stylish women in corral-crash Steeles and sheep-



dog-simalacrum Uggs boots walk around with tiny cell phones glued to their ears. What it's like during ski season I don't want to know.

Aspen to Telluride

On the four-lane out of Aspen, past Snowmass and on toward Leadville, the opposite-direction traffic early in the morning is a steady flow of pickups, Toyota Corollas, and rusty old vans, not a Mercedes SUV among them. These are the mush, caretakers, and waiters, people who do Aspen's seat work but live in places named Basalt and Emma, Catherine and Carbondale. Southbound on Colorado 133, I'm poking the Audi's nose toward a steep wall of mountains, the West Elks. It looks as though there's no way through, but inevitably there will be a pass. It turns out to be a heavily forested, towering gorge, and the river that made it rushes alongside the road. Fir trees cling to the vertical gorge walls like hairs on a fat man's back. The water has been at work forever, exposing layers of colorful rock. It's straight out of an overwrought, sun-dappled Albert Bierstadt Western painting.

Just after topping McClure Pass, I pull into a turnout to admire the vast view beyond the perilous, unguarded drop-off. There's a small cross-stick in the ground. Nailed to it is the faded red cap of trucker Bill Moon, of

Hendrick, Colorado, who the turns and goes up perhaps in a pick-up, his pipes are far below the trees. It doesn't bear the isn't another car, not a much less a town, for two hunchhikers combat Grand Junction, which is 75 miles away. This I pick them up. Their vision, and they're going to check out a meek

Am I imagining it or do all Colorado drivers strictly adhere to posed speed limits? For three days now, I've been behind drivers doing exactly 20, 35, 40... whatever the sign says. "Oh, that's absolutely true," Fairs says. "We're just not in that much of a hurry. Myself, I don't have anything to hurry for. But the out-of-staters—in my God, they're crazy. They pass over the double line, they pass in corners, they're just blow by you no matter what you're doing."

I cut a peak at the Michigan glass on the Audi parked out front, next to the Hinsdale County sheriff's SUV cruiser, in fact. I'm doing the car guy's version of flashing her fairs—open the hood, show your tabs, and everybody goes, "Whoa!"—when the sheriff walks up. "So this is the car I've been hearing about on the radio," he says, and I don't think he means NPR. His squint slowly turns into a smile, yet I'm not altogether sure he's kidding. After all, I did touch an indicated 160 yesterday on a straight, empty stretch south of Montrose. "Back behind the wheel, I decide that Highway 149, the two-lane that runs southeast from Lake City, needs to go on everybody's master list of Ultimate Driving Roads—a category comprising scenery, lack of traffic, and endlessly challenging sweeps, bends, and corners. Car and driver both passing from the exertion of leaving done the route, we come to Creede, where a dozen Shelby Cobras—a car-club run of some sort—short and below their way past me onto Highway 149 back toward Lake City.

Drive-in movies used to be places to neck—a word as archaic as that pursuit's inevitable by-product, hickies. In Monte Vista, Colorado, the ultimate realization of this activity is the Best Western Movie Manor Motor Inn, where you don't have to use the backseat because you're already at

the motel room, watching the movie out the window. *Lois Cruff Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life* and *Jasper Coopers 2* were showing on its two big outdoor screens. Sometimes, constant down-town.

Telluride to Alamosa

My map shows a county road south of Ouray—County 18, the "Alpine Loop Back Country Byway"—to Lake City—and it will cut almost 100 miles from the normal route. The

Audi has its trademark quattro all-wheel drive, and how bad can a backcountry byway be? Way bad. County 18 turns out to be a rocky, muddy three-foot-wide track, not a road. It disappears up into the forest at about a 45-degree angle. Several leather-clad riders on motocross bikes and battered ATVs wait at the bottom to assault it, but this one's too tough even for Walter Rohlf. I get my off-stading chance soon enough. The little sign on U.S. 50, a couple of hours east, says LAKE CITY CUTOFF, another dirt-road shortcut, this one at least suitable for ranchers' pickups. I wonder whether the Audi is the only \$85,000 German sedan to have ever left its tire tracks upon Gunnison County 25. Lake City is famous for one

thing: the Colorado Cannibal, Alfred Packer, who was tried and convicted for murder here. (He'd been circumvented but took the name Alfred, which is how it was spelled in the tattoo he wore on his arm. My guess is that the tattooist couldn't spell, thus the name change.) Packer had been one of a group of six prospectors who in 1874 got lost for three months during a winter expedition into the San Juan Mountains. Packer alone survived, and he returned to civilization so pesty that it quickly became obvious from whence his frozen dinners had come.

Rene Fairs is the talkative docent at the little Hinsdale County Museum, where several Colorado Cannibal artifacts are on display. It's my chance to ask a question that has nothing to do with Alfred Packer. Am I imagining it or do all Colorado drivers strictly adhere to posed speed limits? For three days now, I've been behind drivers doing exactly 20, 35, 40... whatever the sign says. "Oh, that's absolutely true," Fairs says. "We're just not in that much of a hurry. Myself, I don't have anything to hurry for. But the out-of-staters—in my God, they're crazy. They pass over the double line, they pass in corners, they're just blow by you no matter what you're doing."

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Alamosa to Bishop Castle

The Great Sand Dunes National Monument, northeast of Alamosa, is a slice of Saudi Arabia in the middle of the huge San Luis Valley, its dunes so large—they rise 700 feet above the desert floor—that you only begin to grasp their size when you see from a distance the tiny dot of a parked car against them. They are sand glaciers, and it's not just any sand. These crystals of silicon flew here, entirely on the wind, fine and sharp and almost dustlike.

Unlike most of our regimented parks, Great Sand Dunes is free of go-beyond-it-walk-here-stay-off signs. The hardy can climb to the top of the drifts if they wish. The spoor of mule deer and coyote are interspersed with the mark of Nike: the park ranger at the gate tells me people arrive at the dunes "with sleds, garage-sale skis, snowboards.... There's a game that comes down every year from Boulder before they get snow there. The Moon Dune Loonies, they call themselves. They come on a full-moon night and ski down the dunes. In costume."

U.S. 160 takes me to I-25 northbound, back to Denver, but there remains one last sight to sample: Bishop Castle, 24 miles west of the interstate on Colorado 165. It is one of the most wonderfully eccentric accomplishments you'll ever see: a free-form assemblage of stone spires, buttresses, towers, a stainless-steel dragon of a chimney, great halls, and cubbyholes, all laced by wily catwalks, spiral stairways, scaffolding, and steep ladders. The claim is that it's the largest single artifact of any sort made by an individual, certainly in the United States and probably in the world. Jim Bishop was been building it, solo, stone by stone, to a height of more than 160 feet, since 1969. In the process, he has become a curmudgeonly libertarian-cum-anarchist. Scattered about the grounds are angry rams, hand-painted on big yellow panels, against cops, judges, lawyers, bureaucrats, politicians, freeloaders, the IRS, motor-vehicle bureaus, and the taxpayers who support them. You're welcome to roam the property, climb the ladders, leave a donation, and revile the government that wants to charge him for the stones, since they come from the surrounding San Isabel National Forest.

Obsession or accomplishment, idiosyncrasy or artistry, it doesn't matter. The world needs a few Jim Bishops. But just a few. □

ILLINOIS SUMMER GETAWAY GUIDE
3-DAY GETAWAYS AS LOW AS \$132*



1 CULTURAL CHICAGO
Chicago (City)

In summer, Chicago's cultural scene really heats up. Take a tour of our famed cityscape with the Chicago Architecture Foundation. Get an up-close look at the masterpieces of Mies and more at the world-renowned Art Institute. Stroll the 25 acres of Millennium Park, Chicago's stunning showcase for the arts. Squeeze in shopping on State Street or Michigan Avenue. Catch a play in the Loop Theater District or laugh at The Second City.

2 BIG CITY FUN
Chicago (City)

There's no better season than summer for families to visit Chicago. At Navy Pier you can take a spin on the Ferris wheel, kid around in the Chicago Children's Museum, and hop aboard a boat cruise. Take time to talk to the animals at the Free Lincoln Park Zoo. Ride the Chicago Trolley to the Museum Campus and explore The Field Museum, Shedd Aquarium, and Adler Planetarium. Get a great view of it all from the 94th-floor Hancock Observatory.

3 FAMILY FUN
Chicago (City)

Head to Chicago's hubs of family fun. At the Schomburg, kids really games, will leads for the 300 Center. Experience Raper Settlement, DuPage Children's habitats at the



7 SMALL-TOWN SWEETHEARTS
Galena

Fall in love again in Galena. Stay in a cozy bed and breakfast or the luxurious Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa. Shop charming Main Street and learn about the town's fascinating history on a Galena Trolley Tour. Sample the vintage of Galena Cellars and Massbach Ridge wineries. Scoop up for an old-fashioned steeplechase ride from Stage Coach Trails Livery. Catch the sunset as you soak in a hot-air balloon with Galena On The Fly.

8 OUTDOOR ADVENTURES
Utica

Illinois is all about the great outdoors. Jump head-first into adventure with Skyline Chicago. Hike through 2,600 acres of thick forests holding lush canyons and sparkling waterfalls at Starved Rock State Park in Utica. Ride the white water with Verwillow River Rafting. Rent a speedboat from Starved Rock Adventures or saddle up at Starved Rock Stables. Then make a splash in the new water park at Grizzly Jack's Grand Bear Lodge.

9 BIKING
Quincy

The Quad Cities of River Trail, a 62-mile Mississippi River Trail. Arsonal hills that pass several Arsonal Museum, and other beers in American Discovery Island County.



13 LIVING HISTORY
Cahokia/Prairie du Rocher/Ella Grove

From French Colonial sites to battle-tested forts, experience the remarkable history that has shaped Southwest Illinois. Explore the Cahokia Courthouse, an excellent example of pioneer French architecture. Tour Fort de Chartres in Prairie du Rocher, a former French military stronghold that's now a museum. Drive scenic Maff Road to Ella Grove and wander the remains of Fort Kaskaskia, built to ward off the British during the American Revolution.

14 GO FORE IT
Marion

Southern Illinois's great golf courses are open all year round. Shaw Creek Golf Club and Resort in Makanda has one of the most scenic courses in the region, set in a dense forest and featuring 11 rustic cabins. Kaskaskia Golf Club in Marion was named one of "America's 100 Best Courses for \$100 or Less" by Travel + Leisure magazine. Sandhill Golf Club in Vienna features a par 71 course that snakes through rolling meadows and woodlands.

15 HITS
Carlinville

Stop on your bike. The 45-mile Tamm operated railroad National Forest in Adams County, the heart of the Bicycling Capital of Illinois. A 2.5-mile spur in Karnak leads to the Cache River State Natural Area and a magnificent cypress-tupelo swamp. The scenic River-to-River Trail is a must-ride that connects the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.



4 ROMANTIC RENDEZVOUS
Elgin/Galena/St. Charles

Get ready for a weekend of romance while antiquing in St. Charles and Geneva, sampling wine at Lyndell Winery, and cuddling on a pub/restaurant boat cruise on the Fox River. Stroll arm-in-arm through a scenic Japanese garden on the Fabray Estate, then explore historic Elgin. Get pampered at the Pheasant Run Resort & Spa. Have dinner at Aurora at Walter Payton's Roundhouse, then catch a show at the Art Deco Paramount Theatre.

5 FAMILY FROLICS
Geneva

Get ready for sunstop family fun in Chicago's northern suburb. Ride a wild roller coaster at Six Flags Great Escape. Cool off next door at Six Flags Hurricane Harbor, a massive new water park with 25 water slides and a gigantic wave pool. Power shop at nearby Geneva Mills, home to more than 200 stores, a movie theater, and an ice rink. Take a nature walk at the Chicago Botanic Garden, then play at the Ruhl Children's Museum.

6 GET IN THE GAME
Galena/Rockford/Troyport

Northern Illinois is home to some of the finest golf courses in the Midwest. Get getting on one of the four courses at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa in Galena, ranked one of the best golf resorts in America by Golf Digest. Black Hawk Run Golf Club in Stockton offers beautiful wide-open fairways. Golf Digest's best mid-sized golf city in the U.S., Rockford, is home to the Adress Golf Club & Practice Centre, featuring a challenging Reput-designed course.



10 TIME TRAVEL
Quincy/Nauvoo

Follow the Mighty Mississippi along the Great River Road and travel back in time to the historic towns of Nauvoo and Quincy. Rich in Mormon history, Nauvoo is home to the fascinating Joseph Smith Historic Site (where dozens of landmarks include the Brigham Young Temple) and the stunning Nauvoo Temple. Quincy boasts the architecturally important East End Historic District and the Quincy Art Center, showcasing Midwestern artworks.

11 PLAY IN PEORIA
Peoria

Families enjoy all-American fun in Peoria. Take in an old-fashioned baseball game played by the Peoria Chiefs at O'Brien Field. Check out the science exhibits and planetarium at the Lakeview Museum. Spend the night in a renovated cabin and wake up early with the animals at Wildlife Prairie State Park. Head for the action on the Riverfront, a complex of shops and restaurants right on the water. Cruise the Illinois River on the Spirit of Peoria.

12 THE GREAT OUTDOORS
Alton

Start your outdoor adventure in Alton with a ride along the Mississippi River on the 29-mile Sam Kadakabone Bike Trail. Explore the miles of trails in the 8,000-acre Pere Marquette State Park, Illinois's largest state park. Splash the day away at Raging Rivers Waterpark or paddle the Illinois River with a rental from Grafton Canoe & Kayak. Learn about the fossil exploration that changed America at the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Hartford.



16 SHAWNEE ROMANCE
Carbondale/Nehalem

Find romance in the rolling hills of the Shawnee National Forest. Wine lovers can sample their way along the 25-mile Shawnee Hills Wine Trail. Saddle up at Avonlea Acres Stables for a guided horseback tour along the equestrian trails that loop through the Shawnee Forest. Make tracks among the towering sandstone cliffs of Giant City State Park. Spend the night in a secluded bed and breakfast that caters to couples seeking the perfect getaway.

17 LINCOLN LORE
Springfield

Learn about the life of one of the most popular presidents in U.S. history at the recently opened Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. With dazzling special effects and rare Lincoln artifacts, the museum is a must-see. Then visit the many historic Lincoln sites around town, including the Lincoln Home, Old State Capitol, and Lincoln's Tomb. Be sure to make a side trip to Lincoln's New Salem, a re-created 1830s village.

18 AMISH COUNTRY
Decatur/Lake Shelbyville/Chambers

Discover a simpler way of life in Central Illinois's Amish country. Learn about the 9th Order Amish at the Illinois Amish Interpretive Center in Arcola. Pick up a map at the Amish Amish Country Visitor Center for a guide to Amish farm-based shops selling quilts and handcrafted furniture. View acres of lovely flower and rock gardens at Backwood Gardens. Boat, fish, and relax at nearby Lake Shelbyville, one of Illinois's largest lakes.

*Rate includes two nights' accommodations and one attraction for two people. Prices are subject to change without notice, and all reservations are based on availability. Price of attractions will vary. Package price does not include tax.

42 LEISURE Travel**Fall foliage: Com**

New England hasn't cornered the market on autumnal beauty. Almost anywhere in America, gorgeous foliage is just a day's drive away.

The modern California gold rush

Prospectors used to come to north-central California to pan for gold, said Peter Fish and Sara Schneider in *Summer*. Now travelers visit every fall to see the trees turn golden. The classic drive through gold country runs along Highway 49 from Placerville in the north to Angels Camp in the south. From the road, El Dorado, Amador, and Calaveras counties form an "autumn quilt of greens and golds and ambers under a blue, blue sky." Wander off the main drag to Fair Play, Mount Aukum, and Vallecito in search of more stunning views. "This rambling is annoying when you want to get someplace on time. But it is also wonderful." You're never quite sure where you are as you meander down roads that "twist, dip, and turn," but there are exquisite surprises around every bend. Since vineyards in the Sierra foothills specialize in white and red Zinfandel, break up the drive by visiting a couple of family-owned wineries, notably the Boeger Winery in Placerville. *Contact: Calgold.org*

Missouri's ancient Ozark Trail

The Appalachian Trail may get more press, but the Ozark Trail wins for sheer age, said Cheryl Wittenauer in the *Associated Press*. While the dolomite rock of Appalachia dates back about 400 million years, the rhyolite rock of the Ozarks is 1.5 billion years old. The 350-mile stretch of the trail that passes through Missouri looks beautiful all year round—but especially in October. "It's very secluded, a true

wilderness experience, with meadows and creek bottoms," said Whitaker of Gateway Off-Road. "With fall colors, the vistas are more extraordinary." The trail has 13 sections, each about 20 miles long. Hikers can walk the trail, but bicyclists and e-bikers ride only in nonwilderness areas. A section based on what you like: Besides the ubiquitous fall day hike, try the loop trail at Mountain State Park. That park boasts Missouri's highest peak, Sauk Mountain, and the state's tallest waterfall (Minasauk Falls). And a bluff overlook and eagle view from Eleven Point section. *Contact: Ozarktrail.com*

A bird's-eye view of Pen

Why drive through forests to see autumnal glory when you can see it all? said Bob Batz Jr. in the *Post-Gazette*. Western Pennsylvania "morphing from mostly greens and oranges and reds," and so much more from a plane hot-air balloon. Hire a pilot in Clarion. Fifteen- to 20-minute flights cost \$25 for an adult and \$23 for a child. A 30-minute flight costs \$125. If choppers are more your style, hire one from Cherokee Helicopters. A 90-minute spin costs five of \$1,800. Most of Cherokee's flights are around Pittsburgh, but passengers will be taken to the leaves in relaxed aerial observation air balloons. The Davies operation called WindsAloft. "The County family offers wonderful

Travel **LEISURE 43**
a mountain or a town near you

low hour-long flights over the mountains, which shine now." The experience costs \$175 per adult and \$75 per child. That includes a champagne toast upon landing—for adults, of course.

Contacts: Clarionpa.com/alf; Cherokeehelicopter.com/tours.html; WindsAloftballooning.com

Autumn in New York City

Manhattan might be the last place you'd expect to find fall foliage, said Steve Grant in *The Hartford Courant*. That's why Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux created an outpost of nature in the heart of the city about 150 years ago—Central Park. Woods cover 136 of the park's 843 acres. When fall arrives, the contrast between urban gray and natural color arrests the eye. "You won't find an entire mountainside ablaze in yellow, orange, and red, as in Vermont; in Central Park it is as if each tree, or each cluster of trees, has its day." Those trees start to turn color in early September, and the changes continue until November. The elms may turn first, their pointed leaves verging into gold before slipping to the ground. The best place to watch this annual spectacle is the large stand of elms near the 72nd St. entrance to the park. The maples might flame up red in October, while a nearby clutch of oaks stays green. Oaks and beeches tend to wait the longest to let go of their leaves. But turn and let go they do. Even in New York, "trees will be trees." *Contact: Centralparknyc.org*

New England's 'corridor of color'

New England owns fall foliage, said Marshall S. Berdan in *Newsday*. Unlike



Central Park: Even in New York, there's a fall spectacle.

any other part of the country, this region's superabundance of birches, beeches, and sugar maples guarantees an annual Technicolor extravaganza. The best place to see this natural wonder is the 300-mile stretch of Route 7 that runs from Norwalk, Conn., to the Vermont-Canadian border. Since Route 7 rises from sea level to 1,500 feet in Vermont, "this means that anytime—repeat anytime—between late September and late October, several places along its perpendicular pathway are experiencing peak colors." Just north of New Milford, Conn., the two-lane road runs

alongside the Housatonic, a "surprisingly scenic whitewater river." As you climb into Massachusetts, you pass through the quintessential New England village of Stockbridge. The "world-class" colors continue into Vermont, when you enter the Green Mountain National Forest. After you leave Old Bennington, take historic Route 7A and not the modern highway that veers off to the east. Once you pass Brandon and drop down into Lake Champlain Valley, you've reached the end of New England's "corridor of color." *Contact: Massvacation.com*

Leaf-peeping goes high-tech

A \$300 purchase ensures you will never miss a fall foliage peak again, said Eric Gwinn in the *Chicago Tribune*. That's the price of an excellent dashboard-mounted GPS device, such as the Garmin StreetPilot i3 (right). GPS stands for global positioning system. A GPS unit "will figure out where in the world it is by connecting to three of the 27 GPS satellites orbiting Earth." The satellites can't find peak color, but you can use them to get there. Start the search on the Internet. Visit the USDA Forest Service's fall foliage Web site at FS.fed.us/news/fall-colors. The site points you to the most colorful forest near you and links to state-specific sites for up-to-the-minute data. Now the dashboard-mounted GPS comes in. Use the information from the Web to plug a destination into your unit; a rest stop or a

scenic overlook will do. Then the device will provide turn-by-turn directions to fall foliage central.

You don't need satellite technology to find local color, said Janet K. Keeler in the *St. Petersburg, Fla., Times*, but you do need the Web. Folagenetwork.com ranks as the best one-stop destination for "leaf peepers." Its reports include the Northeast, the Southeast, and the Midwest. Vermont deserves its own page because thousands flock to the tree-lined roads of the Northeast Kingdom just for the leaves. Check out Foliage-vermont.com for the latest updates. Since the Blue Ridge Parkway seems "tailor-made for color-admiring road trips," log onto Virginia.org/fall for suggested itineraries.



Trees in Georgia's state parks keep their color until Thanksgiving. Find out when and where to go at Gastateparks.org. Finally, go to Travelwisconsin.com and click on the Fall tab for a leaf color report and suggestions for hiking, biking, and driving.

THE WEEK October 13, 2006

**Corner Office**

Western Pennsylvania: Balloon, helicopter, and plane tours are available.

THE WEEK October 13, 2006

30. Recruit outside events

One of the best ways to increase tourism is to recruit events into your gathering places:

Clubs:

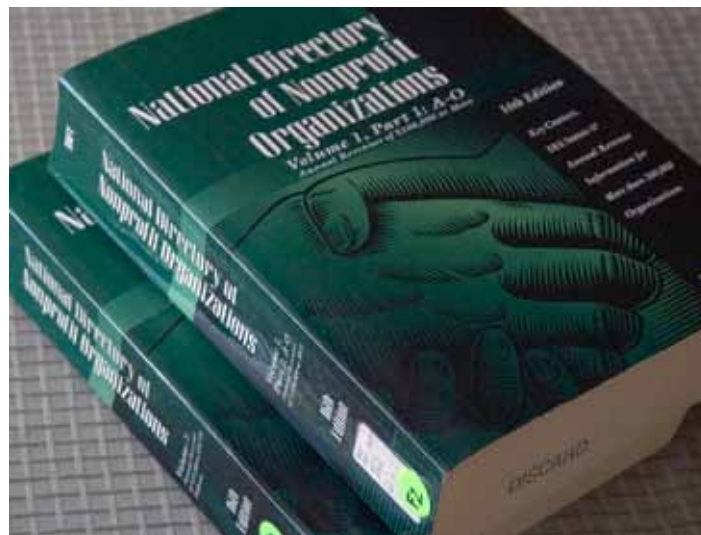
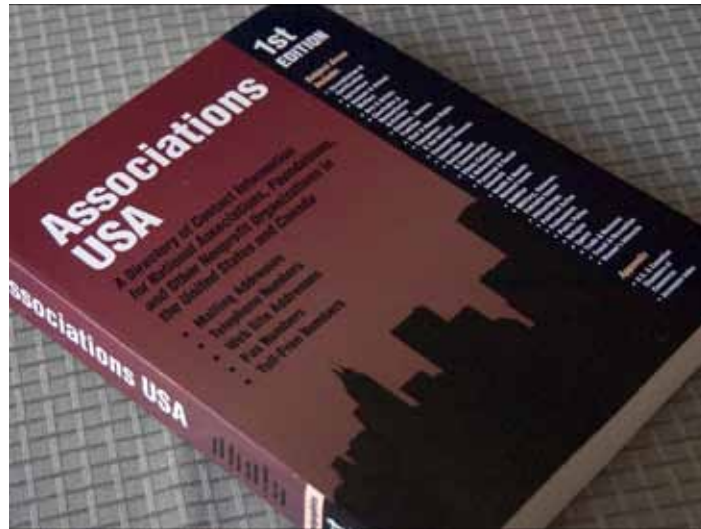
- Classic cars and hot rods
- Motorcycle (HOGs, Gold Wing)
- Biking
- Moutaineering
- Photography
- Genealogy
- Art guilds and organizations
- Quilting

Create a database of organizations (see guides, right) and send them letters asking them to hold one of their events in your area. Offer to close off streets, assist in marketing the event locally, and let them know you'll assist with logistics.

Work with hoteliers to offer them club discounts and special deals at local restaurants. They do the work, you provide the location and logistics.

This will fill hotel rooms (most of these are multi-day events), and will make your community a hub of activity.

Attract organizations in Buffalo, and perhaps Rochester and then within the Allegany, Chautauqua, and Cattaraugus Counties.



Solvang, CA



Solvang, CA

In Solvang, California, they invited car clubs into their town. The First Annual Wheels and Windmills car show (two right photos) brought in more than 10,000 visitors, over three days. The car club did all the work. The local Chamber of Commerce simply invited them and helped close off three blocks of the street. The show was so successful that club organizers have now booked the same weekend in Solvang for the next ten years.



Car clubs are always looking for driving itineraries and will print and promote them in national, regional, and local club newsletters. As you develop specific itineraries, send them to clubs and organizations in the region. It's a great way to get free publicity - while increasing your overnight stays in the area. This is a perfect partnership opportunity for your casino.

31. Make the internet your top priority

The most important marketing tool you have is the Internet. A full 94% of web-enabled people use the Internet as their primary travel planning resource. In fact, it is the second most popular reason for use of the Internet. Yet 70% of all people planning a trip are frustrated by their online experience. The reasons:

- Destinations are promoting geography (mountains, rivers, scenic vistas), yet visitors are looking for activities (hiking, sightseeing, skiing). Geography should ALWAYS be second to the experience – activities.



- Travelers are looking for specifics, not generalities, yet few travel websites provide itineraries or specifics in terms of recommendations, maps, and detailed information
- Travelers are frustrated by home pages with too many links (30+), making it nearly impossible to navigate the site
- If potential visitors are not “sold” on the home page, nearly half move on to other destinations. This is why the home page has to focus on the biggest, best, and most unique. And if it is difficult for the visitor to find the information they want, they'll just look for a different destination.

Tip #1: Purchase keywords on Google and Yahoo! They offer pay per click programs, where you choose the keywords, and your website shows up on the first page of search results. You pay each time a visitor uses that link to reach your website, and the fee depends on the “demand” of the particular

keyword you have chosen. If your website already shows up on the first page of search results, it isn't necessary to purchase those keywords. Using a combination of keyword purchases and search engine optimization is a good strategy.

Tip #2: Organize the website around “Pick Your Season” and “Pick Your Passion.”

Try six seasons:

- Dec/Jan: The Holidays
- Feb/Mar: Winter Romance
- Apr/May: Spring Fling
- Jun/Jul: Summer Solstice
- Aug/Sept: Late Summer
- Oct/Nov: Fall Color

The next page should include weather (what to expect; what to wear); why this is a good season to visit. Make sure to include a great photograph.

Pick your passion should include activities available that time of year. Some ideas:

- Sports and recreation
- The environment
- History and culture
- Arts and entertainment
- Shopping and Dining
- Hunting and fishing
- Off the beaten path (Hidden Gems)
- Kids and family
- Potpourri
- Events
- By mode of travel (RV, auto, motorcycle, bicycle, tour bus)



Tip #3: Develop an E-newsletter

Develop an E-newsletter to create top of mind awareness. The newsletter should be sent out monthly to visitors and people who have requested information about the area. Be sure to include an opt-out feature, so people know they can unsubscribe at any time. Include a newsletter sign-up opportunity on your website.

An E-newsletter is an excellent way to provide news, updates, new opportunities, and calendars of events. Be sure the newsletters include information that visitors would really find of interest – not just another sales pitch. Keep it short and to the point. Include links embedded in the newsletter to the visitor website. Also include other contact information – phone numbers and addresses. Include descriptive visitor experiences and add testimonials to the content. Utilize a database management tool for ease, such as Constant Contact.

Tip #4: Include your printed marketing materials on the website,

both for viewing online and for downloading to print. People like the convenience of being able to print the materials from home immediately, rather than waiting to have them mailed. It also reduces your mailing costs.



Tip #5: Use Social Media

Social media is the best form of brand building online. Utilize video clips, YouTube videos, and “Twitter.” Videos, especially user contributions, serve as third party endorsements that are powerful and effective at brand building. Post two to three minute video clips on YouTube with a link to your website.

What to do and what to spend

It takes a team to develop an effective tourism website. We like to think of the design and construction of a website much like the design and construction of a home. You need:

The architect – Knows tourism and how to “close the sale,” builds the site map, how the information flows and decides what content should be included.

The engineer – Builds the backbone of the site, chooses the right software and writes the code. Assures compatibility.

The interior designer – Authors the site; makes the site visually pleasing, and cohesive with the brand and graphic identity.

The inspector - Assures that everything works properly.

The builder and maintenance crew – Add new content, and update/refresh older content.

How much does it cost?

1. Developing the site - between \$35,000 and \$50,000 for an effective site.

2. Ongoing costs:

- Hosting the site \$120 year
- Hosting domain names \$40 year
- Constant Contact (E-newsletter) \$100 year
- New copy and updates \$500 month
- Google keywords \$100 month
- Yahoo! keywords \$100 month
- Manage keywords and search optimization \$500 month
- E-newsletter writing and graphics \$500 month

Total

\$21,000 year

32. Start with an Action Plan

Consider creating a detailed “Community Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan” which would build on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and community input to develop a unique brand and implementation program.

The next steps in the planning process would be interviewing local stakeholders, providing public outreach, and reviewing past and current planning efforts. This will determine where you want to go as a community.

The third step involves research, feasibility and market analysis, and determining your brand - what you are or what you hope to be known for.

Then comes the “development” portion of the plan or the “how to get there” program: determining what product development initiatives need to be undertaken to reinforce and grow the brand. This also includes defining the roles of the various local organizations. Brand-building takes a village - everyone pulling in the same direction, each with its own “to do list.”

Finally, there’s the detailed marketing plan: how and when you will tell the world who you are and what makes you special: the place to live, work and play.

This Branding, Development & Marketing Plan should be an “action plan” as opposed to a “strategic plan.” You want a “to do” list by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

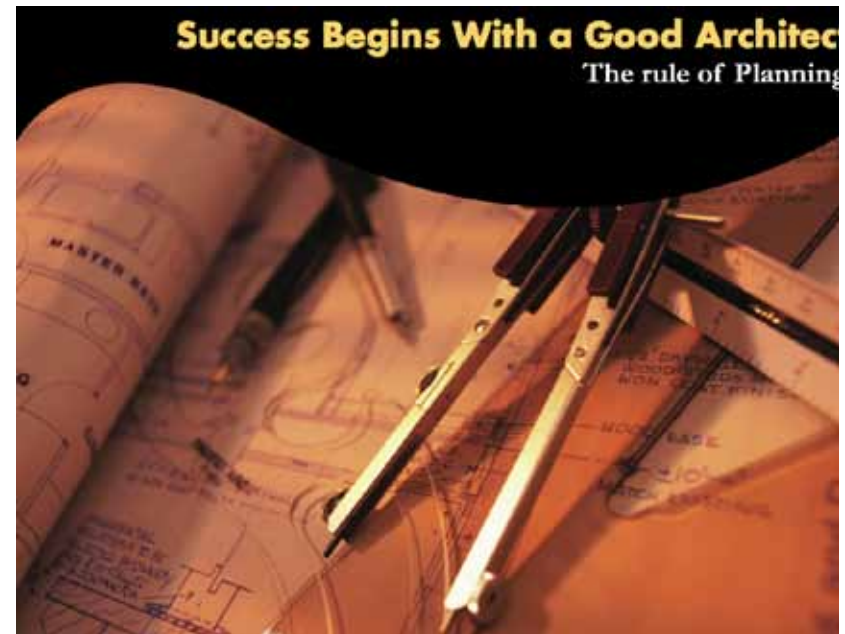
For every recommendation the following elements should be detailed:

1. A brief description of the recommendation
2. Who would be charged with implementation
3. When it would be implemented
4. How much it will cost
5. Where the money will come from
6. The rationale for making the recommendation

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

“I can’t give you a surefire formula for success, but I can give you a formula for failure - try to please everybody all the time.” -Herbert Bayard Swope, first recipient of the Pulitzer Prize.

“Many a false step was made by standing still.” - Fortune Cookie



**Create a Seneca Nation
Branding, Development &
Marketing Action Plan**

- Brands and sub-brands
- Product development
- Dovetail with downtown, city, economic development efforts
- The roles defined
- Marketing: advertising, public relations, internet specifics
- The brand graphics package & Style Guide
- Detailed budgets
- Capital projects identified
- Cross-participation defined



33. Develop a permanent home for an ongoing public market.

Farmers markets have been growing in popularity over the past 15 years, as more and more consumers discover the variety, freshness, and fun shopping they offer. The trend will continue to grow with the added incentives of consumers wanting to shop for locally grown and/or organic produce. The open-air market shopping experience with the opportunity to meet and interact with farmers and craftspeople adds to the appeal. Organizations involved in community revitalization have become increasingly aware that healthy communities need vibrant public spaces. Outdoor public markets, in particular, are active places and encourage people to leave their cars and use the public space where the market is located.

Public markets produce many economic benefits that percolate throughout an entire community. They can have a catalytic effect on the neighborhoods around them. Because so many people are attracted to markets, surrounding businesses can benefit from the markets' drawing power. The open-air market can be a primary attraction to lure travelers from the highways and into town. Provide public restroom facilities and visitor information.

Have the focus for the market vendors be on Native American art, food, crafts, plus invite non-natives to participate. Add music, prepared food, and entertainment. Partner with the folks in Salamanca. This can provide a primary draw to attract visitors, with shopping, a place to rest or eat, entertainment and activities - all in an attractive setting.

Remember that history isn't a point in time. Today is the day you can start creating new history for the great Seneca Nation.



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