

ASSESSMENT AND SUGGESTIONS

Note:

More examples of trompe l'oeil facades. Note the Winslow Arizona wall - even the windows and reflections are painted, reflecting the popular Eagle's song with the words "...sitting on a corner in Winslow, Arizona such a fine site to see. It's a girl, my Lord, in a flatbed Ford, slowing down to look at me." The story is told in the trompe l'oeil mural, which is visited by nearly 1.5 million visitors a year.

In Virginia City, Nevada (top, right), the concrete block wall does not fit the gold rush ambiance, and so trompe l'oeil takes the building back to the mid 1860s. Even the railing is painted on.

In Hunstville, Texas (bottom, left), trompe l'oeil is used to depict the cities rich history by incorporating it into the architecture.



ASSESSMENT AND SUGGESTIONS

Note:

Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump is a perfect example of how stories fascinate people. The Interpretive Center does an amazing job of telling the story and evoking emotion. Visitors become completely caught up in the story. It is a wonderful experience and very well executed.



Critical Mass is Not Just a Religious Experience (The “Mall Mentality” Rule)

Suggestion:

The number one diversion of visitors anywhere in the world is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This is also where most visitor spending takes place. To attract visitors and keep them longer, a downtown needs to have the critical mass. Within a two-to-three lineal block downtown area, there should be, at minimum:

- Ten destination retail shops (not neighborhood retail) This would include antiques, home accents, floral shops, gifts, galleries, clothing and logo gear, visitor information, outfitters, book stores, crafts, and other specialty shops.
- Ten dining/treats shops. This would include ice creams, soda fountain, wine shop, bistros, cafes, sit down dining, coffee shops, bakeries, etc.
- Ten places open after 6:00 p.m. Entertainment is preferable. Movies, theater, shops, markets open after 6:00 p.m., along with restaurants and clubs.



ASSESSMENT AND SUGGESTIONS

Case History: (Ashland, Oregon)

Ashland, Oregon was a dying timber town with nothing much to offer visitors when they held their first Shakespeare Festival. The first one lasted only one weekend, but it grew from there. After many years and lots of hard work, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival is one of the greatest small-town branding success stories ever.

Ashland now boasts seven theaters which operate nine months of the year, six days a week, and 460,000 annual visitors, whose average length of stay is four nights.

Ashland has many diversions, including golf, downhill skiing, local events, their park, mountain biking and hiking, shopping, dining, historical walks. But by focusing on one attraction - the Shakespeare Festival - they have become an outstanding success, helping all the merchants in town to be successful too.



In a Nutshell

Suggestion:

- Have a Brand Development Action Plan created so you have a road map to becoming the destination.
- Recruit a top-notch boutique hotel downtown.
- Once you have your brand, recruit the businesses downtown that will reinforce it and will make downtown a rue destination.
- Create plaza areas, add benches and beautification. Plant shade trees, flowers, etc. Make downtown stunning.

Marketing Assessment

Suggestion:

A huge area is covered in the Trail of the Great Bear, and the focus is on outdoor recreation, wildlife, and scenic vistas.

This is important in keeping the Rocky Mountains the “premier” North American mountain range.

Work is in progress on making specific routes, and in identifying specific regions along the way so that visitors can get more information.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT

Suggestion:

The Cowboy Trail is a great guide for the western ranch experience.

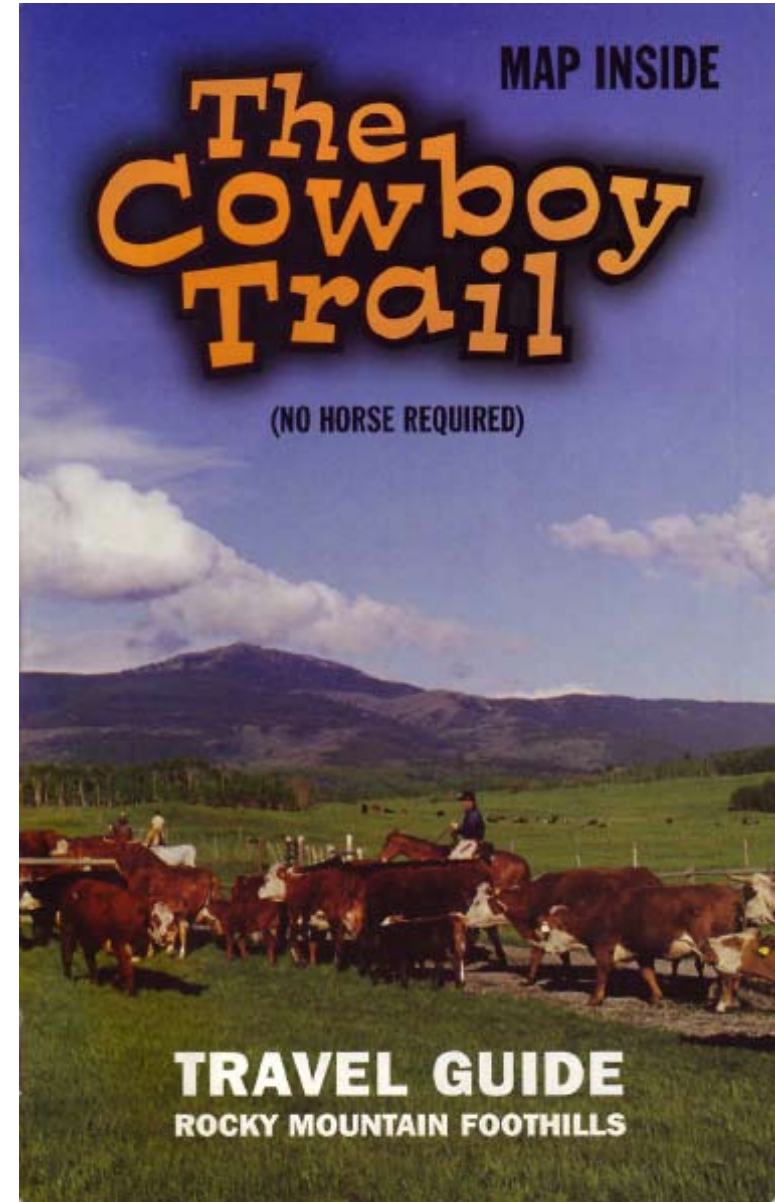
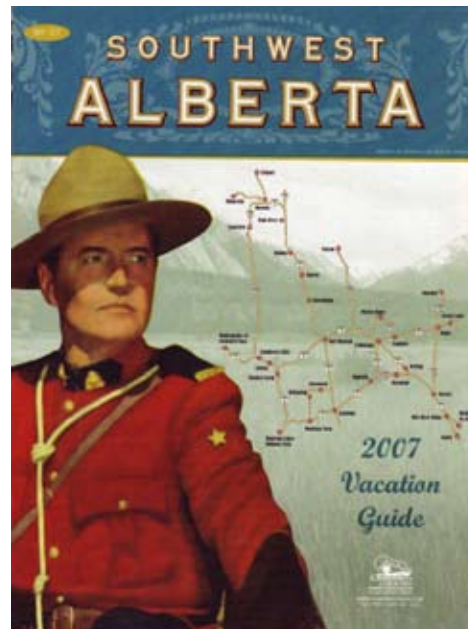
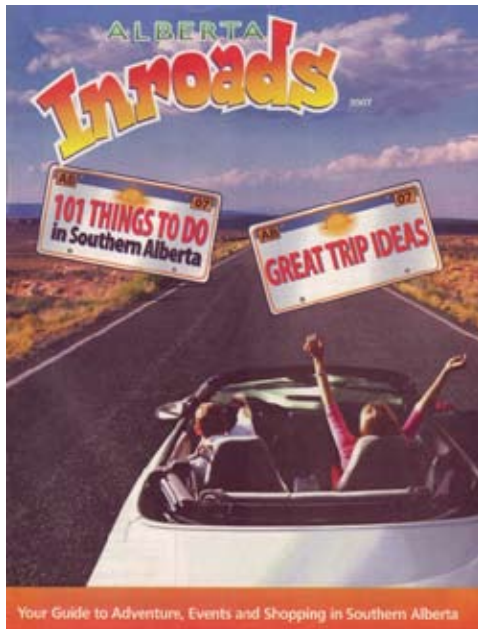
It's focus:

- Ranch vacations
- Wildlife viewing
- The porcupine hills area

Fort Macleod would be a terrific day trip for those vacationing along the Cowboy Trail.

Southwest Alberta 2007 Vacation Guide is about cities. If you are going to a certain city, this is a great resource. What is Chinook Country? And could you combine Southwest Alberta with Alberta Southwest? All the layers and geography designations make it confusing and more difficult to plan a trip to the region.

Alberta Inroads is a great idea. It revolves around activities - things to do, not just places to see. Suggest organizing it as a tour - by experience, then location. Develop itineraries by type of activity.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT

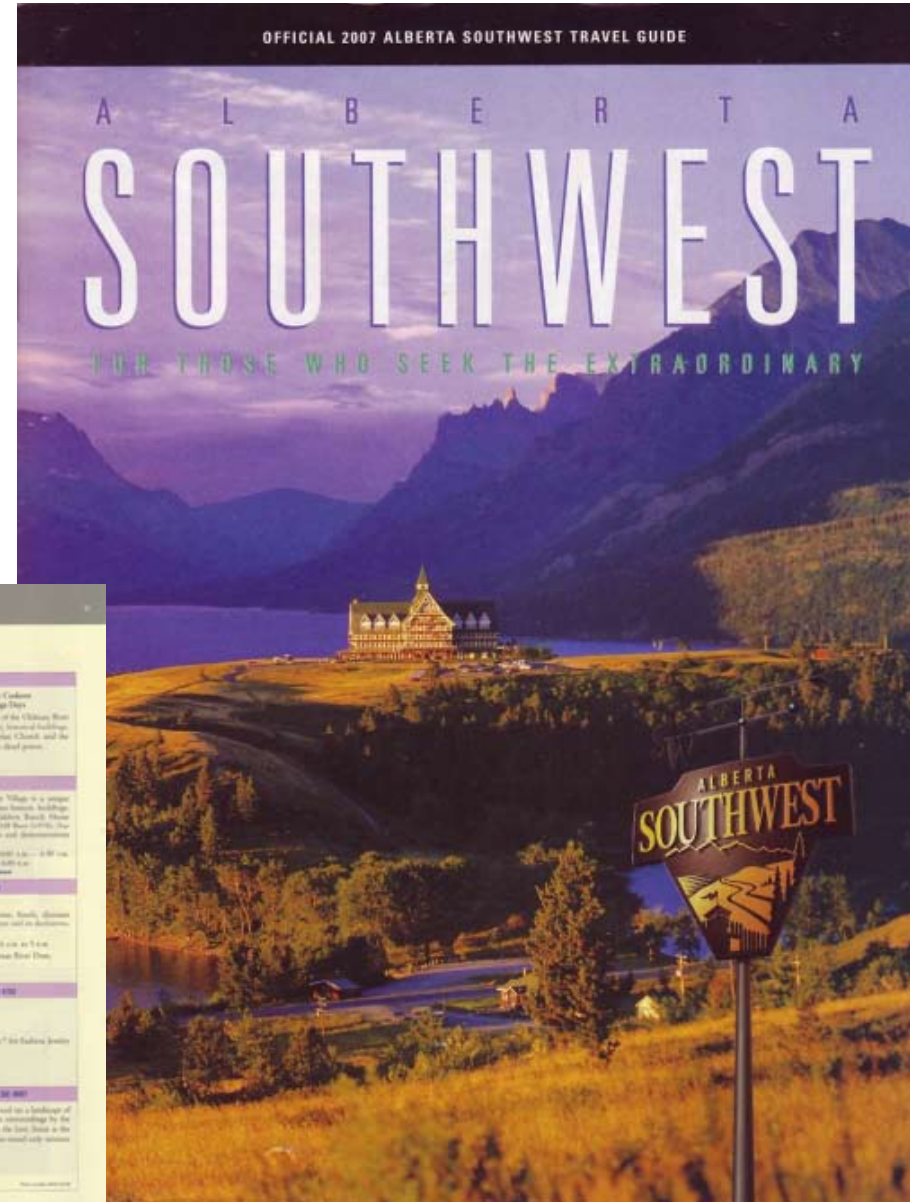
Suggestion:

This piece is the class act of all the guides to Southwest Alberta. Instead of advertisers, there are “partners,” which make the publication much easier to use and reader-friendly. It has:

- Stunning photography
- Great maps
- Excellent teasers
- Partners instead of advertisers

Suggest changing the focus to “pick your season, then pick your passion.”

Create routes by type of experience and type of travel - create detailed itineraries, highlighting specific sites to see and things to do.



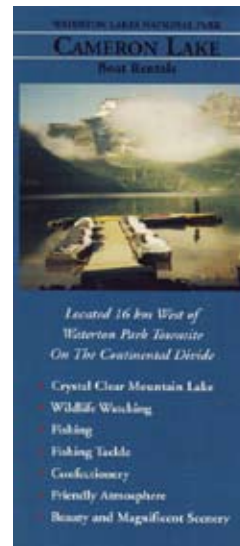
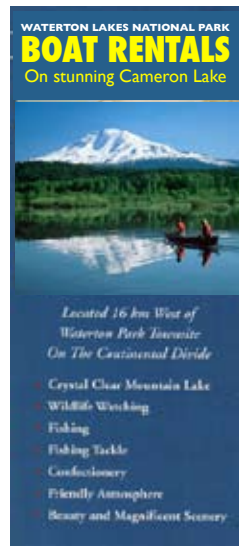
Don't Let Your Last Opportunity Become a Lost Opportunity

(The Rule of Closing the Sale)

Suggestion:

Always sell experiences, not places. Tell me what you have or who you are, tell me why I should visit you.

The top three inches of your brochure are critical. Use yellows on a dark background to stand out in a brochure rack. We took two rack cards (below) and in a few minutes transposed yellow block lettering, selling the experience, over a darker background. Which set of brochures would grab your attention? In the case of the boat rentals, rather than show just a dock, always show people enjoying the activity.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT

Suggestion:

Sell the experience. Here are some examples. The brochure below - The Houseboat From Hell - really grabs attention. People are compelled to pick it up just out of curiosity. The fact is, its in Hells Canyon, Idaho, and this brochure is very good at closing the sale.

The Fredonia, NY brochure on the far right is their standard piece. By simply changing the focus - selling the experience first - they can easily make their brochure more effective. "A Picturesque Victorian Village set among the vineyards of Western New York" is more attention-getting than "Welcome to Fredonia, NY."

The Houseboat From Hell
Experience the scenic beauty of the Pacific Northwest aboard the ST. Mavis Houseboat "Elixir" And!

STUTZMAN HELLS CANYON GUIDE SERVICE
Contact us at 541-742-4828 and start planning your personalized vacation of a lifetime!

STUTZMAN HELLS CANYON GUIDE SERVICE
Box 739
86340 Fall Lake Road
Helford, OR 97334
Email: steve@stutzman.com
www.hellscanyonresort.com

STUTZMAN HELLS CANYON GUIDE SERVICE
You and experience a relaxed and enjoyable family vacation, for up to 8 people, that you personally customize.

STUTZMAN HELLS CANYON GUIDE SERVICE
will individually tailor your vacation, so when you will experience the majestic beauty of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area from Copper Field Park to the Hells Canyon Dam. Cruise the tranquil Hells Canyon Reservoir aboard the fully equipped, 55 foot Myrtle Houseboat "Elixir" And!

STUTZMAN HELLS CANYON GUIDE SERVICE
But don't let the name fool you. Hells Canyon really is a slice of heaven. From the moment you step on board, comfort and relaxation will redefine. As you cruise the placid waters of Hells Canyon, pass by a refreshing swim or a night's dinner, which we will be happy to do for you.

A Picturesque Victorian Village
Set Among the Vineyards of Western New York

Welcome to Fredonia

Experience the many shops, antiques and restaurants, the 1891 Fredonia Opera House, Barker Historical Museum, The Telecommunications Museum of Fredonia, festivals and self-guided tours

"A Timeless Treasure"

Welcome to Fredonia, NY

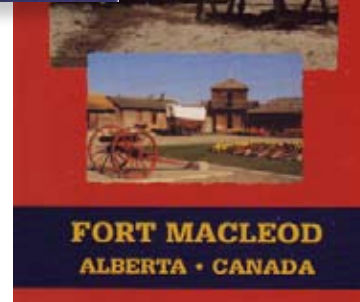
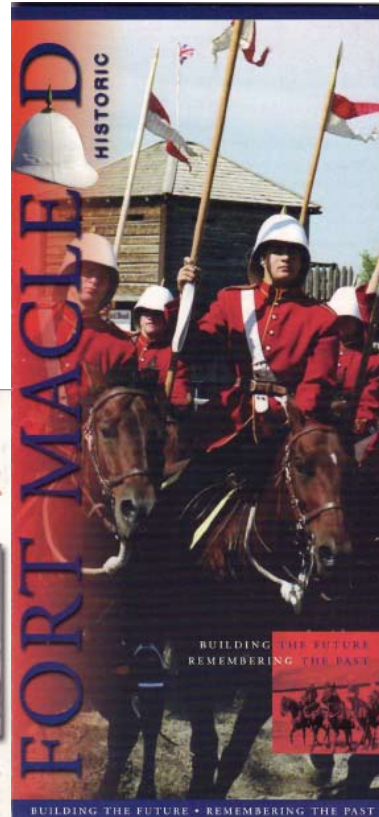
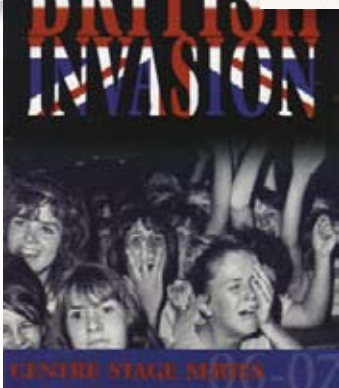
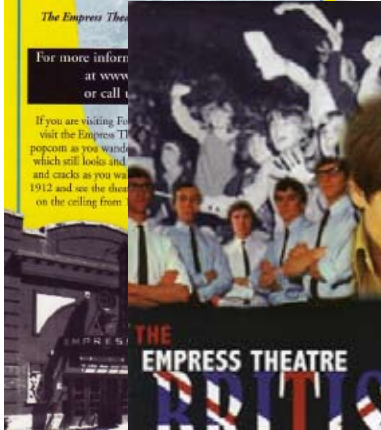
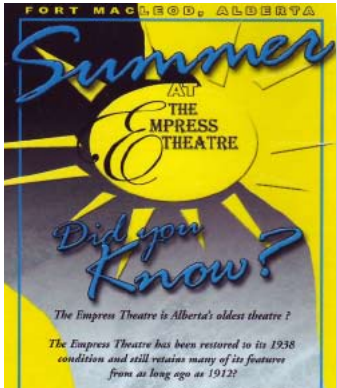
Set amid the Vineyards of Northern Chautauqua County, Fredonia is a picturesque & friendly Historic Victorian Village in Western New York.

Barker Common/Village Hall
Photograph by Jim Boltz

Experience the many shops, antiques and restaurants, the 1891 Fredonia Opera House, Barker Historical Museum, The Telecommunications Museum of Fredonia, festivals, and self-guided walking tours.

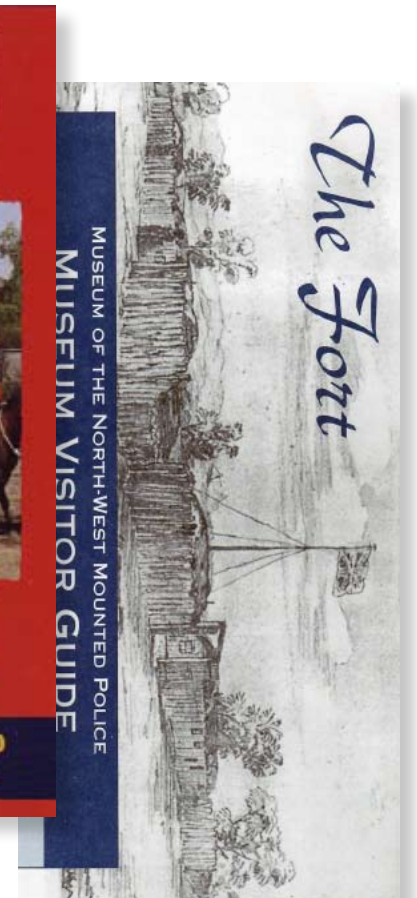
Fredonia... Timeless... Treasure
Relax in a Gracious Victorian Village

MARKETING ASSESSMENT



Suggestion:

Develop an Activities Guide that will combine all of these brochures into one usable, and much less expensive lure brochure to produce. Additionally, consider having a Style Guide produced for the community that would create continuity between marketing pieces and organizations.



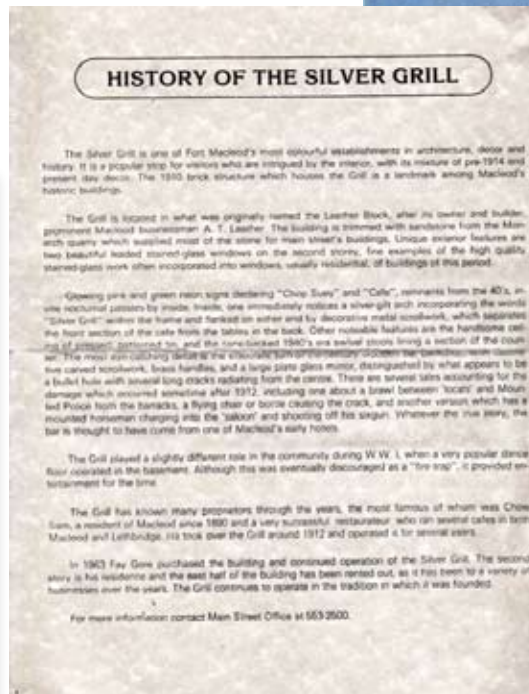
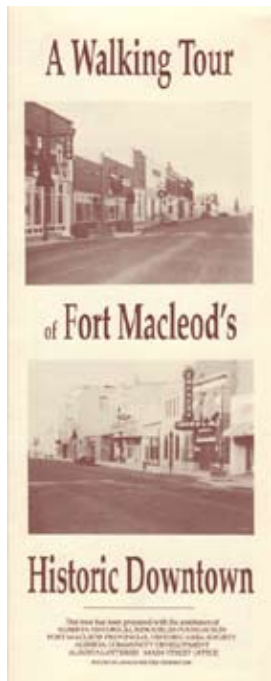
MARKETING ASSESSMENT

Suggestion:

“Historic Fort Macleod” is a nice introduction to Fort Macleod. Remember that people relate to people more than architecture and buildings. So, when you are writing up histories or walking tours, concentrate on the people who lived and worked in those buildings - tell stories, and you will capture people’s interest.

Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump is a good brochure that does a very good job of closing the sale.

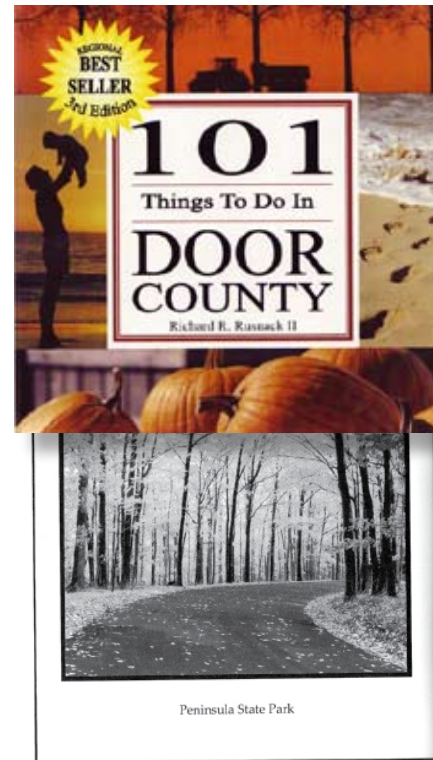
The History of the Silver Grill is a good introduction and should be included, with these two other brochures into the Fort Macleod Activities Guide.



Suggestion:

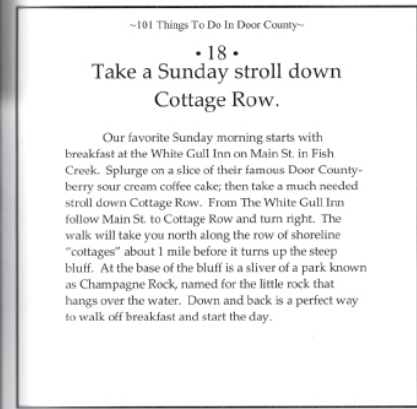
Work with regional tourism folks to create the "Hidden Gems of the Southern Canadian Rockies." Each hidden gem should be something unique and very specific. Visitors are interested in things to do, and want unique experiences - things they can not do close to home.

Market your specifics - what do you have that is special? Is there a coffee shop that makes the best apple pie around? Promote that pie - describe it in detail to make people's mouths water. Evoke emotion, market your unique activities, and visitors will come.



Kittitas Valley's Greatest Hits is an excellent marketing tool in the fact that it showcases specifics: where to go, what to expect, and what sets the attraction apart from the many others.

In Door County, Wisconsin, creation of the "101 Things to Do in Door County" would be a good piece to emulate, but instead of numbering the items, consider them "hidden gems," things that only the locals know about but that are "must see" or "must do" attractions while visiting the area. Make sure they include specifics, not generalities. Read the sample page below. More than 50 million North American residents subscribe to travel publications because they provide specifics: places to stay, places to eat, hidden gems, great desserts - all the things we are looking for as visitors. Communities need to follow suit. To succeed you MUST promote specifics.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT

Suggestion:

Create an Activities Guide that highlights specific shops and restaurants that are unique. This one, produced by the Ottawa, Illinois Visitor Center is proving very successful.

starved rock area
activities guide

YOUR GUIDE TO
NATURE'S
SPLENDOR
OUTDOOR
ADVENTURES
HOMETOWN
COOKING
FAMILY FUN
HISTORIC
TREASURES
RAVE FINDS

www.enjoyillinoisco.com

TWO SISTERS CANDY & GIFTS

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: Mon-Fri 11:30-5:00, Sat 11-4
9703-622-4628

Two Sisters Candy & Gifts is a family-owned business that has been serving the Ottawa area since 1978. Our specialty is hand-dipped chocolates, gourmet candies, and custom gift baskets. We also offer a variety of gift certificates and personalized services.

10/1/2006

THE POPCORN WAGON GOURMET POPCORN

Washington Park, Ottawa
Open: Wednesdays, Fridays, & Saturdays
11:00am-10:00pm
9703-622-4628

The popcorn wagon is a unique and delicious treat that has been a staple of the Ottawa area since 1978. We offer a variety of gourmet popcorn flavors, including our signature 'Butter & Sea Salt' and 'Caramel' varieties. Our popcorn is made fresh daily and is perfect for any occasion.

10/1/2006

UPTOWN GRILL CONTEMPORARY CUISINE

304 East Oshawa Lodge
Ottawa, Ontario
9703-622-4242

Uptown Grill is a contemporary dining experience that offers a variety of gourmet dishes and a sophisticated atmosphere. Our menu features locally sourced ingredients and creative culinary techniques. We also offer a full bar and a comfortable setting for business meetings and social gatherings.

10/1/2006

HEGELER CARUS MANSION TOURS

1402 Somerset Street, Ottawa
Open: Wednesdays, Saturdays, 12:00pm-3:00pm
9703-622-9802
www.hegelercarus.com

The Hegeler Carus Mansion is a historic landmark in Ottawa that offers a unique and informative tour experience. Our knowledgeable guides provide a detailed history of the mansion and the city of Ottawa. The tour is suitable for all ages and is a great way to learn about the city's heritage.

10/1/2006

JEREMIAH JOE SPECIALTY COFFEE

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: Mon-Fri 11:30-5:00, Sat 11-4
9703-622-4628

Jeremiah Joe Specialty Coffee is a locally sourced and roasted coffee company that offers a variety of high-quality coffee beans. Our coffee is sourced from small-scale farmers and is roasted in-house to ensure the best flavor. We also offer a variety of coffee-related products and services.

10/1/2006

SKYDIVE CHICAGO SKYDIVING

1213 S. 170th St., Ottawa, Illinois
Open: Daily 10:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-9802
www.skydivechicago.com

Skydive Chicago is a premier skydiving destination that offers a variety of skydiving experiences for all skill levels. Our experienced instructors provide a safe and exciting skydiving experience. We also offer a variety of skydiving-related products and services.

10/1/2006

RIVER ADVENTURES, INC. CANOE & BIKE RENTALS

1015 East 150th Street, Ottawa
Open: 7 days a week, 9:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-9802
www.riveradventures.com

River Adventures, Inc. is a family-owned business that offers a variety of canoe and bike rental services. Our equipment is well-maintained and suitable for all skill levels. We also offer a variety of guided tours and services.

10/1/2006

JJ'S PUB BAR & GRILL

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: Mon-Fri 11:30-5:00, Sat 11-4
9703-622-4628

JJ's Pub Bar & Grill is a family-owned business that offers a variety of dining and entertainment services. Our menu features a variety of pub-style dishes and a full bar. We also offer a variety of entertainment options, including live music and trivia nights.

10/1/2006

DÉJÀ VU HOME & GARDEN BOUTIQUE

130 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: 11:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-4628

Déjà Vu Home & Garden Boutique is a family-owned business that offers a variety of home and garden products. Our inventory includes a variety of home decor items, garden supplies, and more. We also offer a variety of services, including interior design and landscaping.

10/1/2006

OTTAWA RIVERBOAT CO. RIVER CRUISES

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: 11:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-4628

Ottawa Riverboat Co. is a family-owned business that offers a variety of river cruise services. Our cruises are suitable for all ages and offer a unique and relaxing experience. We also offer a variety of services, including catering and event planning.

10/1/2006

WEBER HOUSE & GARDEN COTTAGE TOURS

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: 11:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-4628

Weber House & Garden Cottage Tours is a family-owned business that offers a variety of guided tour services. Our tours are suitable for all ages and offer a unique and informative experience. We also offer a variety of services, including catering and event planning.

10/1/2006

CAJUN CONNECTION TASTE OF LOUISIANA

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: 11:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-4628

Cajun Connection Taste of Louisiana is a family-owned business that offers a variety of Cajun and Louisiana cuisine. Our menu features a variety of authentic dishes and a full bar. We also offer a variety of services, including catering and event planning.

10/1/2006

STARVED ROCK LODGE & CONFERENCE CENTER

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: 11:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-4628

Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center is a family-owned business that offers a variety of lodging and conference services. Our facilities are well-maintained and suitable for all types of events. We also offer a variety of services, including catering and event planning.

10/1/2006

AUGUST HILL WINERY

1401 Lullabie Street, Ottawa
Open: 11:00am-5:00pm
9703-622-4628

August Hill Winery is a family-owned business that offers a variety of wine and food services. Our wine is made from locally sourced grapes and is available in a variety of styles. We also offer a variety of food and beverage services.

10/1/2006

10/1/2006

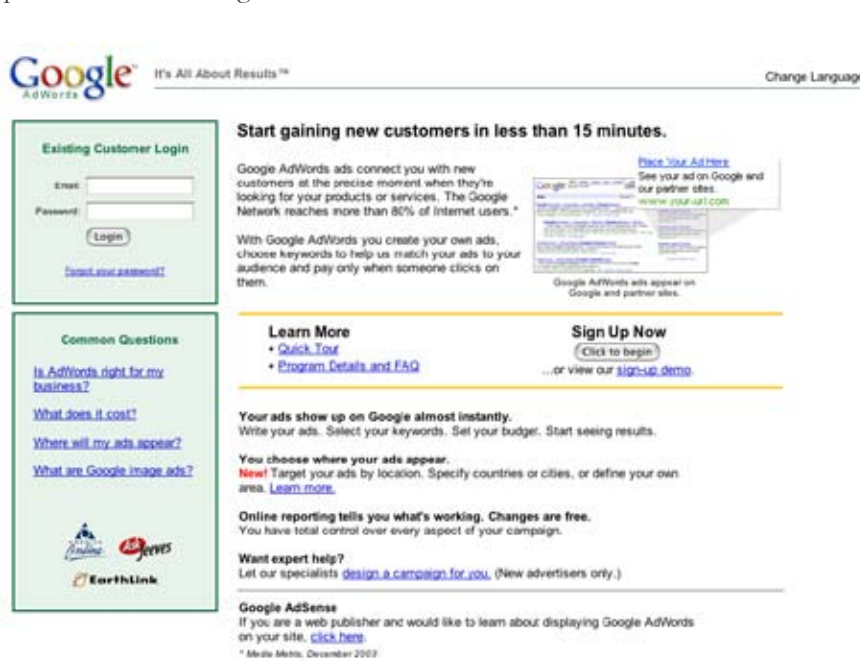
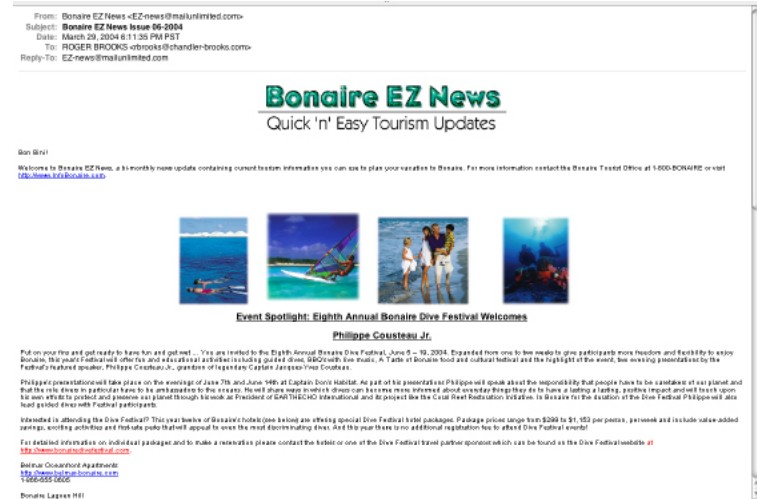
Let Your Fingers Do the Walking (Rules of the Internet)

For more information please see the “Your Town, Online” section of this assessment.

Suggestion:

Develop an e-marketing program to create top of mind awareness. This is permission-based marketing, where visitors can sign up to receive a monthly newsletter. Once a month, you write up the newsletter - make sure it contains information a visitor would want to know about - and send it off.

Purchase key words (pay-per-click). Both Google and Yahoo sell keyword listings. You bid for the keywords, with the highest bidder taking top honors on the first page of results. This is a powerful and cost-effective way to guarantee that you are on the first page.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT

Suggestion:

Find strong keywords - not just locations, but activities as well.

Buy the keyword: "On your way to Banff" to tap into visitors planning a trip to Banff. Other suggestions include: Rocky Mountains, theatre, things to do in Alberta, historical sites or musical theatre.

Google Web Images Maps News More Scholar more...
things to do in alberta
Search: the web pages from Canada

Results 1 - 10 of about 1,780,000 for things to do in alberta (0.16 seconds)

Things to Do in Alberta - Alberta Attractions - TripAdvisor
Alberta Attractions: Visit TripAdvisor, your source for the world's best-reviewed reviews, travel guides and guidebooks listings about things to do in ...
www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g15400-Activities-Alberta.html - 91x - 8 Jun 2007 - Cached - Similar pages

Things to do in Alberta & Alberta Attractions - Yahoo! Travel
Find the best things to do, museums, attractions, and travel advice about Alberta on Yahoo! Travel.
travel.yahoo.com/p/selected-ga-897204-alberta_things_to_do-187k - Cached - Similar pages

Travel Alberta Live - Things To Do
Get a full of travel to live in Alberta city, activities or a hobby with exciting such with fresh, mouth-watering and exciting outdoor adventures. Read More + ...
www.travelalberta.com/ThingsToDo.cfm - 18x - Cached - Similar pages

Province of Alberta Things To Do - Travel Guides - VirtualTourist.com
Province of Alberta attractions and sightseeing, with reviews, tips and photos posted by real travellers and locals. Find insider tips for Province of ...
www.virtualtourist.com/Canada/Province_of_Alberta/Things_To_Do/Province_of_Alberta-670.html - 83x - Cached - Similar pages

ESurf - Things To Do - Alberta, Canada (Zoos, Museums, ...)
Guide to Alberta Zoos, Aquariums, Theme Parks, Events, Fair, Museums, Arts, Parks, Regional, Historic Sites, Wineries, Breweries, Gardens, etc.
esurf.com/totalcanada/ab.htm - 24x - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta | Things To Do in Alberta
Alberta | Things To Do in Alberta, travel information and holidays.
www.visitcanada.ca/en/country/Sites_things_to_do/North_America/Alberta.html - 40x - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta Things to do
Complete, objective information on Alberta travel, including photos and reviews. Add your

Google Web Images Video News Maps Gmail more...
alberta musical theatre
Search: Advanced Search

Results 1 - 10 of about 1,270,000 for alberta musical theatre (0.14 seconds)

The Pen and the Sword | Alberta Tatoo: Alberta's Biggest Musical...
I would like to invite you to the Alberta Tatoo: Alberta's Biggest Musical Theatre Extravaganza. I will be singing (as a member of the cast) at the event ...
www.27.ca/blog-notices/1128-PRNTMT - 44x - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta Tracks - Alberta Centennial
Amy Swaley (Punk, Pop & The Last Days of Pompeii), Bryan Kajak (Musical Theatre), Laura and Elise Nadeau (Classical), The Swifys (Country & Western) ...
www.albertacentennial.com/AlbertaTracks.htm - 17x - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta Music Festival Association
She is currently on Staff at Sheridan College in the Music Theatre Performance Program, ...
members.show.ca/mta2007/a/auditors07.htm - 24x - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta Music Festival Association
Over 100 Musical Theatre Solo, Trio, Duo and Leader Competing for Stellar & District Music Festival Prizes and Alberta Registered Music Teachers' Assoc at ...
members.show.ca/mta/2006/mta.htm - 38x - Cached - Similar pages
[More results from members.show.ca]

Alberta Living - Show Boat - Lethbridge Musical Theatre - 2001
Show Boat - Lethbridge Musical Theatre, November 2001. Act One. Scene 1 The Loss of Natchez on the ... Southern Alberta Theatre - Alberta Living ...
www.southernalbertatheatre.com/AlbLiving/ActTheatre2001_Show_Boat/Show_Boat_Scenes.html - 10x - Cached - Similar pages

Musical Theatre Showtime
Musical Theatre Showtime is for students ages 10 to 18 years ... KEN MORRIS, Set Design and Costume Designer, received his diploma from the Alberta College ...
www.collegeofthearts.com/musical.html - 25x - Cached - Similar pages

The Citadel Theatre - FTS instructors
She has worked with Grant MacEwan's Theatre Arts Program, Leave It to Jane Theatre, and Theatre Alberta's Artist-in-Residence Musical Theatre ...

Google Web Images Video News Maps Gmail more...
alberta historical sites
Search: Advanced Search

Results 1 - 10 of about 1,210,000 for alberta historical sites (0.18 seconds)

Museums and Historic Sites Listing - Tourism, Parks, Recreation ...
Experience Alberta's history at these fascinating Historic Sites and Museums, PDF Map of Alberta with Site Locations, Map of Alberta with ...
www.alberta.ca/eng/visiting_alberta/museums_historic_sites/vis_listing/ - 45x - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta Community Development
Alberta Society, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation ... Museums and historic sites
Provincial Archives - Royal Alberta Museum - Royal Tyrrell Museum ...
www.alg.ca/actual - 21x - Cached - Similar pages
[More results from www.alg.ca]

Welcome to AlbertaHeritage.net
... historic sites as well as heritage organizations and foundations that help ... Discover Alberta by visiting our "Places to Go" and exploring our Guide to ...
www.albertaheritage.net - 8x - Cached - Similar pages

Other Albertan Historic Sites
To access any of these sites, please follow the links to the Official Alberta Community Development, Historic Sites and Archives Services pages ...
www.direct.gov.ab.ca/eng/actual/biblio.htm - 6x - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta's Rockies Historic Sites & Interpretive Centres: Historic ...
Alberta's Rocky Mountain Historic Sites & Interpretive Centres Directory. Includes listings for Historic Sites & Interpretive Centres in Alberta's Rockies ...
www.direct.gov.ab.ca/eng/actual/historical/historicalinterpretiveCentres/ - 87x - 18 Jun 2007 - Cached - Similar pages

Alberta's Rockies Landmarks and Historic Sites: Landmarks and ...
Alberta's Rocky Mountain Landmarks and Historic Sites Directory. Includes listings for Landmarks and Historic Sites of Alberta's Rockies, Alberta ...
www.direct.gov.ab.ca/eng/actual/historical/historicallandmarks/ - 84x - 18 Jun 2007 - Cached - Similar pages

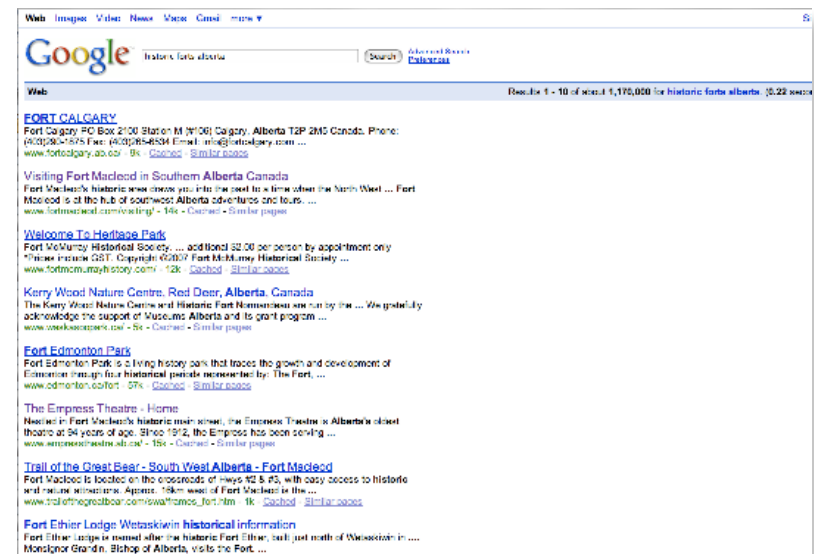
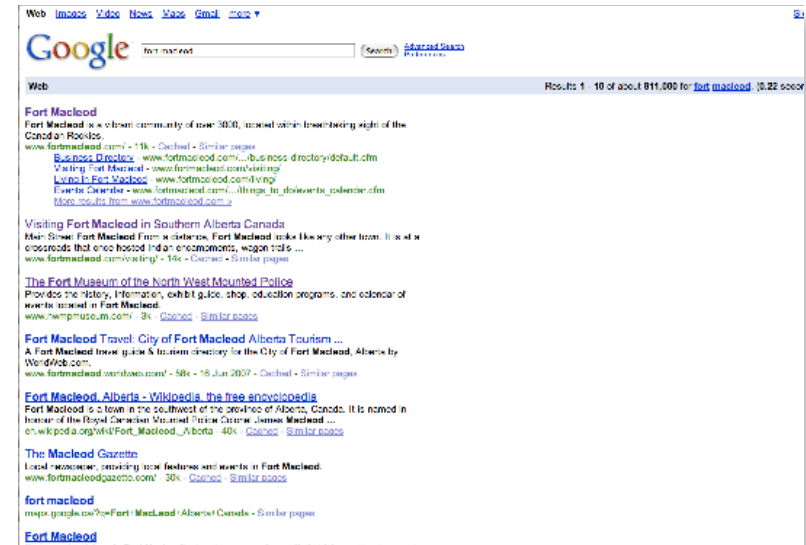
Government of Alberta:

MARKETING ASSESSMENT

Suggestion:

The Empress Theatre has first class marketing pieces - the Website is very good.

Develop a PR program to get the word out about the Empress. You build your brand using public relations - advertising is used to maintain your position. Additionally, PR will extend your reach into other markets.



MARKETING ASSESSMENT

Suggestion:

The Town of Fort Macleod's Website and marketing efforts should reflect the historic brand image. Take people back in time to another era through your marketing.

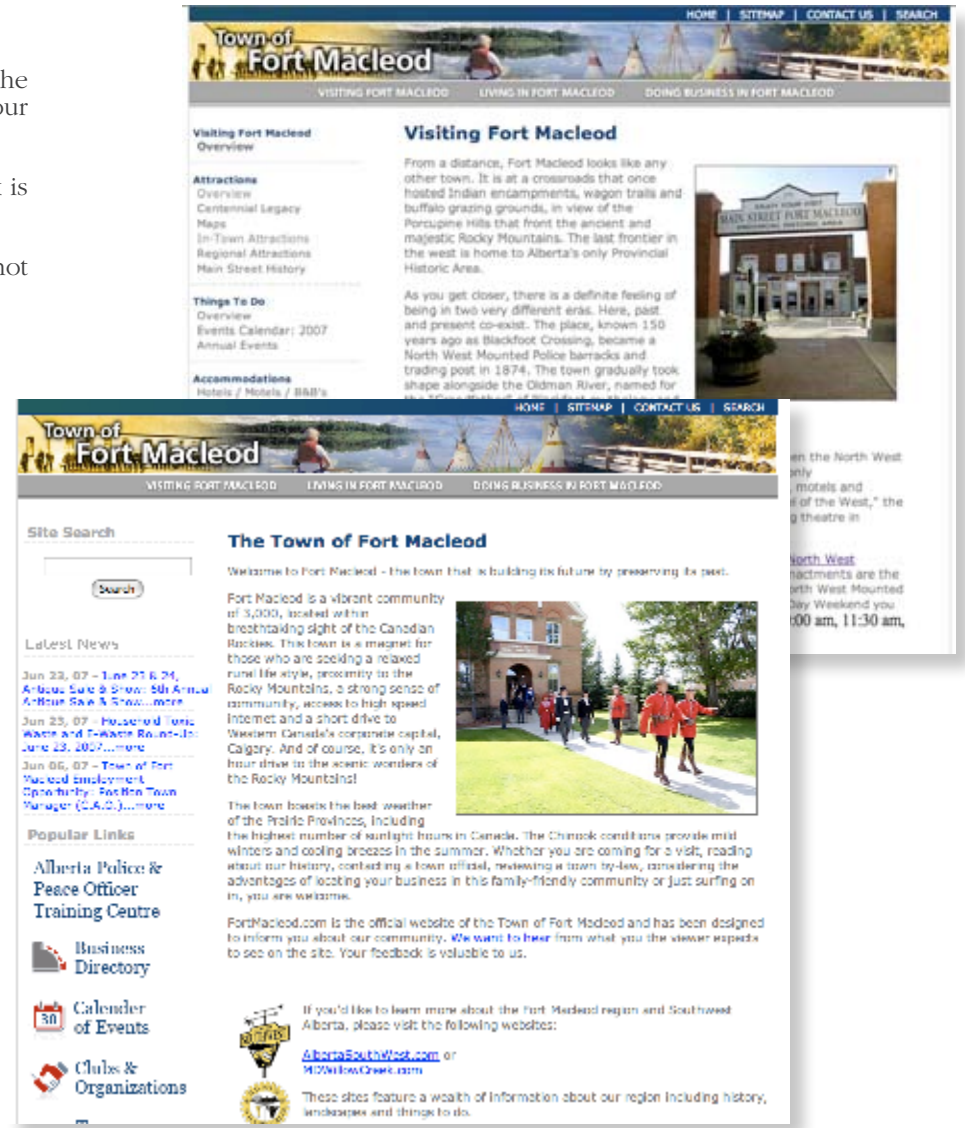
The Website does not reflect the historic ambiance. The most important link is missing: "Why see the Fort."

Get rid of the counter. It serves no purpose and shows that the site has not been visited by many people.

Create reciprocal links. It will gradually boost you to the first page.

Make sure all your marketing materials are available online for both viewing and download.

Purchase easy-to-remember URLs (website addresses).





Forward

This section of the plan is for all those charged with promoting the new brand to increase tourism spending, revitalize downtowns, or for economic development reasons.

When local earnings are spent outside the community, this is leakage. But when outside dollars come back into the community, that's economic development. A successful community imports more cash than it exports. As communities are forced to operate like businesses, they are finding that sales and promotion are critical aspects of a community's life.

Whether you are a Chamber of Commerce, an economic development office or destination marketing organization, downtown revitalization (Main Street) manager, or city/county staff charged with marketing your community, you already know how important a role the internet plays in marketing and branding your community.

While there are dozens, if not hundreds, of books on the subject, this book cuts to the chase and outlines what you can do to develop a Website that's good enough to close the sale. You'll see dozens of examples, and key things to keep in mind as you develop a stronger, more effective Website.

Introduction

"The new phone book's here! The new phone book's here!" yelled Navin Johnson, as he danced around the gas station grounds.

"Well, I wish I could get so excited about nothing," replied his boss Harry, the gas station owner.

Nothing? Are you kidding?!" Navin shouted back. "Page 73, Johnson, Navin R! I'm somebody now! Millions of people look at this book every day! This is the kind of spontaneous publicity, your name in print, that makes people! I'm impressed! Things are going to start happening to me now!"

Navin, played by Steve Martin in the comedy *The Jerk* (1979), was finally somebody. His name was in print. He was listed in the phone book with hundreds of thousands of other somebodies. What are the chances that his name was spotted by the millions of people who use the phone book? Well, slim, but at least he was somebody.

• How would this scene apply to the Internet?

Consider the following:

- A new Website goes on line an average of every three seconds. In fact, more than 64 million domain names have been registered in the U.S. alone – so far. Can you imagine a phone book with 64 million names listed in the white pages?
- The Internet is fourth to only electricity, the automobile, and television in its influence among daily American life. Not bad for a technology few even knew existed less than 20 years ago.
- Eighty-eight percent of all Americans say that the Internet plays a major role in their lives, surpassing television for the first time.
- Seventy-five percent of all Americans use the Internet regularly, and sixty-eight percent have immediate access to the web either at home or work.
- New Internet users are growing at the alarming rate of nearly ten percent – per month!

- Ninety-five percent of U.S. car buyers do research on-line.
- Ninety-four percent of all Internet users plan their travel using the web.

Website use for travel planning has grown quickly and varies little by age and income or gender. Surprisingly, older Americans are using the Web for travel planning as often as younger Americans. This means that the highest potential travelers (those older, retired consumers with the greatest disposable income) can be effectively reached via the Internet. According to one study by Stanford University, Internet users spend 5% of their online time researching travel sites.



So, how excited were you when your Website went live? And now that you have a Website, have you ever considered why you have it? What is your Website's purpose?

Many communities will state that the Website is simply an information source for local residents, businesses, and community leaders. But the real power of the Internet lies in its power to promote.

It's rare to find a community that isn't looking for some form of economic growth: residential, business, industry, or tourism. The Internet is the most powerful and cost effective way to market your community.

There are two major challenges with a Website: Is it good enough to close the sale? And can your customer even find it?

Consider this. If Navin Johnson had a book listing the 64 million registered domain names instead of phone numbers, his name would be listed on page number 12,066 of the 313,725 page book. With 28,000 new Websites coming on line every day, the phone book would grow by 4,235 pages per month!

Part I. Make your town shine – effective web-site design for destinations

1 TOURISM IS YOUR FRONT DOOR

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in all fifty states, and nothing promotes a community like tourism. Because visitors see the quality of life – culture, history, activities, attractions, ameni-

ties, etc. – tourism is a primary attractor for non-tourism economic development efforts. Business people who decide to relocate have always visited the new community first – as tourists.

Your Website should promote the community's quality of life, and the best way to show that is by using great photography. Show off what your community has to offer visitors, residents, and businesses. Showing your community's assets doesn't just attract tourists. It also builds community pride, fosters a sense of cooperative spirit, and promotes economic development.

2 PULL YOUR CUSTOMERS INTO THE SITE

Your home page should be like your front door: attractive, clean, and inviting. To sell your community, use knock-out pictures and introductory text. Just like a novel or magazine article, the first line or paragraph must be powerful enough to grab the reader's attention. And too much clutter distracts your visitor. Too many links and topics are confusing. Make it clean, easy to understand, and a pleasure to view.

Think of the splash page or home page as the front door to your community. Santa Barbara, California's Conference and Visitors Bureau's home/splash page, www.santabarbaraca.com, is a beautiful example.

The stunning slide show illustrates the beauty and activities in the area. Site visitors are mesmerized and watch the entire introduction, which only takes a few seconds.

Sonoma County, California, has also done a good job with a splash page slide show at www.sonomacounty.com. The photos not only show the beauty of the county's vineyards, ocean, and rivers, they show people actively enjoying themselves. Your home page needs to portray your town in the best possible light, making visitors want to continue looking through the Website, and making people want to visit.





3 CREATE A SINGLE FRONT DOOR

Many destination marketing Websites have twenty, thirty, or forty (or more) links on the home page with no central focus, making the experience confusing right from the start. Seventy percent of web searches are met with frustration when the visitor has trouble finding the information they are looking for. Statistics show that visitors who can't easily find what they're looking for will move on after only twenty seconds.

Think about your Website as if it were your home. You walk up to the front door, finding beautiful curb appeal (your splash page). That sets the tone for a good experience and shows visitors who you are. Once through the front door, you can choose which direction you'd like to go. This can be as simple as two choices: the city section, or the chamber (or visitor) section.

The small Washington State town of LaConner did a great job bringing the city and chamber together, with their home page offering a choice between entering the Town site, and entering the Chamber site. More effective than multiple Websites – and less expensive. Even through keywords they've created a partnership: LaConner, Washington: the town and visitor information. What a concept!

Options could include a series of links:

- The community
- Doing business here
- Visitor information
- Links and resources
- City hall or Chamber info
- Website contents

If a visitor to the site is looking for visitor information, they will click on that link which will

give them more options. If they're looking for the minutes to the last City Commission meeting, they'll click on the city hall info link. Make it easy, logical, and progressive.

4 KEEP IT SIMPLE AND IT WILL SELL

Navigating your Website should be simple, answering the following questions: Where do I find the information I want? Where am I? Where can I go next? Where is the home page? Your links should be the same on each page, offering visitors the opportunity to go back to the home page, or select a different option at any time. Including a back button is also a good idea. Don't force visitors to go through too many links to find the information they want – each additional link is an opportunity to lose the visitor.

Look at the Truckee, California Website (www.truckee.com). Notice how easy it is to navigate? The links remain consistent no matter what page you're visiting. Besides having sub-links for each category, there's also an introductory text. It's engaging, informative, and easy to use. Truckee, a town of 16,000, was our clear winner when picking a community in this region to visit. That's the power of a Website that's good enough to close the sale.

Another excellent Website can be found at www.pebblebeach.com. It's easy to navigate, well written (using little text), uses world-class photography, endorsements and accolades to sell the experience, and makes it easy to plan an escape to Pebble Beach. The 17-Mile Drive page is an interactive map that gives specific information in an easy to follow format. Simplicity sells.

