

*Tourism
Marketing*

&

Strategic Plan

Tourism: An Economic Powerhouse That is Vulnerable to Variables

Tourism is one of America's largest industries that generates over \$1.7 trillion in total economic activity. Tourism generates roughly \$704 billion in direct spending by domestic and international visitors and it generates \$13 billion in tax revenue for local, state and federal governments generated by direct travel expenditures. This industry is one of America's largest employers as it generates approximately 7.4 million direct travel-generated jobs. In fact, one out of every nine jobs in the U.S. depends on travel and tourism.

Tourism is an ever-changing vulnerable industry. Currently our economy is still trying to recover from a recession. Consumer confidence gaining some momentum but spending hasn't significantly increased. Currently U.S. travel is steady and trying to recover from a significant drop in occupancy and average daily rate in 2009. 2010 showed a slight increase in demand and occupancy rose roughly 1.9% (to 55.8%), but average daily rate decreased roughly 2.5% (to \$95.45). 2011 was expected to be relatively flat. The U.S. Travel Association forecasted 1.8% growth in total 2011 domestic person trips and 3.7% growth in total 2011 international arrivals to the U.S. Business travel is also predicted to rise. In 2015, spending is beginning to slower for U.S.

As for Newport News, 2015 showed signs of improvement in occupancy and ADR according to Smith Travel Research and transient room revenue received. Transient tax revenue has begun to increase and is estimated to end the year up roughly 10% for the City.

According to Destination Analysis, *"The U.S. travel industry will continue to grow in 2016, fueled by a strong domestic travel market. While regional performance will vary and the strong dollar and economic challenges abroad will test our ability in the short-term to grow international markets, overall the picture looks positive. In the absence of unexpected shocks, our model suggests that we will see the number of leisure trips taken by Americans to grow by 2.1 percent in 2016. Overall leisure travel spending will climb 4.0 percent in the coming year."*

Travelers are booking their weekend getaways at the last minute and using the Internet, hoping to receive a discount. In addition, the majority of travelers are driving to their destinations so Virginia and Newport News does have this benefit with our central Mid-Atlantic location on the East Coast and gas prices are the lowest in years; however, our local weather thus far this year has not been as desirable as we have experienced considerable rain, all of which could affect travel at the end of 2016.

At the blink of an eye, our activities and goals can shift since our economy; acts of God and our nation's security play a significant role in the increase or decrease of tourism in the U.S. and the world. A new product might develop, terrorism, over-saturation in a particular market might occur or a disaster might happen that would affect our entire plan of action and our industry; therefore, since these variables are uncontrollable, it is virtually impossible to have measurable goals for destination marketing organizations in terms of taxes generated unless these variables are held consistent.

To summarize, tourism must establish an identity, promote awareness of its resources outside and within the region, provide tools that will assist visitors in spending more money and, most importantly, assist, train and educate its employees and industry to help them adapt to these variables. Our results are outlined in our plan's conclusion based on consistent variables that affect tourism.

Who Are We?

The Newport News Tourism Development Office (NNTDO) is a Division of Parks, Recreation & Tourism for the City of Newport News, Virginia. Our team of professionals work collaboratively with city leaders, our Economic Development Department, the Newport News Hospitality Association (NNHA), Virginia Tourism Corporation, Coastal Virginia Alliance and our industry representatives. We have a Newport News Hospitality Association Board that we are a part of that meets quarterly to discuss, review and make recommendations to the marketing activities of NNTDO.

Vision Statement:

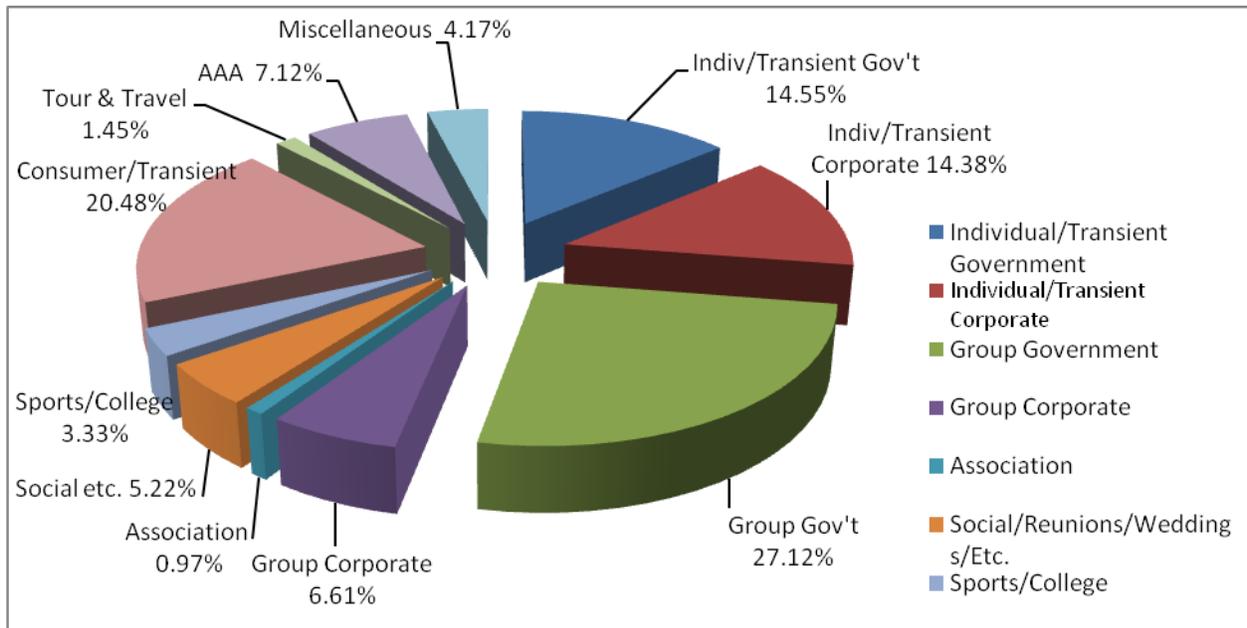
Build an enthusiastic, credible, ethical, professional, innovative, creative tourism team that leads our industry - a team that is highly respected, supported, and admired by our city, region and state officials and is influential and easily adaptive to developmental change that might affect our industry and the nation.

Mission Statement:

The Newport News Tourism Development Office's mission is to enthusiastically promote the City of Newport News and its hospitality industry through creative marketing initiatives and cooperative programs that will increase revenue, visitation and awareness.

Market Analysis

Depending upon the hotel/motel, there are three predominant market mixes present in Newport News. There is the transient corporate/military business traveler, the group military/corporate and the SMERF (to include social, sports, weddings, reunions, religious, fraternal) market and the tourist. Percentages are approximate and are based on data received from the hotels/motels.



Consumer Market Audience

See 2015 Inquiry Demographics but summarized below

Audience inquiring: 2 adults, aged 40-55 & up, average income over \$85,000. Female makes initial inquiry.

Reason to visit Newport News: 1. Vacation/pleasure, 2. visit family & friends, 3. Relocation 4. Business, 5. SMERF (RESULTS FROM OUR VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER)

Found out about Visitor Center: Signage, Other, Ad, brochure, GPS
People did not plan to stop at the Visitor Center before they arrived

The final destination when visitors are at the Visitor Center is Newport News followed by Williamsburg

Accommodations: hotel/motel followed by friends and family tied with timeshares

Inquiry Interests:

What interests our visitors: 1. History, 2. Civil War, 3. Family Fun, 4. Ships, 5. Nature, 6. Shopping

Where are our inquiries coming from?

Top states visiting our Visitor Center: Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Connecticut, Florida

Top states inquiring about our city, originating from Newport News Visitor Center via Web, phone, labels, mail: Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, Florida, Maryland, CA

Primary Market:

Newport News' primary market is generally described as the 500-mile radius from the geographical center of the state, but principally within the Mid-Atlantic region with the exception of North Carolina.

Business/Military-Related Traveler:

Where are our inquiries coming from?

Top states visiting our hotels: Virginia, Washington, DC, North Carolina, Georgia, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland

Inquiry Demographics:

Male, 35-55 years old, \$50,000 to over \$100,000 income, purpose of stay is roughly 1/3 meeting only, 1/3 meeting/pleasure, 1/3 pleasure only, 0-4 nights stay

Tour Group Traveler:

Where are our inquiries coming from?

Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Northern Virginia

Inquiry Demographics:

Students, seniors, and mixed adults with a heavier concentration of demand from student groups.

Inquiry Interests:

Nightly entertainment, shopping, food, interactive educational museums

Strengths

1. Located between Williamsburg and Virginia Beach - two of the largest vacation destinations in Virginia.
2. Great location for drive market, which represents 82% of the primary mode of transportation for travel in the U.S.
3. Easily accessible – a 500-mile drive radius in the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S.- easily accessible.
4. A variety of transportation modes into the city- vehicle, bus, train, air.
5. Variety of attractions and rich in history.
6. Top attractions: The Mariners’ Museum and Virginia Living Museum.
7. Association with (Newport News Shipyard)
8. Active, supportive and interested hospitality industry and City Council.
9. Mix of full service hotels/motels, retail, and restaurants.
10. Ferguson Center for the Arts at Christopher Newport University, Port Warwick Tech Center, City Center at Oyster Point.

Possible Weaknesses

1. Uncontrollable variables - acts of God, business development growth, economy, weather, terrorism.
2. Unknown brand - location is not known with consumers past northern Virginia.
3. Gateway enhancement is needed into the city. People literally drive through the city, not aware of what the city has to offer.
4. Getting to and once in the city, transportation is a challenge because of the tunnels and ongoing construction.
5. Limited flights/airport service.
6. Residents’ perception of Newport News - people take for granted what is in their own backyard.

7. Nightly entertainment lacking: In order for consumers, tourists, business travelers to extend their stay, or groups to spend the night, a destination needs a variety of nightly entertainment options. Currently Newport News offers a limited number of entertainment options: Ferguson Center for the Arts (which is seasonal), a community theater, one comedy club, two dance clubs, bowling, movies and a mall. On occasion, the Boxwood Inn offers “dinnertainments” (entertainment during dinner).
8. Extended stay and AirBnB properties are being added into our hotel product base for Newport News and surrounding cities. This increased product base has affected overall occupancy, ADR and tax revenue.
9. The loss of military business due to spending cuts and the move of Fort Eustis training has caused a major loss for some of our hotels citywide.
10. Budget limitations that affect brand awareness/development.

Division Goals

1. Professionally lead the creation of a strategic, flexible marketing and business plan to ensure marketing activities are being performed; establish policies and procedures for tourism; provide sound fiscal management for the NNTDO; administer all contracts and procurement.
2. Maintain a brand and create advertising and promotions that will lure visitors into the city from a 500 mile radius; enhance product knowledge for visitors and citizens in our region and produce materials that will help them spend more money and stay longer.
3. Develop and execute a plan to promote a wider understanding of travel and tourism as a major U.S. industry that contributes substantially to the economic, cultural, and social well-being of the City.
4. To initiate effective communication and cooperation with tourism representatives and bring cohesion to the travel industry and Economic Development. Work with Coastal Virginia Partners, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Newport News Hospitality Association, and governmental entities in the development and implementation of programs, policies, and legislation that are responsive to the needs of the industry. Also, to advise in any issues that would directly affect the facilitation and promotion of travel to and within the City.
5. Provide NNTDO staff and industry representatives with resources needed for continuing education, ongoing customer service training and personal development.
6. Encourage residents/businesses to be ambassadors for the City by bringing in groups of all types and inviting family and friends to Newport News.
7. Work with NNTDO employees and industry to identify revenue-saving cooperative/grant opportunities and develop and implement programs beneficial to the travel supplier and consumer.

8. Act as professional spokesperson for the City of Newport News on tourism-related topics.
9. Represent the City and work to sustain tax revenues generated by tourism.

Objectives

Objective 1: Educate/Train/Motivate Tourism Industry, City Officials, and Staff

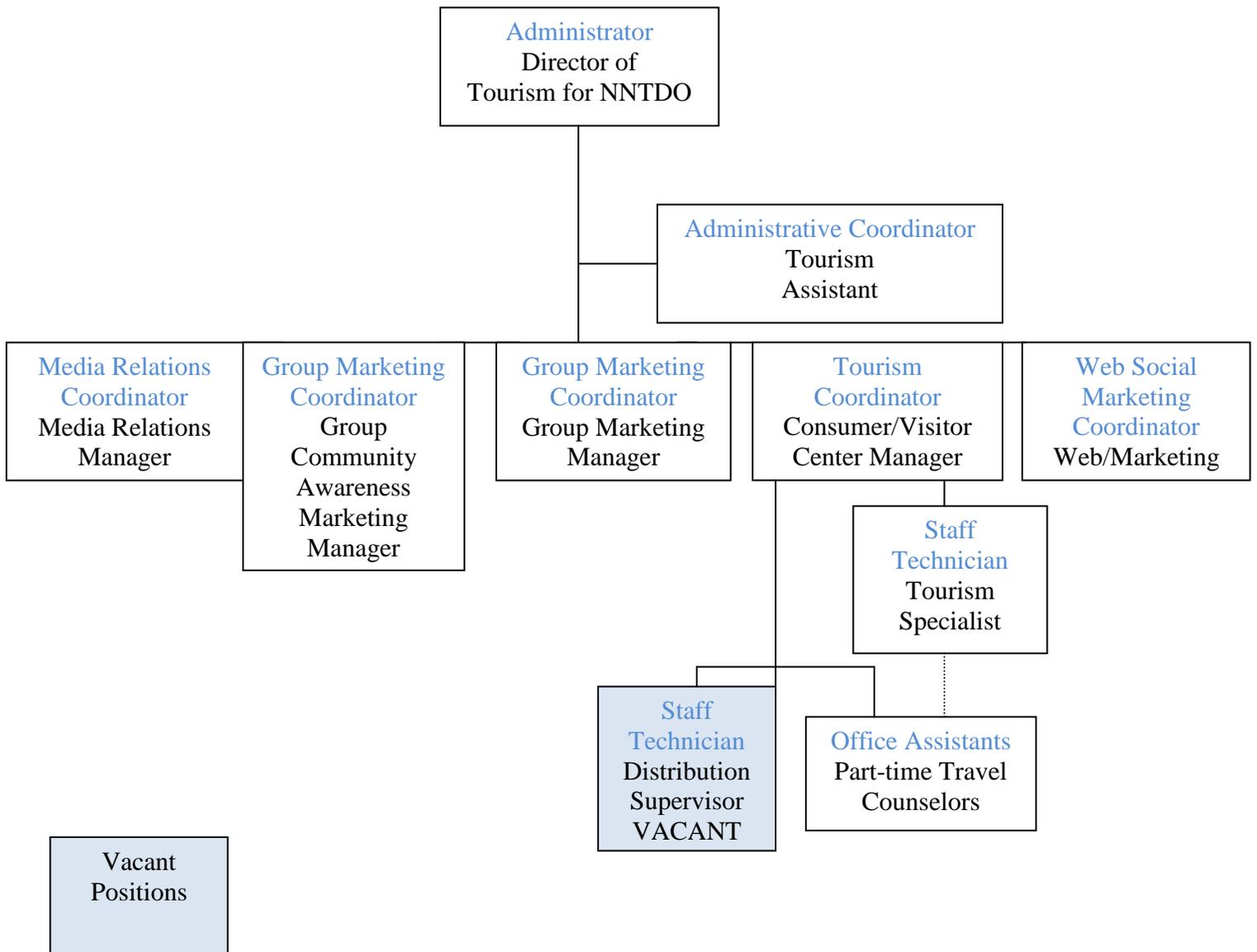
STRATEGY:

1. Attend developmental training seminars that are tourism-related to keep abreast of the ever-changing state of our country and our tourism industry.
2. Provide opportunities for all staff and industry representatives to attend training.
3. Meet on a monthly basis with our industry to discuss issues that face our industry, discuss departmental issues and to ensure activities and goals are reached.
4. Conduct monthly marketing staff meetings.
5. Attend bi-monthly Visitor Center staff meetings.
6. Participate in industry-related events and activities.
7. Participate in associations and organizations that are tourism specific.
8. Conduct at least two marketing/brain storming retreats each year.
9. Provide policies, procedures, “Golden Rules,” goals and expectations for staff.
10. Monitor and assist staff’s personal growth. Keep evaluations current.
11. Organize industry training twice a year.
12. Organize an ongoing training for front-line employees.
13. Motivate employees and industry partners.
14. Work ethically based on the following value mission statement:

Value Statement:

The Newport News Tourism Development Office is committed to working as an energetic, motivated, creative, organized, ethical and harmonious team that strives to effectively and professionally communicate and respect and appreciate everyone’s similarities and differences within and outside our organization.

2016 Organizational Chart



Objective 2: Increase Awareness Create an identity and an appreciation for the City of Newport News through increased advertising within a 500-mile radius foremost; and regionally, as appropriate, to capture/lure visiting tourist which will ultimately increase revenue for the City of Newport News if the economy remains stable.

STRATEGY:

1. Know our customers: Gather statistical information from our visitors, inquiries and our hotels and attractions.
 - Ask our visitors and record results.
 - Assist and train our industry in gathering statistics from their visitors.
 - Gather statistical information from our attractions and hotels.
 - Gather statistics from Virginia Tourism Corporation, Travel Industry Association of America, Randall Travel Marketing, Southeast Tourism Society, Virginia Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus, Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association.
 - Gather research from conversion studies and focus groups as needed.
2. Create an image - “Brand” for Newport News from research

History of Branding Efforts

In the late 1960s, there was an effort by the City to promote a Newport News Tour. After this promotion, there was no real effort to promote the City until the ‘80s when there was the formation of the Virginia Peninsula Tourism & Conference Bureau. The City began contributing approximately \$200,000 to a regional attempt to promote tourism. In 1993, the Bureau dissolved and the City gave Christopher Newport University roughly \$250,000 to begin efforts to promote tourism for the City. In 1995, Newport News formed a Tourism Division within the City under Parks & Recreation.

In the late 1990s, focus groups and surveys were conducted in northern Virginia and surrounding states to determine if the City of Newport News was a recognizable destination to travelers. Results showed that unless Newport News was mentioned with Williamsburg and/or Virginia Beach, hardly anyone knew the location of Newport News or had heard about the City. The few travelers that had heard about Newport News knew about us because of our shipbuilding history and maritime heritage. In fact, the ones that had heard about us thought that Newport News was much closer to Virginia Beach than to Williamsburg.

In 2000, NNTDO hired Randall Travel Marketing (RTM) to research this finding and confirm if, in fact, travelers knew or didn’t know where Newport News was and what Newport News offered. In addition, they were hired to research what interested travelers about our city, what they related to in our city/region, and what it would take to draw these travelers into Newport News.

The RTM study showed that the major “Attractors” for travelers were as follows: Ocean, Bay, River, Ships, Wars, History, Proximity to Williamsburg and Virginia Beach.

The study also proved that travelers into our region do not care or really know where Newport News city lines begin or end; therefore, it was concluded that we needed to market the entire region to interest travelers in visiting and staying in Newport News. To accomplish this, we needed to promote these major “attractors” or interests.

Best of all, if we were successful in stimulating their interest in staying in our city, we could sell all our attractions, as well as the attractions of our neighbors; thus, travelers would stay longer and spend more money in Newport News.

We want travelers visiting Newport News to experience it all by visiting our attractions, eating in our restaurants, spending nights in our hotels, shopping, visiting Virginia Beach, taking a harbor tour in Hampton, Portsmouth or Norfolk, spending the day at Colonial Williamsburg, riding rides at Busch Gardens, etc. The more our travelers enjoy, the longer they will stay and the more money they will spend!

Before any of this spending happens, Newport News must capture their interest in everything our region offers in order to get them here. To do this, we narrowed the top “attractors” down to four of the major interests determined by the RTM research: Ocean, Ships, Wars, and the History of America. From this was developed our slogan: “Discover the ocean, the ships, the wars, and the history of America all in one unforgettable vacation, minutes from Williamsburg and a short drive to Virginia Beach.”

In 2007, surveys indicated that nature was becoming increasingly important to travelers. Also, the word “war” was not positive and the ranking of this word by travelers began to decrease. So, to test our marketing message and creative message, our advertising agency, WB, and the Newport News Tourism Development Office conducted two focus groups in Northern Virginia. From these groups we found a direction for our creative and learned that consumers still need the reference of the major destinations in our advertising. In addition, our message of ships, history & the great outdoors was right on track and this message piqued consumer interest in visiting our city. We also found that our attraction names were not known to many outside our region and their names alone would not draw interest. It was the idea of our many broad facets (Ships, History, Outdoors) that peaked interest.

Locally, whenever appropriate, we have incorporated our City’s Development phrase, *where great things are happening*, to assist with our mission and Development’s efforts to reinforce that our City offers a lot for our citizens and adds to their quality of life. Friends and family visiting represent the majority of visitors into Virginia and we must also market locally/regionally when appropriate. In addition, our focus group confirmed that the variety of attractions we offer would greatly peak their interests if they had known about everything we offer when visiting Williamsburg and Virginia Beach; therefore, marketing regionally will assist in eventually increasing awareness and/or visitation into the City.

It was suggested by our industry partners that we highlight specific top “attractors” which we have incorporated into our regional advertising/awareness.

STRATEGY Continued:

3. Target markets with this consistent message (brand) through the following:

- Website - Internet
- Social Marketing: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Blogging, etc.
- Electronic emails
- Magazine/Newspaper advertorials/Ads
- Brochure distribution outlets
- Vacation Channel
- City Channel
- Direct mail
- Brochures distributed to industry partners and displayed
- Airport advertising/awareness (Norfolk included)
- Media releases both locally and nationally
- Tradeshows, sales missions, etc.

Our Division predominately utilizes Internet/print combined (52%), Internet only (40%) and little print alone (8%) to achieve core advertising and marketing objectives contained within the NNTDO marketing plan. In addition, NNTDO partners with Virginia Tourism Corporation on joint advertising initiatives and opportunities for Newport News.

4. Create, develop and implement advertising that will generate increased consumer inquires and Web visits.

- Place Internet, print, and direct media advertising campaigns in primary target markets.
- Work closely with Virginia Tourism Corporation to maximize “buys” and look at mediums that have the potential for our City to be featured in editorial/advertorial coverage.
- Utilize online lead-generating partners to generate consumer inquiries and increase awareness.
- Offer joint advertising opportunities to NNTDO's tourism industry in order to provide affordable access to advertising
- Expand awareness of Newport News' travel product in larger cities (especially Williamsburg) to capture their interest when visiting
- Extend the brand and increase Internet buys/presence
- Implement an active National Tourism Week Campaign that features a contest and newspaper/Internet advertising to residents in and around Newport News to educate them on the importance of tourism and all there is to see and do in Newport News to increase in-state visitation and visits by their friends and relatives
- Develop cost-effective promotions such as coupons and packages etc., incentives that will convince inquirers to become visitors and keep them spending in the city once here
- Compile data and report results of the NNTDO's core advertising and marketing programs

- Manage advertising agency and NNTDO-approved sub-contractors to ensure maximum value through account service, creative, production, delivery and media buying
- Develop a system for the ongoing creation and gathering of film, video footage and still photography so that all NNTDO print and broadcast images are exciting, compelling and appealing to potential visitors
- Plan and create effective and compelling print advertisements and collateral materials through ad agency
- Coordinate professional photographer "shoot-outs" in order to increase NNTDO's inventory of professional photography
- Feature Photo/Video Contests to increase photography
- Feature contests and awareness through social media outlets
- Participate in sales missions, familiarization tours and tradeshow to develop relationships with planners in various markets and the media

Objective 3: Create Community Awareness and Appreciation

Community Awareness Mission: Train and educate our City Officials, City Council, City employees, our hospitality and business industry, Newport News Hospitality Association and our friends and family that surround Newport News to the importance of tourism and all that our City offers travelers. Newport News is a major tourism destination, with its convenient central location next to Williamsburg and a short drive to Virginia Beach. It is a City where many great things are happening!

Strategy:

1. Produce a newsletter/annual report once a year
2. Keep NNHA, industry, City and Virginia Tourism Corporation updated
3. Conduct industry meetings
4. Conduct monthly marketing staff meetings
5. Send releases to local media
6. Distribute all promotional literature to each department within the city and our industry
7. Distribute information during local festivals
8. Participate at select tradeshow
9. Provide a staffed visitor information table for large conventions/sporting events, etc.
10. Speak to local organizations
11. Broadcast on local cable channel
12. Post blog messages

13. Frequent Facebook posts/contests
14. Provide Customer Service Training twice annually
15. Organize National Tourism Week activities/contests
16. Submit marketing programs for awards
17. Distribute Newport News Ambassador Pass to City residents and current City employees

Objective 4: Work cooperatively with Economic Development and City Departments, Coastal Virginia Partners, Virginia Tourism Corporation, NNHA, the City, Virginia Hospitality Travel Association (VHTA), Virginia Association of Convention & Visitors Bureau (VACVB), Southeast Tourism Society (STS) etc.

Strategy:

1. Network and attend various industry-related conferences to learn all there is about the industry and how to effectively promote our destination. Staying abreast of the trends within this industry is critical to our success.
2. Work with Economic Development and Virginia Tourism Corporation to strengthen tourism product and create awareness of services with our business leaders/community
 - Established Tourism Zones for retail/product development specific for each zone.
3. Actively participate and volunteer on committees and provide presentations
4. Participate in the promotion and awareness of regional events/committees and any grant opportunities that might be available to our industry:
5. Work collaboratively with our regional partners (Coastal Virginia Alliance) to promote our region collectively.
 - Participate in joint advertising and or tourism program development
Past efforts have included Hi-Lite Hampton Roads, 100 Miles of Lights, African-American Heritage, Civil War Trails, OPSAIL, WWI WWII Commemoration

Objective 5: Create awareness in Group Marketing

Group Mission: Build an enthusiasm and awareness for Newport News as a destination to a variety of group markets with primary concentration on those markets not actively pursued by the majority of hotels and attractions. Ultimately, our Division does not want to duplicate efforts but enhance efforts of our hotels; therefore, our marketing initiatives will ultimately benefit the majority of our product mix of hotels and provide awareness of Newport News.

The Sales and Marketing Department develops and implements marketing programs that target the domestic travelers through third party sellers, including tour operators, tour wholesalers, retail travel agents, receptive tour operators, AAA and CAA counselors, sports/event planners, group leaders, airline representatives, travel industry trade suppliers, domestic/local media, meeting, reunion and convention planners, domestic consumers and regional visitors/residents.

Strategy:

1. Increase awareness of Newport News as a vacation/meeting destination through media releases monthly.
2. Develop new and exciting itineraries for the city.
3. Assist in providing advertorial for the group market.
4. Contact and follow up with all leads.
5. Bring potential businesses into the city. Plan and conduct familiarization tours that highlight and showcase what the planners want while highlighting Newport News.
6. Increase sales of packaged Virginia tour products offered by third party sellers, which will result in more revenue generated through partner support of sales and marketing initiatives.
7. Participate with Virginia Tourism in domestic trade and consumer shows and advertising.
8. Develop an incentive for booking groups into the city – ex. coupon book.
9. Produce and distribute a comprehensive group tour guide.
10. Utilize the Internet to promote Newport News to domestic and international third party sellers and consumers through the website and electronic customer relationship marketing.
11. Work with Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) and Coastal Virginia Alliance partners to promote African American heritage, OPSAIL, Civil War sites into sales initiatives to take advantage of its mass audience appeal.
12. Increase top-of-mind awareness among domestic third-party sellers through direct mail advertising and electronic promotional campaigns.
13. Distribute group sales video and historical video.
14. Conduct an educational workshop each year to educate our industry to group marketing.
15. Maintain membership and participation in select regional marketing partnerships including American Bus Association, North Carolina Motorcoach Association, Reunion Network, Student Youth Travel Association, PA Bus Association, Virginia Society of Association Executives, etc.
16. Partner with domestic tour operators and third party sellers to produce effective consumer promotions.
17. Ensure that sales and marketing staff have access to the most current industry sales trends and technology through membership and participation in travel industry educational programs.
18. Attend and assist hotels with their familiarization tours, as needed.
19. Assist groups with requests for proposals.

20. Assist groups and hotels with the convention services for groups coming into the city.

Objective 6: Create awareness in the Media/Film

Media Relations Mission: Work cooperatively with Virginia Tourism Corporation and Newport News' industry to promote and increase awareness for Newport News locally and nationally through increased media releases and promotional giveaways.

The Media Relations Manager works with print, broadcast and direct media to promote Newport News Tourism through publicity. The Media Relations Manager issues media releases, suggests story ideas, works with targeted media providing advertorial, and coordinates promotions that serve to raise awareness about Newport News as a tourism destination to increase inquiries and visitation.

Strategy:

1. Generate domestic publicity with an advertising equivalent value.
2. Position Newport News as a high-performing, independent entity of dedicated professionals, committed to generating economic impact to the City.
3. Work with publishers to ensure that editorial content of NNTDO's consumer publications is professional, accurate and reflects the brand and product adequately.
4. Coordinate domestic public relations strategies in primary target markets with advertising, electronic marketing, and sales.
5. Provide all advertorial and editorial for all publications as needed.
6. Generate domestic consumer inquiries through the use of public relation Activities, including media releases, interviews, media research trips, familiarization tours, and feature stories.
7. Achieve greater editorial coverage by utilizing Ships, History of America & the Great Outdoors brand in order to supplement the NNTDO's core advertising campaign in target domestic markets.
8. Implement a *National Tourism Week* publicity-campaign to residents and local officials of economic benefit to tourism and to encourage in-state visitation and visits by their friends and relatives.
9. Pitch story ideas that match interests of writers and develop relationships with top media representatives.
10. Generate additional media coverage by utilizing unique visitor demographics to target potential visitors with corresponding editorial and media releases.
11. Publish a newsletter once a year and distribute within the City.
12. Increase media coverage by offering film-related story ideas and news/feature releases to the travel media.

13. Secure placement of listings on Virginia Tourism’s website, guides and brochures.
14. Increase the circulation of any newsletter and brochures developed by maintaining a master distribution list.
15. Develop and upload bi-monthly blog posts.
16. Provide key opinion leaders with copies of articles about their jurisdictions.
17. Include local media, key opinion leaders and board members in meals or functions during media tours/FAMS.
18. Continually communicate the economic impact of tourism “message” to the travel industry, legislators and key opinion leaders.
19. Provide location scouting assistance and submit potential film locations to Virginia Film Office via digital technology.
20. Provide exceptional customer service to clients, to include such areas as assistance in finding locations, office space and accommodations, research, and logistical support.
21. Leverage local public relations department's budget for media tours by partnering with neighboring localities, their lodging and dining establishments and travel-related services willing to assist bringing in media to the City for familiarization tours.
22. Organize/participate in sales missions; bring in travel writers and organize media FAMS into the City.
23. Active participation in Mid- Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance

Objective 7: Create awareness on the Web

Web Marketing Mission: Provide an up-to-date, functional, and informative website that is found on the front page of all major search engines while working cooperatively with Virginia Tourism Corporation, the City and Newport News’ industry to promote and increase awareness for Newport News locally, nationally, and internationally through the Web since online travel booking and planning is growing by leaps and bounds.

Roughly 87% of travelers utilize the internet to assist them with their travel.

The Web Social Marketing Coordinator is an essential, integral component of the sales, marketing, advertising, and public relations programs of NNTDO. Maintenance and consistent improvement of the navigation and effectiveness of the Web site helps to achieve NNTDO’s marketing goals. This position is responsible for creating innovative electronic and social marketing promotions in partnership with the tourism industry. 52% of Facebook uses are influenced.

Strategy:

1. Maintain travel/mobile friendly top Web sites that will increase visitation to the NNTDO website(s) and the City.

- Ensure site is on the front page of major search engines through indexing and keyword tags.
- Link to as many partners in the industry to increase referrals.
- Manage and develop www.newport-news.org consumer website, all historical services websites and newportnewstourism.org.
- Develop an effective eCRM (customer relationship management) program in cooperation with the Visitor Center to provide opportunities for direct e-marketing to our tourism industry.
- Extend the brand by incorporating the *NNTDO* brand message in the content of websites and the eCRM program.
- Implement an electronic marketing campaign: Target visitors with specific interests and residents of Newport News to increase visitation and visits by their friends and relatives.
- Enhance travel planning components of consumer website by including itineraries, driving tours, advanced trip planning tools and helpful/interactive maps.
- Offer online reservation linking to consumers for immediate purchase.
- Update Calendar of Events weekly, monthly and overall site quarterly to ensure accuracy.
- Collect, analyze and report on tourism electronic marketing program effectiveness.
- Develop and grow the social networking community with Facebook, being the primary target since it is the largest social media website.
 - Feature contests
 - Develop ads
 - Daily interaction with fans
- Manage/maintain a blog for Newport-news.org.
- Create RSS Feeds.
- Investigate optimization opportunities.
- Invest in pay-per-click advertising with Google.
- Behavioral marketing campaign.
- Purchase travel related content/ads on Trip Advisor, etc.
- Create more effective and relevant title pages and meta tags for website/YouTube.

Objective 8: Manage and market a “top notch” Visitor Center and provide promotional literature to assist our residents and visitors into the city, region and state

Visitor Center Mission: Enthusiastically exceed the needs of our visitors by listening to their request(s), asking about their interests and molding a travel experience that will incorporate everything they desire and that will encourage them to visit our attractions, restaurants, hotels, etc., that will ultimately cause them to spend more money in our city.

Strategy:

1. Train all new hires and familiarize them with Newport News.
2. Provide counselors with the “Golden Rules” of what is expected of them both internally and externally.
3. Provide staff/industry ongoing training.
4. Keeping staff abreast of new products. Conduct “Go See It Tours” six times per year.
5. Provide counselors with brochures and materials that will assist them in selling our city.
6. Motivate staff.
7. Ask for their ideas on how we may better serve our visitors.
8. Conduct surveys of our visitors.
9. Mail specific requests for information.
10. Visit other Visitor Centers and research Internet to receive ideas.
11. Sell a combination ticket for Newport News and Busch Garden Tickets.
12. Utilize the Internet to assist with requests.
13. Customize suggested itineraries.
14. Provide promotional books for all front office staff.
15. Supply information on the city to our hotels, attractions, and restaurants.
16. Update hotel accommodations board for Newport News Hospitality Hotels.
17. Develop and direct a Newport News Hospitality Ambassador Program.
18. Organize FAM Tours of Newport News to educate industry representatives.
19. Provide up to date slide shows promoting on the TV Monitors at the VC.
20. Be visible, distribute information and call on all Virginia Welcome Centers and Visitor Centers, AAAs and area hotels, timeshares, restaurants and attractions.
21. Develop a driving tour for the City.
22. Have presence at East Coast Gateway and Fredericksburg Welcome Centers.
23. Distribution master database for all information and inquiries.
24. Keep statistics on visitors and inquiries.
25. Distribute weekly events calendar information to our industry.
26. Electronic marketing initiatives to past inquiries.
27. Electronic marketing to all nngov.com employees.

Promotional Literature to Assist Industry, Residents, and Visitors

Publication	Publish	Distribution Date	Distribution
Newport News Visitor Guide	Annual	Ongoing	Locally, regionally and nationally
Historical Reflections	Annual-as needed	Ongoing	Locally, regionally and nationally
Rainy Day/Shopping Guide	Online only	Ongoing	Locally
Calendar of Events	Twice annually	Fall-Spring	Locally, regionally
Arts & Sculpture	As needed	Ongoing	Locally, regionally
Newsletter/Annual Report	Annually	Spring	Locally, regionally
African-American	Online Only		Locally, regionally and nationally
Group Planner	Every two years- Online only	Fall	Locally, regionally and nationally
Coupon Booklet	As needed		Locally
Group Planning Checklist	As needed		Locally, regionally and nationally
Re-order Cards	As needed		Regionally and nationally
Restaurant Guide	As needed		
Pad Map in cooperation with NNHA	Annual-as needed	Ongoing	Locally/regionally
Electronic Flyers	Roughly 26 times a year	Summer-Spring- Winter-Fall	Regionally and nationally
Group Marketing Flyers	As needed		Nationally
Group Profile Sheet	Annually	Fall	Nationally
Promotional Video/CD(s)	As needed		Nationally
Websites	ongoing		
Ambassador Passes	Annually	Winter	Locally
VIP Passes	ongoing		Locally, regionally and nationally

Tools to Assist in Reaching Goals

- Marketing Activity Calendar. Separate document.
- Outlook - staff is required to utilize for all projects & activities.

- ACT- database management for all contacts for city, industry & clients.
- Constant Contact & Access - database management for all consumer inquires.
- Media Plan. Separate document.
- Policies & Procedures for NNTDO Staff. Separate document.

Monitoring Process

- Track visitation statistics, tax revenue, total expenditures and jobs.
- Analyze Google Analytics.
- Search Internet for Newport News, VA.
- Track inquiries by lead source.
- Track occupancy, average daily rate and transient room revenue.
- Industry/city participation and feedback.
- Consumer use/demand of promotional literature.

Results

- Opportunities presented to our industry for cooperative advertising opportunities.
- Partnerships and/or collaboration with Economic Development and City Departments, tourism industry professionals, Tourism Advisory Board, Coastal Virginia Alliance regional partners, VTC and NNHA professionals through training, social media, the Ambassador Pass, National Tourism & Travel Week, pad map, tradeshow, FAM tours, sales missions/trade shows and cooperative awareness, marketing and advertising opportunities, etc.
- Occupancy and tourism-related revenue maintains and begins an upturn increasing roughly 2% annually beginning in 2013, barring no economic/world upsets.
- Total travel expenditures increased by 1% annually.
- Facebook fans and Web sites visits stabilize and begin to incline baring no economic crisis/budget/staff reductions.
- Consistent advertising messages based on research, is delivered.
- Visitor satisfaction is above average and measured through questionnaires.