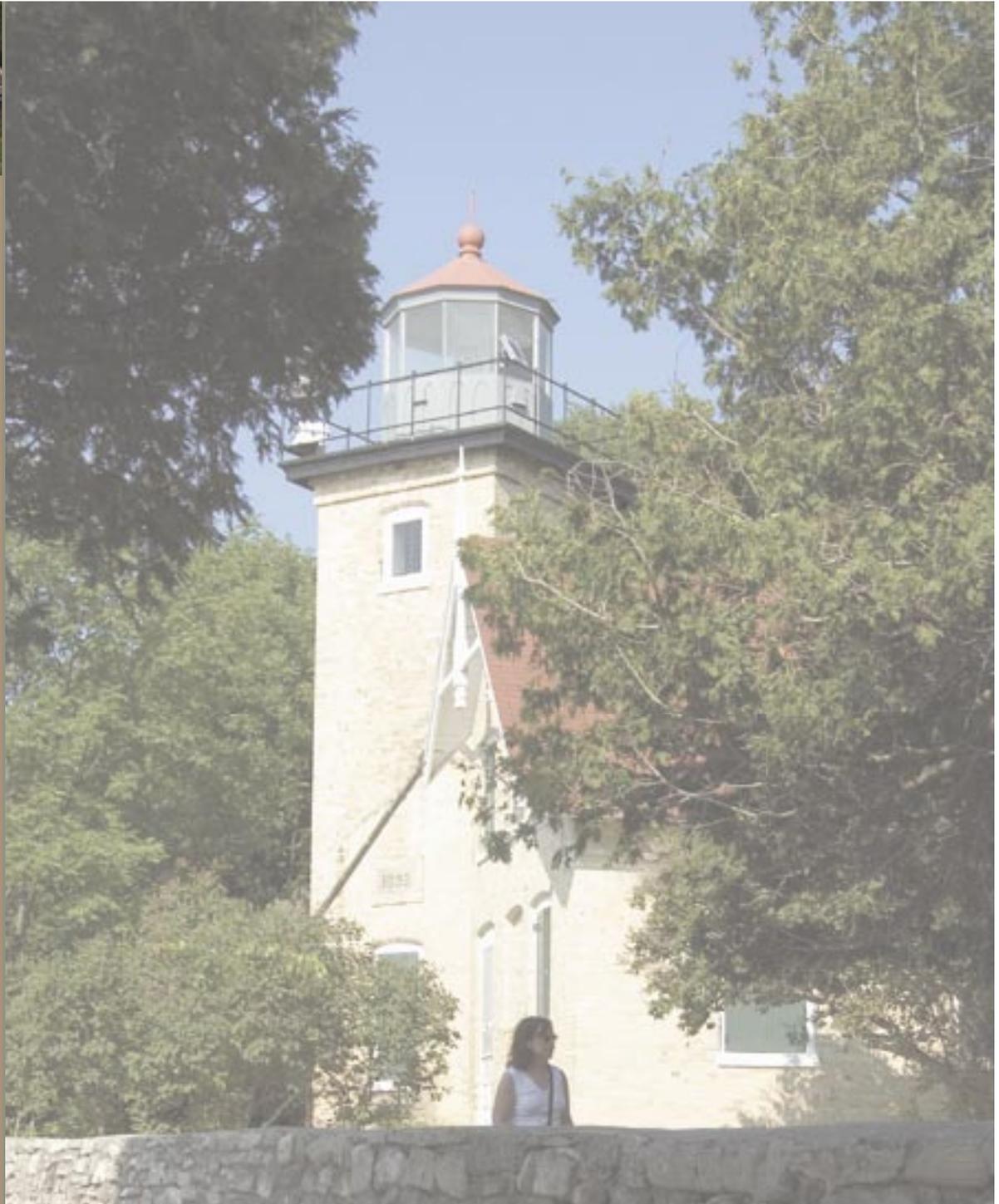




JULY 2005



DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN

VISITOR/TOURISM ASSESSMENT

Door County, Wisconsin • July, 2005

First impressions

...and some ideas to increase tourism spending.



In July of 2005, a Tourism Assessment of the Door County area was conducted, and presented in a two-hour workshop.

A "Tourism Assessment" is a process in which the area is looked at from the eyes of a visitor. No prior research was facilitated, no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project, and the towns and surrounding areas were "secretly shopped."

The assessment is a no-holds-barred look at the community from a visitor's perspective. It includes marketing, signage, things to see and do (attractions mix), critical mass, ease of getting around, customer service, availability of visitor amenities (information, rest rooms, parking, etc.), general appeal, and the community's ability to attract overnight visitors, who spend three times that of day visitors.

There are two primary elements to the assessment process:

- 1) A Marketing Effectiveness Assessment
- 2) On-site Assessment

In the Marketing Effectiveness Assessment three people were asked to plan trips into the region both as a leisure and business traveler. They are not told in advance what communities are actually being assessed. They are to use whatever resources they would typically use in planning a trip: travel guides, brochures, the internet, calling visitor information centers, etc.

The community has four opportunities to close the sale:

- Personal contact (visitor information, trade shows, etc.)
- Internet (websites)
- Brochures and printed materials
- Word of mouth (referrals, image)

In this process we test all four methods by contacting area visitor information services and attractions, looking for activities via the internet, requesting and reviewing printed materials, and asking visitors and regional contacts about their opinions of the area. This last method also includes looking at on-line articles, AAA Tour Book reviews, etc.

The findings determine how "visible" the community is during the research and whether or not the materials and/or per-

sonal contacts were good enough to “close the sale,” convincing the potential visitor to make the community worth either a day trip, stop, or an overnight stay.

The On-site Assessment process includes a look at enticement from freeways and highways (signs, billboards, things that would pull a visitor off the primary roadways), beautification, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public restrooms, visitor information, parking), things to see and do, overall appeal of the community, business attractiveness (drawing power), signage (public and private), customer service, area attractions (things that might prompt a visitor to spend the night), retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass (are these things concentrated in a pedestrian-oriented area?), availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The “Recommendations” made herein are referred to as “suggestions,” as they were developed without consulting the local community. It will be up to the community to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we have provided a low-cost suggestion (when possible) on how the challenge, obstacle or negative element can be corrected. It’s important to point out, that to increase the community’s tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions will have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all of them, can have a profoundly successful impact on the community’s ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a community effort - involving both privately owned businesses as well as county and state agencies, where appropriate.

A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO or CVB, Chamber, etc.) cannot be successful if the tourism effort is not a community-wide effort.

Tourism is largely a private-sector industry, after all, the benefit of tourism is to convince visitors to come, spend money, then go home. That spending takes place, primar-

ily, in local businesses.

Product development is far more of a driving factor in tourism than marketing. After all, you must be able to deliver on your marketing promises. Visitors are drawn to activities, not cities or counties.

The Visitor/Tourism Assessment took place over a four day period - three days in the community, and one day spent assessing the marketing efforts, providing a low-cost overall assessment with ideas the community can discuss and hopefully implement.

Successful tourism translates to cash

- The idea is to import more cash into your community than you export. When local residents earn money in the community and spend some of it outside the community, this is referred to as “leakage.” Tourism is a way to fill that gap, importing cash into the community, without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services.

Communities with successful tourism programs will see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas communities which don’t have successful tourism programs find that they are subsidizing visitors - providing services which visitors use, but don’t leave enough money behind to cover the cost of having them available.

There are three kinds of tourism

• 1. Status quo

If you do nothing to further the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, just by the fact that some visitors will pull off local highways or freeways for services (gas, food, lodging), and by the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have tourism.

• 2. Getting people to stop

Getting people to stop is always the first priority of successful tourism. Imagine how successful the businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through (there are hundreds of thousands every year) pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community.

And if there's a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which almost always translates to additional spending.

• 3. Becoming the destination

You cannot be a successful tourism destination if you can't get people to stop. And to become the destination, you must have attractions (things to see and do) or amenities that will convince visitors to spend the night.

Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors making a "pit stop."

The Four-Times Rule

• Visitors will make it a point of stopping or staying in your community if you have enough to offer to keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes). If a visitor drives an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

In a nutshell, if you hope to keep visitors overnight, you must make it worth the drive.

The more you have to offer, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay. This is why rural communities MUST typically market more than just the immediate downtown areas. You need to market neighboring communities, outdoor recreational opportunities, exploration, and discovery.

Finally, you must also be different. Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as a primary draw. But if residents living in the markets you're hoping to attract can enjoy the same activities closer to home, then why should they go out of their way or the extra distance to visit you?

Critical mass means cash

- While it may not be the primary reason *why* visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity - and where visitors spend the most amount of money - other than lodging.

Do you have a pedestrian-oriented shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many rural communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” which would include visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, well-landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb is seven to nine retail stores (more on that in a minute), and three or more dining establishments which can include sit-down restaurants, espresso bars, cafes, dessert and ice cream shops, etc.

“Visitor Retail” would include antique stores, galleries, collectibles, souvenir shops, T-shirt shops, outfitters, bike and jeep rentals, guided tour operations, activity shops (kites, hiking, climbing gear, etc.), home accents, jewelry, old-fashioned hardware stores, casinos, entertainment facilities such as movie theaters, pubs, etc.

By grouping these businesses together, you will create the “critical

mass” in a pedestrian setting that will draw visitors and will make it worth their while to stop and shop.

Have you ever noticed at major intersections you will see a Chevron, Union 76, Conoco, and Shell on each of the four corners? Or how about fast food franchises? McDonald’s, Burger King, Jack In The Box, and Wendy’s on each corner. You would think these places would avoid being next to the competition, but they know that visitors are drawn to the “critical mass” where they have multiple choices that are convenient.

Where are your visitor-oriented shops? If they are spread out, they will be marginally successful when it comes to tapping into visitor spending. Put them all together, and you have what it takes to get visitors out of their cars (or busses and RV’s) and into your stores.

Market the broader package

- Every community **MUST** market more than just the community in order to be successful with their tourism efforts.

Remember the Four-Times Rule and also remember that visitors don't stay within or care about boundaries - so market the attractions you have around your community that might keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some shopping, or an overnight stay.

The more you have to offer "collectively," the longer visitors will stay. And the longer they stay, the more they spend.

You must be different or better than everyone else

- To become a destination community where you're the place visitors spend the night or multiple days, you must set yourself apart from everyone else.

In order to make your community "worth the drive" and/or "worth a special trip," you must be better or different from other competing communities.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, adopted its Shakespeare Festival which runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. It became "different" than other communities and the festival set it apart.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and all of their events revolve around the Bavarian theme. The town is one of the primary tourist attractions in Washington state, hosting more than two million visitors annually. They have something different to offer.

Okanogan County, Washington (just south of the Canadian border in central Washington) is an outdoor recreational paradise - but so are 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guide books, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising ef-

forts. They started using quotes along the line of "Pinch Yourself, you're in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent."

This, and numerous other quotes, makes it "worth the extra drive" to visit Okanogan Country. They used third party endorsements to show that they are the "best."

Just look at how powerful movie ratings are when it comes to box office receipts. "Two thumbs up" carries a lot of weight.





Having worked in 37 states and 260+ communities, Door County should be marketed as a national attraction and a national treasure. Enough cannot be said about the character of the area, the beautiful towns and the people throughout the county. The county is worthy of a special trip from anywhere in the U.S. - not just a playground for Midwest residents.

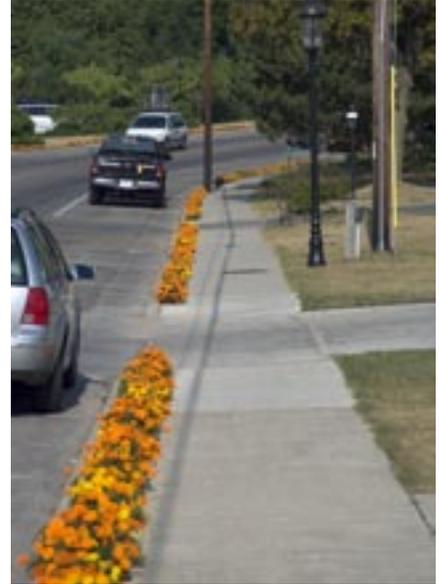
1. First impressions are lasting impressions



First impressions are lasting impressions and the large majority of people and businesses throughout Door County understand this concept very well. It is a stunningly beautiful place to visit. Even more importantly, local businesses understand the power of beautification, curb appeal, attractive signage, and ambiance. Congratulations on a job well done.



TOURISM ASSESSMENT & SUGGESTIONS



While performing the assessment we took more than 200 photos showcasing the beauty and character of the county, which is outstanding. While the flower buffers (above) may be a lot of work to maintain, they are well worth the effort. It draws visitors in, and keeps them in town longer - translating to additional spending and strong community pride.





Suggestion #1

The Jefferson Street Shops in Sturgeon Bay are terrific. The banners, however, could be more colorful and decorative to really showcase the ambiance of this “arts district.” Consider replacing these with banners along the lines of those created in downtown Appleton (below) in terms of color and design.



The beautiful signage and landscaping drew us into this terrific bakery, where we spent both time and money - showing a return on investment for creating exceptional curb appeal.



Suggestion #2

Sturgeon Bay is a terrific town although we were disappointed at the lack of nightlife in town. The Jefferson Street Shops were terrific, although much of the allure was due to the fact that our arrival coincided with the festival.

Sturgeon Bay should be part of the Door County overall marketing effort as the gateway community into the peninsula. We were disappointed to see them doing their own thing as opposed to being part of the larger picture. The overall marketing of the community could be dramatically improved. Individual, truly unique, shops should be showcased and promoted. Nothing will sell Door County as well as photography - not just of scenic vistas, but in terms of shopping, dining, activities (like biking), overall ambiance, marinas, etc.





Suggestion #3

Really promote and play up the Scandinavian heritage of the area. It differentiates Door County from other scenic or recreational areas in the Midwest. Promote specific shops, bakeries and restaurants that have received accolades or exceptional reviews. Don't let politics kill your efforts! Jettison the generic. Remember, while the primary draw to Door County may be recreation, the number one activity will be shopping and dining where visitors spend the most money.



Suggestion #4

The Red Barn is beautifully landscaped with tremendous curb appeal. The sign, however should promote the lure first - "Gifts for Gardeners." This is the reason people will visit. Gifts for Gardeners should be at the top of the sign and very prominent. The Red Barn and McKeetry & Yeomans, should be secondary because they don't tell the visitor what you are selling and don't provide a reason to stop.



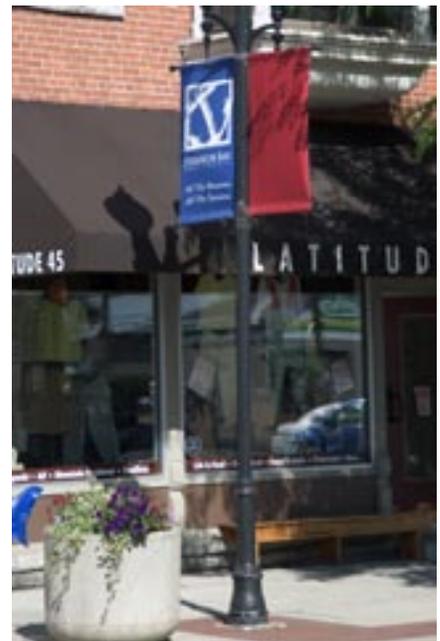


Suggestion #6

With an exceptional nautical heritage, Sturgeon Bay should consider replacing the plain red banners (right) with different nautical flags. There are dozens of flag designs and these would add terrific color and would reinforce the town's overall nautical brand.

Suggestion #5

Sturgeon Bay needs to work on downtown beautification efforts. Consider adding planters like those in Neenah, WI (center left), or in Leavenworth, WA (below). As noted before, beautification is an investment with a solid return. Look at the efforts in downtown Appleton as a perfect example.





Suggestion #7

While it may not be a concern now, communities should rethink the two-hour parking limits. In a pedestrian friendly shopping village, visitors will typically spend four hours dining and shopping. Because local workers can't be trained to park in designated areas, customers, and ultimately businesses, are punished by chasing away customers before they are done spending. As Sturgeon Bay develops additional retail, entertainment, and dining options, extending parking limits will be very important.

Suggestion #8

The City of Sturgeon Bay should consider replacing its wayfinding signage with something more colorful and easier to read. Suggestion: Follow more of a nautical theme and don't promote "city of" but just Sturgeon Bay. The lettering should be twice the existing size. General rule of thumb: 1" for every 12' of distance. Lettering on these signs should be at least 3" to 4" tall. The directional information on the current signs are only visible a car length away - too late to change lanes or directions. Note the signage Appleton uses (below left).





Suggestion #10

Visitors love walking in pedestrian friendly settings, but quite often it was dangerous to simply cross the street (below right). Crosswalks are poorly marked or are nonexistent, and pedestrians are continually having to dodge vehicles - most of which don't stop when pedestrians are waiting to cross the street. While this is probably more the fault of visitors than locals, it should be addressed. Note the crosswalk treatments used in Lee, Massachusetts (below), to call attention to crosswalks.



Suggestion #9

First impressions are lasting impressions. A local recommended we visit this supper club, but our impressions were that this is a place to avoid: The dated, low quality signage and overall curb appeal told us we wouldn't find very good food. Not understanding how a supper club works, we stayed a few minutes waiting for service and then left to find another place to eat. Visitors are very judgmental, and this told us that supper clubs were not for us.



A classic sign we'll be able to use in signage workshops. Just plain fun, while clearly making the point.

Kiosks never sleep



Suggestion #11

It is very important that visitor information be provided on a 24 hour, 365 day basis. This can be done through exterior directories (left in Ashland, OR), or stand-alone visitor information kiosks. Our favorite, and one that best fits the character of Door County, is the gazebo (below) that is used in Beatty, Nevada. Having these in a dozen places throughout the county, including at state parks, would be a great way to cross sell attractions, communities, and events. Kiosks should also include brochure distribution, maps and “must see” attractions information including photos (see next page).



TOURISM ASSESSMENT & SUGGESTIONS



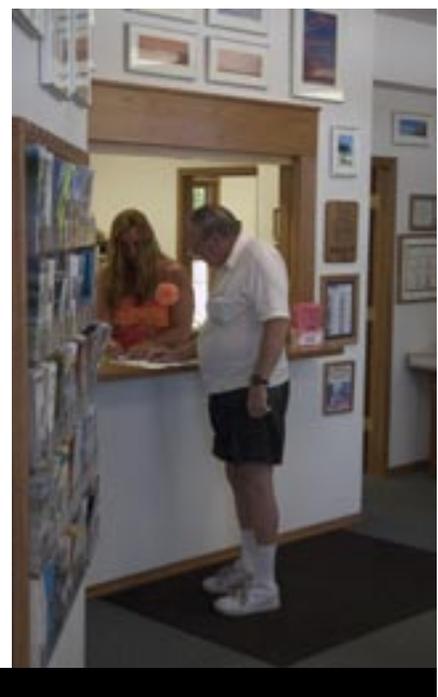
In Stevenson, Washington, they created an 8-panel kiosk that has terrific diorama's of must see attractions in the area. While it's missing any brochure distribution, it does provide a low-cost alternative to a gazebo concept.



Suggestion #12

The Door County Chamber has an excellent visitor information center in a great location. It is easy to find and well marked. Should the sign ever need to be repainted, consider making the words "Visitor Center" bolder and more prominent. Also add "24 hour information."

The visitor center is well laid out, and staff/volunteers do an excellent job assisting visitors.





Suggestion #13

Most visitors are not proponents of electronic visitor information for many reasons:

1. Only one person at a time can use an electronic kiosk.
2. They have to have a pen and paper in order to write down information. Nothing can replace taking a brochure or printed information with you.
3. Electronic kiosks are notorious for not working correctly or at all.
4. In this case, the information is simply a list of chamber members, and offers little if anything on attractions, things to see and do, etc.

Door County is a driving destination, meaning that visitors need brochures, visitor guides, maps, and other information they can take with them. While information is available elsewhere throughout the county, it should be available at this gateway on a 24/7, 365 day basis.

Suggestion #14

Consider adding visitor information at each of the state parks. You do the work, not Parks, who are already underfunded. This will allow the county to cross-sell each of the parks, the communities, and visitor attractions. There was little or no information at the state parks cross selling anything - not even each other. Adding visitor information will increase local spending and will create more repeat visits, and will encourage longer stays in the county.





Suggestion #15

Bailey's Harbor has done an excellent job of providing information including brochure distribution (left). However, the kiosks could use more specifics of things to see and do in the community, and throughout the county. Don't get territorial: visitors are here for the whole experience.



Suggestion #16

The Washington Island visitor information center (below) is beautiful, in a terrific location, but doesn't provide any 24 hour visitor information. A gazebo in the front lawn area here would be ideal.





Suggestion #17

The Ephraim information center was a little more challenging to locate since the sign pointed to the left side of the highway, while the information center was on the right. The sign was difficult to read from a passing car. Once again, there is no 24/7 visitor information and the center was closed each time we went through the area.



Suggestion #18

Christmas in July? If the lighting is intended to draw attention to the visitor information center (which is very cute), consider using rope lights or something less seasonal. Add landscape barrels or planters around the building to make it more attractive along with brochure holders and/or 24/7 kiosk.



Suggestion #19

We had a difficult time finding the Egg Harbor information center - the highway signage is very easy to miss. In fact, had it not been for the fact that the assessment workshop was held next door, we would have missed it entirely.

Once again, 24/7 visitor information is needed. This is a very nice visitor information center, well laid out, with a very helpful staff.

Ghost stories make the campfire memorable



Suggestion #20

The maritime museum in Sturgeon Bay is remarkable. Throughout the county there are great museums and attractions that need to be better promoted individually.

Each, however, should concentrate more on telling stories, than on the display of artifacts. Visitors are drawn to stories far more than things.

The Farm does an excellent job immersing its guests in the farm experience. This is a must-see attraction for kids of all ages.





Suggestion #21

Finding the entrance into The Farm was a tad difficult and could be more clearly marked. Once inside, it's a delightful place to be. The walking trails, history, combined with hands-on exhibits, etc. make this a must for kids and parents, educating them about this agricultural area of the country.



Suggestion #22

Cultural attractions around the county are outstanding, but need to work on engaging the visitor more with stories of the culture, hardships, etc.





Suggestion #23

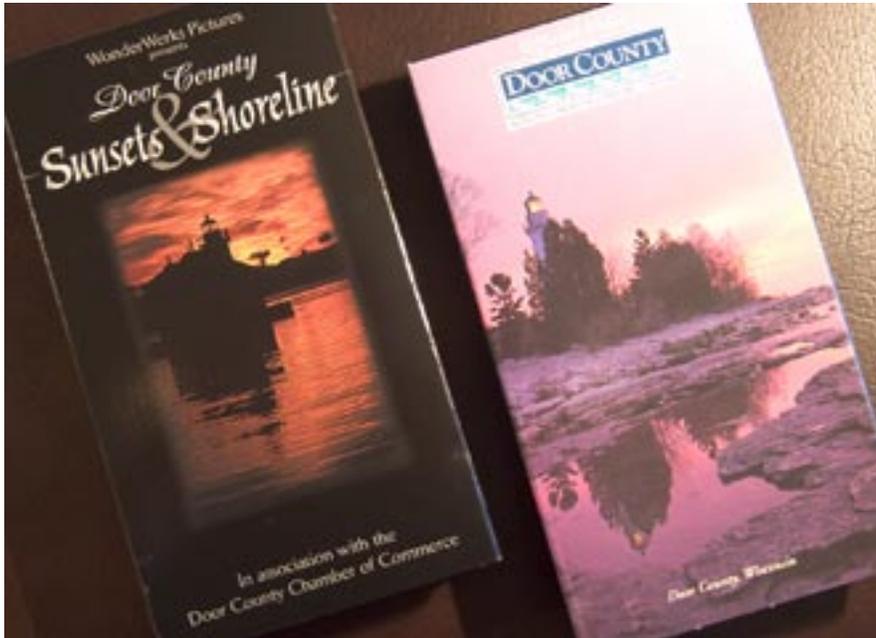
The Jacobsen Museum could use better (professionally produced) signage, but is a terrific attraction. Once again, the focus should be more on the stories of Mr. Jacobsen and the lives of the settlers, and less on the display of artifacts.



Summary

All in all, the on-site assessment yielded just small things that need to be worked on. Most rural communities across the country require substantial investment in product development initiatives. In the case of Door County, the challenge will be keeping it from becoming a victim of its own success. Things that need to be addressed include better wayfinding signage (decorative signage), 24/7 visitor information, and a unified marketing effort, as opposed to each community doing its own thing. The more you have to offer collectively, the further visitors will come and the longer they will stay. Successful tourism is about keeping visitors longer and keeping them coming back. It's length of stay more than the number of visitors.



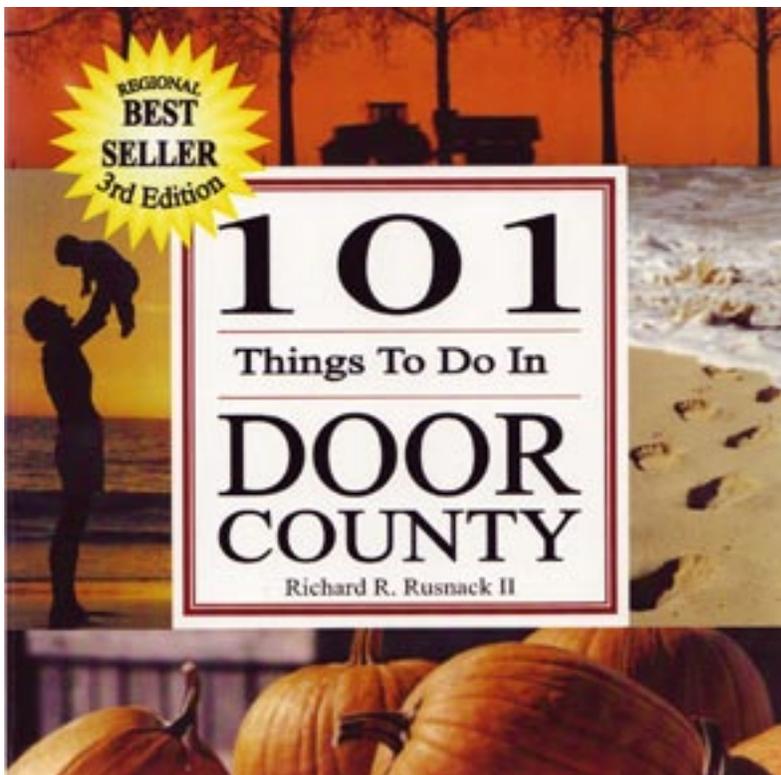


Suggestion #24

Redevelop your videos - both of them. While creative, neither does an effective job of selling experiences: Activities and specific places to see, things to do. Consider creating several three to five-minute videos selling a variety of experiences:

- Scandinavian culture
- Fish Boils
- Biking and hiking
- Boating
- Scenic drives
- Dining on the peninsula
- The Villages of Door County

These, in condensed versions, could be placed on the Door County website.

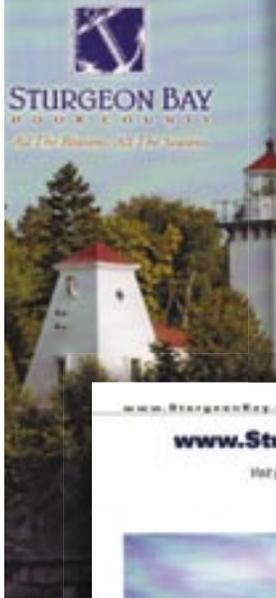


Suggestion #25

This little book (left) did more to market Door County than all the other marketing materials. Why? Because it showcases specifics, not just generalities. Consider creating something along this line that would include color photography of each attraction. You might even consider a series of smaller books for each niche market like those listed above plus others:

- Hidden drives of Door County
- The best fishing spots
- Quiet scenic spots
- The biking guide to Door County
- Wineries and Eateries Guide
- The Gallery Guide and artists in action

Don't promote just places, but activities in those places. You must promote SPECIFICS, including businesses totally unique to the area. Surrounding businesses will benefit.



**ALL THE REASONS.
ALL THE SEASONS.**

Welcome to Sturgeon Bay, your perfect all-seasons gateway. We're proud to feature Door County's widest selection of specialty shops, fine restaurants, museums and lodging accommodations with year-round service.

While you're here, stroll through our charming downtown where you'll find quaint eateries and unique shops filled with antiques, fine art and holiday selections. Admire picturesque lighthouses, fascinating galleries, entertaining parks to go, skiing or water skiing, or enjoy the gateway for your reunion for families you love.

www.SturgeonBay.net

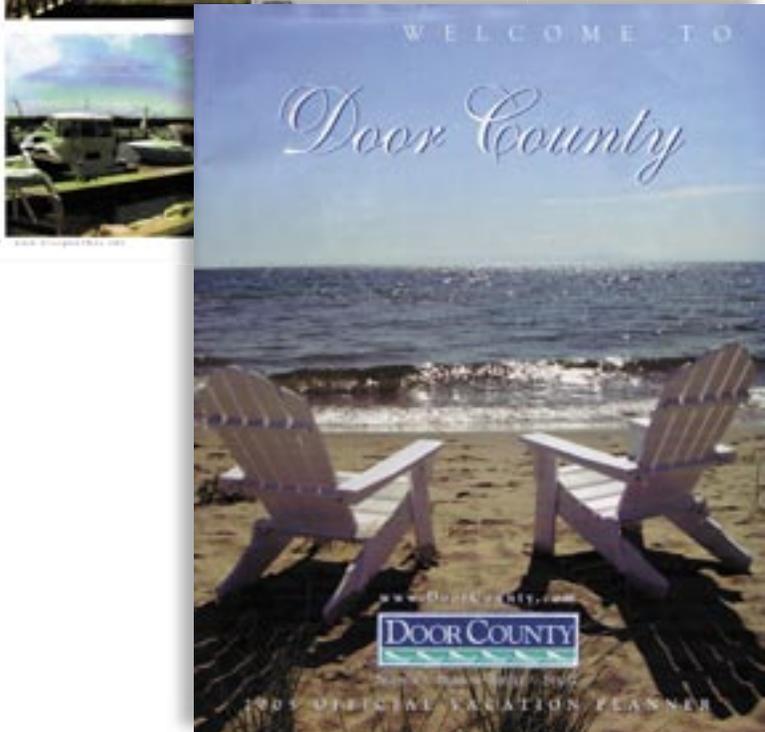
www.SturgeonBay.net Your Online Guide to Sturgeon Bay

Visit www.SturgeonBay.net for the latest information on where to stay and what to do while visiting the cultural center of the Door Peninsula

STOP BY TO DISCOVER:

- **UPCOMING REASONS TO VISIT**, including festivals and special events
- **LODGING** - Bed & breakfast inns, motels, resorts, condos, cottages and guest houses
- **CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS** - Art galleries and museums
- **OUTDOOR RECREATION** - Golf courses, sailing and fishing charters and bike and boat rentals
- **ENTERTAINMENT** - Carriage rides, trolley rides, tours and live theater
- **DINING** - Restaurants offering culinary delights for every palate
- **SHOPPING** - Where to find the perfect gift
- **CITY, COUNTY AND STATE PARKS** - Perfect places to enjoy the unique beauty of the peninsula

And while you're on the Web, check out Sturgeon Bay's newest Web site, www.SturgeonBayHotels.com - A Fitting and Booking Guide. Find out how, when and where to find the best lodging spots in Sturgeon Bay.



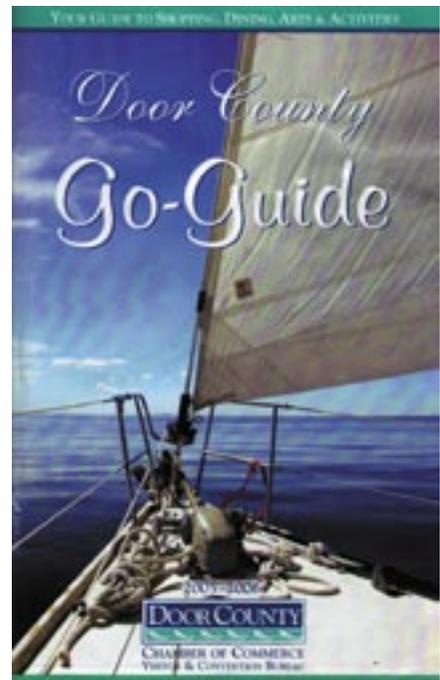
Suggestion #26

Politics is the killer of tourism. You MUST promote specifics regardless of memberships. What does Door County have that I can't get closer to home? There are many beautiful places in Wisconsin and other neighboring states. Activities must be promoted including specific shops, restaurants, trail systems, etc.

Most of the marketing materials we saw provide lists of members and did little to convince us to actually visit Door County. Word of mouth has been far more effective than actual marketing materials.

It's unfortunate to see Sturgeon Bay with its own visitor guide and the rest of Door County separately.

The Go Guide is perhaps the best resource for visitors already on the peninsula. Why three different guides?



Avoid

- Marketing just cities
- Avoid these words:**
- Explore
 - Discover
 - Outdoor recreation
 - We have it all
 - Naturally Fun
 - The four season destination
 - Something for everyone
 - Historic downtown
 - Center of it all
 - Gateway

Note

Branding is the art of differentiation. Branding is how you are perceived or what you are known for. While Door County is known for its natural beauty, visitor spending comes from specific activities and the diversions: shopping, dining, quaint and luxurious accommodations, etc.

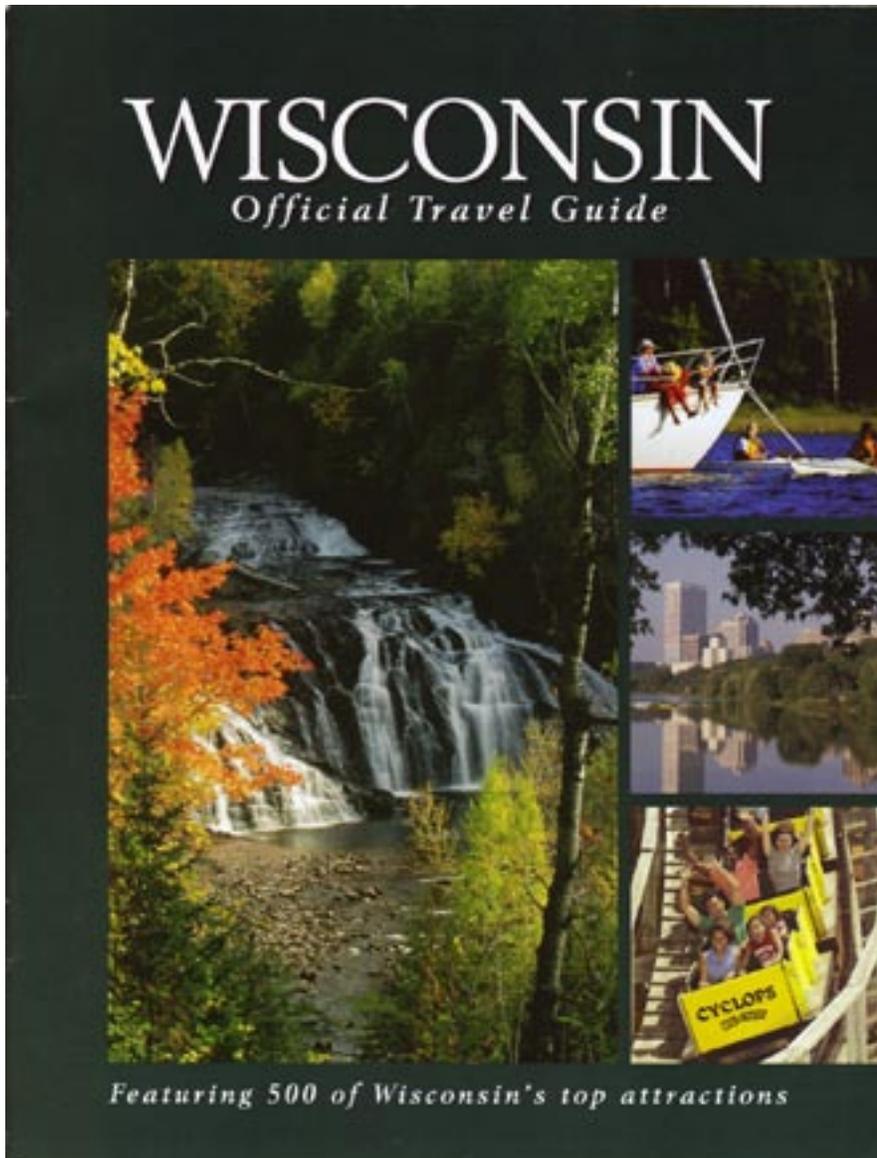
In your marketing efforts, avoid the generic. Tell me “WHY” I should visit.

**You ARE the best. Now tell the world.
Be worthy of a standing ovation.**



Suggestion #27

Purchase guide books and start using third-party endorsements about Door County. Use quotes to elevate you above the competition. We found many quotes that should be the focus of the marketing effort (next pages).



Suggestion #28

Use the following (from the state's official travel guide):
"Named one of the "Top 10 Vacation Destinations in North America," by Money Magazine. With more state parks (5), lighthouses (10), galleries (100), and miles of shoreline (250) than any other county in the country, this 75 mile long peninsula combines pristine scenery with acclaimed performing arts, renowned galleries and shops, and pampering accommodations."

This paragraph should be headlining ALL of your marketing efforts. All by itself, it says you are a place worth a trip across the country. Every ad headliner should read *"One of the Top 10 Vacation Destinations in North America"* - Money Magazine.

In Key to the Door Illustrated, there is another quote that should be used: *"A recent visitor said she has shopped all over the East Coast and Europe and believes Door County has more unique, one-of-a-kind shops than anywhere she has ever visited. Readers of Midwest Living voted Door County as the "Best Place to Find a Unique Gift."*

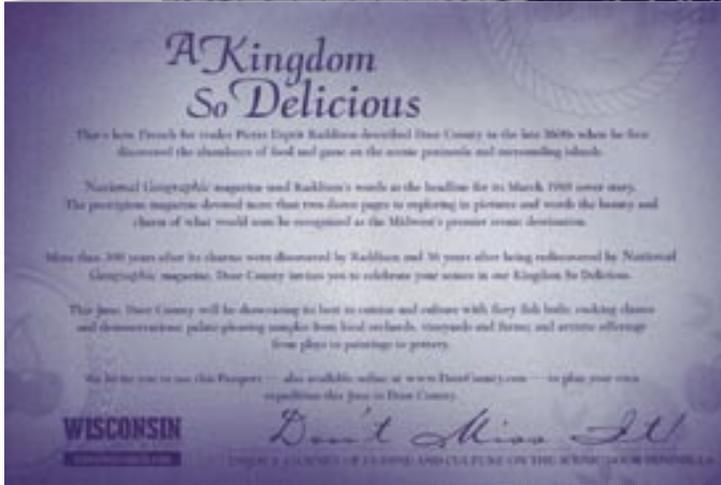
In Fodor's Compass American Guides: *"Door County invites comparison to Cape Cod, which it exceeds in attributes such as developmental restraint, picturesque cliffs, sandy beaches, dunes, numerous parks, Victorian charm, and abundant orchards."*

Use these and other quotes!



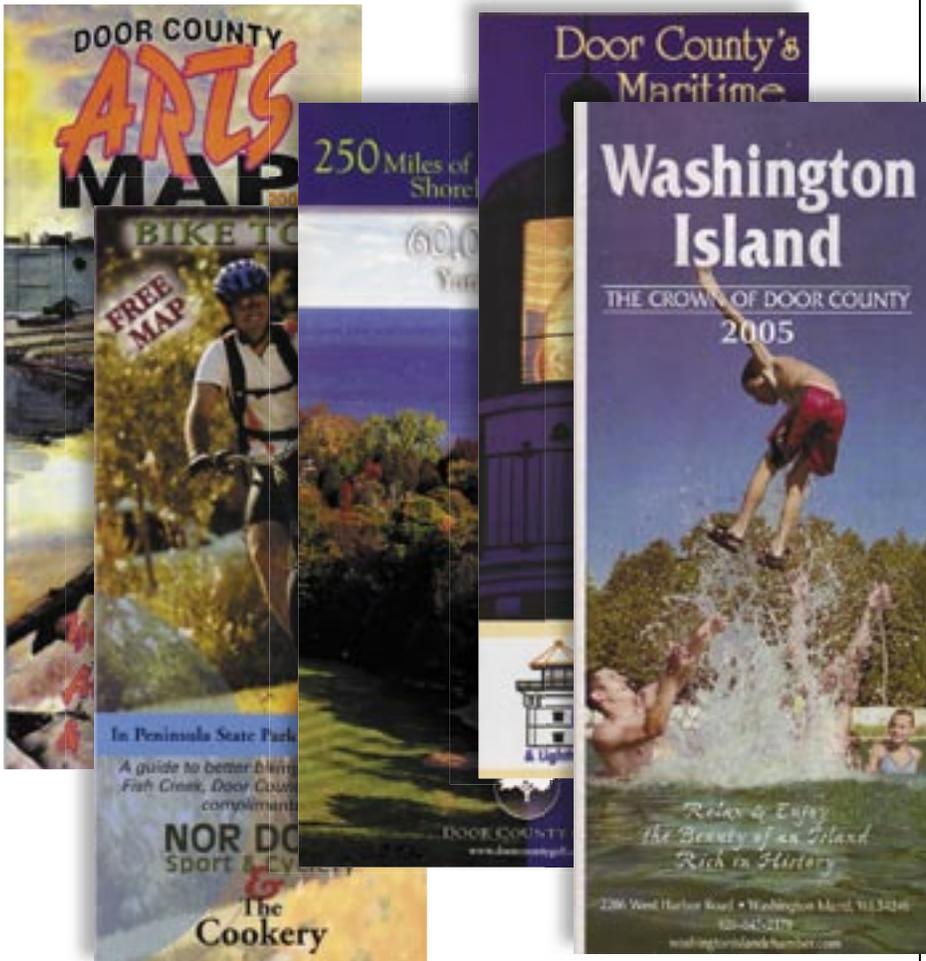
Suggestion #29

While this is a nice brochure and capitalizes on a quote, it doesn't really say anything. Instead, concentrate on quotes that give visitors a reason to visit. Tell me WHY instead.



Suggestion #30

Develop a style guide that will reinforce the brand. Everyone should be using the Door County logo, and graphic design standards with common graphic elements or colors should be used to create a strong branding effort. Guidance would be given to other organizations when developing marketing materials. There are dozens of brochures, but none of them have any continuity.



This requires a lot of work, but will be well worth it in the long run.



**Sell the rapids, not the river.
Always sell experiences, not just places.**

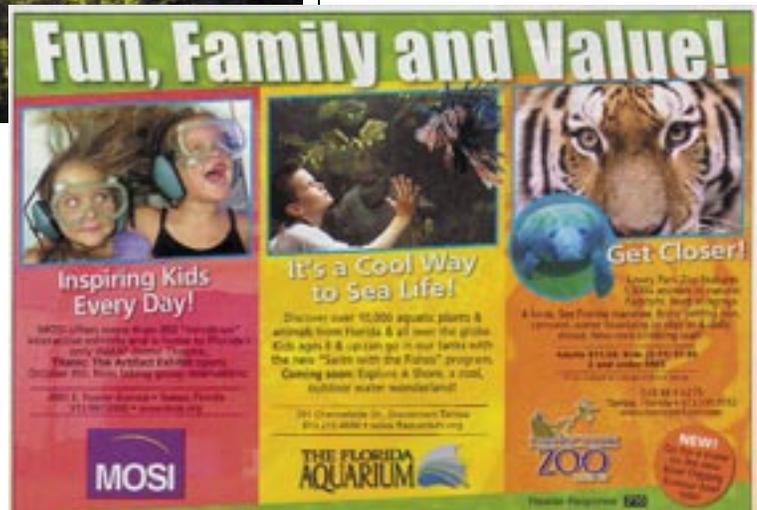


Suggestion #31

Get community buy-in for the overall brand. Assist with graphic standards. When marketing, consider creating an identity for each community, that will be unique, but might incorporate a common graphic element, such as the wave (left).

Remember: Scenic vistas set the ambiance, but only last an average of seven minutes. Visitors are drawn to activities and experiences over places.

Tampa Bay, Florida (below) promotes the Museum of Science and Industry, The Florida Aquarium, and the Lowry Park Zoo. Not just “visit Tampa - we have something for everyone.”





Wisconsin's shopping place®

- **FOX RIVER MALL – WISCONSIN'S SECOND LARGEST**
- **VIBRANT DOWNTOWN APPLETON**
- **HISTORIC DOWNTOWN NEENAH**

Come and see why the Fox Cities are Wisconsin's shopping place.



www.foxcities.org _____ 1-800-236-6673

Continued

Even the Fox Cities found themselves promoting a “Refreshing Change of Place.” Does it make you want to go there? Does it tell you WHY you should go there?

The Fox Cities new campaign revolves around “Wisconsin’s Shopping Place.” The area is home to every major brand found in the U.S. It’s home to nearly five million feet of retail stores. It is home to the state’s second largest mall.

The Fox Cities is already becoming the place to shop in Wisconsin. Sure, the area has a lot to offer, but the lure is shopping. The other attractions are diversions. The average visitor will spend four to six hours participating in the primary activity, and eight hours doing secondary activities.

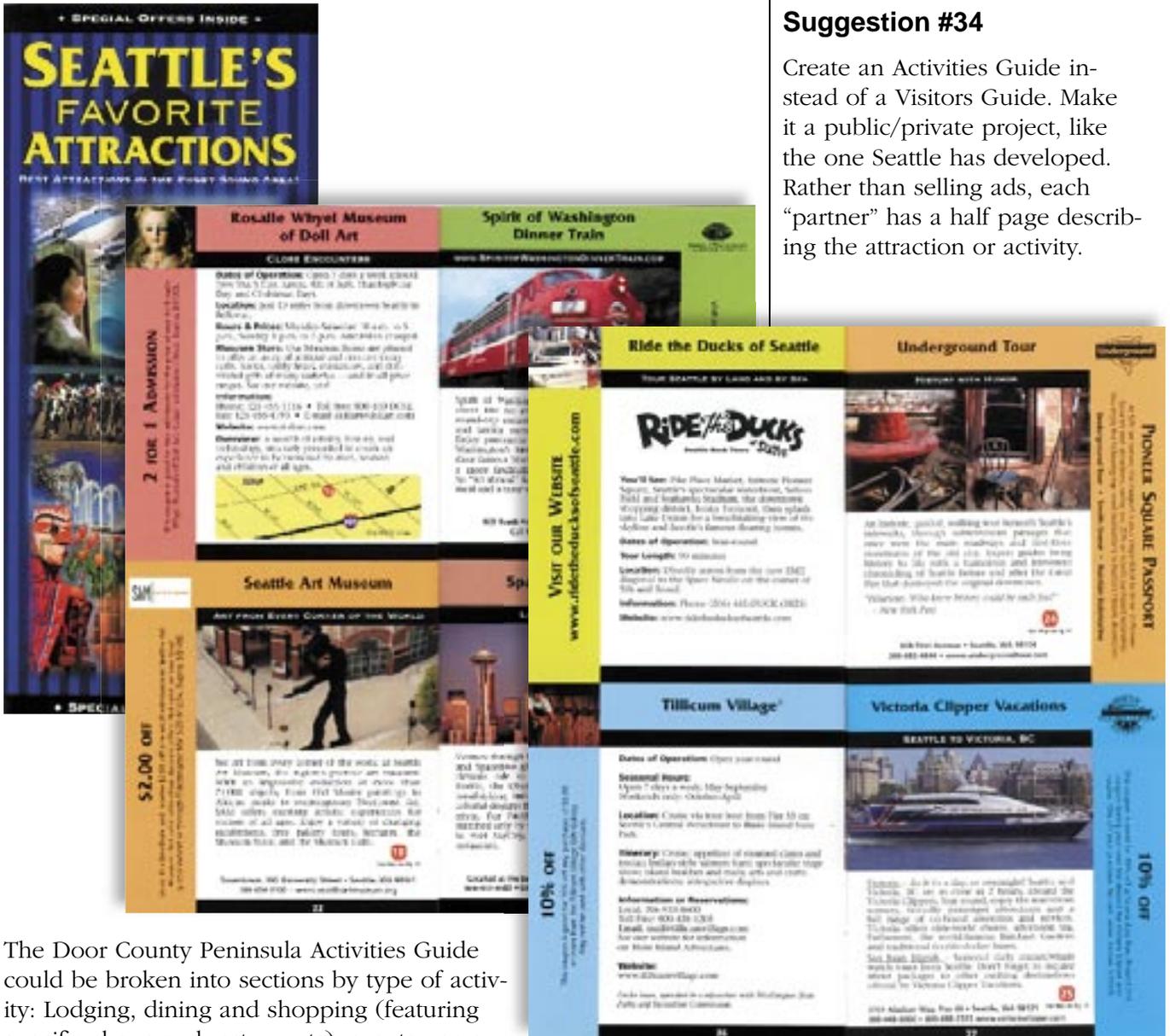
Suggestion #32

Begin promoting not just Door County, but “Door County Peninsula.” Would you rather go to Napa County or Napa Valley. By using the word “peninsula” visitors get a sense of place - the ambiance of a waterfront community. Napa Valley sounds like a destination. Napa County doesn’t. “Door County Peninsula.” A perfect comparison.



Suggestion #33

Raise the bar. You're not the Dells. Door County is a world-class destination, which can attract the biggest spenders. You need to look the part, which starts with the development of all new marketing materials. This, of course, requires additional funding, which should come from implementation of a lodging tax - like the rest of the country.



Suggestion #34

Create an Activities Guide instead of a Visitors Guide. Make it a public/private project, like the one Seattle has developed. Rather than selling ads, each “partner” has a half page describing the attraction or activity.

The Door County Peninsula Activities Guide could be broken into sections by type of activity: Lodging, dining and shopping (featuring specific shops and restaurants), events, recreation, culture and the arts, etc.



Suggestion #35

Remember who you are. As a great escape for high-end guests (households with incomes of \$75,000 annually contribute 83% of all visitor spending), will slogans like “Go jump in a lake” attract these people? Would it work for Nantucket or Cape Cod? With an abundance of performing and visual arts, galleries, unique shops, wineries, etc. move your marketing effort to attract these types of visitors.

Don't use negatives to promote the area.

There's nothing wrong with using the headline “One of North America's Top 10 Destinations” on every ad followed by “The Door County Peninsula, Wisconsin.”

Attract an upscale market and don't try to compete with Wisconsin Dells and other areas. Cater to the baby boom generation. They control 70% of the nation's wealth. Tourism is about importing cash into the community, so work to attract those with the highest disposable incomes.

Suggestion #36

In your advertising, use the top third of every co-op ad to promote Door County, and the remaining two-thirds to promote businesses. For instance, the Glidden Lodge will benefit by marketing the reason to visit the area (top third of the ad) and then in their portion that they are the place to stay.

Do not promote events as the primary lure to the county unless they are totally unique to the area. Even then, only promote the top tier events and those that repeat every year.

**Let your fingers do the walking.
Websites and the internet: Priority number 1**



The following pages have to do with using the internet to its full potential. Following the suggestions, is an article I recently wrote that includes some tips on how to make your website a more powerful selling tool.

Suggestion #37

The Activities Guide, once developed, should be downloadable on the website as should ALL of your brochures and guides.

Suggestion #38

Even high-income travelers expect a special deal. Promote them, but make them REAL deals, not just a half-price appetizer when you order dinner for six between 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm. Promote packages as well.

The lodging section of the Chamber's site is excellent (below).





Suggestion #39

Develop a better travel planner. Offer suggestions. Don't assume visitors already know everything there is to see and do in the county. It will translate to longer stays and repeat visits.

Include one, two, three-day and week-long itineraries based on a variety of experiences, offering specific activities and places to visit.



Suggestion #40

Instead of listing a few activities, consider a door titled, "Pick your passion," and once inside there are many options including biking (one of the most popular activities in the county and not mentioned), performances, fishing, shopping, historical and cultural finds, boating, etc.

Suggestion #41

Develop a slide show. Showcase activities, not just scenic vistas. For every photo include a caption that describes the location, the experience, and details or links to details. While many of the photos on the site are nice, they could have been taken just about anywhere and are far too generic.

Always promote activities: shopping (shop interiors), dining, biking, hiking, boating, fishing, events, fish boils, etc. Evoke emotion. Every photo should make a visitor say, "Wow! I want to go there."



DOOR COUNTY *Beaches*
IN DOOR COUNTY

Vacation Planner - General Info - Business Directory - Online Store - Meeting Planning - Starting a Business

- Maps
- Weather
- Communities
- Transportation
- Lighthouses
- Arts & History
- Sports & Nature
- Beaches
- Fishing
- Golfing
- Islands
- Oysterbeds
- Parks
- Trails
- Weddings & Reunions
- Worship
- Libraries
- Service Clubs

Door County's shoreline offers plenty of public beaches, including Egg Harbor, Fish Creek, Ephraim, Baileys Harbor, Jacksonport and Sturgeon Bay. Swimming beaches also are located in Peninsula State Park, Potawatomi State Park, Newport State Park and Whitefish Dunes State Park.

[Click Here for the Door County Beach Map, Temperatures and Current Advisories.](#)

Sturgeon Bay

Columbia Park-driving north past the stoplight. Before the Bridgeport Resort, take this road to Columbia Park.

Sunset Park-driving north past the stoplight. Follow B the first left after the bridge runs into Third Avenue, 8th Watch for signs to Sunset Park.

Jacksonport

Whitefish Dunes State Park Road) east to the entrance

Clarks Lake Beach-follow on Park Road and follow rd

Lakeside Park-located off

Baileys Harbor

Anchor Park-located off of the Square Rigger Harbor

Baileys Harbor Ridges-Free Sandpiper Restaurant. Follow

Egg Harbor

Murphy Park-located on Co Farms.



Suggestion #42

Make the sale FIRST, then provide resources. On the Beaches page it gives driving instructions, but no reason for going there. Include photos. Nothing will sell Door County as well as professional photography.

DOOR COUNTY *Fish Creek*
DOOR COUNTY

Vacation Planner - General Info - Business Directory - Online Store - Meeting Planning - Starting a Business

- Maps
- Weather
- Communities
- Southern Door
- Sturgeon Bay
- Carlisle
- Jacksonport
- Baileys Harbor
- Egg Harbor
- Fish Creek
- Ephraim
- Stater Bay
- Edison Bay/Gills Rock
- Washington Island
- Door County Map
- Transportation
- Lighthouses
- Arts & History
- Sports & Nature
- Weddings & Reunions
- Worship
- Libraries
- Service Clubs

Fish Creek Information

Sturgeon Bay, Door County's first community, was settled by Increase Claflin in 1825. Nine years later, following a frightening confrontation between his son-in-law and local Indians, Claflin moved his family north to Fish Creek.

Although Claflin was the first settler, Asa Thorp is regarded as the man who founded the village. By 1853 Thorp owned much of the land in the Fish Creek area and had begun building a pier from which he could sell cord wood to Lake Michigan steamers.

The beauty that held Claflin and Thorp in thrall claims today's visitors to Fish Creek as well. The entrance to Peninsula State Park is located in the village. Within its 3,700 acres is located Claflin Point, the site of the settler's cabin. The breathtaking view of the bay from Weborg Point makes it easy to see why he chose to live here.

For those who prefer getting away from crowds, a bike ride through the park is just the ticket for relaxation. The park, with its sand beaches and nature trails, also is popular with campers. There are well-kept private campgrounds located near the village too.

Over the years, Fish Creek has become the heart of the county's artistic life. Here you'll find Peninsula Players, the county's oldest professional summer theater; The Peninsula Music Festival; American Folklore Theatre; Peninsula Art School; Peninsula Arts Theater, and the Door Community Auditorium, which plays host to dozens of well-known artists and shows each year.

A wide variety of shops, galleries and restaurants draws visitors back year after year. After a fine dinner, take a stroll to the marina and check out the pleasure boats moored there, or sit on the city beach and watch as the sun paints the sky red and gold.



INSIDE FISH CREEK

www.fishcreek.info



Home - News - Newsletter - Peninsula State Park - The Harbor - Arts - Business - History - Events - Contact Us

The Destination

Renowned for the scenic views of Lake Michigan, Fish Creek is a natural beauty and is often referred to as "The Cape Cod of the Midwest."

Unique life. Hundreds of miles of forest preserve with breathtaking views, an extraordinary collection of historic buildings, and a variety of shops and services that ensure the area will be a unique experience for both visitor and the arts.

Back to the roots of the beautiful nature retreat is a city within a city. Fish Creek is the area where it all comes together. The historic, the scenic, the unique, the beautiful views of Lake Michigan, a few historic, historic inns, and a variety of shops and services that ensure the area will be a unique experience for both visitor and the arts.

Fish Creek is always ripe for unique get-togethers. From the scenic views, the historic buildings, the shops, the services, the nature, the history, the scenic, the unique, the beautiful views of Lake Michigan, a few historic, historic inns, and a variety of shops and services that ensure the area will be a unique experience for both visitor and the arts.

The Fish Creek Lifestyle



Hospitality

- Fish Creek Lodging
- Dining
- Recreation
- Art Galleries
- Museums & Historical Sites
- Parks
- Entertainment
- Deer County Real Estate

Upcoming events

- **July 1st - 2nd** - **Peninsula Music Festival**
A celebration of music featuring local and national talent. Tickets \$10.00. 11am - 4pm. Peninsula State Park, Fish Creek, WI.
- **July 1st - 2nd** - **Peninsula Players**
A production of "The Sound of Music". Tickets \$10.00. 7pm - 9pm. Peninsula State Park, Fish Creek, WI.
- **July 1st - 2nd** - **Peninsula Art School**
A celebration of art featuring local and national talent. Tickets \$10.00. 11am - 4pm. Peninsula State Park, Fish Creek, WI.

Suggestion #43

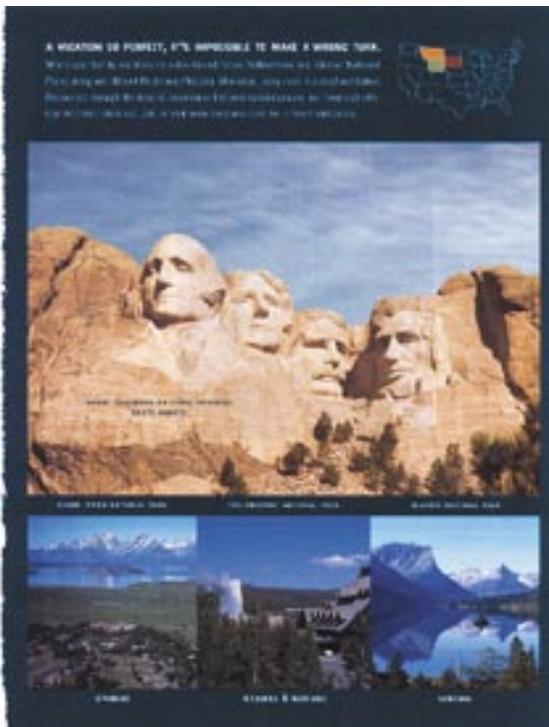
Fish Creek has a nice website, but it would be much more effective if it was part of the county's site, creating a single planning resource for the area. The Fish Creek site was nearly impossible to find without specifically searching for "Fish Creek." Most visitors will know the area as Door County. In that case, the Fish Creek site does not show up in search engine results.



Suggestion #46

Make public relations your primary marketing program. You build your brand through public relations, you maintain your position through advertising. Secondly, articles are read three times more than ads. Publicity also gives you more credibility than do ads. After all, someone else will be toot-

ing your horn, where in ads you're tooting your own horn. Finally, for every \$1 you invest in a PR effort, you'll see a \$3 return in the form of "earned media" - what you would have paid had you purchased the space or television time. Note the ad (left): You will be far more effective as one loud voice. The combination of Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone, Glacier National park and Mount Rushmore is far more effective than if Mount Rushmore advertised alone. Mt. Rushmore, by itself, probably wouldn't be worth a special trip.



Suggestion #44

The Sturgeon Bay site spends too much time promoting the organization, rather than activities, experiences, or reasons to visit. You must sell the visitor on why they should visit Sturgeon Bay, before selling gift certificates.

Never promote the organization, but promote activities and attractions. In this case, rather than "Welcome to the VCB's official website," it should read *"Door County Peninsula, One of North America's Top Ten Vacation Destinations. Welcome to the gateway, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin."*

Suggestion #45

Plan on spending between \$15,000 and \$20,000 for a website good enough to close the sale. Then budget \$1,000 a month to keep making it better, providing new changes (so it's not a been there, seen that website).

Things worth spending money on include:

- Key words (pay per click)
- Marketing domain names
- Special deals
- Seasonal activities and events
- Activity updates monthly
- E-marketing programs
- Monthly teasers to various categories
- Photography and video clips
- Splash page updates and development.

TOURISM ASSESSMENT & SUGGESTIONS



Suggestion #47

Cater to niche groups. They are looking for places to send their subscribers or club members. Give them specifics. Even encourage members to put together suggested itineraries for you.

Particularly go after car clubs, bicycle and photography clubs, motorcycle clubs.

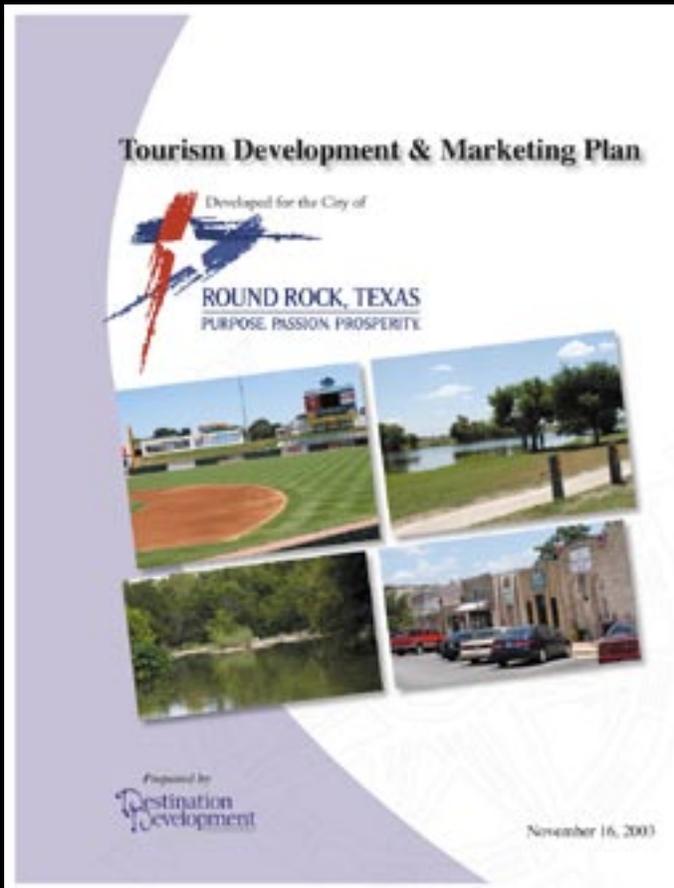
Suggestion #48

Create custom itineraries for various niche groups. Spend a year doing this. You need specifics, not just generalities. It will pay off and is easily worth the initial investment.



Itineraries to consider:

- Biking routes and tours
- Winery and arts itineraries
- World gifts and dining tours
- Holiday shop tour (with fall color)
- One, two, three-day and week-long recreational tours
- Artists in action (arts crawl)
- Golf tours
- The spa and relaxation tour
- The photography tour
- Harbor towns for boaters



Create a Tourism Development & Marketing Plan:

- Branding

- Product development

- Dovetail with economic development efforts

- Wayfinding, signage & entries

- Marketing: advertising & public relations

- Detailed budgets

- Ten to twenty year capital projects plan

- Three to five year marketing plan

Suggestion #49

The number one priority should be the implementation of the lodging tax. We have yet to find a single community anywhere in the U.S. or Canada that has seen tourism spending decline as a result. In fact, if Door County does NOT implement the tax, it will soon be passed up by others with the funding to outsell and out-compete Door County. It will be the smartest investment you can make to further develop the tourism industry. The very first order of business would be the creation of a Tourism Development, Branding and Marketing Plan. This will give lodging properties and the Chamber an “Action Plan” of how the money will be spent, including measurables.

The plan will also define the roles of the various organizations so there are not duplications of effort in both product development, branding, and marketing.

Suggestion #50

State Parks needs to create two and three day pass programs. Having single day or year long passes is selling the customer short. It takes at least three days to go through the parks in Door County alone. Don't make visitors buy a yearlong pass when a three day or week long pass would fit the bill nicely.

Suggestion #51

Lobby for state parks. Having the second poorest funded park system in the U.S. could be a travesty to Door County, with five incredible parks. You need to provide vocal support for them at every legislative session.

In a nutshell:

- Get the lodging tax implemented or you will lose the ability to compete in a growing marketplace. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in all 50 states and the number one diversification strategy. Don't get left behind.
- Create a Tourism Branding and Marketing Action Plan. Define the roles of the various organizations. Each have an important role to play.
- Develop a Style Guide. Change the focus of current marketing efforts. Upscale your marketing pieces and efforts. Create continuity between communities and organizations.
- This is the age of specialization. Cater to the niche groups. Begin a direct sales effort to them and cut back on generic advertising.
- Redevelop all of the marketing materials and create an Activities Guide. Sell experiences over places and scenic vistas.
- Spread your wings nationally - you have what it takes.
- Change the brand focus to Door County Peninsula.
- Develop a first-class website complete with e-marketing programs.

TOURISM ASSESSMENT & SUGGESTIONS

This visitor assessment was prepared by the team at:



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