

## Florida and Nova Scotia's Destination Plans

The purpose of this case study is to analyze two different tourism plans from both Florida and Nova Scotia. My goal is to compare and contrast the differences between these two states to determine their strengths and weaknesses. In order to accomplish this I will dissect each plan's research methods, goals and objectives, target market and audience, strategy, measure of success, and eventually state my personal opinion.

After reviewing Florida's destination marketing plan, I came to the conclusion that this state went through a period of extensive research in order to develop such an in depth outline. This research began in December of 2009, when representatives from Florida's tourism industry met for an annual corporate event. The Board of Directors and the community of VISIT FLORIDA decided that it was time to expand tourism by creating an updated marketing plan, which discussed the priorities and long term goals for the tourism industry in Florida. This eventually led to substantial research, which consisted of statistics of City Profiles, State Drive Profiles, Consumer Segment Profiles, and a Florida Encounter Survey.

In comparison, Nova Scotia seemed to be less extensive with statistical research, and instead relied on personal accounts. For example, a large portion of Nova Scotia's research was based off of their Visitor Exit Survey (VES). This survey is performed every 4 to 6 years, in order to receive insight on this province's tourism industry by recording the growth and demand of specific trends. Similar to Florida, Nova also continuously keeps track of their consumer market and where visitors come from geographically.

One of the most important factors of Florida's destination marketing plan was identifying their goals and objectives. Florida's tourism industry breaks down their goals into five potential long term goals: create a tourism industry that is competitive and sustainable, become a source of

travel information, create growth in Florida's destination travel through marketing and sales, use VISIT FLORIDA resources to develop partners, and use VISIT Florida resources at their highest potential. Unlike goals, objectives are placed into a marketing plan in order to develop something that is measurable and can be accomplished within a period of time. A few of Florida's objectives (to be accomplished by June 30, 2013) are the following: increase VISIT FLORIDA's annual budget to \$125 million, increase industry partners by 10,000 listings, increase domestic visitors from 15.8% to 20%, increase the index of VISIT FLORIDA as the source for travel planning from 35.00 to 40.00, improve value of the brand VISIT FLORIDA by receiving a 5% point increase, and maintain the satisfaction level of VISIT FLORIDA at 80%.

In a different approach, in comparison to Florida, Nova Scotia doesn't specifically distinguish the difference between their goals and objectives. In Nova Scotia's marketing plan they refer to their goals as 'Key themes in the 2011 plan', which consists of: enhancing the experience of the visitors trip, promote experiences such as festivals and events, increase marketing in Ontario to increase visitors, increase use of mobile and online marketing, and create opportunities for Nova Scotia tourism partners. These goals will be accomplished through Nova Scotia's set objectives discussed in their marketing plan. Such as, increasing travel trade activity in partnerships by 15%, increase business meetings with travel trade clients by 10%, increase industry's familiarization tours by 10%, increase air access from Europeans by 20%, increase the awareness of partnership opportunities by attending 25 tourism industry events or meetings, generate \$13.5 million in media profits.

In order for the tourism industry to accomplish Florida's objectives and goals, they must first understand their target market and audience. Florida's target market largely consists of

geographic targets who are key feeders within their tourism industry. These key feeders (such as Alabama and North Carolina) have caused drive travel to increase beyond air travel, with the majority of Florida's tourists driving from nearby states. Almost a third of domestic travelers drive from six nearby cities, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York City, and Washington DC. When it comes to international travelers Florida's largest market is Canada, while the largest overseas markets consist of the United Kingdom and Brazil. Florida's main audience is built of leisure travelers with a strong desire to visit a sunny destination, such as regional drive travelers, couples, or young families. Since Florida offers a variety of activities they also have a large flow of speciality travelers, which includes cultural heritage, gay and lesbians, travel trade, outdoor enthusiasts, and golfers. Luckily, Florida has extreme growth potential created by the demand from new tourist audiences recently entering the market, such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and luxury travelers.

Similar to Florida, Nova Scotia's largest market consists of domestic tourists. Over half of Nova's geographic market (56%) comes from Atlantic Canada, with the second largest geographic market (21%) visiting from Ontario. Internationally the largest market of tourists come from the United States. With an untapped international market, they have recently created partnerships with the United Kingdom and the United States (specifically New York) in order to expand marketing and advertising to create a larger demand of international tourists. The main audience in Nova Scotia is targeted at Canadian couples and families, with a wide range of incomes and education. The international main target audience consists of couples over the age of 45, with above average income and higher education.

Another main purpose for Florida developing a destination marketing plan is to create a strategy, which will develop enough success to reach their objectives. There are 12 main strategic concepts that would benefit their industry, consisting of relevance, ROI, target, integration, content, distribution, CO-OP, electronic platform, innovation, awareness, sustainability, and social marketing. Not only do they explain these concepts and how they will help the Florida tourism industry, they also relate each concept to the objectives previously mentioned. Florida developed six initiatives (Business to Business, Share a Little Sunshine, Meetings, Your Florida Side is Calling, International, Mobile) in order to reach new audiences and expand their previous markets. For example, Share a Little Sunshine initiative encourages Florida residents to promote their friends and family to visit the sunshine state. Their International initiative can be seen in cases such as Florida developing a travel market in China, by creating partnerships with airlines and educating Chinese travel agencies. Placing Florida tourism markets in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, uses strategies such as relevance, awareness, target, ROI, integration, and distribution.

A large part of Nova Scotia's marketing strategy was dedicated to bettering their social marketing techniques, with both web apps and social media. They also plan to expand their marketing campaigns locally (such as Ontario), in order to attract potential visitors. These concepts as well as their previously listed objectives would be accomplished by advertising the experience you would receive in Nova Scotia, which consists of authenticity, personal enrichment, the opportunity to learn and experience local life, exclusivity, and interactivity.

In my personal opinion, the largest similarity I noticed between the two travel destinations was the similarities in their target markets. Both states received the majority of their

tourists from their domestic geographic market, while their largest international geographic market was the country closest to them. Florida's market of in state travelers has drastically increased within the past couple years, while Nova Scotia received most of their tourists from Atlantic Canada. Their target audiences also seem to be made up of psychocentric dependables who prefer to travel somewhere familiar with a large tourist industry.

The largest difference I noticed between Nova Scotia and Florida's marketing plan was how different they each portrayed themselves. I found Florida's plan to be somewhat overwhelming to read, because of the amount of statistics and raw information they presented. In my opinion, Nova Scotia presented themselves as more community orientated and full of life. They continuously show beautiful photographs of their land, culture, and people; which I found extremely helpful because I wasn't as familiar with Nova Scotia as I was with Florida. Nova Scotia also seemed sincere in their desire to create an amazing experience for their consumer, which can be seen numerous times in their strategy. After extensively reading and analyzing both marketing plans, I'd love to visit Nova Scotia in the future.