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York Region Tourism

2005 Tourism Marketing Program

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Goals and Vision

- To position York Region as a viable four season tourism destination with attributes to support various consumer and business sector audiences (resident, tourist, meetings, corporate, conference, travel trade)
- To motivate new tourists and business sector travellers; to encourage repeat visitation and increase overnight stays.
- To create an environment for the development, growth and sustainability of the Region's tourism industry.

Strategies

The tourism program is aligned with the overall York Region Economic Development strategic direction and complements and supports the Ontario Tourism, Tourism Toronto and tourism industry partners strategies.

Target Audience and Market Segments

Research¹ and industry consultation determined the following as the most effective consumer target audience, market segments and product to focus the Region's and partners efforts:

Target Audience:

- Greater Toronto Area
- York Region residents
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Secondary Markets – U.S.A., International

¹ Research sources used include: 2002 Statistics Canada Travel Survey for York Region, Travel Activities & Motivation Study, Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Research.

Market Segments:

- Leisure Travellers – residents, visiting friends and relatives, tourists
- Travel Trade – group travel, fully independent travellers (consumers buying packages)
- Meeting and Convention – corporate, association SMERF (social, military, educational, religious and fraternal, sport
- Industry Development – The tourism industry identified the need for the Region to provide strategic direction, educational forums and act as the catalyst for tourism development.

Tourism Product

Leisure travellers are still interested in packages for ease of purchase but are comparison shopping for the best deals. The product must be compelling innovative tourism experiences offering perceived value added will be key. Provincial tourism research points out that arts and culture, hands-on programs and recreational activities are still in demand but it is important to consider the needs of an ageing population and the increasing immigrant communities when future planning. The Region's strategy is to work in partnership with the tourism industry to identify key travel motivators for consumer packages and product offerings.

The following product offerings have been identified as market driven demand experiences for development:

- Arts & Culture – historical, heritage, quaint town, arts, museums, theatre, shopping, studio tours
- Recreation – eco tourism, garden tours, equestrian, fishing, golf, Oak Ridges Moraine, York Region Forest, hiking
- Farm and Agri-tourism – agricultural product development

Tourism Partnerships

The tourism program builds upon partnerships with all the industry stakeholders and provincial and federal governments to finance, implement and measure programs in support of tourism within York Region. In 2005, York Region will receive \$250,000 from the destination marketing fee funds as part of a partnership agreement with Tourism Toronto.

Marketing Program

The 2005 Tourism Marketing Program builds upon previous marketing direction and incorporates feedback obtained from industry focus group sessions held in 2002 and most recently the 2004 Economic Development Strategy workshops. The Plan provides the Region's tourism industry with tactical partnership opportunities at various levels of financial commitment to build their tourism businesses and to enhance their current initiatives. It is important to recognize that these programs may evolve and change as economic conditions dictate.

LEISURE MARKET

Objective: To increase visitation through integrated marketing and media relations initiatives directed at consumers from key target audiences.

INITIATIVE	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME FRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
PROMOTIONAL PUBLICATIONS					
<i>York Region Visitors Guide</i>	80,000 circulation All target audiences	February	The region's primary marketing tool and fulfilment for consumer inquiries and advertising programs	York Region staff, Industry Partners	Build awareness, increase visitation , overnight stays and spending in York Region
<i>Spotlight on Arts & Culture Events/Map</i>	GTA, York Residents, Ontario	May	Supports cultural sector	York Region staff, Industry Partners, Artslink York Region	
<i>Farm Fresh Guide</i>	GTA, York Residents	May	Supports agricultural community	York Region staff, York Region Farm Fresh Association	
<i>"Stay N Play" Program and Packages</i>	All target audiences	May	Purchasable consumer packages	York Region staff, Tourism Toronto, Industry Partners	

INITIATIVE	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME FRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT • <i>Arts & Culture</i> • <i>Recreation</i> • <i>Agricultural</i>	All target audiences and niche markets	Seasonal dependent upon experience being packaged	Development of tourism experiences that meet consumer demand	York Region staff, Industry Partners	Build awareness, increase visitation , overnight stays and spending in York Region
MEDIA PROGRAM <i>Product Testing Tours</i> <i>Travel Media Association of Canada Conference</i>	Local/GTA media, Ethnic media, Travel Media Association of Canada Members of Canadian Travel Media	To be determined February 19-21 Hamilton, ON	Selected media invited for hands on experience. An opportunity to showcase individual business to key media	York Region staff, Industry Partners York Region staff attend conference	Increased media exposure through print, radio, television mediums

INITIATIVE	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME FRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
SIGNAGE PROGRAM	Tourism and Agricultural businesses	Year round	Tourism and Farm Fresh Directional Signage available	York Region staff – tourism and transportation and works	Provides consumer assistance
CTM BROCHURE DISTRIBUTION	Consumers in all market segments	May-October	Distribution of Visitors Guide	York Region staff	Increase consumer market reach

OPPORTUNITY	TARGET AUDIENCE	FRAME WORK	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
Tait Collins Buffalo, Rochester, Ottawa	Buffalo, Rochester, Ottawa residents	May-September		Tourism Toronto York Region staff	
AAA Michigan Living	Michigan residents	Summer	Generic York Region ads with call to action for Stay n Play overnight packages	Tourism Toronto York Region staff	
AAA Going Place (N.Y)	Upstate NY residents	Summer		Tourism Toronto York Region staff	

TRAVEL TRADE MARKET

Objective: To increase visitation through targeted marketing initiatives directed at Tour Groups and (FIT) Fully Independent Traveller from Ontario, U.S.A. and International markets.

OPPORTUNITY	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME FRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
PROMOTIONAL PUBLICATIONS <i>Group Travel Planner</i>	Domestic, International, U.S.A. Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Group Leaders, Receptive Operators	To be determined	Development of group experience brochure targeting Tour Operators	Tourism Toronto, York Region staff	Inclusion of York Region tourism products for the purpose of generating new overnight business and increase in group travel market share
PROMOTIONAL INITIATIVES <i>Product Testing Tours</i> <i>Student Youth Travel Association</i> <i>Trade Shows</i> <i>Trade Advertising</i> <i>Website Enhancements</i>	Domestic, International, U.S.A. Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Group Leaders, Receptive Operators	To be determined	Opportunities to market directly to the travel trade audience	Tourism Toronto, York Region staff York Region staff attend trade shows promoting group experiences and product	Build awareness of York Region as a viable group tour destination

MEETINGS MARKET

Objective: To increase visitation through targeted marketing initiatives directed at Canadian and Regional source meeting market segments from Ontario, Canada and USA.

OPPORTUNITY	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIMEFRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS <i>KeyNote Conference and Meeting Planner</i> <i>Meet n Play Solutions</i>	Meeting Planners	To be determined	Enhancement to current publication and increase partner participation Incentive offer to encourage new meeting business	York Region staff, Industry Partners advertising opportunity Tourism Toronto, York Region staff	Increase awareness of meeting facilities in York Region.
MEETING TRADE INITIATIVES & ADVERTISING <i>Meeting and Travel Group</i> <i>Meeting Planners International</i>	Meeting Planners	To be determined	Attract Canadian and Regional source city meeting market buyers	Tourism Toronto, York Region staff	Increase awareness and generate new corporate, association segment overnight meetings and conferences.

OPPORTUNITY	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIMEFRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
<i>Canadian Society of Association Executives</i>	Association Meeting Planners	To be determined	Attract Canadian and Regional source city meeting market buyers	Tourism Toronto, York Region staff	Increase awareness of Meet n Play and Meeting Solutions Incentive program Hotels to track new meeting business generated
<i>Regional Corporate CEO Reward Program</i>	York Region Corporate Headquarters and Businesses	To be determined	Build commitment from local industry stay in York Region for meetings	York Region	

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Objective: Increase awareness of York Region programs, enhance communication channels and provide developmental educational opportunities and consumer research to make informed decisions.

OPPORTUNITY	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIME FRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
NEWSLETTER <i>Tourism News</i>	York Region tourism industry	Through out the year	Key communication tool within the industry	York Region staff	Increase communication of Regions' activities and other industry opportunities

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS					
<i>Beyond the City Lights</i>	York Region tourism industry	Throughout the year April 19 Scugog Recreation Centre	Provide networking and educational opportunities Supports the Agricultural Community	York Region staff Industry participation fee	Ensuring a competitive edge for York Region's tourism industry
<i>4th Annual General Meeting</i>	York Region Tourism Industry & Stakeholders Municipalities, BIA	January 2005		York Region staff Proposals being accepted for host locations – this is an excellent opportunity to showcase your facilities	

OPPORTUNITY	TARGET AUDIENCE	TIMEFRAME	PRODUCT STRENGTH	RESOURCES/SUPPORT	TARGETED RESULTS
RESEARCH <i>Premier Ranked Tourist Destination</i> <i>An Overview of Tourism in York Region</i>	York Region tourism industry	Early 2005	Provide a better understanding of the region's tourism product, weakness, opportunities and strengths Obtain latest Statistics Canada visitation and revenue analysis for York Region	York Region staff	Evaluate the regions' performance to attract tourism investment, create employment and sustain economic stability Be able to make informed decisions
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE	Regional Council All levels of Government Tourism Organization	Year round	Key industry leaders participating in Regional Council authorized advisory group	Industry Partners, York Region staff	To establish an ad hoc committee to provide leverage the profile of the regions' tourism program