

CANADA'S
**MUSICAL
Coast**



Inverness County Canada's Musical Coast

Marketing Strategy

FINAL PLAN - JULY 2016





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I. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

The Project Overview from the terms of reference document provides a comprehensive introduction for this document:

Cape Breton Island is re-emerging as one of the most dynamic travel destinations in Atlantic Canada. Stimulated by outstanding institutional support, a new generation of leadership, strategic intervention, mobilization and outreach by a solid group of partners – essentially Destination Cape Breton Association (DCBA), Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the Province of Nova Scotia, local municipalities and regional economic development agencies – the destination is determined to rejuvenate its product and experiences. The Municipality of Inverness County has emerged as an important player in this transition.

The municipality is situated in the western and northern part of Cape Breton and borders the Atlantic Ocean and the Bras d'Or Lake. Cape Breton's Ceilidh Trail (Route 19), the Bras d'Or Lakes Scenic Drive, and Highway 105, all pass through Inverness County, with all roads leading to the famous Cabot Trail. Inverness County promises some of the most spectacular coastline views and breathtaking scenery.

The municipality is also noted for its melding of Acadian, Scottish, Irish and Mi'kmaq cultures, and its music and ceilidhs. It has a multitude of sandy accessible beaches, coastal trails and sunsets, and three golf courses that include Cabot Links and Cabot Cliffs in Inverness and Le Portage in Cheticamp. There are a number of creative industries, and splendid coastal and outdoor recreation. With these and other natural and cultural attributes at play, tourism is considered by the region's economic development practitioners to be one of the highest potential generators for the local economy and its residents.

To set the stage for discussing the travel products and experiences associated with Inverness County, it is important to understand Cape Breton tourism in general terms. Cape Breton Island has a history as a leading Canadian travel destination, internationally regarded for its breathtaking coastal and inland scenic touring, Parks Canada properties, historic attractions, natural hospitality, heritage and culture, excellent foodservice and outstanding golf – all led by a longstanding tradition of tourism entrepreneurship. Tourism has impacted the Island's physical, social and economic development with several industry sub-sectors which are dependent, either directly or indirectly, on tourism revenue.

More recently, Destination Cape Breton has been working with Cape Breton municipal units (Mayors and Wardens) to identify/recognize a consistent Cape Breton signage standard to enhance our tourism product and experience. With some investigation, it is understood that the Province passed a Provincial Signage Strategy/Policy in 2001



(similar to Prince Edward Island's) and that it was updated two years ago. Currently, Inverness County may proceed independently to begin adhering to the parameters of the Provincial Signage Policy by exercising their jurisdiction to introduce their own signage by-laws with the approval of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

One of the key results of this work has been Inverness County's own strategic tourism planning initiative, which was facilitated by Forerunner Creative and Tourism Strategies Ltd. under the direction of the municipality during the first half of 2014. Forerunner Creative's work resulted in the report: DESTINATION INVERNESS COUNTY, The Municipality of the County of Inverness 2014-2017 Tourism Strategy. The report is the result of the collaboration between Forerunner Creative, municipal council, staff, industry and public consultation and is now serving as the guide for the municipality's new momentum towards the tourism sector.

The municipality recognizes tourism as a key economic driver that fuels new business, investment and employment and a sector that the municipality can further support with the implementation of a new tourism main gate strategy that includes a cornerstone initiative - the expansion of its airstrip in Margaree. The municipality will market the region's unique identity and social character under a unified tourism and economic development brand "Canada's Musical Coast" and, with new partnerships with the provincial and federal departments, develop new coastal product to further enhance our destination. The full strategy is estimated to be implemented over a three to five year period.

The municipality is now poised to embark on several key recommendations that require further planning and design. The following are three initiatives that are separate but will be integrated streams all happening in close proximity:

- 1) The further development of the new brand concept and brand story;
- 2) The development of new tourism content for municipal website, and marketing strategy.
- 3) The development of new coastal product enhancement.

This new marketing strategy has been developed to address initiate #2 listed above. It is designed to guide the research, product development, branding, and marketing direction for Inverness County. The strategy is designed based on proven tourism tactics with a keen focus on delivering a solid return on the investment for the municipality, its tourism industry, and its residents. It is designed to align with the strategies of Tourism Nova Scotia (TNS) and DCBA.



This document outlines the strategic rationale, goals and objectives, prescribed tactics, the action plan for implementation, and a recommended marketing budget. It is meant to be a living document that guides the process and may be adjusted on an annual basis based on a review of the effectiveness of each tactic and new developments that may arise.

B. THE NOVA SCOTIA CONTEXT

Tourism Nova Scotia has embraced the goal to double tourism revenues by 2024 to \$4 billion. In 2015, tourism revenues have been estimated to be \$2.472 billion and, projecting this rate to 2024, TNS has determined that the status quo will not achieve the target. As a result, they have adopted a new strategy that is designed to move “outside the box” to achieve the \$4 billion goal.

This new TNS strategy has four pillars:

1. Invest in Markets of Highest Return

To invest in markets of highest return, TNS will be seeking to attract those who will spend the most money while visiting, with a longer length of stay not necessarily a requirement. To do so, they will focus on priority Explorer Quotient (EQ) types. In the short-term, this will include Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers, the segments that have been targeted by DCBA for the past five years. TNS will also be focusing on the Free Spirit EQ type from a product development standpoint, with the intention to market to this segment in the medium term.

This pillar will include a focus on air travel. Research conducted by TNS shows that air travelers spend more per day on average than road travelers. The Northeast US, Ontario, and Quebec markets will continue to be a focus for TNS as core markets. From an international standpoint, they will continue to target the United Kingdom and Germany through the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership and are also partnering with Destination Canada to enter the Chinese market.

Focus on World Class Experiences

World class experiences have a number of important facets for growing the tourism industry. They build upon the cachet of Nova Scotia as a vacation destination, as visitors will want to share and talk about the experience. They have the potential to be primary motivators for travel to the province, thus providing additional reasons to visit. They leverage the Explorer Quotient market segmentation tool, as experiences may be designed specifically for target EQ types. They may also align with Destination Canada's Signature Experience criteria, which is utilized in working with travel trade.



Attract First-time Visitors to Nova Scotia

TNS believes that first-time visitors are more likely to be directly influenced by marketing, so focusing on this audience is aimed at having the maximum impact for the marketing spend. This does not mean that repeat visitors will be ignored, but TNS sees the delivery of a quality visitor experience, mainly by the tourism industry, as the key to repeat visitation.

Build Nova Scotia's Tourism Confidence

TNS seeks to collaborate with industry to educate Nova Scotians about their approach to growing tourism and why tourism growth matters. In doing so, it is hoped that Nova Scotians will get behind the \$4 billion goal. In educating Nova Scotians about who is coming, why they are coming, and why the destination brand is special, TNS believes that the public will see that they can play a role in delivering on visitor expectations.

Nova Scotia 2015 Performance by Market (Full Year Estimate)

Market	2015 Visitors	Change vs. 2014	% Change
Atlantic Canada	1,052,440	+49,000	+5%
Ontario	485,400	+32,000	+7%
Quebec	99,700	+10,000	+11%
Western Canada	154,200	-5,000	-3%
Northeastern US	68,800	+9,000	+10%
Rest of United States	124,300	+5,000	+6%
United Kingdom	29,800	+10,000	+49%
Germany	9,300	+500	+5%
Other International	43,500	+1,000	+3%

Source: Tourism Nova Scotia

The table above outlines the visitation to the province by market during 2015. As illustrated, Atlantic Canada and Ontario are the largest sources of visitation, while Quebec, Western Canada, and the US all provide significant numbers of visitors. With the exception of Western Canada, which may have been impacted by the downturn in the energy sector, all markets showed increases in 2015.

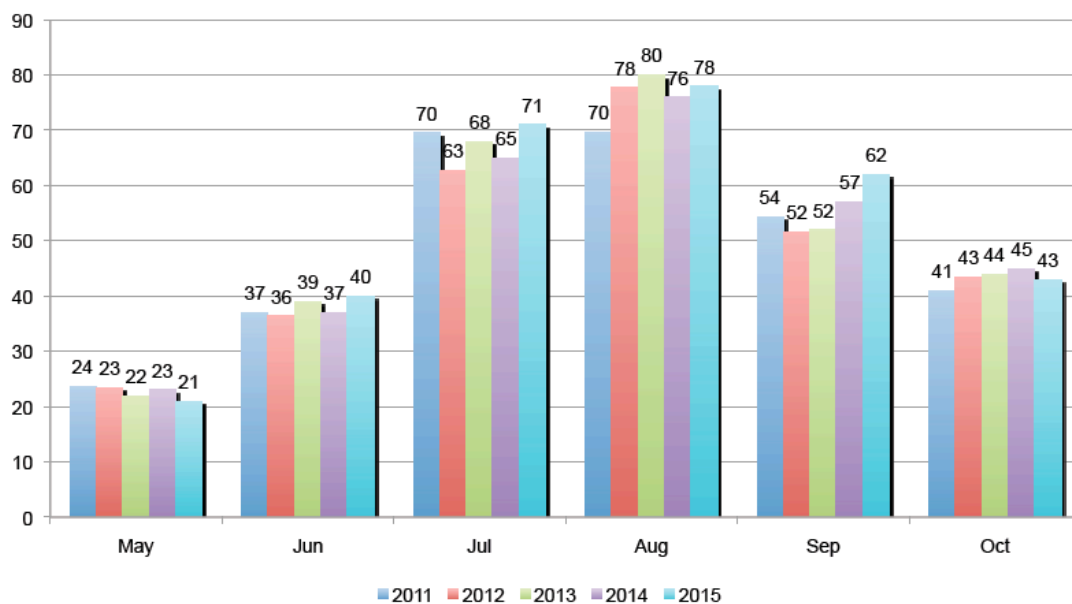


C. THE CAPE BRETON ISLAND CONTEXT

The 2015 season was strong for Cape Breton Island. In the primary tourism season months of May to October, the Island experienced a 4% increase in room night sales over 2014.

The chart below shows the room night sales per month for Cape Breton Island over the past five years. The 2015 season produced the best June, July and September in the five-year period, along with the second best August, which was only bested by August

Room Nights Sold - Cape Breton Island



2013 which benefitted from the Louisbourg 300 celebrations and a significantly larger marketing budget.

While the room night sales results were strong for the season, another positive sign was a significant increase in marketing levy revenues for DCBA, which saw double-digit growth. This suggests that the average accommodation spending per visitor saw positive growth.

While visitation by market data is not available for Cape Breton Island, Google Analytics from the cbisland.com website provide an indication of growth in interest in the destination by market. This is illustrated in the table below.



Cape Breton Island 2015 Website Visitation by Market

Market	2015 Visits	Change vs. 2014	% Change
Atlantic Canada	102,325	+20,394	+25%
- Nova Scotia	85,005	+15,919	+23%
- New Brunswick	9,823	+1,996	+25%
- Prince Edward Island	5,074	+1,640	+48%
- Newfoundland and Labrador	2,423	+839	+53%
Ontario	56,916	+18,027	+46%
Quebec	18,468	+6,478	+54%
Western Canada	20,441	+4,418	+28%
Northeastern US (New England)	17,749	+3,537	+25%
Rest of United States	59,340	+13,524	+30%
United Kingdom	3,808	+725	+24%
Germany	2,279	+382	+20%
Other International	13,467	+5,426	+67%

Source: Google Analytics for cbisland.com

As indicated in the table above, the highest traffic increases came from Nova Scotia and Ontario, the two primary markets where the majority of marketing resources were employed. The two secondary markets, Quebec and Northeastern US, had strong traffic increases with modest resources employed in those markets. Although not target markets, Western Canada and the Rest of the United States showed strong growth in website traffic.

Traffic to the cbisland.com website for 2016 has already surpassed the website visitation total for 2015 due to the interest from the cbiftrumpwins.com website, which invited Americans to move to Cape Breton if Donald Trump wins the presidency. That initiative started by local radio personality Rob Calabrese, and then harnessed by DCBA, has created substantial awareness of the Island in the US market and has resulted in anecdotal feedback of increased bookings for the 2016 season.



In terms of spending, the following table indicates the average on-Island spend per travel party per key market:

Market	2015 On-Island Spend/Travel Party
Nova Scotia	\$817
Ontario	\$1,208
Quebec	\$861
Alberta	\$1,603
Massachusetts	\$1,008
New York	\$1,130

Source: 2015 Cape Breton Island Conversion Survey

As a result, while still important to target markets within the Atlantic region due to the visitation volume, DCBA is placing an increasing emphasis on the markets of higher return, particularly Ontario and the Northeast US, to maintain alignment with the TNS strategy. A particular focus will be placed on re-marketing to those people who visited cbisland.com from the "Trump Bump".



II. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

A. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The 2016 strategy for Inverness County – Canada's Musical Coast is based on the following guiding principles:

1. It is developed in alignment with Destination Cape Breton and Tourism Nova Scotia.

The strategy will be designed to align and “piggy-back” on the existing marketing efforts of Destination Cape Breton and Tourism Nova Scotia. This will allow Canada's Musical Coast to receive optimal exposure through those campaigns while also leveraging them to introduce complementary campaigns for Canada's Musical Coast .

2. It adheres to the Research/Product Development/Marketing Continuum.

The Research/Product/Marketing Continuum is a process that was formulated by Harvey Sawler of Forerunner Creative and Tourism Strategies, who has worked with the municipality. Sawler defines the Continuum as follows:

The Research/Product/Marketing Continuum is a never-ending process of investigation, invention and intervention. All three of these energies must work in concert to achieve optimum results in order to arrive at a true tourism economy. The Continuum illustration elaborates on the fact that tourism operators and organizations too often leapfrog from research to marketing without thinking the product challenge through. Forerunner believes that it is product – not marketing – that generates true demand: Product Drives Brand, which Drives Marketing, which Drives Demand.

3. It builds on the established core experiences/motivators.

ACOA/Tourism Atlantic conducted extensive research to identify the reasons why visitors choose to come to Atlantic Canada. DCBA subsequently adopted the following key core experiences as they aligned with Cape Breton Island's current product offering:

- Coastal/Seacoast Experiences
- Sightseeing and Touring
- Culture, Entertainment and Heritage
- Outdoor Activities
- Major and International Events
- Experiential Accommodations

Further to the ACOA-led research findings, TNS conducted an extensive visitor exit survey to understand travel motivation and trends. The findings identified cuisine as a key core experience, and henceforth, DCBA adopted cuisine as a seventh and final key core experience for visitors to Cape Breton Island.



Inverness County will focus on its three core experiences: music, coastal experiences, and cuisine.

4. It is based on solid research evidence.

All product development, marketing, and other activities are driven by research, analytics and available data to make well-informed decisions.

B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Inverness County – Canada's Musical Coast will pursue the following overall goals:

- To increase tourism visitation and spending in the municipality;
- To achieve local ownership and adoption of the brand;
- To strengthen the musical culture and tourism industry; and
- To inspire entrepreneurship and improve the economy.

In addition to these overarching goals, a number of strategic objectives have been defined using the Research/Product/Marketing Continuum:

Research:

1. To develop benchmarks for key performance indicators (KPIs) and tracking procedures.
2. To monitor research being conducted by destination partners – Destination Cape Breton, Tourism Nova Scotia, Destination Canada, etc.

Product Development:

1. To work with DCBA, TNS, and industry to develop world-class experiences.
2. To encourage the development of new packages and experiences that support the brand.
3. To address seasonality.

Brand:

1. To trademark the brand.
2. To extend the brand consistently throughout channels and throughout the municipality.
3. To develop strong imagery to capture and reflect the brand.
4. To develop an "inspired songs and tunes" video series.



Marketing:

1. To piggy-back and complement TNS and DCBA leisure campaigns in high yield markets (Toronto, Montreal, Northeast US).
2. To piggy-back and complement the DCBA leisure campaign in the Maritimes regional market.
3. To intercept visitors to the Island to maximize share of stay.
4. To optimize the web presence and set benchmarks for analytics.
5. To double the social media follower base and pursue engagement in conversations.
6. To promote the cultural centres of the municipality.
7. To adopt and foster a sales focus.
8. To work through partners to convert sales.
9. To encourage sharing of user-generated content.



III. RESEARCH

A. RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The Research/Product/Marketing Continuum begins with research to define the target audience and what they are seeking. The target audience can be defined in psychographic, demographic, and geographic terms. These parameters have been defined to match the targets that are being pursued by TNS and DCBA to support and leverage their brands for greater overall impact.

Psychographic

Destination Canada's Explorer Quotient™ (EQ) market segmentation tool has changed the way that tourism experiences are developed, marketed, and sold. As stated by Destination Canada:

EQ can narrow your campaign focus down to the target audience that's most interested in your message or product. It creates a profile of your customer and gives your internal teams and the partners they work with a common language when it comes to talking about their best prospects, planning campaigns, building marketing communications, buying media and delivering the products consumers are most likely to buy.

TNS has recently adopted the EQ approach, joining DCBA who had been using EQ for five years. The EQ types both will be targeting for the leisure travel market are Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers. Each of these EQ segments is defined in greater detail below (Source: Destination Canada).

Authentic Experiencers (26% of the Nova Scotia market)

Authentic Experiencers appreciate the understated beauty of both natural and cultural environments, and try to keep a foot in both worlds. They enjoy using all of their senses when they explore their chosen destination and really get to know the places they visit. They quickly adapt to personal challenges and risks, easily figuring out how to make the most of every situation. Authentic Experiencers want to be fully immersed in their travel experience and tend to stay away from group tours and rigid plans.

While Authentic Experiencers are not constant travelers, they are also not reluctant travelers. Travel is seen as enriching life, not escaping from it. Authentic Experiencers travel to better understand the world around them and value the nature and culture found everywhere, including their own backyard. Authentic Experiencers tend to visit a wider range of destinations and prefer longer trips to weekend getaways. They are more likely than others to add time before or after business trips.



Authentic Experiencers have a strong ecological and societal ethic, being very conscious of the environment and those around them. Generally, they are more socially reserved and are not interested in crowds or status seeking. Authentic Experiencers are skeptical of advertising and tend not to impulse shop. When they decide to purchase, they are guided by ethical concerns and social equality.

Travel values:

- Learning travel – they like to learn everything about a place, time or culture
- Nature – they enjoy vast natural settings and wonders
- Cultural immersion – they prefer integration into the local culture
- Personal development – they seek self-improvement through understanding others

Cultural Explorers (16% of the Nova Scotia market)

Cultural Explorers seek constant opportunities to embrace, discover and immerse themselves in the entire experience of the culture, people and settings of the places they visit. Not content to just visit historic sites and watch from the sidelines, they want to participate in the modern-day culture as well. They often attempt to converse with locals, attend cultural festivals or go off the beaten track to discover how locals truly live.

For Cultural Explorers, travel is seen as the only way to truly experience life and the world. Experiencing the world first-hand can never be replaced by secondary methods such as TV or the Internet. Travel tends to have an element of escapism for Cultural Explorers, as they get away from their everyday lives. Cultural Explorers prefer spontaneous events and unique discoveries; they avoid mainstream, touristy locations. They are not intimidated at all by unfamiliar locations or situations and are willing to endure uncomfortable transportation and amenities to “live” a different culture. Cultural Explorers avoid skimming the surface of their destinations and are more interested in deep, meaningful experiences than seeing all of the “must-see” attractions.

Cultural Explorers feel some time pressure, trying to meet all of their goals and responsibilities. They are willing to take risks to reach their goals and are confident in their ability to adapt to change. Cultural Explorers are egalitarian and progressive in their societal views, and feel little need to adhere to societal norms. They seek fun and excitement, and are attracted to crowds and social events. When shopping, Cultural Explorers place little importance on brand names and status purchases, and are skeptical of advertising. They are ecologically and ethically aware, which their carefully thought-out and researched purchases reflect.



Travel values:

- Companion experiences – they prefer traveling with like-minded people
- Living history/culture – they enjoy ancient history and modern culture
- Learning travel – they like to learn everything about a place, time or culture
- Constant exploration – they're always planning for the next outing

Demographic

The primary target market for Cape Breton Island from a leisure traveler perspective, as defined through the 2016 Cape Breton Island Travel Intentions and Conversion Surveys, has the following demographic characteristics:

Attribute	Cape Breton Island Visitors
Primary travel planner	65% of planning conducted by women
Age	51% are in the 45-64 age range
Employment status	53% employed full time 23% retired
Household income	41% have household income of \$50,000-\$100,000 38% have household income of \$100,000+
Travel party composition	53% travel as couples
Geographic location	50% from Atlantic Canada 23% from Ontario

Source: 2015 Cape Breton Island Conversion Survey

Geographic

From a geographic perspective, TNS is targeting Ontario, Quebec, and the Northeast US as its primary markets. Through the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership it targets the United Kingdom and Germany markets and, as previously mentioned, is now targeting China through a partnership with Destination Canada.

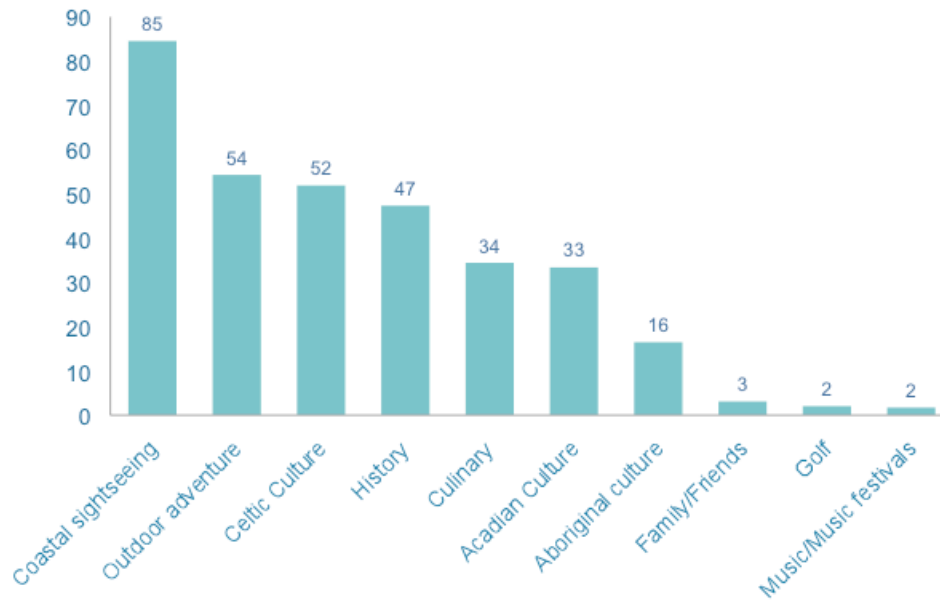
DCBA is also targeting Ontario, Quebec, and the Northeast US with an emphasis on the Greater Toronto Area. It is also targeting the Maritimes market with a regional campaign on Mainland Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. DCBA is also conducting a re-marketing campaign to the website traffic that was delivered by the "Trump Bump, which mainly focuses on the US, with the greatest traffic from California, New York, and Texas.

Visit Motivators

The chart on the following page shows the top visitation motivators for Cape Breton Island, from the DCBA Travel Intention Survey. As illustrated, Inverness County is well positioned as its product matches up against these top motivators. This reinforces the guiding principle to align with the DCBA strategy.



Top Motivators to Visit Cape Breton Island (%)

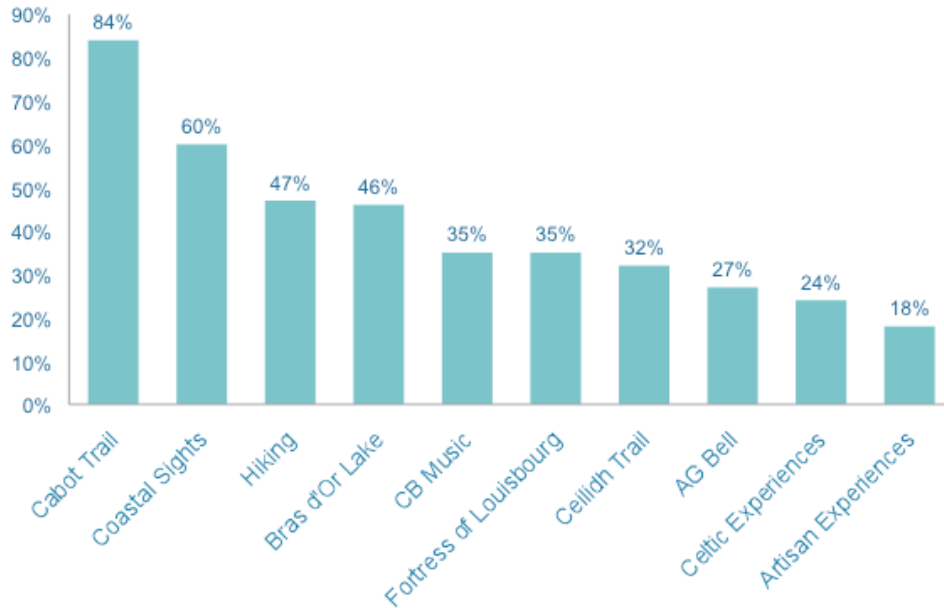


Source: DCBA Travel Intention Survey 2015



The chart below shows the top experiences from actual visits to Cape Breton Island, from the DCBA Conversion Survey. As illustrated, eight of the top experiences are available in Inverness County, including all of the top five.

Top Experiences During Cape Breton Island Visits



Source: DCBA Conversion Survey 2015



Research Objectives:

1. To develop benchmarks for key performance indicators (KPIs) and tracking procedures.
2. To monitor research being conducted by destination partners – Destination Cape Breton, Tourism Nova Scotia, Destination Canada, etc.

B. RESEARCH TACTICS

To achieve the research objectives, a number of tactics will be implemented, as follows.

Research Objective 1:

To develop benchmarks for key performance indicators (KPIs) and tracking procedures.

- **KPI tracking procedures should be developed and monthly reporting instituted to establish benchmarks based on the 2016 season**
TNS has placed a greater emphasis on tourism revenues as a KPI, so it would be valuable for the municipality to establish a benchmark for revenues to determine how it is contributing to the goal to double tourism revenues within the province. It would be cost-prohibitive to conduct a significant valuation of tourism revenues, but an estimation can be determined based on the percentage of tourism revenues attributed to Cape Breton Island and the percentage of Cape Breton room night sales within Inverness County. The estimated number is less important than determining the level of growth from year to year.

Other KPIs should be tracked, including:

- Room night sales (estimated based on the proportion of Cape Breton Island room night sales in Inverness County, as per TNS tracking data);
 - Marketing levy revenues collected within the municipality;
 - Attendance at dances and ceilidhs;
 - Google Analytics on the website;
 - Online advertising stats (clicks, impressions, views);
 - Social media insights for Facebook and Twitter; and
 - Video views.
- **Develop tracking procedures and set targets**
While some tracking procedures will be straight-forward (e.g. Analytics), others may require new methods to be set up, such as working with ceilidhs and dances to track attendance. Once benchmarks are established during the 2016 season, targets may be set for improvement in 2017.



- **Apply Google Analytics and Google Tags to new website**

Google Analytics provides valuable consumer intelligence, such as where visitors are coming from, what they are viewing, how much time they are spending on the site, how they are referred to the site, etc. Google Tags provides a way to segment website visitors into categories for the purpose of re-marketing. For example, tagging can identify anyone viewing square dance content on the site, so that they may be sent follow-up ads to further promote dances with the aim of them converting to a booking. A training session may be conducted with Inverness County staff on Google Analytics.

Research Objective 2:

To monitor research being conducted by destination partners – Destination Cape Breton, Tourism Nova Scotia, Destination Canada, etc.

- **Develop strong relationships with destination marketing partners and keep abreast of research being conducted**

Through working with partners at DCBA, TNS, Destination Canada, etc., Inverness County may request access to their research that specifically pertains to its experience. Reviewing this data will add to the overall market intelligence of the municipality. For example, the Visitor Exit Survey conducted by TNS may provide some data that is pertinent to Inverness County, based on its musical and coastal experiences.

- **Explore ways to extract specific Canada's Musical Coast research from activities**

When destination partners are conducting research, such as visitor exit surveys or conversion surveys, there may be opportunities to include specific questions in their questionnaires. For example, a DCBA conversion survey may be able to add questions for those who said they experienced Celtic, Acadian or Mi'kmaq culture to determine if they were aware of the Canada's Musical Coast brand and their perceptions of the region. Such questions may provide valuable insight that could result in adjustments to the strategy.



IV. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

In recent years, Inverness County has seen the development of the Destination Inverness County Strategy, and has been a partner in assessments of the Ceilidh Trail and Cabot Trail by tourism expert Roger Brooks. DCBA has commissioned the development of a number of product assessments and development strategies, including culinary, outdoor adventure, trails, etc. that have included Inverness County. Given these assessments and reports, coupled with significant investments like the Cabot Links property in Inverness and the development of the Celtic Shores Coastal Trail, much of the experience within Canada's Musical Coast is market-ready and moving toward world class, as illustrated in the chart below.



Although there are still some market readiness steps to be taken, these are in progress, so the Product Development direction in this strategy is focussed on moving toward packages and itineraries and world class experiences.

Product Development Objectives:

1. To work with DCBA, TNS, and industry to develop world-class experiences.
2. To encourage the development of new packages and experiences that support the brand.
3. To address seasonality.



B. PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TACTICS

To achieve the product development objectives, a number of tactics will be implemented, as follows:

Product Development Objective 1:

To work with DCBA, TNS, and industry to develop world-class experiences.

- **Work with DCBA, TNS and industry in developing innovative new experiences**

TNS has often cited the Dining on the Ocean Floor experience (<http://www.novascotia.com/packages/experiences/dining-on-the-ocean-floor/201988>) in the Bay of Fundy as an example of a world class experience they are hoping to develop. Inverness County can work with select operators to develop experiences at a similar (or better) level. Examples may include a dining and music experience on a living wharf or a program to discover the dance styles of Canada's Musical Coast.

- **Adhere to Twelve Essentials of Cape Breton Travel Experiences**

It is vital that the tourism experience holds appeal to the target market. The Twelve Essentials were developed by tourism consultant Harvey Sawler for DCBA. Sawler defines the twelve essentials as follows:

The Twelve Essentials speak for themselves – a series of ideals, which, regardless of the audience, provide clarity to the very heart and nature of great tourism experiences. The philosophy holds that in order to be truly successful, [tourism organizations] must employ all of the Twelve Essentials in their day-to-day practices.

The Twelve Essentials of Cape Breton Travel Experiences are:

1. *Well-themed*
The theme should accurately and honestly represent what is going on within the experience. The brand must express a unique selling proposition (USP).
2. *Essence of Cape Breton*
The experience should live up to the standard of the *Nova Scotia's Masterpiece* promise for Cape Breton. It should exhibit primary characteristics of Cape Breton, such as Celtic or Acadian culture, the sea, dramatic scenic viewing, etc.
3. *Authenticity*
The experience should present something that is authentic about Cape Breton.
4. *Accessibility*
The experience should be accessible to customers seeking to conduct a purchase, from finding it on a website to delivering the experience.



5. *Emotional Trigger*
The experience should capture the customer emotionally.
 6. *Sense of Place*
The experience should be associated with a unique place or site. For example, did something historic happen there? Does it have unique physical characteristics? Are there legends or heroes associated with it?
 7. *Educational*
The experience should provide specific educational elements.
 8. *Enriching/Accomplishment*
The experience should enrich the life of the customer and create a personal sense of accomplishment or reward.
 9. *Entertaining*
The experience should include techniques, ideas or actions within it that create joy, laughter and fun.
 10. *Hands-on*
The experience should physically engage the customer.
 11. *Value-added*
Specific ideas or actions should be employed to add unexpected value to the experience.
 12. *Exceed Expectations*
The experience should "blow the customer away".
- **Consider coastal adventures, music and culture, and culinary for experience development**
These areas match the motivators for travelers to Cape Breton Island and the experience offered in Inverness County.
 - **Encourage key operators to attend the Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism (GMIST) Edge of the Wedge program**
This program is renowned for its instruction on the development of authentic experiences. The program is usually offered at least twice annually. For more information, visit: <http://www.gmist.ca>.
 - **Implement WorldHost customer service training or other customer service training with operators**
The Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council (NSTHRC) secured the rights to the WorldHost Program from the Province of BC. The workshop builds on the same principles as the previous SuperHost program, but has updated content. WorldHost was delivered as the training program for the Vancouver 2010 and London 2012 Olympic Games, giving this workshop a significant amount of credibility.



The municipality can work with NSTHRC to implement the program, which is also available online. For more information, visit: <http://www.tourismhrc.com>.

The Strait Chamber of Commerce is also conducting customer service training and the municipality may be able to participate within this initiative.

**Product Development Objective 2:
Encourage the development of new packages and experiences that support the brand.**

- **Build packages based on research and demand**
Based on the top motivators to visit Cape Breton Island, it is recommended that new packages be developed for coastal, music and culinary packages, such as:
 - A Celtic Shores Coastal Trail hike/bike from inn to inn;
 - A dance Canada's Music Coast package; and
 - A sea to table culinary package.
- **Conduct package mentoring**
While the municipality has hosted packaging workshops in recent years, the results have been mixed, as operators tend to be guarded with their ideas and rates. Therefore, a mentorship project could be established where a consultant works with various operators individually and then compiles multiple operators into packages according to established themes.
- **Develop a special event that captures Canada's Musical Coast – a combination of the music and the coast**
A special event could be developed around the 200th anniversary of the settlement at Cape Mabou whereby the "MacKinnon's Brook Suite" by Scott MacMillan is produced in that incredible setting in a once in a lifetime performance. Such a production would capture the attention of broadcasters.

**Product Development Objective 3:
Address seasonality.**

- **Work with operators to develop a rotational, planned approach to extending the season**
There may be sufficient business generated in a shoulder season period to sustain one operation in a community, but not all of the operations. Therefore, operators in a community may be encouraged to buy into a plan whereby a rotation is put into effect for the community that would see one operator open earlier than the others for one season and then the designation switch to another operator the following season, and so on.



For example, Mabou area has three accommodation operators that typically open at various times between May 1 and October 31. If the first two weeks of May and the last two weeks of October are considered to be slower periods that can only sustain one of these operators to be open, the rotational plan would go into effect. Should demand warrant, a second operator could be added to either time period.

The operators opening for these extended shoulder season periods should be supported by promotion from the municipality on its website and social media channels.

- **Support community groups to start dances and ceilidhs earlier and continue later**

Most ceilidhs and dances in the municipality run during July and August, although visitation statistics show that September rivals June in terms of numbers and June and October are growing as well. Similar to the approach recommended for operators, a rotation may be taken to ensure that visitors can access these experiences earlier or later in the season. This deals with volunteers, so that has to be taken into consideration, and care should be taken to be sensitive to organizations who are offering these experiences in the shoulder seasons (e.g. the Celtic Music Interpretive Centre, Strathspey Place, West Mabou Dance, etc.).

The community groups operating ceilidhs and dances for these shoulder season periods should also be supported by promotion from the municipality on its website and social media channels.

- **Explore the option of a festival or event to strengthen and/or extend the shoulder seasons**

Festivals and events can serve as motivators to visit during non-peak periods. The Celtic Colours International Festival is an excellent example of an event that extended the fall shoulder season and resulted in many operators staying open longer. KitchenFest! is an event that is currently held in early July, but could be moved slightly to be in late June or could be extended to a two-week festival to bolster the spring shoulder season. A Canada's Musical Coast festival could be developed in the spring to celebrate the region's diverse musical culture and experiences. The municipality could work with partners, the industry, and the community to explore options.

- **Explore a musical broadcast from the municipality**

A broadcast could be developed, following the "Up Home Tonight" format, which is based at the Red Shoe Pub and shot during the off-season to provide encouragement to open the venue longer, while also promoting the Canada's Musical Coast brand. The broadcast could be supported by funding through the Creative Industries Fund, which is now with the Nova Scotia Communities, Culture, and Heritage Department.



- **Develop a reunion program**

A professional approach could be established to assist families or community groups to systematically organize reunions as a way of drawing people during the shoulder seasons. A template model could be developed which could be replicated for each reunion. Research could be conducted to determine how many visitors are originally from the municipality or have family roots in Inverness County. This audience could be targeted through search engine marketing by utilizing keyword terms like “Cape Breton roots”, “Inverness roots”, “Port Hood genealogy”, etc.

- **Take gradual steps**

The key to addressing seasonality is to take gradual steps to strengthen and extend the shoulder seasons. For example, developing a successful festival in early May could motivate operators to open sooner, but could also create operational challenges if they are not sustainable for the rest of that month. By looking at steps that extend or strengthen a week at a time, the municipality could make a lasting, sustainable impact.

V. BRAND

A. BRAND OVERVIEW

Brand Identity

The brand identity is the visual representation of the Canada's Musical Coast brand. At first glance, the brand identity should hold appeal to the target market and draw them in to learn more. As a first impression, the brand identity should be welcoming, approachable, fun, and casual. It is comprised of graphical elements, photos and video.

- **Logo**

The logo for the destination is the most basic visual representation of the brand. Logos should be designed to be enduring, to stand the test of time, rather than incorporating trendy elements or colours. For Inverness County ~ Canada's Musical Coast, the following logo has been developed:



- **Imagery**

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words and so it is important to communicate the brand platform in imagery, whether photos, graphics or video. Destination Canada offers the following advice regarding imagery:

The imagery needs to be unique and engaging, reflecting the kind of moment travellers experience and cherish. It should feel authentic and real, not overly posed. It should capture a moment in time and evoke the feelings of that particular experience in Canada.



On the whole, Canadian context is important, but it is not the driver—an obvious iconic reference is not necessarily required. Instead, the imagery should show people connecting with, rather than simply observing, their environment. It is more important to capture the spirit of the moment being shared (between the people in the scene or between the people and their environment) than it is to show a specific tourist icon. The people (or person) in the shot should come across as the hero, with the environment serving as the inspiration.

For Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers, imagery should help them visualize themselves in the experience. Destination Canada advises using inspiring imagery that focuses on people connecting with nature or with the culture, enjoying themselves, and conversing with locals.

These images from Inverness County from the TNS and DCBA libraries provide great examples of the imagery that should be sought:





As one can see, the photos demonstrate experiences and interaction with locals. The same approach should be used with videos.

Brand Objectives:

1. To trademark the brand.
2. To extend the brand consistently throughout channels and throughout the municipality.
3. To develop strong imagery to capture and reflect the brand.
4. To develop an “inspired songs and tunes” video series.

B. BRAND TACTICS

To achieve the brand objectives, a number of tactics will be implemented, as follows:

Brand Objective 1:

To trademark the brand.

- **Submit the Canada's Musical Coast name and brand identity to be trademarked**
To ensure control and protection of the brand name and visual identity, a copyright lawyer should be contracted to trademark the brand.

Brand Objective 2:

Extend the brand values consistently throughout channels and throughout the municipality.

- **Ensure consistent application through website, email signatures, Facebook page, etc.**
The new brand design should be applied consistently to all visual elements.
- **Organize a brand launch event**
The new brand should be launched at a public/media event that unveils Inverness County as Canada's Musical Coast and mobilizes residents to adopt and employ the brand. The musical production of the brand may be performed. Some merchandise may be provided to all who attend. This event will be planned to National Tourism Week in May 2017.



- **Develop a consistent, branded signage plan for the region that includes live music signage, experience signage, wayfinding signage, etc.**
The new brand identity should be applied to a new signage plan for the region that demonstrates consistency and creates a sense of unity and excitement. Given the brand name, a special emphasis should be placed on signage for live music venues, including signage for poles and decals for doors. A signage plan would be developed that would recommend the optimal approach and provide detailed costs on all options. Once adopted, the plan would be implemented over a series of years. By taking this approach, Inverness County would become the tourism signage leader in the province.
- **Encourage industry to adopt the brand and provide tools for them to utilize it consistently by holding a series of mobilization meetings**
A series of mobilization meetings could be held throughout the municipality to invite industry members to a presentation about the brand and the vision. These meetings will serve to motivate the industry to support and utilize the brand. A series of tools may be provided to them, including door/window decals, electronic files, etc.
- **Encourage operators to support the brand through musical décor and ambience**
To further reinforce the brand, restaurants and accommodations may be encouraged to display music memorabilia and posters of past acts. Coasters and placements may be developed with the brand and provided to operators. They should also be encouraged to pipe local music outdoors in as many locations as possible.
- **Encourage operators to add the logo to receipts**
Adding the logo to receipts is a simple way to further extend the brand for the visitor.
- **Work with DCBA to add the brand logo to Canada's Musical Coast experiences.**
DCBA may be encouraged to add the Canada's Musical Coast logo to Inverness County website listings and packages in the Cape Breton Island Experience Guide.
- **Extend the brand through merchandise, as planned**
The brand may be extended through a line of merchandise, including apparel, guitar picks, beach towels, outdoor concert lawn chairs, big lid cups, fiddle and guitar case stickers, beach coolers, iPhone cases, etc. Note: these items will be determined in the merchandise portion of the brand project.



- **Explore innovative ways to extend the brand into the landscape**
The brand may be extended by designing music notes into the landscape and capturing them through aerial photography and video. An event may be organized to celebrate this project.

Brand Objective 3:

To develop strong imagery to capture and reflect the brand.

- **Apply to the Inspiring Content program offered by TNS**
This year, TNS has offered an Inspiring Content program that will provide 50% funding for the acquisition of new content, including imagery. If approved, the new imagery would then be utilized by both TNS and Inverness County.
- **Develop a library of current photos and video**
A photo and video inventory should be compiled to determine what is available for use and whether all the core experiences of Canada's Musical Coast are represented. New content to be collected should follow the Destination Canada guidelines for the target EQ types (i.e. more imagery of visitors engaged in experiences).
- **Develop plan to acquire new imagery**
From the inventory, gaps may be identified for photography and video. A list of needs should be developed and contractors hired to acquire the required images. The contractors should be experienced in shooting for tourism and should be provided with the Destination Canada guidelines.
- **Apply new imagery as needed to visual elements – website, brochures, social media, etc.**
Once the new imagery is acquired, it should be utilized throughout all marketing materials and channels.

Brand Objective 4:

To develop an “inspired songs and tunes” video series.

- **Develop a plan for the video series**
This concept was actually conceptualized by Darcy Campbell of NovaStream to shoot a video that profiles an artist playing a song or tune in a beautiful setting that inspires them. Canada's Musical Coast has the added benefit that there are numerous existing pieces of music that have been written for specific locations within the municipality. This project should work with artists within the County to develop a list of pieces of music and locations and then a shot list and filming schedule. Once completed, the individual videos may be released one at a time according to a set schedule to have the greatest impact.



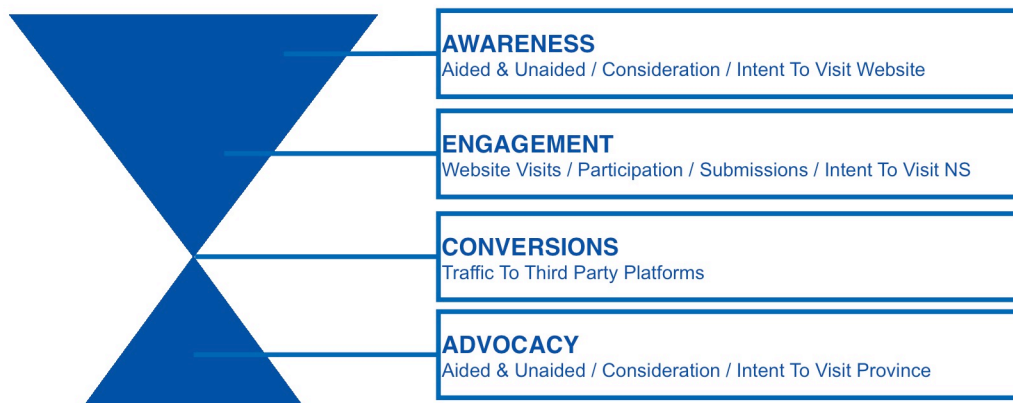
VI. MARKETING

A. MARKETING OVERVIEW

To align with the TNS and DCBA marketing strategies, the Canada's Musical Coast will target:

First-time visitors, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers, from high yield markets, the Greater Toronto Area, Montreal, and the Northeastern United States, with a secondary focus on the Maritimes regional market.

TNS has defined the role of marketing as inspiring the target audience to create a “vacation movie” and nudge them toward conversion with tactical messaging. Creating a vacation movie means visualizing their vacation and picturing what they would do in Nova Scotia. To do so, their plan will follow the marketing funnel illustrated below to create awareness of Nova Scotia, to engage potential visitors to sample the experience and visualize their vacation movie, to nudge potential visitors toward conversion, and then to encourage visitors to become advocates for Nova Scotia.



DCBA have utilized a similar process in recent years and will continue to match this approach. Therefore, Canada's Musical Coast should also follow this approach.

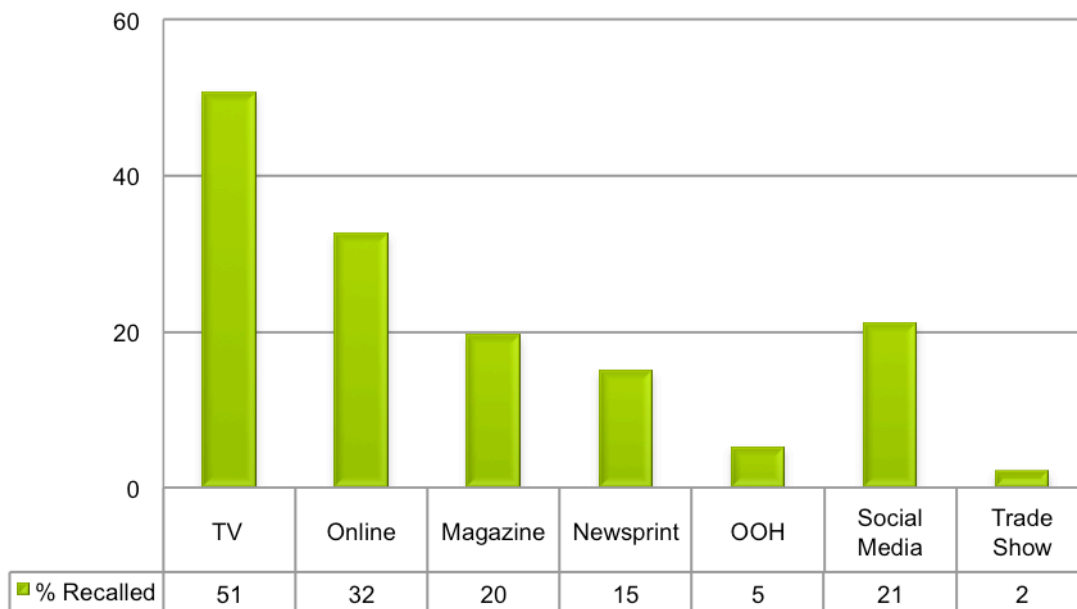
From the 2015 DCBA Travel Intention Survey, the effectiveness of media channels was measured in terms of ad recall. The chart on the following page illustrates that, for tourism, the following channels have the greatest impact:

1. Television;
2. Online (Google AdWords, Facebook Advertising, programmatic, etc.);
3. Social media; and
4. Specialty magazine.



Television can be very expensive, but has a powerful reach. Online channels provide excellent effectiveness, as they can be very targeted and are often based on a pay per click approach that delivers qualified leads. Social media can be very cost-effective, as its cost is usually associated with time, but careful planning is key to its impact. Some specialty magazines can be very effective, while many others are a waste of resources.

DCBA Ad Recall by Channel



Source: 2015 Cape Breton Island Travel Intention Survey



Marketing Objectives:

1. To piggy-back and complement TNS and DCBA leisure campaigns in high yield markets (Toronto, Montreal, Northeast US).
2. To piggy-back and complement the DCBA leisure campaign in the Maritimes regional market.
3. To intercept visitors to the Island to maximize share of stay.
4. To optimize the web presence and set benchmarks for analytics.
5. To double the social media follower base and pursue engagement in conversations.
6. To promote the cultural centres of the municipality.
7. To adopt and foster a sales focus.
8. To work through partners to convert sales.
9. To encourage sharing of user-generated content.



B. MARKETING TACTICS

To achieve the marketing objectives, a number of tactics will be implemented, as follows. These tactics are also organized by awareness, engagement, conversion, and advocacy, although it should be noted that some tactics cross over multiple phases.

AWARENESS

Marketing Objective 1:

To piggy-back and complement TNS and DCBA leisure campaigns in high yield markets (Toronto, Montreal, Northeast US).

- **Develop targeted online campaign using Google AdWords, Facebook Advertising, and YouTube to reach the target audience with an interest in Nova Scotia or Cape Breton Island**
It's very expensive to advertise in these markets using traditional media, but online marketing offers an opportunity to be very targeted and, thus, cost effective in reaching the target audience. In 2017, apply to the TNS SEM program for 50% funding.
- **Develop a re-targeting campaign with DCBA to deliver a Canada's Musical Coast video or package to qualified leads from these markets who have visited cbisland.com**
Through Google Tagging, a list can be developed in the DCBA AdWords account for those who visited Inverness County content. A partnership with DCBA may provide access to re-target these individuals who have shown some interest, but may not have converted to a visit.
- **Encourage operators to update accommodation, package and restaurant listings on NovaScotia.com (which feed to cbisland.com) utilizing new branding, description and imagery**
The listings on NovaScotia.com should be refreshed by operators to inject key messages, new imagery, new packages, and new dining experiences that support the Canada's Musical Coast brand, where possible. These listings will also populate the cbisland.com website (and the new Inverness County website).
- **Develop a world class experiences and advocate for them to be featured as on NovaScotia.com and cbisland.com**
Once a new world class experiences are developed (as recommended in the Product Development section), it is recommended to invite key members of the TNS and DCBA teams to sample the experience and to request a strong profile of the experience in their marketing efforts.



- **Work with TNS and DCBA to optimize Canada's Music Coast content on their websites and social media channels**
Through making content improvements to Cape Breton content on NovaScotia.com (and supporting it with a Google AdWords campaign), the views for that content increased significantly for DCBA. Similar steps may be taken by Inverness County with both TNS and DCBA to optimize content.
- **Develop strong relationships with media/sales coordinators to ensure Canada's Musical Coast is highlighted and included in media and travel trade fairs**
Relationships should be nurtured with the media/sales coordinators for both TNS and DCBA to ensure that they are featuring Canada's Music Coast in media and travel trade fair itineraries.

Marketing Objective 2:

To piggy-back and complement the DCBA leisure campaign in the Maritimes regional market.

- **Develop targeted online campaign using Google AdWords, Facebook Advertising, and YouTube to reach the target audience with an interest in Cape Breton Island**
Similar to the high yield market campaign, an online campaign can be utilized to target the Maritimes market.
- **Develop a re-targeting campaign with DCBA to deliver a Canada's Musical Coast video or package to qualified leads who have visited cbisland.com from the Maritimes market**
Similar to the high yield market campaign, a re-marketing campaign can be utilized to target the Maritimes market, who have been qualified through the cbisland.com site.
- **Invest in providing packages to DCBA for the Experience Cape Breton Island Guide**
The new Experience Cape Breton Island Guide has a distribution of 300,000 throughout the Maritimes and into Ontario targeting Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers. DCBA provided opportunities for industry to buy in to the initiative through packages. This investment can be made for 2017 edition of the guide.
- **Partner with DCBA to participate in the Saltscapes Expo**
The Saltscapes Expo provides a solid return on investment and serves as a motivator for the regional market to consider Cape Breton Island. The Island's presence is organized in partnership with key industry partners to provide a strong sample of core experiences available on the Island. Canada's Musical Coast should be a partner in the Cape Breton Island pavilion.



- **Work through DCBA's Halifax hotel concierge program to intercept visitors in Halifax**

This year, DCBA is piloting a program with hotel concierges in Downtown Halifax to educate them and motivate them to promote Cape Breton Island. Inverness County may provide collateral materials to DCBA to support this initiative.

Marketing Objective 3:

To intercept visitors to the Island to maximize share of stay.

- **Educate VIC and other front-line staff on Canada's Musical Coast**
A training presentation may be developed to provide to VIC staff and front-line staff at operators at the beginning of each season to encourage them to promote the region.
- **Develop collateral for Canada's Musical Coast to educate visitors on everything they may experience**
The Sunset Guide may be reworked to be the Canada's Musical Coast Guide and used as a key collateral tool. Other tools may include a new Dance/Ceilidh brochure, posters, etc.
- **Publish a monthly Canada's Musical Coast schedule and provide to operators, VICs and service providers**
A monthly schedule may be developed and provided to every operator in the municipality. A counter display or poster may be developed to contain the schedule in a consistent presentation.

ENGAGEMENT

Marketing Objective 4:

To optimize the web presence and set benchmarks for analytics.

- **Design the new website to reflect the brand using best practices**
A new website will be developed and will be designed using current best practices for destination websites, including a visual navigation structure, optimization/responsiveness for mobile devices, geo-targeting, TripAdvisor integration, etc. It will incorporate content feeds from NovaScotia.com and cbisland.com and will allow for user-friendly content editing. The build will include steps to optimize performance, search engine optimization, and site security.
- **Look at Google Tour Builder to create itineraries**
Google's Tour Builder is a new way to show people places to visit and the experiences to enjoy along the way using Google Earth. It allows for the creation of itineraries on the map, where photos, text, and video can be added to each stop of the itinerary.



- **Set benchmarks for the site upon which targets may be set for future years**
From the Analytics of the first year, benchmarks will be established for traffic, time on site, pages per visit, bounce rate, etc. Based on those benchmarks, targets may then be set for the subsequent year and steps taken to meet those targets.

Marketing Objective 5:

To double the social media follower base and pursue engagement in conversations. (NOTE: More detail will be provided in the Social Media Plan)

- **Establish content channels**
Content channels (Facebook, Website, Blog / Newsletter) will be established and efforts on these channels focused on researching and identifying key industry influencers, and sharing relevant Inverness County information as outlined in the Basic Tactics Plan and Content Calendar.
- **Develop and execute a content calendar**
A content calendar outlines the types of content to be posted in which channels and at what times. This calendar will outline key event information that a potential visitor will need in order to decide whether or not visit. For planning purposes, this calendar will carry forward 6 months ahead to allow for effective targeted content posting and planning.

Content will include daily sharing of information related to the Inverness County locations, cultures, communities, and harbours in a rotation and scheduled on social media channels. Daily features of local businesses and service providers as well as musicians and community organizations will eventually be added to the content mix. The content calendar will continuously be reviewed and enhanced.

- **Establish influencer lists**
Influencer, visitor & local business audience lists will be established and categorized by influencer type (Resident, Local Business, Visitor, Travel influencer, etc.). These contact lists will be built from contacts made through online and social media as well as contact lists that may be gathered through municipal directories.
- **Analysis and measurement of website analytics and social media channels**
Analysis and measurement of the website analytics and social media channels will be key in providing relevant and valuable data for adding and enhancing the content that is shared through the website and social media channels. With a focus on this analysis, Inverness County will have a stronger ability to speak to potential visitors and businesses in phases 2 and 3 of the Social Media Plan. A monthly report on these analytics will be prepared and reviewed.



- **Plan and implement social media campaigns**
Social media campaigns will be planned and implemented to engage followers to participate through these channels. Some of these tactics will be contesting, photosharing, etc.
- **Increase followers and reach**
Steps will be taken to increase followers and reach of the message with a focus on building the follower base and online ambassadors from both within the local communities as well as followers from “away” that may have strong connections to the areas musicians.

Marketing Objective 6:

To promote the cultural centres of the municipality.

- **Develop combined marketing initiatives for Inverness County's cultural centres**
Options will be explored with ACOA and Communities, Culture and Heritage to promote the municipalities five cultural centres: Celtic Music Interpretive Centre, Strathspey Place, Inverness County Centre for the Arts, Centre de la Mi-Carême, and Place des Arts. This may include the development of touch-screen kiosks to be placed at each centre that will include information on each centre, events, exhibits, etc.

CONVERSION

Marketing Objective 7:

To adopt and foster a sales focus.

- **Encourage cross-promotion and upselling among operators**
Front-line staff for operators should be trained in the art of cross-promotion and upselling to maximize the spend per visitor in the municipality. For example, if a visitor is having lunch at The Dancing Goat, they may be informed that there is an afternoon ceilidh at the Doryman and a dance that night in South West Margaree. Through making recommendations, the visitors will have a richer experience and become educated that there is so much to experience along Canada's Musical Coast.
- **Drive conversion of packages through social media engagement and VIC staff**
Social media should be ultimately used to drive business, so when possible, packages should be recommended in posts or in conversations. As well, VIC staff should be armed with packages and encouraged to promote them to visitors.



- **Work with DCBA to educate their concierge service on Canada's Musical Coast packages and experiences**
DCBA's concierge service is actively involved in assisting visitors in making travel plans. By educating concierge staff on Canada's Musical Coast and its packages and services, they will be able to drive more business for the municipality.
- **Use a clear, strong call to action in all promotions**
A strong call to action (e.g. book this package today) should be utilized in all advertising and promotions.

Marketing Objective 8:

To work through partners to convert sales.

- **Ensure key partners (TNS, DCBA, tour operators, etc.) have Canada's Musical Coast packages and experiences**
Relationships should be developed and nurtured with these partners to ensure they have and are promoting Canada's Musical Coast packages. Strong relationships should be built with these partners to ensure packages are being featured.

ADVOCACY

Marketing Objective 9:

To encourage sharing of user-generated content.

- **Develop a program to prompt satisfied visitors to share their experience on social media with the hashtag #canadasmusicalcoast**
Posters may be provided to operators throughout the municipality to encourage guests to share their experience and to tag it with the hashtag #canadasmusicalcoast so their experiences may be aggregated and monitored.
- **Employ a contest for visitors – such as photo of the week – and provide a modest prize**
Through using the hashtag, visitors may share photos through Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and the photos may be monitored each week to select a 'photo of the week'. These photos may then be shared through the municipality's social media channels. Winners may be provided with a modest prize, such as a Canada's Musical Coast t-shirt.
- **Add user-generated content streams to website**
The content streams from the hashtag may be added to the website. This will provide third party testimonials that will hold strong credibility for those who are considering the destination.



VIII. ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan provides steps for each tactic, a suggested timeline, and a suggested budget (one-time investment or an annual investment). Please note that a number of budget lines are set at \$0 or N/A, but this either denotes that it would be handled by an existing municipality staff member or that the item will require more in-depth investigation.

RESEARCH

Research Objective 1: To develop benchmarks for key performance indicators (KPIs) and tracking procedures.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
KPI tracking procedures Work with TNS and DCBA to identify and set up tracking procedures Contact community partners to explore ways to track attendance at dances and ceilidhs Analyze results and provide monthly reports Compile end of season report with 2016 benchmarks Set targets for 2017	Spring/Summer 2016 Spring/Summer 2016 Monthly Fall 2016 Winter 2017	\$0	\$0
Google Analytics and Google Tags Hire Google specialist to set-up tags and list development Set up Analytics and Tags Conduct a training session with municipal staff on Analytics Track and include in monthly reports Develop consumer lists based on Tagging	Spring/Summer 2016 Spring/Summer 2016 Summer/Fall 2016 Monthly Ongoing	\$2,000	\$0
TOTAL		\$2,000	\$0

Research Objective 2: To monitor research being conducted by destination partners – Destination Cape Breton, Tourism Nova Scotia, Destination Canada, etc.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Destination marketing partners research Meet with partners at end of season to discuss existing research and research plans for 2017 Identify opportunities to obtain specific Inverness County research from their activities Monitor results and future opportunities	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 Ongoing	\$0	\$1,000
TOTAL		\$0	\$1,000



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Product Development Objective 1: To work with DCBA, TNS, and industry to develop world-class experiences.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
New experience development Meet with DCBA and TNS re: experience development Follow the Twelve Essentials of CB Travel Experiences Consider coastal adventures, music and culture, and culinary for new experiences Pilot new experiences Monitor results and feedback and adjust, as necessary	Fall 2016 Ongoing Fall 2016/Winter 2017 2017 season Ongoing	\$0	\$5,000
Operators to attend GMIST Edge of the Wedge Communicate dates to operators involved in experience development Follow-up to determine results Assist operators in implementing learnings from session in experience development	Spring/Summer 2016 Fall 2016 Fall 2016/Winter 2017	\$0	\$0

Implement WorldHost customer service training or other customer service training with operators Work with Strait Chamber of Commerce to apply their customer service training to tourism operators Communicate program and dates to operators Conduct training program Follow-up to gauge effectiveness	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 Fall 2016/Winter 2017 2017 season	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$0	\$5,000

Product Development Objective 2: Encourage the development of new packages and experiences that support the brand.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Build packages based on research and demand Meet with DCBA and TNS re: experience development Follow the Twelve Essentials of CB Travel Experiences Consider coastal adventures, music and culture, and culinary for new experiences Pilot new packages and then adjust as needed	Fall 2016 Ongoing Fall 2016/Winter 2017 2017 season	\$0	\$0
Conduct package mentoring Contract a packaging specialist to work with operators Meet with potential accommodation and experience partners Develop packages and work out logistics Begin package sales Monitor progress and adjust as necessary	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 Fall 2016/Winter 2017 2017 season Ongoing	\$5,000	\$2,500
Develop a special event that captures Canada's Musical Coast Bring together stakeholders to brainstorm possibilities Develop a plan for the event Launch new event Evaluate results	Fall 2016 2017 2018 season Fall 2018	\$5,000 (seed funds for exploration of concept only)	TBD
TOTAL		\$10,000	\$2,500



Product Development Objective 3: Address seasonality.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Work with operators to develop approach to extend season Conduct meetings with operators in various communities Identify opportunities to extend seasons Implement pilot plans and support with promotion Evaluate results	Fall 2016 Fall 2016/Winter 2017 Spring/Fall 2017 Fall 2017	\$0	\$0
Support community groups to start dances/ceilidhs earlier and later Conduct meetings with groups in various communities Identify opportunities to extend seasons Implement pilot plans and support with promotion Evaluate results	Fall 2016 Fall 2016/Winter 2017 Spring/Fall 2017 Fall 2017	\$0	\$0
Explore festival/event to strengthen/extend shoulder seasons Discuss the extension of KitchenFest! Bring together stakeholders to brainstorm possibilities Develop a plan for new event(s) Launch new event(s) Evaluate results	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 2017 2018 season Fall 2018	\$0 (seed funding included under Objective 2)	TBD
Explore a musical broadcast from the municipality Bring together stakeholders to brainstorm possibilities Discuss preliminary concept with Communities, Culture and Heritage Develop a plan for new broadcast Launch new broadcast Evaluate results	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 2017 2018 season Fall 2018	\$5,000 (seed funds for exploration of concept only)	TBD
Develop a reunion program Conduct research to identify existing models Conduct family roots research Develop a template approach and identify a family/group to pilot the program Implement pilot Evaluate results and adjust template Invite families and groups to utilize the model	Spring/Summer 2016 Spring/Summer 2016 Summer/Fall 2016 2017 season Fall 2017 Fall 2017	\$5,000 (seed funds to develop the template)	TBD
Take gradual steps Focus on incremental strengthening/extending of the seasons	Ongoing	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$10,000	\$0



BRAND

Brand Objective 1: To trademark the brand.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Submit the Canada's Musical Coast name and brand identity to be trademarked Provide the request to the Municipality's legal counsel to file the paperwork Once approved, add the trademark symbol to the logo	Summer 2016 Fall 2016	\$1,500 (registration fee + legal fees)	\$0
TOTAL		\$1,500	\$0

Brand Objective 2: Extend the brand values consistently throughout channels and throughout the municipality.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Ensure consistent application through website, email signatures, Facebook page, etc. Add brand to all current items, where feasible Implement transition plan to replace existing materials Follow brand guidelines	Summer 2016 Summer 2016 Ongoing	\$0 (included in current projects)	\$0
Organize a brand launch event Plan launch event Organize all logistics Send invitations and promote the event through the media Implement event Gauge success	Winter 2017 Winter 2017 April 2016 May 2016 Post-event	\$10,000	\$0
Develop a consistent, branded signage plan for the region Develop new signage plan Implement plan	Fall 2016-Winter 2017 2017-2019 seasons	\$5,000 (this would include the development of the plan)	TBD (this will be determined by the signage plan)
Industry mobilization meetings Develop a presentation and arrange tools for industry Schedule a series of meetings with industry throughout the municipality Conduct meetings Develop a symposium to bring festivals and events/community groups together for mobilization meeting Follow-up to gauge adoption	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 Fall 2016 Fall 2016 2017 season	\$3,000	\$0
Encourage operators to support the brand through musical décor and ambience Discuss at industry mobilization meetings Follow-up to gauge adoption	Fall 2016 2017 season	\$0	\$0
Encourage operators to add the logo to receipts Discuss at industry mobilization meetings Follow-up to gauge adoption	Fall 2016 2017 season	\$0	\$0
Work with DCBA to add the brand logo to Canada's Musical Coast experiences Meet with DCBA to discuss and provide brand DCBA to add a Canada's Musical Coast tag to Inverness County listings DCBA to add a Canada's Musical Coast symbol to Inverness County packages in Experience Guide Follow-up with DCBA to gauge success	Summer/Fall 2016 Summer/Fall 2016 Winter 2017 Spring 2017	\$0	\$0
Extend the brand through merchandise Research merchandise options Develop merchandise plan Purchase merchandise Launch sales Evaluate program	Summer 2016 Summer 2016 Winter/Spring 2017 Spring 2017 Fall 2017	\$10,000	\$10,000



Explore innovative ways to extend brand into the landscape Bring together stakeholders to brainstorm possibilities Develop a plans Implement plans Capture aerial imagery	Fall 2016 Fall 2016/Winter 2017 2017 season 2017 season	TBD	TBD
TOTAL		\$28,000	\$10,000

Brand Objective 3: To develop strong imagery to capture and reflect the brand.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Apply to the TNS Inspiring Content Program Submit application and await approval Once approved, develop plans and MOU	April 2016 Spring 2016	\$0	\$0 (included in imagery below)
Develop a library of current photos and video Compile all tourism photos and video of the municipality Ask DCBA, TNS and other partners what imagery they have that may be utilized Develop a cloud based library of the images that enables sharing (e.g. Dropbox or Google Drive)	Spring/Summer 2016 Spring/Summer 2016 Spring/Summer 2016	\$0	\$0
Develop plan to acquire new imagery Review EQ guidelines for imagery Identify gaps in imagery, with EQ guidelines in mind Develop and prioritize needs Secure photographer and videographer (*possibly with TNS) Arrange shooting sessions Review and edit photos, video	Spring 2016 Spring 2016 Spring 2016 Spring/Summer 2016 Summer/Fall 2016 Fall 2016	\$0	\$10,000 (to be matched if funding approved)
Apply new imagery to visual elements Provide new imagery to designers Apply new imagery to website, social media, collaterals, etc.	Summer/Fall 2016 Ongoing	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$0	\$10,000

Brand Objective 4: To develop an "inspired songs and tunes" video series.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Develop a plan for the video series Develop terms of reference for project Contract videographer and music producer Identify musicians, locations and songs/tunes Arrange shooting sessions Promote via the media – press release Develop launch schedule for series Monitor views and results	Spring 2016 Summer 2016 Summer 2016 Summer/Fall 2016 Winter 2017 Winter/Spring 2017 Ongoing	\$20,000	\$10,000 (add new pieces each year)
TOTAL		\$20,000	\$10,000



MARKETING - AWARENESS

Marketing Objective 1: To piggy-back and complement TNS and DCBA leisure campaigns in high yield markets (Toronto, Montreal, Northeast US).		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Develop targeted online campaign Contract an online marketing specialist Develop and launch campaign Analyze results and provide monthly reports Compile end of season report	Winter 2017 Winter 2017 Monthly Fall 2017	\$0	\$10,000
Develop a re-targeting campaign with DCBA Discuss opportunity with DCBA to secure their buy-in Contract an online marketing specialist Develop and launch campaign Analyze results and provide monthly reports Compile end of season report	Winter 2017 Winter 2017 Winter 2017 Monthly Fall 2017	\$0	\$5,000
Encourage operators to update listings on NovaScotia.com Send email to all operators about news website being fed through NovaScotia.com listings Reinforce at industry mobilization sessions	Summer 2016 Fall 2016	\$0	\$0
World class experience advocacy with TNS and DCBA Meet with DCBA and TNS re: experience development Invite DCBA and TNS reps to sample the new experiences Advocate for premier positioning of experiences on cbisland.com and novascotia.com	Fall 2016 Spring/Summer 2017 Ongoing	\$0	\$0
Work with TNS and DCBA to optimize Canada's Music Coast content on their websites and social media channels Meet with DCBA and TNS re: content Provide new content Monitor results	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 Fall 2017	\$0	\$0
Develop strong relationships with media/sales coordinators Meet with DCBA and TNS media/sales coordinators Invite DCBA and TNS media/sales coordinators to sample the new experiences Nurture relationships	Fall 2016 Spring/Summer 2017 Ongoing	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$0	\$15,000

Marketing Objective 2: To piggy-back and complement the DCBA leisure campaign in the Maritimes regional market.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Develop targeted online campaign Contract an online marketing specialist Develop and launch campaign Analyze results and provide monthly reports Compile end of season report	Winter 2017 Winter 2017 Monthly Fall 2017	\$0	\$10,000
Develop a re-targeting campaign with DCBA Discuss opportunity with DCBA to secure their buy-in Contract an online marketing specialist Develop and launch campaign Analyze results and provide monthly reports Compile end of season report	Winter 2017 Winter 2017 Winter 2017 Monthly Fall 2017	\$0	\$5,000
Invest in providing packages to DCBA's Experience Cape Breton Island Guide Book packages Provide content Monitor results and adjust, as necessary	Winter 2016 Winter 2016 Fall 2016	\$0	\$1,000 (based on 5 packages)
Partner with DCBA in Saltscapes Expo Outline presentation in conjunction with DCBA Arrange all logistics Review results and adjust as necessary	Winter 2017 Spring 2016 Post Expo	\$0	\$3,000



Work through DCBA's Halifax hotel concierge program Work with DCBA to determine opportunities Educate Halifax concierges to promote the municipality Review results and adjust as necessary	Spring 2017 Spring 2017 Fall 2017/Winter 2018	\$0	\$1,000
TOTAL		\$0	\$20,000

Marketing Objective 3: To intercept visitors to the Island to maximize share of stay.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Educate VIC and front-line staff on Canada's Musical Coast Develop presentation Plan and deliver training sessions Measure results	Spring 2017 Spring 2017 Fall 2017	\$0	\$1,000
Develop collateral for Canada's Musical Coast Identify immediate collateral needs for 2016 season Produce 2016 collateral Distribute 2016 collateral Review collateral needs post-season and develop plan for 2017 Discuss changes to the Sunset Guide with the Oran for 2017	Spring 2016 Spring 2016 2016 season Fall 2016 Fall 2016	\$0	\$10,000
Publish a monthly Canada's Musical Coast schedule and provide to operators, VICs and service providers Develop and produce displays for schedules Develop template for schedule Update schedule every two weeks through season and send to operators, VICs and service providers Analyze results and adjust as necessary for 2017	Spring 2016 Spring 2016 Monthly Fall 2016	\$3,000	\$1,000
TOTAL		\$3,000	\$12,000



MARKETING - ENGAGEMENT

Marketing Objective 4: To optimize the web presence and set benchmarks for analytics.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Design the new website to reflect the brand using best practices Develop new website (in progress) Review results and adjust as necessary	Spring/Summer 2016 Ongoing	\$0 (included in current project)	\$2,500
Look at Google Tour Builder to create itineraries Explore the potential of Tour Builder and discuss with web developer If feasible, develop implementation plan	Winter 2017 Winter 2017	TBD	TBD
Set benchmarks for the site upon which targets may be set Establish benchmarks for 2016 season – traffic, time on site, bounce rate, pages visited, etc. Set targets for 2017	Winter 2017 Winter 2017	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$0	\$2,500

Marketing Objective 5: To double the social media follower base and pursue engagement in conversations. (NOTE: More detail will be provided in the Social Media Plan)		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Establish content channels Determine optimal content channels to utilize Set up channels Review new channels as they arise	Summer 2016 Summer 2016 Ongoing	\$1,000	\$0
Develop and execute a content calendar Contract a social media specialist to develop plan (in progress) Develop content calendar with objectives in mind Implement calendar Review and adjust, as needed	Summer 2016 Summer 2016 Monthly Fall 2016	\$0 (included in current project)	\$2,500
Establish influencer lists Compile influencer, visitor & local business audience lists Update when new influencers are identified	Spring 2016 Ongoing	\$0 (included in current project)	\$0
Plan and implement social media campaigns Develop campaign plans Implement in content calendar Review and adjust, as needed	Winter 2017 2017 season Ongoing	\$0	\$0
Increase followers and reach Implement steps in social media plan to increase followers and reach Review and adjust, as needed	2017 season Ongoing	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$1,000	\$2,500

Marketing Objective 6: To promote the cultural centres of the municipality.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Develop combined marketing initiatives for Inverness County's cultural centres Explore concepts with ACOA, CCH and the 5 cultural centres Develop a plan for the marketing initiatives Promote and implement the initiatives Review results and adjust, as needed, for 2018	Fall 2016 Fall 2016 2017 season Fall 2017	\$2,000	\$5,000
TOTAL		\$2,000	\$5,000



MARKETING - CONVERSION

Marketing Objective 7: To adopt and foster a sales focus.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Encourage cross-promotion and upselling among operators Institute cross-promotion and upselling in VIC and front-line staff training programs Monitor results and adjust, as needed	Spring/Summer 2016 Fall 2016	\$0	\$1,000
Drive conversion of packages through social media and VIC staff Implement conversion within social media plans Educate VIC staff on new packages and experiences Monitor results and adjust, as needed	2016 season and ongoing Spring 2017 Ongoing	\$0	\$0
Work with DCBA to educate their concierge service on Canada's Musical Coast packages and experiences Educate DCBA concierge staff on new packages and experiences Invite concierge staff to sample packages and experiences Monitor results and adjust, as needed	Spring 2017 2017 season Ongoing	\$0	\$0
Use a clear, strong call to action in all promotions Direct marketing/creative team to implement strong call to action in all promotions	Ongoing	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$0	\$1,000

Marketing Objective 8: To work through partners to convert sales.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Ensure key partners (TNS, DCBA, tour operators, etc.) have Canada's Musical Coast packages and experiences Identify all potential packaging partners (TNS, DCBA, Bay Ferries, tour operators, etc.) Contact partners to provide new packages and content Monitor results and adjust, as needed	Winter 2017 Winter/Spring 2017 Fall 2017	\$0	\$0
TOTAL		\$0	\$0



MARKETING - ADVOCACY

Marketing Objective 9: To encourage sharing of user-generated content.		Suggested Budget	
Tactic	Timeline	One-time	Annual
Prompt satisfied guests to share experience Develop sharing approach (e.g. hashtag) Design, print and distribute posters for operators Encourage sharing Review results and adjust as necessary	Spring 2016 Spring/Summer 2016 2016 season November	\$0	\$2,000
Employ a contest for visitors Develop contest Communicate contest to VICs, operators, service providers, and visitors Monitor contest submissions and award prizes Promote contest winners on social media Monitor results and adjust, as needed	Spring 2016 2016 season 2016 season 2016 season Ongoing	\$0	\$2,000
Add user-generated content streams to website Direct web developer to add streams to website Monitor results and adjust, as needed	Spring 2016 Ongoing	\$500	\$0
TOTAL		\$500	\$4,000



VIII. BUDGET

Following is the proposed marketing budget with one-time investments and annual investments listed.

Item	One-time	Annual
Research		
Google Analytics and Tags	\$2,000	\$0
Partner Research Participation	0	1,000
Product Development		
New Experience Development	0	5,000
Customer Service Training	0	0
Package Mentoring	5,000	2,500
New Event Development (Seed Funding)	5,000	0
Musical Broadcast Development (Seed Funding)	5,000	0
Reunion Program Development (Seed Funding)	5,000	0
Brand		
Trademark Process	1,500	0
Brand Launch Event	10,000	0
Signage Plan	5,000	0
Industry Mobilization	3,000	0
Merchandise Program	10,000	10,000
Imagery Development	0	10,000
Inspired Songs/Tunes Video Project	20,000	10,000
Marketing		
Online Marketing		
Toronto, Montreal, Northeast US	0	15,000
Maritimes	0	15,000
DCBA Experience Cape Breton Island Guide	0	1,000
Saltscapes Expo	0	3,000
DCBA Concierge Program	0	1,000
VIC/Front-line Staff Brand Training	0	1,000
Collateral Materials	0	10,000
Canada's Musical Coast Schedule	3,000	1,000
Website Development	0	2,500
Social Media	1,000	2,500
Promotion of Cultural Centres	2,000	5,000
Cross-selling/Upselling Staff Training	0	1,000
Visitor Advocacy Program	0	4,000
Marketing Contingency	5,000	10,000
TOTAL	\$82,500	\$110,500

* Plus 15% HST.