

Step 4: Market for Success

HANDOUT: Measuring Statewide Cultural Heritage Tourism Programs



Are you prepared to justify your state's efforts and investment in cultural heritage tourism? Establishing benchmarks for measurement early is the key to demonstrating value and justifying the importance of sustainable funding and staffing for cultural heritage tourism programs. The key to making a case for your program and position is determining what each stakeholder values, identifying tangible products that can be produced, defining ways to measure the program in each of these categories and providing constant updates on successes. Use examples, existing market research, testimonies, visual aids, media articles and other sources to demonstrate the impact of cultural heritage tourism to key audiences.

To get started, here are some ideas to jumpstart your thinking and examples (drawn from *Share Your Heritage*) to consider how to communicate or package results.

1. Produce credible research to demonstrate visitors' desire for cultural heritage experiences.

- ◆ Meet with market research staff or consulting firms on contract with state tourism office or local universities to identify ways to track visitation/ economic/social impact of impact to cultural heritage sites and events.
- ◆ Collect information from local, regional, national and international sources tracking tourism data for your state. If your sources do not break out cultural heritage tourism, work to see if this can be included in future research.
- ◆ Include measurement systems in all programs to quantify return on investment.

Best Practice: To establish benchmarks for heritage tourism, the National Trust for Historic Preservation conducted landmark research during its demonstration program (1989-1993) to profile heritage travelers. The findings from this research conducted by Davidson/Peterson Associates led to subsequent national studies on cultural heritage tourism. According to the Travel Industry Association of America's updated study – Profile of the Historic/Cultural Traveler, 2001 Edition – visitors who engage in historic and cultural activities continue to spend more and stay longer than average tourists.

2. Annually evaluate cultural heritage tourism products produced.

- ◆ Identify tangible products that have been generated in the past year and create year-end report for distribution. If no products have been generated, look at evaluating activities to date: new collaborations, new partners, media coverage, information distribution and education.

*Best Practice: The HandCraft Alliance describes four craft trails along the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia in a 32-page, 4-color booklet, *The Blue Ridge Art & Craft Trails, a Creative Meander*. A website, <http://artsvirginia.com>, provides this marketing tool to countless potential visitors as well.*

3. Measure the return on investment of human and financial resources for cultural heritage tourism.

- ◆ Ask cultural heritage institutions to provide annual budget for cultural heritage tourism. Tally staff hours dedicated to cultural heritage tourism projects, events and programs.
- ◆ Identify additional investments and capital improvements to develop product.
- ◆ Divide economic generation from visitation by total cost of project to obtain return on investment.

Best Practice: Since its inception in 1979, The Northern Plains Tribal Arts Show (NPTA) has awarded more than \$150,000 in prizes, produced more than \$1 million in sales for artists, has seen a cumulative attendance of 70,000 people with an economic impact to Sioux Falls and South Dakota of \$13 million. To accomplish these results, American Indian Services raised more than \$1.5 million and enlisted 2,500 volunteers.

4. Define the economic impact of cultural heritage tourism via jobs, new businesses, and spending/attendance at sites.

- ◆ Poll each of the cultural heritage tourism institutions to identify how many people are currently employed at museums, historic sites and other cultural heritage tourism attractions.
- ◆ Tally number of persons - artists, storytellers, craftspeople, tour guides, event coordinators – directly engaged in/benefiting from cultural heritage tourism.
- ◆ Obtain market research information on visitation to cultural heritage sites and events. Compare with other attractions and/or national statistics.
- ◆ Ask local destinations and/or institutions to track the number of new businesses - hotels, restaurants, attractions, retail, services - generated annually from cultural heritage tourism development and visitation.

Best Practice: Visits to Civil War sites in Virginia jumped from 500,000 in 1996 to 580,000 in 1997. Statewide study shows that Civil War driving travelers spent \$21 per day more than other pleasure travelers (\$71 per day vs. \$50). Nine percent of all Virginia travelers included a Civil War site in their travel plans.

5. Enhance residents' quality of life through cultural heritage tourism.

- ◆ Obtain testimonials from local officials, residents to showcase how cultural heritage tourism has increased community pride, provided new products and services, revitalized community and/or brought new monies into the community to offset services (fire, police, etc.)
- ◆ Identify key new products and services that have been utilized by residents as well as visitors.

Best Practice: In the Tennessee Overhill region, Etowah's Historic Gem Theater is now restored and home to live performances year round.

6. Define how meetings pay off.

- ◆ For each meeting, set a measurable outcome. Establish the number of meetings required to accomplish the project. Include a budget for meeting time as well as out-of-pocket expenses to determine the entire cost of the project.
- ◆ To determine a budget for meetings or staff time involved, take the hourly wage of each person involved and multiply by the time spent on the project. Include travel time, in-office and on-site time. Also track time spent by volunteers to help demonstrate the scope of work accomplished and the number of man hours required to complete the project.

Best Practice: Three-year series of training sessions sponsored by the Atlanta (Georgia) Convention & Visitors Bureau and conducted by a Georgia State University professor has helped cultural site managers improve their programming, pricing, board development and marketing techniques. The training sessions expose participants to experts and, just as importantly, afford an opportunity to meet and learn from each other.

7. Educate on long-term benefits rather than short-term results.

- ◆ Share best practices and the timeline required to accomplish quality results.
- ◆ Compare the time to develop the niche market – identify constituents and produce product – with investment of human and financial resources required to develop other market segments (three to five years to develop results from group tour, international audience) or other industries (economic development/industrial recruiters spend three years attracting new businesses to a community.)

Best Practice: Local businesses reap long-term economic improvements. Statistics show that as many as 12% of visitors participating in Chicago's Neighborhood Tours (CNT) return to shop at neighborhood stores later.

8. Understand cultural heritage's impact on tourism marketing.

- ◆ Focus on key areas: market research, sales, promotions, public relations, advertising, graphic materials, information distribution (direct mail, internet, telephone, etc.)

- ◆ Conduct outreach initiatives, working with tourism marketing to educate arts and preservation leaders about travel & tourism, how the industry works, key strategies to increase visitation/economic impact, how to partner with public and private marketing organizations, timeline and investments required.

Best Practice: Lancaster, Pennsylvania's locally devised authenticity guidelines for heritage sites, services and events ensure an authentic quality experience for visitors. The Heritage Logo has become the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" to help visitors seek out Lancaster's authentic heritage. Authenticity guidelines also provide an added incentive to encourage authentic restorations and interpretation.

Best Practice: Mississippi's Museum of Southern Jewish Experience (MSJE) Cultural Corridors introduce the history of an additional ethnic group in what has always been seen as a polar society of black and white.

9. Demonstrate the importance of cultural heritage tourism to key stakeholders.

- ◆ Identify key areas of interest from each constituent. For instance, preservationists may care about number of buildings saved, restored. Cultural organizations may want increased membership, new exhibits, or funding. Tourism desires new product to market and increased visitation and/or economic impact from travelers.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to legislators:

Best Practice: After five years of operation, Tamarack has hosted over 2.2 million visitors who (purchased) \$23.5 million in West Virginia products and generated over \$1.2 million in sales tax revenues for the state. It provides a retail outlet for more than 1,900 West Virginia artists and craftspeople, with a total inventory of more than 30,000 diverse products.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to new administration/agency:

Best Practice: California – Culture's Edge campaign proved that when the nonprofit arts and for-profit travel industries work together, when true public/private partnerships are developed around common goals, the sky's the limit. The campaign – which won the 1998 TIA Odyssey Award for Cultural Heritage Tourism – partnered arts councils, hotels, convention & visitors bureaus with American Express and Hyatt Hotels & Resorts to promote 13 culturally themed itineraries in Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to residents:

Best Practice: Chicago Neighborhood Tours build community pride. Some communities don't think they have anything to share. Once guides research their own neighborhoods, they realize the wealth of history and lore they have and the importance of not losing it. Local residents are then eager to become tour guides and ambassadors.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to constituents:

Best Practice: The US Bureau of Land Management has noted a shift in visitor behavior to Sand Canyon since 1997. Subsequent visitors have been more respectful of the landscape and archeological sites. BLM is currently in discussion with other commercial outfitters who

would like to take a more active role in preserving Sand Canyon. Outfitters have expressed interest in helping monitor the land, gather information and produce educational materials about how to be a responsible visitor.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to media:

Best Practice: Michigan's Great Outdoors Culture Tour attracted 8,500 people in 2000 representing a 42% increase from 1998, the program's first full year. It grew from 18 presenters conducting 85 programs to 20 presenters conducting 94 programs. In Fall 2000 it received the US Forest Service's Windows on the Past national heritage award for excellence and innovative work.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to travel industry:

Best Practice: In a decade, the Tennessee Overhill Heritage Association increased lodging from one establishment to nine bed and breakfast inns, new cabins, lodges and retreats. The tri-county area also restored the L&N Railroad Watchman's House at Reliance, and citizens have recently joined together to save Starr Mountain, one of the area's most prominent natural assets.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to preservationists:

Best Practice: Four archaeological sites in Sand Canyon have been stabilized including Castle Rock (1998), Sunny Alcove (1998), Vision House (1999-2000) and Two Storey House (1999-2000). The presence of volunteers and archaeologists in Sand Canyon, Colorado has helped to keep the area open and expand the capabilities of U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to monitor the land.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to arts community:

Best Practice: 78% of participating craft businesses along the Craft Trails of Western North Carolina reported increased sales, some up to 30%. Due to participation in Handmade in America, some craftspeople have expanded their businesses, purchased new equipment, and added space to studios and galleries.

Importance of cultural heritage tourism to visitors:

Best Practice: Response cards from the Crafts Trails of Western North Carolina guidebook indicates 94% of trail visitors purchase crafts during their travel on the trails. Of those making purchases, 42% spent more than \$200.

10. What to do with \$1 million:

- ◆ Make a plan, create a wish list and have it ready to present at any moment.

