



Regional Tourism Organization 12 / Explorers' Edge  
 2014/2015 Marketing Plan

June 15, 2014  
 Prepared by: James Murphy, Executive Director

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## Learnings

- We must develop content with mobile in mind and optimize it for mobile browsers and apps like Facebook
- After search, Facebook and Facebook Mobile have become the most important methods for distributing content to our target audience, and it will continue to grow in importance. But getting users to click onward to operators will be more challenging on mobile. Reconsider all aspects of the EE.ca content page, as it's fast becoming our front door
- By focusing our paid advertising on Google and Facebook, we can increase site traffic by up to 50%
- Content marketing drove results in 2014, and suggests we go all-in in 2014, but focus content on qualified prospects who don't have EE in their consideration set. More content against keyword strategy = more organic traffic
- Traditional ad campaigns over-consume organizational resources (both in terms of time of staff and, especially, marketing budget) compared to the contribution they make to site traffic. They should be (mostly) axed.
- Target Searchers with offer-oriented content and search advertising that aims to get them to an operator site or the EE booking engine. Target Discovers with brand-building content and social advertising.
- Publishing more content on EE.ca/social platforms that shows real people enjoying themselves in the sub-regions will build the perception that these are THE places to go for a holiday
- As per the MTCS 8 Performance Measures we will continue to use our branding as an umbrella for the region, but will also continue to push out sub-regions as unique destinations within the region, thereby helping them to maintain or establish positioning and identity as well.
- Target our content messaging and ads to reach those who are more likely to consider Niagara or other RTOs than EE. Use the content to battle the perception that EE is less likely to have accommodations, accessibility, cultural activities, attractions and dining/entertainment
- Expand our social media footprint in 2014

## **Business Vision**

By 2017, EE will be the most popular tourism destination in Ontario.

## **Marketing Mission**

To make our target audience (Ontario Explorers) aware of Explorers' Edge and the regions within to help them maximize their enjoyment when they visit

### **Brand Positioning**

A quintessentially Canadian wilderness experience just 2 hours from the city

### **Tagline**

We recommend the Naturally Adventurous tagline be either dropped or changed to one more explicitly linked to brand position

### **Brand Voice**

Earnest, approachable, informed and, most of all, Canadian

## **Marketing Priorities 2014**

We will have advertising in market year-round, with "heavy-ups" for shoulder seasons to encourage perception that EE is a four-season destination. Specifically:

- Drive 450,000 qualified prospects to ExplorersEdge.ca, an increase of 50%:
  - Attract Searchers with offer-oriented content and advertising – drive to operator websites or to booking engine
  - Attract Discoverers with brand-oriented content and advertising
  - Target NICHE markets (associated with various product development, e.g. fishing sites, motorcycle sites, etc.)
- Directly generate operator-level sales with transacting programs and by sending 100,000 visitors to operator websites (100% increase over 2013)

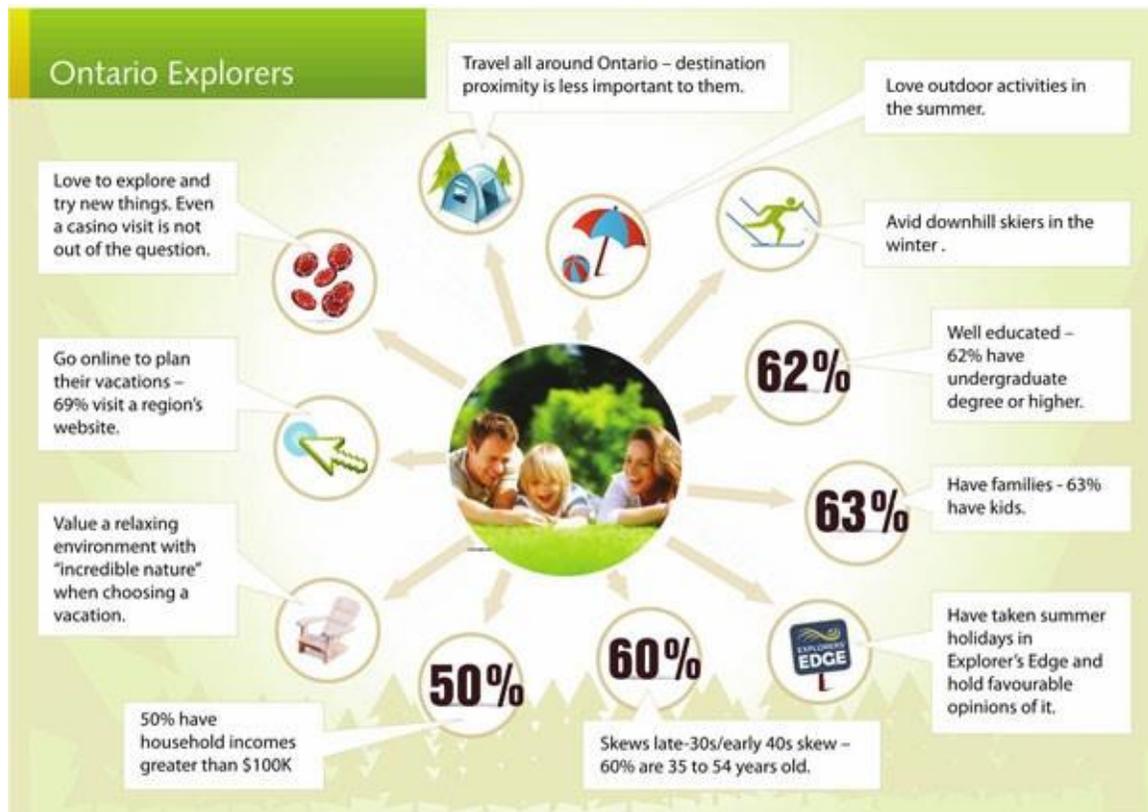
## **Marketing Objectives 2014**

- Expand visitors to the region by building on existing brand recognition
- Be more efficient in advertising buys
- Strengthen consumer trade and media databases

- Provide greater reach and access to the region by linking the consumer to regional information, experiences and packages that corresponds with seasonal and general tourism marketing initiatives.
- Change perceptions of customers from target markets

## Priority Target Market(s)

- Ontario Explorers: Married with kids – 35 to 60 years old. Above average HHI and education. Uses digital media to plan holidays and enjoys broadcast media like radio during commute. Takes family trips in Ontario every summer.
- We will target Ontario Explorers who are actively seeking information (Searchers) by increasing the amount of content on EE.ca and with search engine advertising.
- We will target Ontario Explorers who are not actively seeking information (Discoverers) by increasing the amount of content published on social media platforms
- The Ontario Explorers (2012) mirrors the identified Connected Explorer that was segmented in the Consumer Insight Research Segmentation Report (2013).



## Marketing Manifesto

As our target audience turns away from traditional advertising and other interruptive marketing, we will turn towards content to forge a new kind of marketing relationship with them.

The challenge with traditional advertising is that most of what it communicates is irrelevant to our target needs or reaches them at the wrong time. What distinguishes content is that it seeks not to interrupt, but to be found – and to be found at precisely the moment when the target is ready to consider our message. Moreover, because it's better suited to inform and educate, our content will attract to Explorers' Edge and its 5 regions and engage potential customers much earlier in the path to purchase.

And unlike traditional advertising, content marketing doesn't limit the scope of our message, and allows us to communicate the breadth and depth of the Explorer's Edge proposition and be inclusive of ALL the regions it comprises. It also means more of our marketing budget is spent on reaching the prospect and not on agency fees and creative development.

We have already found our voice as social mobile content publishers, and have proved that it can bring qualified prospects to our brand. In 2014 we will fully commit ourselves to becoming leading edge content marketers – and out-smarting our competitors for the attention of Ontario Explorers. We will publish more compelling content more frequently, and ensure that it is fully optimized for the social mobile consumer. And we will use the full suite of content distribution technologies to reach them.

**We will be Ontario tourism's leading social mobile content marketers.**

## Tactical Plan

### Content Strategy

- More content on ExplorersEdge.ca will drive more organic traffic (from Searchers) and attract Discoverers who find our content in their social media feeds. It's recommended to publish a new piece of content at least 3 to five times per week, 52 weeks/year
- In addition to content that reinforces the brand position, the plan will focus a significant portion of the new content on purchase decision criteria where EE is perceived to be lacking against competitor regions:
  - Proximity/Accessibility
  - Accommodations
  - Cultural activities

- Attractions
- Dining/entertainment
- Content will also reinforce niche markets (some have been identified with Product Development):
  - Culture
  - Golf
  - Culinary
  - Motorsport (Ride the Edge)
  - Fishing
  - Natural Landscape (water, stars, trees etc)
  - Resort Experience
  - Cycling
  - LGBT
- We will publish content that has universal appeal (and thus highly shareable) but still connects to the region (e.g., “Top Five Ways to Cook Lake Trout”, “How to Launch & Land a Canoe”)
- Expand guest author program to cover more communities of interest and areas of expertise
- We will layer on a “curated” content stream, in which EE publishes short pieces throwing to content relating to the region, but published by third parties. This content not only will increase the utility of the blog, it will also improve Page Rank
- The focus will be to “carve the turkey” to make content work harder. A great piece of content can be likened to a large turkey: once roasted you need to plan a myriad of ways to serve it up to make the most of the bird – soups, sandwiches, casseroles, etc. The same idea applies to great content!
  - For example, consider a piece called the “Boats of Muskoka” featuring 5 historic watercraft and ships found in the region. This piece features the history of each boat as well as a photo gallery:
  - On Facebook, the piece provide 5 different daily posts, each featuring a different boat, and linking to the article
  - Tweet 5 pics of the boats on the same day, with a link to the article
  - On Instagram, post 5 striking images of the boats over a five day period with a special hashtag #MuskokaBoats (and other common ones to improve reach), and invite other users to post images of boats they like in the region with the hashtag
  - Post those same images on Pinterest boat board, with a special offers for “boat-oriented” operators like Muskoka Steamships, Muskoka Boat & Heritage Centre, Uber, Swift Canoe, etc.

***There will be no major campaign investments, but seasonal themes will still be developed and delivered through content. So a campaign like Fall Blue will still be developed, but pushed out through content (photos, copy, articles, videos), etc, rather than on big billboards etc.***

## Marketing Funnel



## Optimizing Content for Distribution on Social and Mobile (of note)

- We will ensure EE's content publishing platform/methods are optimized for both mobile and social distribution:
  - Revisit the EE blog design and redesign it to surface more content on the front pages, making it more like a news site (and less blog-like). Macleans (<http://www.macleans.ca>) is a great example of this. Also:
    - Addition of social sharing buttons and FB commenting to the EE story pages
    - We will ensure the site code and structure is optimized for SEO (see <http://moz.com/blog/the-web-developers-seo-cheat-sheet-2013-edition>) and to ensure site conforms to FB, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest protocol for social sharing (<http://www.iacquire.com/blog/18-meta-tags-every-webpage-should-have-in-2013>)
- Ensure that all content, including images on the blog, are comprehensively tagged with key words, and that headlines are SEO friendly (descriptive, containing key words)

## Expanding Our Social Media Footprint in 2014

Our primary content distribution channel for reaching Ontario Explorers.

- We will continue to grow our Facebook Fan base, with objective of an increase of 15% the number of likes on Facebook (7,500) fans by end of fiscal 2014. Increase spend on promoting posts and use the platform to invite engagement on other social platforms.
- The gift certificate app will be modified to promote special offers from operators

- Test Twitter ads to attract followers and promote high value content. To increase our Twitter followers by 20% (508)
- Invest in strategy development and social media listening tool like Sysomos to increase base of followed accounts to grow follower base, with a focus on finding influential users in SW Ontario with a focus on those involved in lifestyle media
- Start business account and publish at least three high quality photos per day, with an emphasis on artfully presenting different aspects of the region (i.e., the boats of EE, sunsets of EE, etc.).
- We will share all Instagram posts on both Facebook and Twitter as well as use the Instagram API to create a feed on EE.ca. Find and follow relevant local users and like/comment on their photos. Create an ongoing IG Fan Photo contest (perhaps weekly), where the winning photo is featured as the EE FB cover image and the winner receive a modest prize from a local operator
- Continue to publish, at least once per day, with an emphasis on promoting the offerings of local operators and retailers (since Pinterest is the most transactional of social media, and is one of the most effective ways to drive referral traffic to operators). Combine great images with content to create Pinterest boards that appeal to interests in hobbies and activities – for example, art & crafts, food/drink, bird watching, etc. Invite visitors to the region to “guest pin” their experiences and operators to promote special offers

## Timing

In market with week of June 16, 2014 (Pending MTCS, Marketing Committee and Board of Director approval) and run to week of March 15, 2015.

- Circulation to the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport, June 15, 2014
- Concept presentation Marketing Committee – June 16, 2014
- Concept presentation Board of Directors – June 18, 2014
- On-going refinement of the content schedule and editorial calendar with the Marketing Committee

## Partnered Activities

Tactical initiatives and the process for participating in them have yet to be clearly defined by OTMPC. Based on previous years' work and high level information provided by OTMPC there is an opportunity to leverage:

- OTMPC Great North program (Free Standing Insert [FSI], Union Station, ontariotravel.net etc).
- Provincial Power sport Program – Northern OTMPC
- Provincial Outdoor Program – Northern OTMPC
- Provincial Fishing Program – Northern OTMPC
- Overseas (England & Germany) – Toronto OTMPC
- Free Standing Insert (FSI) – Toronto OTMPC
- ontariotravel.net – Toronto OTMPC

## Tracking / Measurement

As part of our marketing management, we will track the results of the campaign and provide a “dashboard” of results. These metrics include:

- Web ad impressions/clicks
- Traffic profiles/trends on Explorers' Edge websites
- Visits by influential bloggers to the region
- Social media posts
- Social network mentions (Facebook/Twitter)
- New interactions with Explorer's Edge
- Net new Facebook fans
- Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Pinterest
- Newsletter subscribers
- Referrals – Jack Rabbit Referral System

## Content Marketing Plan

Category	Tactic	Objective	Primary Target
Social Media Advertising	Facebook Ads to solicit Page Likes and promote posts	Increase Page Likes, encourage post engagement, drive traffic to EE.ca	Discoverers
	Promoted Account / Tweets / Trends	Increase followers, encourage post engagement, drive traffic to EE.ca	Discoverers
Search Engine Marketing	Google Adwords	Attract highly qualified prospects to EE.ca with targeted keywords	Searchers
	Google Display Network Ads retargeting people who have already visited EE.ca with offers to book	Drive booking engine conversion	Searchers
Content Marketing	Niche Marketing	Expose EE.ca content on high-reach third party websites	Discoverers
	Content Discovery Networks Outbrain/Taboola	Expose EE.ca content on high-reach third party websites	Discoverers
	OTMPC (programs and newsletters)	Expose EE.ca content on high-reach OTMPC third party website(s)	Discoverers
	Third Party Content (Toronto Star)	Expose EE.ca content on high-reach third party websites	Discoverers
	Content Development / Guest Authors	Increase followers, encourage post engagement, drive traffic to EE.ca	Discoverers

## 2014 / 2015 Budget

Social Media Advertising	Facebook Ads to solicit Page Likes	210,000.00	206,800.00	485,800.00
	Promoted Account / Tweets / Trends	25,000.00		
Search Engine Marketing	Google Adwords	100,000.00	132,000.00	
	Google Display Networks	50,000.00		
Content Marketing	Content Discovery Networks - Outbrain / Taboola		25,000.00	
	Niche Marketing (the weather network, outdoor Canada, ride the edge etc.)		52,000.00	
	Third Party Content (Toronto Star)		25,000.00	
	Content Development / Guest Authors		25,000.00	
	OTMPC (Programs [FSI, ontariotravel.net, union station] and newsletters)		20,000.00	
Development Expenses	Website		-	
	Social media promotions / contests		15,000.00	
	Facebook Offers Tab		3,000.00	
	Media and PR		-	
	E-mail newsletter development		10,000.00	
	Creative development		10,000.00	
Project Management	Facebook 12%	0.12	28,200.00	
	Google 12%	0.12	18,000.00	
Strategic Development	Strategy Development		15,000.00	
	Monthly Retainer	\$2,800 @ 10 months	28,000.00	
	Tools - Social Listening / Subscription		13,000.00	
TOTAL			626,000.00	<b>626,000.00</b>

## MTCS Media Investment Template

- Newspaper 0%
- On-line/Social 69%
- SEM 27%
- Trip Advisor 0%
- Magazine 0%
- OTMPC 4 %
- Other (specify) 0%
- Radio 0%

## Performance, tracking and measurement

The proposed brand/tactical campaign will bring visitors to the region during the fall period. But it will also continue the task of building the Explorers' Edge brand with the key target audience, an investment that will pay dividends for years to come.

As part of our campaign management, we will track the results of the campaign and provide a "dashboard" of results. These metrics include:

- Web ad impressions/clicks
- Traffic profiles/trends on Explorers' Edge websites
- Visits by influential bloggers to the region
- Social media posts (we'll provide periodic reporting on social media reports using our monitoring tool Radian6):
- Social network mentions (Facebook/Twitter)
- New interactions with Explorer's Edge:
- Net new Facebook fans
- Newsletter subscribers (through contest entry form)

## Timing

In market with week of May 1, 2013 and run to week of March 15, 2014.

- Creative concept presentation Marketing Committee – April 25th
- Creative concept approved, Boar of Directors – April 29th
- Media plan presentation, Boar of Directors – April 30th
- Circulation to the Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport, May 6th
- Radio script presented – May 17th
- Radio production – May 24th