

2022

SoIN Tourism

Sales & Marketing Plan

The "SMarketing" Plan



Introduction

Nearly two years into the Covid-19 pandemic, we continue to reinvigorate the tourism industry within Clark and Floyd counties' communities. The industry is rebounding, though somewhat unevenly within our market sectors (group travel, indoor events and business travel). Though these sectors may lag a bit, we have made good strides in these areas.

SoIN Tourism is thankful for the partners who have continued to innovate and respond to changing market forces. Our tourism partners are emerging from the pandemic with an entrepreneurial spirit that continues to enhance our quality of place. We will support partners as they continue to recover.

SoIN Tourism's sales and marketing efforts have evolved to be more measurable and accountable. Our decisions on how to market to potential visitors rely on data.

We use our brand pillars to position the communities in Clark & Floyd Counties as destinations in which visitors can have new and worthwhile experiences. Travelers who visit Clark and Floyd counties are surprised and delighted with our unique offerings.

The 2022 Sales & Marketing (SMarketing) Plan is a roadmap we will follow to tell the SoIN story so visitors may experience our destination and support our local tourism businesses.

The SoIN Brand Story

A destination is not a slogan or an ad campaign. It is the sum of the history, character and culture of the people within the destination. Visitor experiences in SoIN reflect the area's communities and their people. We are:

- Open & Unpretentious
- Bustling, yet Friendly
- Down-to-earth
- Neighborly & Easy Going
- Low Hassle
- Good Value, Affordable



SWEET
SPOT



*We're in the Sweet Spot
between City and Country.*

Our Messaging is Organized Around

SoIN's Brand Pillars

Brand pillars are characteristics that make our area distinctive, unique and attractive. We lead with these attributes to tell the SoIN story. Through research and visitor's reaction to our destination marketing, we find that visitors value these pillars.

Riverside



Ohio River scenery
Riverside dining and
recreation
390 million year
old fossils
River history

Arts & Culture



Immersive arts
experiences
Maker culture
Storyed
performing arts

History & Heritage



Lewis & Clark and the
Corps of Discovery
Steamboat history
African American History
*the Underground Railroad &
the Network to Freedom*

Culinary



Eclectic,
entrepreneurial
restaurant scene
Craft beer, wine and
cocktails

Outdoor Recreation



Rolling hills, atypical
Midwest topography
Farm experiences
Knobstone Trail,
*the Midwest's
Appalachian trail*

Guiding Principles

Leading through Covid-19

As the Covid-19 pandemic lingers, SoIN Tourism will promote travel to SoIN without compromising the health and safety of tourism employees, residents and visitors. We will monitor the pandemic, follow federal, state and local health guidelines and communicate Covid safety protocols as needed.

Destination Marketing Benefits SoIN

Destination Marketing is a vital community function. It attracts visitors who inject money into the local economy and enhances our quality of place. SoIN Tourism performs a public good benefiting the local people in Clark and Floyd counties and the Louisville metro area.

Marketing through Storytelling

We use video, photographic and written storytelling to make authentic connections with consumers. We include diverse voices to represent our diversity and convey that all are welcome here.

Vital Partnerships

We don't own an attraction, restaurant, or hotel and we don't operate a festival. Our partners deliver experiences to visitors, and we can't market without them. We create opportunities to collaborate with partners; we share their stories in our messaging. These stories attract visitors to our destination. We are open to mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses who wish to enhance the local visitor experience.

Regionalism Benefits All

The SoIN visitor industry maintains a symbiotic relationship with Louisville's. Our ability to attract visitors relies on our proximity to Louisville. In turn, Louisville tourism benefits from our offerings.

Website as a Hub

We rely on our website, GoSoIN.com, as the hub of all communications.

Tourism's Economic Impact*



Total local workers**
supported by tourism:

5,003

**Full or part-time jobs



11 Cents

of each visitor dollar went toward the
payment of state and local taxes.



If tourism did not exist, each of the
84,842 families in Clark-Floyd
would have to pay an additional **\$447**
per year in taxes to maintain current levels
of state & local government services.



57 Cents

of every dollar spent by visitors to Clark-Floyd
counties is returned to the local area.

*Source: Rockport Analytics, LLC

Situational Analysis

We don't have a crystal ball. This document is an overview for the upcoming year. We make certain assumptions based on our current state and will be flexible when needed.

- 1** Through Clark and Floyd counties' growth, new partners and exciting tourism developments, SoIN Tourism's targeted marketing campaigns are poised to capitalize on the region's successes and attract new visitors.
- 2** Though improved, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to challenge the tourism industry and our partners. Tourism marketers must monitor infection rates and adjust our messaging accordingly. The marketing tactics we use must be flexible enough to pivot if infection rates spike.
- 3** Though the SoIN brand is gaining traction, it is still somewhat complicated and needs to be explained to those not familiar with our area.
- 4** Hotel data indicates leisure travel and youth sports are driving the recovery. Group tours, meetings and business travel are rebounding, but are not yet at previous levels.
- 5** SoIN Tourism is addressing Diversity, Inclusivity, and Equity in its marketing and community outreach to ensure that the diverse populations within our community have a voice and that we market to and for the diverse populations within our community.
- 6** IEDC Board of Directors are set to make funding recommendations after this SMarketing Plan is produced. If IEDC selects Southern Indiana as a regional recipient, READI funding awards will advance the implementation of projects and programs designed to catalyze economic growth and talent development in our area.
- 7** Sherman Minton Bridge construction may dampen the number of visitors to New Albany from Louisville and other traffic from westbound Interstate 64.
- 8** Two Clarksville projects will attract visitors and improve the area's quality of life: Origin Park and South Clark redevelopment. SoIN Tourism will incorporate these projects into its marketing as they develop.
- 9** SoIN Tourism has relied on third party data to make marketing decisions. In 2021 and 2022, that data will be more difficult to obtain. We will collect information directly from audiences and customers in the future to market to them effectively.

SoIN Visitor Data

Target Markets

We target

Regional Visitors (drive market)

Louisville & Southern Indiana residents who are involved in clubs, associations and sport leagues

Louisville & Southern Indiana residents

Motorcoach tour operators

Event owners, rights-holders and organizers

because they

are more likely to stay overnight and spend more.

are our best way to reach meeting, event and tournament planners.

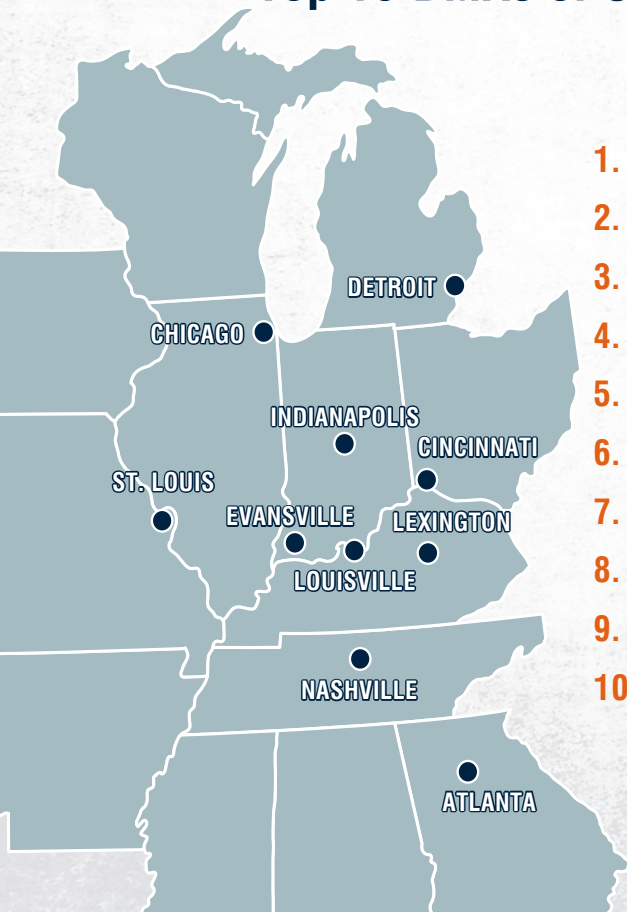
they support local businesses and are "brand ambassadors" who influence visiting friends and relatives to engage with our partners.

deliver busloads of visitors.

deliver individuals, couples, and groups on weekends.

Top 10 DMAs of Origin*

1. Indianapolis
2. Chicago
3. Lexington
4. Evansville
5. Nashville
6. Cincinnati
7. Louisville
8. Atlanta
9. St. Louis
10. Detroit



Visitors' Average Length of Stay



Day Trips

4.8 hours



Overnight Visitors

51.6 hours



Highest Visitation Months

March, April, May & June

*Source: Longwoods & Uber Media, 2019

Personas

To shape messages effectively and influence decision making, it's helpful to think of customers as individuals who have a lifestyle – or travel style – and with needs that our destination can meet.



Michelle Mom

The family travel planner, has kids in sports, family recreation
With affordable, kid-friendly activities and great opportunities to get outdoors, SolN is an ideal place for family fun with easy access to Louisville.



Friend Trips - Drew Brew/Gloria Girlfriend

Girls' trip planner, relaxing getaway, entertainment with friends
Guys' trip planner, active getaway, entertainment with friends
With convenient hotels, a casino, six golf courses and a variety of craft breweries, SolN offers an easy guys' getaway with plenty of fun.



Couples - Clyde & Connie/Terry & Morgan

Weekend getaway, one-day excursion, evening out
Always up for something different, Clyde and Connie Couple will find SolN an unexplored and unexpected source of culture, cuisine and a way to "get away" without going far.

Traveling LGBTQ+ couples seek the chance to explore new areas, talk to interesting people, shop for one-of-a-kind items, and discover culinary options to tempt the palate.
SolN offers walkable downtowns that welcome couples and friends of all stripes with its easygoing, accepting attitude. A wide variety of dining options allow travelers to experience local and regional flavors.

Tom/Tess Tour Operator

Group tour planner, may own buses
SolN gives Tom and Tess affordable options to build unique tours that can stand alone or complement a Louisville itinerary.

Partner Support

SoIN Tourism doesn't own our destination's attractions, restaurants, or hotels, nor do we operate the festivals held here. Our partners deliver those experiences to those who both live in and visit Clark and Floyd counties.

As a destination marketing organization, we promote the visitor experiences our partners offer through various outlets. We strengthen our destination's businesses by helping our partners reach new audiences and by collaborating with partners to create new opportunities. We share our partners' stories in our marketing and messaging. In turn, we attract visitors to our destination so they may experience SoIN – and those partners who make up our destination.

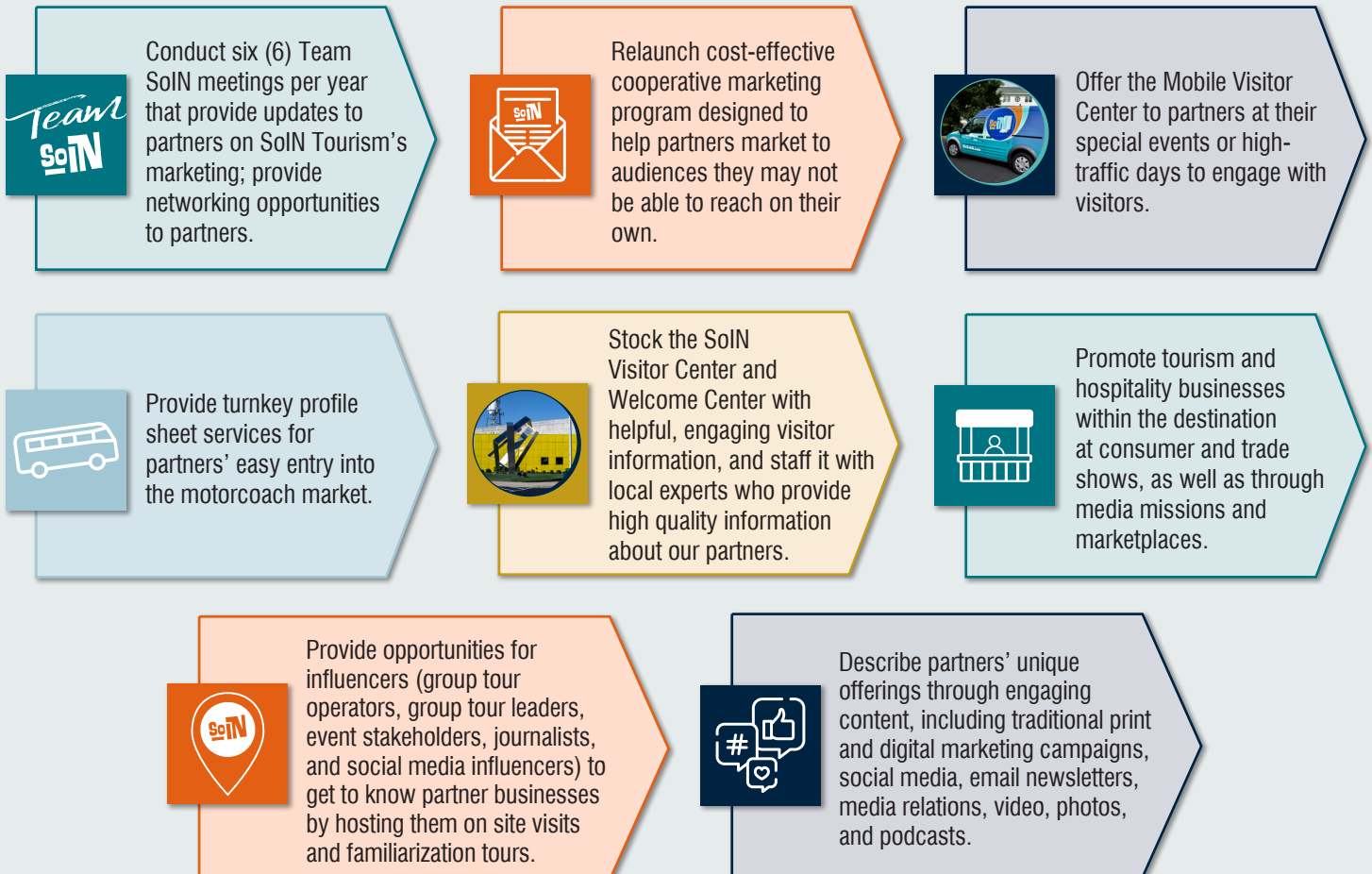
Objectives

- 1. Continue to engage tourism and hospitality business owners to build strong partnerships.**
- 2. Develop new marketing tools and benefits that are beneficial to our partners as well as SoIN Tourism.**
- 3. Encourage partners to network with one another and create new partnerships to enhance their businesses.**

Goals

- 1.** Increase partner engagement by 10% (Facebook Team SoIN group response, increased partner portal usage, etc.)
- 2.** Grow Team SoIN attendance by 5%
- 3.** Assess partner educational needs and develop initial programming
- 4.** Engage with visitors by having partners request the presence of the Mobile Visitor Center at their high-traffic attractions and events

Strategies



Leisure Travel

When asked why they visit SoIN, many people say they are visiting family and friends. An important source of visitors, SoIN Tourism will continue to reinforce the SoIN brand to residents, who are our most frequent visitors and customers. They serve as ambassadors for our destination. Residents experience our amenities and take pride in our community. They share their experiences with family and friends who visit from other cities. We market our brand through owned, shared, earned and paid platforms, which include our website, email newsletters, social media, advertising, and outreach at local and regional events. We encourage locals and visitors to engage with us in these channels to create more awareness of the area and expand our reach. SoIN Tourism will also seek to penetrate other regional markets, encourage out-of-town visitors to visit and experience our destination.

Objective

Establish in the minds of potential visitors that Southern Indiana's lodging, attractions, events, dining and retail are healthy, safe options for a weekend getaway destination by itself in addition to being a complementary destination to Louisville. Use brand pillars (that which makes our destination unique) to target, focus and filter our messaging.

Goals

1. Attract 307,000 unique visitors to GoSoIN.com
2. Generate and service 10-15 hosted media visits
3. Engage at least 60 partners and 800 visitors with an appealing SoIN passport program
4. Increase engagement across all media outreach channels (paid, earned, shared and owned) to convert potential travelers to SoIN visitors
5. Maintain SoIN brand engagement in local and Indianapolis markets
6. Expand SoIN brand awareness in selected drive markets
7. Need one to talk about goals related to nurturing leads and converting visitors

Key Strategies

- A. Use research to understand customers, their motivation to travel and gear marketing to their needs.
- B. List needs to be renumbered.
- C. Continue the outdoor recreation focus as a safe and effective way to engage audiences and drive visitation to our destination.
- D. Market to areas north and west of SoIN to address restricted access to New Albany as the Sherman Minton Bridge construction project continues.
- E. Use extensive digital placement and selected social media audiences to expand paid media in selected target markets; this includes a targeted 200-mile radius around SoIN, along with other markets indicated by research. Also use these tactics to increase social media engagement and website traffic. (addressed in partner section)G. Target Louisville metro area residents to expand our reach and win them over to SoIN experiences. Use our owned and leased platforms. (This last part is addressed in partner section)
- F. Target journalists who tell destination stories to expand media coverage and generate stories about the SoIN experience.
- G. Develop engaging video, photographic and written storytelling to engage potential visitors and drive them to our website and destination.
- H. Refine systems designed for collecting high-quality leads (email and postal addresses, cell phone numbers and social media followers). Nurture those leads to motivate them to consider SoIN as a travel destination and move them toward booking.
- I. Produce high-quality e-mail marketing collateral that gets opened, engages and drives web traffic.
- J. Develop direct mail campaign to target additional audiences.
- K. Improve the Visitor Centers' influence on visitors already in market, enhancing their trip experience leading to superior satisfaction, social sharing and repeat visits.
- L. Integrate messaging throughout all channels to unify our voice, creating calls to action that motivate travelers to inquire about, consider, book and visit SoIN.

Motorcoach

Southern Indiana has untold and undiscovered experiential tourism offerings. The sales team will build new and strengthen existing partnerships to create conceptual, collaborative projects, including these interactive activities into a set of unique itinerary options to present to a variety of group tour planners. We continue to develop new ideas for an ever-changing market/demographic. The explosive growth in SoIN downtowns has the potential to produce experiential options suited to the group tour market. We will continue to work with our tourism partners and strengthen our partnership with the Indiana Destination Development Corporation and Louisville Tourism to build more regional and statewide experiences.

Objectives

- 1. Achieve greater partner engagement and unique experience delivery to the motorcoach market.**
- 2. Establish SoIN as a must-visit destination by itself or combined with other Indiana destinations and Louisville by building experiential tourism as a key component of our sales efforts.**
- 3. Establish in the minds of tour operators and group leaders that southern Indiana's lodging, attractions, dining and retail are affordable options that complete the essential Louisville experience and craft an authentic southern Indiana trip.**
- 4. Position SoIN Tourism as a trusted source for group tour information for the region.**
- 5. Promote our brand as it relates to a place groups tours want to be and should be.**

Goals

- 1.** After a review of current group tour itineraries, have a total of five, group-tour friendly themed itineraries for 2022.
- 2.** Connect with 200 Group Tour Planners. (This number is combined group leaders and tour operators).
- 3.** 225 Daytrips
- 4.** 20 Overnight Motorcoaches
- 5.** Organize, orchestrate, and execute at least 1 familiarization tour for group tour operators.
- 6.** Plan, invite, and execute up to 2 tour operator site visits.

Key Strategies

- A.** Continue to promote the SoIN brand in marketing efforts within the group tour market to introduce, reinforce, and solidify southern Indiana as a unique and emerging group tour destination to planners who often considered us "Louisville North."
- B.** Build a stronger understanding of the motorcoach market among our partners with education and one-on-one training.
- C.** Work closer with local group-friendly partners and provide more training and personal connections to help solidify more product offerings.
- D.** Build experiences that are attractive and interactive for the senior and bank group markets with a minor focus on the millennial and student markets.
- E.** Coach partners to create and develop more experiential, group-friendly tourism.
- F.** Increase group tour content on GoSoIN.com to increase engagement with tour planners.
- G.** Complement sales activities with targeted trade publication advertising.

Sports Marketing

SolN Tourism has had success in acquiring non-traditional events like the Twisted Cat Outdoors Fishing Tournament. While the sports market can be a challenge based on regional municipalities' use of their individual parks, it may still be possible to host large sporting events. Moving forward, SolN Tourism will continue to work with partners and city governments to secure sporting events. Through collaboration with city and county governments, our parks can be assets for visitors as well as residents. Family members and friends will travel to our destination following the sports enthusiasts. These families and friends will then inject cash into the economy by staying in our hotels, eating at our restaurants, shopping at our stores, and visiting our attractions.

Objectives

- 1. Strengthen relationships with municipal parks and recreation departments to help establish the region's collection of sports facilities.**
- 2. Set up regular meetings with governing authorities to collaborate on events suitable for our destination.**
- 3. Identify non-traditional sporting events that may be a better fit for our open spaces.**
- 4. Lure mid-level sports teams and conferences to SolN through use of existing facilities, potential Team Indiana grants and online platforms.**

Goals

- 1.** Continue work to secure SolN again as the home for the Twisted Cat Outdoors Fishing Tournament through excellent service and support.
- 2.** Open dialogues with two non-traditional events/rights holders such as disc golf.
- 3.** Create a one-page sports market themed profile sheet for use at trade shows and for distribution in 2022.

Key Strategies

- A.** Work with local government to build the awareness of the importance of sports in our community.
- B.** Provide Team Indiana with data for its Events Economic Impact Calculator to build Indiana-specific measurements.
- C.** Work with local event planners to build their events for growth in room night revenue.
- D.** Use open dialog with local restaurants that want to grow their business during sporting events and help build a sports-friendly mentality in our destination.
- E.** Work with the Indiana Sports Commission's Team Indiana grant program to help potential sports events offset overall cost.
- F.** Orchestrate and monitor the implementation of appropriate SolN sports facilities on the Playeasy website through the Team Indiana pilot program.

Meetings, Events and Conventions

SolN is becoming a valuable resource for meeting and event planners. Since the region lacks dedicated conference facilities, we have scaled back our progressive approach to searching out potential business from large groups and conventions. Southern Indiana is affordable and accessible, so it is a good fit for the "SMERF" market (social, military, educational, religious, and fraternal meetings). In addition, events such as Abbey Road on the River work well here. Our accommodations are close enough to event sites to make guest experiences accessible, hassle-free, and memorable.

Objectives

- 1. Develop awareness of regional meeting opportunities among residents who are involved in business, association, religious, fraternal, or affinity organizations and assist in appropriate bid requests.**
- 2. Create stronger relationships with our hotels' sales departments to promote our services and willingness to help.**
- 3. Develop stronger relationships in the community through Leadership SI and One SI.**

Goals

- 1.** Obtain five local business contacts who influence meetings and/or events.
- 2.** Meet with 3 Qualified meeting planners and produce actual leads for development.
- 3.** Service two meetings from beginning to end.
- 4.** Join One Southern Indiana as an ambassador to help secure local meeting leads.

Key Strategies

- A.** Partnering with Louisville Tourism will help determine events in Louisville that will most likely impact our hotels.
- B.** Identify events like Abbey Road on the River that can bring a national spotlight to our area.
- C.** Work with local governments to encourage their participation in hosting events.

Key Performance Indicators

What we are measuring today

Earned Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising Value Equivalent • Impressions • Sentiment
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits (sessions) • Unique visitors • New visitors • Average time spent on site • Bounce rate • Referrals to partner websites
Extranet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event submissions and deletions • Updated listings • Lead pick-ups • Special offer views
Email Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open rate • Click-through rate • Email newsletters distributed
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to digital ads and campaigns • Email addresses collected • Best media sources based on type, editorial, circulation and leads collected
Event Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Spending levels while attending events.
Event Marketing <i>(i.e. Balloon events, consumer shows, local festivals)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email addresses collected • Quality of emails collected • Quality of show/festival/ event for email collection • Number of promo code uses to specific events

Key Performance Indicators Continued

What we are measuring today

Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total followers • Total engagement, engagement behavior (likes, shares, retweets, comments, etc.) • Total sign-ups for giveaways
Meetings, Events & Conference Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales contacts generated • Actual leads generated • Site inspections hosted • Lost business (estimated room nights)
Meeting & Conference Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events hosted • Room nights • Total attendance
Group Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour planner contacts generated • Potential number of visitors • Potential economic impact • Actual leads generated • Total overnight coaches reported • Total daytrip coaches reported • Percent of partners reporting to SoIN
Visitor Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email addresses collected at VC/WC • Visitors serviced • Merchandise sales and ad leads • Partner referrals • Visitor interests • Visitor inquiry location