

*SoIN Tourism*

2025

# Sales & Marketing Plan

*The "SMarketing" Plan*

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# Introduction

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

SoIN Tourism develops a comprehensive marketing plan each year to guide our efforts in promoting our area as a premier destination. Our primary objective is to attract visitors to our community for weekend getaways, group tours, sports tournaments, business meetings, and other excursions. As we prepare for 2025, collaboration with our tourism partners and local municipalities will be more crucial than ever for the tourism industry to thrive.

As your local tourism office, we provide help for small businesses by amplifying your stories and leveraging the benefits of increased tourism. We work closely with our partners to ensure our marketing efforts align with the needs of our community and that we promote the unique experiences SoIN has to offer. Our shared goal is to drive visitor engagement and support the growth of small businesses' contribution to our economy.

In 2025, we will embark on several initiatives, including a partnership with Paradise Advertising & Marketing, Inc., who will assist us in refining the "SoIN" destination brand. Community members embrace the brand with events like the "SoIN Big Read." Moving forward, we aim to deepen this connection, working collectively to strengthen the brand within our communities. We want people to associate SoIN with the unique, memorable experiences that exemplify our region's charm.

With the Visitor Center's relocation to a high-traffic area, we've enhanced our ability to serve both visitors and residents. Our Travel Counselors are now better able to provide the personalized service that enriches visitors' experiences. These positive experiences turn guests into enthusiastic destination ambassadors. This strategic move allows us to be even more responsive to our community's needs and to support tourism businesses in SoIN.

As an organization committed to assisting our partners, we provide valuable research and data insights to help them make informed marketing decisions. This enables them to use resources wisely to help grow the visitor economy. SoIN Tourism will monitor tourism and marketing developments and stay informed of industry trends, specifically as it relates to artificial intelligence. We can help identify opportunities and address challenges that may arise and share insights with our partners.

Our vision for 2025 is to make SoIN a recognized destination, celebrated for its quality of place and welcoming Midwest vibe. We are excited to continue collaborating with our community partners to increase tourism and bring economic benefits to our region.

Together, we can positively impact our communities and help small businesses thrive.

Sincerely,



*Chief Marketing Officer*

# The SoIN Brand Story

A destination brand 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



*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 visitors' reactions to our destination marketing, we find that visitors value these pillars.

### Riverside/ Waterfront



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

### Outdoor Recreation



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

### Culinary



- Eclectic, entrepreneurial restaurant scene
- Craft beer, wine and spirits

### History & Heritage



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

### Arts & Culture



- Immersive arts experiences
- Maker culture
- Storyed performing arts

# Guiding Principles

## 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 local people in Clark and Floyd.

## Vital Partnerships

Our tourism partners deliver experiences to visitors, and we can't market without them. We create opportunities to collaborate with partners; we share their stories. We are open to mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses who wish to enhance the local visitor experience.

## Monitoring COVID-19

SoIN Tourism will continue to be mindful of COVID levels and will market responsibly.

## 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, and Louisville tourism benefits from our offerings.

## GoSoIN.com as a Hub

Our website serves as our front doorstep, inviting visitors to explore SoIN's offerings and plan a stay. It is the hub of our communications.

## Marketing through Storytelling

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

# Tourism's Economic Impact\*



Total local workers\*\* supported by tourism:

**6,935**

\*\*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 **78,755** families in Clark-Floyd would have to pay an additional **\$720** per year in taxes to maintain current levels of state & local government services.



**56 Cents**

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

\*Source: Rockport Analytics, LLC, 2022

## SWOT Analysis

To prepare the 2025 Sales and Marketing Plan, SoIN Tourism conducted a SWOT analysis assessing the current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the destination.

### Strengths

- As a data-driven, accountable, transparent organization, SoIN Tourism engages with the community and shares its plans and reports
- Segmented social marketing campaigns generating results
- Tracking contributions to the community (in kind donations to partners)
- Emerging as a recognized group market destination
- Strong regional collaborations
- SoIN Tourism’s involvement in the community has increased and the organization is a trusted partner
- New Visitor Center engaging consumers, residents, community, and partners with fresh, renewed focus
- Engaging more tourism industry partners with innovative initiatives

### Weaknesses

- Awareness of SoIN is increasing, but more is needed to gain strength among our competitive set as a weekend getaway destination
- Lack of appropriate lodging property mix, limited capacity meetings and sports facilities leads to lost business
- Staff capacity in select areas continues to challenge some of the organization’s resources.
- A tight labor market makes it difficult to maintain consistent and quality experiences in our visitor center.

### Opportunities

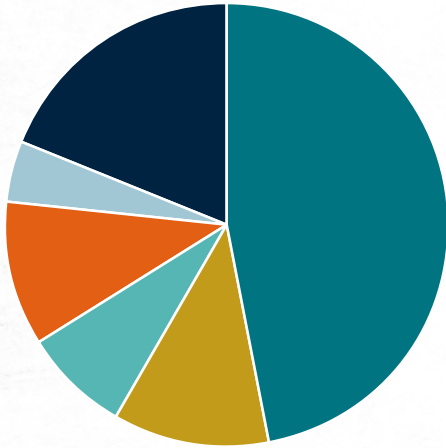
- New staff positions could increase tourism’s influence in the region
- Expand roles of Travel Counselors to be more beneficial to staff and the community
- Encourage partners to use SoIN Tourism’s marketing expertise and resources
- Enhance education and awareness of tourism’s contribution to the local economy
- Encourage collaboration between area tourism and hospitality partners
- Provide SoIN Tourism board members with tools to act as ambassadors
- Capitalize on READI initiative prospects and other SoIN developments (Clarksville South, READI projects, other communities)
- Engage residents and visitors with SoIN Tourism’s presence at regional and local events
- Advance the Conference Center project in partnership with Town of Clarksville
- Elevate and promote current and future outdoor recreation assets (Origin Park, Ohio River Greenway, South Monon, etc.)
- Increase tourism funding with 2025 passage of Tourism Improvement District legislation
- Introduce SoIN as a place to experience niche activities in marketing campaigns
- Business travel (meetings, etc.) has rebounded and is growing
- Engage and participate in more travel writer groups to gain more positive media coverage
- SoIN Tourism can become the central hub for the area’s calendar of events
- Engagement and involvement with area Main Street organizations

### Threats

- Alignment among our communities presents challenges for our destination. The focus on local priorities may sometimes divert resources from larger initiatives that could benefit the region as a whole.
- Continuing workforce and labor shortages
- Turnover in hospitality sector limits continuity in SoIN Tourism’s sales, services and marketing communications functions
- Fragmented media
- Political landscape creates negative perception of the state
- Potential for resurgence of Covid variants
- Need broader engagement of partners with SoIN Tourism
- Lack of perceived diversity in the destination
- Lack of regional brand evangelists among the individual community stakeholders
- Hoosier humility and authenticity conflict with some residents’ push-back against change; perception of their town as being in the shadow of Louisville;
- Lack of diversity in the types of SoIN’s tourism offerings small businesses
- Economic uncertainty with potential for recession; could reduce discretionary spending on tourism

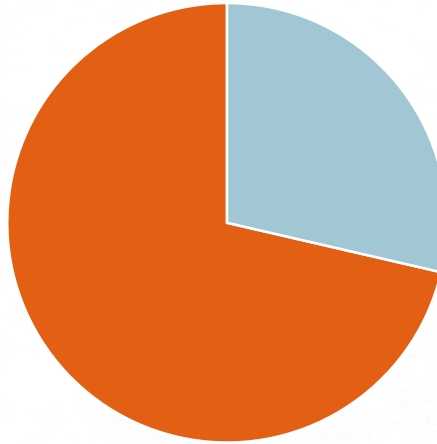
# Visitor Information & Data

Visitor Days by Length of Stay



- 1 Day - 47.2%
- 4 Days - 10.6%
- 2 Days - 11.2%
- 5 Days - 4.57%
- 3 Days - 7.77%
- 6+ Days - 18.7%

Repeat & One Time Visits



- Repeat - 71.1%
- One Time - 28.9%

## SoIN Tourism's Target Markets

SoIN Tourism targets travelers in Indianapolis, Ind., Columbus, Ohio; and Lexington, Ky. because research conducted indicated that these markets are most likely to be receptive to SoIN Tourism's brand messaging.



## 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.

## 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, SoIN 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 diverse live music scene, a nearby casino, six golf courses and craft breweries, SoIN offers easy getaways 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 SoIN 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.**

*SoIN 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**  
*SoIN 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 people who visit and live in Clark and Floyd counties.

As a destination marketing organization, we promote the visitor experiences our partners offer. We strengthen our community by helping partners reach new audiences and by collaborating to create new opportunities. We share our partners' stories in our marketing and messaging. In turn, we attract visitors to our destination; they can experience SoIN through the businesses that make up our destination.

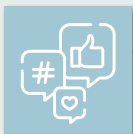
### Objectives

1. Be the go-to marketing resource for tourism businesses who want to increase their knowledge; help partners implement sound strategies into their marketing.
2. SoIN Tourism will engage with business owners to build strong partnerships and a strong tourism and hospitality industry. Create win-win opportunities to further strengthen SoIN as a destination.

### Goals

1. Drive ticket sales, overnight bookings, attraction attendance, and other sales for partners within SoIN by increased cooperative marketing participation.
2. Increased programs to drive customers to partners' businesses.
3. Grow Team SoIN attendance by 5%.
4. Engage with visitors by having the Mobile Visitor Center present at partners' high-traffic attractions and events.
5. Distribute SoIN Tourism's annual Visitor Guide highlighting partner businesses to potential and current visitors.

## Partner Resources and Opportunities



### SoIN Tourism Partnerships

- Upload content to SoIN Tourism's website to share stories to a wider audience
- Dollar-for-dollar match for cooperative marketing
- Connect partners to journalists who tell destination stories



### Team SoIN Industry Meetings

- Provide networking meetings throughout the year
- Encourage and facilitate partnerships
- Share marketing tips and resources



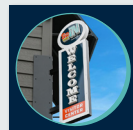
### SoIN Visitor Guide

- Provide engaging stories through the organization's Visitor Guide
- Distribute to SoIN's target markets



### Group Tour Efforts

- Sell destination at travel trade shows
- Advise partners on product development for groups
- Affordable turnkey group marketing solutions
- Include appropriate partners in familiarization tours and site visits



### Provide Visitor Services

- Engage visitors at select events via Mobile Visitor Center
- Spotlight partners at Visitor Center
  - » Encourage use of customized itineraries via True Omni software
  - » Stock locally sourced products
  - » Provide brochure rack opportunities
- Consumer outreach through travel shows



## Leisure Travel

Whether visiting friends and relatives, getting away for a romantic weekend or taking children to fun attractions, leisure travel represents a significant amount of visitor trips to the destination. Through marketing, communications, and visitor services, SoIN Tourism develops strategies to attract visitors within our top feeder markets. We lead with our brand pillars: riverside, outdoor recreation, arts and culture, history and culinary to promote the authentic SoIN visitor experience.

### Objectives

- 1. Establish in the minds of potential visitors that Southern Indiana's lodging, attractions, events, dining, and retail are desirable options for a weekend getaway destination by itself or to complement a Louisville visit.**
- 2. Deliver messages within each stage of the marketing funnel to reinforce the value of a SoIN getaway.**

### Goals

- 1.** Increase number of engaged users to our website by 10%.
- 2.** Host 12-16 travel journalists/bloggers on either individual or group familiarization tours.
- 3.** Increase engagement in SoIN passport programs by 5% or more over previous year's level.
- 4.** Increase email marketing subscribers by 5% while exceeding industry average for open and click-through rates.
- 5.** Maintain distribution of SoIN Tourism's Visitor Guides within the area; increase distribution to SoIN Tourism's target markets via lead generation and fulfillment. Maintain travel trade contacts who supply our Visitor Guides.

### Key Strategies

- A.** Expand media coverage by targeting journalists from diverse perspectives who generate stories about the SoIN experience as a welcoming, accessible destination.
- B.** Use compelling storytelling and integrated marketing campaigns, engage potential visitors, attract them to our website and provide clear calls to action for visiting the destination.
- C.** Continue developing Visitor Center programs to enhance its role in the community and make it a must-visit destination for visitors and residents.
- D.** Focus digital marketing to enhance brand recognition with audiences in SoIN Tourism's target markets: Lexington, Indianapolis, and Columbus, Ohio.
- E.** Convert potential visitors who attend regional & local events, consumer travel shows, and balloon events to explore SoIN as a getaway destination worthy of consideration.

## Sales and Destination Services

Whether it's by a themed motorcoach tour, an industry meeting, a sports tournament or an event, SoIN Tourism's Sales and Destination Services team strives to help key decision makers choose the area as a destination for group business.

SoIN Tourism's creative product development, packaging, and itinerary building has raised awareness of the SoIN brand among influencers in the group market. The team fosters strong relationships in collaborative projects among regional partners to strengthen offerings in these ever-changing markets. The team generates leads, services clients, offers site visits and hosts potential customers on familiarization tours to motivate people to choose SoIN for their group's destination.

Since SoIN lacks dedicated conference facilities, the area 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.

### Objectives

- 1. Establish SoIN as a must-visit destination for group tours, meetings, events and sports by itself or combined with other surrounding destinations.**
- 2. Achieve greater partner engagement and encourage collaboration among partners throughout the counties.**
- 3. Establish SoIN in the minds of potential customers that our lodging, attraction, dining and retail options offer authentic experiences by themselves or as part of the essential Louisville experience.**
- 4. Develop awareness of regional meeting opportunities among residents involved in business, association, religious, fraternal, or affinity organizations and assist in appropriate bid requests.**

### Goals

- 1.** Connect with 200 Group Tour Planners (group leaders & tour operators).
- 2.** 200 Day Trips; 20 Overnight Motorcoaches
- 3.** Organize, orchestrate, and execute at least 1 familiarization tour for group tour operators.
- 4.** Plan, invite, and execute up to 2 tour operator site visits for stakeholders within the meetings, conventions, or sports markets.
- 5.** Meet with 3 qualified meeting planners and produce actual leads for development.
- 6.** Service 2 meetings and/or sports events from beginning to end.

### Key Strategies

- A.** Promote the SoIN brand in marketing efforts within group influencer networks (group tour operators, meetings, and sports).
- B.** Increase the number of partners who participate in the motorcoach market by providing education and one-on-one training.
- C.** Coach partners on building attractive, interactive experiences.
- D.** Complement sales activities with targeted trade publication advertising and personalized digital content.
- E.** Work with local event planners to build their events for growth in room night revenue.
- F.** Obtain grants from the Indiana Sports Commission's Team Indiana to help lure potential sports events.
- G.** Identify other unique events like Abbey Road on the River that can shine a national spotlight on our area.
- H.** Work with local governments to encourage their participation in hosting events.

## 2025 Business Development Calendar

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Type</b>
Feb. 1 & 2	Chicago Travel and Adventure Show	Consumer Outreach
Feb. 1-4	American Bus Association Marketplace	Travel Trade
March 7-9	Heartland Travel Showcase	Travel Trade
TBD Feb/ March	Indiana Media Marketplace	Media Trade Show
April 6-8	Midwest Marketplace	Travel Trade
May 7-10	National Travel Association Contact	Travel Trade
May 19-23	Society of American Travel Writers Regional Conference	Media Trade Show
May 22-26	Abbey Road on the River	Consumer Outreach
TBD	Travel Alliance Partners	Travel Trade
June 2-5	Public Relations Society of America's Travel & Tourism Conference	Media Trade Show
June 12-14	Midwest Travel Network	Media Trade Show
Aug. 19-21	Outdoor Writers Assoc. of America	Media Trade Show
Aug. 22-26	Student and Youth Travel Conference	Travel Trade
TBD-Summer	Group Tour Sales Mission	Travel Trade
September	Great Day Travel Markeplace	Travel Trade
TBD-Fall	Louisville AAA Travel Show	Consumer Outreach
TBD-Fall	Group Tour Sales Mission	Travel Trade
November	National Tour Association	Travel Trade
November	Ontario Motorcoach Association	Travel Trade
Ongoing	SoIN Tourism outreach at Regional Events	Consumer Outreach

# Key Performance Indicators

	Measurement		What it monitors
<b>Earned Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of placements</li> <li>• Impressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sentiment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness</li> <li>• Third party endorsement</li> </ul>
<b>Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits (sessions)</li> <li>• Unique visitors</li> <li>• New visitors</li> <li>• Bounce rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average time spent on site</li> <li>• Referrals to partner websites</li> <li>• Visitor interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health of our brand</li> <li>• Strength of our marketing</li> <li>• Number of referrals to our site</li> </ul>
<b>Extranet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event submissions</li> <li>• Updated listings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead pick-ups</li> <li>• Special offer submissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Email Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open rate</li> <li>• Click-through rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email newsletters distributed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer engagement</li> <li>• Partner engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Advertising</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to digital ads/campaigns</li> <li>• Email addresses collected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best uses for media sources based on type, editorial, circulation, and leads collected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad effectiveness</li> <li>• Channel effectiveness</li> </ul>
<b>Event Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor spending levels while attending event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential Economic Impact</li> </ul>
<b>Event Marketing</b> <i>(i.e. Balloon events, local festivals, consumer shows)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email addresses collected</li> <li>• Quality of emails collected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of event/show for email collection</li> <li>• Number of QR code uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer engagement</li> <li>• Lead collection</li> <li>• Brand/destination awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Social Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total followers</li> <li>• Leads generated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total sign-ups for giveaways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer engagement</li> <li>• Partner engagement</li> <li>• Community engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Meetings, Events &amp; Conference Sales</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sales contacts generated</li> <li>• Actual leads generated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site inspections hosted</li> <li>• Lost business (estimated room nights)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead collection</li> <li>• Brand awareness</li> <li>• Business development</li> <li>• Health of meetings market</li> </ul>
<b>Meeting &amp; Conference Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events hosted &amp; serviced</li> <li>• Room nights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total attendance</li> <li>• Number of welcome bags distributed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead collection</li> <li>• Brand awareness</li> <li>• Business development</li> <li>• Health of meetings market</li> </ul>
<b>Group Travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tour planner contacts generated</li> <li>• Potential number of visitors</li> <li>• Potential economic impact</li> <li>• Actual leads generated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total overnight coaches reported</li> <li>• Total daytrip coaches reported</li> <li>• Percent of partners reporting to SoIN</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead collection</li> <li>• Brand awareness</li> <li>• Business development</li> <li>• Health of group market</li> </ul>
<b>Visitor Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email addresses collected at Visitor Center</li> <li>• Number of visitors serviced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merchandise sales</li> <li>• Partner referrals</li> <li>• Visitor inquiry location</li> <li>• Number of Visitor Guides distributed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer engagement</li> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Lead collection</li> <li>• Visitor Satisfaction</li> <li>• Partner engagement</li> </ul>