

Winter Marketing 2015-16

GTA – Thursday June 25, 2015 at Bearskin Lodge

Focus

- Early snow season + amount of snow throughout the season. Getting the word out about early snow, typically the first place in the state. Maybe connecting with LMC's opening date.
 - Idea: possibly radio/tv campaign like waterfalls this spring
- Silent Sports – VCC is the finest of the silent sports, nowhere else can compete with the diversity and depth of terrain and conditions.
 - Explore more of the lodge to lodge XC skiing opportunities
 - Possibly look into the publication/club called Finnsisu: <https://finnsisu.com/>
 - Idea: Bus wrap promoting silent sports -- with XC & dogsledding
- Snowmobiling. Pristine trails, imagery should reflect how different it is than other snowmobiling destinations. Plenty of room to grow the base, however it was noted that often they are 1nighters and that it would be preferred that they stay longer.
 - Promote lodge to lodge – needs different name than the XC lodge to lodge.
 - Avoid overlap of marketing efforts between XC'ers and snowmobilers. Different interests. Also do not want to brand the area as specific to snowmobile.
 - Map improvements – Ridge Riders publishes a new map every 2-years. This is one of those years.
- Ice Fishing. Some of the best in the state. Known mainly for large lake trout vs walleyes in the winter. Again focus on what makes ice fishing in this region unique, having a fish filled lake all to yourself in the wilderness. Excellent wildlife watching.

Markets & Mediums

- Explore bus wraps in Duluth, TBay, and Rochester again

Highlight Summary

Snow Guarantee – 1st in the state to get snow, remains all season.

Alpine Skiing – new gondola, new website, new terrain.

Identify brand advocates to reach out to.

Silent Sports capital – cream of the crop in terms of terrain, variety, and quality of grooming for XC. – Lodge to lodge offerings.

Also includes Dogsledding, Snowshoeing, Ice Fishing etc.

R&R / Post Activity – foodie experience, micro beers, spas, sitting by fire drinking wine, music (late night/ après)

Snowmobiling – completely different experience than other destinations. Iconic scenery and top notch grooming. New mapping.

Targets (in addition to usual)

Tbay – the luxury resort experience

Duluth – so much more to offer

Honeymooners – starting new traditions

Younger markets: ages 24 – 40

Pre-family or young families, working professionals

Markets/Mediums

Bus/Train Wraps, Digital Media, Brand Advocates, Radio and/or TV call-ins.

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- Promote more in Tbay – Canadians idea of resorts/lodges very different, typically would be a very primitive experience in Canada. Coming to VCC is like a luxury (running water, electricity, amenities) living large at a reasonable amount.
 - The WallEye is a great publication to reach out to visitors
- Honeymooners – newbies, starting new traditions and families.
- Trade Shows
 - Loppet – out. Too expensive, too much the same people. Probably a better venue for specific lodges vs region.
 - TBay Outdoor Show in February – New
 - Duluth Arrowhead Ice Fishing and Snowmobiling Expo – December. Will do again. Good traffic, wide array of exhibitors, different market than typical.

GMATA – Friday June 26, 2015 at East Bay Suites

Focus

- Snowmobiling. Increase promotion of destination rides. Market the style of terrain, boreal forest, Lake Superior scenery, wildlife. Completely different from other snowmobile destinations.
 - Look into advertising in MN State Snowmobile Orgs and DNR
 - Create a welcoming message to snowmobilers – both in marketing as well as at ‘check-in’.
 - Upgrade trail systems and grooming reports
 - Radio might be a good market to reach snowmobilers
 - Improve Ridge Rider Map at production this year
 - Identify parking areas
 - Include all communities – Grand Portage has over 100 miles of trails too
- R&R – the ideal place to get away from it all and sit by the fire. Promote foodie, entertainment, and spa as activities.
- Coolest Small Town – continue promotion throughout the year.
 - EBS currently running a “Taste the Coolest Small Town” package with deals to various activities and businesses promoting visitation.
- Trade Shows
 - Loppet – agreed to not return
 - TBay Outdoor Show in February – encouraged to attend
 - Duluth Arrowhead Ice Fishing Expo – try again

LTTA – Tuesday June 30, 2015 at Lutsen Resort

Focus

- Downhill Skiing (obviously) ☺
 - Brand Advocates – several suggestions were made to get well known professional skiers and/or personalities to advocate for being at Lutsen and/or using it as a training ground.

Winter Marketing 2015-16

- New gondola – Nov 1. → sale of old gondola and possible saturation of them around the community for photo opps
- More ‘futuristic’ reaching out to the younger market
- Snowmobiling
 - Lodge to lodge – coordination nightmare (trucks, trailers, what?!)
 - Does not encourage large \$\$ amounts going toward snowmobiling – in particular, lodge to lodge
 - MW Extreme will happen again this year
- XC Skiing
 - Most LTTA properties want in on the lodge to lodge XC
 - Use imagery that demonstrates the uniqueness of region and pristineness of trails
- R&R – the ideal place to get away from it all and sit by the fire. Promote foodie, entertainment, and spa as activities.