

Maine Office of Tourism Strategic Five Year Plan

February 2008

Table of Contents

Background	3
Role of the Office of Tourism and its Advisors	4
Marketing Challenges	6
Marketing Strengths/Opportunities	8
New Mission and Marketing Platform	9
Proposed New Initiatives - Executive Summary	10
Detailed Descriptions	12
Implementation Timeline	19
Conclusions	20
Appendix A – 2002 Five Year Plan	21

Background

The plan laid out in the 2002 Five Year plan that was prepared by the Maine Office of Tourism (MOT) at the direction of the Governor, has run its course. During the past five years the Office of Tourism has had to contend with upheaval in the travel industry on many fronts. The after effects of the events of September 11 depressed the travel industry for several years. The subsequent impact on New England continues to be felt, as secondary destination regions are among the first to lose ground and the last to gain it back. The weak domestic economy, the sinking value of the dollar internationally (coupled with America's tarnished image abroad) and the increasing cost of effectively competing in an ever more crowded communications arena have all combined to make the business of promoting tourism in Maine as difficult and challenging as it has ever been.

Nonetheless, the MOT has responded aggressively, and successfully. In 2005 the Office of Tourism changed its marketing strategy to one that focused on increasing share of market within the New England region. This response to a statistically flat tourism environment across the region called for significant changes in the content of our message and in the core geographic markets we would pursue. The past two years have shown the success of that approach, and today research shows that the State of Maine was the only state in the region to increase its market share. That trend continues today and the early returns from the 2007 season point to the biggest increase in tourism that Maine has seen in several years.

The Office of Tourism embarks on this new five year plan with new leadership and a renewed commitment to expanding and enhancing the state's largest industry. Over the past five years we have demonstrated the ability to increase substantially the number of people actively shopping for a Maine vacation. While that will continue to be a cornerstone of our efforts, the focus of this five year plan is on improving our state's competitive infrastructure; to put Maine in a position not only to compete effectively, but to "set the bar" on tourism marketing and delivery. Carrying out the recommendations contained in this plan will establish Maine as the leader in tourism promotion in New England, and will place our state among the top tourism promotion agencies in the country. These recommendations are the embodiment of years of research, input from our regional representatives, suggestions from members of the tourism commission and the expertise of the Office's various independent contractors.

Special appreciation is due to all those who have worked to make tourism the state's largest industry, and to all those who have worked to let the world know about it.

Role of the Office of Tourism and its Advisors

The Office of Tourism was established in 1983 primarily as a marketing organization to administer a program to support and expand the tourism industry and promote the state as a tourist destination. The Director of the Office of Tourism administers the Office in accordance with the policies of the Commissioner and the provisions outlined. The Office includes the Maine Tourism Commission and the Maine Film Office.

The Office of Tourism is responsible for developing a 5-year marketing and development strategy for state tourism growth that maximizes the effectiveness of state and private sector contributions in attracting visitors to the state and increasing tourism-based revenues.

As part of its stewardship of the Maine brand, the Office of Tourism administers the various components of the strategy and supports staffing of the visitor information centers. And finally, the Office works in close partnership with the tourism industry in the state to achieve their common goals. (The full text of the Offices operating authority can be found under Title 5, Chapter 383, Sections 13090-C and E).

The Role of the Maine Tourism Commission

The Maine Tourism Commission was created to assist, to advise and make recommendations to the Office of Tourism.

The Commission consists of 25 voting members who appointed by the Governor as follows:

- Members representing each of the eight tourism regions.
- Major tourism trade associations and other representatives of tourism related businesses.
- One member each to represent statewide organizations of hunters, anglers or trappers; large landowners; and licensed Maine guides.
- One member representing statewide organization of agricultural producers.
- The commissioners, directors or designees of the following state departments or offices each serve as ex officio, non-voting members of the Commission
 - State Planning Office
 - Department of Conservation
 - Department of Transportation
 - Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
 - Department of Agriculture
 - Department of Education

The powers and duties of the Commission are as follows:

- Recommend rules for the implementation of statutes and make recommendations on the award of matching funds.
- Recommend policy guidelines on marketing, promotion and advertising strategies to the Office of Tourism.
- Conduct public hearings necessary to obtain input concerning tourism policy development from a broad cross-section of travel interests.
- Assist the Office of Tourism in providing technical assistance to the travel industry and in planning and conducting periodic tourism conferences.
- Prepare a report for annual submission to the Governor and the Legislature relative to the programs, policies and accomplishments of the commission.
- Assist the Office of Tourism in other areas the commissioner considers appropriate and necessary to ensure the successful implementation of the tourism program.

(The full text of the Tourism Commission's operating authority can be found under Title 5, Chapter 383, Section 13090-F).

The Role of the Regions

The State of Maine has described in detail the role to be played by the eight tourism promotion regions within the state. Accordingly, and in concert with the Maine office of Tourism, the regions should fulfill the following tasks:

- Work in partnership with the state to encourage the development of quality sustainable travel products to support tourism marketing efforts from the region and the Maine Office of Tourism
- Serve as the principal in-region informational conduit for the tourism industry and its business communities
- Foster and promote a collective spirit of cooperation among businesses within the region
- Develop promotional programming to support regional tourism interests

Marketing Challenges

The MOT has continually faced significant marketing challenges and met them. Today, the Office faces not only immediate challenges but new ones on the horizon that become more serious each season. Chief among these challenges are the:

- globalization of competition;
- subsequent flattening of travel to New England;
- financial challenges posed by a weakening dollar;
- increasing costs of media;
- financial and human resource demands placed on the office by the advent of technologies and the need to keep abreast of them.

The competitive landscape has evolved over the years and now destinations like Maine are in competition not only with our neighboring states but with states across the country, Caribbean islands, and even European countries. Financial influences, increasing time constraints, and the globalization of travel have joined to cause the flattened pattern of travel to New England that we have witnessed over the past several years. It is the opinion of the MOT and its agencies that this very likely represents not a temporary flattening of growth but more closely represents the new norm. For that reason, the MOT moved in 2005 to a marketing strategy aimed at increasing market share within the New England region, and that strategy has proven quite effective. Maine is the only state in New England to have recorded increased market share over the past two years according to Longwood's International. We will continue to focus on increasing our market share and becoming the premier four-season destination in New England.

Financial challenges have to be met on several fronts as well. The weakening dollar and an uncertain economic future in the United States has depressed travel, particularly the short weekend stays that are so important to destinations like Maine. At the same time, the weakened dollar has made the United States and Maine a more attractive destination for foreign visitors. To capitalize on that, Maine has resumed advertising in Canada and our media plan for 2008 includes newspaper, direct mail and internet efforts in several key Canadian markets. In addition, we have established relationships with local Canadian representatives who will be bringing the message of Maine to meeting planners, travel agents, tour operators and other key influencers in the Canadian market.

An equally important financial concern is the increasing cost of media in the United States and abroad. New measuring techniques and new media outlets have caused the prices of core media vehicles such as cable and broadcast television to become more and more costly. The proliferation of alternative media sources and expanded internet offerings have changed the competitive field there as well, and substantially raised the rates being demanded by the best sites. The Office of Tourism has had to stretch its budget to the limit in order to maintain the reach and frequency of its message necessary to achieve this continued growth in market share.

Over the coming years, it will be increasingly more important for the MOT to take full advantage of all reasonable cost containment measures. To that end, it is critical that we upgrade our communications infrastructure to ensure its most efficient operation. Those efficiencies extend to increasing our ability to obtain and analyze research in house; to build on the resources available through CenTRO to reduce our research expenses further; to upgrade our web capabilities such that we increase the likelihood of conversion, and to expand our marketing efforts to include restimulation of past prospects.

These efforts require additional human resources as well. The Office maintains a policy of continuing education for its staff members to make certain that decision making personnel have sufficient depth of knowledge to make informed decisions. Nonetheless, the Office is limited in the amount it can successfully undertake in a single year. Though we are utilizing technology as an internal communications tool as well as an external tool, we must still balance the structural advancements outlined in this five year plan with the daily activities of overseeing the immediate day-to-day needs of Maine's largest industry.

Marketing Strengths & Opportunities

The Office periodically conducts a SWOT Analysis (**S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats). During the past six months we have revisited this exercise with the assistance and input of each of the state's eight tourism regions. That process confirms that we are well positioned to use our strengths to capitalize on our opportunities and minimize the impact of any weaknesses.

The MOT recognized early on the long-term impact of what was initially defined as a temporary flattening of travel to New England but which we are addressing as the new standard. Our shift from a tourism growth to share growth was evidenced in both the creative message as well as the media plan we implemented over the past two years. While the success of this strategy has been independently documented, we recognize this as the beginning of another chapter. We will continue to pursue a strategy of market share growth, augmented by a concerted effort to pursue those prospects whose past interest in a Maine vacation may not yet have converted to a visit. According to well researched and trended data as reported by Longwood's, Maine enjoys a competitive advantage over its neighboring states in a number of activities usually associated with a New England vacation. We will continue to highlight those activities that press our advantage in all of our communications efforts.

Our plan calls for substantial upgrades to our web site and its capabilities, as a response tool, as a booking and tracking tool, and as an ongoing marketing and research tool. We have in place a plan to create the premier web site in the travel industry which will be fully functioning by 2010.

New Mission and Marketing Platform

To provide clarity and purpose of the Office of Tourism's role, the following marketing mission, strategic process, major objectives and strategic direction are recommended for consideration.

Marketing Mission

The mission of the Maine Office of Tourism is to serve as the state's customer focused travel marketing organization. We shape and define the Maine brand and present that brand promise to potential travelers. Our core responsibility is to present the activities and amenities of Maine that are most integral to the target audience's decision making process.

Strategic Process

We will sustain a customer focused brand marketing program for the state while developing the next generation of tourism promotion and communications infrastructure. That investment will pay immediate dividends in terms of competitive advantage and increased tourism, while establishing Maine's communications ability well into the future.

Our communications message will continue to be targeted based on research, trends, competitive strengths and other factors on a seasonal basis.

Major Objectives

- Improve the MOT web site in terms of architectural capability and consumer appeal
- Increase Maine's share of the New England travel market and secure that share level by maintaining positive awareness and high levels of repeat visitors
- Maximize the value of each visitor by encouraging longer trips with deeper excursions into the less traveled areas of the state
- Support the development of additional Maine tourism products, and in particular the development of quick-sale package
- Improve research protocols that increase the value of research to the local (regional) levels
- Expand MOT-private industry partnerships

Proposed New Initiatives

Executive Summary

The 2008 Five Year Plan focuses on measurable achievements in the enhancement of the tourism marketing infrastructure and the state's ability to compete effectively on every level. To that end, we established the following key goals to guide our activity for the next five years.

1. Evaluate the establishment of a voluntary rating system that will assist people considering a vacation in Maine, and in selecting the property (or properties) that are best suited to delivering the vacation experience they seek;
2. Enhancing the current MOT web site in order to make the web site a functioning "travel agent." Those enhancements will include the development and implementation of a travel planner that will assist prospects in sorting the hundreds of pages of content currently available and presenting only that content which best suits the prospects specified criteria, i.e., budget, geographic area of interest, etc.;
3. The development of a web-based booking engine that will allow prospective Maine vacationers to book their accommodations as well as certain activity reservations in advance;
4. Create a package development system that can be tested, implemented, re-tested and rolled out within the span of this five year plan. The program will offer region-specific as well as state-wide travel packages designed to make it as easy as possible for potential visitors to choose Maine;
5. Work with our partner organizations to create long-term, sustainable communication programs and tourist request fulfillment materials that increase the conversion rate of potential visitors, provide tracking and conversion data for future marketing use, and better meet the needs of the MOT as well as those of our partner organizations;
6. Create new research protocols that will provide the state and the individual regions with real-time data on intention to travel, reasons for choosing Maine, perception of Maine vis-à-vis its core competition, and provide benchmarks for judging the effectiveness of the MOT's overall communications efforts;
7. Guide the creation of a training program and work with the education infrastructure in Maine to implement training of the next generation of hospitality professionals, spur interest and growth in the state's tourism infrastructure, and provide destination training to potential brand ambassadors at every level:

8. Institute improved detailed procedures for evaluating MTMPP applications and provide a mechanism for increasing inter-regional cooperation in developing tourism by enhancing the tourists' experiences in Maine and by expanding the geographic limits of their trips;
9. Establish the lifespan of a prospect and the lifetime value of a visitor;
10. Continue the development and expansion of public/private initiative to increase coordination of communications and promotion of Maine tourism to varied audiences;
11. Examine the social media structures available to the MOT and develop a means of expanding communications to our audiences via this developing channel, and;
12. Initiate a product development program to attract and assist Maine businesses in creating new and more competitive products that will appeal to and attract more first-time visitors to Maine.

1. Establishment of a tourism provider rating system

People shopping for a vacation in Maine are presented with a wide array of options for everything from accommodations to dining to activities and geography. Making sense of those choices and finding the ones that are right for the sort of vacation experience an individual or group is seeking can be a difficult task. And a difficult task is often one that goes unfinished, and that often translates to a trip that goes un-booked. Equally important is the delivery of the brand promise made in all of the communications developed by the Office. While the Office makes promises of a certain sort of experience, the hotels, inns, restaurants and attractions, as well as the people of Maine, are the ones who must deliver it. Since a visitor's accommodations are often the centerpiece of their vacation planning, the rating system will begin with accommodations.

One of Maine's great strengths is the broad variety of experiences available in the state. The mission of a rating system is to assist potential visitors in selecting the properties that will best deliver to their level of expectation. By helping to guide people to the right choices, we make the shopping and the buying experience easier, thereby increasing the likelihood of booking. We also ensure that visitors, regardless of the sort of experience they are seeking, will find that Maine delivers exactly what they want in a vacation, thereby creating good memories and positive word of mouth.

One thing a rating system is not designed to do is to promote one property over another. The rating system will be developed with extensive input from the industry and other pertinent stakeholders, and participation in the program will be entirely voluntary. The ratings will be based on a series of agreed upon criteria, much in the way the Mobil Travel Guide or Triple-A assesses properties for the Star and Diamond ratings. A clear description of what each level stands for will be presented to potential visitors to assist them, and they will be informed that properties participate on a voluntary basis and that not having an MOT rating does not imply any level of product or service, or lack thereof. Prior to implementation, the Office will seek input from the industry and will ensure that each property that wishes to contribute is heard from.

The rating system will enable the Office to improve its web site by being able to deliver targeted properties to prospects that identify their specific needs and wants. Additionally, by being able to offer targeted suggestions, prospects will be encouraged to share important information about themselves and their travel requirements that will be useful to the Office and which can be shared with the properties taking the reservation.

2. Enhancing the MOT web site

The internet is rapidly replacing the travel agent in many circles, and even when reservations are not made on the web, the shopping decision is almost always made or influenced by information that the prospect received over the web.

In order to make the Office of Tourism's web site a function as an electronic "travel agent," certain improvements are required. Moreover, while the MOT is in a position to take the lead in our region and even in the United States in terms of site development, we must act now to avoid being forced into a weak position by the advances being implemented by our competitors. Among the improvements required are those that will be readily visible to our prospects as well as those that will serve to support our marketing efforts "behind the scenes." Visible improvements include:

A) The development and implementation of a travel planner. This function will collect specific data from the prospect such as budget, length of stay, members traveling, areas of interest, etc. It will then sort the information available on the MOT web site and present those choices that are most likely to meet the prospects needs and result in a vacation booking. The data collected can then be shared with the property making the reservation so that they are able to better understand what their guests are seeking, while also being added to the MOT database to allow for in depth research, conducted in-house by the Office, that will provide ongoing, critical insight into the sort of people we are attracting, the people we are converting, changing trends in the industry relative to our state, etc.

B) Create a deep database for ongoing research and marketing. A booking engine will also provide key, projectible data that will improve and refine our ability to measure the conversion rate of people being attracted to the web site and them making a decision to visit after spending time on the web site. That data in turn will guide the MOT in developing the type of content that evidence shows to be most persuasive in helping a prospect choose Maine as their vacation destination. Further, by encouraging prospects to voluntarily share valuable data with us, we will begin to develop the data necessary to quantify the lifecycle of a prospect and to facilitate ongoing outbound marketing to prospects that have considered Maine but not yet visited.

C) The continued development of in-depth content that will attract and hold visitors longer, and ensure that Maine continues to rank high in search engine queries.

3) Develop a Web-based Booking Engine

The development of a web-based booking engine - This critical function is a very visible upgrade to our web-site. It will allow prospective Maine vacationers to book their accommodations as well as certain activity reservations in advance, as soon as the decision is made, without having to leave the MOT site. By enabling the booking of a

vacation immediately at the time that the prospect makes the decision to visit Maine, it eliminates the possibility of that person changing their mind, or of them being swayed by interim messages, difficulties in reserving, etc. And if the first property is fully booked, the site will be able to deliver alternatives immediately. The MOT web site is the state's "tourism store." A booking engine will serve as the state's "cash register" to complete the sale.

4. Create a package development system

Maine's prospects are starved for time. Repeated research shows that one of the main reasons for not visiting is a lack of time. Even web usage is most often driven by constraints – people are simply able to get more information, faster, at their computer than anywhere else. For these people especially, we intend to create a system for developing packages that can provide "one-click" vacations ranging from a weekend to a week or more.

Initially, package creation will be facilitated by the Office and will open to any potential participants. Packages including multiple property participants will all share similar ratings (i.e., 2-star, 3-star, etc) to ensure compatibility and consistency of experiences. Packages will be created for seniors, couples and families and within each demographic group there will be weekend and longer term offerings. Each region will be asked to create to an initial set of packages for testing, and the Office will facilitate the development of certain inter-region packages for the initial test. In that way, packages can be tested, implemented, re-tested and rolled out within the span of this five year plan so that by the conclusion of the plan Maine is offering a variety of packages based on activities, seasonality, demographics, and a host of other criteria. By using the enhanced web capabilities, the Office will be able to serve each participant with a well targeted selection of "one-click" packages for immediate purchase.

5. Enhance our partnership with the Maine Tourism Association

The Office of Tourism has enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship with many partners over the years. One of the most prominent of those has been with the Maine Tourism Association (MTA), with whom the Office has worked for many years, and one of the goals of this five year plan is to ensure that those relationships continue to grow and to offer ever improving benefits to each organization and the groups they serve.

As information consumption habits change, the MOT will provide guidance to the MTA regarding the types of fulfillment material that potential visitors to Maine are seeking, as well as potentially improving information delivery within the state. A key information delivery system enhancement that will develop over the next several years is an electronic information delivery system for deployment throughout the state visitor centers currently managed by the MTA. The system will consist of touch-screen electronic kiosks that the MTA will oversee as part of their visitor center management responsibilities. The content of this system will provide visitors with easy access to

activities, directions, contact information etc. In addition, the usage of this system by visitors will provide the basis for critical tracking and conversion studies that the MOT will conduct.

By creating long-term, sustainable communication programs and tourist request fulfillment materials that increase the conversion rate of potential visitors, provide tracking and conversion data for future marketing use, we will ensure that the needs of the MOT as well as those of the MTA and other partner organizations are not only met, but that the beneficial relationship we have shared for years continues to grow and prosper.

6. Create new research protocols

As our ability to deliver our message more quickly and with more precise targeting has expanded, our need for increasingly more timely and focused research data has grown as well. The Office now demands research that will provide the state and the individual regions with real-time data on intention to travel, changing reasons for choosing Maine, and perception of Maine vis-à-vis its core competition. That research will also provide benchmarks for judging the effectiveness of the MOT's overall communications efforts.

While we still require the sort of trending data and revenue estimates provided by our current contractors and by the state tax department, we need the ability to talk with tourists during and immediately following their experience, and while they are here. To that end, the Office will pursue three distinct yet compatible avenues:

- expand the Office's independent sources of data capture and analysis;
- work with CentTRO to expand their role on a state and regional basis, and;
- develop new sources of web-based data capture and analysis.

The Office's web site enhancement efforts include the development of an expanded database that can be mined for pertinent information on a state and regional level. It will also facilitate the formation of an internet panel of interested visitors who can be polled on a regular basis about various factors facing us as marketers of Maine tourism.

A key mission of the CentTRO partnership will be to identify the lifespan of a prospect – specifically, “For how many years does a prospect remain a *qualified* prospect for follow up by the MOT, the regional promotional groups, or even by independent businesses?” A corollary to that is a determination of the lifetime value of visitor. We know that past experience is a key factor in bringing tourists to Maine, and that in our main feeder market, Boston, the vast majority of residents have already visited Maine. The MOT therefore needs to know the lifetime value of a first visitor in order to accurately project a return on investment for each new visitor.

Both the expanded partnership with CentTRO as well as the identification of new sources of research (proprietary as well as syndicated research) can be implemented more quickly

and the results put to immediate use. The MOT has already begun to employ rapid response research techniques including omnibus, on-line and telephone surveys as a means of providing near immediate input on the prevailing attitudes and needs of our audience at the time we are communicating with them. We will continue those efforts as we simultaneously begin to work out new protocols to be implemented within the CentTRO framework. Those protocols will be developed in conjunction with independent research providers who will work with the Office and CentTRO to determine the best methodologies that CentTRO can implement and to determine how the data will be used.

7. Create new training programs

The Office of Tourism has identified several independent sources, well credentialed in the development of brand and hospitality training programs. We will work with these sources and with the regional tourism promotion groups to create brand and hospitality programs that can be realized through the existing educational system in the state. The higher education resources within Maine will then be fully prepared to train the next generation of hospitality professionals, spur interest and growth in the state's tourism infrastructure, and provide destination training to potential brand ambassadors at every level.

The sources we have identified have an unmatched depth of experience in this field and will relieve schools in the state of the burden of developing these programs from scratch by bringing complete, proven programs based on best practices that can be implemented immediately.

8. Improve the MTMPP grant program

The Maine Tourism Marketing Partnership Program has established procedures designed to improve the ability of each regional promotional organization to plan an effective local communications program, and manage public grant money more efficiently and for maximum return. In the coming years, the Office will create new programs for regional cooperation and participation, and examine ways to provide additional seed funds to help ensure the success of those programs. Building on the proven success of existing joint programs such as the highly successful PSA program and the intra-state television advertising campaign will be the starting point. The Office will also initiate joint programs in research and web site design and management. In addition, we will pursue efforts to coordinate the look and feel of all collateral promotional pieces for maximum impact and economies of scale.

In keeping with the Office's role as the chief steward of the Maine brand, we will exercise the greatest possible control over the presentation of that brand in all areas where the MOT takes a financial interest in the project.

By instituting improved, detailed procedures for disseminating grant money to individual regions and by providing a mechanism(s) for increasing inter-regional cooperation in developing tourism, we will help to enhance the tourists' experiences in Maine. A closely coordinated effort will also serve to educate tourists in Maine as to the wealth of experiences awaiting them beyond the interstate and it will effectively expand the geographic limits of their trips, and spread the benefits of tourism more equitable across the state.

9. Establish the lifespan of a prospect and the lifetime value of a visitor

In order to be a more effective promotion organization, the Office of Tourism needs to establish two key pieces of marketing intelligence that few (if any) travel marketers have been able to discern: the lifespan of a prospect and the lifetime value of a visitor.

While the MOT has wealth of data on people who have expressed interest in visiting the state, we have not determined the length of time that a prospect remains a viable prospect for the MOT to invest in. Many prospects who decide not to vacation in Maine in a given year, may still be viable prospects for us to pursue the following season. And similarly, for the MOT to properly calculate its return on investment, we need to establish the lifetime value of a visitor. Specifically, we need to determine how often people return to Maine once they have been exposed to our vacation offerings, because it is much more economical to re-stimulate a past visitor than to attract a first time visitor.

The MOT will be working with its marketing and research resources during the next year to establish protocols that will lead us to reliable answers to these questions.

10. Expand public/private initiatives

The private sector businesses are the ones who deliver on the brand promise that the MOT promotes. They are also the primary beneficiaries of the results of that promotion. Moreover, many businesses in Maine are beginning to understand what the tourism industry has known for a long time; that we are all talking to the same person, and if we do it together we'll both be more effective.

The Office of Tourism broke new ground in 2007 when it established a very visible partnership with LL Bean. It truly highlights the value of public/private partnerships. In the coming years, the MOT will identify additional potential partners in a variety of areas outside of the traditional core of hospitality and tourism, and aggressively pursue mutually beneficial partnerships that will expand the depth and breadth of our message and increase the value and visibility of the Maine brand.

11. Social Media

The social media phenomenon has become much less "phenomenon" and much more common over the past two years. In the coming months and years we will examine the varied aspects of this increasingly more important media. We will evaluate blogging,

consumer reviews, on-line posting of art, video and conversation, and determine the best ways for the MOT to become part of the consumer conversation that is showing a growing importance travel decision-making. We will look at how the Office can become a facilitator in that conversation as a means of bringing other Maine tourism-related businesses into this new realm of communications as well, as we find new and more impactful ways to support our advertising, public relations and research through social media.

12. Product Development

The MOT will work to facilitate the development of travel and travel-related products and packages that will deliver one-stop shopping and booking to our prospects while enhancing our reputation as a vacation destination through the development of attractions that people want to see. In so doing, potential new visitors will have more reasons to say yes to Maine, and repeat visitors will have more reasons to come back, more often.

Proposed Timeline

January 2008	January 2009	January 2010	January 2011	January 2012
Introduce 5-Year Plan	Populate Relational Database for Website	Launch Phase II Test Packages	Launch Electric Kiosks with MTA	Roll Out Phase III Travel Packages
Set & Approve New Joint Goals with MTA	Review Hospitality Training Curriculum	Begin Full Roll Out of In-State Advertising Effort	Data Analysis of Prospect Lifecycle Lifetime Value of a Visitor	Develop 5-Year Plan for 2013-2018
Define Research Protocols to be Managed by Centro	Launch New Website	Activate Website Booking Engine		
Draft Rating System, Review & Approve	Begin Using Centro Data in Communications Planning	Roll Out Revised Tourism Information Fulfillment		
Define Revised Website Parameters	Launch Phase I Travel Packages	Initial Training Program Development		
Approve Phase I Test Packages				

•Expansion of public/private initiatives, product development and exploration of new social media opportunities are all ongoing activities spanning the length of the plan.

Conclusions

This five year plan sets the direction for the Maine Office of Tourism and its partners for the foreseeable future and beyond. It clearly defines an Office that will be assuming a leadership in the marketing of tourism in the United States and abroad.

It is the culmination of research, deliberation and contributions by members of the Office of Tourism, its key agencies and partners, directors of the eight tourism regions, and representatives from within all parts for the tourism industry in Maine.

This document has been presented to and been approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Community and Economic Development and by the Governor's Office. As such it will serve to guide the decisions and actions of this department beginning immediately.

Appendix A
2002 Five Year Plan