

TOUR  
**CAYUGA**  
in the FINGER LAKES



2026 Marketing Plan



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# Executive Summary



## Mission

The Cayuga County Convention & Visitors Bureau (CCCVB) is Cayuga County's tourism promotion agency. We increase tourism and related revenues through promotion and research based targeted marketing, and we improve the visitor experience by providing data and training to local hospitality industry providers. We continuously work to increase tourism and improve the visitor experience, which in turn stimulate economic growth and sustain recreational and cultural opportunities in the County.

## Vision

The CCCVB will be the primary catalyst for the ongoing development of a dynamic, collaborative and innovative Cayuga County tourism industry which: Enhances economic development throughout the county, improves quality of life for its residents and provides an unparalleled Finger Lakes visitor experience.

## About Us

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# Executive Summary

The 2026 marketing plan for Tour Cayuga prioritizes brand storytelling in an effort to position Cayuga County as a meaningful destination that offers one-of-a-kind experiences. This marketing plan was compiled using historical data, the Tour Cayuga 2026-2030 (and beyond) Strategic Plan, and a marketing audit completed by Paperkite on December 22, 2025.



## Strategic Focus

Our marketing strategy in 2026 will focus on aligning our promotion efforts with a data-driven marketing approach. In an effort to have consistent branding, Tour Cayuga will prioritize the “Where you go matters. Make it count.” campaign as an overarching unified message whenever possible. This campaign resonates with our audience and has the capacity to promote Cayuga County as a meaningful destination.

## Key Objectives:

- Increase Year-Over-Year Visitation by 10% through targeted campaigns that drive greater awareness and interest in the destination.
- Connect with local influencers and individuals who align with the Tour Cayuga brand values.
- Ensure that we aren’t losing potential visitors in the marketing funnel by strengthening the consideration and conversion aspects of our marketing.
- Partnerships with businesses and attractions to create compelling packages and cross-promotional opportunities.

# SWOT

## Strengths

- Culturally Resonant Campaigns
- Community-focused initiatives
- Data-driven decision making
- Compelling storytelling

## Weaknesses

- Speaking to wider, yet more niche audiences.
- Inconsistent branding in marketing and advertising
- Limited creative diversification
- Clear conversion tactics in digital campaigns

## Opportunities

- Expanding focus to sustainability and accessibility.
- Growing theme of conscious travel
- Luxury and wellness campaigns
- Organic growth on digital platforms
- Historic National and State Anniversaries

## Threats

- Environmental concerns
- Broad community buy-in
- Uncertainty with Canadian travelers

# Goals & Objectives

SMART Goal: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

## Impact Multiplier

This is captured by using the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Growth of Awareness} \\ + \\ \text{Leadership Wins} \\ + \\ \text{Influence on Future Guidance} \\ = \\ \text{Impact} \end{array}$$

- Growth of Awareness - The sum of paid and earned media impressions.
- Leadership Wins - The output of thought leadership development by members of the executive team.
- Influence on Future Guidance - These are wins in the form of shifting perceptions, programs, and attitudes across industry and regional partners.

## OKR Goals

### Objective & Key Results

- Increase year-over-year visitation by 10%.
- Boost engagement on digital channels by 20%.
- Enhance brand awareness in target markets by 15%.
- Grow partnerships with local businesses by 30%.



# Target Audience Strategy

Traditionally, destination marketing has centered on creating detailed personas based on demographic information like age, gender, income level, and interests. These personas were helpful in segmenting audiences and tailoring messages to different groups. However, while personas provide a snapshot of who our visitors are, they don't always capture how and when travelers make decisions or what motivates them at each step of their journey.

To create a more relevant and engaging experience, we are shifting our focus from simply targeting static personas to understanding the dynamic visitor journey. This journey-specific strategy allows us to look beyond who the traveler is and focus on their path to discovering, planning, booking, and experiencing a trip. Zartico is a key platform in helping us to better understand the Visitor Journey in Cayuga County.

**Segmentation:** Detailed breakdown of audience segments.

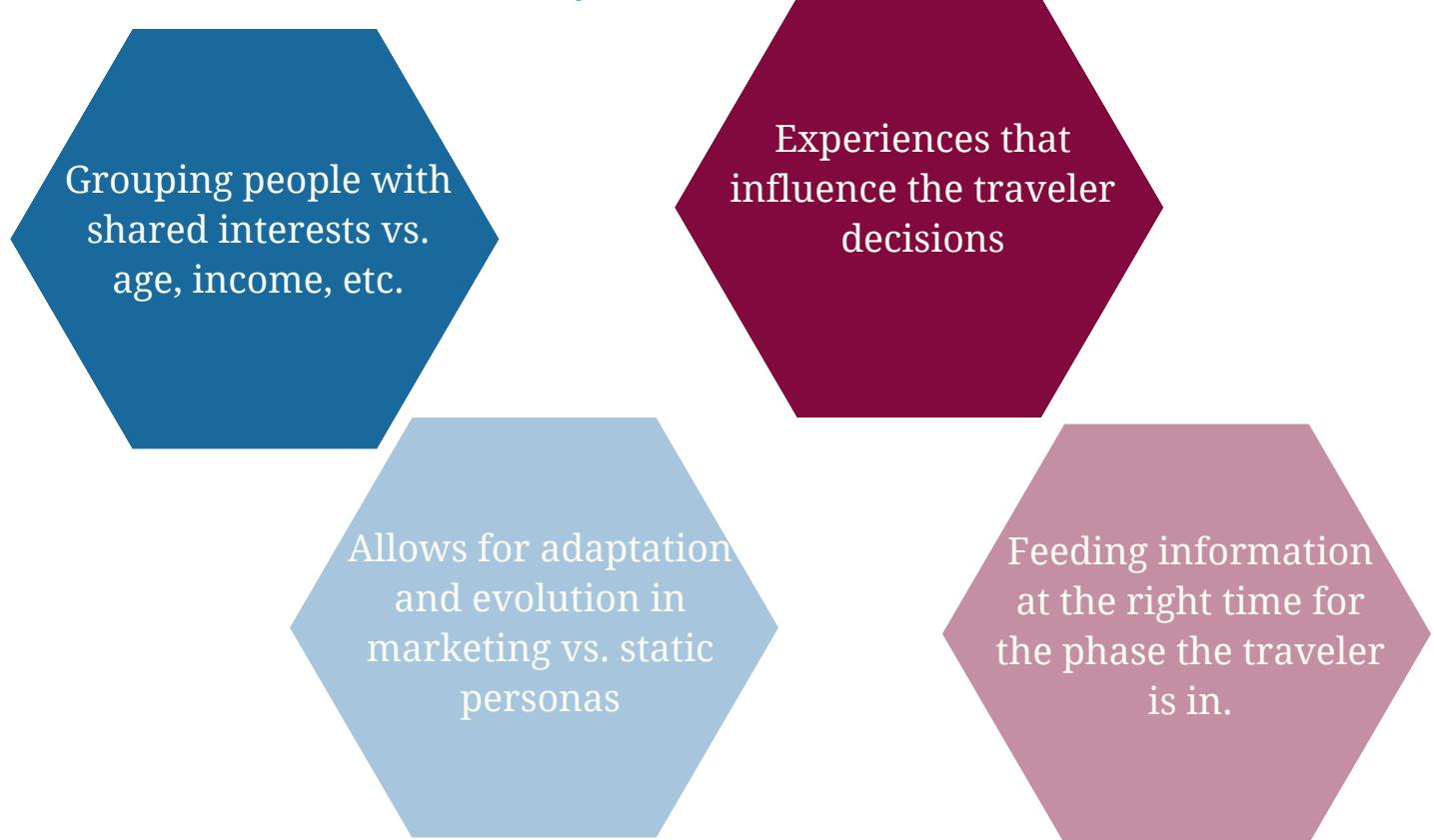
**Journey Mapping:** Outline the visitor journey from awareness to conversion to post-visit engagement.

# Target Audience Strategy

To create a more relevant and engaging experience, we have shifted our focus from traditional personas to understanding the dynamic visitor journey. This journey-centric approach prioritizes the process travelers go through—discovering, planning, booking, and experiencing their trips—over simply defining their identity. By aligning our efforts with their motivations and actions at each step, we can deliver more timely, personalized, and impactful interactions that resonate with travelers when it matters most to help deliver a better ROI.

In short, this strategy enables us to move beyond targeting based on who visitors are and instead focus on their behaviors, needs, and decision-making processes throughout the travel experience.

## *Key Differences*



# Demographics vs Traveler Behavior

## Demographics

## Traveler Behavior

Gender

Annual trip frequency

Age

Past destinations

Marital Status

Business travel

Household Income

Preferred lodging

Location

Search method

Job Title

Transportation

Children/Family make up

# Brand Positioning & Messaging: Core Brand Values

This year Tour Cayuga is prioritizing the Where you go matters-make it count messaging as the core of our brand voice. Nestled in the heart of the Finger Lakes, we are dedicated to promoting a destination that celebrates people, places, history, and experiences that make our region unique. As champions of diversity, sustainability, and innovation, we empower our partners and shape the future of tourism with care and purpose. Together, we invite visitors to explore, connect, and make meaningful memories in a place that feels like home.

## **Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA):**

- We embrace the rich diversity of our region and strive to foster an inclusive environment where every visitor and partner feels valued, respected, and represented. Our actions reflect a dedication to equitable opportunities for all.

## **Creating a Welcoming Destination:**

- Tour Cayuga is dedicated to making the Finger Lakes a destination where everyone feels at home. By celebrating local culture, natural beauty, and unique experiences, we ensure a warm and inviting atmosphere for visitors from all walks of life.

## **Empowering Our Partners:**

- We are more than a resource—we are a collaborator and champion for our local partners. By providing tools, guidance, and opportunities, we empower businesses and communities to thrive and grow together.

## **Thought Leadership in Tourism:**

- As innovators and influencers in the tourism industry, we are committed to staying ahead of trends and sharing best practices. Tour Cayuga leads by example, driving sustainable growth and shaping the future of tourism in the Finger Lakes and beyond.

## **Sustainability and Stewardship:**

- Preserving the Finger Lakes' natural beauty and cultural heritage is at the heart of everything we do. We promote responsible tourism practices that protect the environment and benefit the local community for generations to come.

## **Excellence in Service:**

- Our team is committed to exceeding expectations through genuine care, creative solutions, and a passion for showcasing the best of Cayuga County and the Finger Lakes region.

# Brand Positioning & Messaging: Core Brand Values

## Cayuga County

### Experiences

### People

On the land

Our residents

On the water

Our historical figures

Events

Our communities

### Places

### History

Craft beverages

Sites

Lodging

Locations

Restaurants

Events

Attractions

# Marketing Strategy & Tactics

## Where you go matters. Make it count.

Our annual marketing plan follows the customer journey, guiding visitors through inspiration, planning, experience, and sharing phases. By leveraging data-driven insights and understanding traveler behavior, we aim to deliver the right message at the right time, enhancing engagement and increasing visitation to the region.

### • Digital Marketing:

- Inspiration: Engage audiences with visually rich social media campaigns, targeted display ads, and storytelling content that highlights the Finger Lakes' unique people, history, and natural beauty. Prioritize short form video content.
- Planning: Optimize the Tour Cayuga website as a comprehensive resource featuring itineraries, event calendars, booking solutions, and partner highlights. Use email campaigns to nurture interest and deliver personalized trip suggestions. Respond to any questions quickly and professionally.
- Experience: Leverage geotargeting and mobile-friendly tools to provide on-the-go recommendations, dining options, and activity guides to enhance visitors' time in the region.
- Sharing: Encourage user-generated content with social contests, giveaways and branded hashtags, amplifying authentic experiences to inspire future travelers.

### • Print Marketing:

- Inspiration & Planning: Distribute high-quality travel guides, brochures, and maps that emphasize the region's cultural and natural attractions. Highlight partners through curated lists and feature stories that make planning fun and seamless.
- Experience: Provide printed itineraries and walking tours to enhance visitor exploration and enrich their understanding of local history and heritage. Connect print to appropriate digital resources via QR Codes.

# Marketing Strategy & Tactics

## Partnership Marketing:

- Collaboration: Work with local businesses, cultural institutions, and event organizers to co-create campaigns that spotlight their unique offerings and elevate the region as a whole. Attend regional meetings and events when appropriate.
- Amplification: Partner and actively participate with regional and national tourism boards, influencers, and travel publications to expand Tour Cayuga's message reach. Support regional marketing programs.
- Sustainability & DEIA: Collaborate on initiatives that promote inclusivity, accessibility, environmental stewardship, and community enrichment, reinforcing Tour Cayuga's leadership in thoughtful tourism. Improve accessibility communications of accommodations and visitor attractions.



## Key areas of focus:

### Seasonality:

Tailor campaigns to showcase year-round appeal, from vibrant fall foliage to summer lake adventures. Promote seasons as a strength of Cayuga County

### Engagement:

Use a mix of storytelling and actionable content to create an emotional connection while providing practical resources.

### Measurement:

Track success with KPIs such as website traffic, partner referrals, social engagement, and visitor satisfaction, and refine tactics based on performance insights. Set goals in advance of campaigns to better assess their success.

# Budget

## E-MARKETING - \$44,500

E-communications  
Partners, visitors, niche  
Social media  
boost and paid ads

## ADVERTISING

## CAMPAGNS - \$174,300

Hibercation  
Brave Women  
Go Beyond  
Luxury  
Sweet Treat Trail  
Other

## COLLATERAL

Printing  
Design  
Distribution  
Information Centers  
Mailing

## DIGITAL SOFTWARE

SnapSea  
ITI Digital

**TOTAL BUDGET:**

**\$218,800**

# Visitor Journey

# Visitor Journey

		<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Consideration</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Visit</b>	<b>Post-Visit</b>
Customer Actions/Interest		Social Media	Retargeting	Promotions	Website account profile	Retargeting
Outdoors		Social Media, Google	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting
Food & Wine		Social Media, Google, Print	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting
Culture & History		Social Media, Google, Print	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting
Health & Wellness		Social Media, Google	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting
Accessible travel		Social Media, Google, Print	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting
Sustainable travel		Social Media, Google	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting
Black travel		Social Media, Google, Print	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting
Luxury		Social Media, Google	Retargeting	CTR, bookings, partner sales	Website account profile	Retargeting

# Strategy

Marketing Channels	Channel Plans	Budget	Timeline	Measure of Success
Meta (Facebook & Instagram)	Paid ads for niche campaigns. Boosts for in-house campaigns. Focus on short form video	\$100-300 per run	Number of days x geolocation	CTR, profile views & Completion rates
Google Display	Go Beyond, Hibernation, Sweet Treat Trail	Campaign dependent	Geolocation	CTR & video completion
Dynamic ads	Hibernation, Sweet Treat Trail,	Campaign dependent	Market reach	Impressions & CTR
Other social channels: Reddit, YouTube, LinkedIn	Go Beyond, Luxury, in-house campaigns	Campaign dependent	Number of days x geolocation	CTR & Profile Views

## Content Calendar

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Brave Women												
Hibernation												
Make it Count												
Cayuga Cuisine												
Leave no trace												
Sweet Treat Trail												
Pride of Place												
Parks Challenge												
Luxury												
America 250 - Freedom 2026/27												
Go Beyond												
Health and Wellness												