

Rethinking Return on Investment



Applying the Impact Multiplier to Inclusive Tourism

Economic development, visitor spending, and attendance numbers have long defined success in tourism. We believe true impact lies in how tourism affects people, the stories we tell, the communities we represent, and the sense of welcome we create for both residents and visitors.



Tour Cayuga uses the Impact Multiplier to shape a more inclusive and authentic destination. Here’s how each part of the equation plays out in our work:

Growth of Awareness:

Inclusive tourism requires us to ask:

- Whose stories are being told?
- Who sees themselves in our marketing?
- Who feels safe and welcomed in our spaces

Leadership Wins:

Awards & Nominations

- City Nation Place nominations
- Destinations International Social Impact Summit
- TAP’s “Welcoming All 2.0” forum
- NYSTIA DEI Award

Influence on Future Guidance:

We consider how programming:

- shapes community identity
- how residents experience tourism
- and how we can balance promotion with responsibility

The Limitations of Traditional ROI

Take, for example, a cultural event that draws a large crowd. From a traditional ROI lens, the event is a success. But what if it doesn’t reflect the diversity of the community, or creates barriers to access for residents?

Tourism that doesn’t serve all stakeholders misses the mark and over time, can erode local support.

The impact multiplier lead us to consider that the true impact is seen in the depth of connection and representation it fosters: through events like Greatness Weekend, Harriet Tubman’s Legacy: Faith and Freedom, and the Chawne Kimber textile exhibition, residents felt seen, underrepresented voices were elevated, and visitors engaged with Cayuga County’s authentic stories, laying the groundwork for deeper, trust-based partnerships. These events were made possible partly by grants provided by Tour Cayuga. That is the Impact Multiplier in action.



Conclusion: Metrics That Reflect Meaning



- Tourism success must be redefined to include:
- **Connection**
 - **Cultural Representation**
 - **Community Ownership**

Through the Impact Multiplier, Tour Cayuga is measuring what matters balancing economic growth with the creation of a destination that is truly inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable for all.

We’re not just counting heads, we’re creating space. And that, to us, is the greatest return on investment.