

## ***25 Immutable rules for tourism.***

Based on "Your Town: A Destination." By Roger Brooks

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## 1. The Rule of Planning

People are attracted to an area based on any of the four features:

1. Natural resources – lakes, forests, wildlife, recreation
2. Cultural resources – history, cuisine, ethnic
3. Human resources – performing arts, artisans, and crafts folk
4. Capital resources – transportation, hotels, utilities

Understand what type of resources are available and how they fit into an overall plan.

What do we have to appeal to various visitors?

- Day visitors,
- Business travelers,
- People visiting friends and family
- Vacationers
- Niche groups such as bird watchers to motorcycle groups.

They all spend money, but they want different services and amenities because they have different needs and desires.

**Has Geeveston developed a business plan for tourism development and marketing?**

**Do we know who our town's customers are and why they visit?**

**Do we have a coordinated tourism effort?**

**Does our tourism program tie in to our economic development programs?**

**Is there continuity in our marketing messages, materials, and marketing theme?**

**Are we seeing a good return on our investments in our tourism and marketing and development efforts?**

**Have we developed a plan with a good balance of product development and marketing?**

**Is everyone on board? It takes a united approach to achieve optimum success?**

## 2. The Rule of Partnerships

Partnerships are a crucial tourism strategy. Tourism programs are almost impossible to succeed if done in isolation by a single entity.

By partnering with an assortment of attractions, the area becomes worth travelling a longer distance to visit. And people stay for a longer period of time.

In most communities, a single agency typically coordinates tourism development, promotion, activities, and events. Maybe a visitor's bureau or a local chamber of commerce.

But just because they are taking the lead, does not mean they should do it alone. Tourism development and promotion must be done in synergy, especially in smaller communities where resources are limited.

Partnerships accomplish a number of goals.

- They create continuity in marketing effort
- Build a stronger brand for the community
- Reduce the duplication of efforts – multiple websites, toll-free numbers, etc
- And make selling the community easier.

Potential visitors are more likely to act when presented with a single vision a single contact and a single source of getting initial information.

There are three types of tourism partnerships and all types should be developed.

1. Financial partnerships with other communities or tourism promoters, in which two or more – ideally all – of the partners pool their funds to accomplish certain tourism objectives. This allows communities to leverage available funds for discounts on advertising, hiring public relations services, development of quality photo libraries, and first class website development.
2. Shared resources, which avoids common duplications of services and visitor confusion. Shared benefits of photo libraries, press kits, single toll-free information request lines, etc.
3. Leveraging money and resources with the private business sector. Many times the best attractions are privately owned. Bring them on board. Create public/private partnerships.

Partners in tourism should include

- Economic development associations
- Convention centres
- Chambers of commerce,
- Tribal units,
- Cultural attractions and organisations
- Event organisers
- Government agencies – local, state and federal

The more partners our town has, the more successful it will be.

The biggest partnerships should be between communities, councils, and regions.

Our town will be more successful as one loud voice, rather than a bunch of small voices.

Partnerships are like a marriage. You agree, disagree, get upset, compromise, and then move on to a decision that will make all parties reasonably happy. But in this case, it's better to have multiple partners.

**Have we developed partnerships that include both public and private attractions?**

**Is everyone in agreement in terms of any branding effort?**

**Is there continuity in our tourism marketing and development efforts?**

**Are we working closely with state agencies and taking advantage of other available resources?**

### 3. The Rule of Billboards and Exits

Billboards can lure road travellers into our town if done optimally.

They are brief marketing opportunities that need to grab drivers' attention and make them realise that what we offer is what they need.

It could be

- Food
- An attraction or event, or even
- The facilities.

Simply saying that a road leads to our Geeveston and when it was founded is of interest to no one.

Use billboards to tell visitors why they should visit us. Focus on

- Things to do
- Things to see
- Or places to eat

Then give them a “what’s in it for me” reason.

Travellers may not even know what they want until they see our billboard as they drive past.

In order to be effective, highway signs must be eye-catching. There are four keys to billboard success.

1. Use the right words
2. Keep it brief
3. Keep the design simple
4. Keep the sign well maintained

Strong action words are the most successful in luring visitors to our town.

(See Appendix 1 for a comprehensive list of words and phrases to avoid using, and the preferred superior words that are proven to be irresistible lures.)

Avoid the word *discover*, as you can only discover something once, and the point is to keep people coming back.

Other tired words or empty words include *welcome*, *explore* or *we have it all*.

The concept of *gateway* is overused and frequently not used correctly. Gateways are something you drive through in order to get somewhere else. But we don't want our town to be a place to drive through. **We want our town to be the destination visitors want to visit.**

Keep the signs brief. At speed, drivers have less than 4 seconds to read any signs. Don't clutter the sign with words or images. Magazine-style ads rarely make good highway signs.

Make sure to assign responsibility for the maintenance of the physical sign and the message to keep either from being past their use by date.

Highway signs are like a community's front door. It creates that first impression.

#### 4. The Rule of Needing To Go. Now.

The pit stop is the most underrated reason to lure visitors to our town. Especially for visitors with children and for women.

Toilets are one of the easiest reasons for luring visitors into a town, because the need to go is often unpredictable.

Imagine a sign on the highway that reads, “Clean toilets, easy access” and how that might impact on additional visitor spending.

Visitors will often stretch their legs, and walk around to explore what is nearby. They will often buy something to eat.

If our public toilets included a visitor information sign, they could be quite an effective means of bringing in extra income to our town.

Businesses often make a big mistake when putting up signs that toilets are for customers only. Many times people don’t even think about buying anything until they come out of the toilet. They will always empty their bladder before they empty their wallets.

Eateries don’t offer public toilets, as such. But it is well known in the industry that visitors will see them as such, and so they make it a point to keep their facilities clean because it often translates into purchases.

Who has never stopped at McDonalds just because someone in their car needed to go to the toilet? Don’t you or your fellow travellers usually end up buying something?

Smart communities know they have a profitable little secret with the thing that travellers need the most – toilets. Especially if they are close to other visitor amenities, are clean, and have easy car access.

**Do we have toilet facilities available to visitors?**

**If so, do we have signs letting them know they’re available?**

**Are our facilities close to places where those visitors can spend time and money?**

**Are they well maintained?**

**Are they easy to find?**

**Is visitor information readily available?**

**How do our public (and public access) toilets shape up?**

**Do they fairly represent our community in terms of cleanliness, curb appeal, etc?**

## 5. The Rule of Perceived Value

While it's true that we say we shouldn't judge a book by its cover, it's also unavoidably true that we do. We form instant impressions about what the quality we can expect if we proceed.

The first entry to our community is like our book cover. It provides hints about the character and the quality of the people and businesses within our town. New visitors WILL judge us by our town entry.

We want visitors to come, spend time and money, then go home and tell their friends how great it was, and come back often to visit again.

The entrance to our town is where we have posted that **first** sign that says 'Welcome to Geeveston.'

Taking a critical look at our gateway signage,

- Does it reflect the community picture we want to project?
- Is the sign decorative, interesting, and easy to read?
- Or is it easy to ignore?
- Look at the landscaping, the lighting, and the businesses or home near to the entryway?
- Does our entrance create a good first impression?

When visitors decide where to eat, to sleep, to play golf, in the absence of recommendations, the only criteria they have to go in is appearances. People will either decide, *"This is a nice place to stop,"* or *"Let's keep going until we find something more appealing."*

Here are four important rules for creating a good first impression:

### 1. Make sure the entrance signs are in the right place.

Most communities put them at the town limits, but that boundary has little or no marketing value. Because less desirable businesses or homes are often at the outskirts of towns, placing signs there often creates a wrong impression of a town.

So, place signs where the boundary of the real community lies, not where government boundaries are.

2. Avoid cluttered signs at town entryways. People don't need to see a listing of all churches, service clubs and annual events on separate signs as they drive into town. Find better places in town to place such signs, where they offer visitors a chance to stop and get more information about whatever interests them.

Reserve entry signs to tell visitors why they should stop and stay awhile.

3. Never list more than four items on a welcome sign and keep your words to a minimum. People are in a hurry, so create signs with a message that can be quickly understood.
4. Don't skimp on our town's welcome signs. Consider them an investment with a tremendous potential for return.

Make sure the signs are attractive, professionally produced, impeccably landscaped, with lots of colour, lit at night, and cleaned or repainted annually. They should be large and make a "grand entrance."

Place them on both sides of the street, or span the street to create a sense of arrival.



These same rules apply to businesses, particularly those in the tourism industry. In fact, as much as 70% of sales at

- wineries,
- golf courses,
- restaurants,
- motels and B&B's, and
- retail shops

come as a result of curb appeal.

Entrances to towns help to create community pride, and increases perceived value. The greater the perceived value, the more visitors will spend and the longer they will stay, and the more likely they will come back.

For residents, perceived value translates as increased property values, stronger community spirit, and the desire to want to live, work and play in the community.

## 6. The Rule of Wayfinding

Signs should lead to destinations and not cause confusion and irritation.

There are two main sign issues that are critical to the success of any community.

1. Gateway signs, and
2. Directional signage (Wayfinding)

Gateway signs introduce visitors to our community and provide a sense of arrival.

Directional signs help visitors navigate through the area, while telling them

- what there is to see and do,
- where amenities are located,
  - public parking
  - toilets,
  - visitor information,
  - local services
- and where the attractions are.

The moment a potential visitor drives into our town, they should have adequate signs to help them find amenities, services and attractions. These signs should be attractive and fit in with the town's theme, instead of standard (boring) council issue.

Developing a good wayfinding plan needs to be a top priority to help us connect the dots of our community.

It could be colour-coded, for example

- public amenities might be in yellow,
- attractions in blue and
- retail in green.

That way, visitors can identify their next destination from a distance.

Signs should promote spending in our town, and can be a very powerful and effective selling tool.

Our chosen wayfinding system should be in a theme that matches our town's brand – what we want to be known for.

Not only does wayfinding

- reduce traffic confusion and
- make our attractions, activities and amenities more convenient to find, but
- they are also good front-line marketing system that will help to increase sales.

**How easy is it for visitors to find the attractions, amenities and services Geeveston offers?**

**Is our signage in keeping with the community's overall theme or ambiance?**

**Does our town have an ongoing signage program in place?**

## 7. The Rule of Perpendicular Signage

When you drive into a new place, your vision is automatically funneled through your windscreen because you want to make sure you read all the legal and directional signs, while trying not to cause any accidents as you maneuver through unfamiliar territory.

You are also trying to find your way around this new town, possibly looking for a place to park, or just checking the place out, to see whether it's worth a stop.

All these are reasons that drivers look forward rather than glancing around to their sides. Which is good at avoiding accidents. But not so good at showing visitors what the town has to offer.

This is where perpendicular signs come in.

Most shops simply place their signs above doorways and on windows. As such, they are almost invisible to passing visitors, who will not be aware that these businesses even exist, much less at what they might offer.

Even driving at slow speed, it is difficult to read awning and window signage.

So signs placed perpendicular to the building will allow drivers to read them without turning their heads, and can also be noticed from a distance.

To enhance readability from a distance, the letters must be tall enough. Here the general rule is 3 cm per 4 meters of distance.

So, 20 cm high letters can be read from 30 meters away, which is about right for drivers travelling through unfamiliar high traffic areas between 10 to 50 kilometers/hour.

This is useful for pedestrian traffic too, who don't need to crane their necks to read shop signs.

Don't use store names in perpendicular signage, as these mean nothing to visitors. Just tell visitors the type of store you are.

Sell what the town has, not what it is. This will greatly increase drop-in shopping traffic.

Perpendicular signage lets drivers keep their eyes on the road AND see what you are selling.

- ✓ Perpendicular signs should be consistent in height and size.
- ✓ Promote what you are selling, not the name of the store.
- ✓ Never use script font
- ✓ Use no more than six words

## 8. The Rule of Parking Limits

Not so much a real issue in Geeveston, but visitors – particularly city ones - are not to know that.

Most people are intimidated by parking limit signs, and will either

- keep their eye on the time which will cramp their ability to relax and savour the experiences our town offers,
- or (in other places, where parking limits are enforced) return to their cars, full of parcels and happy feelings, to be confronted with a parking ticket, which will no doubt quickly remove that happy feeling and contaminate their impression of the town.

Visitors should be encouraged and supported to shop and dine as long as they want to in a community's commercial area, as this is what generates most of the tourist dollars.

The main reason that parking limits are set in commercial areas is to discourage employees from taking up all the parking outside establishments. But it is the visitor who is punished for employees' unthinking behaviour, at the expense of the community.

Many studies show that out of town visitors take approximately four hours to satisfy their shopping and dining interest. Visitors who watch the time are forced to leave before their interest is satisfied, taking their unspent money elsewhere.

Clever communities help visitors to *shop till they drop*, not inhibit them.

Motorhomes and caravans are an increasing sight in Geeveston. This market is increasing every year, and they have a higher-than-average disposable income.

Rather than having signs that say "No Trucks" (or similar), have helpful signs that tell motorhome drivers where they CAN park, such as "Truck Parking Next Right."

If a town does need to insist on limited parking restrictions, direct drivers to where they can park longer for free or for a reasonable charge.

If parking is too expensive or restrictive, visitors will simply leave.

Successful communities get more from visitor spending than they do from parking meters and infringement fines.

**Do we have a place for Motorhomes and Caravans to park?**

**Do we display parking limits that may be chasing visitors away before they're finished shopping and eating?**

**Are our parking areas well signed, easy to find, and within a block of the town centre?**

**Are parking restrictions removed after business hours?**

## 9. The Rule of Frontline Sales

Chitchat with staff is common for visitors to new towns, so it's absolutely critical that staff know how to talk with visitors in ways that reflect favourably on the town.

Checkout and sale staff, stockers, hospitality staff, petrol station attendants, receptionists are ALL sales people for our community.

In successful communities, in addition to making sales for their employer, staff also sell events, attractions and even the competition.

Every dollar spent in the community has more chance of staying in the community, and increases the likelihood of return visits and recommendations.

Frontline staff should be coached to ask three simple questions of their customers:

1. Where are you from?
2. How long will you be in town?
3. Have you been to ... (or) What brings you to Geeveston?

These three questions will usually generate a small conversation where the staff member can promote a local attraction that fits the customer's taste. The longer you can keep a visitor in the area, the more likely that person will spend more money there.

One clever town has a clever attraction-adoption program created by their merchants. Each store promotes a different attraction to store visitors. By adopting one attraction, the staff can really get to know it and can better promote it as a "must see" thing to do while visiting the area.

Commercial staff form a critical part of the tourist success of a town.

## 10. The Rule of 24/7 and 365

Ideally visitors to Visitor Information Centres are able to speak to someone about what there is to do, where things are, and how to get there. And many times they can, either to paid staff or to volunteers.

But since it's not possible or reasonable to expect these centres to be attended around the clock, every day of the year, there are many times when there is simply no one to talk with.

This is where round-the-clock visitor kiosks comes in handy.

Install visitor kiosks at several key locations that are easily accessible from the highway. Work with state transport departments to make sure that Visitor Information Services and kiosks are given highway signage to direct visitors to them.

There are five key factors to having a successful kiosk program in our community:

1. They should be weather proof.
2. They should blend in to the character of the community.
3. They should be updated regularly, with outdated information removed consistently.
4. They should provide information that can be taken away, in the form of brochures, flyers, leaflets, or business cards.
5. A town cannot have enough of such information kiosks. Convenience is critical. Place them
  - outside attractions and
  - visitor information centres that are staffed during operating hours,
  - near public toilets,
  - in the commercial area.

They should all have a similar look, but be slightly different in the attractions they promote.

They need to be user friendly style and have room for distributable literature.

They can come in all shapes and sizes, and can cost between a few hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars.

They can be free standing or they can be wall mounted.

They should include photos and brief texts selling the area attractions.

Kiosks should be considered a sales tool and not just a location finder.

Important: Avoid using these as public noticeboards, as these are of no interest at all to visitors, other than as a quaint curiosity.

## 11. The Rule of Convenience

There are two types of retail stores in a community.

There are neighbourhood retail stores such as

- Hardware stores
- Professional services
- Taverns
- Pharmacies,
- Grocery stores
- And other shops geared mainly to local residents.

Then there are the visitor retail stores who cater both to locals AND visitors. They include shops like:

- Gift shops
- Galleries
- Bookstores
- Antique dealers
- Clothes shops,
- Collectibles
- Restaurants and cafes
- Souvenir shops
- Arts and crafts shops.

Ideally, for a peak visitor experience, all visitor shops should be hubbed together in close proximity to each other.

Even if many of the shops are similar to each other.

As few as 15 such visitor stores can spur very strong retail sales and can really revitalise a town. Communities that develop a pedestrian-friendly, visitor-oriented retail hub end up thriving.

The minimum critical mass for building and maintaining spending momentum is the 10 + 10 + 10 rule.

Within a two or three lineal block (not square blocks) there should be at least:

10 destination retail shops

- |                                      |          |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| ● galleries,                         | ● books, |
| ● collectibles,                      | ● etc.   |
| ● home furnishings and décor,        |          |
| ● clothing, souvenirs,               |          |
| ● antiques (not second hand stores), |          |

10 venues for dining and treats

- |                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| ● restaurants,   | ● candy,   |
| ● coffee shops,  | ● bistros, |
| ● milkshake bar, | ● etc      |

10 places open after 6 pm.

- Nightlife is critical.
- Entertainment preferable.

## 12. The Rule of Turning Negatives Into Positives

Communities often feel at the mercy of what others say about them, particularly if it is unkind or unflattering.

It doesn't matter whether these comments are true or not, communities often feel devastated when they are reported in such a light.

When this happens, communities have three choices on how to respond:

Get into a kerfuffle, and write lots of letters to editors and threaten to or actually cancel subscriptions.

Lie low and hope it dies away, hopefully sooner rather than later.

Or turn the negative into a positive.

A sense of humour and a willingness to laugh at yourself goes a long way in such instances.

The practicality of doing what can be done to address truthful criticisms can often spur a community into a revitalisation effort.

And a snarky public comment about a town can be turned around into a selling point.

Triabunna comes to mind in light of comments in early July 2014 by the Mayor of their council.

Rather than fighting or resisting being labeled as bogan, they could capitalise on it and attract tens, if not hundreds of thousands of bogan oriented visitors, developing the tongue-in-cheek bogan theme to their businesses.

**What are the general perceptions of Geeveston?**

**Has Geeveston had a visitor assessment?**

**Have we taken a hard look at Geeveston's challenges, and how we could turn those into assets?**



### 13. The Rule of Being Unique

People like the weird and wonderful and will travel to witness or experience it.

However, bizarre attractions don't mean that they are in and of themselves, instant visitor magnets. Just as much planning and organisation needs to go into developing the idea, as other, more obvious attractions.

Unique attractions can be built around

- A weird physical phenomenon (such as headless chickens that live for years)
- A obvious tie-in with something fictional and unprovable (eg the town of Metropolis in Ohio claimed Superman for their own)
- An extensive collection of some kind.
- A Guinness Book of Records claimant.

These are particularly effective if a whole community can get into the spirit of the theme.

**What does Geeveston have that makes visitors want to make a special trip, and that they can't get closer to home?**

**What assets does Geeveston have that could become the lure for visitors?**

#### 14. The Rule of Being the Best

What does a region do when it offers many similar things to neighbouring regions? It strives to be superior in every way from their competition, often in a quality of service context.

And when that service is recognised and acknowledged, for instance by a celebrity or written about in a respected journal, you should promote the sh\*t out of it, using it in all promotional and advertising campaigns.

Do not say you are the best. Have other people say it for you. In the absence of a high profile endorsement, make sure to simply collect customer comments.

**At the very least, have a visitor's book, and use their comments about your establishment.**

**What does Geeveston have that is better than what potential visitors can find closer to home?**

**Have we searched for third party endorsements in books, magazine articles and other sources?**

## 15. The Rule of Supporting Businesses

It is never one business on its own that contributes to the success of a region, despite it being a major draw card.

There are also other businesses and services that support the main attraction and their visitors, such as transport, maintenance, stockists, and even other, minor attractions.

When regional tourism campaigns focus only on the main attractions, without considering the supporting businesses, the region will never achieve its highest potential.

This is especially true if the main attraction is seasonal, and the supporting local businesses struggle to survive during the off season.

Are there particular local businesses we need to recruit, develop, or foster in order to make the most of our region all year round?

To find out, it is important to discuss with our main attraction what other businesses would help them to both bring more people into the area, and help them stay longer?

They may respond with a list of nearby suppliers, amenities, or other attractions, to help people keep spending for days, if not weeks.

If plans could be developed that would keep local businesses active and profitable throughout most of the year, that would be a great incentive for support businesses to develop in our region.

For example, ski resorts that become mountain bike destinations during the warmer months.

**What are the biggest draws to our community in Geeveston?**

**Does our town have the supporting businesses necessary to make those activities successful?**

**Does our town promote supporting businesses or just the activity?**

**Does our town have a tourism/business attraction and retention program?**

**Are our community leaders working with supporting businesses to promote our town's attractions and activities?**

## 16. The Rule of Telling Stories

Human beings are hard wired for story-telling, and an increasing number of communities are getting wise to the power that stories have to attract and hold visitors to a region.

Cultural tourism is the fastest grown segment in the tourism industry. Visitors are taken on a journey of discovery, beyond the gift shops and the entertainment, into a community's soul, into its history, environment, and the arts.

Museums are the backbone of cultural tourism. Rather than just showing items of interest and featuring colourful local characters, it is important to tell the stories that give context to the exhibits.

Artifacts without stories are boring to most people. But stories bring them alive, it makes them real and memorable. Which keeps visitors in the area for longer, which flows on to increased spending.

**Do we have a museum, and does it tell stories or just show artifacts?**

**How long does the average visitor spend in our museum (heritage centre?)**

**Are the stories interesting enough to capture the visitor and encourage them to return?**

**Are the displays unique and captivating?**

**Are interesting stories about local buildings or sites included as a main part of the museum program?**

## 17. The Rule of Four Times

People will not travel a long way for a brief visit. If you want people to drive an hour to reach you, you must make that travel time worth their while.

People will visit a community if it has activities that interest them, and that will keep them busy four times longer than it took to get them there.

So if we expect visitors to drive from Franklin, for instance, an hour's worth of activities will make it worth their while. If we expect people to drive from Hobart, we need to offer them four hour's worth of activities to make it worth their while. This is known as the Rule of Four Times.

The Rule of Four Times will determine Geeveston's market area. The more we have to offer, and the more powerful the draw, the further people will travel to visit.

This Rule also determines whether or not Geeveston could become an overnight destination. To lure overnight visitors to our primary attractions, we need to have at least eight hours of activities that will cater to the visitor.

We must also have other amenities that go with overnight stays, such as lodging, dining, entertainment, and supporting businesses.

The ultimate goal of a community with a focus on tourism is to become worthy of multi-day and repeat visits. Overnight visitors spend up to three times more than day visitors.

What makes Geeveston worth the drive? Does our town have enough attractions to become a destination community?

**Have we taken a look at our town's activities and their drawing power?**

**Have we determined who our town's major markets are?**

**Does our town have the activities that make visiting it worth the drive?**

**Have we explored how to use the Rule of Four Times to attract more visitors?**

## 18. The Rule of Marketing Vs Product Development

The aim of successful tourism is for a town to import more money from visitors than is exported by residents.

And it's easy to get caught in the spiral of using all available money to keep bringing more people to the area by increased marketing spend.

However, many communities make the mistake of not actually investing in upgrading or adding to the things that keep visitors coming and returning. Which risks visitors leaving disappointed, as their expectations weren't met.

The point is that every single community should make product development a top priority.

- Activities
- Attractions
- Amenities

Always invest in product development first and marketing later.

A smart community will always spend 90% of its available tourism budget on product development, and as the product gets better and better, gradually tip the scales towards 50-50.

While every community is different, the scales should never be tipped to more than about 70% for marketing. Product development never ends. It's an ongoing process and should ALWAYS be a priority.

Remember that visitors come for the products. Keep adding to them and making them better.

This way you will generate:

- More repeat business
- Have a longer season
- And a strong brand that requires less effort to market.

Product development does not just mean community events and attractions that bring visitors.

Product development includes such things as:

- Signage
- Wayfinding
- Visitor kiosks
- Public toilets
- Theme development
- Beautification
- Supporting businesses, and so on.

Communities must also make sure to talk to all business owners to learn what infrastructure should be upgraded or developed to help enhance their community – which is ultimately the product – and get people to keep coming back.

This is part of a business retention program. Without a strong business retention program to support local businesses, a tourism program will never succeed.

Do our tourism efforts include both product development and marketing?

Is there a good balance between the two?

Is Geeveston under so much pressure to make something happen *now*, that most of our funds are spent on marketing, even though our product might not be fully developed?

## 19. The Rule of Selling The Experience

When marketing themselves, most communities get stuck promoting the place and not the activities. Visitors are far more interested in the things that there are to do, rather than the actual location.

How do we reach someone a hundred or a thousand kilometers away who is sitting comfortably in their home? The easiest and least expensive way to reach them is through the Internet.

Bring together:

- Brief, eloquent descriptions
- Professional photography
- Third party reviews
- Action packed video clips

This brings our region and our activities to life, which will draw visitors to us.

Create an Activities Guide, rather than a standard brochure. An Activities Guide is a multi-page booklet or brochure that dedicates at least one page to each major activity or attraction.

Too many brochures are sparse in words, using lists of activities and attractions. More effective would be great photos and descriptions.

Even using the term “Activities Guide” tells potential visitors that our town has things to do. The word brochure says nothing. Would people respond to getting a free Activities Guide or a free brochure? We like things to do, not just to see.

The most powerful tourism marketing is when it evokes emotion.

Heart pounding thrills, serene relaxation, squeals of delight. If we can effectively sell the experiences, people will flock to us.

More than ever, visitors want things to do, not just look at. They want to be immersed in, amongst other things:

- Music
- Culture
- The environment
- Recreation
- History
- Food.

**Is Geeveston selling itself on activities or as a place?**

**Do the words in our marketing materials evoke emotion?**

**Do our town’s marketing materials simply list activities or do they tell visitors why they should take part in those activities?**



## 20. The Rule of Branding

Branding is the means by which we show our distinct personality which is different from other destinations.

Geeveston's brand should be pervasive throughout the community. In our:

- Wayfinding systems
- Gateways
- All community-related
  - websites
  - Brochures
- Experiences, and even
- Photography.

A brand must be obvious in your marketing and in your town. When visitors arrive, do they see our branding throughout the community?

Branding is not just about information. In this era of information-rich, time-poor, **people value feeling more than information**. Branding creates the perception potential visitors have about Geeveston.

Branding is not just about slogans and logos.

Brands are what people think of our town's product (attractions and activities), not what our marketing materials say about them.

Perceptions, often developed by word of mouth, are the key to developing a brand

The slogan simply reinforces those perceptions.

Successful branding is never generic. Find our niche, then work to own it. So:

- Be specific,
- Fun,
- Colourful,
- Weird
- Scary,
- Silly,
- Adventuresome,
- Or be lazy.

Just never be generic. The more generic we are, the less likely it will be that visitors choose Geeveston over other towns as a place to visit.

What is generic? Words like ...

- Discover
- Best kept secret
- Historic
- Something for everyone
- So much to see and do

- Explore
- Outdoor recreation
- We have it all
- Visit Geeveston (or wherever)
- Unlike anywhere else
- So much history
- Gateway
- Centre of it all
- Naturally fun
- Experience
- Next to everything
- Come visit us

Brands rarely succeed as a top-down effort. The best-branded communities happened as grass-roots initiatives, often privately developed. The towns then help to market that brand.

The real secret to branding is to separate our primary lure from our diversions. The primary lure is the experience or activity that separates our town from everywhere else.

Diversions are the secondary activities, things that could be done closer to a visitor's home, but they could do while they are visiting us. This includes things like:

- Shopping,
- Dining,
- Golf,
- Fishing
- Boating,
- A multitude of outdoor activities,
- Etc.

While no one wants to be classified as a diversion or secondary activity, consider the following:

- **Visitors are active 14 hours a day, yet typically spend only 4 to 6 hours at the primary lure that brought them to us.**
- **Up to 80% of visitor spending takes place in diversions.**

Branding a community is not easy work.

In the first instance, it requires a blending of

- Business,
- Product development,
- Marketing,
- Communications, and
- Graphic design.

On top of that, it requires agreement or acceptance by the community, so that we all get behind a consistent message.

And all this takes time.

Communities that rush to develop their brand will be at a very high risk of failure as a result of insufficient planning and inadequate feedback.

The branding process includes

1. Repositioning – for communities that want to turn themselves around,
2. Image – defining who our town is,
3. Market Definition – defining who our town hopes to attract,
4. Creation of an Icon – photo opportunity
5. And Finding Our Town’s Niche – defining the unique feature that will attract visitors.

**What do we have that clearly sets us apart and that we can build our brand around?**

**Are our local organisations on the same page in terms of developing our brand?**

**Do our events follow a particular marketing theme we are trying to build?**

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Bonus Content:

### **Three Killers Of Branding (There are never four)**

We have worked with more than a thousand destinations and researched countless more, and we found there are ONLY three killers of any branding effort. Here they are:

1. Local politics
2. Lack of champions
3. Lack of money (both public and private)

#### **LOCAL POLITICS**

With local politics, membership organizations can cause more problems than elected officials.

Branding is about narrowing your focus. For example, as soon as you float the idea of being THE equestrian destination, someone will say “But we have so much more than that” or “I’m a chamber member, I pay my dues, and I think we should be known for our fishing.” And then we try to make everyone happy, and we end up with “We have something for everyone!”

#### **LACK OF MONEY**

All successful brands are built on product, not just marketing. If you hope to become the equestrian destination, do you have the stadiums and facilities that cater to equestrian event organizers? Is the footing conducive for equestrian events? Do you have boarding, supplies, parking for large rigs, and spending opportunities for horse owners? Developing the product you need usually requires funding.

The best brands are built on private-sector investment, not public sector amenities. Think Orlando, Anaheim, Napa Valley, Nashville and Hershey, Pennsylvania, to name just a few. All are private-sector driven.

#### **LACK OF CHAMPIONS**

Without strong champions, no branding (or specialization) effort can succeed. Do you have the people who will push the agenda forward, never taking “no” for an answer? It only takes

two, three or four strong champions to win the branding game. As a matter of fact, if you have the right champions in place, they will find the money, and they will work through the local politics.

### **WHAT TO DO**

1. Make a list of the activities that really set your community apart from everyone else. That the people you are hoping to attract can't get or do closer to home. You might end up with five or you might end up with twenty. Don't panic if you don't have anything truly unique to you.
2. Draw a line through the items that are static or never changing, such as local museums, statues, or static displays that people would usually see only once. If your focus is on a "been there, done that" attraction, it won't be sustainable. After everyone has seen it, you'll run out of customers.
3. You probably just narrowed your list dramatically. Now look at the major market you are hoping to attract people from. Draw a big circle – a couple hours' drive – around that market area, remembering that they can go west, north or south as easy as they can head your direction. Then make sure no one in that circle has what you have on your list. If they do, cross it off – your attraction won't be unique to your market.

### **10 Commandments of Branding**

Over the past month we've focused on how important it is to find the one thing that really sets your community apart. This can apply to a downtown district and how it sets itself apart from other districts, or it can apply to a community hoping to attract tourism, new jobs, or private investment. In every case you must find that one thing that makes you different. If you don't have anything truly unique (pardon the use of that word) you may need to come up with something new. This is what branding is about.

But as soon as I bring up the word "branding," eyes glaze over, and people think we're talking about logos, slogans, slick ads and tag lines. So before we go any further, here are the Ten Commandments of Branding a Community (or downtown):

- 1. Logos and slogans are not brands.** They are merely marketing messages used to reinforce, support and strengthen your brand. They make up 2% of a brand, yet local politics usually give it 98% of the attention when they're developing their brand.
- 2. Brands are perceptions.** They are what people think of you – good or bad.
- 3. Brands are about differentiation.** What sets you apart from other communities?
- 4. Brands have a narrow focus.** Narrow your focus, then narrow it some more. Brands are specific. Find your niche.
- 5. Brands are about ownership.** Napa Valley owns the wine country brand. Nashville owns the country music brand. Branson, Missouri owns the music theater capital brand.

- 6. Steer clear of focus groups.** You can't build a successful brand using focus groups. The "group-hug mentality" will give you a watered-down generic "one size fits all" brand, which isn't really a brand at all.
- 7. Successful brands are built on product.** Brands are a promise that you will deliver on the perception created by your brand. Those perceptions are built on product and communicated by marketing – not the other way around. Your product must fulfill your brand promise. For decades Volvo was touted as the safest car. The product backed it up, and today they are still seen as a very safe car.
- 8. You never roll out a brand.** A brand is earned – good or bad. It can take years to build a strong brand. Brands are largely developed via word of mouth: publicity, social media. After all, brands are built because of what people think of you.
- 9. Great brands evoke emotion.** They hit you in an emotional spot. They make you want to go there. They are memorable. They have strong "top of mind awareness." Disney's advertising is a perfect example of how to evoke emotion.
- 10. Brands require tireless champions.** One of my favorite quotes is "A by-product of brands 'for the people' is the committee that compromises and kills a potential brand home run. This is why you never see statues of committees in public parks; you see brave leaders." Successful brands require strong supporters.

## 21. The Rule of *Wow!* Photography

Nothing sells tourism like good photography.

People are looking for activities – to say, “that looks like fun.”

So show activities rather than simply scenery.

Every community should develop a professional photo library of between 60 to 100 photographs.

They should showcase every season.

75% of photos should feature people enjoying activities.

While scenic vistas may create ambience, the reality is that they capture the visitor’s attention for only a few minutes. Our goal is to entice people to come and spend money in the community, not to stop briefly to admire the view, and then move on.

Look for existing exceptional shots of our region, and contact the photographer to see if it can be arranged to use those images as part of the library.

Or find a (local) professional photographer and give them a brief of what is required to promote the area and its activities.

Costs will vary, but you will get what you pay for. This should be considered an investment, with each photo enticing potential visitors to spend money.

Most photographers will want to retain rights and limit your use.

Make sure photos are digitised in a large, high-resolution format.

Some communities encourage photos by amateurs, even holding occasional photo competitions.

Though these can be kept in the photo library and displayed at community events, they rarely meet the professional standards required for marketing materials.

Photos are not only worth a thousand words. They can also be worth a thousand room nights.

**Have we budgeted for the development of a photo library?**

**Does our photo library include activities more than scenic vistas?**

**Do our photos have *Wow!* appeal?**

**Have we looked at other ads, brochures, and/or websites to see what a difference good photography can make in closing the sale?**

## 22. The Rule of Closing the Sale

People are bombarded with hundreds of ads each day, vying with each other for customers to buy their products and services.

There are:

- newspapers,
- brochures,
- magazines,
- special events,
- direct mail,
- trade shows,
- the Internet,
- television,
- radio,
- transit advertising,
- billboards,
- product displays
- and much more!

The bottom line? Any marketing material we produce **MUST** be good enough to close the sale on its own. We rarely get a second chance to win a potential customer's attention.

Most communities waste 85% of their marketing budget because they fail to understand effective marketing.

*As an exercise, review a series of ads or brochures and see which are good enough to make you want to (1) make the effort to find out more, and then once you have more information, to (2) make an actual booking.*

All marketing material must have a “call to action” to get the reader to take that next step, be it to visit a website, or make a booking.

Materials should also feature any word of mouth recommendations, especially if they are made by anyone of influence.

The top two or three inches of a brochure or activities guide must grab the reader's eye, while the bottom should have your potential customer reaching for their phone to either call or check out your website.

Tourism marketing is getting more competitive all the time, as other communities also vie for the consumer dollar. Becoming marketing savvy can help us get that edge over other destinations.

*TIP: YELLOW always stands out and catches the eye faster than other colours. Use either bold type on yellow, or yellow type on a dark background.*

**What was it that convinced you to book your last holiday destination?**

**Are our marketing materials good enough to close the sale?**

**How do our marketing materials stack up to other communities' marketing materials?**

**Are the top three inches (10 cm) good enough to capture the attention of a potential customer?**

**Do our brochures sell activities, and not just things to see?**

## 23. The Rule of Public Relations

Public Relations is often an overlooked aspect of marketing.

Studies show that

- 10% of holiday makers chose their trip as a result of an ad,
- 40% from an article they read, and
- 50% from word-of-mouth recommendation by friends or family.

What is the difference between an ad, and PR?

With ads, you know that you are guaranteed to see your message run in a guaranteed position exactly as you wrote it. But with PR, the route is less direct.

You suggest a good story to an editor, and hope it will be picked up by the news media, trade publications, and website. The cost is lower, but you have less control over your final message.

You pay for advertising. You pay for good PR.

Why does PR tend to be more successful? One word. Credibility.

While a magazine can publish an article exactly as it was provided to them by you, the reader believes the article to be objective.

PR is perceived as getting someone else to say something good about your product, service, attraction, or amenities. Advertising is simply tooting your own horn.

Additionally, 3 times more people would read an article as would read an ad. Remember that people browse through magazines and liftouts for the articles, not for the ads.

A lot of people think that PR just means sending out press releases. But good PR is about establishing relationships with editors and sometimes creating stories – and attention – where none existed before.

Buying good PR can yield a return of \$3 for every \$ spent. Compared to print, radio, and television advertising, which can cost an enormous amount, and must be consistent to be effective, PR generally offers a greater return on investment.

Do we have any great third party endorsements that we can use?

Do we have any articles written by journalists, that endorse us?

Do we need to consider establishing our own PR program?

Bonus Content



## How To Budget Your Marketing Dollars

### **45% on digital marketing:**

Your website, social media, online advertising, digital guides, apps, search engine optimization, website updates, e-newsletter, video content, pay per click advertising, etc. When you plan your personal travel what is your number one resource? I'll be it's the web.

### **20% on public relations:**

You build your brand on PR, advertising is used to maintain your ownership position of your niche in the marketplace. What is said about you is far more important than what you say about yourself. For every dollar you spend on public relations, you'll see a \$3 return in "earned media" – what it would cost if you paid for that space. Publicity is a third-party endorsement, and that carries a lot of weight! Think about the power of good reviews on TripAdvisor.

### **20% on advertising**

The goal should be to drive people to your website, which must be good enough to close the sale.

### **10% on collateral materials:**

This includes your Activities Guide, other brochures, maps and printed materials, including distribution costs.

### **5% of trade shows and signage:**

This includes trade shows, fairs, billboards and readerboards and other forms of marketing.

This is a general guideline, and your destination may require some tweaking. What worked in the 1970s doesn't work today, so break out of that mold.

## **WHAT TO DO**

1. Take your last year's budget and categorize your marketing as I showed above.
2. Then compare it. What can you do differently?
3. Redevelop your budget so it fits into these parameters. Of course content is what closes the sale, but this will help you put your valuable resources into the right pots. Over this weekly series I'll help you narrow these down into specifics. But the big takeaway is to spend your most precious resources on the web, not creating print guides and brochures.

## 24. The Rule of Websites

Consider the following ...

- A new website goes online every three seconds.
- More than 64 million travel-related domain names have been registered so far.
- In Australia, for 2012-2013, the Internet usage for the various age groups are as follows:

25 - 34 years            95%

35 – 44 years           90%

45 – 54 years           85%

55 – 64 years           78%

65+ years               46%

- 80% of Australian households with Internet access go online daily, with the balance going online at least weekly.
- 75% of Australian Internet users make online purchases.
- The most frequently purchased items online are travel, accommodation, ticket sales, and memberships.

Website use for travel planning has grown incredibly fast, and does not vary much by age, income, or gender. So older, more affluent Australians are just as likely to research and book their next travel experience online, as any other adult group.

[Note: how beneficial would it be to have a Chinese language version of our website, if the Chinese tourism market is the next big thing waiting to happen for Tasmania?]

Many communities have a website, and most use it as simply an information source for local residents, businesses and organisations.

But the real power of the Internet is in its power to promote. The Internet is the most powerful and cost effective way to market a community.

But there are two major challenges:

1. Is it good enough to close the sale?
2. Can our potential customers even find it?

Here are some tips to make our website stand out:

1. Make the site informational but not wordy. Users prefer sites that are concise and factual. Use bullet points.
2. The site should answer two questions most visitors have:
  - i. What is there to do?
  - ii. What does the town look like?
  - iii. How do I get around?
  - iv. Where do I stay?
  - v. Are there any package deals?
  - vi. Are there any special activities for kids, seniors, etc?
  - vii. What's going on this month?

3. Think about organising your site by activity type from a menu that asks, “What do you want to do?”
4. Include testimonials from satisfied visitors.
5. Make your activities guide and other literature available for download as PDF files.
6. To ensure large numbers of visitors to our website, establish reciprocal links with other tourism-oriented websites. And make sure to be searchable by all major search engines.
7. A good website is meant to showcase a community’s best qualities – the things that make Geeveston a special trip. \$15,000 to \$20,000 is not too much to spend for a professional website that displays and sells our region worldwide, 24 hours a day, every day.
8. Use lots of photography, especially action shots. Viewers want to get as close to the action as they virtually can. Photos draw people in.
9. Utilise Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to make sure our community’s website is on the first page of listings for various activities. Pay per click programs are effective at achieving this.
10. Promote experiences, not geography. People search for activities and seldom for towns.
11. Market experiences by type of travel:
  - i. Motorcycle,
  - ii. Motor home,
  - iii. Tour bus,
  - iv. Private car,
  - v. Bicycle,
  - vi. Etc.
12. Or by activity
  - i. History,
  - ii. Culinary,
  - iii. Photography,
  - iv. Gardening,
  - v. Culture,
  - vi. Events,
  - vii. Entertainment,
  - viii. Etc.
13. Or by season.
14. Develop itineraries by type of travel and activity. Do
  - i. Half-day
  - ii. Full-day,
  - iii. Two-day
  - iv. Three-day itineraries.
  - v. Include specifics, not generalities.
15. Photos should be optimized for fast downloading. If you want to display a lot of photos on one page, use thumbnail images that users can click on if they want to see a larger size.

16. Develop an e-newsletter that includes upcoming events and special savings.
  - i. Make it easy to subscribe and unsubscribe. This is “permission marketing” and is not spam. It creates top of mind awareness.
17. If we have the budget, dedicate a person full-time to the web. It IS that important to keep our site fresh, up to date, and ever changing so it does not become a “*been there, done that*” site.
18. Travelers use their computers to book flights and reserve rooms. If our site does not offer that e-commerce connection, make sure to provide links to sites that do.

The Internet has become a remarkable tool for people who want to plan their holidays from the comfort of their own homes.

It has also become a marketing tool for communities to encourage people to get out of their homes and see what is great about Australia.

#### Some example websites for branded communities

(mostly US and Canadian, but still instructive.)

1. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/alpena-michigan/>
2. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/angels-camp-california/>
3. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/bracebridge-ontario/>
4. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/chautauqua-county-new-york/>
5. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/mt-vernon/>
6. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/old-strathcona/>
7. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/vermillion-alberta/>
8. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/rapid-city-south-dakota/>
9. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/st-albert-ab/>
10. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/walnut-creek-california/>
11. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/york-pennsylvania/>
12. <http://www.rogerbrooksinternational.com/portfolio-items/jonesborough-tennessee/>

#### How to Sabotage Your Internet Effectiveness

The Internet has changed the world. These days if I want a horseback riding experience in Northern Texas, I'll Google “horseback rides + ‘Northern Texas,’” and within a third of a

second I'll get 74,000 responses. People now search for the experience first, and the general location second.

If I'm visiting Vancouver, British Columbia I might search for:

- Best restaurants, downtown Vancouver
- Greek restaurants, North Vancouver, BC
- Job opportunities, southern BC
- Downhill skiing, British Columbia
- Ferry schedule, Vancouver to Victoria BC
- Things to do, Victoria, BC
- Wildlife viewing, British Columbia
- Apartment rentals, Langley, BC
- "Best hiking trails" + "Canadian Rockies"

In each example, not once did the location come first. To be successful, you must market the experience first, and THEN your location. But the key is to make sure the experiences you're promoting differentiate you from everyone else in your market. Every place has "outdoor recreation" and "unique shops and restaurants."

Have you ever gone anywhere because it was a county? And yet, county-wide marketing usually promotes the fact that they are a county, before they ever give you a reason to want to visit.

To win you must answer this one question: **What do you have that the people you are hoping to attract can't get or do closer to home?** Whatever it is, you need to hang your hat on that. You simply can't be "all things to all people" and win in this new age of branding.

The surefire way to kill your marketing effectiveness is marketing your downtown, town, city, county or region – your geographic location – BEFORE experiences, the things to do that make you worth a special trip, even if it's just a ten minute drive to your downtown from the suburbs.

So QUIT marketing your location first. And quit marketing your organization – it should be the very last item in any ad or website. Visitors (even local residents) don't care about the actual organization when they are trying to find things to do, places to eat, and places to stay. Sell the experience first, and then the location.

### **WHAT TO DO**

1. Google your community name. I'll bet you're right at the top of the list.
2. Now Google your top activity. If you're an equestrian destination search for "horseback trails" and then the general area "Western Washington." Do you show up? If not, you have some work to do. Try another primary activity such as "Micro-brew" and "Metroplex" (the Dallas/Fort Worth area and a dozen other communities). Does your website show up on the first page of search results? Try some others as well.

**Fact: 86% of search engine users never go past the second page of search results. Do you?**

3. Look at your introductory text. Does it mention the one, two, or three best activities that really set you apart and make you worth a special trip? This is where search engines get their keywords – that opening paragraph.

4. Rewrite your introductory text to promote the top one, two or three things that really set you apart. Then reread the previous two articles to make sure you're complying with those rules. Then post it on your home page.
5. Consider purchasing a "pay per click" program through Google, Bing, Yahoo and other search engines. If you have to buy your way onto the first page, then do it until the search engines pick up those key words. No one is going to find you if they look for "horseback riding, western Washington" and you're listed on the 64<sup>th</sup> page of search results!

## 25. The Rule of Frequency

In tourism, repetition is often the key to getting people to visit us.

Frequency creates Top of Mind Awareness (ToMA). When people think about getting away for a few days, we want it to be Geeveston they think about. If they think of us, it will either be because they've been here before and had a great time, or they've heard about us enough times for it to register.

When people go to a new place, it's more likely that they've seen or heard about it a number of times.

Ads need to be seen a number of times – between 5 and 7 – for them to be remembered.

So we are better off running one ad in the same magazine 5 times, rather than placing one ad in five different publications.

The aim of the game is to be remembered.

Linked to frequency, is consistency.

While we may get bored with the same message, or the same slogan, or the same photo, the customers do not see it as often as we do. If there is too much variation between messages, it's the same as running different ads in different publications. It nullifies the 5-times principle.

Rather than remembering five distinct messages, each seen only once, the customer will remember none of them. Depending on the campaign, we can easily use the same slogan or concept for two or three years. Or, if it's *really* good, it can last a lifetime. (Think: *What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.*)

Chances are that when people come across our ads, they may not be even thinking about a holiday or a getaway. But when they do, we want them to remember us.

Say it once, say it twice. And then say it again, and again. Frequency sells.

**Is our town using ToMA in its marketing efforts?**

**When someone wants to experience what our town has to offer, is our community the first place that comes to mind?**

## Appendix 1 - words and phrases to avoid using

Explore	Gateway	Far from ordinary
Discover	Naturally	Relax. Recharge. Rejuvenate.
Experience	Culturally rich	Close to everywhere
Outdoor recreation	Welcome to my town!	Right around the corner
Unlike anywhere else	Always something happening	Your playground
So much to see and do	Rediscover	So much history
The four season destination	Real Tasmania	Purley natural
Where the seasons come to life	Slowdown and enjoy	The place for all ages
Historic downtown	Real people. Real fun	... and so much more!
Centre of it all	Lose yourself here	Home away from home
Best kept secret	Fresh fun [the word <i>fresh</i> ]	A slice of heaven
We have it all	Tour. Taste. Toast. [period fetish]	It's all right here
Visit Geeveston	This is the place	Recreation unlimited
Beauty and heritage	A real treasure	The perfect getaway
Naturally fun	Waiting for you	The place for families
Recreational paradise	Take a look!	Start your vacation here

These are generic, hackneyed, or dated. Or all of these.



## Appendix 2 – words that work and increase sales

### Words to evoke emotion

Beautiful	Genuine	Startling
Classic	Magic	Surprising
Exclusive	Revolutionary	Jaw Dropping
Exceptional	Revealing	Breathtaking
Fascinating	Secrets	

### Superlatives that work

Absolutely	Tremendous	Terrific
Amazing	Unsurpassed	Masterpiece
Exciting	Unparalleled	
Outstanding	Wonderful	
Sensational	Remarkable	

### Words that deliver a promise

Approved	Gift	Unconditional
Complete	Guaranteed	Wealth
Endorsed	Immediately	Personalised
Fortune	Lifetime	Exclusive

### Claim words (but they have to be true)

Biggest	Gigantic	Lowest
Colossal	Powerful	Highest
Enormous	Famous	Greatest
Mammoth	Miracle	Better
Largest	Proven	Best
Huge	Popular	

*(These have to be something to DO, not to SEE)*

### Appendix 3 – About Activities Guides

We've been saying for years that we're in a new age of marketing. The days of printing tens of thousands of Visitor Guides has come down to printing just 10% of the quantity we printed five years ago. They are being replaced by digital guides and apps.

Do you even need a printed guide? YES. But visitors don't need a Visitors Guide that just has lists of restaurants, hotels, activities and other general things to do. They can get all of that easily via TripAdvisor, Yelp and local websites. What they want is an Activities Guide.

These days, consumers are looking for things to do, not just places to go. They want experiences rather than landmarks. Part of the reason for changing to an "Activities Guide" is because people respond better to the title. It tells them the guide is focused on things to do, which is primarily what they are looking for. The name tells a potential visitor that this guide is going to answer their question, "What can I DO there?"

#### **WHAT TO DO**

1. Sit down with your team and start fresh. Don't look at your current Guide. Think totally fresh – from square one.
2. Within the guide, the focus remains on the available activities. Instead of structuring the guide around locations, or listings of hotels, restaurants and amenities, the content should be focused on TYPES of activities. This groups things for people to DO (remember – they want experiences) according to potential categories of interest. Chapters or sections might include activities catering to:
  - Kids and family
  - The sports enthusiast
  - The great outdoors/recreation
  - Photography and wildlife
  - Culinary experiences
  - Girls weekends (shopping, dining, spas, nightlife)
  - History
  - Nightlife and entertainment
  - The arts (performing, visual, artisans in action)
3. Think like a travel writer! Millions of people subscribe to travel publications because they provide specifics, while communities often market themselves by providing generic lists of "things." People are looking for experiences – things to do – so provide sample itineraries, with specific places to shop or stop of lunch or dinner, and how much time to spend at attractions. The easier you make it in this age of convenience, the more likely you'll be to close the sale. Itineraries are huge now – as long as they aren't too structured and allow for flexibility.

Do you still need to print guides? Absolutely! Just not as many as in the old days. People do get much of their information online, but still like having a printed piece. We like having that booklet or brochure in our laps while we cruise in the car and explore the area. And there's nothing quite as fun as getting a requested guide in the mail – something we can look at over dinner, in the bathroom, at a restaurant while we're not "plugged in." Most people don't consume ALL of their content via computer screen, although it's headed that way.

## Appendix 4 – List of Accessible Videos

You'll learn how to create these ingredients with your subscription to the Roger's Library. Immediate access, 24/7, in full HD on demand. Current videos include:

### **1. 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown - Part 1 (Property Owners)**

Roger teaches the merchants' responsibilities for creating an outstanding downtown. There is a new shift taking place across North America and downtowns are back! So how do you make your downtown a thriving destination? We found out.

Over a 5-year period, we surveyed more than 400 successful downtowns and downtown districts in the US and Canada. What we found were the 20 most common ingredients that led to their success.

Learn these ingredients so that your downtown efforts become a revenue gainer and not a money drainer. This three-part series teaches you how to make your downtown outstanding for both local residents and visitors.

### **2. 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown - Part 2 (Public sector)**

### **3. 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown - Part 3 (Public sector)**

### **4. The Art of Branding a Community - Part 1**

In this eye-opening, must-see presentation by Roger Brooks, you'll learn the ten things you need to do to successfully brand your community. "Branding" is the keyword of the decade, but what does it really mean? Most people don't understand what a brand really is or how to actually build one.

This series demystifies and explains the process of branding for umbrella organizations (multiple communities), cities, downtowns, and marketing professionals. Through case histories, video clips, dozens of photos, and humorous stories, attendees will learn what it takes to create a successful brand, how to make it obvious, and how that translates to cash.

### **5. The Art of Branding a Community - Part 2**

In this second part, Roger will teach you HOW to successfully develop your own brand using the 13-step process that took him and his team nearly 30 years to develop and perfect. "Branding" is the keyword of the decade, but what does it really mean? Most people don't understand what a brand really is or how to actually build one.

### **6. The Art of Branding a Community - Revisited**

Roger teaches all about why branding is important, how to do it, and presents several new branding case histories.

### **7. Tourism for the 21st Century**

This incredible presentation by Roger Brooks showcases the power of tourism and the 13 things you can do today to maximize tourism revenues. Everything has changed over the past few years and the old models are changing to an entirely new, and exciting, reality.

This incredible presentation showcases the power of tourism and the 13 things you can do today to maximize tourism revenues and get a jump start on this new marketing & product development frontier including:

- How to tap into multi-generational travel – the new hot wave
- Attracting boomers during the shoulder seasons
- How to court the millennials – and watch the boomers follow
- The future of visitor information centers: you need to be all-in, or all-out
- Why the days of the traditional DMO (Destinations Marketing Organisations) are over
- How to tap into the new age of personalized travel
- How to get noticed without spending a fortune
- And many more!

Fast paced and full of how-to-make-it-happen, this is THE presentation you won't want to miss!

### **8. Recruiting Tourism Development**

Roger takes you through his step-by-step process on how to recruit tourism development projects into your community. All successful tourism destinations are built on product, not marketing. Roger Brooks, in just ten years, recruited more than \$2.8 billion in new development projects for resorts and communities throughout North America. How much was spent on advertising?

Just \$60 total in all ten years. In this fast-paced presentation you'll learn Roger's step-by-step process for recruitment using the case histories of Whistler Resort in British Columbia and Ocean Shores, Washington. You'll finish this presentation with specific strategies of how to recruit tourism development projects into your community.

### **9. Visitor Information Centres & Services**

Roger teaches the ten things you need to know and do to maximize return on investment in visitor information services. With the advent of QR codes, smart phones, tablets, navigation systems, and the fact that 90% of all North Americans and Europeans now have immediate Internet access, are staffed visitor information centres necessary any longer? If so, when and where?

We'll jump into the debate and talk about costs, return on investment, whether to have a staffed location, operating hours, and alternative solutions. We'll show sample stand-alone kiosks, brochure distribution alternatives, and some new ideas and technologies being used in this "new age of tourism."

### **10. Parking is not just for lovers**

Roger teaches the 10 things to know and do about downtown parking. This presentation is a doozy – and an eye opener! Parking should be an economic development tool and should not be considered a general fund revenue source! That doesn't mean, however, that it should be free.

Roger discusses time limits (providing only two-hour parking is a good way to kill a downtown), after hours parking, ideas for funding parking structures such as sponsorships, parking fines and enforcement, angle-in versus parallel parking, and new parking trends. Plus he'll address parking

fees and where the money generated should be spent. He'll cover the top ten ideas that will make downtown parking a friend instead of a foe.

### **11. How to Bring Downtown to Life (buskers and vendors)**

Roger teaches how busking, street vendors, and food trucks enhance the local culture and help bring downtown to life. Every downtown should be a hub of activity for both locals and visitors. And when it comes to visitors, if you don't hang out in your downtown neither will they. They go where you go. The most successful downtowns encourage, and often pay, buskers, street performers, artisans and vendors to bring life to downtowns. Attendees will get sample "codes of conduct" and a wealth of information that will help you bring your downtown to life.

### **12. Business and Community Signage**

Roger covers community gateways, downtown retail signage, portable retail/service signs, plastic & vinyl banners, sandwich boards, window signage, and billboards. Good signage can be the most effective advertising a business uses. In this incredible, fast-paced webinar, you'll learn about blade signs and why they are so critical to downtowns, how to deal with temporary signs, plastic/vinyl banners, sandwich boards, and portable signs, and how to avoid sign clutter. Signage says a lot about you – as a business and as a community.

Learn how to deal with retail signage: The do's the don'ts for merchants, downtown organizations, planning departments, and cities and towns. Every retailer should watch this video.

### **13. Seven Deadly Sins of Destination Marketing**

In this fast-paced, humorous presentation, Roger will teach you how to avoid the seven deadly sins of destination marketing and create unique, eye-catching material for your target audience. A full 97% of all destination-based marketing is now ineffective. This includes brochures, websites, print and radio advertising, videos, etc. Why? Because we are now exposed to 5,000 marketing messages a day.

In this fast-paced, humorous presentation, you'll learn how to avoid the seven deadly sins of community marketing and create unique, eye-catching material for your target audience.

If you commit any of these sins on behalf of your community....

- Being all things to all people
- Promoting what, who and where before why
- Boring headlines
- Lack of focus....then this is an ideal presentation to wash away those sins and even more.

Plus you'll learn new ways to make your marketing efforts more effective in your economic development, tourism, or business attraction promotional materials.

### **14. Community Marketing on a Minuscule Budget**

Roger teaches seven things you can do today for practically no money, which will generate incredible local and visitor spending. Let's face it. Communities have less and less money to spend on marketing – but without marketing the hole just gets deeper. And as the hole gets deeper, funding continues to diminish. So how do you break the cycle?

In this presentation you'll learn seven things you can do today for practically no money, that will generate incredible local and visitor spending. And this is not about social media – that's a given.

You'll learn how to:

- Recruit outside events into the community. They do the work, you just invite them. It's fast and it's easy.
- Create niche itineraries for hundreds of specialty publications who are actively looking for places to send their readers. And it's free!
- Develop a low-cost, high impact website that allows you to spend more time and money creating content, rather than paying big bucks on the delivery system ("professionals required" websites).

Learn these and four other low-cost, or no-cost, marketing solutions that will make you a local hero in tough times.

### **15. Is Your Downtown Open After 6pm?**

Roger teaches five different strategies you can use to help "Ma and Pa" businesses stay open longer, increase their sales, and make your community a much stronger visitor destination. Seventy per cent of all consumer retail spending now takes place after 6:00 pm. Are you open? One of the primary reasons downtowns are dying is because most downtown retailers close between 5:00 and 6:00 pm, sending local residents – and visitors – to other destinations.

This creates tremendous "leakage" of locally earned dollars being spent elsewhere. How do you change this? This video will teach you five different strategies you can use to help "Ma and Pa" businesses stay open longer, increase their sales, and make your community a much stronger visitor destination. After all, visitors spend the night where there are things to do after 6:00 pm.

### **16. The Art of Wayfinding**

Roger Brooks gives you the step-by-step guide to developing and implementing a wayfinding system in your community. Wayfinding is an investment, not an expense. A good wayfinding system will increase local sales and services, contribute to a pleasant experience, and educate both locals and visitors about your attractions, amenities and services, and where they are located.

Roger Brooks gives you the five reasons why wayfinding should be a top priority, plus you'll learn the step-by-step process of getting the system designed, fabricated and installed, with approximate costs. You'll see dozens of examples that include community and downtown gateways, vehicular and pedestrian signage, place identifiers, pole banners and visitor information kiosks.

### **17. Downtown Critical Mass**

To win you must institute "The Mall Mentality" – orchestrating your business mix. This is the rule of clustering. This is one presentation you DON'T want to miss and it's the most important ingredient to making your downtown an amazing destination for both local residents and visitors. To win you must institute "The Mall Mentality" – orchestrating your business mix.

Think antique malls, auto malls, food courts, and intersections where there are fast food restaurants on all four corners. This is the rule of clustering. In this exciting and absolutely critical video, Roger Brooks will teach you the five steps to creating critical mass, showcasing several

case histories, so that your downtown becomes THE place to spend time – and money and becomes the heart and soul of your community.

### **18. Year-Round Public Markets**

Learn the three reasons why public markets are so important, and the five things you need to know and do to create an outstanding market that will be a resounding success. Public plazas and permanent year-round public markets are the top two downtown revitalization projects a community can tap into.

In this insightful webinar you'll learn the three reasons why public markets are so important, and the five things you need to know and do to create an outstanding market that will be a resounding success. You'll see numerous case histories, will learn about development and operational costs, where markets should be located, how to orchestrate the mix of goods, and seasonal considerations.

### **19. Power of Public Plazas**

Using case histories in high resolution photographs and video clips, Roger teaches the 13 ingredients to a successful plaza. Nothing creates a "sense of place" as well as public gathering spaces, or plazas. People enjoy active, attractive, dynamic public places – places they can gather with friends, neighbours, and family, to eat, shop, visit, or just people-watch.

In this presentation, Roger shows you case histories in high resolution photographs and video clips, showing the 13 ingredients to a successful plaza. This is an amazing revitalization tool for downtowns everywhere!

### **20. The Power of Itineraries**

Roger teaches you how itineraries can help increase visitors to your community and region. In this new digital age visitors will go to your website and then want specifics, not generalities. In this fast-paced and fun presentation, you'll learn how to get your community developing itineraries for you, how to promote them, how to categorize them, and what should be included.

Roger will also help you get past the politics of picking one place over another. To win you must think like a travel writer and he'll show you lots of samples you can use as guides. Developing detailed half-day, all-day and multi-day itineraries can DOUBLE your tourism spending!

### **21. The Power of Photography to Increase Sales**

In this presentation Roger showcases the five things you need to know about the importance of photography. NOTHING is as powerful and visuals in your marketing efforts. Does your photography really stand out? Does it close the sale?

Roger demystifies ownership, uses, agreements, and releases and will cover:

- Who owns the photos you use and what about model releases?
- Using photographic techniques that command a reader's attention and will close the sale.
- How to get a professional photographer on your team at practically no cost.
- How to make the best use of photos on line, in guides, brochures and presentations.
- Creating a website slide show, and online press room

## **22. The Power of Selling Experiences Over Places**

Visitors are looking for things to do, not places to go. There's a subtle difference, and in this fast-paced presentation Roger talks about the power of selling experiences first and the destination second. He shows a dozen examples of how experience-marketing generates increased bookings, year round tourism, and will make you the destination of choice.

## **23. Promoting Your "Anchor Tenants"**

To win you must ALWAYS promote your anchor tenants – those businesses and attractions that make you worth a special trip. Just like a mall, the anchor tenants pull customers in and once there they will see what else you have to offer.

## **24. How to Create Marketing Partnerships – Save Money, Increase Sales**

From Roger's book, *The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism*, you'll discover why relationships require more than one person. Roger provides you with the seven ways to create strong, lasting partnerships that can triple sales while cutting marketing costs dramatically.

**More videos are being added every month!**

**Exciting upcoming content!**

Words & Phrase That Work Every Time and Will Increase Sales

Designing Effective Print and Mobile Ads

The Death of Visitors Guides and What to Do Instead

Getting the most from YouTube

Developing Your Annual Marketing Budget

Marketing the Unusual, the Quirky, and Truly "Unique"





