

Further Resources for “Destination Marketing in the COVID Age: A Practical Two-Part Series Supporting Small Business COVID-19 Recovery”



Thank you for joining “Destination Marketing in the COVID Age: A Practical Two-Part Series Supporting Small Business COVID-19 Recovery.” A recording of our first session can be accessed [here](#). We have put together a few resources to complement the webinar materials and provide links included in the presentation. The following information provides you with more details and resources referenced in our first webinar on August 4. The hyperlinks will direct you to more information about that topic and help you market your business. Each topic will fall under the section headers from the live webinar and will explain that topic in more detail.

- ▶ **Who** are you talking to: *Target audiences*
- ▶ **What** are you saying: *Content*
- ▶ **Where** are you reaching them: *Marketing channels*
- ▶ **When** are you talking to them: *Timing*
- ▶ **Why** are you talking to them: *Goals*

Why: Your Goals

Always start with your why: Why are you doing any sort of marketing activity or campaign? In the time of the COVID pandemic, your short-term goals could include:

- Saying you’re still open for business
- Sharing new products or experiences
- Communicating new operations procedures
- Connecting with your existing customer base

Your why should connect you with all of your marketing activities.

Who: Target Audience

Your target audience is your current customers plus other people who you would like to be your customers. These can be visitors or residents. When identifying your target audiences, you want to think about:

- Who are you trying to reach and what are their qualities?
- Understand who is currently visiting Marquette County for tourism, and which of these travelers would be interested in your offering?
- Who lives in the current area and would be interested in your products?

According to Travel Marquette’s Visitor Profile Research, “the majority of travelers come from a 3–8-hour drive radius among the contiguous US states, however visitors

responded to the survey from 36 states as well as Canada, Germany and Mexico.” During the pandemic, most travelers will be in the drive market so it is important to keep this in mind. For our local marketing efforts, we identified three target markets and have included more information on each one.

Marquette Day Trippers

- **Age:** 20s-50s
- **Travel decision-making characteristics:** Spur of the moment decisions driven by in-market travelers looking for ways to spend their day.
- **Motivated by** access to nature, exploring the area, outdoor recreation, avoiding crowds, and finding unique experiences like hidden waterfalls.
- **Travel characteristics:** Solo, couples, or group travelers either from Marquette or staying in Marquette and looking to explore the broader area in their own vehicle.
- **Travel channels used:** TripAdvisor, Yelp, Instagram, and third-party sites to find out what is in the area. GPS used to find things within driving distance.
- **Visitor Spending:** An average of \$181 per trip according to Travel Marquette.
- **Note:** Your online presence can influence the day trippers while they are looking for travel activities.

Downstate Outdoor Enthusiasts

- **Age:** 30-60s
- **Travel decision-making** made by the individual or the group around peak season for their chosen activity or sport.
- **Motivated by** finding the best place to pursue their chosen sport, seeking adventure, and adrenaline.
- **Travel style/characteristics:** travel in pairs or with a group for a specific activity like hiking, leaf peeping, snowmobiling, hunting, skiing, fat-tire biking, and other sports in season. Travel during the prime season for their sport. Often repeat visitors and driving from elsewhere in the state so they can bring their gear.
- **Travel channels used:** specialty maps and brochures, word of mouth, specialized websites.
- **Visitor Spending:** An average of \$779 per trip for an average of 3.5 nights according to Travel Marquette.

Regional Drive-Market Families

- **Age:** Multigenerational families with kids
- **Travel decision-making characteristics:** the female makes the majority of the travel decisions for family travel.

- **Motivated** by relaxation, spending time with family in a safe environment with activities for the entire family, access to outdoors and seeking beautiful sceneries to make memories with families, watersports and swimming in the summer-time.
- **Travel style/characteristics:** Coming from drive-market destinations (3- to 8-hour drive radius among the contiguous states, Minneapolis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Green Bay, Madison), travel in multigenerational families, families often book home-sharing accommodations or camping in Perkins Park for ease of accommodating their family and the ability to cook for themselves. They are often repeat visitors.
- **Travel channels used:** Home-sharing websites, TripAdvisor, magazines and brochures, social media depending on age of parents, word of mouth.
- **Visitor Spending:** An average of \$779 per trip for an average of 3.5 nights according to Travel Marquette.

Once you understand your who your target audience, their travel preferences and how they shop for travel experiences, this will help you understand where and how to talk to them. You also want to think about how these behaviors might change during the COVID pandemic.

What: Content and Content Marketing

What are you saying about your business? This is all of the content you are creating from the description of your business to the sentence describing your menu items. High-quality content can get more people to your website. The [Content Marketing Institute](#) has lots of free resources for you on content creation and marketing to improve your marketing performance. They have also offered a [COVID-specific content marketing article](#), which provides helpful tips on checking all of the content you are creating.

What: Content: Photos and Videos

Having high-quality photo and video content is essential for promoting your business. You don't need to hire a professional photographer if your budget is tight you can take high-quality photos using your smartphone camera. Photos are especially important for eCommerce. Here are some tips for taking better photos:

- [Time's tips from real photographers](#)
- Hubspot's [tips](#)
- Widen.com shares [How to take better marketing photos with your phone](#)

You can edit those photos to enhance and crop them using mobile applications that you can download from your phone's app store. Some free editing applications include:

Photos

- Built-in editors on the phone or social media apps (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Snapseed (app like Photoshop)
- Adobe Photoshop Express Editor
- Canva (free or paid versions; good for social media post creation, as you can also overlay text via nice templates)

Videos

- Built-in editors on phone or social media apps (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Quik
- iMovie
- Magisto
- Hyperlapse (for time lapse videos)

To download one of these apps, type the name into your phone's application store. Download them to your phone and get started. Please note, many of these have free versions with some paid features, be mindful of this as you use the apps.

Where: Marketing Channels or Platforms

Marketing channels are the way you connect with your customer THROUGH content. The most important channel for you as a small business is your website. Third-party platforms are also very important ways to reach customers on the websites and apps they are already using. Search engine optimization is a way for your business to appear in the search results when someone is searching for information or businesses that meet their needs. If appropriate, you may decide to do some paid advertising to reach new customers and share new messaging. Make sure you have your non-paid marketing channels, like your website and social media, updated and running smoothly before you undertake paid media. Don't take on too much, and remember to test and learn so you can continually improve your marketing.

- **Your Website:** Your website is the anchor for all of your other online and offline marketing content, which includes everything from a social post to a brochure. It is critical that your website is updated regularly during COVID to communicate hours of operation, changes to your business operations, COVID business protocols, inventory, and new product offerings. Having your website updated will make it easier for you to update your information on other third-party platforms.
- **Third-party platforms** are marketing channels that customers are already using in their travel planning and shopping needs. These platforms have the benefit of already having thousands of users, and they are managed and maintained by that company. They provide a snapshot of your business to potential customers who are searching for a product just like yours, instead of having to find your

website on the internet. They are limited in their content fields and sometimes charge for on-platform advertising and other paid media. We will provide more information in Webinar 2 and we will review these essential travel platforms:

- Google
- Facebook
- TripAdvisor
- Yelp

Where: Search Engine Optimization, commonly referred to as “SEO”

SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization, which is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results. SEO allows you to reach customers when they are actively searching for something, likely somewhere to spend their time or money. You want to adapt your website so you can rise to the top. Essentially search engines like Google are trying to use their technology to find the best websites to give the person searching for content. There are simple things you can do to improve your SEO, but it can also be a very involved process. Updating your website, having specific titles for content, having other websites link to you, and other efforts can improve your search rankings.

Here are some resources:

- [What is SEO by MOZ](#)
- [Ultimate guide to SEO for small businesses](#) by ContentFac.com
- Content Marketing Institute: [SEO](#)

Where: Website: Online sales/eCommerce

ECommerce is the ability to sell your products online. This requires having a detailed inventory with product descriptions, prices, availability, and ability to offer pick up, delivery etc. Online sales is essential to reduce contact with customers and the spread of COVID. There are many eCommerce platforms that you can use on your website to sell your products. Some might work with your existing website and others might require you to update your website with new content and technology, or build a new one. This would depend on your overall goals, the age of your website, the content management system you are using, and the type of products you want to sell.

- [Inc](#) has a nice overview of eCommerce platforms. It depends on what you want to sell and what your current website can offer. You might be able to update your current website to incorporate eCommerce or you might use this time to invest in your website long term.
- Shopify, a popular eCommerce platform for small businesses, offers [this overview](#) of online sales.
- Some eCommerce websites include:

- [Shopify](#)
- [Squarespace](#)
- [Wix.com](#)
- [Magneto](#)
- [WooCommerce](#)
- Restaurants can also choose to sell their food items online using popular websites and mobile applications that customers are already familiar with. These services involve you putting your menus online with detailed descriptions, including ingredients and pricing. They also offer options for dietary restrictions and order adjustments. These websites also have delivery people that pick up the order at your restaurant and deliver them to your customer, which creates jobs in your community. These websites charge service fees for using them, but give you access to a broader customer base who might not have been aware of your business before. Those applications that are available in the Marquette area include:
 - [Grubhub](#)
 - [Doordash](#)

COVID Resources:

It is important that you stay up to date on local COVID guidelines so that your business and customers remain compliant and that you ensure the health and safety of your guests and employees. There are a number of resources to help you stay safe and open:

- [Marquette County local guidelines and business restart kit](#) and crisis [checklist](#)
- [Marquette County Health Department COVID Resources](#)
- [Printable Mask Up Michigan Sign](#) (to post outside your business)
- [COVID Workplace Safety Guidelines](#)
- [Michigan.gov/coronavirus](#)
- [Adventure Travel Association COVID Operation Guidelines](#)
 - [Listen to their tourism operations webinar](#)
- Michigan Department of Labor and Education: [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Guidance](#)
- Safe tourism [guidelines](#) from the U.S. Travel Association
- Longwoods International Research on COVID Travelers and [mask-wearing](#)

If you have any questions regarding tourism marketing and content creation, please email Talia Salem talia@theurbanomad.com. If you have any questions regarding Eagle Mine and their ongoing efforts to support COVID business recovery, email Meagan Morrison at Meagan.Morrison@lundinmining.com. Thank you and we hope to talk again next week for part 2!