



2016/2017

Strategic Marketing Plan

Department of Economic and
Community Development

Office Of Tourism

Connecticut[®]
still revolutionary

SITUATION ANALYSIS:

Tourism in Connecticut is rebounding from the days of the \$1 annual tourism marketing budget. With the \$15 Million annual budget established in **2012**, the new **Connecticut *still revolutionary*** brand was launched, creating new awareness and interest in Connecticut as a place to visit.

In **2014**, with a reduced \$12 Million annual budget*, the campaign focused on building on that awareness momentum while also inspiring action and more immediate visitation. Research has demonstrated the campaign's measurable, impressive results.

In **2016** our challenge is to continue the momentum of the successful campaign with an annual budget* now reduced to \$8.5 million.

* 20% supports DECD's Business Development marketing efforts.

BRAND POSITIONING:



Just as it has for centuries, Connecticut remains a haven for original ideas and fresh thinking. A magnet for dreamers and doers, the state blends the old and historic with the young and energetic to create an inspiring dynamic – one that motivates people to experience new things, defy convention and blaze their own trails.

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS:

Data shows that our most important tourism stats are up since the launch of the Connecticut *still revolutionary* efforts in 2012.



\$14 billion

in total traveler spending across Connecticut in 2013, a 3% growth over 2012.



\$1.6 billion

in tax revenues, including \$523 million in state taxes and \$345 million in local taxes.



118,500 jobs

supported by the tourism industry, including 80,000 direct jobs in the tourism sector.

Tourism Economics Study, Economic Impact of Travel in Connecticut, 2013

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS:

In fact, metrics after Summer 2015 show strong growth and momentum over Summer 2014.



4% increase

in occupancy over 2014,
including casino lodging properties.

*Comparing May-August STR reports
for 2014 and 2015*



12% increase

in visits to leading attractions.

*Witan Intelligence, VISION Index of 23
attractions, June-August 2014 & 2015*



9% increase

in lodging tax receipts.

*CT Department of Revenue Services.
May-July 2015 over same time 2014*

SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS:

And we believe the Connecticut *still revolutionary* efforts can take a good portion of the credit for this growth.

Our Advertising Effectiveness tracking study showed that the campaign is indeed driving action:

73% of people who saw our Connecticut *still revolutionary* campaign reported taking action as a result of seeing an ad:

27% researched more information.

31% made plans to visit.

23% went to CTvisit.com.

22% contacted at least one attraction.

25% actually visited Connecticut as a direct result of seeing an ad!

Source: MMGY 8-wave Attitudes and Awareness study fielded September 2015

MOTIVATION: What We Want to Accomplish in 2016

1. Continue to raise awareness of Connecticut as a desirable place to visit; demonstrate lots to see and do.
2. Drive visitation.
 - Focus on driving overnights.
 - Increase all actions, e.g., visits to CTvisit.com, referrals from CTvisit.com to partner sites, visits to attractions/properties.
3. Increase state pride.
4. Involve/engage/support more partners in all Connecticut Office of Tourism (COT) programs.
5. Greatly improve our user experience on CTvisit.com (Optimize launch and utilization of new CTvisit.com, including new mobile site.)
6. Tightly integrate all content marketing vehicles, including the State's Welcome Centers, and improve content management process.
7. Migrate our consumer touchpoints to digital.
8. Present casinos as overnight and entertainment destinations.
9. Expand our promotion of culinary and romantic escape offerings, content and partners.
10. Segment marketing initiatives for trial vs. repeat visitors to be more efficient and targeted.

MARKETS: Who We Need to Reach

Our most important prospects are:

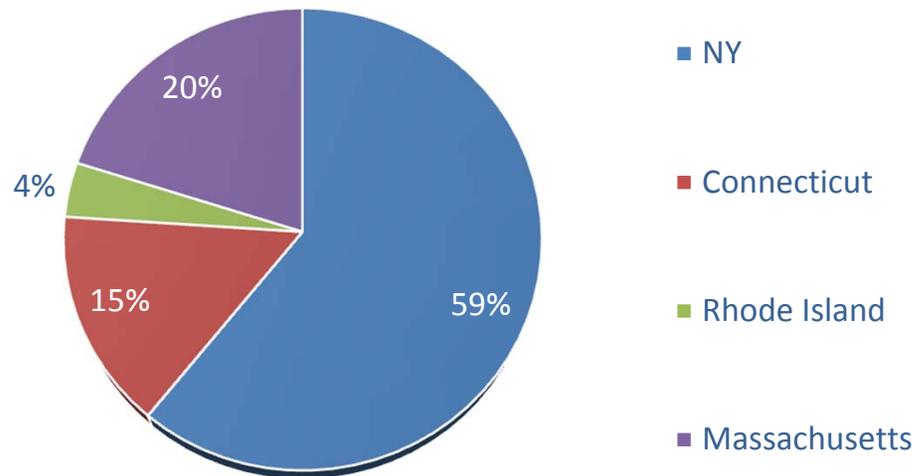
Residents of nearby states and Connecticut with an emphasis on:

- Household income of \$100K+
- Age 25+
- Slightly more females as decision makers
- Approximately half with children in the household



MARKETS: Who We Need to Reach (cont.)

With the reduced budget we will sharpen our focus on the most important target geographies for media spend and use PR/Social and some digital to expand into other key markets:



Continue to Prioritize Manhattan:

- Strong past performance
- Size of the prize
- Good potential for overnight trips

Extend presence in Boston.

MESSAGING: What We Need to Say

Continue momentum/success of current campaign:

- Emphasize dichotomies of contrasting yet complementary things to do:
 - exciting *and* relaxing
 - historic *and* innovative
 - culture *and* nature-oriented
- Convey proximity:
 - to the target > greater spontaneity
 - between attractions > do more, travel less

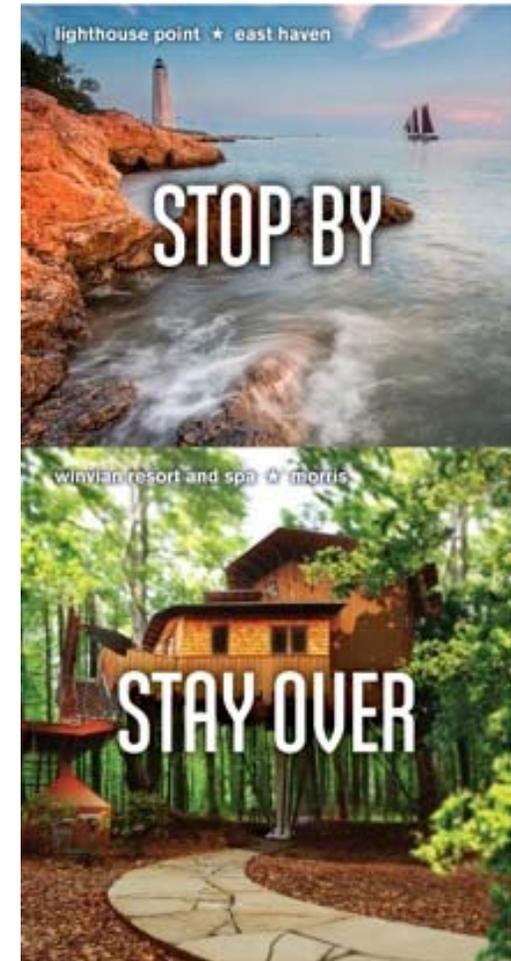
Continue emphasizing:

- Overnight stays
- A mix of big draw attractions and hidden gems
- Our “Experience categories”: *Rest and Relaxation, Family Fun, Arts and Culture, History and Heritage, Active Adventure, Culinary (New) and Romantic Escapes (New)*

Back to nature.
Still close to civilization.

Connecticut
still revolutionary

CTvisit.com



METHODS: *Creative Executions*

In 2016 we will continue bringing this messaging to life via the “dichotomies” executions. We will primarily re-run existing creative, but will refresh as budget allows.

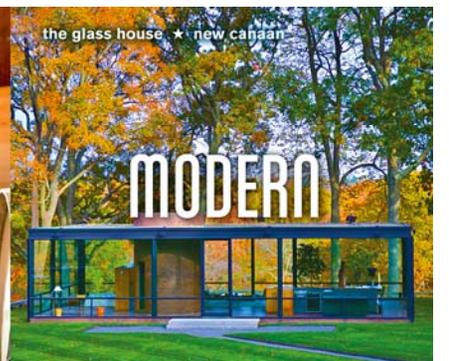
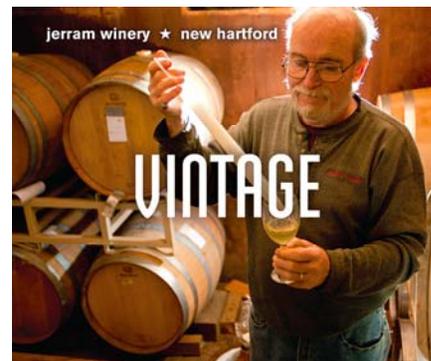


CTvisit.com

Travel less and experience more. Connecticut  still revolutionary.

CTvisit.com

Long on experiences. Short on travel. Connecticut  still revolutionary.



METHODS: *Creative Executions*

We have 13 different :15 second TV spots, designed to be run as bookends on advertising pods: 9 for Spring/Summer and 4 for Fall that we will continue to rotate in 2016.



DISCONNECT/RECONNECT
Argia/Odetah Camping



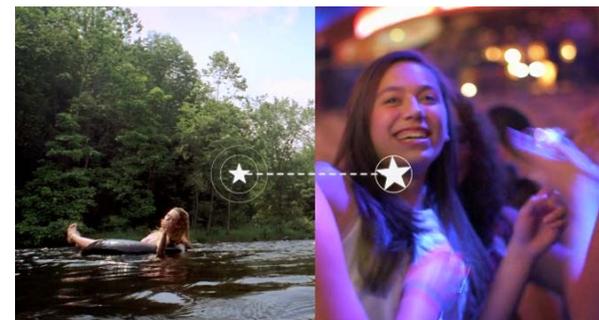
SURF/TURF
Rocky Neck Beach/Chester



SOAR/PLUNGE
NE Air Museum/Lake Compounce



UNPLUG/RECHARGE
Winvian/Thimble Island
Kayaking

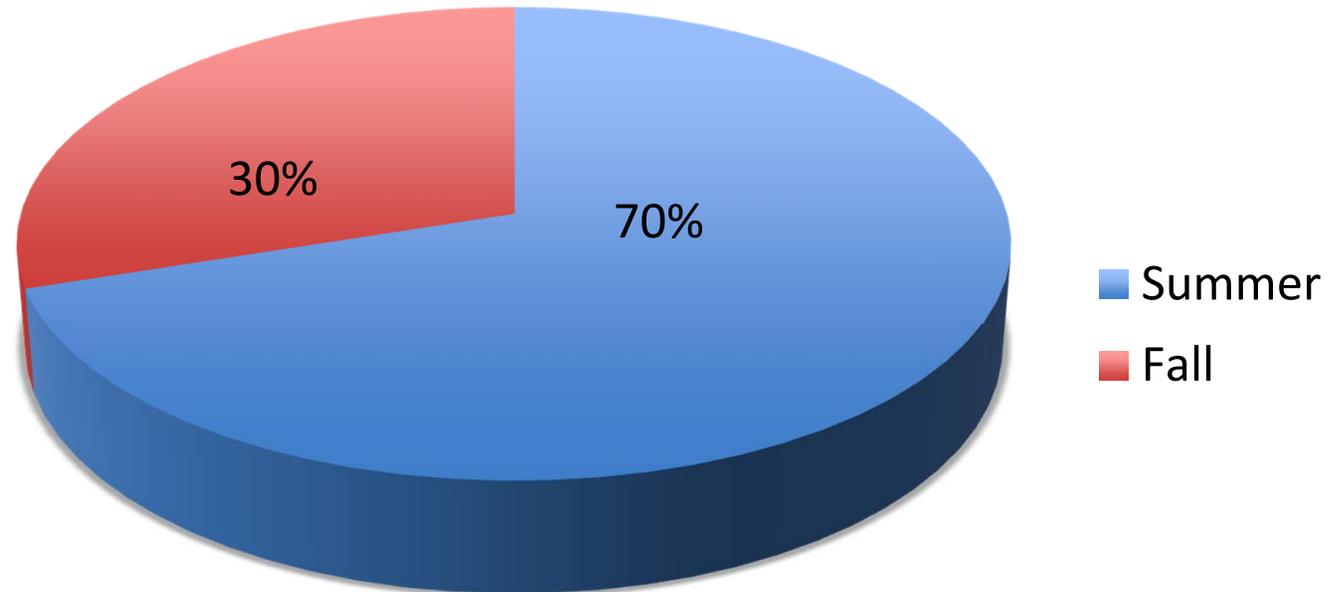


COOL DOWN/REV UP
River tubing/Mohegan Sun

METHODS: *Advertising*

With Spring/Summer being our most important season, we will continue to support the majority of advertising in summer with another significant push in Fall.

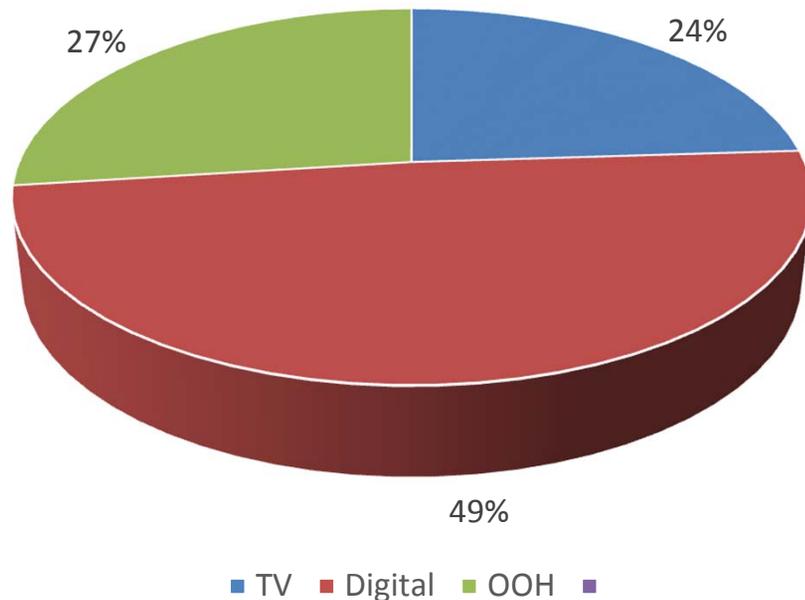
The budget is not large enough to support Winter/Holiday advertising efforts at this time other than for baseline SEM (search engine marketing keywords).



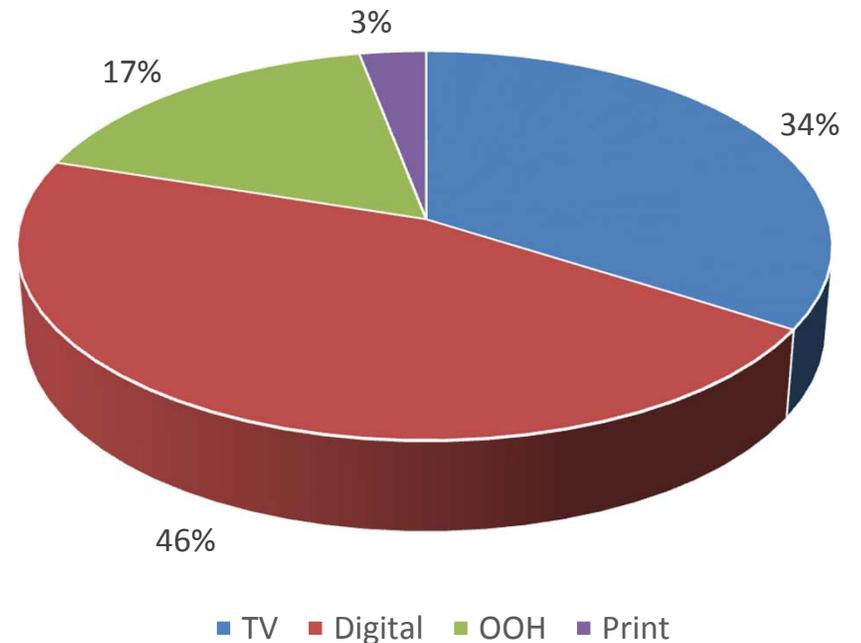
METHODS: *Advertising*

With the same budget, we will implement the same successful strategies as 2015, using OOH and TV for high impact and the majority of the spend in digital.

Media Spend 2015



Media Spend 2016

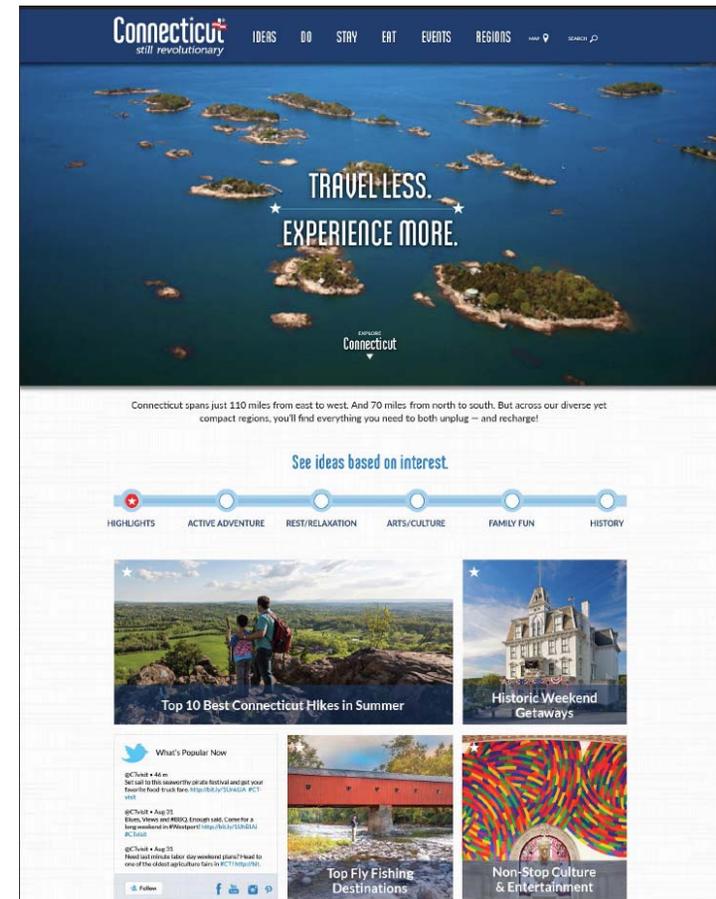


METHODS: *CTvisit.com Redesign and Rebuild*

The current CTvisit.com website has served us well for many years, but it is time to redesign and rebuild this keystone of our tourism marketing to optimize the user experience.

The new site, launching in April 2016, will:

- Employ responsive design to optimize the visitor experience on all platforms including the growing mobile audience.
- Be more easily navigable.
- Streamline copy.
- Make much more use of images.
- Promote the rich depth of content.
- Cross-sell our many partners.
- Integrate rich, regionally focused views.
- Showcase much richer, more visual partner listings pages.
- Encourage linking to partner websites and booking engines.



METHODS: *Content Marketing*

We are restructuring our Content Marketing approach so that the story, not the medium, is the initial driver.

Content Management will:

- Reach out to a much wider array of influencers and stakeholders to develop the content marketing calendar.
- Develop new stories for an appropriate array of media/touch points.
- Edit or integrate existing stories from third parties into the content calendar.

This emphasis on story first, along with the new processes, will:

- Create better content integration of all consumer touch points including Social Media, web content, newsletters, visitors guides, and PR.
- Streamline new content creation.
- Greatly broaden the sources of content and story inspiration.
- Provide greater opportunity to engage and involve partners.

METHODS: *PR/Social Media*

Our PR efforts will continue to support:

- National and in-state story pitching
- Consumer and business of tourism angles
- News Bureau
- Familiarization tours

And the Social Media program will continue the state's presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube channels.



METHODS: *Visitors Guide and eNewsletters*

As part of our staged move towards more digital Visitors Guides, in 2016 we will create two inspirational magazines available in both print and online formats.

- Spring/Summer 2016
- Fall/Winter 2016/2017

Each guide will be focused on inspiring the reader to want to visit through a variety of motivating experiences.

Expanded listings on the new CTvisit.com website will integrate with the new guides.

Trend focused eNewsletters will be distributed monthly to over 200K subscribers.



METHODS: *Connecticut Welcome Centers*

Data and research shows that our visitors are more impulsive and spontaneous than ever. Many just get in the car looking for something to do.

This increases the importance of the State's Welcome Centers and how we service the hundreds of thousands of visitors who stop at them. With this greater focus, in 2016 we are:

- Upgrading the Welcome Center experience, including maintenance improvements and physical improvements.
- Improving Highway and Center signage.
- Becoming more digitally focused, now putting tablets in the hands of tourism counselors at all Welcome Centers.



METHODS: *Direct Group Sales*

We have a very active direct sales effort promoting Connecticut to the group tour and travel trade markets domestically and internationally.

Specific efforts in 2016 will include:

- Membership in organizations such as the American Bus Association, National Tour Association, U.S. Travel Association and Discover New England.
- Participation in annual trade shows in a marketplace environment. The shows consist of business sessions including prescheduled one-to-one appointments with tour operators, group tour leaders, travel agents and media.

METHODS: *International*

In partnership with Discover New England (DNE), we will continue to target high potential markets including the United Kingdom and Germany.



Efforts include:

- Advertising in DNE and Brand USA supported printed and online travel guides
- Familiarization tours for international travel trade and media
- Participation at various international marketplaces with an expansion in the UK/Irish market with the start of Aer Lingus service to Bradley
- Distribution of a new “Lure Brochure” in English and German that promotes Connecticut’s international draws in keeping with the brand platform.

Business Development Strategies:

Tourism and Business Development strategies unite under the Connecticut *still revolutionary* brand, and we will continue using the voice and vision of our state's business leaders to promote the benefits of starting and growing a business in Connecticut.

- Continue focus on five key sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Bioscience, Financial Services and Insurance, Green Technology and Digital Media
- Run in- and out-of-state paid media campaign to spotlight success stories; extend the reach of the news.
- Manage DECD's social media properties to deliver the most timely and relevant news.
- Key messaging will support the state's ongoing commitment to providing resources for innovation and training.
- Leverage events/initiatives in key sectors.
- Use email marketing to help find and cultivate more business leads.



Access to a highly skilled workforce *and* a strategic Northeast location that's within 500 miles of one-third of the U.S. economy. These are just two of the many reasons Connecticut has become such an innovative hub for aerospace. See for yourself why more than a thousand aerospace leaders of all sizes call Connecticut home.

Connecticut[®]
Visit CTforBusiness.com/advancedmanufacturing

How Tourism Partners Can Get Involved in the Campaign:

Here are ways partners can get involved in the campaign:

- Make sure you subscribe to:
 - COT's industry eNewsletter, *The Outlook*
 - The Connecticut *still revolutionary* eNewsletter for consumers
- Contribute content & story ideas for CTvisit.com, public relations & social media postings.
- Maximize your presence on the new CTvisit.com website, launching in April 2016.
- Attend the Connecticut Tourism Marketing Outreach Meetings on March 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th.
- Attend the Governor's Conference on Tourism on April 27th.
- Participate in Connecticut Open House Day June 11, 2016.
- Host COT familiarization tours for visiting press, social media influencers and tour operators.
- Take advantage of COT co-op advertising opportunities.



For more information, please contact:

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