



**Situation**

How do you market a community that contains diverse attractions and has just established a new tourism marketing agency? By developing a highly focused and carefully targeted strategy that plays to your strengths. The Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau, a new destination marketing organization formed to serve 33 municipalities in Central Pennsylvania, sought to tackle two critical issues. The first was how to leverage, rather than lose out from, the area's close proximity to national tourism draws such as Hershey Park and Gettysburg. And the second was how to definitively brand the Cumberland Valley as a singular destination, while recognizing the considerable diversity of the area's tourism assets.

**Strategy**

The bureau began by building a fresh and flexible brand identity, rooted in market research and competitive analysis. The next step was to harness the power of being near larger attractions by highlighting the area's proximity and location as a base for visiting the entire region. In addition, the agency committed to a major new direction in organizing and presenting its tourism assets.



strategic consulting

branding & messaging

organizational development

integrated communications

**Awards**

- Best of Class – Visitors Guide
- Award of Excellence – Annual Report
- Award of Excellence – Tourism Brochure
- Northeast Economic Developers Association

advise

design

engage

deliver

“Leadership begins with a strategy and grows through effective communication. Douglas Wendt led the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau to consistent success by creating innovative programs, an effective marketing plan and a wide range of partnerships. He has an innate grasp of how to balance constituent interests with market realities and come out with an approach that works.”

■ **Don Geistwhite**

Member

Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau  
Tourism Committee

Whereas visitor guides are traditionally built around the ‘do, dine and stay’ categories, the inaugural Cumberland Valley Visitors Guide provided readers with ten different interest areas from which to choose. These interest areas brought together attractions, dining preferences, a locator map and insider “tips” around a given theme—supported by a high quality, in-depth editorial style normally reserved for travel books and magazines. The marketing strategy was then applied in print, online and in the agency’s visitor center displays. This market-driven approach allowed the new bureau to make advertising buys and participate in trade shows that specifically matched the interests and demographics of each market segment.

**Solution**

By using a highly focused approach, the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau was able to simultaneously target its marketing budget with precision, speak with credibility to new target audiences, and also engage tourism partners in activities that met their specific needs. The results spoke for themselves—consistent gains in visitor activity as measured by Smith Travel Research; a five-fold increase in state tourism grant funding; and integration of the new bureau into a series of dynamic regional marketing initiatives, as well as successful recruitment of new tourism partners into the effort.

**Sectors**

Nonprofit, Tourism

**Services**

Strategic Consulting, Branding & Messaging, Organizational Development, Integrated Communications

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