Promoting Trails for Tourism

October 24, 2019
Tourism is big business in Connecticut!

- **TRAVELER SPENDING**: Contributes $15.5 billion in total business sales, a 5.5% increase since the last study (2015).
- **TAX REVENUES**: Generates $2.2 billion in tax revenues, including $960 million in state and local taxes.
- **SUPPORTED JOBS**: 84,254 jobs directly related to tourism; 123,521 total jobs supported by direct and indirect activities.
Trails and related interests make up 25% of the top 10 most sought after tourism activities in Connecticut:

- Parks & Forests
- Nature & Outdoors
- Hiking & Biking
- Animals & Wildlife
- Boating & Sailing
- Cities & Towns
- Family Fun
- Amusement Parks
- History

Out of a total of 1.34 Million pageviews YTD
Tourism marketing drives new visitors.

In 2018, the Office of Tourism:

• Generated 280 million paid media impressions and over 1 billion PR impressions
• Attracted more than 5 million to CTvisit
• Drove 335,000 pageviews on trail or related listings
• Promoted over 50 articles that featured hiking and biking trails
• Sent over 3 million calls, emails, and clicks to tourism businesses
• Featured more than 1,100 hotels, restaurants, attractions, arts organizations, and events from every corner of the state
• And efficiently increased visitation!
Key objectives in all our marketing

1. **Inspire visitation** to the site and the state

2. **Promote as many partners as possible**
   We aim to promote 1,000+ different partners a year

3. **Push overnights** whenever possible
Who are we targeting?

- We focus on our key out-of-state markets, **keeping a strong focus on New York & Boston**, and to a lesser extent **Rhode Island**

- We reach **in-state travelers** with **20%** of the media budget

- We define the **target most likely to be receptive** to our message:
  - HH Income of $100K+
  - Age 25+
  - Skew female
  - Approximately half have children at home
Two key elements of our brand positioning

Diversity of Experiences

“nature and city”
“charm and sophistication”
“scenic and active”
“mountains and sea”
“urban and rural”
“outdoors and nightlife”
“relaxing and fun”
“history and style”

Proximity

The compact nature of our state is both a benefit — and a differentiator.

Things are close to each other — and close to our key target audiences of New York and Boston.
Connecticut’s tourism brand positioning

Only Connecticut offers such a dynamic blend of the...

- historic and contemporary,
- natural and cultural,
- relaxing and active.

All so close to each other.
All so close to you.

All our marketing reflects this brand positioning, offering a blend of experiences in every communication.
Content marketing has become our core tactic.

We start with research on potential topics, create a calendar of stories, manage a variety of content creators, and then package each story and distribute via as many different tactics as possible.

PR: print, online, broadcast media coverage

Paid search ads on Google

Paid social media

Paid content seeding via Taboola and Outbrain

Ongoing email outreach

Branded content via trusted pubs
Examples of our content marketing

More than 300 “stories” live on CTvisit

- 4-8 new articles developed each month
- Almost all of them updated each year
- Each article promotes and links to many partners, from 5 to 45 partners each
- Over 50 current articles feature trails
- A new article on “towns to visit for hiking” is coming out next month

Check the portal for current upcoming topics.
Tips for being featured in content, social or PR

1. **Stay informed about opportunities!**
   - Check the portal
   - Sign up for, *and read*, emails from COT

2. **Submit news/ideas via the portal.**
   Keep us aware of what’s going on

3. **Send great photos!** The better your photos, the more ways and more times we will feature them!

4. **Tag @Ctvisit** in your social posts:
   We’ll get notified and can determine ways to share

5. **Be responsive** to email requests for PR inquiries, FAM tours, prizes, news and ideas
Get a free listing on CTvisit.com
Create a free listing page

Trail attractions can create a free listing on CTvisit!

- Go to the login on the partner portal
- Request a login
- Once you receive your login credentials, you will get instructions on how to create your listing
- The portal offers tips on how to maximize your listing

Mattabesett Blue Trail

Mattabesett and Mount Highy Trail is a 9 mile out and back trail located near Middlefield, CT that features beautiful wild flowers and is rated as moderate. The trail offers a number of activity options and is accessible from April until October.
Features of a free listing page

**Hero image.** Can be horizontal as shown (preferred), or square.

**Image carousel.** Insert as many images and videos (from YouTube post) as you like.

**Button link** to your website

**Description.** Intro copy shows. “Read More” expands area to show text of any length.

**Contact information**

**Upcoming Events** (optional)

**Deals & Packages** (optional)

Pull in your Twitter and Facebook feeds (optional)

Automatically suggests nearby businesses

Automatically offers a map of your business and others close by
Stay Informed via the Tourism Industry Portal
Introducing the Tourism Industry Portal!

Partners asked for one place to find everything the Office of Tourism has done/is planning. So we built it!
Get to the portal via the footer of CTvisit

Access the portal from the Tourism Partners link on the CTvisit footer.
Everything you need is on the portal!

- The topics we are working on for upcoming articles
- The dates and descriptions of upcoming industry events
- Tips on how to get the most out of your free CTvisit listing
- Examples of all of the creative used in recent or current campaigns
- Details on the many no-cost ways to partner with the Office of Tourism
- Research and performance results, marketing plans, and more

And the ability to search all COT marketing to see where any listing partner has been featured in PR, content, email and advertising.
Thank You!