

As part of the 2016 Destination Development Action Plan, in partnership with our stakeholders, we developed a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis of Grey County as a tourism destination. We would like to update this, as part of our 2018 Marketing Strategy. We have already added some points below, highlighted in green, and would like to include your input.

Strengths

1. Natural assets: unique nature and environmental features
2. Four seasons: Distinct seasons with different tourism experiences offered year round
3. Blue Mountain: Iconic and well-known demand generator
4. Culture and history: a defined history with compelling stories
5. **Organizational stability**

Weaknesses

1. Soft infrastructure: limited signage, parking, washrooms, **mapping, and cell phone coverage.**
2. Few accommodation options available outside of Blue Mountain and Owen Sound
3. Limited restaurant and retail options, with reduced hours of operation
4. **Regional Transportation and transit very limited**

Opportunities

1. Growing agri-tourism
2. Better collaboration with **local DMOs**, neighbouring counties and RTO7
3. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) as focused target market
4. Better packaging and itinerary development
5. The US Market, **and changing multi-cultural markets**
6. **Food, beverage and unique local food stories.**
7. **Trails (hiking & cycling)**
8. **Growth of alternative accommodations**

Threats

1. Weather/climate change
2. Limited development/adoption of Grey County brand
3. ~~Limited collaboration with peer DMOs~~
4. Workforce Issues
5. Monitor new and growing competitive national tourism organizations
6. **Capacity issues in select areas**

Edits:

Green – tourism department changes from the 2016 version

Yellow – suggested changes from TAC

Pink – suggested changes from DMO meeting

In addition to the SWOT analysis, we have been researching some of the new trends that are happening amongst travelers and consumers. We would like your input here as well, on any trends that you are seeing.

Top Travel Marketing Trends for 2018:

- Mobile platforms and responsive websites are the primary engagement platform for travelers. * 60% of web traffic to visitgrey.ca came from mobile & tablet users in 2017.
- Travelers are demanding more information, control, interaction, and personalization. ie: customized and experiential travel.
- Visitors are increasingly looking for a travel experience that allows them to experience a local's way of life. "*Locavore*"
- Technology is enabling faster decision-making by customers, thereby, increasing business to a destination. Google Business listings are key.
- Marketers have to speak to their niche markets directly, using key messages crafted specifically for that audience. Gone are the days of mass marketing.
- Visitors want access to information while they're here. There's a need for wifi and high speed internet while they travel.
- User-generated content through blogs, photos & video.
- Frontline staff interactions with visitors are essential in a hi-tech world. Visitors to Grey County expect friendly, welcoming locals, kindness and superior customer service.
- Social Media platforms, specifically images and video have now become the biggest way to connect with potential visitors. Live videos are big.