



*"Kingston is an impressive alternative to a metro market destination made seamless by professionals that truly understand customer service."*

# Meetings & Conferences

**TOURISM KINGSTON 2008  
MARKETING PLAN**

LEISURE • SPORT TOURISM • MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS • TRAVEL TRADE



# Meetings & Conferences

## CALL TO ORDER!

Welcome to the 2008 Sales & Marketing Plan for Kingston's Meetings & Conferences Initiatives. This Marketing Plan has been integrated with the entire Tourism Kingston marketing plan.

In 2007, the Meetings & Conferences committee initiated five main direct sales initiatives and advertised in four prominent publications, with the purpose of increasing Kingston's profile as a destination of Mixing Business with Pleasure. With increased partner contribution we have been successful in maintaining a conference grid that provided leads from trade show attendance and will continue into 2008 to reflect a more accurate snapshot of the economic impact in Kingston.

The objectives for 2008 will continue to focus on boosting recognition of Kingston as a Meetings and Conferences destination of choice. The Meetings and Conferences committee will continue to target key demographic and geographic markets to build and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders in order to promote the city's value as a Meetings & Conferences location.

## 2007 REWIND

In September 2007 a Toronto sales blitz met with Government & Corporate leads. These leads were generated from the Incentive Works Tradeshow. During the sales blitz the team met with over twenty meeting planners with very positive interest in the Kingston market as conference destination.



Tourism Kingston attended Meet Canada in Ottawa. This boosted awareness of Kingston as a Meeting & Conference destination of choice by establishing contacts with qualified regional/national Meetings & Conference planners.

Once again Incentive Works Canada, a leading one-stop marketplace for purchasers of incentive travel, was attended and attracted over 3000 attendees. The tradeshow space was enhanced with the new Tourism Kingston Tradeshow Booth.

The Silver Shows have returned after a fifteen year absence. The Silver Show in Ottawa – one of Canada's leading interactive shows for Government and Corporate Event Planners, attracted new meeting planners not previously targeted before. The tradeshow was a resounding success and will be hosting in Toronto as well.



## THE BEST BETS

### > **Brand Development**

The brand tag line Mixing Business with Pleasure has been very successful in its development and has provided continuity and identity in the balance of sales and advertising initiatives. This brand will be sustained in all 2008 initiatives. The new branding effectively reflects and positions the spirit, place and activities of Kingston.

### > **Destination Marketing Fund - Kingston Accommodation Partners Inc.**

The Destination Marketing Fund has been a successful program facilitating in the realization of additional opportunities for the City of Kingston. Assistance from the organization will enhance Meetings & Conference initiatives in 2008 by supporting additional marketing opportunities.



### > **Customer Relationship Management**

Tourism Kingston and all committee members have been diligent in soliciting feedback from potential clients during local sales initiatives and tradeshows. Positive feedback from these leads has been encouraging and indicative of new business for 2008. Effective follow-up, a valuable communications strategy and a commitment from Tourism Kingston and all Meetings & Conference facilities will further influence clients decisions to chose Kingston as their Meetings & Conference destination.

### > **Location, Location, Location**

Kingston is at the centre of three main Canadian urban hubs, specifically Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa. It is a natural option for meeting and conference planners who are looking for a central location to hold annual general meetings, regional meetings and other key events calling on delegates from areas across Ontario.

## CHALLENGES



### > Evaluation and Measurement

There is presently a tracking tool called the Convention Alert Grid which identifies the business acquired from sales initiatives, and with continued efforts and enhancement will provide enough detail to calculate and estimate the economic impact to Kingston. Tourism Kingston is dedicated to revising this tool to provide safe, accurate and timely data, yet a collaborative effort to compile this reporting is still a challenge and requires further development.

### > Inventory of Facilities

Kingston offers a good mix of facilities, however capacity for large conventions (1000+ delegates) is lacking. We are missing opportunities for significant economic impact due to lack of large convention space and room capacity within one establishment. With the completion of the Entertainment Centre this may encourage larger groups for tradeshow 7 exhibit space but will still remain an issue for larger conferences to be held in one space.

### > The need for Media and Meeting Technology

To remain competitive with this emerging sector, planners require accessible, state-of-the-art technology. There is a tremendous opportunity for M&C partners to secure this metro-market business.

> **Unique Setting and Atmosphere**

This city is rich in history and culture while offering a distinct experience with a wonderful waterfront, breath-taking architecture and a wide variety of extra-curricular activities such as group-friendly dining, attractions, and special events. Customized itineraries are available for delegates and their spouses or guests to enjoy the city before, during, or after the conference.

> **Additional Trade Show Opportunities**

After extensive research on the part of the Meeting & Conference Committee, they have discovered new opportunities to promote Kingston as a conference destination. This would include Tete a Tete, which is a tradeshow geared towards association executives and meeting planners. This is an opportunity to meet with clients on a one to one basis. The governing houses are the Canadian Society of Association Executives and Meeting Planners International.



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

### > **Boost Recognition**

To boost recognition of Kingston as a Meetings and Conference destination of choice in key markets such as Toronto and Ottawa.

### > **Generate and Manage Leads**

To identify, generate and distribute qualified leads to our Meetings & Conference partners, maximizing the overall economic impact to the City of Kingston.

### > **Track and Measure Economic Impact**

To more effectively track and measure the economic impact of Meetings & Conferences to the City of Kingston.

## TARGET MARKETS

### **Demographic**

#### > **Meeting Planners**

The profile of a meeting planner ranges from an individual who is employed in a meeting planning capacity for a corporation (association, university or similar organization) to someone within an organization that plans meetings as part of his or her responsibilities. The DMO will strategically meet their needs through a roster of support services and support of the M&C committee.

### **Geographic**

#### > **Canada**

Historically, the majority of meetings and convention business has come from Ontario, specifically from Kingston, Ottawa and Toronto. These are the primary target markets for the city of Kingston.



## 2008 TACTICS

The main areas of strategic activity will be:

- > **Direct Sales**
- > **Customer Relationship Management**
- > **Communications**
- > **Advertising**



### Direct Sales

**Sales Blitz:** Plan a local sale blitz with approx. 60 pre-arranged appointments to continue to raise awareness of Meetings & Conferences options in Kingston and generating additional local leads and interest in Kingston as a destination for Meetings & Conferences. Secondary objectives included research on motivating factors in the decision-making process of organizing a meeting and/or convention and identifying local, regional and national opportunities by soliciting contact names of key stakeholders of various associations and regional/national offices.

**Trade Shows:** Continue to provide a superior presence on the tradeshow floor, combining sales information, survey tools, tracking and follow-up activities with an entertaining setting. Concentration on high impact presence throughout tradeshow will leave Kingston as a “top-of-mind” destination to all delegates.

Attend leading industry shows including:

- Meet Canada Ottawa
- Silver Show in Ottawa & Toronto
- Tete a Tete
- Incentive Works Marketplace
- Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE)

## Customer Relationship Management

**Database Development:** A database management system will be developed and all leads generated from sales initiatives will be automatically updated on the system. This database will also be integrated into the Meetings & Conferences evaluation and measurement tool to better assess economic impact of activities.



## Communications

**E-Newsletter:** Increase exposure by launching an e-newsletter to be published on a quarterly basis and distributed to all qualified leads via mass e-mail.

## Paid Media

**Conventions Meetings Canada:** Also known as the Meetings & Conferences Bible, this guide provides information on service suppliers such as audiovisual and transportation providers, information on hotels and resorts who have dedicated meeting space, and information on unique venues and convention centres. Over 80% of readers use the guide for meeting site and service selection. Kingston is featured annually in this publication and in the 2005/2006 issue, held 6 pages of advertising under a Kingston branded banner.

**Within 2 Hours Magazine:** Issued twice a year (Spring/Summer, Fall/Winter), this publication has a distribution of approximately 40,000 and ranges from the GTA to Ottawa and some of Northern Ontario. 100% of the distribution of this publication is sent directly to our target market, specifically meeting and conference planners and their respective executives.

Kingston has advertised in both the Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter 2006 editions, having one page of editorial and seven pages of advertising under a Kingston branded banner.

**Meet in Ontario (OTMP):** This 32-page Meeting and Convention Guide highlights major convention hubs, smaller urban centres including Ontario's North, resorts as well as pre and post convention activity. The editorial content of the planner is experience focused with complimentary images. The Guide also contains 15 inserts in the back, profiling each destination partner pursuing the meeting and convention market.

## TRADESHOW DETAILS

### Meet Canada - Ottawa

Coined the “sidewalk sale” of the meetings industry, Meet Canada is a luncheon trade show specifically designed for Canadian meeting and special event planners working within a budget.

The show targets corporate, third-party, association, government and independent meeting planners, convention and incentive travel planners, communication specialists, sales and marketing managers, executive administration specialists, special event planners, trade show managers, tourism and hospitality personnel.

The purpose of the show is to join together meeting and special events planners with facilities and services to explore their respective challenges and solutions in a tradeshow environment.

### Incentive Works

This is Canada’s leading one-stop marketplace for purchasers of incentive travel, meeting/convention space and related services. In 2006, it is expected to attract over 3,000 attendees, giving exhibitors a tremendous 5:1 attendee to exhibitor ratio.

The show targets Canadian corporate, association, government, third-party and independent planners of meetings, conventions and incentive travel programs as well as specialty incentive houses, corporate travel agencies active in the MC & IT area, convention and meeting consultants/organizers.

2008 MEETINGS & CONFERENCES MARKETING BUDGET	
MC & IT City Contribution	44,750
MC & IT KAP Contribution	19,200
<b>TOTAL MC &amp; IT BUDGET</b>	<b>63,950</b>