

# DELIVERING TO DELEGATES





# MEETINGS & CONFERENCES

## MORE YIELD IN THE FIELD

Welcome to Tourism Kingston's 2009 Sales & Marketing Plan for the Meetings and Conference segment. The Meetings and Conferences (M&C) market represents tremendous opportunity for business and economic development for Kingston. Although the meetings and convention market is smaller than the leisure market, the yield is more significant. Statistically, conference delegates spend four times as much money in business travel than they do in leisure travel. Many delegates attending conferences in Kingston are experiencing the city for the first time, providing the ideal opportunity to showcase Kingston and have them return to the city with their families. The team approach will lead to multi-property conventions and will grow the number of city-wide conventions and room nights.

In May 2008, Tourism Kingston hosted a Meetings & Conference Tradeshow at the newly renovated Grand Theatre. With close to 180 qualified event planners from Ottawa, Toronto and Kingston in attendance, the tradeshow was deemed a huge success. Both exhibitors and invited guests were intrigued by Kingston's offerings as a conference destination of choice.

In cooperation with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, we had the opportunity to include an insert in their Meetings and Conventions Guide. The purpose of the guide is to create awareness of Ontario's unique and diverse meeting destinations and products, and generate planner interest. The publication is distributed in Canada, USA and overseas to the association, corporate and incentive travel planners market. With 5,000 copies in circulation, it is used as a fulfillment piece for requests from planners and is distributed at tradeshow and events.

Our attendance at Incentive Works last year bolstered Kingston once again as a very unique and affordable conference destination. With close to 3,200 invited guests, this continues to be the marketplace for one stop shopping for purchasers of incentive travel and selection of future conference sites.

With the addition of the Travel Trade Canada – Silver shows, in both Ottawa and Toronto, another opportunity is presented to attract new meeting planners that have not been previously targeted. We attended both marketplaces and distributed over 100 qualified leads to the partnership.

In February 2008, Tourism Kingston attended the CSAE/Tete-Tete tradeshow in Ottawa. This presents the opportunity to meet with association executives and establish relationships to better ensure the opportunity of larger association bids.

## 2009 MEETINGS & CONFERENCES BUDGET

**\$166,250.00**

### CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND TRENDS

- > Increased room capacity for conference and event planning.
- > The critical role of face to face meetings is still essential in conducting business.
- > Corporate travel policies prioritize their employees' safety as a number one factor when selecting conference destination.
- > With the implementation of audio and video communication tools, 27% of businesses intend to utilize new technology as a method of reducing travel expenses.
- > With continued increases in supplier rates, this will lead to tougher negotiations in the bid process.
- > Anticipated growth for travel budgets is an average of 4.5% each year.
- > Kingston's new facility base may stimulate more interest in the markets, providing planners more extra-curricular activity for delegates.

### STRATEGIC DIRECTION

#### 2009 Marketing Campaign

The Meetings & Conferences committee has realized many successes in the past years with very limited budgets. In the summer of 2008 it was decided that the development of an M&C campaign be implemented to strengthen Kingston's position as a conference/meeting destination of choice.

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 unique experience as well as the quality of meeting space and accommodation venues. With the larger venues such as the K-Rock Centre, we are now in a position to host larger conferences. In 2009, Kingston will also have additional accommodation partners which will increase the number of guestrooms we have to offer.

Tourism Kingston conducted a survey which included event planners from both Toronto and Ottawa. After careful consideration, we now are ready to move forward with a marketing campaign to showcase everything the modern day event planner is looking for. We will be working very closely with the Kingston Accommodation Partners, Inc. in order to achieve both print and media coverage that will generate the exposure to maximize the message.





## Showcase 2009

In May 2008, the Meetings and Conference committee staged a tradeshow at the newly renovated Grand Theatre. It was a resounding success with over 180 conference planners in attendance from Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto and Kingston. Reports from both the exhibitors and planners found the tradeshow to be both informative and representative of all that Kingston offers as a conference destination. We will continue into 2009 with a repeat performance at a venue that would allow more attendance.

## Association Sales Initiative

Tourism Kingston will be conducting an extensive sales presentation to local associations, societies, government and corporate planners. This sales initiative will provide meeting planners the ease of initializing and planning the larger annual conferences that will have the greatest economic impact on Kingston. The planning kit will contain a comprehensive collateral package outlining partner services, guestroom inventory, venues, site selection, audio visual support, transportation, spousal programs, team building activities, Tourism Kingston support services and much more.

## Familiarization Tours

Tourism Kingston has been involved in many requests for site tours and visitation to Kingston from event planners. Our focus is to respond and assist potential conference business on behalf of the meetings and convention partners. This includes request for proposals, organized site tours of hotels and venues along with the experience and uniqueness of successful conferencing in Kingston.

## Incentive Works (Toronto)

This proves to be Canada's largest trade show for meetings, incentive travel and events in the conference industry. Both corporate and government levels of meeting planners attend each and every year to establish new conference destinations.

## Travel Trade Canada – Silver shows (Toronto & Ottawa)

This marketplace has proven itself to be one of the best attended Corporate Meeting Planners trade show. Kingston's geographic location once again prevails as a preferred conference destination.

## CSAE/Tete-Tete (Ottawa)

With their ever growing membership, this show becomes more popular every year to the association market. The opportunity to build future relationships with top executives enables our partners to better position themselves for larger conferences on a city wide basis.

## STRATEGY IN ACTION

- > Develop, design and launch the 2009 M&C Campaign to lure new business to Kingston as a conference destination of choice.
- > Attend key tradeshows on behalf of the partnership to continue branding Kingston as the conference destination of choice.
- > Attract larger conferences to Kingston through campaign efforts; facilitated by expanded hotel inventory and new facilities.
- > We will work closely with key partners to implement the marketing campaign and all of its layers into the marketplace.
- > Continue our relationship with the Kingston Accommodation Partners to access DMF funds for consistent branding in all niche markets.

## TARGET MARKETS

Target markets will include Government, Associations and Corporate markets at all levels. The distinct range of meeting planners in the marketplace leads to very different service requirements. They range from well seasoned professionals to young inexperienced individuals who require more time and attention.

- > **The Traditional Meeting Planner**  
Someone employed full-time in a meeting planning capacity for a corporation, association, university or similar organization. Mostly female between the ages of 35 and 60. They are pressed for time and solicited by many destination marketing organizations via a variety of media. They value and respond to developing relationships.
- > **The Independent Meeting Planner**  
Someone hired by a variety of organizations on a contract basis to perform meeting planning services. Mixed male (20%)/female (80%) between the ages of 30 and 55. They are service oriented and demand high quality.
- > **Third-Party Meeting Planning Firm**  
A firm that performs a variety of meeting planning and purchasing services for a number of organizations on an ongoing basis. Mixed male (30%)/female (70%) between the ages of 30 and 55 and functions as part of a team.



> **The Non Meeting Planner...Planner**

Someone within an organization that plans meeting as part of their responsibilities, usually on behalf of a more senior executive. Mostly female between the ages of 25 and 45. They are less experienced in planning meetings and are attracted to value offers and packaged product.

> **The Meeting Decision Maker**

The manager or executive that has initiated the meeting and set the purpose and agenda. Mixed male (70%)/female (30%) between the ages of 40 and 65. They are motivated by the bottom line.

## MEASUREMENT

The success of any plan must be judged by certain criteria – by general or qualitative measures of success and/or specific quantitative metrics. For the Meetings & Conference Market, the main criteria of success have been identified as:

- > Growth in estimated overall economic impact – direct spending (by conference or overall).
- > Number of heads in beds attributed to conferences.
- > Increased media coverage for Kingston.
- > Increased support of local associations, corporate and government organizations.

