



Welcome to the 2010 Sales & Marketing plan for the Travel Trade market. Kingston will work with its network of intermediaries to showcase visitors to the largest city of the world-famous Thousand Islands which is characterized for its rich heritage, colourful attractions, architectural significance and a waterfront location second to none.

The Travel Trade committee had many successes in 2009. The on-going requests for media familiarization tours were the direct result of marketing efforts and attending selected tradeshows that would best captivate our intended audience.

The UNESCO World Heritage Designation continues to provide an excellent opportunity to position Kingston to the international operator and visitor. This brand has not been fully leveraged and needs further support to maximize the visitation opportunities through this honored designation.

## Travel Trade

The relationship with the Canadian Tourism Commission and Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership has grown as they continue to target key markets around the world. This has resulted in a resounding recognition in Eastern Ontario. Key markets include Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, the UK and the United States.

### Mission Statement

Developing year-round Group Tour and Foreign Independent Traveler (FIT) business for Kingston with a specific focus on bolstering the conventional shoulder seasons.

The combined partnerships collaborate to deliver the following:

- Promote Canada as a desirable tourist destination.
- Generate timely, accurate information and research for the tourism industry.
- Build effective marketing strategies and programs aimed to increase tourism revenue for Canada.
- Bolster industry coordination and partnering.
- Strengthen industry competitiveness.



Our branding on the tradeshow floor has grown in conjunction with our efforts to sponsor key events at specific travel trade shows. Kingston has built a relationship and created a presence on selected tradeshow floors which showcases the product with style and professionalism.

As a result of our partnership with the Kingston Accommodation Partners, we attended the Canada Media Marketplace in New York City. Participants recognize the invaluable importance of this event. Their goal is for continued success in achieving the maximum positive media coverage for Canada, both in print and electronic media.

## Strategic Direction

### FAMILIARIZATION TOURS

After a very successful FAM Tour of approximately 38 Tour Operators in 2009, we will once again host this ever-growing event in April 2010. An active itinerary included visiting key attractions and museums, dining and shopping and accommodation at various hotels. This puts Kingston top of mind in the planning stages of new visitation to Kingston.

### ONLINE SUPPORT

A strong and reliable web presence for the group tour market is essential for the modern day operator. Currently, the [planandtourkingston.ca](http://planandtourkingston.ca) site is a portal of information directing operators to industry partners and providing sample itineraries for group excursions.

In 2010, the Travel Trade division of Tourism Kingston will conduct a one-day focus group with industry planners to better understand the needs of the large receptive operators to the private and more customized operations. With a significant number of day trip visits which are unaccounted for, the aim of this session is to better understand how we can create compelling packages that will secure overnight stays and track more of the daytrip activity.

### TRADE SHOW REPRESENTATION

Attendance at key tradeshows is vital to the health and sustainability of group tour business in Kingston. The tradeshow approach can be based on Priority, Presence, and Practicality.

Priority - Today, DMO's are bombarded by multiple trade show opportunities which provide cities the opportunity to showcase their destination. We will be strategic about selecting tradeshows that provide the greatest return. Presence - Tradeshow floors can often be over-crowded with many booths going unnoticed without making an impact. We will be certain to position ourselves where Kingston will receive excellent exposure with additional opportunities to create lasting impressions through show sponsorships. Practicality - Even though larger centers such as Ottawa, Toronto, or



Montreal can offer more products, Kingston is geographically positioned to benefit from connecting tours that span the Eastern portion of the province. We will work with tour operators as well as other DMO's to provide sensible and convenient itineraries which would compliment existing tours and add a new experience.

## Primary Target Markets

### Ontario & Canada

- › Group Tour in both student & adult markets
- › These two markets offset the high season for accommodation as well as seasonal attractions
- › Domestic marketing efforts play a key role in retaining volume

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- › UNESCO designation (within Kingston and region) remains a strong and unique brand as Ontario's only recipient
- › Currency Exchange rates may place limits on length of stay and spending while visiting
- › Ontario continues to offer a safe travel environment and good value for money being spent
- › Reports of long haul travel within Canada (inter-provincial) will still be low due to lack of disposable income
- › Arts, culture and history are resulting in effective counterpoints to the traditional allure of nature and the outdoors



## International (Inbound)

- › Asian, German, Italian, French, Australia and Mexico are key target markets
- › Food, wine and other special interests are being combined with personal passions and hobbies
- › The baby boomers (Zoomers), with time and money to travel, continues to grow. They demand high quality, personalized experiences with more soft adventure and culture.
- › While the outlook for domestic travel has weakened, it remains the backbone of growth in the industry. This is due to the fact that international travel to Canada is facing even stronger growth.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- › Tour Operators will face major challenges in the next year with a more critical audience that have educated themselves in their destination plans
- › Canada's key competitor in the long haul market continues to be Australia and the Asian Market
- › International market views Canada for scenery, safety, nature, historical sites, accommodations, friendliness and its overall image as the land of natural beauty.
- › Product packaging for long haul trips to include partnering with larger city centres. They should include quality accommodation and dining options
- › Solo travel is on the rise with the increasing divorce rate. Usually look to package vacation

## STRATEGY IN ACTION

- › Strong representation at key marketplaces for both domestic and international tour operators. Trade shows that Tourism Kingston will be attending on the partner's behalf include:
  - American Bus Association
  - Bienvenue Quebec
  - Ontario Motor Coach Association
  - Rendezvous Canada Marketplace
  - Canadian Inbound Tourism Association
- › Sell to domestic tour operators features to include new product and new partnerships.
- › Provide support services to Travel Trade Partners who facilitate group tours
- › Encourage partners to provide current Group and FIT rates for faster follow up and distribution.



## Communications

- › We will ensure our partnership receives updates and activities from Tourism Kingston in relationship to Travel Trade initiatives.
- › A continued relationship with other DMO's in promotion of Eastern Ontario; highlighting unique and distinct getaways that broaden the visitor experience.
- › Ongoing updates and enhancement of the [www.kingstoncanada.com](http://www.kingstoncanada.com) to ensure that tour operators are receiving accurate information.
- › USB sticks and a Group Tour lure piece will provide both operators and industry partners multi-media and print collateral on Kingston attractions, dining, museums and galleries, spa's, shopping and much more. These pieces are distributed along with the current Visitor Guide at every tradeshow and are included in all media kits for both leisure and travel trade.

**Measurement.** The success of any plan must be judged by certain criteria – by general or qualitative measures of success and/or specific quantitative metrics. Within the Travel Trade market, the main criteria of success have been identified as:

- › Partnership evaluation of success levels and individual revenue reporting in accommodation and food & beverage areas with relation to Travel Trade activity
- › Continuous follow up with leads obtained at trade shows
- › Maintaining partnership cooperation in reporting visitation statistics