

Marketing Your Byway, Volume I

Defining Your Target Markets and Messages

An Introduction
to Basic Marketing
for America's Byways®

come **CLOSER**
to America

The logo for America's Byways, featuring a stylized blue and white American flag with a white star on a blue background, positioned above the text "AMERICA'S BYWAYS®".

Recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road defines your byway as one of America's most distinctive driving routes.

Designation acknowledges your organization's commitment to protect, preserve, and promote your byway resources.

Designation also provides you with the opportunity to leverage the collective strength of the America's Byways® brand and asks you to contribute to it—and you can easily do both at the same time!

Include the America's Byways logo and mention that your byway is part of the America's Byways collection in all of your communications (print, online, broadcast, press releases, interviews, etc.), upholding the brand's core values.

Marketing Your Byway, Volume I

Defining Your Target Markets and Messages

An Introduction to Basic
Marketing for America's Byways®

Purpose

- Learn how the America's Byways brand is important to an individual byway.
- Gain an understanding of basic marketing concepts and planning elements.
- Explore research and strategic development approaches in byway marketing.

Note: No single document can explain or guide you through marketing. Use this basic introduction as a catalyst for further study, including reading books about general marketing and destination marketing, attending conferences, or reviewing online sources and noting how other byways have approached their marketing. No “magic bullet” completes your marketing and you are never done—you always have opportunities to share your byway's story with audiences waiting to hear it.

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AMERICA'S BYWAYS®

Leverage the Brand Advantage

The America's Byways® brand identifies the collection of 150 distinct routes designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads, recognizing them as some of the nation's most significant drives.

Branding this unique collection allows your byway to tap into the strength of national scope, credibility, and recognizable brand elements. Travelers can choose many different routes to arrive at the same point; knowing that a route has been vetted and federally designated can influence their itinerary choices.

At the same time, the brand's strength depends on your byway's support. To contribute to the brand's viability:

- Maintain a designation-worthy driving experience
- Showcase the brand at every touch-point
- Serve as a brand steward

Your actions benefit the brand—and the brand benefits your byway.

Purpose and Value of the Collection

When the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) created and registered the America's Byways brand trademark in 2005, the purpose was to provide a singular entity for communicating about the unique routes in the collection. FHWA and America's Byways Resource Center have continued to support and promote the brand in ways that are meaningful, memorable, and effective.

Today, the brand remains valuable to every byway in the collection. As awareness of America's Byways continues to build, the brand brings added value to your marketing by conveying the national scope of your affiliation. Target audiences can recognize the combination of logo, theme line ("Come closer"), colors, typography, and imagery as a stamp of credibility and authenticity. The brand works to invite travelers for an up-close and personal American experience that your byway provides.



Use the Logo and Other Brand Connectors

Come Closer Theme/Tagline

In addition to the America's Byways logo, the invitational "Come closer" theme/tag line and its graphic representation, called a lockup, can connect your byway to the national brand (see above). The lockup melds the theme with the logo and either a general message ("Come Closer to America") or a location-based message that often connects to an intrinsic quality ("Come Closer to history"). Use the specified colors and follow the guidelines posted at bywaysonline.org/program/marketing.

Affiliation Text

Similarly, affiliation text—wording that ties your individual byway to the national brand—should be inserted into your press releases, brochures, and other marketing materials. Your leadership can practice it as an "elevator speech," or what you would want to say about your byway to the uninitiated if you only had a few seconds to do so.

In most cases, the affiliation text is simply:

<Your byway> is part of the America's Byways® collection of 150 nationally designated routes.

Or you can elaborate a bit:

<Your byway> is part of America's Byways®, a collection of 150 distinctive routes designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

Verbally connect your byway to the brand in the same way every time you use it—in press releases, on your website, on brochures. Consistency builds recognition.

Brand Stewardship

Every byway leader can and should serve as a brand steward, continually watching for proper applications of the logo, lockup, and other elements. Brand stewardship requires that you spend a few minutes to become familiar with the brand application requirements, as detailed in the *Graphics Standards Manual* at bywaysonline.org/program/marketing/manual, and make sure that your byway complies. Importantly, correct any inconsistencies!

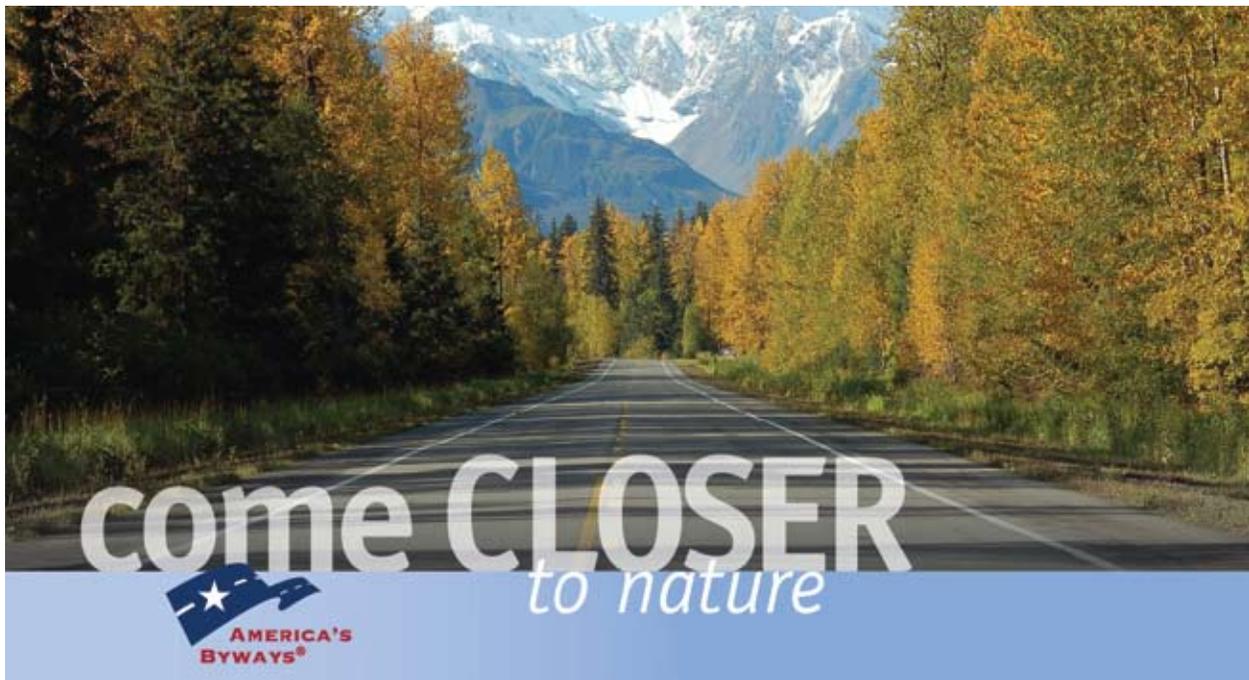
Brand stewardship also means ensuring that your byway experience upholds the brand promise. The America's Byways brand promises to deliver a memorable, authentically American driving experience—a kind of journey found only on these designated routes. Your byway lives up to the brand when you maintain or improve upon the visitor experience you described in your designation nomination and your corridor management plan. Stay true to your vision and mission, and you will echo the America's Byways brand.

Look for Opportunities

This document helps you define your target markets and develop persuasive messages for them; all of these messages should also include the America's Byways brand.

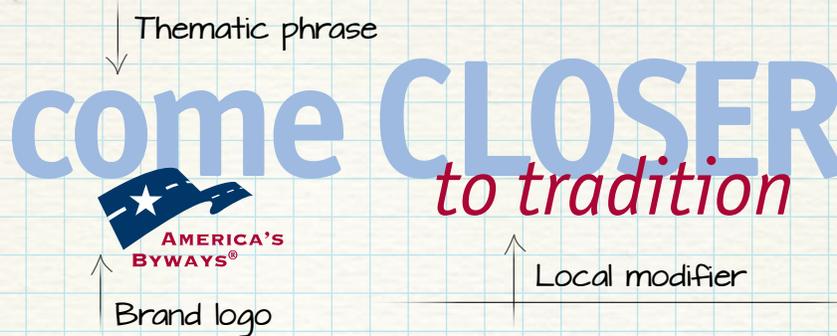
The America's Byways brand, and especially the logo, should appear in all of your byway's advertisements, brochures, and maps. Because today's travelers use the Internet for their travel planning, place the America's Byways logo prominently on your website and Facebook byway's page or other social media venues, with a link to your byway's page.

Other opportunities for leveraging the brand while building its awareness include asking partners, stakeholder organizations, and local media to include the America's Byways logo and your affiliation text in any articles about your byway. Every touch-point—your visitor center's front desk, your wayshowing signage, your online itineraries—present opportunities to showcase your inclusion as one of America's Byways.



CREATING A LOCALIZED CALL-TO-ACTION

COMPONENTS



PRIMARY LOCKUP



Placement: The primary lockup of the brand logo and the "come CLOSER" theme line should always be positioned exactly as shown. Lockups can be downloaded at <http://www.bywaysonline.org/program/marketing>.

Color: The brand logo must follow proper color standards. The "come CLOSER" themeline can be solid or a shade of light blue (Pantone®* 659) or white.

LOCAL MODIFIER

to tradition

CHOOSING YOUR LOCAL MODIFIER

Customize the lockup with a modifier that reflects a single local experience. The local modifier is typically a noun that relates to one of your byway's intrinsic qualities. There should not be an adjective before the noun, such as "beautiful nature."

CREATING YOUR LOCAL MODIFIER:

- **Font:** ITC Officina Sans Std Book Italic**
- **Size:** 1/3 the height of "E" in "CLOSER"
- **Color:** Byways red or reverse to white
- **Placement:** Centered under "CLOSER"; top of cross stroke of "+" just touches the bottom of "CLOSER"



* Pantone® is a system for matching colors, used in specifying printing inks. See pantone.com for more information.
** Font can be purchased and downloaded at several font websites.

Marketing Overview

Marketing delivers an intentional message to influence a specific audience to adopt a certain opinion or perception or to take action in ways that help you reach your goals. This process produces more effective results when you spend time on research, thoughtfully consider your options, and work from a plan.



Developing Your Marketing Plan

Before your marketing can deliver a message, you need to know its intended audience and what the message will say. Research and planning shape these important aspects of your marketing plan.

Putting the plan on paper—writing it down—ensures that everyone in your organization understands the strategic rationale behind marketing efforts. It provides a yardstick to measure whether an unexpected opportunity, such as a discount on advertising or free booth space at a conference, fits with your byway's goals and objectives.

Developing a marketing plan does not have to be expensive, but it does require an investment of time. Your byway may want to assign a committee to work on a marketing plan or you may want to hire outside professionals, especially for larger communication goals. Either way, your organization should create a marketing plan every time that you have a specific message that you want to communicate to another audience.

A Typical Marketing Plan

Title page and Table of Contents

Include the most recent date, version, and author(s).

Executive Summary

Explain the highlights of your goals, how you intend to reach them, and your rationale for your approach.

Goals and Objectives

Review your corridor management plan and identify the goals that you want your marketing to help you achieve. Increase visitors? Gain supporters for a funding project? Sign up volunteers to plant trees? Whatever the goals are, check that they fit with your byway's vision and mission as described in the corridor management plan or work plan.

Translate your goals into quantifiable objectives. For instance, your **goal** might be to increase visitors on the byway. Your **objectives**, then, could be to increase out-of-state requests for local maps by 20 percent and increase visitor-center traffic by 15 percent.

Measure or benchmark where you are now to be able to evaluate expected outcomes when the marketing effort concludes.

Target Audience, including relevant research results

Marketing can communicate why people should visit or support your route. Even if your byway is not seeking additional visitors, it can convey persuasive messages to other targeted audiences, such as:

- Your byway's membership
- Community groups
- Local political leaders
- Businesses of influence
- Media
- Potential partners

Define your target audiences that can help you achieve your goals and objectives. Understand the demographics, preferences, and interests of those groups. Know the audiences that you want your message to reach and why they would care. This is where research pays off! It's also a good time to think creatively. Perhaps your goal is to boost awareness of tribal heritage along the byway. Working with local tribes, you may identify audiences as varied as university anthropology students, pottery collectors, or storyteller festival organizers.

Situational Analysis, including relevant research results

Clarify how your target audiences perceive your byway. This may be different than how you perceive the byway. What are your strengths and weaknesses? Again, take the time to do research. Most likely, you will need to do surveys or focus group research to find this information. Setting the benchmark baselines at the beginning of a marketing plan enable you to evaluate expected outcomes at the conclusion of the marketing effort.

Strategic Development, including message, media, and brand usage

Develop a meaningful message that persuades your audience to adopt a certain perception or to take action. The message likely includes both verbal and visual elements. Plan to leverage the strength of the America's Byways brand in all of your messaging.

Consider all the methods of reaching your target audiences, including traditional and online media, events, and individual activities. Begin to frame your communication plan, which is a specific portion of the marketing plan. You will fine-tune it after you've completed the marketing plan's big picture.

Timeline

Set a timeline. State the start and end dates, as well as checkpoints along the way to see that the plan and the budget stay on track.

Budget

Estimate the costs. Include the funding resources, especially partnerships.

Evaluation Methods

Evaluate the results. Use quantifiable measurements to compare before and after data. Document what worked and why; note how you could improve next time.

Next Steps

Describe how the process will move forward, particularly when and how you will create and execute the communication plan.

• Sources / Appendix

You may also include a bibliography or listing of sources, as well as an appendix with any additional charts or supporting data.

Research

The next sections delve into the core areas of the marketing plan elements. The first section focuses on research for defining your target markets and assessing your current market situation. The second section concentrates on strategically aligning your message and the media that deliver it.

Research Drives Marketing Results

For primary data about your particular byway, consider implementing intercept surveys. To conduct a survey, volunteers ask a set of questions to visitors along a byway, perhaps at a visitor center or museum, or to other target audience members at appropriate locations. Similarly, if you have an active database of e-mails, you can query your list to respond to questions linked to an online survey form, such as Survey Monkey. Provide an “opt-out” notice on your e-mails or online surveys, explaining how a recipient may contact your organization to unsubscribe to your messages.

Acquiring primary data is time-consuming and labor-intensive; accuracy depends greatly on the size of the sampling (how many people respond) and many variables can affect responses, such as weather, time of day, number of people in the traveling party, surveyor’s appearance and presentation, etc. However, a survey remains a strong and useful tool for understanding more about your particular situation.

Not all aspects of marketing research require collecting new data. In fact, gathering existing data from qualified sources may reveal most of the answers you need. Make phone calls, write letters, search online, or visit your library.

Some sources to consider:

- U.S. Government statistics (www.census.gov)
- State, regional, and city government reports
- State, regional, and local offices of tourism studies and reports
- Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO), which could be linked to chambers of commerce or convention and visitor bureaus

- Industry studies, such as those related to lodging/hospitality, recreational vehicles, fishing, etc.
- Event organizers, enthusiast groups, etc.
- Media that are focused on the target audience, including print, broadcast, and online venues

Target Markets

Your byway appeals to many audiences. Clear identification of potential audiences leads to cost-effective promotion, saves money, time and effort, and leads to better results.

Spend some time identifying exactly who these people are. Make lists of characteristics. Depending on your goals and objectives, you should define one primary target market and a list of secondary audiences. Prioritize the audiences to know where to allocate resources and choose media that will be most effective in your communication plan.

Identify travelers by their geographic origination.

- Within a 100-mile radius (day trippers)
- Within a 500-mile radius (overnighters)
- Beyond the borders (international travelers – identify the country of origin)

Look for more demographics.

- Family leisure travelers (how many children? ages? interests – attractions, education, shopping, reunions, games, etc.?)
- Senior travelers (couples or solo; ages? health considerations? interests – history/cultural arts? shopping? reading?)
- Group travelers (bus tours, student groups, motorcyclists, special event tours, etc.)

Dig deeper.

Within the broad groups, you may have one or several specific niche target audiences that complement your intrinsic qualities and attractions. Think about their interests and the visitor experience you can deliver.

For example:

- Recreational travelers (bicyclists, RVs, snowmobilers, campers, hikers, fishing folks, kayakers, etc.)
- Cultural/heritage travelers (tribal interests, historians, anthropologists, etc.)
- Wildlife/wilderness travelers (birders, photographers, scientists, etc.)

Fill in with additional specific demographic information for the various interest-based niches.

- Gender
- Marital status
- Age range
- Education
- Income
- Transportation preferences
- Frequency of travel
- Duration of travel

Study the data.

Does one group outshine the others as more likely to be persuaded by your marketing to benefit your goals? Are there overlapping markets? Use the data, not your intuition, and you may find unexpected opportunities!

Learn more about the high-potential target markets, cross referencing as appropriate.

For example, you may find correlations that suggest a high-potential market among cultural/heritage travelers from Germany interested in tribal tours.

Or you may find family leisure travelers are staying within two-days drive, but seeking new recreational activities, such as camping or geocaching.

Situation Analysis

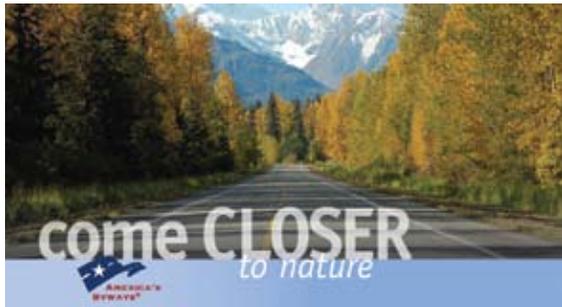
As your research begins to reveal answers, it also will prompt more questions. Use these questions to understand more about your target audiences and to hone your situation analysis. Some examples:

- How many people are in this target market by region? Is the target large enough to meet your goals or do you need more breadth?
- Does the research indicate market growth? Will this be a sustainable market or a one-time push?
- Do these travelers visit the same place twice? What would keep them coming back?
- What factors influence the target market's travel decisions? How do they choose an itinerary? Is seasonality a huge consideration? If so, which season and why? Is affordability a huge consideration? If so, does the group represent enough of an economic impact to pursue as a primary target market? Or, could you provide discounts or other incentives to overcome cost as a hurdle for their visit?
- What do these travelers know about your byway? What is their perception of your strengths and weaknesses?
- Where else do these travelers go? Who are your competitors in their minds?
- What other products, services, attractions, sites, etc., appeal to this market? Are there partnership opportunities?

Again, you may find much of this data already exists with public and private entities. Note what you learn and use it when you write your marketing plan.

Strategic Development

Your marketing plan has considered your CMP, your goals and objectives, your target markets, and your current situation. Strategic development includes defining and matching your message, based on your byway story, to your markets and choosing media that best deliver your message—all in alignment with your vision, mission, goals, objectives, and research.



Your Message

Look to your CMP for inspiration when you begin developing your message. In your CMP, you identified your byway's primary intrinsic qualities (archaeological, recreational, cultural, natural, historic, or scenic) and described them in the context of the visitor experience. The CMP required for designation as a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road prompted you to clarify your byway's story using those intrinsic qualities.

The byway story is a theme based on an intrinsic quality, qualified through descriptive and compelling statements, or subthemes.

Match your themes and subthemes to your target audiences. For example, if your byway story focuses on scenic beauty in every season, who would be most likely to enjoy that experience? Perhaps the target markets include motorcyclists, RV enthusiasts, and photographers. Your message must speak to the interests of these groups, based on the research.

Interpretive expert Tim Merriman suggests that a byway identify five to nine subthemes as part of the story. This foundational interpretative exercise sets the stage for all of your byway's work, including your marketing message.

Theme:

A single idea expressed in a complete sentence.

Supporting statements (subthemes):

Build an emotional or intellectual connection to help people understand the meaning of the resource.

EXAMPLE:

Intrinsic Quality:

- Scenic

Theme:

- Expanses of native wildflowers and forests provide scenic beauty in every season.

Subthemes:

- Ride your bicycle where waves of summer wildflower unfurl at every curve.
- Cruise for miles beside autumn's golden stands of birch.
- Capture spectacular winter photographs of sparkling evergreen-crested vistas.
- Hike woodland trails marked by spring drifts of white and pink trillium.

Other examples of topics for themes:

- Explore the contributions of a heritage group, such as a Native American tribe or Amish settlers
- Discover the legacy of a historic road or road construction methods
- Tour historic buildings or a historic district
- Dig for fossils and learn about prehistoric times
- Experience family fun (fishing, camping, biking, etc.)

Write out your message in its most basic form. Keep in mind what action you want from your target audience. Then speak to those audience members in a way that appeals to them. You will fine-tune this message in your communication plan (see Volume II).

Don't worry about being clever or fancy in your marketing plan. For example: *Visit here and experience amazing scenery at every turn.*

Later, you can begin to work on adding emotional appeal, such as humor, nostalgia, excitement, etc. Consider how your message complements the America's Byways brand message, "Come closer to America." You may even use one of the variations of that tagline as your message. For example, "Come closer to adventure" or "Come closer to nature."

Developing your message is a creative process. Consider hiring advertising and marketing professionals to assist you, especially with the communication plan, to ensure quality work that meets your expectations and the America's Byways brand standards.

Your Media

Strategically selected media channels effectively deliver the marketing media to your intended audiences. Will you reach more of your target market online? Through printed media? Through in-person gatherings? Narrow your channels from there to provide direction; however, the specific publications or websites will be indicated in the communication plan.

For example, if you are targeting motorcyclists, your marketing plan may include advertising in one national print magazine for riders; advertising online with the regional destination marketing organization; and attending three regional tradeshow.

Some media to consider include:

- Collateral materials, such as brochures and maps
- Print, broadcast, or online advertising
- Speaking engagements, trade shows, etc.
- Website
- E-mail
- Social media

With so many media channels available (and most of them costing money to use), how can you choose those media that align with your goals? Try this list exercise.

1. List each target audience related to the theme.
2. Under each target audience, list members' interest areas or things that appeal to them, based on your research.
3. For each interest area, identify five to ten sources of information or communication channels about that interest area. Include any known travel-planning sources, such as websites or map resources.
4. Prioritize the top three sources that are reasonable for your byway to use as communication channels for your marketing message.
5. Contact those media venues to learn what costs are associated with them. Ask for samples.
6. Evaluate how other byways or destinations have communicated within those same media. What are their themes? What are their verbal and visual messages? Are they affiliated with national organizations or partners?

Again, your communication plan will identify the specific publication titles, websites, events, etc. The marketing plan provides the media channels in generalized terms with strategically aligned rationale for your selections.

Timeline and Budget

Based on your research and strategic development, you should now be able to set timelines. Consider when and where your audience members will be most receptive to your message and when you want the highest responses. Check local community calendars, including those from schools, community organizations, and enthusiast groups.

Estimate the budget to implement the marketing plan, including the financial resources allocated for media. These figures should be based on research and analysis, in alignment with your vision, mission, goals, objectives, target markets, and strategic development. Indicate confirmed and potential funding sources for each budget item. These steps will lead you to the tactics in your communication plan.

Evaluation

Evaluating your marketing effort helps determine where you should focus your attention and your financial resources in the future. Establish your benchmarks for your evaluations early in the process. Quantifiable benchmarks begin with repeatable measurements and continue with analysis over time.



Measurement and Analytics

Measurement gives you an idea of *how many*, such as:

- How many travelers take bus tours in each season in your region
- How many people call for maps or itineraries each quarter
- How many people registered for a three-day bicycle race in July
- How many new visitors spent time on your website this month
- How many sunny days you have in a year for photography

Analytics give you an idea of *how the measurements change over time*.

Typically, you would use a spreadsheet or database tool for categorizing and reporting data for certain time periods. For example, you might track visitor phone calls each month. Google Analytics works well for similar tracking of website visitor information; Facebook and other online venues offer similar analytics.

Tracking these measurements gathers historical data that may indicate future results. Moreover, you will likely spot trends to use in planning your marketing effort, such as opportunities for reaching new audiences or ideal timing for communications that you may not have recognized earlier.

The data that you accumulate, use to measure, and analyze over time provide insights to your results when the specific marketing effort concludes. Beginning your process with quantifiable research improves the likelihood of effective results, and, importantly, helps you evaluate and define the degree of effectiveness.

Return on Marketing Investment

Knowing how well a marketing plan delivered on your objectives is part of your return on investment (ROI) or more accurately, return on marketing investment (ROMI).

ROMI is a calculation of the gain attributed to marketing minus the marketing costs divided by the marketing costs invested. The result is a rate that allows you to compare various marketing methodologies and assess the value of them.

Marketing gains are your results converted to dollar values.

Marketing costs are the dollar values that were actually spent. This includes the actual dollar value of in-kind donations.

$$\text{ROMI} = \frac{\text{Marketing Gain} - \text{Marketing Cost}}{\text{Marketing Cost}}$$

Example: Your measurements indicate that a 15 percent increase in visitors, or an additional 3,000 travelers, was attributed to marketing. Using other economic impact calculations, you estimate that increase converts to \$900,000. The marketing costs included \$5,000 in website design costs and \$5,000 in printing and postage for postcards for a total of \$10,000.


$$\begin{aligned} \text{ROMI} &= \$900,000 \text{ Marketing Gain} \\ &- \$10,000 \text{ Marketing Cost} \\ &= \$890,000 / \$10,000 \text{ Marketing Cost} \\ &\text{ROMI factor} = 89 \end{aligned}$$

ROMI Calculation Example #1

Using this formula, you can test ROMI if your marketing costs included \$6,000 in newspaper advertising and \$3,000 in map printing. The returns for the second model are significantly higher. ROMI is a simple tool for comparison.


$$\begin{aligned} \text{ROMI} &= \$900,000 \text{ Marketing Gain} \\ &- \$9,000 \text{ Marketing Cost} \\ &= \$891,000 / \$9,000 \text{ Marketing Cost} \\ &\text{ROMI factor} = 99 \end{aligned}$$

ROMI Calculation Example #2 for ROMI Factor Comparison

Economic Impact

What impact does your marketing have on your local economy? Various models exist for quantifying economic impact in terms of marketing investments or other factors. The measurements that you track throughout your marketing efforts will be useful in understanding and defining the value of your marketing efforts to your advocates and stakeholders, community members, and skeptics and critics.

America's Byways Resource Center commissioned the development of an Economic Impact Tool to assist local byway staff and/or volunteers to measure the impacts of byways and byway-related activities in their communities.

The Economic Impact Tool is a Microsoft Excel-based software program with a user-friendly interface that allows even novice computer users to generate economic impact figures for their regions. Request this CD from the Resource Center online at its website: <http://www.bywaysresourcecenter.org/resources/specialprojects/economicimpacttool/>.

Contact your local chamber of commerce or convention and visitor bureau or your state's byway coordinator to learn more about the common economic impact models in use for your area.

Next Steps: The Communication Plan

The communication plan shows your action steps—the specific tactics that will help you reach your goals in strategic alignment with all other aspects of your marketing plan. The communication plan evaluates and identifies the messages and methods of delivering the messages, optimum timing, development and production considerations, and costs.

The communication plan may change, even when the marketing plan stays the same.

Your marketing plan should indicate how you intend to proceed with creating and executing the communication plan. Show when you expect the plan to be completed and assign the responsible individuals or organizations.

Look for more information about the communication plan and its potential tactics in Volumes II and III.

Summary

Stakeholder and Partnership Engagement

Throughout your marketing plan development and implementation, communicate with your stakeholders and partners. Ask for their input and feedback. Send regular updates on your progress. Share your questions and concerns—they have valuable vantage points for assessing your situation and suggesting solutions or actions.

Your research may reveal additional potential partners that may become instrumental in reaching your goals. Their marketing plans may complement yours, and you may find opportunities for cost-sharing advertising or other communication tactics. Some examples include:

- State tourism office
- Convention and visitor bureaus
- Chambers of commerce
- Schools or colleges
- Recreational organizations

By taking the necessary time to work through the research and strategic development process and checking that your marketing plan aligns with your CMP and the America's Byways brand, you'll keep your byway on the road to success.



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