

# TURNING YOUR SHOULDER SEASONS INTO PEAK SEASONS

Presented by Roger Brooks

Destination Development  
Association

What are “shoulder seasons”?

Peak (12 wks)

Shoulder (22)

Off (18 wks)

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10 to-do items that will maximize tourism during the shoulder seasons

“There is no silver bullet.”



Thom Tischik - ExecDir  
Revelstoke (BC) Accommodation Association



Do the research and create  
the foundation for success

You will enjoy a sustainable tourism economy  
when you can stretch your seasons to  
eight months a year

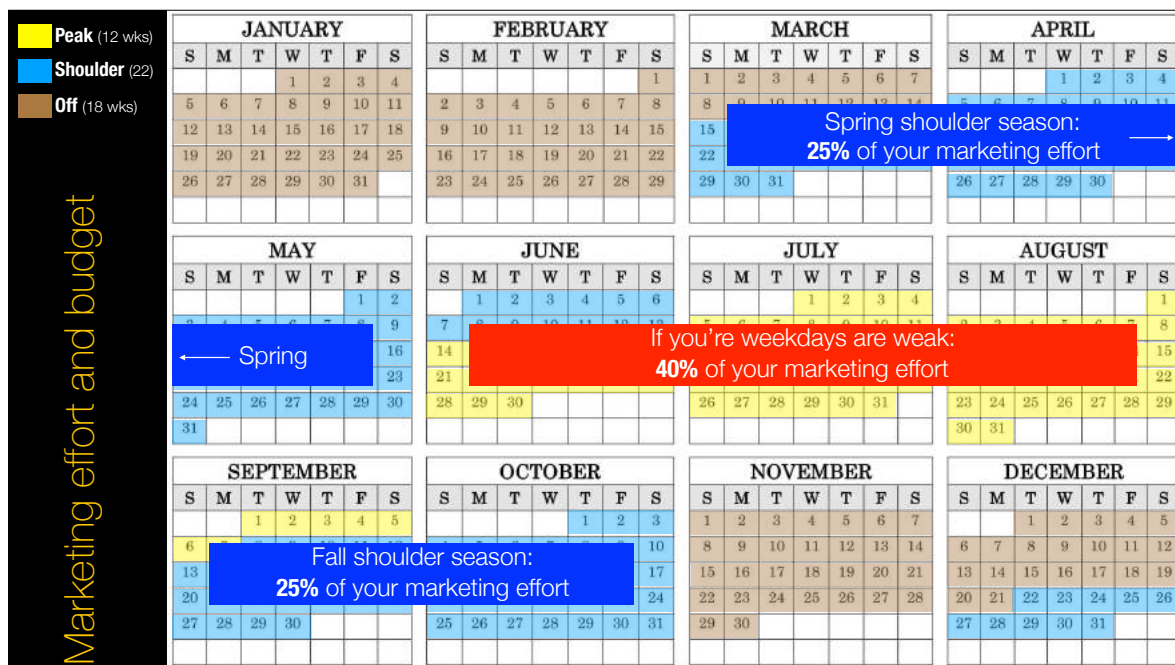




# What to do

Determine when your  
“shoulder seasons” are

Ask your hotels | motels | B&Bs | AirBNB owners | Look at lodging tax receipts by month





## Ocean Shores, Washington

- Monday through Thursday
- October through March
- Weekdays during the summer when weather was not cooperating

2

## Seasonal marketing

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Always spend your marketing dollars where you can achieve the greatest return on investment

## Tourism New Zealand



Spent **100%** of its budget promoting New Zealand as an off-peak destination.  
Promoting primarily March through November (the winter months down under)

It worked:

**3,847,000 visitors - a record high**

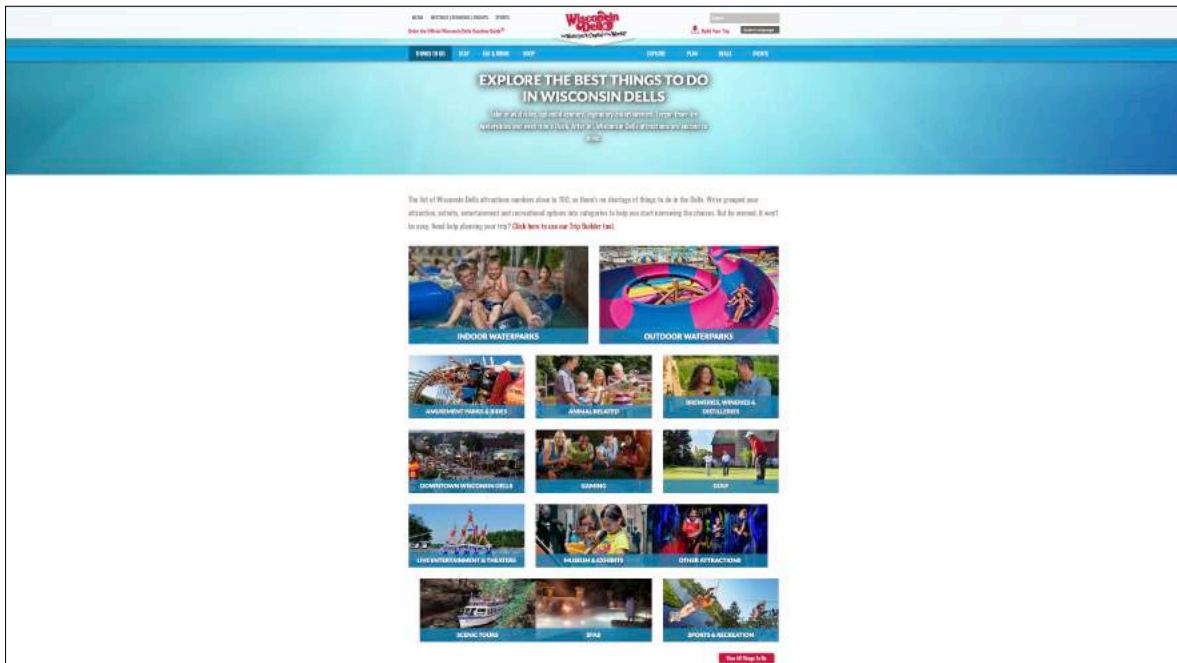
Also helped destinations suffering from over-tourism during their summer months

3

What to do

Determine who your audience is:  
Who can travel during those weeks?



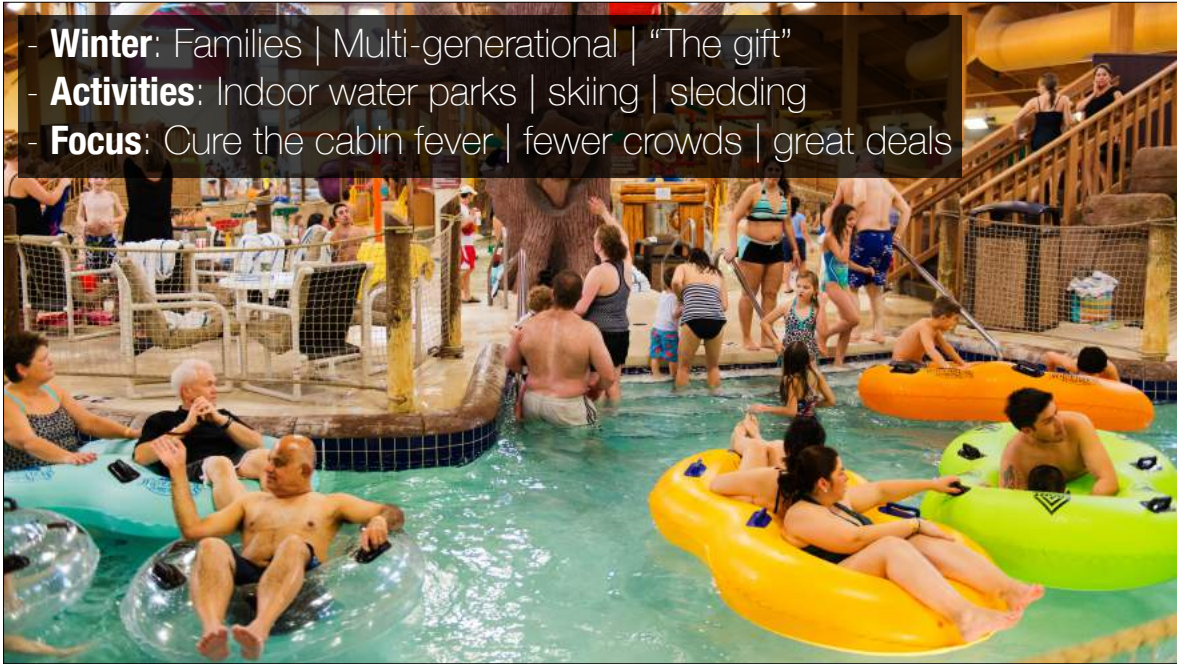


## Wisconsin Dells. Wisconsin

- **40% of fall & early spring visitors:** Adults with no kids
- **Focus:** Couples, friends, girls getaways
- **Activities:** Casino, nightlife, wineries, breweries
- **Media:** Outlets this demographic sees or reads



- **Winter:** Families | Multi-generational | “The gift”
- **Activities:** Indoor water parks | skiing | sledding
- **Focus:** Cure the cabin fever | fewer crowds | great deals



Boomers | Empty nesters

**Most of the US\*  
Canada**  
[Non-ski destinations]

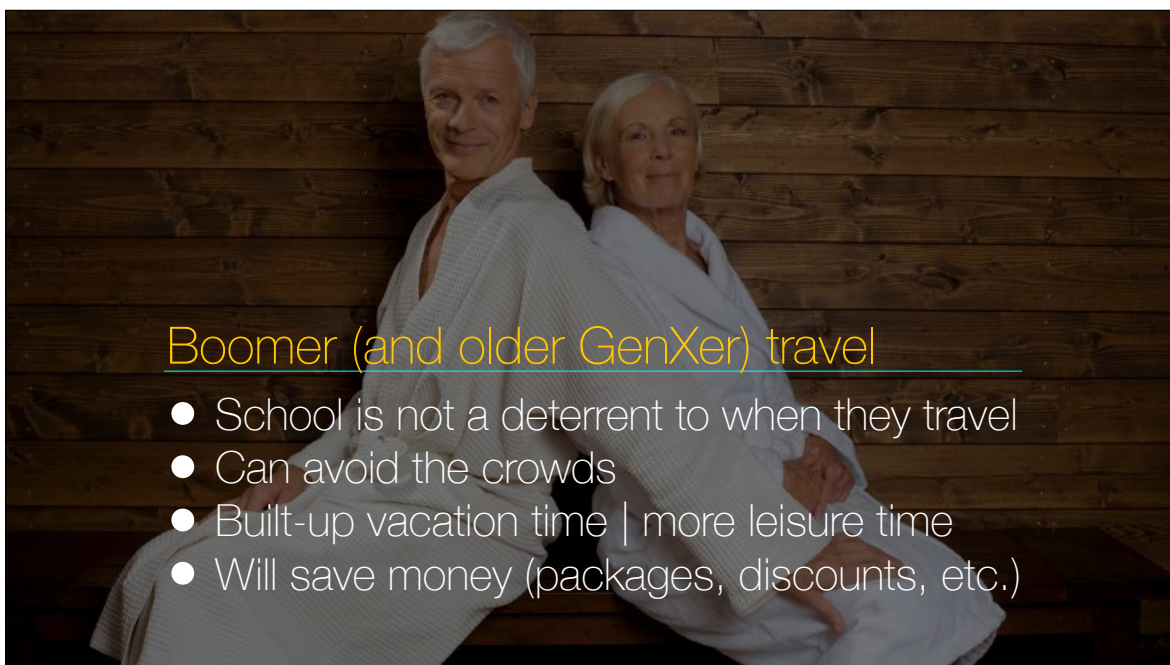
Peak travel weeks for Boomers

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Spring shoulder season:  
25% of your marketing effort →

← Spring

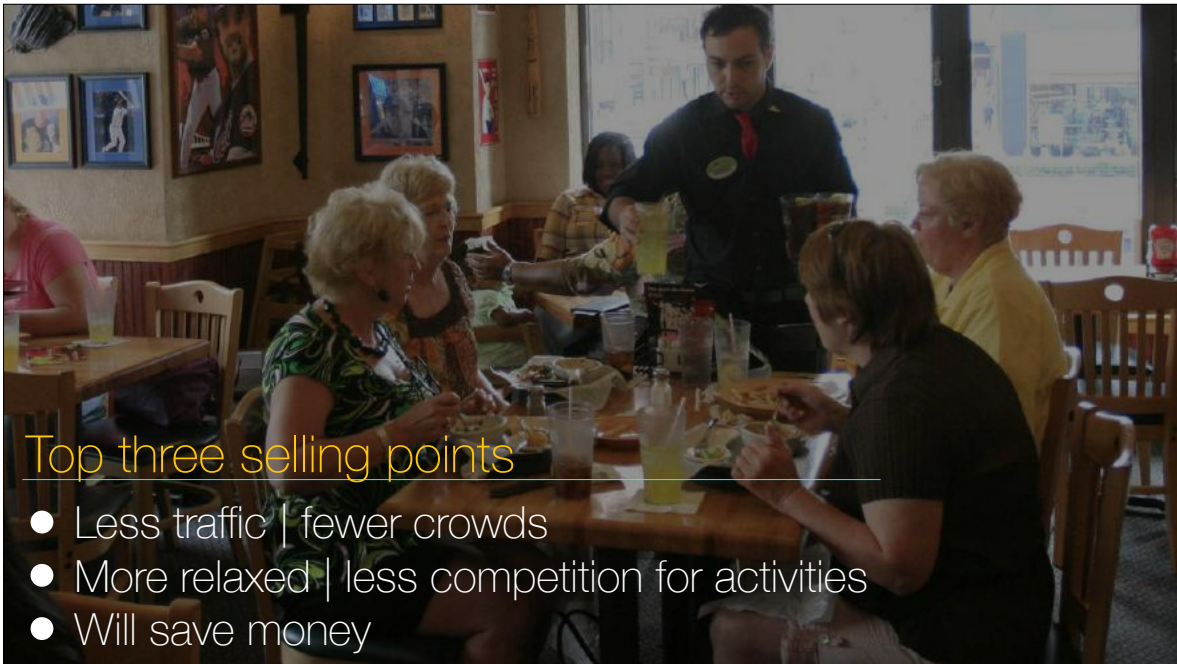
Fall shoulder season:  
25% of your marketing effort



## Boomer (and older GenXer) travel

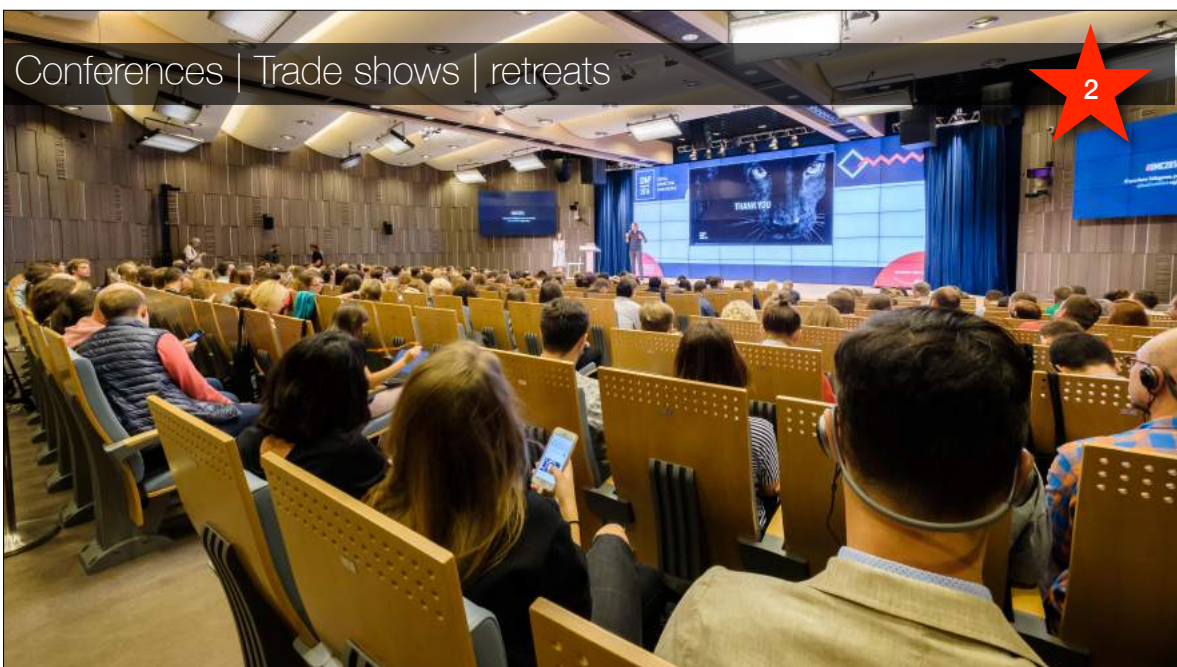
- School is not a deterrent to when they travel
- Can avoid the crowds
- Built-up vacation time | more leisure time
- Will save money (packages, discounts, etc.)





### Top three selling points

- Less traffic | fewer crowds
- More relaxed | less competition for activities
- Will save money



Conferences | Trade shows | retreats

2



Learning retreats: writers | pottery & visual arts | culinary | wellness

4

What to do

Make a list of school districts  
within a 2.5 hour drive and find out  
when fall, spring breaks take place





## Homework

- Identify your shoulder season weeks
- Identify your audience (geographic)
- Identify your audience (demographics)
- Make a calendar of school breaks
- Load those weeks with activities
- Determine a marketing budget
- Then market to them specifically



Make it obvious you're open year round!

### **First up**

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Clearly identify **five** seasons  
and when each will take place

Peak (12 wks)

Shoulder (22)

Off (18 wks)

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Peak (12 wks)

Shoulder (22)

Off (18 wks)

ROMANTIC ESCAPES

SPRING FLING

SPRING FLING

SUMMER FUN

FALL COLOR

THE HOLIDAYS

## Late January | February | March

- Winter break
- Cabin fever
- Snow kissed
- Romantic escapes
- Heartsong Season
- Winter's End





A close-up photograph of a branch with several pink cherry blossoms. One flower is in sharp focus in the foreground, showing its delicate petals and yellow stamens. Other blossoms are visible along the branch and in the blurred background.

## **April | May**

- Spring fling
- Spring magic
- Spring fever
- Blossom
- Vernal Voyages

A photograph of a field of sunflowers. The sun is shining brightly from behind one of the flowers, creating a lens flare effect. The sunflowers have large, dark brown heads and bright yellow petals. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue.

## **June | July | August**

- Summer splash
- Fun in the Sun
- Summer song
- Hot Fun
- Picnics & playtime





## September | October

- Autumn Fest
- Fabulous Fall
- Fall color
- Festive Fall
- Fall Cornucopia



## November | December

- Winter wonderland
- Season of Joy
- The Holidays
- Get together season
- Holiday Magic

## Second up

Update your website and Activities Guide:  
To include your five seasons  
and top three reasons to visit each season

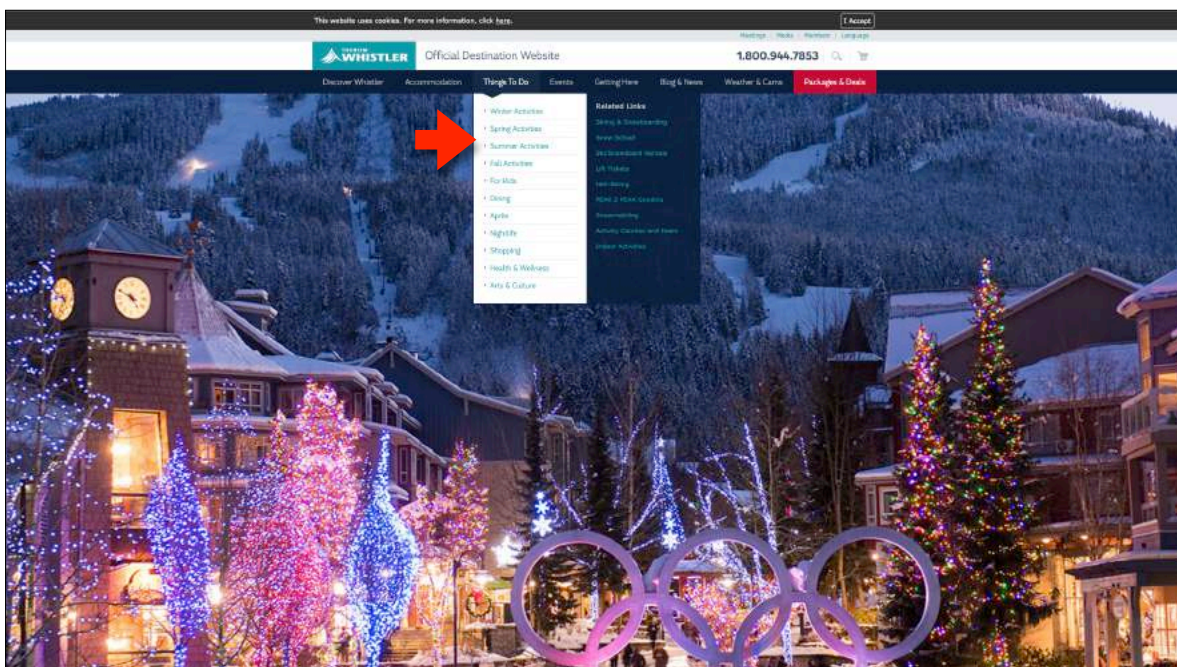






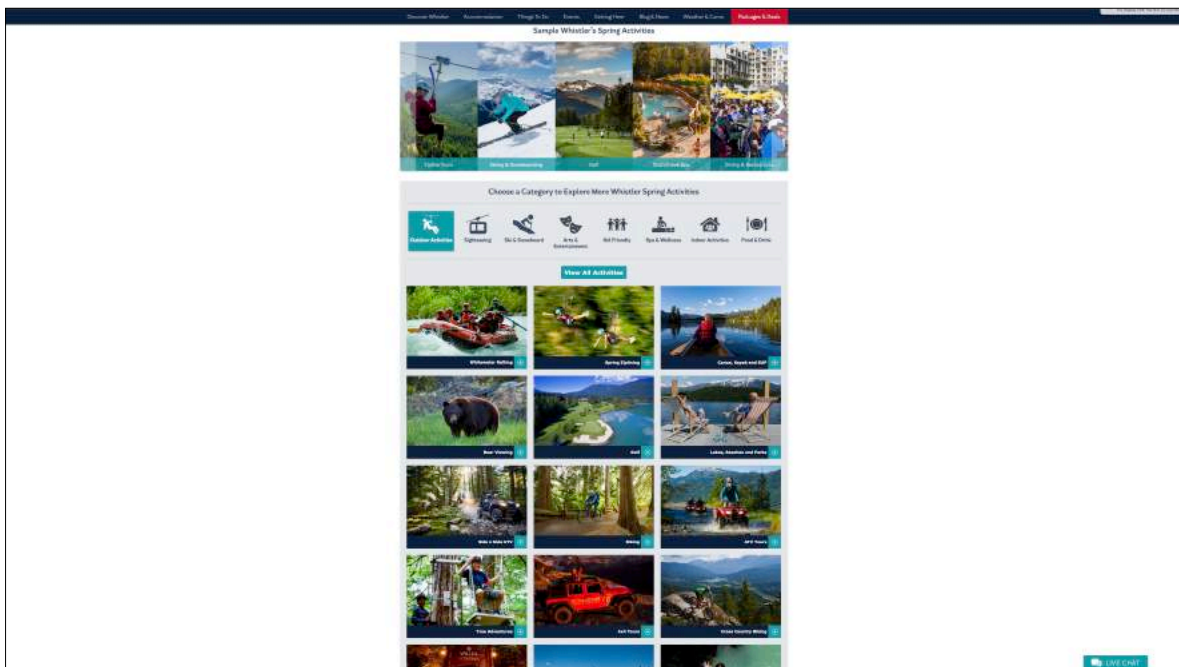
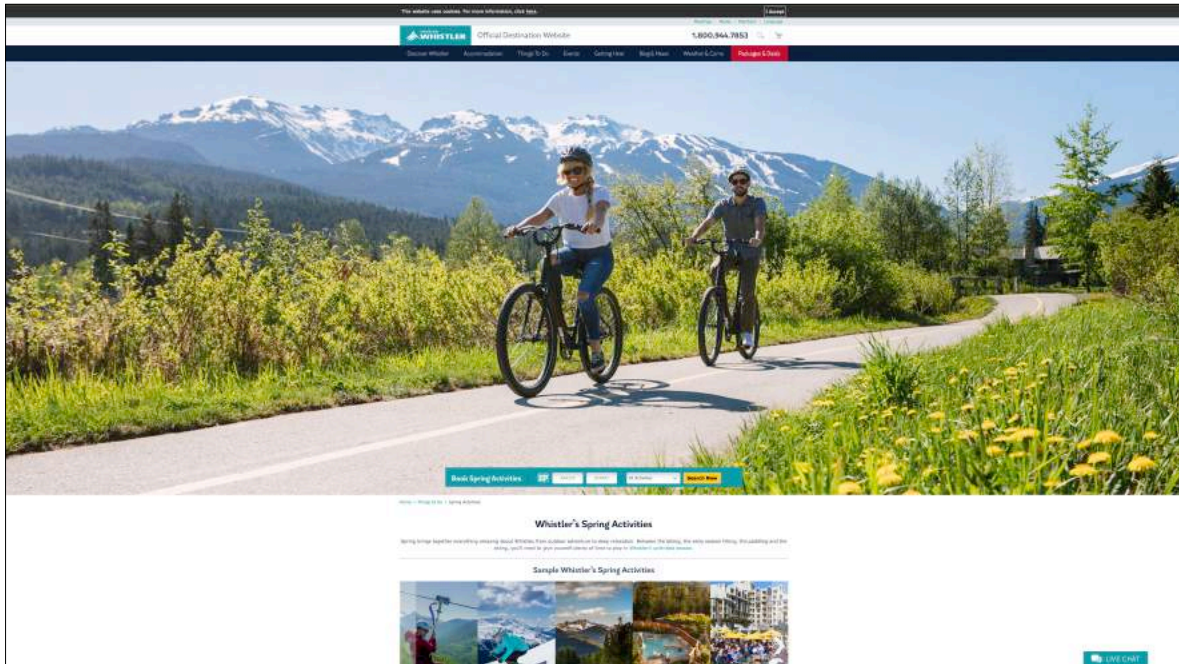
## Third up

Your home page should promote the season  
Then: Pick your season, pick your passion

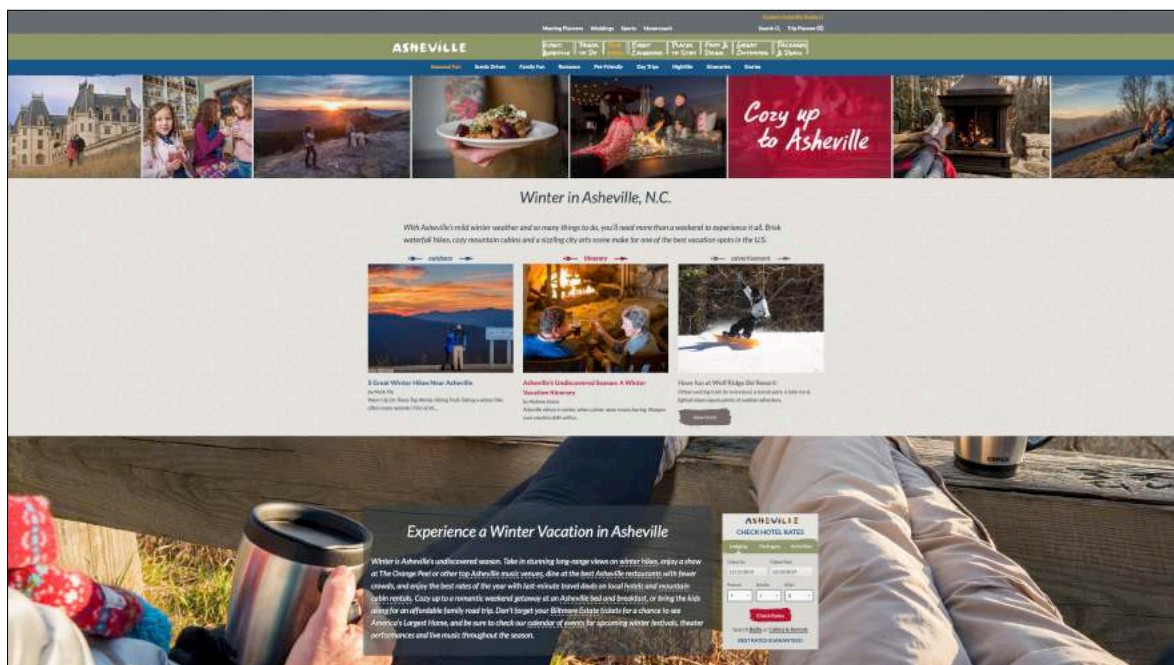








## The slow season in Whistler: May & November









## Pick your season



## Pick your passion



You've been cooped up all winter and it's time to escape the doldrums and turn winter on its head. Here are three outstanding reasons to escape this weekend to our town:



1

A hotel or B&B with cozy fireplaces, candles, hot cider drinks, spa tubs. Provide links with big savings. [Click here for details](#)



2

One of the top-rated snowmobile destinations in Alberta. Rent one, head out with a guide, or download a map of the most scenic trails you've ever ridden. [Click here for details](#)



3

Spend some time on three amazing sledding hills. Rent one, bring your own. A tow rope takes you up making it easy and so much fun! [Click here for details](#)



## Fourth up

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### Include:

- Weather considerations
- Top three, five, seven activities where you shine
- What to wear
- What to bring
- Travel tips for this season

## Fifth up

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Start the seasonal marketing

**30 days prior**

to the start of the shoulder season you're promoting.

## Pick your season

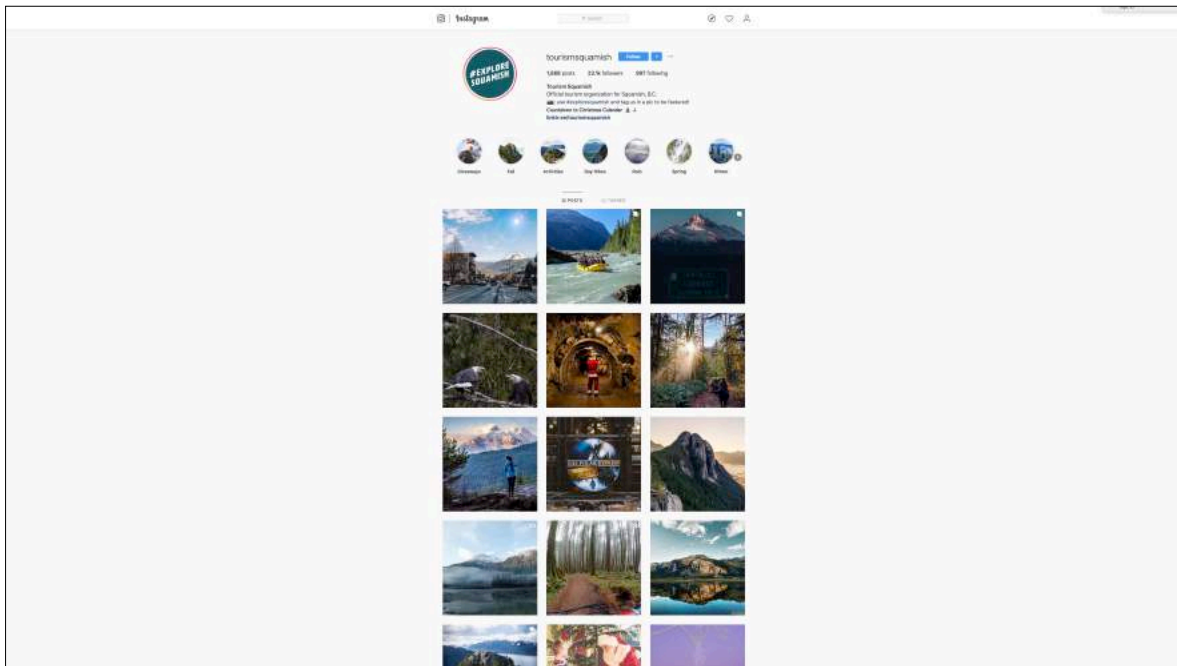


## Sixth up

### Social media

Make sure your Instagram and Facebook feeds feature activities taking place that time of year





## Bottom line

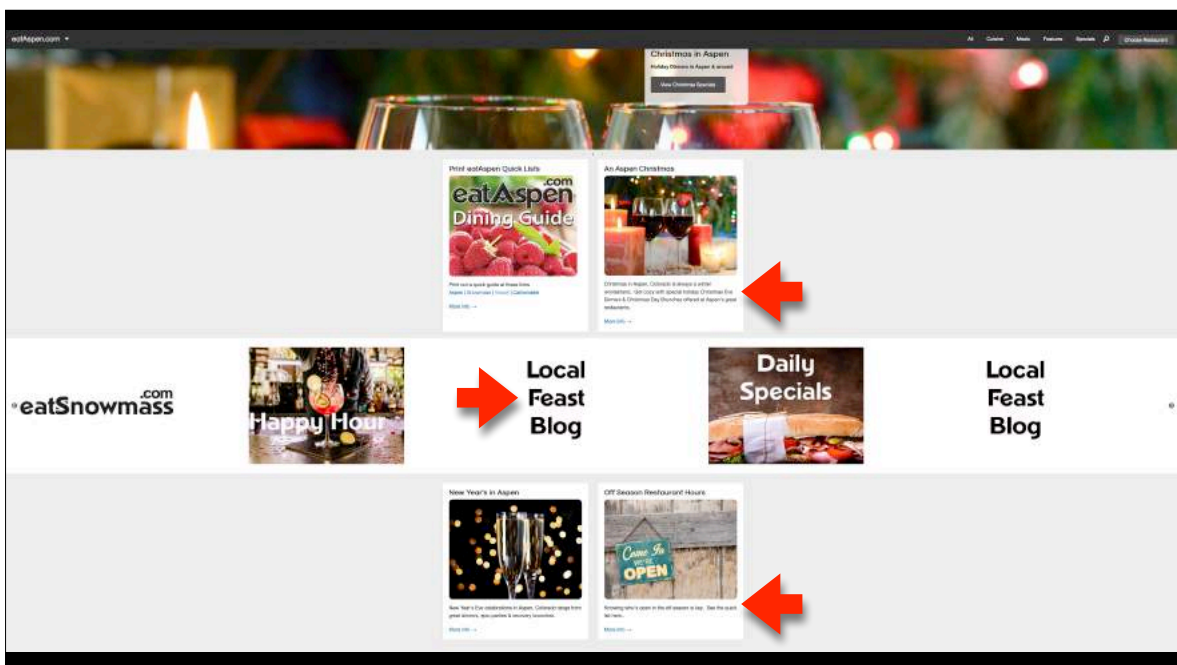
Make it obvious you're open year round:

Change your home page each season

Pick your season, pick your passion



Market to your local residents

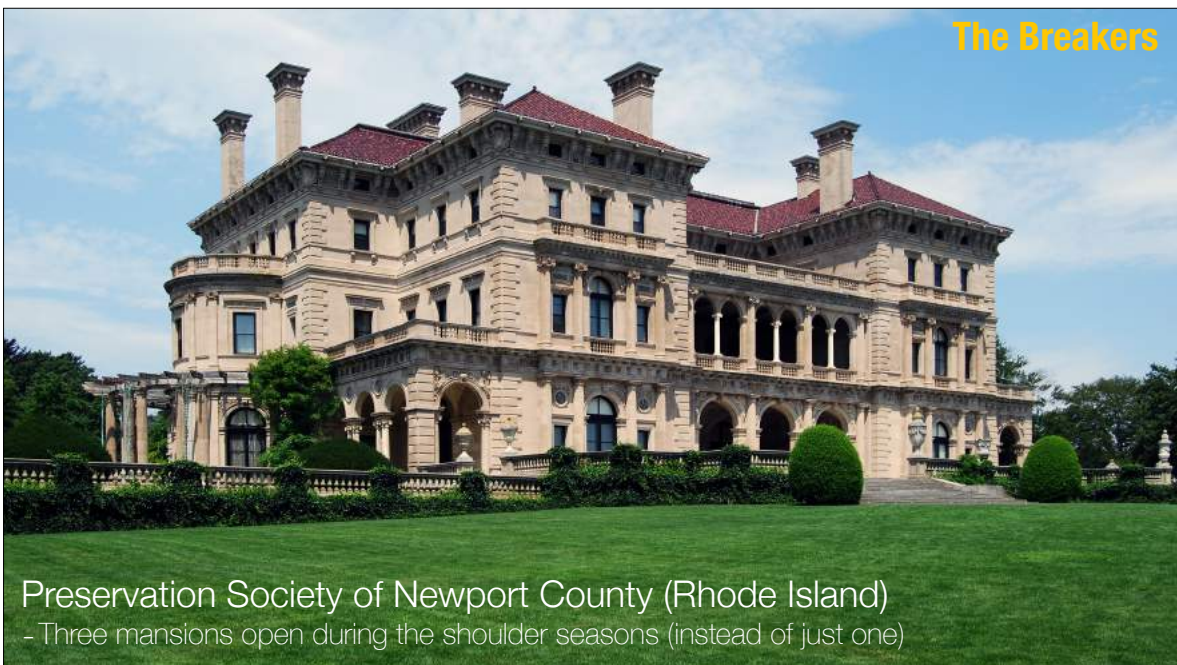








Canmore, Alberta



The Breakers

Preservation Society of Newport County (Rhode Island)  
- Three mansions open during the shoulder seasons (instead of just one)





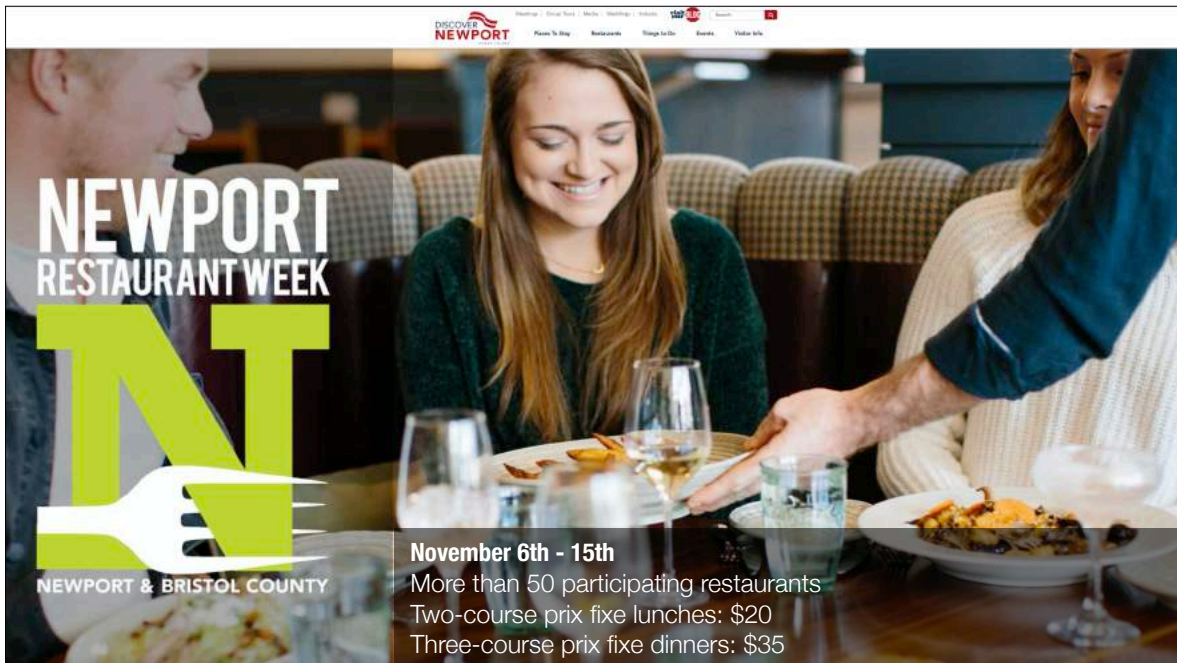
**The Elms**

- Free admission for residents



**Marble House**

- Free admission (Jan weekend) for everyone in the county

A banner for Newport Restaurant Week. The background is a photograph of three people (two women and one man) sitting at a restaurant table, smiling and looking at a plate of food. Overlaid on the left is a large green 'N' with a white fork integrated into its design. To the right of the 'N', the text 'NEWPORT RESTAURANT WEEK' is written in white. Below the 'N' is the text 'NEWPORT & BRISTOL COUNTY' in white. At the top of the banner, there is a navigation bar with the 'DISCOVER NEWPORT' logo and links for 'Home', 'About Newport', 'Media', 'Meetings', 'Events', 'Things to Do', 'Restaurants', 'Brews', and 'Visitor Info'.

**NEWPORT RESTAURANT WEEK**

**NT**

NEWPORT & BRISTOL COUNTY

**November 6th - 15th**  
More than 50 participating restaurants  
Two-course prix fixe lunches: \$20  
Three-course prix fixe dinners: \$35

Offer “**locals only**” discounts at hotels & resorts  
Typically 1/2 price

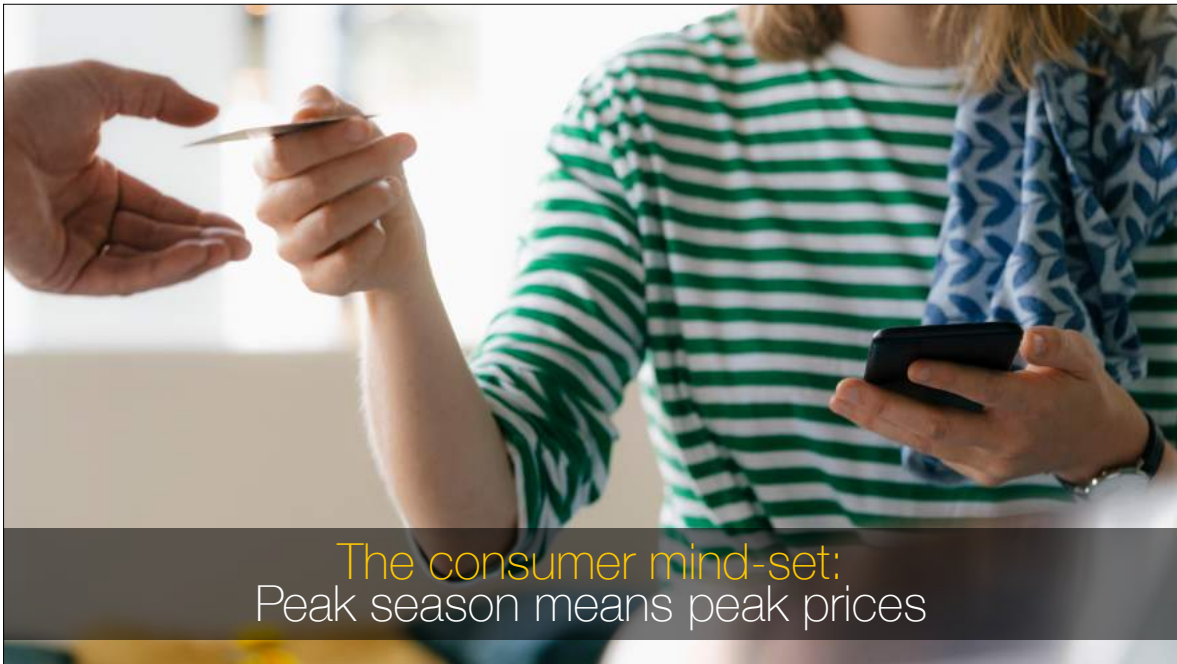
**What to do**  
One-third to 60% off  
**Make the pricing transparent:**  
Real \$ not just %



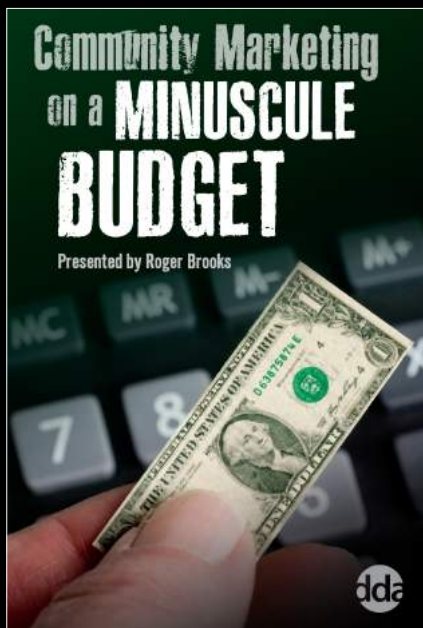


Book small-group gatherings:  
conferences & retreats





The consumer mind-set:  
Peak season means peak prices

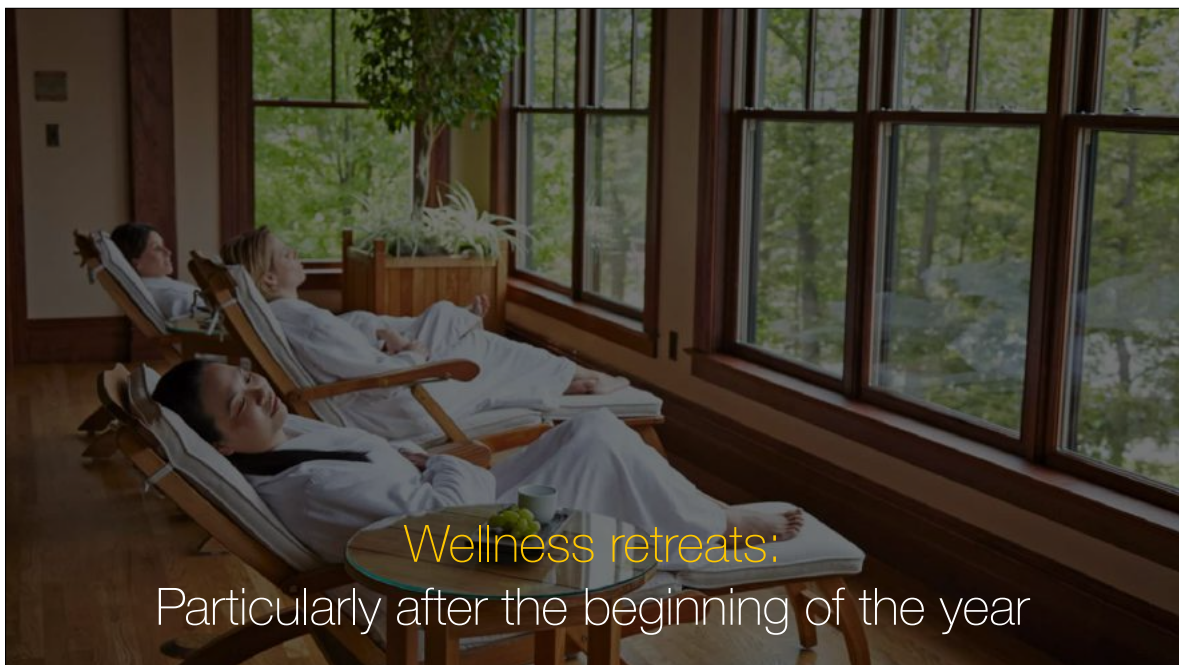


In the DDA Resource Center - Marketing



### Educational classes:

- Quilting
- Pottery & visual arts
- Writers retreats
- Indoor shooting | archery
- Furniture making | restoration
- Home decor



### Wellness retreats:

Particularly after the beginning of the year



## Note

Your local businesses  
are the ones to make this happen:  
create marketing partnerships

**Chippewa Retreat Resort**  
The Northwest's Best All Season Resort

Search

[Newsletter Signup](#) [Reservations](#) [Home](#) [About](#) [Accommodations](#) [Packages](#) [Retreats](#) [Events](#) [Weddings](#) [Contact](#) [Map](#)

**Corporate Retreats**  
*Rejuvenate Your Professional Team*

**Accommodations**  
Chippewa Retreat Resort has sealed its position as the go-to destination for family vacations, weddings, corporate retreats, training seminars, family reunions & specialty events. The level of clients returning year after year attests to our success! Amenities include on-site rental management, the lodge,  
[Read more](#)

**Weddings**  
Weddings at Chippewa Retreat Resort offers the perfect lakeside setting for your wedding day. A beautifully manicured and landscaped lawn overlooking Lake Manitowish, providing a breathtaking backdrop for an outdoor ceremony. After the ceremony you and your wedding party along  
[Read more](#)

**Events**  
Chippewa Retreat Resort is the perfect destination for a special event. A panoramic view of Lake Manitowish and the surrounding natural beauty of the Northwoods create a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere. Located on a beautiful 10 lake chain, summer activities include swimming,  
[Read more](#)



Create and sell packages:  
Make them exceptional

### **Sonnenalp - Vail, Colorado**

\$227 (Oct 2nd to Nov 17th)  
Reduced valet parking costs  
Two oxygen bar sessions at the spa  
Reduced green fees  
One & two-bedroom suites

#### **What to include:**

- Lodging (make it nice)
- Meals (2 for 1 cost)
- Activities (1/2 price)
- Gift basket | room perks (included)

## **Bottom line**

Make it too good to pass up!



Take advantage of the weather:  
turn lemons into lemonade



Storm watching alerts





Candles in rooms  
Fireplace rooms get booked first  
Hot chocolate | coffee | ciders  
Extra throws  
Video and book library  
Board games and puzzles

### **The weather conundrum:**

Provide things to do when the weather won't cooperate  
(particularly during the shoulder season)



## Escape Rooms




Have a local retailer sell  
"Emergency Spa Kits"





## Lodging:

# Invite your customers back! Give them a reason & incentives



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info@fueltravel.com

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### How can Hotels Promote Sales During the Off-Season?

January Research - October 6, 2016

Hotels are always looking for off-season revenue and one of the best ways to get it is by creating a list of incentives for your digital marketing strategy. Hotels should be considering options including email, social, paid search, and website content to promote sales during the off-season. It's challenging as hotels have to be aware of what they can do to get their guests back for their off-season marketing strategy.

Before getting started, hotels should first determine what their off-season marketing strategy is. It's important to know what your off-season marketing strategy is before you can create a list of incentives for your off-season marketing strategy.

Follow the ideas below on how hotels can start promoting sales during the off-season:



#### How can hotels use website content to increase off-season occupancy?

##### Use off-season imagery on your website

As the seasons shift, hotels should have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season.

##### Implement Hotel Website Content

Hotels should have a plan to update their website content to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season.

##### Create content dedicated to the off-season

Hotels should have a plan to update their website content to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season.

##### Build content around weddings, meetings, sporting events

Hotels should have a plan to update their website content to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season.

#### How can hotels use paid search to increase off-season occupancy?

##### Update your ad copy with off-season friendly language

Hotels should have a plan to update their website content to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season.

##### Create campaigns that market off-season amenities

Hotels should have a plan to update their website content to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season.

##### Build out season-specific campaigns for your location

Hotels should have a plan to update their website content to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season. It's important to have a plan to update your property's website to reflect the off-season.

### How can hotels use email marketing to increase off-season occupancy?

**Re-market your email database**

It's a repeat tactic that can already be familiar with your property. Follow an email campaign that entice your past guests with new rates or a loyalty package. Go further to segment your database with guests that already stayed at your hotel during the off-season. Also there is a particular reason they stayed at your hotel during that time period? Refine list to increase occupancy.

### How can hotels use social media to increase off-season occupancy?

**Target your targeting to locals**

Facebook, with its targeting features, is a great resource for hotels looking to engage with their past guests and generate repeat guests. In this resource consider marketing to those who are already near your property.

High resolution "beachfront" images or photos of your hotel that locals can use. Post on stories that feature under the hotel's off-season rates, and add a link to your hotel.

Facebook's ad targeting tools allow you to target specific regions and cities, but you can also target from regional targeting with member demographics and behaviors. To your audience base would be local? Consider a campaign that target people in nearby cities and towns. To make your ads to local hotels are appearing prominently with a targeted campaign only available during your off-season.

Get more hotel marketing tips and how-to's.

Let us help you grow your business. With the most comprehensive set of hotel marketing products available, you'll have everything you need to grow your business.

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- Software
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Get the latest news on hotel marketing and more. Sign up now.

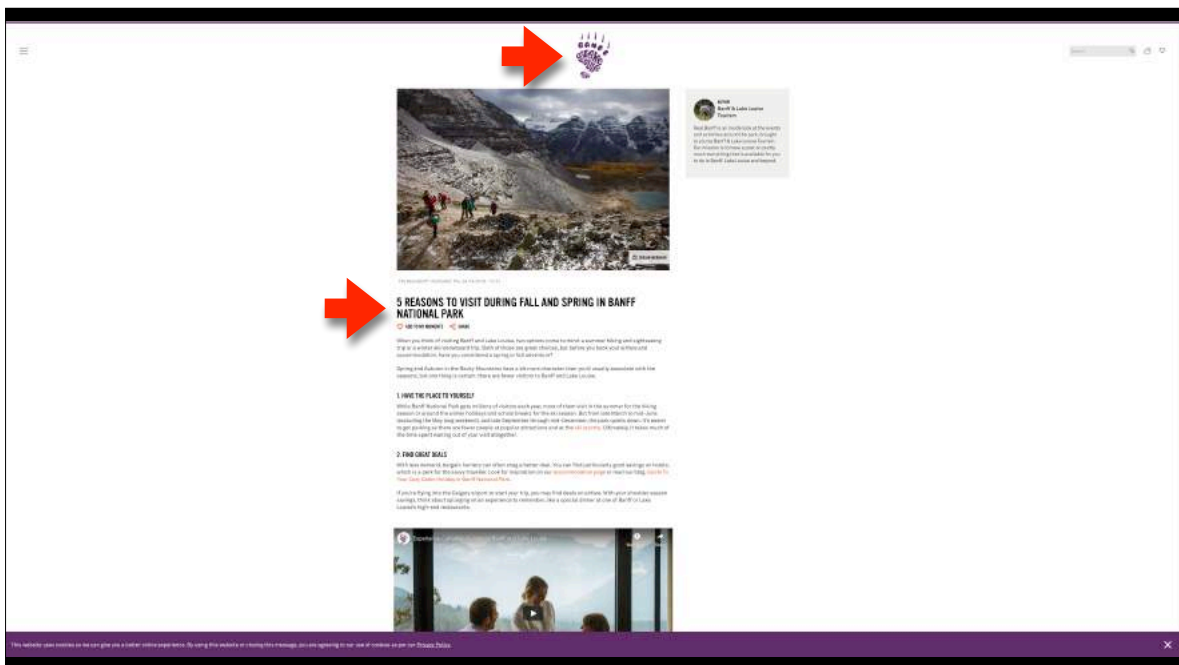
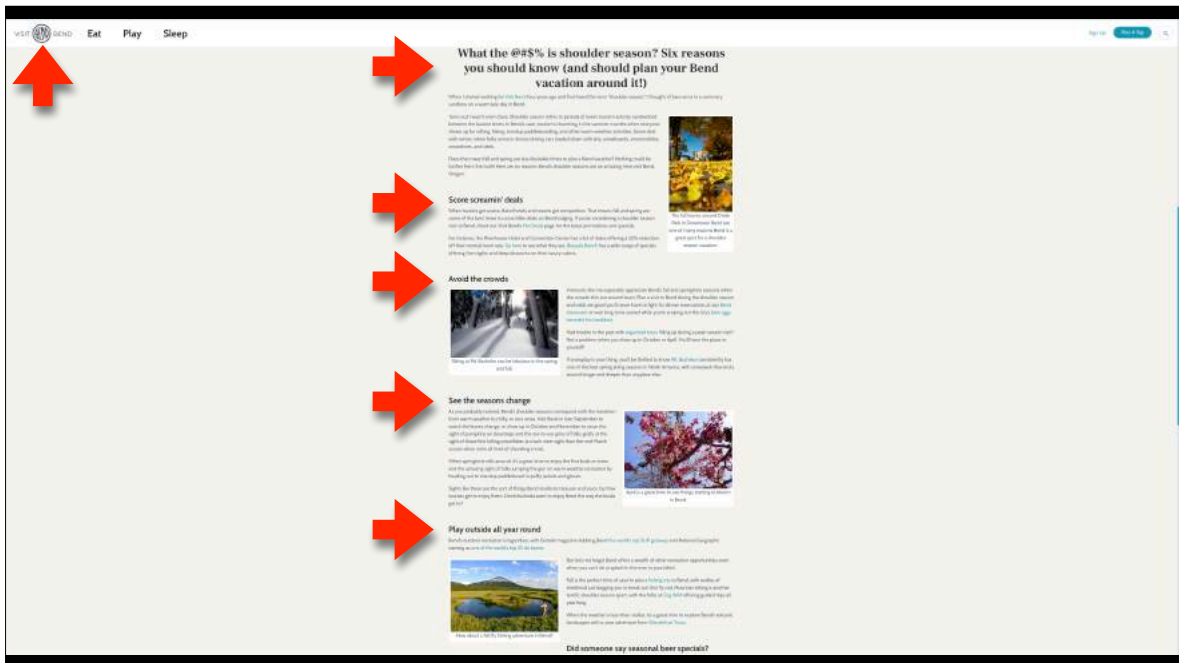
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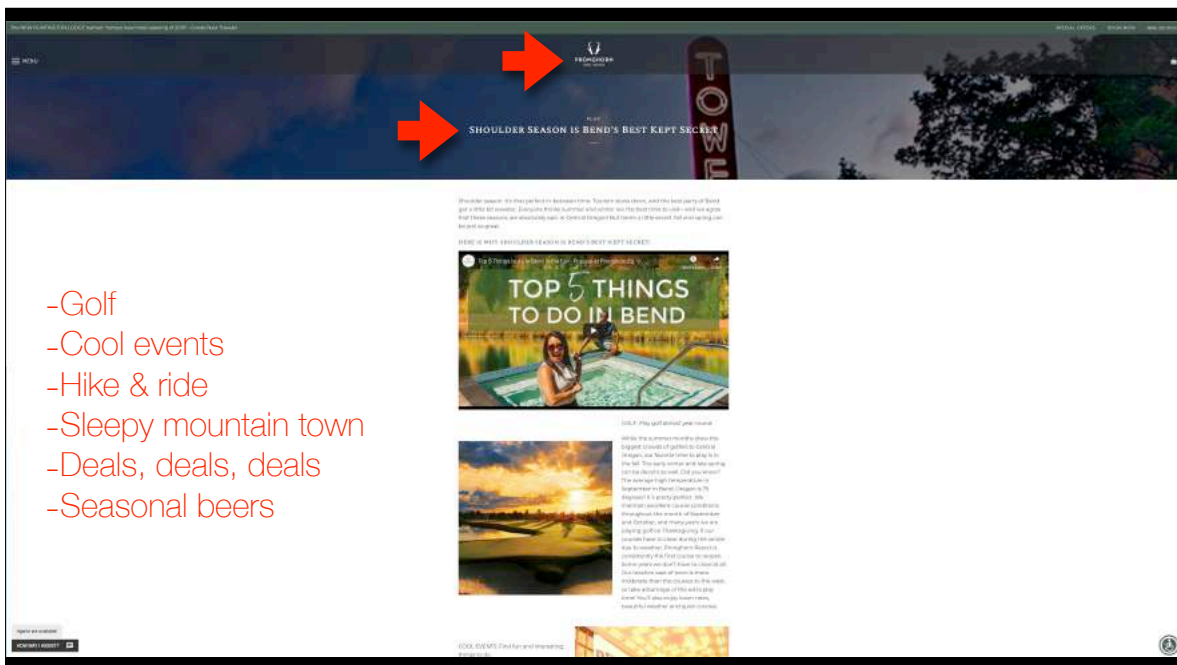
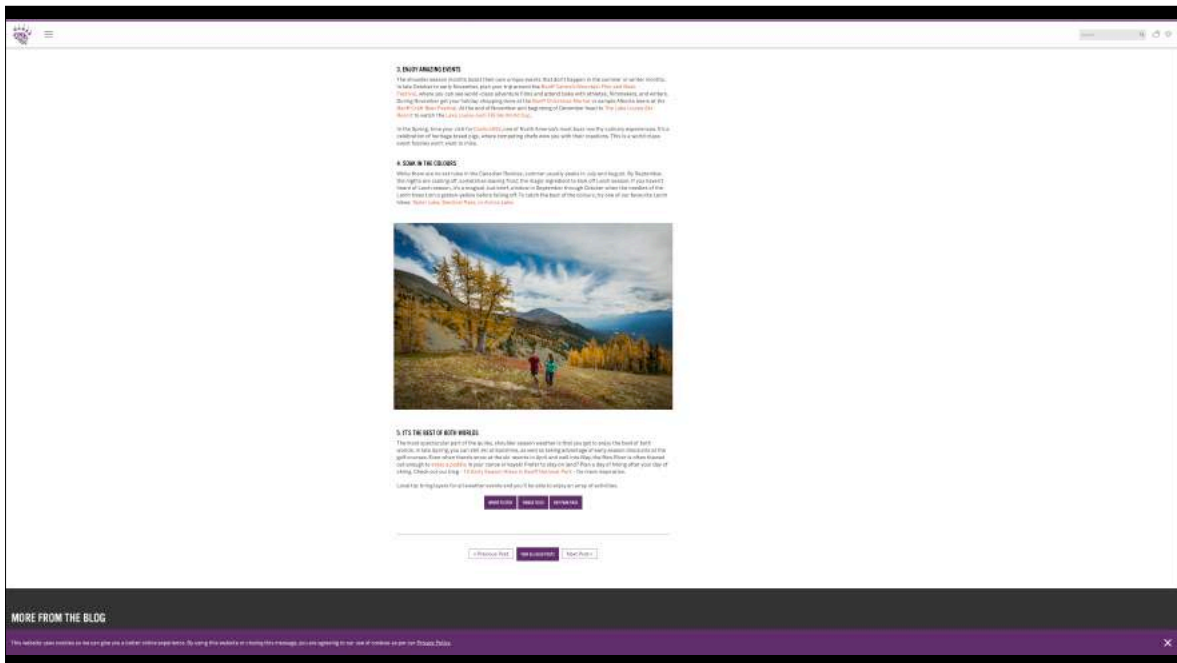
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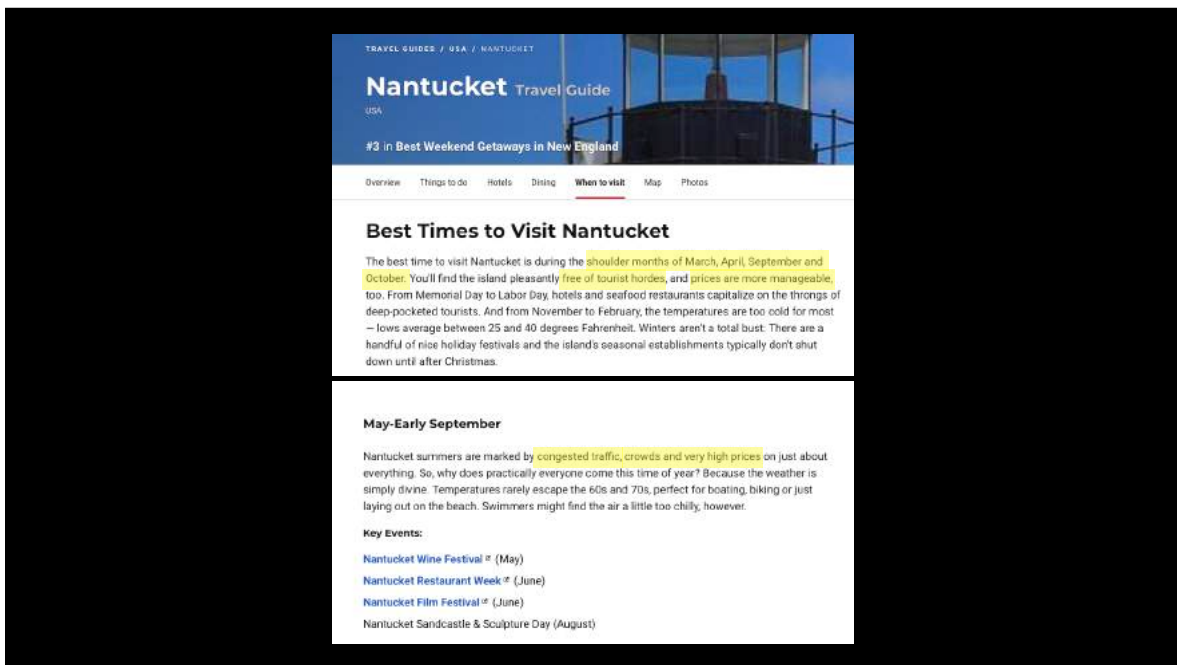
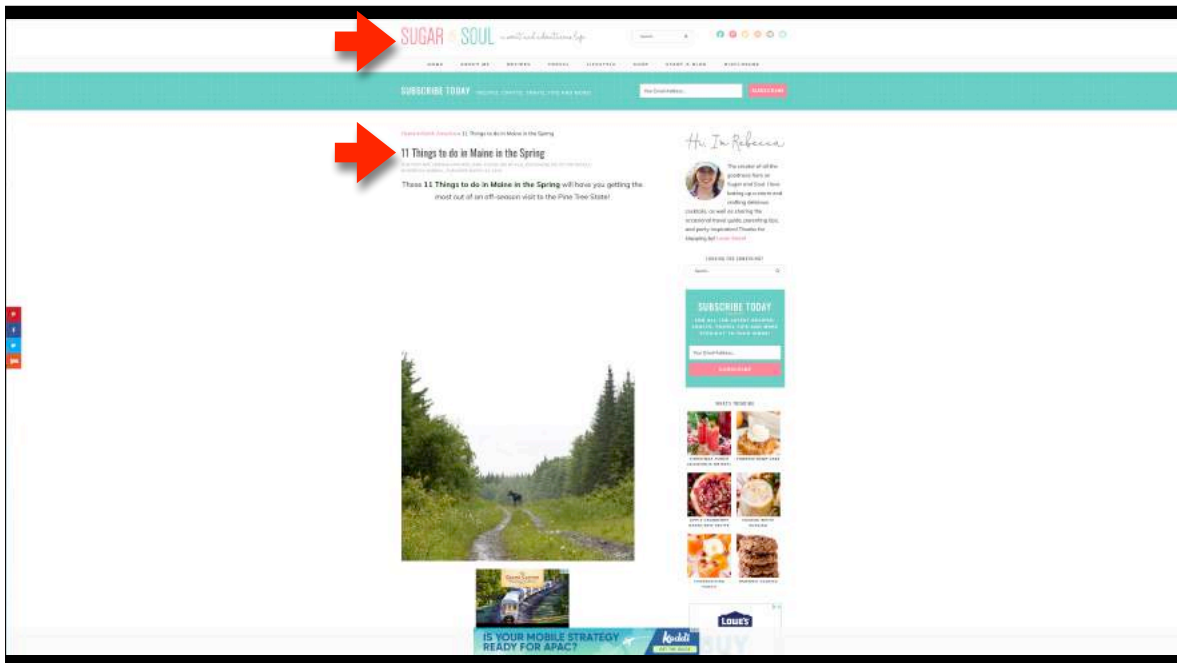
Work with influencers, bloggers:  
provide reasons WHY visitors should come  
this time of year







- Golf
- Cool events
- Hike & ride
- Sleepy mountain town
- Deals, deals, deals
- Seasonal beers



**Next Time to Visit**

**Key Events:**

Nantucket Arts Festival <sup>8</sup> (October)

November-February

**Key Events:**

Festival of Trees <sup>12</sup> (December)

March-April

**Key Events:**

The screenshot shows a web browser with a list of travel blogs. Two red arrows point to specific blog entries. The first arrow points to a blog titled "Here are the top 10 travel bloggers you should already be following." The second arrow points to a blog titled "Top 10 Travel Bloggers You Should Already Be Following".





Push your festivals and events  
into the shoulder seasons





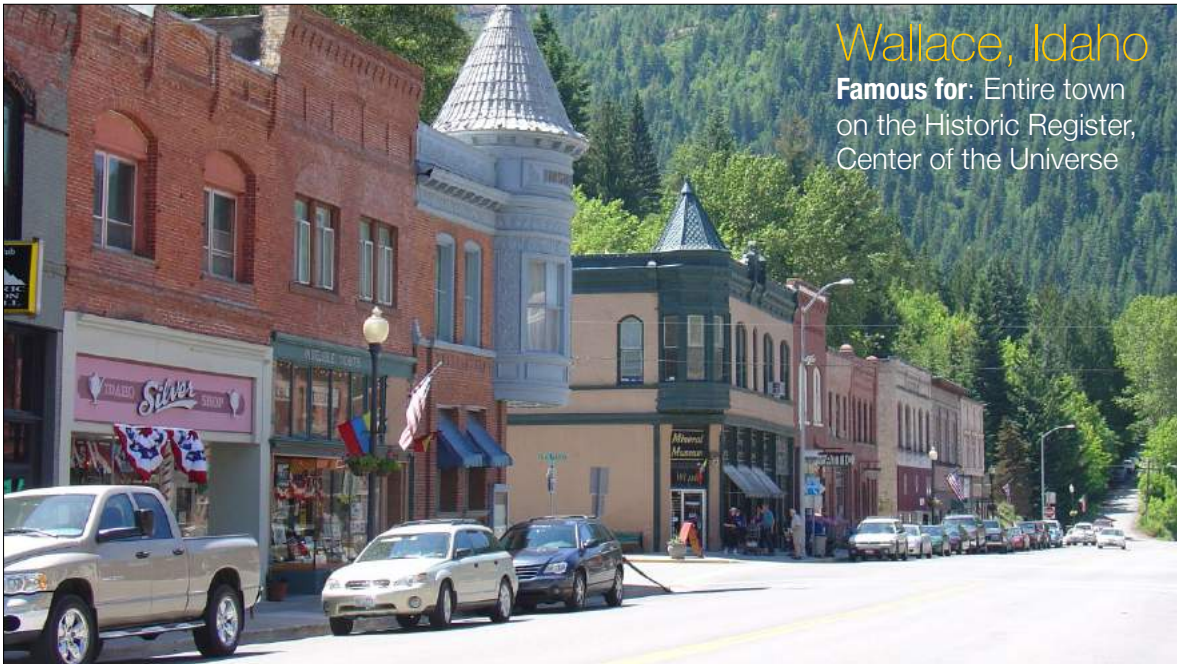




They also host a Chocolate Walk  
(The Saturday prior to Valentine's Day)

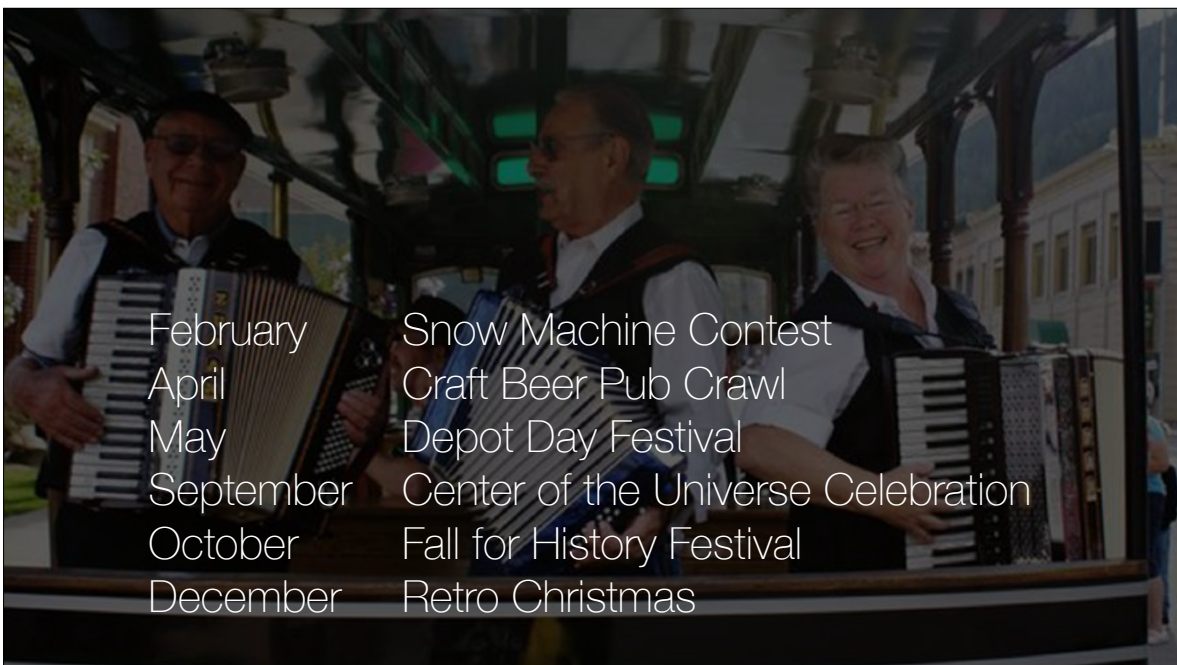






## Wallace, Idaho

**Famous for:** Entire town  
on the Historic Register,  
Center of the Universe



February

April

May

September

October

December

Snow Machine Contest

Craft Beer Pub Crawl

Depot Day Festival

Center of the Universe Celebration

Fall for History Festival

Retro Christmas

## Savannah, Georgia

**September:** Savannah Jazz Fest

**October:** Savannah Film Festival

**October:** Ghost tours

**November:** Food & Wine Festival



College and professional sports:  
FanFests, tailgate parties



[illegible]



















Steubenville, Ohio  
Nutcracker Village & Advent Market







## Great Ideas That Will Make You A Fantastic Holiday Destination

Presented by Roger Brooks



DDA Resource Center - Downtown

## Ashland, Oregon

Oregon Shakespeare Festival

6 days a week, 9 months of the year



## St. Paul, Minnesota

Winter Carnival

Jan. 23rd - Feb 2nd











## Month-long festival ideas

- Scarecrow Festival
- Ice sculptures
- Ice skating
- Holiday festival (Christmas)
- Oktoberfest
- Quilt shows
- Holiday inflatables
- Farm shows
- Pumpkin festival
- Storytelling festival

In conclusion

- 1 Start with a plan
- 2 Make it obvious your open year round - Invite us back!
- 3 Market to your local residents - and their visitors
- 4 Book small-group gatherings
- 5 Create and market packages - Make it worth the trip!
- 6 Take advantage of not-so-great weather
- 7 Lodging: Invite your customers back!
- 8 Work with bloggers and online influencers
- 9 Push your festivals into your shoulder seasons
- 10 Create multi-day and month-long events

Here's to bolstering your shoulder seasons  
making you an eight-month must-visit destination

For more how-to resources join us - and  
have your local businesses join as well  
[DestinationDevelopment.org](http://DestinationDevelopment.org)