

CANADIAN SALES PLAN

VISIT ST. PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER

OCTOBER 1, 2008 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2009

Presented by:

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Tourist Development Council (TDC) and staff of Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater are responsible for the promotion in growth of Tourism, Pinellas County's major industry. Their purpose is to strengthen the county's economy and employment by investing the Tourist Development Tax receipts in a comprehensive and successful tourism marketing program. Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater is the countywide marketing organization responsible for promoting the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area as a leisure, business, convention and conference destination.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater visitor profile research and client statistical data indicate that visitation figures from the Canadian market remained relatively the same for the year of 2007, with a minimal decline of 0.4 per cent compared to 2006, welcoming 338,521 overnight Canadian visitors.

The population of Canada is close to 33 million people, and is expected to reach 36 to 42 million people by 2031. Growth in total Canadian visitor volume of one or more nights continued through December 2007 – arrivals to the U.S. from Canada rose 20 per cent in December and built on the increases in each of the preceding eleven months. Year-over-year changes in monthly traveler volume have been positive for 35 of the past 36 months. Overnight visitation in 2007 finished the year up 11 per cent. All travel mode segments have recorded increases, including the dominant transportation segments of auto (+14%) and air (+6%). Canada remains the number one international market for the United States, accounting for 31.4 per cent of U.S. international visitors - more Canadians visit the U.S. than Europeans and South Americans combined. Canada also ranks the number two market in visitor spending (12.4%) and the number two country for travel balance of trade (BOT) surplus (\$5,737,000 billion). Ontario accounted for a higher proportion of visits-to-population at 39 per cent of the Canadian population, but 46 per cent of all Canadian visits to the U.S. Based on preliminary reports from Visit Florida, Canadian travel to Florida rose sharply by 10.2 per cent in 2007 to 2,314,200 visitors, the majority of visitors being 35 years and older. Over 13 per cent of all Canadian visitors to the United States visit the state of Florida for one or more nights. Florida records 32 per cent of all visitor-nights to the U.S. due to the “Snowbirds”.

Canadians love to travel south of the border, especially to Florida, the number one U.S. sun destination! Over 56 per cent of Canadians travel for leisure; 20 per cent to visit friends and relatives; 14 per cent for business; and 10 per cent for other reasons. Key chosen activities include the beach, shopping, sightseeing, sports and entertainment. Over 50 per cent of Canadians intend to take a leisure vacation in 2008/2009 and of those, 13 per cent plan to travel to the U.S. The majority of Canadians (83%) owns a passport and travel to the U.S. with easy access. Forecasts predict increased numbers of Canadians will visit the U.S. in 2008 and 2009, with an average 4 per cent annual growth over the next five years.

The Canadian dollar continues to remain very strong, reaching an all time high this past year of US\$1.06, which surpassed the recorded high in 1976 of US\$1.02. The added value of the CAD\$ increases the attractiveness of U.S. travel destinations. This is a very strong factor influencing the decision to travel, as the Canadian dollar currently holds steady at US\$.99 value. There is a direct correlation with exchange rate fluctuations, which have shown signs of growth in the last many months, as consumers benefit from the increased value of the dollar, reinforcing the economic attractiveness of the destination. The Canadian dollar is expected to remain strong, with additional appreciation in 2008 boosting the value over par.

With the recent increase in oil prices, a very strong Canadian dollar, low unemployment, low interest rates and a high disposable income, the Canadian economy is balanced to perform very well in 2008. The market in Canada is vibrant. The GDP rate is holding steady at close to 3 per cent. Consumer confidence remains high across the nation and excellent economic conditions this year will enable consumers to spend money in support of the travel industry. Significant employment growth this past year has boosted demand, with the 2007 annual average employment growth in Canada at 2 per cent. Continued growth in the economy will support more outbound travel to Pinellas County.

Tour operator, wholesale, travel agency and online sales have been very good for 2007, and current reports indicate that the first quarter of 2008 is up over last year, indicating that visitation from Canada is on the rise for air and auto travel. Canadian couples, families, mature adults and singles continue to flock to our region seeking beaches, adventure, experiences, culture, unique and different things to see and do. The diverse variety of accommodations is very appealing. Weather is also a very important deciding factor, along with proximity and familiarity. There is a strong affinity between Canadians and the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area.

In spite of the addition of increased air service in 2007 from Canada to Pinellas County, airline capacity has remained relatively static. Sunwing Vacations (Sunwing Airlines) and Transat Holidays/Nolitours (Canjet Airlines) have both committed to selling both ITC and FIT packages to the destination, enabling the area to maintain and grow its market share in both eastern and western Canada. Westjet Airlines has also expanded its service from Canada to the Tampa Bay region by adding the gateway of Hamilton, Ontario to current Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax departures. Air Canada continues to operate scheduled service from Toronto and Montreal to the Tampa area. The destination remains to be the number one choice for Canadians and visitation to Pinellas County is on the rise for 2008.

2008-2009 SALES OBJECTIVE/STRATEGIES

The following sales objectives are designed to increase visitation, length of stay and economic impact to the region from Canada while continually providing customer service through total quality commitment.

A. Increase visitation to the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area by 2 per cent via joint marketing efforts with travel partners.

STRATEGIES

- Launch the Fifth Annual CAA (Canadian Automobile Association) Sweepstake and sales blitz training program during the fall months in the provinces of Manitoba, Ontario and the Maritimes, with a possible expansion to Alberta (AMA), targeting 75 CAA Travel offices and 3 million consumer members. The program will be augmented by personal sales calls, member presentations, co-operative advertising, and educational familiarization tours, in addition to attending four CAA Travel Shows.
- Continue to promote our Website and eNewsletter to the travel trade market by encouraging tour operators and consortiums to join our web link, reaching a high number of consumers across Canada planning a vacation with these tour companies.
- Partner with key tour operators in Eastern Canada on cooperative marketing efforts targeting the consumer directly in key primary markets in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. Develop local radio promotions, destination training sessions, educational trips and booking incentives, reaching an estimated 5000 travel agents and millions of consumers.
- Develop penetration in the secondary market of Western Canada by aligning with airlines and tour operators which are growing their product in Florida via product launches and consumer promotions.
- Enhance partnerships with competitive retail consortium chain(s) by continuing the Florida's Beach Window Display blitz and by attending select agency consumer shows from October to December, targeting a total of 100 travel agencies in Ontario reaching a population of 3,000,000.
- Build upon and expand established relationships with six Internet suppliers (online receptive operators and online retailers) in Canada by developing programs and promotions to augment the destination. Develop call centre training sessions on a bi-annual basis targeting over 500 agents.
- Continue to support all local inquiries and leads from meeting and incentive planners to promote the destination, working closely with the Convention Sales and/or Services Departments. Assist the head office staff with meeting and incentive appointments, travel shows and lead generations.
- Encourage airline partners to promote the destination by targeting both scheduled and chartered carriers servicing the St. Petersburg/Clearwater/Tampa areas via their websites, reservation staff training, educational training trips, and via distribution of our annual Visitor Guide at airport check-in locations in Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Moncton and Halifax.
- Pursue incremental business and increase sales efforts in Eastern Canada by sponsoring one "FLY2PIE" Events in St. John's, NFLD, and a possible second event in Calgary, Alberta, in partnership with the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport and the Tampa International Airport. Concentration would be directed towards the local tour operators and retail travel agents in these two regions, reaching over 500 clients.
- Partner with the Visit Florida Canadian office by participating in select trade and consumer events in the Ontario and Quebec markets, in collaboration with retail chains, wholesalers and tour operators, to enhance Florida and the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area as the ideal vacation destination for Canadians, while meeting with over 5,000 travel agents and 45,000 consumers.
- Promote our destination and Website to both the trade and consumer markets via joint sales missions, trade promotions, e-commerce, mailings, and in-house presentations to the large agency consortiums, attendance at trade and consumer shows, and scheduled personal sales calls on travel agents across Canada.

2008-2009 SALES OBJECTIVE/STRATEGIES

B. *Increase sales contacts by 5 per cent by focusing on educating the travel industry via existing and new sales and marketing programs*

STRATEGIES

- Continue to promote the new name and new logo of Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater to the travel trade in Canada via personal sales calls, destination presentations, media releases, trade shows, and electronic mailings/eNewsletters
- Develop a promotional tracking system and code for all trade promotions with the travel trade partner/tour operator in order to measure the return on investment.
- Create selective marketing opportunities for all travel agents (850) that have completed the University of Visit Florida and the “Your Workshop” Levels 1 & 2 online educational programs in order to continue to educate and sell the destination. Develop a “Preferred” Destination Month for them to visit the area on an educational familiarization trip program. Unique product will be highlighted such as golf, spa, condocations, rainbow travel, multi-generational travel and adventure/eco-travel to encourage “top of mind” with our “Preferred” travel agents. A special “How to Sell” section will be featured highlighting what is new in the destination. These VIP agents will also receive regular eNewsletters and correspondence on What’s New in the area.
- Introduce a “Taste of PIE” to 50 CAA Travel offices in Ontario by delivering “PIES” to agencies via personal sales calls. Partner with a key tour operator to conduct destination training seminars, reaching over 500 employees, in addition to conducting a Window Display Blitz on 50 CAA offices in Ontario. The entire CAA program will be enhanced with continued sales and marketing efforts, while at the same time positioning our brand, “Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater”.
- Conduct a “Taste of PIE” sales mission in the cities of Toronto, London, Montreal and Ottawa, incorporating local trade and consumer shows, tour operator/airline reservation staff training, and retail agency sales calls, reaching over 1500 travel trade and 15,000 consumers. All local area tour operator partners and online receptive operators will be encouraged to participate. Coordinate this event with Public Relations to include a possible PR media luncheon in Toronto and/or Montreal.
- Partner with Visit Florida on joint trade shows in the province of Quebec to increase business from the French Canadian market targeting a potential 200 new clients.
- Continue to support the Addison Trade Shows in seven cities in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba. All show series target a total of 2200 travel agents increasing potential business for the spring, summer and fall seasons.
- Enhance relationships with key consortiums and retail chains in Canada by supporting and/or sponsoring elements of their Annual General Meetings, Conferences or training sessions promoting the Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater brand, and by conducting presentations and introducing independent booking incentives, targeting a total of 100 travel agencies.
- Continue to participate in five tour operator educational seminars/product launch events to further penetrate the retail market in both Toronto and Montreal by reaching over 4,000 travel agents.
- Partner with a key tour operator to co-sponsor the Eighth Annual Travel Courier Travel Agent Contest, targeting all 5500 agencies across Canada, to win a trip to the destination.
- Maintain a Silver Sponsorship role in the University of Visit Florida online educational program targeting 16,000 travel agents across Canada.
- Host our annual “Beaches and Baseball” VIP event at the Toronto Roger’s Centre for 75 travel trade and media guests, promoting our Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater area highlights, during a VIP reception, dinner and ball game.
- Attend Florida Huddle and Pow Wow Conferences to enhance current supplier relations and to increase new potential business from Canada to the destination.
- Promote our website and brand via product presentations, educational seminars, co-operative marketing and advertising, while continuing to enhance relationships with travel agents across Canada.

- Host four educational training trips, in cooperation with key tour operator partners, airline partners, retail consortiums and chains, and corporate sponsors, targeting our primary markets of Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada to further promote the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area to 80+ travel agents, promoting health and wellness, girls getaways, golf and experiential activities.
- Continue to focus on the educational aspect of the destination by distributing detailed sales material to travel agents via 50 personal sales calls per month. In addition, continue to distribute the travel agent information package via fulfillment and mailings.

2008-2009 SALES OBJECTIVE/STRATEGIES

C. *Increase penetration by 10 per cent to consumers via existing and new sales and marketing programs*

STRATEGIES

- Promote the Sixth Annual CAA Florida's Beach Sweepstake Campaign to over 2 million consumers and members in the provinces of Manitoba, Ontario and the Maritimes in partnership with CAA magazines in each region, as well as on their independent websites, in these three markets and with key travel trade partners.
- Revisit the CAA Show Your Card and Save Program with head office in Ottawa, Canada, and with our regional CAA clubs to increase awareness of our destination to over 3 million member consumers.
- Coordinate a cooperative promotion with a major internet supplier, Expedia.ca, to create awareness of the destination and increase sales to the area by targeting millions of Canadian consumers.
- Expand the outreach to the Canadian consumer by continuing a Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater Window Display Blitz, in 50 key travel agency consortium offices, targeting a population of 2,000,000 consumers in Ontario.
- Build awareness of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area by aligning with both scheduled and charter airline partners to promote the destination on cooperative marketing programs, in addition to supplying our Visitor Guide at all airline check-in positions for flights to our destination.
- Continue to work closely with the CFRB/CJAD radio travel shows, held in Toronto and Montreal, and with our Public Relations department to promote the area in partnership with a key tour operator/airline for the four shows – two from the Toronto studio and two broadcasted live from the destination. A promotional booking code will be implemented to track business developed from the radio shows.
- Continue to build a strong strategic alliance with the Toronto Blue Jays Baseball Club by partnering with the club on local area consumer promotions, radio contests, in-stadium programs and season ticket holder mailings. Increase direct marketing efforts with ITravel2000, the retail travel agency in charge of the Jays account, to influence thousands of consumers in the Greater Toronto Area and region during regular season games.
- Promote the Greek flavor of the destination in partnership with a key tour operator/airline to participate in one of the largest consumer events in Toronto, titled "Tastes of the Danforth", which is held in the Greek area of Toronto for three days, targeting over 250,000 consumers.
- Expand the consumer market segment by participating in six key CAA Travel Shows, reaching approximately 8,000 consumers in Southern Ontario.
- Participate in a new consumer promotion in partnership with Ultimate Golf Vacations, targeting 450,000 "golf" consumers for one month, promoting golf in the destination, golf-around programs, and the PODS Golf Tournament in 35 Golf Town retail stores across Canada, with emphasis in Eastern Canada. Continue to promote all golf facilities via Canadian golf associations, clubs, organizations and golf tour operators.
- Continue to support the two largest consumer Travel Shows in Canada, namely, the SITV PromExpo show in Montreal and the Ultimate Toronto Star Travel Show in Toronto, penetrating over 50,000 consumers.
- Launch a new consumer program with Park'N Fly in the cities of Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax for two months targeting 150,000 consumers per month (300,000) from a higher than average income bracket, promoting the destination with emphasis on health and wellness experiences.
- Develop a cross promotion in partnership with a travel partner for the Toronto Jazz Festival 10 day event, promoting the Clearwater Jazz Festival, targeting over 500,000 consumers.
- Test market the Weddings and Honeymoon shows in Toronto and Montreal, and investigate key partners to promote this niche market segment, targeting over 40,000 consumers.

- Pursue opportunities with special interest groups in the areas of sports (major league hockey, Indy car races), outdoor activities (hiking, biking, canoeing), cultural organizations, the rainbow market, spa vacations, weddings, and the arts (Jazz festivals) via sales and presentation meetings, consumer shows and mailings. Explore the opportunity to create a promotion with the Toronto Maple Leafs and Tampa Bay Lightning teams, and with the Toronto Indy Car Race and the St. Petersburg Indy Car Race.
- Continue to be receptive to cooperative advertising promotional opportunities by working closely with our major tour operators and key retail agency consortiums targeting the consumer market.
- Partner with Visit Florida on three major consumer shows, namely the Outdoor Adventure Travel Show in Toronto, the Travel & Vacation Show in Ottawa, and the National Women's Show in Toronto, to increase penetration in our primary and secondary markets, targeting 75,000 consumers.

2008-2009 SALES OBJECTIVES/STRATEGIES

- D. *Seek promotional opportunities in both mature and emerging markets by aligning with traditional and non-traditional travel trade partners*

STRATEGIES

- Continue to develop regional co-operative sales and marketing campaigns with all major tour operators, wholesalers and internet providers in Ontario, the Maritimes, Alberta and Quebec, in order to enhance the awareness of the destination.
- Establish strong relationships with all major retail consortiums and chains, promoting the Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater brand by promoting the area local regional meetings and annual conferences, golf tournaments and educational sessions.
- Continue to remain on the Executive Board for the Discover America Canada Committee, while at the same time promoting the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area.
- Continue to remain on the National Executive Board for Skal International Canada (SICAN), while at the same time promoting the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area.
- Continue to support the Visit Florida office staff in Toronto by co-hosting educational training trips to the Gulf Coast region, by aligning with their staff on joint trade and consumer shows, sales seminars and presentations, by examining promotional opportunities targeted towards the consumer and by supporting public relations campaigns, which are targeted towards Pinellas County.
- Encourage the Canadian Travel Advisory Committee, made up of travel industry representatives from the tour operator and airline sectors, to continue to share ideas with our local area suppliers to enhance the knowledge of the Canadian marketplace and the specifics required to increase visitation to our area.
- Assist the Director of Leisure Travel, the Director of Public Relations, the Director of Advertising, the Director of Convention Services and the advertising agency with Canadian contacts and opportunities.
- Maintain membership in the following trade associations:
 - ⇒ Alliance of Canadian Travel Agents (ACTA)
 - ⇒ Alliance of National Tourist Board Associations (ANTOR)
 - ⇒ Meeting Professionals International (MPI)
 - ⇒ SKAL International Hamilton/SKAL International Canada (SICAN)
 - ⇒ Discover America Canada Committee (DACC)
 - ⇒ Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC)