

Critical Messages

Customer Service

Excellent customer service, while not synonymous with “experiential tourism,” is essential to providing a superior visitor experience. It is at the very foundation of tourism businesses that flourish in the face of adversity. Studies, in fact, have shown that customer service is often more important than even price or quality of product.

As we position Lancaster County as the most compelling experiential destination in America, it will be crucial that exemplary customer service be a given. Just as experiential tourism is expected to deliver the “Wow!” factor, so too should customer service. Visitors are the lifeblood of our industry, and it rests upon each of our shoulders to deliver exceptional customer service with consistency.

Breaking free from the standard deliverance of customer satisfaction and personalizing service for each customer will differentiate your business from “theirs” and will set our destination apart from the competition.

Quality

Integral to Customer Service is Quality. As a mature destination, we are fortunate to have numerous businesses that were visited by children decades ago who now bring their children... and grandchildren... to our doors! But with that maturity comes a responsibility to ensure that the experience we offer and the physical environment we put forth is well-maintained and refreshed. In this economic climate we recognize that it can be difficult to contemplate such investments, but it is incumbent upon each of us as stewards of this great destination and hosts to continuing generations of visitors.

Positioning our County’s Culture

Lancaster County has long been perceived as all things Amish to our visitors. It is what put our destination on the tourism map and drew visitors to our county in droves. And while this will continue to be our foundation, our county has evolved into something much more; a Mecca of many rich cultures, from the Amish to the Arts. To grow our market base, we must expand our thinking; marketing to new demographics and psychographics.

Vision

Lancaster County is the most compelling experiential destination in America.

An organization’s vision is a written picture of where it sees itself in 15-20 years. It’s emotional, yet measurable; lofty, yet achievable. We firmly believe that well within the next 15 years, Lancaster County **will** be known as the most compelling experiential destination in America.

Experiential tourism is all about the “Wow!” factor; providing unique, innovative, unforgettable experiences. It exemplifies the shift from mass marketing to mass customization and -- depending on a visitor’s desires and expectations -- can range from **behind the scenes** to **hands-on** to **immersion**.

- **Behind the Scenes** is ideal for the individual who seeks education and understanding but with limited physical involvement. It provides the visitor with an understanding of how things work from a combination of seeing the “back of the house” operations and dialogue with locals or experts. It’s the back stage tour to which most other theatre patrons aren’t privy... or visiting with the artist in his private studio to learn about his thought process and experience his creative environment.
- **Hands-on** is the second tier of experiential tourism. It combines seeing + doing to meet the needs of participants through a moderate level of interaction. It’s a private class on wine and cheese pairing... or the basics of quilting.
- **Immersion** is the third tier of experiential tourism. It provides the maximum level of interactivity with a culture, event or site, and engages people to a level of actually performing a task or activity. It’s rolling up your sleeves to help plant a crop at a local farm or creating a new relish or jam with the guidance of a local woman who’s been canning for decades.

The opportunities are infinite, and although the vision may take up to 15 years in accomplishing, our 3 year strategic plan is integrally woven with this “new tourism” approach.

We will continue to work with Lancaster County’s tourism businesses to develop and market engaging and memorable experiences for both the group and leisure markets, and ultimately broaden our base of “Wowed” visitors.



Strategic Plan ♦ 2009-2011



Our Vision:

Lancaster County is the most compelling experiential destination in America.

Our Mission:

To increase the number of visitors to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Contact us at:

501 Greenfield Road / Lancaster, PA 17601
717-299-8901

Board Message

The economy at home and afar is undeniably daunting and tourism is akin to many other industries in the extent of challenges it faces as a result. Travelers are responding to uncertain times with dramatic changes in their buying behavior. Successful businesses will be those that rally with a quality product, focused strategic plan, and tremendous agility in a persistently fluctuating environment.

Travelers and travel suppliers increasingly covet new product and immersive experiences, and demand product personalization that suggests we’re addressing their individual needs rather than the needs of millions. We’re responding with a Strategic Plan that supports our new Vision while underscoring our county’s rich cultures. We will seek loyalty within new niche markets, focus on new and emerging product, and – as the Lancaster County Convention Center readies to open its doors – position our destination to welcome tens of thousands of new visitors.

We continue to be optimistic that our exemplary product and value, combined with aggressive marketing, will distinguish us from the competition and give us a significant advantage.



We extend our thanks to you, our member partners and our stakeholders, who helped us form the foundation of this Strategic Plan with your input, ideas, and challenges. We look forward to your continued involvement as we forge ahead.

Please contact PA Dutch CVB President & CEO Chris Barrett (717-391-6001) or Vice President Janet Wall (717-391-6005) with your questions and comments.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	IMPLICATIONS	SUCCESS INDICATORS
<p>Branding Strategy PA Dutch CVB will develop a branding strategy.</p>	<p>A. This will require significant time and research. B. We will consolidate the existing visual imagery and compose relevant messaging to ensure consistent guest recognition of the destination.</p>	<p>1. A new, cohesive branding strategy is in place by December 2011.</p>
<p>City Tourism Products The city is recognized for having exciting products that will be promoted as part of the county's tourism mix.</p>	<p>A. PA Dutch CVB (Board and staff) will publicly promote and support the city of Lancaster products as important to the county's tourism mix. B. Marketing and advertising resources will be allocated for promoting the city of Lancaster products. C. PA Dutch CVB will help address a specific county-wide tourism need that can be best addressed by the city (e.g., entertainment and night life). D. The PA Dutch CVB will provide specific marketing and branding assistance to the city of Lancaster. E. The PA Dutch CVB will open the Lancaster Visitors Center in Penn Square, downtown Lancaster.</p>	<p>1. The city will be featured notably on the PA Dutch CVB website and in its e-marketing initiatives. 2. There are significant increases year over year in web analytics indicating prospective visitors and visitors inquiring about the city. 3. Benchmark metrics are developed in 2009 for the number of guests who visit the Lancaster Visitors Center. There is a 3% increase in visitors using it in 2010, and a 5% increase in visitors using it in 2011. 4. There is a significant year over year increase in the distribution of itineraries designed to move guests between the county and city and vice versa. 5. There is an increase year over year (2009 as a benchmark year, with goal to be established in 2010) in city and county partnerships increasing visitor stays. 6. There is a recognizable tourism brand in place for the city by December 2011. 7. The number of city-based members increases by at least 25 net members year over year.</p>
<p>County's Rich Culture PA Dutch CVB will promote Lancaster County's rich culture ranging from the Amish to the arts in a variety of ways to different audiences.</p>	<p>A. Primary tourism messaging will be far more broad-based, highlighting the county's culture of which the Amish and PA Dutch are components, among others. B. The Amish and PA Dutch heritage will be used strategically and intentionally, based on the targeted audience. C. There will be certain marketing messages and materials that will not refer to the Amish or PA Dutch, but refer to other county assets. D. Promote the Amish and PA Dutch in new and creative ways (e.g., sustainability; "slow food" movement; arts and artisans).</p>	<p>1. Surveys of travelers reflect an increase in interest in areas other than Amish-related activities, attractions, etc. 2. The web, <i>Map & Overnight Getaway Guide</i>, and the <i>Group Planning Guide</i> highlight the county's rich culture. 3. Create a theme for public relations purposes highlighting Lancaster County's rich culture. 4. Increase the total number of impressions (based on circulation plus secondary readership) of articles and stories promoting Lancaster County's rich culture 10% year over year, with 2009 serving as a benchmark year.</p>
<p>Meeting and Convention Destination PA Dutch CVB has an appropriate and important role in promoting the convention center and will act accordingly. Further, Lancaster County will be recognized as a leading mid-market meeting and convention destination with significant product countywide.</p>	<p>A. Marketing and advertising revenues will be allocated for promoting the convention center and our county as a premiere mid-size meeting and convention destination. B. PA Dutch CVB staff will allocate their time to market the convention center and all Lancaster County meeting and convention product. C. PA Dutch CVB Board and staff will continue to promote and support the convention center. D. The convention center will be highlighted in PA Dutch CVB publications and electronic applications.</p>	<p>1. Baseline data for priority 1 and priority 2 qualified leads resulting in bookings requiring overflow rooms will be established in 2009. 2. Will provide qualified leads for at least four priority 1 and priority 2 bookings to result in overflow rooms in 2010; will provide at least eight priority 1 and priority 2 qualified leads resulting in the booking of overflow rooms in 2011. 3. \$506,000 in convention center rental space and F&B revenue will be generated by 12/31/09; \$TBD by December 2010; and \$TBD by December 2011. 4. The countywide economic impact quotient for convention center sales will be established in 2009; will be increased by 3% in 2010; and 5% in 2011.</p>
<p>New Tourism Products PA Dutch CVB will assume leadership for developing new (bricks & mortar) tourism products for Lancaster County.</p>	<p>A. This will require significant time and statesmanship. B. PA Dutch CVB may hire someone to assume this role. C. The selection and development of new product could be controversial, placing the PA Dutch CVB in a politically difficult position. D. A new product could initially overshadow long-standing existing products. E. Significant resources will be needed to successfully promote a new product.</p>	<p>1. New Product Task Force is created by March 2009. 2. New Product Task Force has developed recommendations on how to best staff and manage developing the new tourism products initiative by June 2009. 3. Several prospective new tourism products have been identified for research and due diligence by June 2010. 4. Have selected the new product(s) to be pursued by December 2011.</p>
<p>Niche Marketing PA Dutch CVB will incorporate niche marketing into the Bureau's overall marketing strategy. Niche: As a strategy, niche marketing's aim is to be a big fish in a small pond rather than a small fish in a big pond. Marketing identifies needs, wants and requirements that are poorly addressed or not being addressed by other entities. Then, goods and services to satisfy them are developed, creating a niche market.</p>	<p>A. Marketing and advertising resources will be allocated for niche marketing in order to pursue a different and more diverse type of visitor. B. Will need to market and package Lancaster County in new and innovative ways. C. Will refer to Lancaster County's diverse culture, rather than solely to the PA Dutch and Amish. D. In order to attract and be compelling to visitors of the selected niche markets, members may need to make adjustments (e.g., marketing and presenting their product; customer service). E. In order to capitalize on the niche markets and new visitors, members will benefit by understanding the markets and the profile of who those markets attract.</p>	<p>1. The niche markets that will best drive up visitations and overnight stays are identified and marketed. 2. Develop five packages/itineraries annually for niche marketing. 3. There are year over year increases in itineraries downloaded and distribution of niche materials at the Visitors Centers. 4. Create themed e-blasts resulting in year over year increases in sign-ups for the e-blasts. 5. There is an increase in earned media in niche publications year over year. 6. Members are providing qualitative input annually indicating that the niche marketing is improving/increasing their business.</p>