

Member Responses to Strategic Planning Survey

Question #1:

The mission of the PA Dutch CVB is "To increase the number of visitors to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and create a model of success envied by other travel destinations." With this in mind, what three strategies do you believe could help ensure our success?

#1 Strategy:

- Convince Sight & Sound to change their main summer show every year, instead of every other year. There's a significant drop-off in visitors during their second year of a show.
- Heavy marketing in surrounding states
- Continue to market us as a destination and not a stop over
- Promote education of local and visiting public of the importance of private farms and open space contribution to the attractiveness of the PA Dutch CVB region.
- Continue Wake Up in Lancaster campaign
- More advertising
- Print ads in family oriented magazines (Family Circle, Woman's Day, Better Homes & Gardens etc....)
- Funding for product development
- Inform people about things such as advertising
- Strengthen communications to stakeholders including members, legislators, and visitors
- Develop awareness of the county assets which attract the young professional visitor
- To use the Convention Center as the anchor for marketing group since daily attendance can exceed 5000 ppl
- Fact finding - for real - no BS
- Better knowledge of our visitors
- Everything linked to ROI
- Continue with the special packages and events such as the foodie tours
- Add more upscale, 35+ adults to our target audience.
- Regionalism
- Work on bringing in new attractions (NASCAR Track/think big)
- Increased advertising in 'feeder' markets such as DC, Baltimore and NY
- Aggressively develop market strategy to appeal to anyone below the Mason Dixon line
- Support the continued revitalization of Lancaster City
- Review Pigeon Forge's plan
- Work on developing new product- ask what are we missing and go after it
- Work with businesses to develop a downtown nightlife atmosphere
- Advertising the CVB in national magazines (Reunion Magazine, etc)
- Increase visibility
- Promote the attractions first; they are the reason for people to visit the county in the first place.
- Be a leader in destination events marketing and promotion
- Encouraging improved and new "product" in our destination
- Celebrate the county's urban centers
- Regionalize with adjoining areas (Hershey, Philadelphia, Gettysburg, etc.) to get more bang for the bucks and more bucks from the governor
- Provide ample opportunities to cross sell properties
- Refocus the timing of our messages (earlier)
- Build/edit tactics based on the target, not the member
- Marketing in Lancaster
- Encourage reinvestment in existing product and properties
- Immersive experiences

- Advertise in "day driving distance" markets
- Go after DC and Baltimore market
- Assist members in packaging benefits to visitors
- 100% marketing focus - All marketing, all the time
- Set hotel standards to be part of organization and reservation system. There are too many hotels in the area that do not represent the county well
- Promote antiquing
- Front-line staff education of customer service; member attractions
- More events in the area done by the VB in the main hub of activity (i.e., Bird-in-Hand, Intercourse, Strasburg)
- Promoting mid-week getaways to avoid crowds
- Accent on entertainment, especially live theater
- Increase marketing in further destination areas (longer stays)
- Work to expand the quality of the member products
- Make co-op advertising affordable to all member budgets in an effort to reach more visitors with reasons to visit Lancaster County
- Come and see the Amish again, for the first time
- Strong web presence
- Really promote the new Convention Center product; not suggesting the Amish don't get attention, but there are a lot of folks who would love to see that message morph

Strategy #2

- Increase advertising in the Baltimore and D.C. areas, as these have become prime sources of new overnight visitors
- Cohesive, catchy print/web campaign
- Continue to emphasize the family-oriented aspects of our area
- Integrate membership engagement into our business activities
- Promote destination as more than Amish country
- Travel consultancy
- TV ads/commercials in states within a days drive
- Consumer research to identify trends and primary markets
- More events
- Improve technology, governance, management operations, and strengthen our financial base
- Maintain a pleasant/friendly/people user friendly environment for the visitor's stay
- Place a greater emphasis on PPC campaigns related to drive-in leisure business.
- Minimize regionalism to the extent practical
- Foundation for long-term growth in the county
- Have at least a five or more year marketing plan and add to it year to year
- Work with smaller towns and their restaurants to be open on Sundays and Mondays
- Make plans to ride the coattails of the new convention center
- Cross marketing
- Promote Lancaster County, PA to markets we know are coming our way (PA, NJ, NY, MD, etc.) and do it with a marketing team comprised of seasoned attractions, hoteliers and eateries and hit high areas where there is a high density of consumers (malls, fairs, etc.).When you hit areas that are high density, you are reaching out to everyone and not just to a specific market, which I feel gives you more success.
- Ease up on the NY market. We get the value customer that pinches pennies.
- Promote downtown Lancaster travel as a destination.
- Less bodies, more advertising
- Create a follow-up plan for the members similar to the groups where each requested planner gets leads to follow-up. This is happening on the Yellowstone site.

- Do not just think nationally - We have not locked up statewide recognition
- Publicize tourist testimonials (what they loved about their visit here)
- Promote the hospitality properties second, so visitors are comfortable with longer stays, confirming quality of hotels and restaurants
- Develop a highly focused sales culture
- Focus on sales, setting and measuring goals
- Identify themes
- Institutionalize a "tourism economic development corporation" to attract new tourism generators to the area.
- Protect Lancaster County assets
- Recommit, reallocate, refocus on transient business
- Support businesses other than hotels
- Partner with LancasterARTS and the city to market Lancaster City as a destination
- Local product and knowledge authenticity
- Encourage members to "package" themselves
- Develop a yearly event that will draw people to the area
- Aggressively market the destinations outside the region
- Low interest loan funding to develop tourist destination locations without the county
- Offer couples events; not always about families
- Re-evaluate member fees, participation fees
- Establish public transportation infrastructure
- Heritage and historical tourism
- Expand shoulder seasons
- Target market high end tourism
- Provide more member opportunities to network between our various attractions, dining options & lodging options so that we all become strong salespersons for the region, not just our own companies
- Highlight our entertainment.
- Presence at out-of-town tour conferences
- Figure out what role the Bureau has related to tourism product development, or at least advocating for tools to upgrade existing product. We met with a hotel development prospect last week and it was insightful to recently hear that take on our market from someone in the hotel development business.

Strategy #3

- Look for ways to increase advertising in Europe. Many Europeans are fascinated by the Amish in America.
- Encourage cross-promotion between area attractions
- Enhance package deals with one price discounts for multiple attractions and multiple visits to the same venue
- Be a leader in destination events marketing and promotion
- Create experiential tourism opportunities with members - be an advocate for this and get members involved!
- Bring more events to the area
- More FAM tours
- Position ourselves as leaders & partners in PA tourism development
- Highlight Amish culture
- Enhance and provide for collaboration through proactive and centralized systems and processes to automate and enhance individual destination response to visitor inquiries
- Create a coupon book as "value-add" to market several destinations at once.

- Focus on true strength (whatever it is) of Lancaster County
- Drive a change in Lancaster County
- Market Lancaster County as "special" and a value
- Create a factory tours map and maybe a B&B map
- Leverage events already being staged here to create immediate calls-to-action
- New branding
- Make a concerted effort, through local and state channels, to get signage up at all the gateways into Lancaster County so that people know where they are. You can come from the PA turnpike and down 222 and head west on 30 and miss Lancaster completely if you don't see one sign.
- Support the effort to secure convention center bookings
- Identify potential growth markets and advertise
- Interactive video on the website from different places: Amish tending fields, theatres, outdoor activities, etc: this says "it's happening now!" Video speaks louder than images
- Run discounts for certain tourist sites at different times
- Incorporate new technology to improve service and increase visitation
- Regional and co-op marketing, as deemed beneficial
- Build on past successes, with fresh approaches
- Really focus on attracting new groups and conventions to Lancaster's new Convention Center.
- Continue to foster good working relationships with the tour operators coming to this area
- Stop asking for freebies
- Develop tourism packages focusing on the county's natural resources (rivers, trails, fishing, etc.)
- Variety
- Promote active involvement experiences
- Develop regional partnerships within Pennsylvania
- Work with business and local government to ensure pristine look of the region
- Improvement of downtown area
- Realize there is life outside of Rt. 30
- Collaborate with Convention Center
- Plan special events during slower times
- Ditch the "Amish Only" mentality. Start thinking "Amish and..."
- Family reunion destination-it appears from surveys that a lot of people prime reason to travel is to visit family.
- Return to the focus on the Amish and Plain people
- Spend advertising & marketing dollars in areas of easy travel to us – i.e., concentrate on Maryland, Delaware, Ohio, southern New York, New Jersey, northern Virginia
- Emphasize our destination as a conference location
- Strong partnership with new convention center
- When the Route 30 corridor project moves toward completion (do we have any update on this?), it will require major cheerleading, which may have to come in part at least from the Bureau.

Question #2:

Please identify one specific programmatic goal you believe the PA Dutch CVB should undertake in each of the following areas in the next three years to ensure its success in increasing visitation to our destination.

Marketing & PR

- Target Baltimore and D.C. areas more, as well as Europe
- Dynamic commercial (like Philly's)

- Keep it family-oriented
- Maintain excellence in website development
- Promote the destination as more than just the Amish country, hold bi-annual FAM tours for travel writers
- Attract people specifically interested in Hershey to stay overnight in Lancaster
- Consumer research
- Establish a secondary brand (under Dutch Country Roads) to position the region as a destination for a more diverse market of visitors
- Reach the young professional /increase awareness of the "rest of the story..."
- Find a brand and stick to it
- Create a reason for guest/groups to come to Lancaster County to work, play and sleep./brand recognition
- Plan to try "new " markets outside of NY and NJ. Broaden our base
- More effort to gain local and regional PA audience
- Create a B&B map and brochure. Maybe create special B&B programs - a sort of tour around Lancaster county weekends - staying at one or two different B&B's
- Cross marketing; show visitors what they can do by driving an hour in each direction from Lancaster County
- Anything other than what we have been doing because the numbers have been stagnant for the last 4 or 5 years
- We haven't been here long enough yet to fully assess
- Lancaster City promotion
- Develop festivals, events, seasons that are easily cross-promotable, like Pigeon Forge
- Consumer video not just on request
- Market to the rest of the state - we are missing a huge demographic within our state
- increased visibility billboards in other states and locations
- More web-based advertising and TV if we can afford it
- Continued use of a longer term marketing theme combined with a different niche theme on a shorter term basis
- "Database" of photos, stories, story ideas from members
- Special campaign highlighting a journey thru our DTs
- Support the introduction of the Convention Center to groups and meeting planners
- School groups should know where we are and what we can provide
- Refocus to transient
- Build/edit tactics based on the target, not the member
- Market in Lancaster, not just outside our county
- Target specific markets, i.e. 20-30 yr olds; arts lovers
- Concentrate on "day driving distance" markets
- Promote Lancaster to larger sources of advertising
- Sophisticated campaign targeted at urban dwellers (same comforts and sophistication as large cities - completely different change of scene and pace)
- More co-op member participation. PR staff should be totally plugged into what is newsworthy, week-to-week at our member properties.
- Create a specific slogan for the area that all locations can use in advertising (sounds corny, but everyone knows the slogan, "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas")
- Find niche marketing opportunities
- More emphasis on current advertising trends to determine advertising methods - blog, more Internet promotion
- Market to sector that likes to travel off season
- Continuing exploitation of web and email
- Canada-we have tapped into it, and have gotten great returns!
- Develop a fresh Amish/Plain campaign

- Provide more direct benefit and return-on-investment to the membership from marketing & public relations
- Focus on the greater Baltimore/Washington corridor
- Get as much information as possible out to the greater NE market

Sales:

- Find ways to promote return visits by people attending conventions at the new Convention Center. "Come back with your spouse and family and enjoy the variety of activities and lodgings that Lancaster County offers!"
- Keep the prices of food at a minimum to help families stretch their vacation dollar
- Keep high level of enthusiasm at all levels with top-notch staff
- Target larger conventions for the new center and promote pre- and post-stay leisure travel
- Group sales targeting travelers 300 + miles beyond our destination; meeting sales - religious market
- Increase visitation from international groups
- Sell the county
- Improve current revenue streams/control expenses
- Everyone out selling
- Think about a program for smaller, local businesses to join
- Market to the gay and active over 55 communities
- We have to go out and address the consumer face to face with experienced sales people and make use of the skills we have developed in this industry and earn our living. We can't sell to each other, we have to sell to the consumer firsthand!
- Convention center promotion
- Develop more varied itineraries for groups and strongly pitch it to them that the same old trip won't sell for them or us
- Keep working with attractions and hospitality sites to package the area for individuals and motorcoach operators
- Develop more aggressive staff to secure group business as this market continues to evolve away from the commonly accepted model
- Goal setting and accountability, lead generation
- Sell buses on fresh tours
- Book meetings and conventions to our area
- Selling the area as "the best non big city destination"
- Refocus to transient
- Stop asking for free services from your members
- Partner with Convention Center to increase bookings
- Push assortment of venues - large and small
- More direct member involvement
- Increase number of tour services/series (?) through the area and determine what we need to provide them in our area to increase their interest
- Go out and talk to your members
- Target the young to medium young couple, no kids, drivable radius
- Make a family reunion "kit"- step-by-step instructions for a novice to organize a family reunion- pointing out that each family member can have their own style of lodging. Pitch to alumni organizations to book reunions. Get "product placement" in Hollywood- and last but not least- get Oprah to endorse Lancaster County!
- Focus on 1 or 2 serious big conventions. Rifle rather than shotgun approach to sales.
- Involve the membership in the design of packages and/or marketing promotions. Let us have a say in what we want to market/package about ourselves and the area!
- Continue with the same sales strategy

Legislative Advocacy:

- Find a way to "legalize" dinners in Amish homes, as Ohio has done. It's a perfect example of "experiential tourism" and we should be able to openly promote it.
- Try to keep our area at the front of the line for marketing dollars
- Encourage member participation in lobbying for laws and regulations that not only benefit us but society as a whole
- House Bill 258
- Funding for product enhancement & development
- Reestablish funding through heavy advocacy focused on the economic impact and residual affects of tourism
- Manage the growth / work toward unified plans
- Get rid of regionalism
- Drive more funding to tourism
- State to be fair about distributing resources. Stop changing slogan every time we change governors. Find a professional to run agency not an appointee. Work with PTLA
- Fix the Philly-Pitt hole in the state budget bucket
- Work with the legislature to make special exemptions for B&B's when it comes to building code requirements - they need to be more understanding of the innkeepers
- Better allocation of the hotel tax to be equal for all CVBs.
- Get the local politicians representing us in the state to continually reinforce just how important the tourist industry is to the state of PA in providing jobs for our residents and if they continue to cut funds in our area, let them know we will show our disdain by going to the polls and putting in someone who will represent us and gets results
- Standardize back to school after Labor Day
- Infrastructure improvements to Harrisburg Pike corridor
- Form a PAC
- Sept. opening of schools
- Equitable funding from state
- Create a legislative committee to keep the Lancaster delegation informed of critical needs for the PA Dutch CVB and its members
- More face time with legislators to educate them to the economic contribution of tourism in Lancaster County
- Keeping our funding / getting our message to reps
- FAM tour for legislators
- Extend the start of public schools until after Labor Day
- Funding concerns need to be addressed
- Prevent any increase in hotel taxes by lobbying against new taxes and to maintain state funding
- Increase funding for product development
- Encourage continued funding for programs like the heritage region
- Continue to develop ties with the state
- It would be nice if the Bureau could leverage financial support to the businesses who are attracting tourist
- Funding is always key. Make sure we get proper amount of hotel and sales tax
- Be sure our voice is well versed and well spoken
- Focus on creating transport system throughout county
- Continue support of maintaining farmlands
- Get more funding for PA Dutch CVB
- Keep the membership informed on all legislative issues that directly impact the hospitality industry in our area.
- Stay intensely visible to our legislators

Member Services & Support:

- Continue to actively support the B&B lodging segment by not overly favoring the larger hotels in your prioritization and focus. There are hotels & motels anywhere you travel, but our large and diverse B&B community is unique to Lancaster County!
- Strengthen the partnership between attractions to make our area more guest focused
- Continue excellent one-on-one services with energetic, helpful staff
- Create opportunities for members to work at the Visitor Center; provide quality networking opportunities
- Generate leads for membership
- Expand services designed to encourage visitors to see more of the region to grow revenue, attendance, and night stays
- Continued education and partnerships between city/county sites
- Get accurate visitation numbers to the county
- Better member customer service and relationships
- Continue more open dialogue between board and members
- Continue doing the great job
- Everything seems to be working very well; don't see a need for change
- Enforce to this group that the best source of information on any property is talking to the property itself if you don't know the answer. No assumptions please. That kills us when you are wrong or not sure. Guide the caller to the individual property when in doubt or not sure what the answer is. Please!
- Motivational programs that help members rethink their own mission
- I think this has increased with the newsletter. More info about what is happening with the board meetings and what larger decisions are being made. Trade shows that we attended. More meaty info about shows, success of them, list of articles that are appearing and when, etc.
- Provide as much support for area attractions as you do for the restaurants and hotels
- Continue attempts to communicate with members
- PA Dutch CVB staff familiarity with member product
- Develop ways that struggling destinations can be a part
- Create a housing bureau for area wide events that is run by the PA Dutch CVB
- continue providing streamlined lead microsite
- Bring new members/organizations into positions and activities that direct Bureau activities
- Lower fees
- Continue Let's Talk
- Continue to develop and stay cutting edge with websites
- Keep up with socials and mixers. We may not all go, but we know you are there and care
- So many of the advertising opportunities are beyond our financial reach. A sliding scale of fees based on budget size would be tremendous
- Very limited involvement. Budget dollars must go to the marketing effort.
- Marketing co-op and buying discounts are helpful
- Do you even know your members?
- Would like to see the PA Dutch CVB staff visiting members; member forum page on Website
- Ensuring that the "home businesses" not affiliated with the VB are licensed or approved by local townships
- Relaying B&B info to all members, not just small groups
- Help management emphasize the importance of good customer service. Have meetings or trainings differentiated for large corporations vs Mom & Pop shops.
- Pay to Play rather than membership
- More seminars & trainings for the membership
- Enlist more members to attend trade shows
- Continue to let us know when tours are coming to Lancaster

Visitor Services

- Continue to strongly promote attractions, shops, and restaurants to be open on Sunday
- Visitor's Center needs to stand out more from Rt 30
- Family focused services
- Great front-desk services are a plus to us all, keep it strong
- Fulfill leads in a timely manner, "Sell Up" to customers

- ? I don't even know what services are currently offered to visitors. I'm aware of a few services but am sure there are many I'm not aware of.
- Continued Web-based visitor services
- Expand online marketing tools to remain on the top tier of CVB's to include automated, electronic push-pieces offering site specific information and packages
- Tailored "suggested" itinerary based on their likes/needs
- Possibly decentralize the information center to a number of locations
- Better inaction with the guest/create experiences
- Better directional and road signage
- Continue doing a great job
- More information on the customs of the Amish never goes amiss
- Interactive tourist information, an "online guest services" aid would be beneficial given the technology age that is upon society.
- I have watched the 15 minute film that all the visitors have the opportunity to watch and when I came out of it, I was baffled. There is nothing in that film that allows you to leave that room with any sort of sense of direction as to where to go. That film is a nature film of sorts and does nothing to promote 99% of your membership.
- Interactive displays around the county. In 10 years, will brochures have much impact?
- Increase promotion of Lancaster City
- Sell current location and have a presence on our borders
- With the decrease in center attendance, not sure if this is where to spend the money. Better signage along the road prior to the exit would help to attract people
- Create a more friendly, less institutional entrance to the visitor center
- Develop front line training programs for use by members to train their folks
- Increasing ways and reasons to stay and come back
- Increase ed. awareness among volunteers of what's avail
- Create a central packaging purchase program for attractions in key interest areas (ie: Amish; Historical; Art; Live Theatre, etc) similar to Ticketmaster to simplify the visitor's choices and purchase of admissions.
- Ample opportunities for planning trips and service during the trip
- Commit to not relocating, under any circumstances, the visitors center into downtown
- Provide stronger support to other Visitors Centers - i.e. City, Columbia
- Make it easy to plan a visit with a wide variety of experiences
- Better understanding of ALL of Lancaster
- I'd love a welcome center in the heart of the city.
- Keep budget to a minimum to service current visitor levels at the Bureau.
- Transportation or tour series that pick-up at hotels
- Clean up the front
- Using Visitor Center as an attraction - offering free/unique visitor programs at Center
- System to be aware of lodging availability
- Clearer segmentation: B&B interest literature, Theater, Arts, Crafts, Museums, History, etc.
- More up-beat staff at visitor desk- great everyone with a sincere smile and a "Hello, welcome to Lancaster County!"

- Kiosk Internet stops at gateway stops
- More exposure (via billboards, media, etc.) of the location & hours of the Visitors' Bureau in order to increase foot traffic
- Enlist more receptives to offer sample tours
- Have a stronger visitor presence in Lancaster City

Question #3:

What do you see as the top external challenges to this organization's future success?

Challenge #1

- Looming cuts in the state's financial support of the PA Dutch CVB
- Lack of state funding
- Government funding of our marketing
- Excessive control or limits of property rights on farmland and open space will cause huge negative unintended consequences
- State budget cuts
- Too many hotels in the area
- Loss/decrease in the amount of state funds
- Destination product decline
- Bring more people to Lancaster
- Impact of fiscal decision making from Harrisburg
- Economy
- Expedia, Travelocity, et al
- Flexibility to change
- Convention Center
- Fuel prices and economy
- Lack of activities on Sundays
- Stale product
- Lack of a "regional" mindset, no cross-marketing with other CVBs in the region
- Funding
- Competition with 'food and wine' vacation destinations
- Understanding and supporting the changing customer base
- Reinvention of how the County is promoted to avoid becoming stale in the minds of those who have visited previously
- Greater competition from Philadelphia, now with the outlets in Limrick
- Financing
- Much of our success depends on one very recognizable group of Lancaster Countians - let's hope they stay and/or continue to receive good press. Much of our fate depends on the Amish
- Increasing number of annual tourists
- State government and its apparent lack of support for its number two industry
- Reduced financial support and increased restrictions from government
- More destinations doing effective advertising
- Ability for all of us to work together toward common goals
- Technology: embrace it or lose out because of it
- Keeping a new look. Many TOs have been coming here for so long they may perceive Lancaster County as old. Been there done that.
- Cuts in state funding
- Mature product
- Continued lack of support of convention center and hotel by hoteliers

- The economy
- Affordable membership dues
- Less funds to work with from the state
- Loss of state funding
- Failure to stay destination marketing focused, by the many other distractions always present, including members' inability to think globally for the good of the destination.
- State funding
- Economic conditions
- Most businesses not open on Sundays
- Route 30 congestion
- Decline in motorcoach and group travel
- "The second generation" it's kind of a "been there done that with my parents"-(ex.- Right now Florida is losing market share of retirees, because boomers don't want to be associated with the image.)
- Interorganizational strife. Our unwillingness to put pettiness behind us to work together as a tourism community.
- Not enough new attractions or additions to existing attractions to keep the same visitors coming back year after year.
- Watch our economics. We can price ourselves out of the market.
- Funding

Challenge #2

- Make sure sufficient staff is added to the PA Dutch CVB to handle the needs of the new convention center, without sacrificing your attention to all of the services you currently provide to members and visitors.
- Competition from neighboring destinations
- Keeping our area family focused
- If county adopts a home rule charter, it could impact us heavily
- York, PA hotels
- Increasing costs of business
- Higher gas prices
- Increasing competition from other destinations
- Economy and its impact on discretionary spending of travelers
- Individual membership success
- Regionalism
- Understand the trends and then take action
- Tax reallocation
- Cost of advertising
- Increased traffic on roads that are not made for more cars
- Overdevelopment of county
- Tired branding. Lancaster is more than just the Amish & farmland
- Leadership
- Influencing City destinations to expand/establish later weekday and more weekend hours of operation. Many places close early and are not open Sundays.
- Lack of things to do in the evening.
- Cost of marketing
- Continued growth and development. Overcrowded roadways.
- Keeping facilities in top-notch condition
- Still dealing with fallout from the convention center and the Lancaster shooting gallery
- Major changes in group market; it is not your father's bus trip anymore
- Others trying to steal or maximize our Amish brand
- Significant pop growth and the challenges that go with it

- Competition from other destinations
- Views of bus tours in general do not align with the travel desires of many baby boomers
- Pressure to provide too much support/funding for efforts to market the CC
- Hungry competition
- Aging tourism product
- Loss of the root reasons for visiting Lancaster County
- Utilizing all visitor venues in county
- Pleasing each group all the time
- Growing success in surrounding communities: IE: Poconos
- To look within and be critical
- Securing external funding
- Lack of public transportation & time available
- High gas prices and economic malaise overall
- attracting the " high end" tourist- competing with exotic places
- Lack of cohesion between the public, private and non-profit sectors
- National security issues and the impact they have on visitors' decisions to travel
- Develop value added programs
- Having a distinctive enough message to get people to come here

Challenge #3

- Be sure the new convention center is paying its fair and full share of PA Dutch CVB costs, without other members subsidizing it.
- Continuously keeping our product in the right markets
- Success or failure of convention center will help or hurt our industry locally
- Siloed marketing programs within the membership base
- Rising cost of gas and food prices
- Lack of new/larger type attractions
- State funding & our role in regional leadership
- Increased competition (substitution) due to increased access to tourism information over the Internet
- Individual member agendas
- Understanding the changing economy
- Keeping members if Convention Center is perceived as getting most of the Visitors Bureau pie
- State funding
- Cost of advertising outside of the visitors centers
- Making tourists perpetual visitors, opening their eyes to the unique experience they can have each time they return to Lancaster.
- Decisions based on input from your membership and not some hair brained ideas by a few
- Promoting reasons why younger people should come to Lancaster County and City
- Unreliable funding sources
- No new product
- Being competitive with other top tourist sites
- Providing less emphasis on the traditional sites that made the county a tourist destination and placing more and more emphasis on Lancaster City
- Promoting the county as a multigenerational destination
- Economic or other events beyond our control
- Relevance to value systems of the tourist as trends emerge
- Competing within the marketplace with reduced dollars
- Lack of respect from the state
- Lack of state support for local tourism efforts
- Not enough education relating to the area
- Maintaining quality in visitor's experience

- Traffic congestion
- To welcome change
- Development of additional tourism product
- Yard sales on busy weekends w/ heavy traffic & buggies
- The aging of the PennDutch Amish brand - we're yesterday's news
- The brain drain within the community.
- Keep our vision as a destination "Fresh and Vibrant"
- Transportation to the area

Question #4:

Other thoughts about a new Strategic Plan? Please share them here.

- The danger of the new convention center monopolizing the PA Dutch CVB staff's time cannot be over-emphasized. It will require enormous amounts of your collective time and resources, especially as you work to build a reputation within the convention planning industry. A fall-off in other member and visitor services and efforts could have a significant negative impact on Lancaster County tourism. We trust that appropriate attention is being paid to this important issue. Thank you for your ongoing excellent work, and for soliciting members' input to your strategic plan!
- #1 strategy and #1 challenge could be our Waterloo as an industry if we fail to see the direct impact of over-regulation and attempts to excessively control private lands, but could be the best thing we ever did if we promote cooperation between landowners and non-landowners! Last year's strategy #2 of expanding membership base should be continued but modified to be a collaboration with nearby bureaus like the Amish who have a Coordinating Committee of autonomous bishop's districts. Strategies #3, #4, and #5 are still very good, so this year we need six strategies!
- If I had more information on the CVB current visitor services and insight on the previous strategic plan about to expire, perhaps I could offer more input.
- The board's focus needs to remain solidly on *strategic* issues. Programming goals should be delegated to staff, with the assistance of active membership task forces for marketing, sales, etc.
- Regardless how great marketing and PR results are, their ability to attain our goals rest with destinations who, largely, are unable to respond to inquiries in a manner equal to the campaign or media coverage. This dramatically reduces the overall value of the CVB unless resources are allocated to administer this component.
- The PA Dutch CVB, in my opinion has become somewhat self-serving, almost like it is a separate attraction in the county. Times are changing rapidly and what was a fact 10 years ago, no longer is. I do not believe anyone has a firm grip on hard facts and too many decisions are being made based upon perceived facts. This must change. Year-to-year comparisons are not realistic considering the level of tourism in Lancaster County in 1990 as compared to 2007. If this issue is not honestly and thoroughly addressed, the rest doesn't matter.
- Small changes work best.

- Half the people that travel to a destination are probably men and I think we have to address the needs of men, too. The people that represent Lancaster County, PA to the general public are 85% to 90% women and I think sometimes, they have to think about the male visitors and appeal to them, too. Women may make the decision as to where they are going on vacation each year, but I can assure you, in my case, if I don't enjoy my stay in Lancaster County because there were not things available to dad and sons, mom may still make the decision as to where to go next year, but dad will let her know in no uncertain terms, that it will not be Lancaster again.
- Because of PA's PLCB (Liquor Control Board), PA is seriously lagging behind in the other up and coming 'food and wine' destinations. People are really enjoying wine like never before and the state of PA with its archaic PLCB makes it very difficult for PA to compete with neighboring states like NY, MD, VA and DE.
- Thanks for the opportunity to provide input.
- I think the management team is doing well. I think there are specific goals that need to be set and use the existing people to do the jobs. I think there have been some staffing additions that could have probably been handled with the existing staff. We need to attack the social group market more. Although the motorcoach market is important, the individual traveling group of 45- 65 year olds and FIT will be stronger with the Baltimore and Philly airports becoming so much more accessible and reasonable airfares.
- While I would never suggest that we turn away from the wholesome family oriented feel that we project to the world, I think we need to work on marketing Lancaster City as a destination for those who would not be interested in the PA Dutch experience. We already have great restaurants for foodies, but we need more nightlife downtown.
- The industry will continue away from the more accepted form it has today. Some "heavy lifting" needs to be done to make educated guesses as to how it will change and when those changes might occur.
- In the newly written "mission" to create a model of success that is envied, let's worry less about whether we are envied or not. If we are successful, we will be. Perhaps a number should be attached to the "increase," this providing a measure of what we consider success to be.
- You must find a way to be as inclusive as possible, perhaps creatively defining your membership structure. And you must find ways to use your limited external funding as wisely, efficiently, and productively as possible.
- The single biggest upside in the short term can be the Convention Center and its impact on all tourism related businesses. It's the Bureau's role to make it as inclusive as possible to maximize the potential impact on every tourist business.
- Return to our roots! Sell the Amish to transient customers as priority #1. That is what our customers associate with us, we should meet their expectations with our marketing efforts. Expand and rework our schedule to market earlier in the season.
- Continue to expand the variety of visitor experiences - not just "Amish Country." We have a valuable natural resource - the Susquehanna River - just waiting to be discovered.

- I really believe that a yearly event that is put together by the PA Dutch CVB would be the best thing to bring the whole together. It would be a step in the right direction for each group within the organization to understand the challenges that the other faces.
- I'm not sure where the "create a model of success envied by other travel destinations" in the mission statement came from. I find it of absolutely no value. We don't need a model of success for other destinations to envy, we need an organization that is singularly focused "to increase the number of visitors to Lancaster County". Mission Statement is critical. Let's look at revising the present statement and then making sure that a copy exists in all member communiqués and on the desk of all staff members.
- A common theme for all hospitality operations to utilize and improving the quality of the experience to the visit in the county from hotel improvements to amenity/attraction improvements.
- Two prong: your traditional visitors have to be given reasons to continue coming here, and new visitors have to have reasons to choose here. Entertainment builds repeat visit for the simple reason that it shows change. Let's face it, the Amish Village will be pretty much as you last saw it 10 years ago. Heritage and historical will bring in people with an interest in expanding their minds and who will skew higher in education and income - and who will spend more while they're here. They will also be enquirers, and will seek out other things to do while here. Motorcoach is dying and the best we can do is to hold onto our share of the ailing beast. The key is the small family grouping in their car; their numbers will have to make up for continuing losses in motorcoach.
- As this generation is turning away from outdoor activities, as evidenced by pools closing due to lack of use- and surveys indicating a down turn in fishing and hunting, it is a very big challenge considering farmlands are our draw. If I had the answer, I would write a book and retire! I believe that you are doing a very, very good job, and I wish you continued success! Thanks for asking- Renie
- I think you are taking the wrong approach by asking us to comment on program. Your program is set by your mission. However, the key here is really audience. Let's get onto the audience and not on the program. See the big picture and then worry about program.
- I believe that the Bureau needs to be careful about its opinions on legislative issues, or at least careful in its expression of those opinions. With such a diverse membership, what is "good for most" is not the same as what is "good for all," and to ask the entire membership to participate in support of or against certain issues that the Bureau feels strongly about can alienate members whose opinion is vastly different. It is a difficult position to walk that fine line, and I think the Bureau can be more aware in the way it expresses those opinions so as not to make those members with differing opinions feel outcast.
- Multi-focus our destination in contrast to "just dining"
- The question is "How do we get people to the area with the continuing increase in gas prices?" Once they are here, possibly without a car, how do we move tourists?