

Prioritized Gold Standard Components for DMOs

Destination Website (18 points)
Photography (15 points)
Visitor Study (12 points)
Destination Brand (10 points)
Email Program (9 points)
Visitor Center (8 points)
Visitors Guide (8 points)
Destination Audit (7 points)
Social Media Engagement (7 points)
Information Specialist(s) (6 points)

Gold Standard Components

11 Points

- Maintain a “one-stop shop” website with all the information a visitor needs to know about *all* activities, attractions, guest amenities and services identified in the Destination Audit, including hours, prices, maps and photos, so it is a virtual destination encyclopedia

9 Points

- Feature a prominent, easy method throughout the website for visitors to “opt in” for targeted email news and features about the destination’s most significant interest areas, and distribute quality information to subscribers on a regular, scheduled basis

8 Points

- Own complete rights to high quality, color, thematic images of the most important geographical features and priority activities/attractions identified in the Visitor Study

7 Points

- Cultivate an authentic brand that communicates a unique emotional attractiveness and theme for the destination and integrate it into all DMO marketing efforts including ads, brochures, photos, Visitor Center, website, etc.

6 Points

- Commission a statistically valid email survey of travelers from principal markets every 3-5 years for a complete destination snapshot of who is (is not) visiting

5 Points

- Feature people experiencing memorable interactions in the key photo images, telling an emotional story within a story that travelers can identify with

4 Points

- Conduct a written audit of *all* destination activities, attractions, amenities and services every 3-5 years with broad-based community input into the process

- Produce an official Visitor Guide at least once per year with high quality photos, concise, well-organized editorial and maps highlighting the most popular activities and attractions identified in the Visitor Study
- Maintain a Facebook and Twitter page for the destination and monitor content, respond to inquiries and engage users daily
- Provide a Visitor Center clearly identified with wayfinding signage off the most traveled road into the destination, or adjacent to its most popular visitor attraction, with clean bathrooms and a comprehensive collection of area literature

3 Points

- Investigate activities and attractions 1½-2 hours outside of official political boundaries as part of a Destination Audit
- Benchmark the popularity and appeal of all activities and attractions identified in the destination audit through a Visitor Study or separate traveler survey
- Have a full-time staff member, or the equivalent, dedicated to researching, confirming and updating all information about the destination
- Verify every published fact by the DMO at least every six months
- Open the Visitor Center seven days a week and provide knowledgeable information specialists, who receive formal monthly training, to explain and sell the destination

2 Points

- Benchmark consumer awareness and satisfaction in the Visitor Study, or a separate traveler survey, to track the DMO/destination effectiveness over time
- Develop and execute an ongoing formal program to build and refresh the image library
- Organize the website so it is fast, easy and simple to research the destination with no more than 25 links per page, 12 options per menu, and 4-5 clicks to reach any webpage
- Conduct a keyword analysis and build optimized pages for the most important topics identified in the Visitor Study to make them easy to find on the Internet
- Build a responsive website that can be viewed by any kind of electronic device
- Distribute at least 100,000 copies of the Visitors Guide, mail out copies in response to requests within 3 days, and make it downloadable from DMO website
- Cultivate at least 25,000 “likes”/followers for Facebook & Twitter
- Engage a broad swath of the community to develop and champion the brand identity

1 Point

- Involve the community and constituents in the process of finalizing the Destination Audit
- Create statistically valid visitor profiles for each month of the year in a Visitor Study
- Maintain the official community events calendar
- Limit advertising in the Visitors Guide to no more than 40 percent of the editorial content and publish the DMO website on every spread
- Provide hours, addresses, times & prices for all activities, attractions and lodgings listed in the Visitors Guide to simplify planning efforts
- Integrate social media into the website, including a YouTube Gallery
- Offer daily tour and event information, and hotel, restaurant & tour reservations for Visitor Center guests
- Test the creative elements of the brand with travelers and residents to ensure strong and popular support