

Visit Cook County MN (VCC) Summer Association Directives 2018

Friday, February 16, 2018

How we use this survey

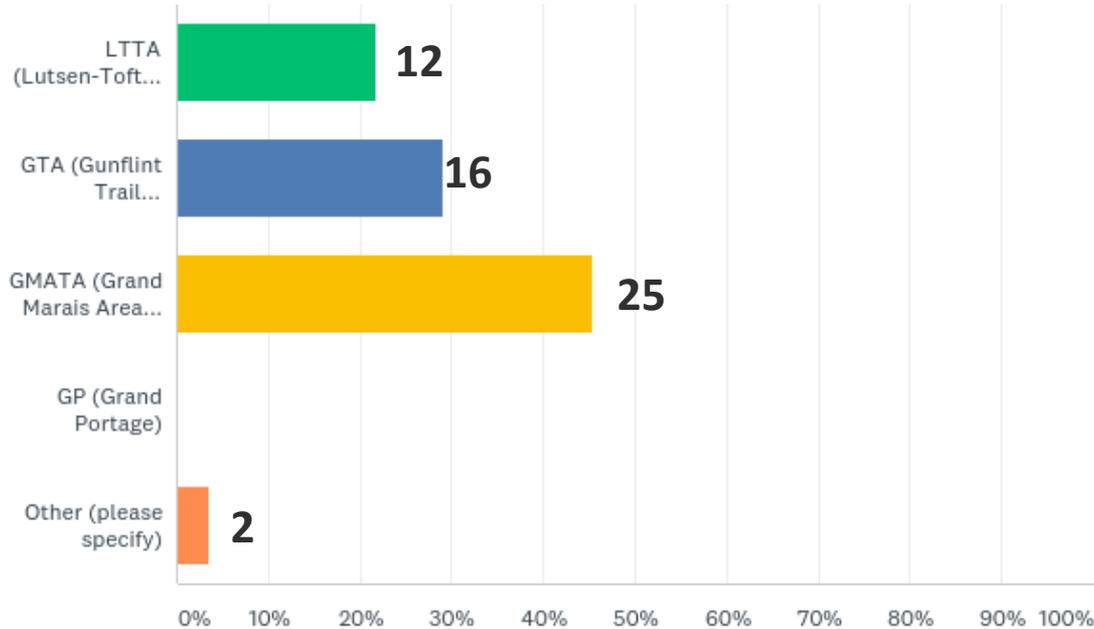
Thank you for participating in the 2018 Spring-Summer-Fall Marketing Survey!

At VCC, we use the data collected in this survey to guide our seasonal marketing campaigns, identify any new trends or changes in the market, direct the social media emphasis, build a content marketing calendar, discover public relations opportunities and as an overall assessment of how we are doing in the eyes of our stakeholders.

However, we do not take the survey results as gospel. We combine the survey data with narrative from association meetings and conversations with stakeholders as well as social media listening to our overarching campaign objective.

Q1: Which association are you a member of?

Answered: 55 Skipped: 0



Average time to complete survey:
9 minutes

Q2: What vertical markets do you think Visit Cook County (VCC) focus on this summer (2018)?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 13



Answered: 42 Skipped: 13

Q2: What vertical markets do you think visit Cook County (VCC) focus on this summer (2018)?

Breakdown of votes

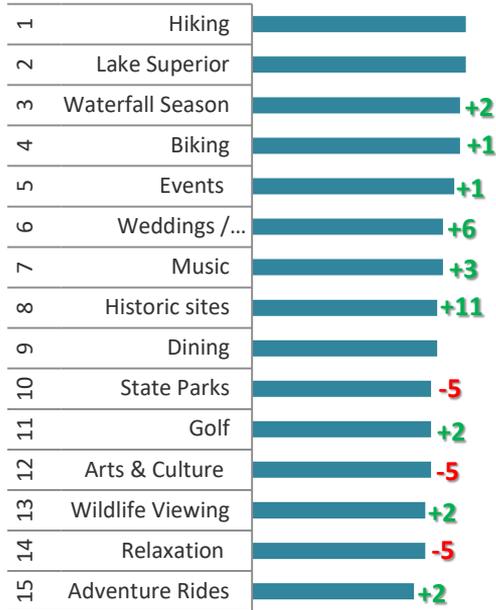
	LEAST IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	ABSOLUTELY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Lake Superior	2.44% 1	9.76% 4	12.20% 5	19.51% 8	56.10% 23	41	4.17
Hiking	2.44% 1	4.88% 2	17.07% 7	29.27% 12	46.34% 19	41	4.12
BMC&W	2.44% 1	12.20% 5	17.07% 7	9.76% 4	58.54% 24	41	4.10
Canoeing	2.44% 1	9.76% 4	21.95% 9	26.83% 11	39.02% 16	41	3.90
Waterfall Season	10.00% 4	7.50% 3	17.50% 7	30.00% 12	35.00% 14	40	3.73
Wildlife Viewing (birding, moose, etc.)	4.89% 2	7.32% 3	24.39% 10	36.59% 15	26.83% 11	41	3.73
Events (major events like the Lutensberger Fish Pic, Canoe Races, Rendezvous Days, etc.)	7.32% 3	14.63% 6	24.39% 10	21.95% 9	31.71% 13	41	3.56
Biking	7.32% 3	4.88% 2	31.71% 13	39.02% 16	17.07% 7	41	3.54
Dining	2.39% 1	19.05% 8	28.57% 12	26.19% 11	23.81% 10	42	3.50
State Parks	14.29% 6	14.29% 6	14.29% 6	26.19% 11	30.96% 13	42	3.45
Arts & Culture (shopping, events, and classes)	4.89% 2	14.63% 6	34.15% 14	29.27% 12	17.07% 7	41	3.39
Fishing	4.89% 2	24.39% 10	29.27% 12	12.20% 5	29.27% 12	41	3.37
Kayaking	7.69% 3	12.82% 5	33.33% 13	28.21% 11	17.96% 7	39	3.36
Historic sites	2.39% 1	16.67% 7	35.71% 15	35.71% 15	9.52% 4	42	3.33
Music	9.76% 4	21.95% 9	26.83% 11	24.39% 10	17.07% 7	41	3.17
Naturalist programs	4.89% 2	17.07% 7	41.46% 17	29.27% 12	7.32% 3	41	3.17
Relaxation (spas, massage, romance, reading, etc)	7.32% 3	29.27% 12	31.71% 13	19.51% 8	12.20% 5	41	3.00
Weddings / Honeyrooms	19.51% 8	24.39% 10	19.51% 8	26.83% 11	9.76% 4	41	2.83
Watersports (SUP, etc.)	12.20% 5	21.95% 9	41.46% 17	21.95% 9	2.44% 1	41	2.80
Shopping	21.95% 9	26.83% 11	21.95% 9	14.63% 6	14.63% 6	41	2.73
Adventure Rides (zipline, gondola, alpine slide, etc.)	14.63% 6	28.83% 11	41.46% 17	12.20% 5	4.88% 2	41	2.66
Awards/Accolades	25.00% 10	27.50% 11	30.00% 12	7.50% 3	10.00% 4	40	2.50
Golf	29.27% 12	31.71% 13	17.07% 7	9.76% 4	12.20% 5	41	2.44
Sailing	25.64% 10	35.90% 14	25.64% 10	12.82% 5	0.00% 0	39	2.26

Q2: Vertical Markets Top 15 by association

+1 = number of spots gained from LY

-1 = number of spots lost from LY

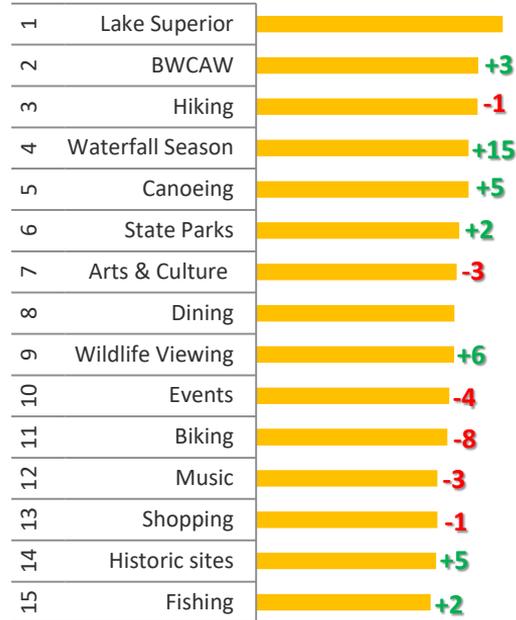
LTTA Top 15



9 answered | 3 skip

Biggest changes from 2017 to 2018: Historic sites and Weddings climbed to top 10. Arts, Parks and Relaxation all dropped 5 and BWCA (previously 8th) dropped out of top 15.

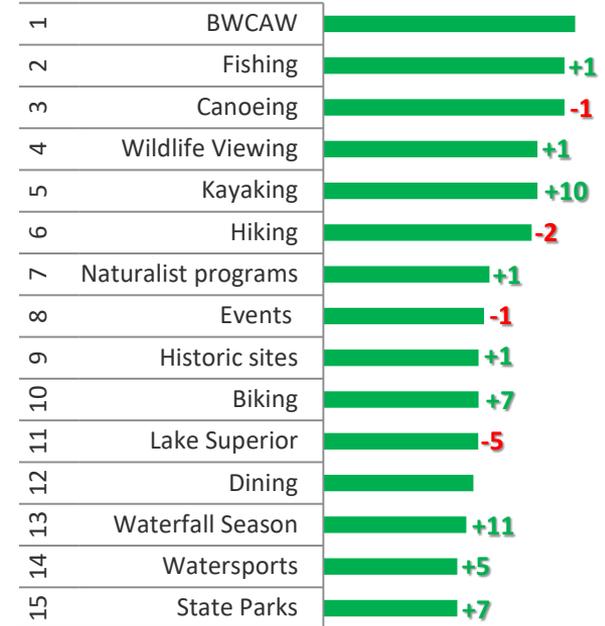
GMATA Top 15



23 answered | 4 skip

Biggest changes from 2017 to 2018: Waterfall season climbed from 19th. Historic sites and Wildlife gained as well. Events, biking, music and arts all dropped a few points.

GTA Top 15

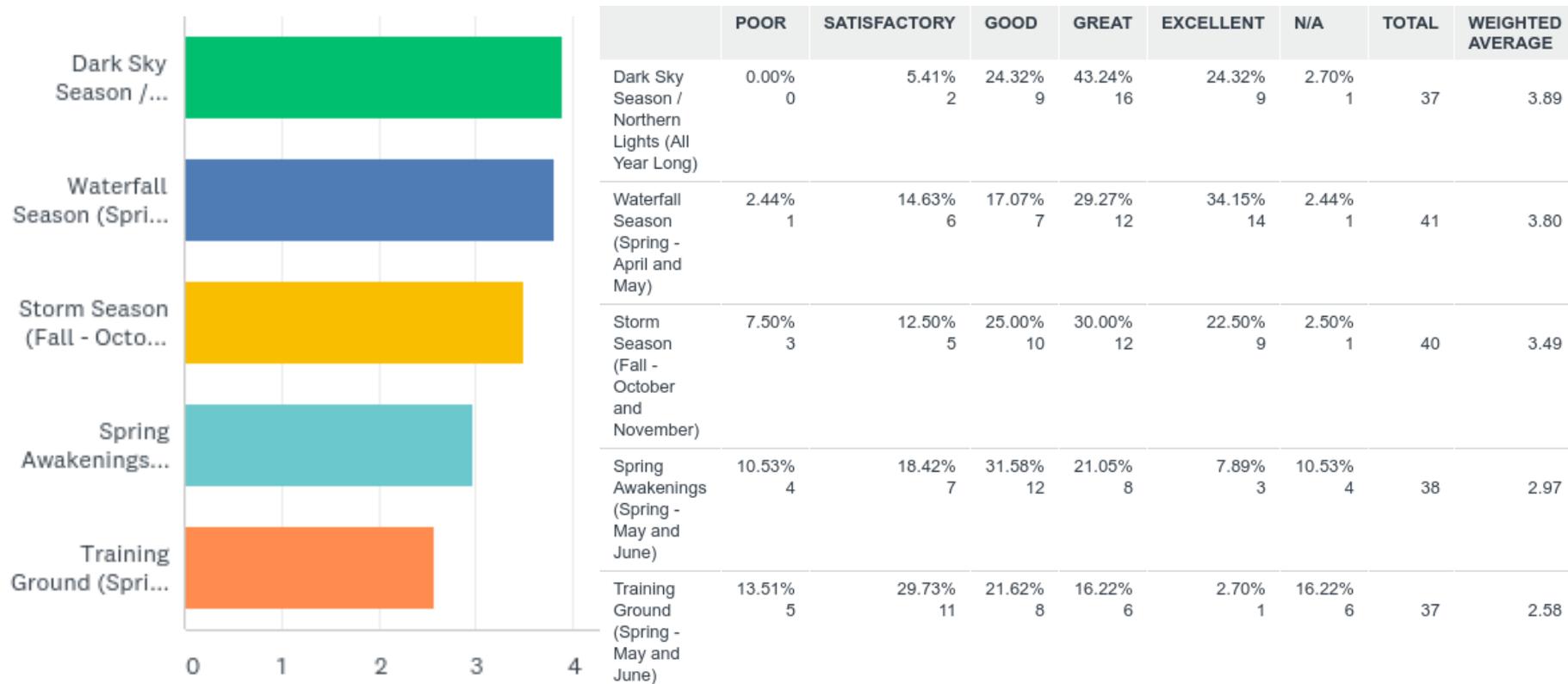


10 answered | 6 skip

Biggest changes from 2017 to 2018: Kayaking and Waterfall Season gained at least 10 spots. Lake Superior dropped out of top 10 and Arts (previously 9th) dropped off out of top 15.

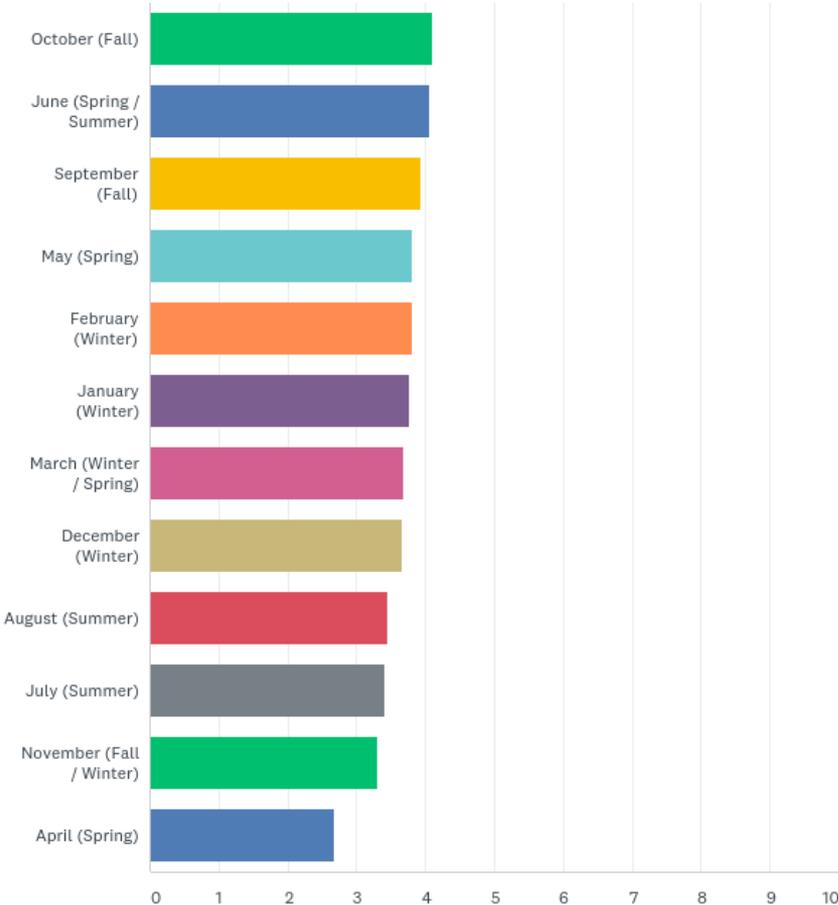
Q3: What past seasonal marketing and PR campaigns resonated with you?

Answered: 41 Skipped: 14



Q4: What months do you think are most important to promote?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 12

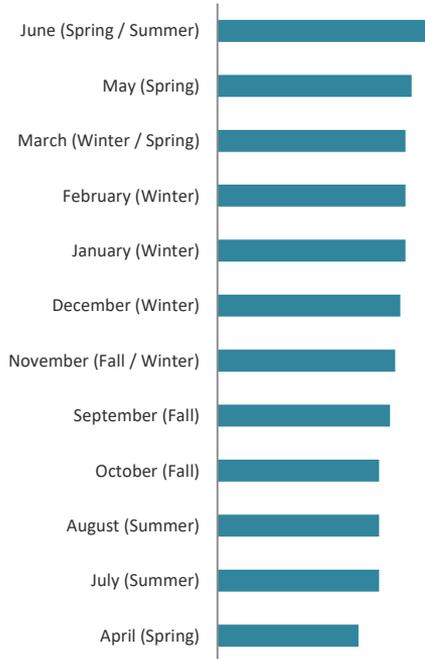


	LESS IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT	ABSOLUTELY IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
October (Fall)	2.38% 1	4.76% 2	16.67% 7	33.33% 14	42.86% 18	42	4.10
June (Spring / Summer)	0.00% 0	9.30% 4	23.26% 10	20.93% 9	46.51% 20	43	4.05
September (Fall)	4.76% 2	4.76% 2	21.43% 9	30.95% 13	38.10% 16	42	3.93
May (Spring)	0.00% 0	9.52% 4	28.57% 12	33.33% 14	28.57% 12	42	3.81
February (Winter)	0.00% 0	12.20% 5	31.71% 13	19.51% 8	36.59% 15	41	3.80
January (Winter)	0.00% 0	12.20% 5	34.15% 14	19.51% 8	34.15% 14	41	3.76
March (Winter / Spring)	5.13% 2	7.69% 3	30.77% 12	25.64% 10	30.77% 12	39	3.69
December (Winter)	7.14% 3	11.90% 5	21.43% 9	26.19% 11	33.33% 14	42	3.67
August (Summer)	10.00% 4	22.50% 9	15.00% 6	17.50% 7	35.00% 14	40	3.45
July (Summer)	10.00% 4	25.00% 10	12.50% 5	20.00% 8	32.50% 13	40	3.40
November (Fall / Winter)	11.90% 5	14.29% 6	23.81% 10	30.95% 13	19.05% 8	42	3.31
April (Spring)	28.21% 11	17.95% 7	28.21% 11	10.26% 4	15.38% 6	39	2.67

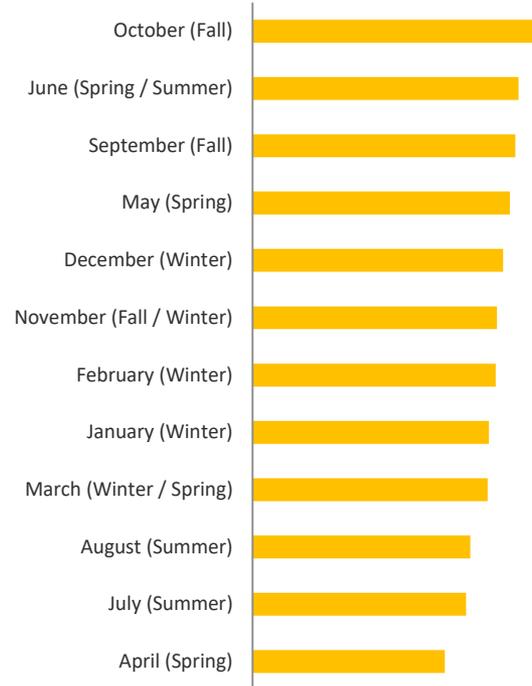
Q4: Ranking by month by association

Answered: 43 Skipped: 12

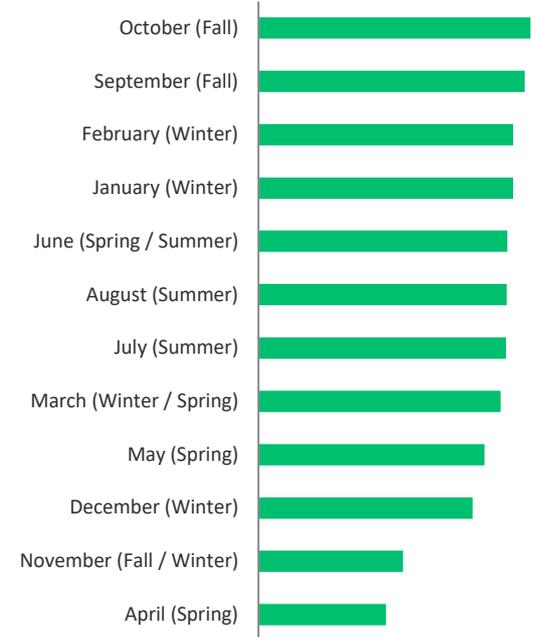
LTTA Month Rank



GMATA Month Rank



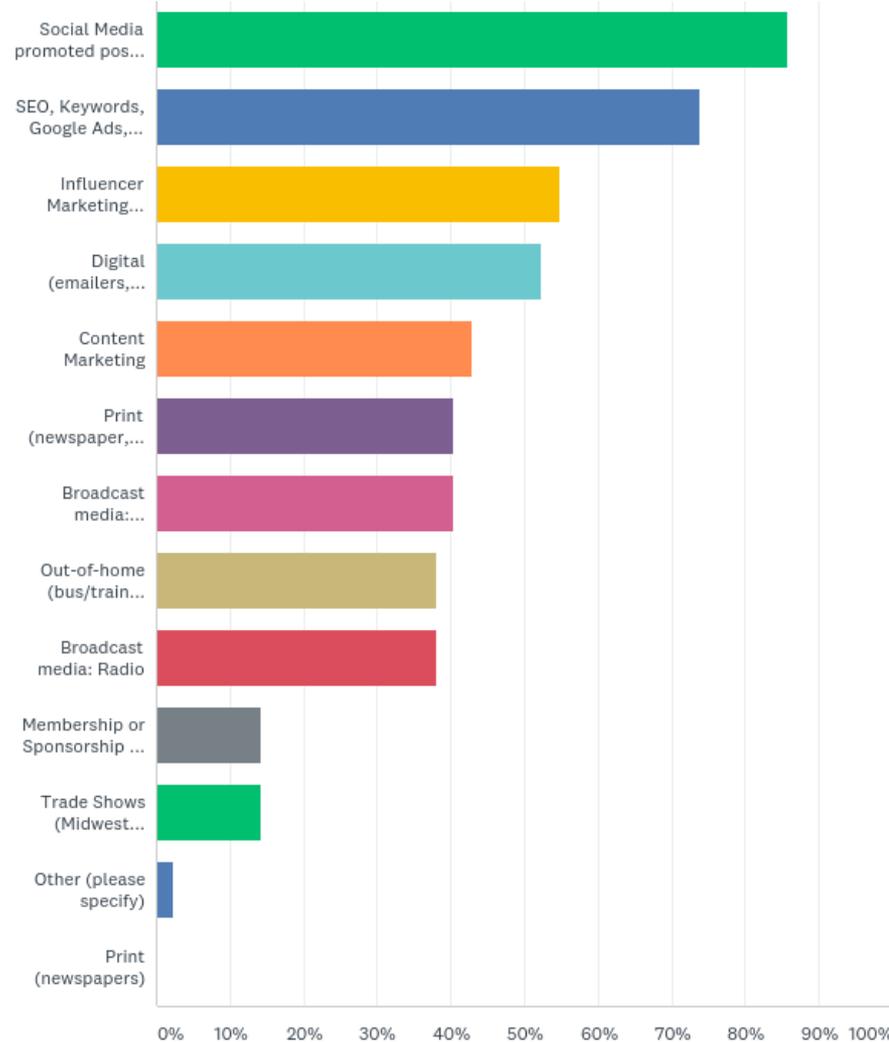
GTA Month Rank



Q5: VCC uses a wide variety of marketing mediums to reach potential guests. Please select the Top 5 marketing mediums you feel are most important.

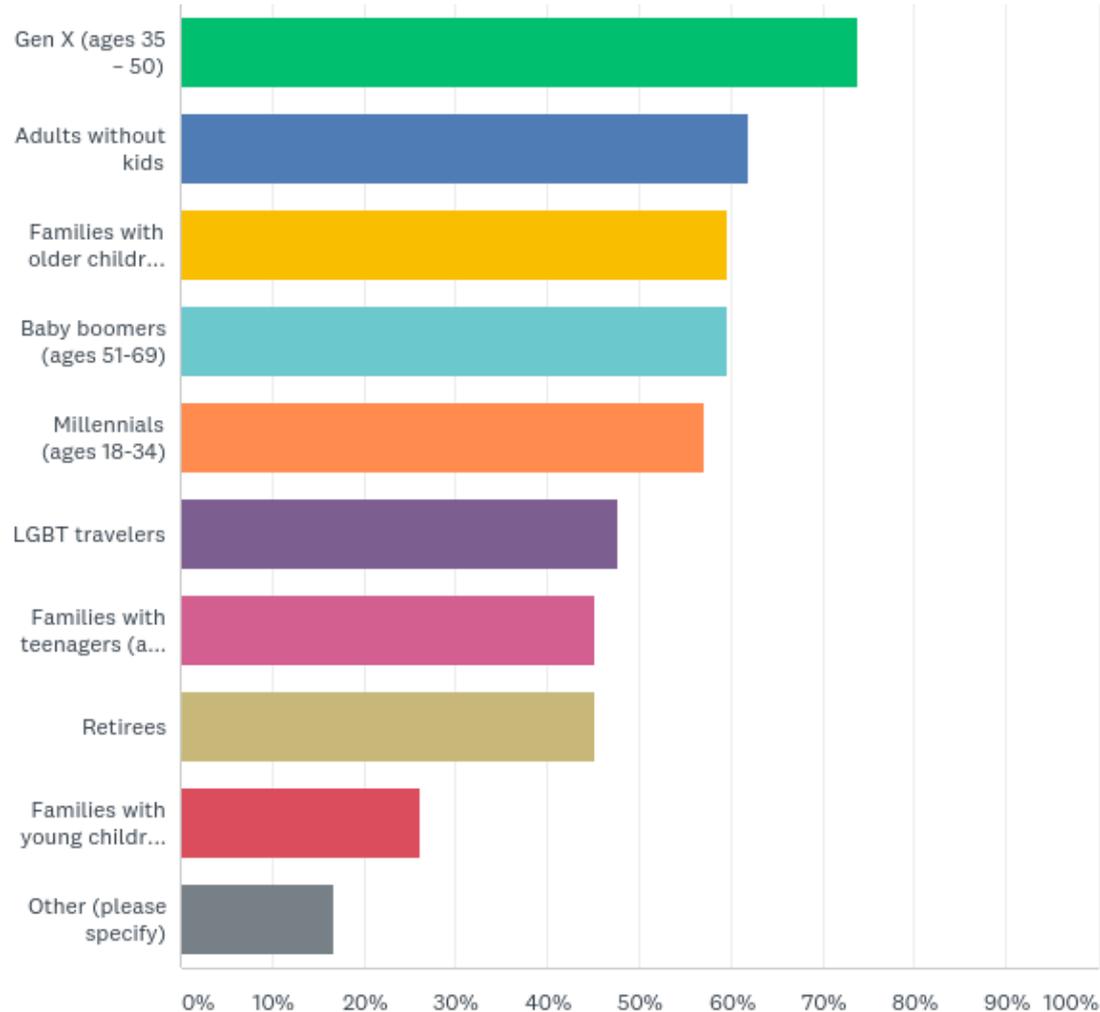
Answered: 42 Skipped: 13

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Social Media promoted posts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	85.71%	36
SEO, Keywords, Google Ads, Retargeting, etc.	73.81%	31
Influencer Marketing (inviting social influencers and bloggers to the area)	54.76%	23
Digital (emailers, video pre-roll, etc.)	52.38%	22
Content Marketing	42.86%	18
Print (newspaper, magazines, monthly publications)	40.48%	17
Broadcast media: Television	40.48%	17
Out-of-home (bus/train wraps, billboards, transit shelter takeovers, etc.)	38.10%	16
Broadcast media: Radio	38.10%	16
Membership or Sponsorship to specific organizations (BWCA.com, etc.)	14.29%	6
Trade Shows (Midwest Mountaineering, Canoeopia, etc.)	14.29%	6
Other (please specify)	2.38%	1
Print (newspapers)	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 42		



Q8: What demographic group(s) do you recommend we target?

Answered: 42 Skipped: 13



General Narrative (part 1)

Q3: What past seasonal marketing and PR campaigns resonated with you?

1. These seem to give people a reason to come to our area. I believe a historical tour, or resort tour would too.
2. Fall colors.
3. Shoulder season events in November and April.

Q4: What months do you think are most important to promote?

1. Fill the other months before promoting our rest times (april/November)
2. Summer takes care of itself for all of us now. May and June have fallen off dramatically. Fall is almost self-sustaining but people need to be reminded its coming so they book. Winter needs help. Some months, April and much of November, are total failures and need to be accepted as that and not marketed. Most resorts close, most dining closed, and drawing people up here for those dates just gives a bad impression.
3. It's difficult to want to support more advertising for months when our international workers don't arrive until June. In the winter months we can most likely get by with more business with the local workers we have.It's a catch 22.
4. People are going to come in the summer months, regardless. Important to show them what is available outside the traditional window - spread out the traffic.

General Narrative (part 2)

Q6: What kind of print publications do you recommend?

1. Regional Pubs: Twin Cities, Duluth, and Rochester based family oriented and travel publications. College Magazines/Newspapers/Emails
2. Magazines & Monthly Pubs: Lake Superior Magazine, Northern Wilds, MNMO, City Pages, Lake Time, National Geographic, Outdoor Today
3. Visitor Guide: Explore MN, our own lure piece...
4. PR Focus: Articles in Strib and PPress, or national newspapers if you can make it happen.
5. The MSP airport has many publications with Minnesota Tourism, the Gunflint Trail should be highlighted in those.

Q7: What blogger or social media influencers do you recommend? Please be as specific as possible.

1. Traditional Social Methods: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
2. Look to Midwest Living and larger travel markets outside Twin Cities area, we have access to TC
3. Types of influencers: Artists, authors, photographers. Invite Duluth, Tbay, and Twin Cities news bloggers and columnists.
4. Target: hikers, campers, kayakers, canoers
5. Specific: Fit Foodie Finds, Dirt Bag Darling, [Sven Sundgaard](#), [Sharon Stiteler \(Birdchick\)](#), [Molly at Hey Eleanor!](#), There are so many local bloggers, and others with a social media presence, in our area, each with a following. To the extent they could be encouraged to carry the VCC message, that could be a powerful tool.
6. In our experience of giving away things to bloggers and so- called influencers, most are a total waste of time. They mainly take advantage of you and throw their weight around, with little payback. Unless their reach is through national publications, not just their site, don't give them much. Exception might be writers with well-received books as well as website. We find most bloggers and especially anyone who labels themselves an "influencer" have extremely inflated stats about their reach.

General Narrative (part 3)

Q8: What demographic group(s) do you recommend we target?

1. All demographics welcome, but concentrate on the families with children and gen-xers to grow/maintain our future.
2. We need to seed future customers by attracting younger outdoor adventure types; we already have the boomers & families.
3. Foreign visitors, Professionals, travel bloggers, print and film industry, Art Museum goers.
4. Minority community. Our nation is rapidly becoming less white, yet our tourist crowd is almost totally white. There is so much that could be done to attract other segments of our society to the North Shore - African descent, Latino, Asian - and we could open north shore opportunities to many people who might never have considered visiting before.

Q9: Have you noticed any changes in where your visitors are coming from? Any new markets you would like to see tested?

1. **Out of State:** Upper Midwest -Illinois, Iowa, Kansas City, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and the Dakotas.
 1. Chicago people are coming in...must be VCC efforts!
 2. Southern states: Texas, Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Mississippi
2. **Within MN** (outside of Twin Cities metro): St Cloud, Winona, Rochester, Northfield
3. **Other Countries:** Canada (Thunder Bay). Thunder Bay is strong, keep marketing to them.
4. **Regional:** We get even more Duluth than we used to and they are younger, often having moved to Duluth for a job in recent years. Targeting new arrivals to Duluth, especially work transfers, in some way might be smart.
5. **Antidotal & Misc.:**
 1. Got a larger booking from California today they didn't bat an eye at our room rate. We should be trying to attract wilderness seekers from East/west coast.
 2. People coming from Europe specifically England and their only destination is the BWCAW which I think is amazing and very important.
 3. Visitors starting to look more diverse, urban, first-time visitors as opposed to just the families/boomers that have been coming for years.
 4. Seeing more large family groups from the Twin Cities who are newer Americans of Indian and SE Asian origin.

General Narrative (part 4)

Seasonality

Any other comments:

1. Keep boosting the waterfall weekends in the spring - these really helped our business. We expected May to be dead quiet and our weekends were busy like a ski weekend. Thanks for the efforts!
2. The summer looks very strong. Help us all fix the May and June problem, which gets worse every year. Pushing things that happen in Grand Marais or along the shore does not help us one bit up here.
3. Summer really takes care of itself - overbusy in August if anything late spring (May-early June) needs work Fall needs more leaf push (well before the metro leaves) November is hopeless -- leave it alone, aside from North House.
4. Really focus the marketing to attract guests April-June and October. July - Sept. is already so popular, there's no need to market Grand Marais. If you are spending for these summer months, I would say focus on the other areas of the county that may have capacity (cough...LTTA...cough). I can't stress enough the allure of Lake Superior for my guests. The more images of the big lake, the better, esp. during the spring and late fall seasons when the lake is so moody and magnificent.
5. If we don't find a way to spread the number of tourists around the calendar, we will continue to be overwhelmed in the summer months, and bone dry during other, just as wonderful, parts of the year.
6. Spring is a crucial time period to market as we're not in full-swing yet and it will have a ripple effect throughout the summer/fall. We don't need as much help with the summer/fall as our numbers are healthy.
7. Is there any focus on racially diverse people in your ads? Cook County visitors aren't all white. Urban, ethnically diverse people should be able to imagine themselves relaxing/playing/shopping in Cook County and see themselves in your ads.
8. Concentrate on events where the majority of revenue is generated by local businesses, this way the money stays in the community. When you invite vendors from out of town the money leaves with them and the local businesses lose those precious prime market days.
9. How to make a BWCAW trip easy. How to visit the BWCAW and stay in a cabin, not a tent. Drive your car right to your cabin.
10. It would be nice to know times restaurants are operational, when the sailboat runs, fishing trips on Superior, a map of all the campsites, private and public. Phone numbers of other establishments that host out of town guests. Which establishments forgo the minimum two night stay for weekends. Hours the visitor center is open. Maps of the Gunflint Trail, which roads lead to which lakes, etc. What eateries are up the Gunflint, besides Trail Center, Hungry Jack, and Skyport lodge. Which establishments can host up to eight people in a single cabin.