

3.4. Build excitement about Montana among niche market enthusiasts

This Strategic Action strengthens Montana's tourism product development and marketing efforts.

Recommended Tactics

MTOT, Regions, CVBs, Communities, Tribes

- » Craft visitor information that immediately sells the excitement of experiencing an activity or interest *in Montana*.
- » Ensure that locations within Montana for a particular activity/interest are easily located on a map, including their relative location to one another.
- » Ensure that for each location for a particular activity or interest the surrounding towns are easily identified. Present surrounding towns as gateways to that activity or interest, offering supplies and support needed for the activity or interest, and offering comfort and hospitality to complement the breathtaking experience.
- » Provide links to user generated content online (e.g., blogs, online communities, reviews) to capture the passion for pursuing the activity or interest in Montana.
- » When presenting niche information, also offer area activities and attractions that would appeal to a spouse, family members, or other travel partners that are not as passionate about the niche activity. For example, when promoting fly fishing or hunting, suggest activities that could entice the target niche visitor to bring along a spouse, family, or friends.

Businesses & Organizations

- » If customers often share a common trip motivation (e.g. fishing, snowmobiling) provide links to user generated content online (e.g., blogs, online communities, reviews) to capture the passion for pursuing the activity or interest in the area.
- » If your business or organization doesn't serve all the needs of the niche market, provide information about other local entities that can offer supplies, support for activities or interests and offer comfort and hospitality.
- » When presenting niche information, also suggest activities and attractions that would appeal to a spouse, family members, or other travel partners that are not as passionate about the niche activity. For example, when promoting fly fishing or hunting, suggest cultural, heritage, or recreational activities that could entice the target niche visitor to bring along a spouse.

Indicators of Success

- » For visitors interested in a particular activity or interest, visitor information offers easy access to multiple locations to partake in that activity or interest. These locations are easily located on the map, located in relation to one another, and located in relation to gateway towns.
- » Visitor information presents each activity or interest in a way that immediately sets a tone of excitement, focusing on the superb setting offered by Montana.

- » Links to independent online content helps to build excitement and lend credibility to the Brand promise.

Background & Rationale

Niche activities are strong motivators for their audiences and, while these audiences may be individually small, they can contribute significantly to overall tourism numbers. (For example, Wyoming’s Office of Tourism found that niche activities together *motivated* the choice of Wyoming for 47% of the state’s 2012 visitors, compared to 46% of visitors motivated by visiting a national park. See <http://www.wyomingofficeoftourism.gov/industry/pdf/homepage/2012VisitorProfileStudy.pdf>).

Because Montana’s strength as a destination depends upon the natural landscape and outdoor activities (adventurous or not), targeting the niche markets associated with these activities offers strong opportunities for Montana’s tourism sector.

Today’s traveler seeks experiences rather than “sights” and judges a destination on the “existential or authentic experience” – the deep and lasting impression that it makes upon them and their lives. Offering the enthusiast a superb experience involving the favored activity or interest will have a strong marketing pull.

Like scenic beauty, however, many other states have the same activities and interests available. Montana must position itself, therefore, by emphasizing *excitement* rather than just *availability*.

Mapping the various locations for an activity or interest in relation to one another and to gateway towns facilitates multi-destination trip planning and mitigates any concerns about the availability of necessary services and amenities. The visitor can envision and plan a balanced trip with breathtaking experiences and relaxing hospitality. It “expands opportunities for these visitors to stay longer and spend more” (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2009).

Linking to user generated content online – blogs, online communities, reviews – strengthens the credibility of the breathtaking experiences that are offered, supports trip planning, and builds excitement. The excitement generated can be significant, as online community members often express great passion not only for the activity but also the Montana setting. For example, motorcyclists on AdvRider.com rave about riding in the Gravelly Range and the BigSkyFishing.com blog exudes excitement about favorite fishing spots all around Montana. These word-of-mouth praises are incredibly valuable and can be found for most activities marketed to the non-resident visitor.