

Destination Gettysburg Column
By Carl Whitehill
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Today's marketing landscape is complex, challenging

Thirty years ago, conversations about tourism marketing primarily focused on advertising – mostly print, TV and radio ... maybe billboards and brochures.

But since then, the marketing landscape has changed dramatically, and most significantly in the past decade. There are more ways than ever to reach potential visitors, and while obviously having more tools is always a good thing, today's marketing takes more resources.

Destination marketing organizations such as Destination Gettysburg are now working with online advertising, pre-roll video commercials that play before online video content, travel and lifestyle blogs in addition to the handful or more of social media channels that visitors use to seek out travel information and opinions by fellow travelers.

Paid advertising is no longer a question of print or broadcast – the opportunities are vast and in many ways, much more targeted than the marketing of many decades ago. This advertising can engage with specific interests, demographics and online search patterns. These ads can provide marketing organizations such as Destination Gettysburg with vital information on whether a person clicked on an advertisement and visited a website to find more information.

Ads on streaming services such as Spotify or Pandora can be targeted to people who listen to a specific type of music, or live in a certain geographic area.

Today, Destination Gettysburg engages with visitors one-on-one through social media interactions, promotes events and businesses through videos, weekly blogs and monthly digital newsletters, among other ways.

These marketing efforts can bring a destination to life – through amazing photography and videos, as well as other multi-media content that simply was not an option many years ago.

In other words, destinations have a personality like never before.

These marketing changes are forcing destination marketing organizations to adapt, and often adapt quickly by growing their marketing, their marketing budgets and sometimes, their staff to meet the demands of today's marketing landscape.

Destination Gettysburg spends 90 percent of its budget on marketing through staff specialized in marketing, paid advertising and other efforts to reach potential visitors. This budget is crucial to growing Adams County as a top destination in the Mid-Atlantic United States, and in turn, bringing upwards of \$660 million into our community and supporting more than 7,500 jobs.

Tourism, like many industries, is competitive. It's that marketing – whether found through a Facebook post, a blog or through digital advertising on a music streaming service – that puts Gettysburg and Adams County in front of millions of Americans that are in the midst of planning their next weekend getaway or family vacation.

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