



**Survive & Thrive!**

**Tourism Recession Beaters**

with

**Phil Bruno**

**Virginia  
Tourism Summit**

**April 19, 2011**

# GET IT IN GEAR

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**When your survival  
is threatened how  
you react is key.**



# BEFORE

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High Blood  
Pressure

High Cholesterol

Ulcerative Colitis

Sleep Apnea

325 lbs.

5 Medications

Morbidly Obese



# AFTER

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BP = 125 / 73

Cholesterol = V. Good

Colitis = Cured

Sleep Apnea = Cured

210 lbs

No medications

Century Cyclist



# GET IT IN GEAR

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**In 2011 –  
Tourism  
organizations  
are threatened  
to survive.**



# TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

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- **Understand the basic shift in consumerism**
- **Takeaway concrete actions steps from Hospitality and Tourism organizations who have successfully adjusted.**
- **Understand that HOPE is not a strategy**

# EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

## **FOCUS GROUP RESULTS**

**Q: NOW THAT WE ARE IN  
RECESSION, WHAT DO YOU DESIRE  
IN A TRAVEL/VACATION  
EXPERIENCE?**



# BOOMERS WANT (AGE 45 -65)

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- Willing to pay for good service - want value
- Good food
- Choices
- Small group adventure
- Experiential/authentic travel
- Voluntourism
- Relaxation
- Free time
- Shoppers
- 'Man'cations
- Girlfriends getaways
- Family travel –  
multi-generational

# BOOMERS DON'T WANT

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- BUSSES!
- Rudeness
- Inconvenience
- No crowds
- No lines
- Screaming children
- Cramped airplanes
- Paying for luggage
- Structured itineraries

# GENERATION X (AGE 32 – 44)

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- Unique experience
- Cultural - no tour buses
- Volunteer Tourism
- Gay & Lesbian Travel

# GENERATION Y (AGE 18 – 31)

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- Experiential
- Break from life/technology
- Affordable
- Convenient
- Fun
- Learning
- Togetherness
- Your own experience  
w unique pictures
- Want to eat/shop/
- Explore where locals go

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# TOP FIVE TACTICS

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- Focus on customers who CAN and will act.
- Enrich the customer experience.
- Convert trial customers to core customers.
- Enhance your brand.
- Community – together we are stronger.

# ENRICHING

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## Strategy

Deliver high value agri-tourism exp  
Target affinity groups  
corporate group market



## Tactics

Immerse customer in harvest and wine making process  
Involve all senses  
Provide edu-tainment  
Offer Team Building experience  
Community synergy – CVB – 11 other winemakers  
channel partners – Crush Club

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<http://firstcrushwinemaking.com/>

# FIRST CRUSH RESULTS

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**500% growth of customer base in year 2**

**New workshops began +30% projected attendance 2010**

**Addition of corporate team building in 2010 - took 50% of Harvest weekend experiences**

**HOW ARE YOU ENRICHING THE  
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?**

# AMERICAN MOUNTAIN THEATER

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**527 seat, \$1.8 million theater – opened July 2007**  
**Elkins West Virginia**

## **Strategy**

Offer family friendly entertainment unique to the region

Attract family, individual and motorcoach operators in various stage of vacation planning process to spend multiple day stays in area for benefit of community

# AMERICAN MOUNTAIN THEATER

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## Tactics

Produce 3 different live family friendly music and comic variety shows over the course of each season.

Buy media in WV and surrounding states  
some national publications

'08 started packaging department to partner with excursion train, local hoteliers, attractions and restaurants.

# AMT RESULTS

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2008 attendance/sales + 117% over '07  
2009 +57% over '08  
2010 thru July +19% over '09  
Hotel tax +15% over '09  
County travel spending +13% '07-08  
2x state avg.

Local economical impact \$5-6 million

Elkins is #1 motorcoach destination in state

325 bus groups in 2009

Become a 2-3 day overnight package with most attractions a few miles from each other



# AMT – MORE RESULTS

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Packaging department has packaged trips from 26 states and 2 foreign countries.

Dinner theater under construction

Style compliments rather than competes

Bluegrass and comedy

Demand for rooms exceeds supply

From September - Shows sold out through 2010

Visit their website - WOW

[www. Americanmountaintheater.com](http://www.Americanmountaintheater.com)



See Seven States

↑ KY-VA. 120 MI.  
The Potomac

↑ NC. 50 MI.

↑ S.C. 80 MI.

↑ GEORGIA

↑ ALA. 25 MI.

↑ TENN. 1/2 MI.





SEE  
**ROCK  
CITY**

FARMALL  
M

FARMALL

FARMALL

FARMALL

DEERE

WARNING  
NO  
SMOKING  
NO  
OPEN  
FLAMES

# ROCK CITY STRATEGY

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- #1 Resource = People
- Culture of Excellence
- Renewed training
- Aggressive mystery shopping
- Accountability and rewards
- Special event production

# VALUES

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- **Being proactive**
- **Innovating throughout**
- **Acting as a learning organization**
- **Communication as key**
- **Appreciation of all**
- **Accountability**

# ROCK CITY RESULTS

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- Attendance steady at 400M
- 2007 – 08 profitability +52%
- 08-09 profitability +43%
- #1 Guest Service rating Southern Highlands Attractions Association
- Revenue per guest +4%
- Attendance in 2010 +6%

**WHAT ARE THE VALUES OF YOUR  
ORGANIZATION?**

# DELIVERABLES

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## Industry relations

- Introduced a hospitality program reinforced with a secret shopper programs fueled by volunteers
- Catalyst for a Hospitality Program at Community College



# DELIVERABLES

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## Tourism Marketing

- Initiated a regional branding program  
Try Southwest Kansas
- Participates with State co-op media buying program
- Partners with local attractions

# DELIVERABLES

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## Community Relations

- Got support to introduce 1 cent tourism tax
- Economic impact is at core of efforts
- Tourism has been recognized as key economic development player

# DODGE CITY KANSAS CVB

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## Strategy

- Focus on those who can and will act
- Community effort to diversify business base through tourism



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## Get the Heck INTO Dodge

<http://www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/us/2010/04/22/foreman.bua.dodge.city.cn.html>

# DODGE CITY KANSAS CVB

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## Tactics

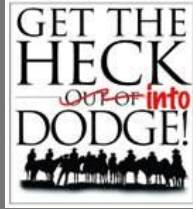
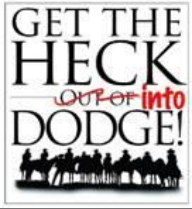
- Establish 1% sales tax for tourism development
- Invest in sports complex, race track, convention center and seasonal leisure activities
- Capture momentum from opening of 1st ever State-owned casino
- Reinforce the brand of “Wild West”

# DODGE CITY KANSAS CVB

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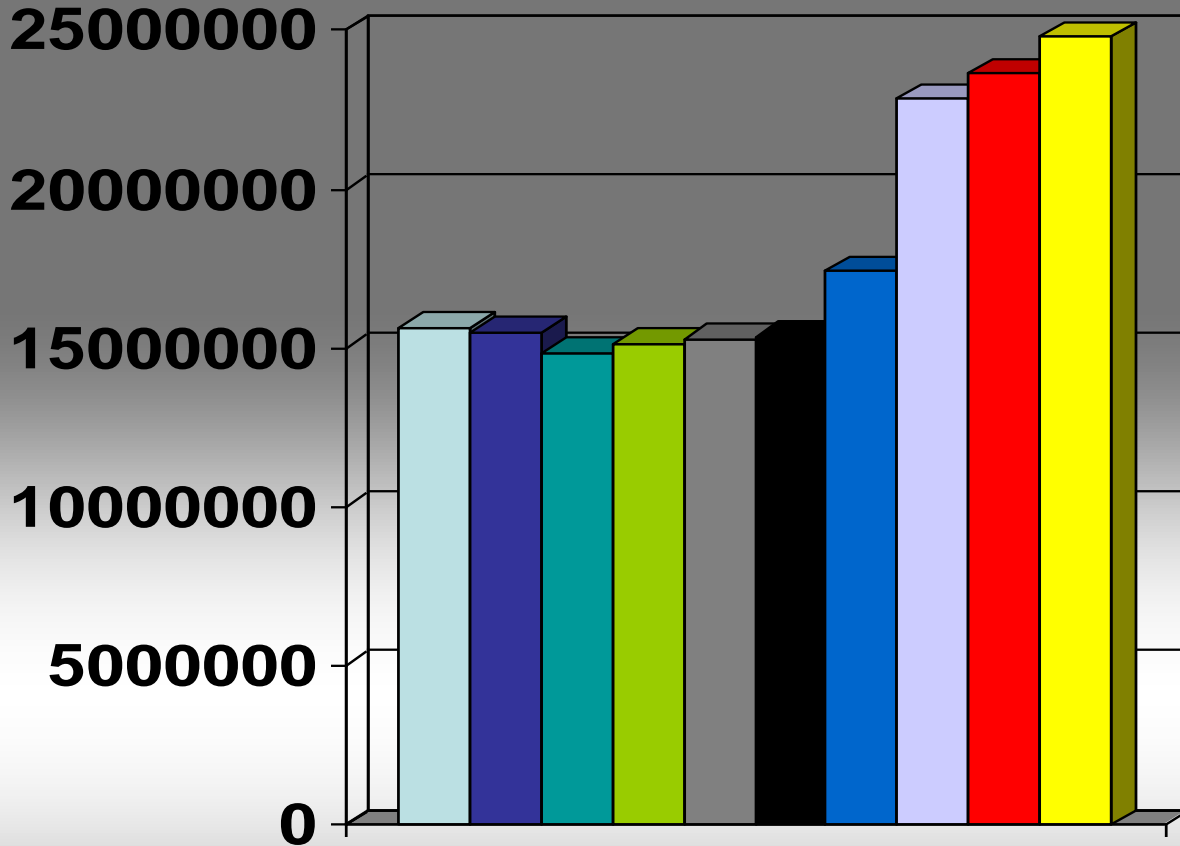
## Tactics

- Establish a Hospitality program among partners reinforced with secret shoppers
- Co-op marketing efforts with state tourism office and local attractions
- Established regional marketing effort with surrounding communities
  - Try Southwest Kansas



# Economic Impact

Based on guest tax



-2001-	15,638,082.00
-2002-	15,516,540.00
-2003-	14,827,500.00
-2004-	15,137,207.00
-2005-	15,303,165.00
-2006-	15,367,500.00
-2007-	17,410,500.00
-2008-	22,845,875.00
-2009-	23,625,040.00
-2010-	24,794,250.00



# **RESULTS**

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- 31% Guest tax revenue increase during 2008-10
- Unemployment rate 4%



**HOW ARE YOU SUPPORTING  
FRONT-LINE STANDARDS?**

**WHAT TOOLS HAVE YOU  
INTRODUCED RECENTLY TO  
REINFORCE YOUR BRAND  
EXPERIENCE?**

# TITANIC: WORLD'S LARGEST MUSEUM

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Branson Mo opened in 2006

Raised tax rev 9%

'07 +5%

'08 -3%

'09 -3%

'10 +4%

Molly and Carter promotion

Raised 2010 revenues 30%



# TITANIC PIGEON FORGE, TN

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Opened April 2010  
Capacity crowds 4K daily  
Sold out by 11am  
Quarterly promotions  
Community Involvement  
Local partnering  
11.5% above projections

## Tax revenue

2008	-4%
'09	-12%
'10	+11%

# IN CONCLUSION

## TOP FIVE TACTICS

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- Focus on customers who CAN and will act.
- Enrich the customer experience.
- Convert trial customers to core customers.
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# WANTED: CVB SUCCESS STORIES

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- If you changed strategy and tactics in response to recession issues

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You have positive results

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You are willing to share your story

**PLEASE SEE ME**

**FOR MORE  
INFO  
SEE ME  
OR  
LEAVE YOUR CARD  
WITH VACVB REPRESENTATIVE  
OR  
E-MAIL  
PHIL@TREATEMRIGHT.COM**