



# COMMUNICATION AUDIT AND PLAN

*APRIL 2024*

By: Annika Wimpari

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# Executive Summary:

**To: Paige, West Michigan Tourist Association**

**From: Annika Wimpari, Grand Valley State University**

**Date: April 12th, 2024**

**Re: Communication Audit and Plan Overview**

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The following Communication Audit and Plan is tailored specifically for the West Michigan Tourist Association. The Communication Audit provides an in-depth evaluation of the association's current communication strategies, materials, and recommendations for enhancement. The communication plan prioritizes enhancing online engagement through platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, while also aiming to attract new and diverse audiences to the association and West Michigan collectively. This includes implementing various media tactics at both state and national levels to increase awareness. The plan outlines different target audiences, their needs, and corresponding objectives. Additionally, it includes four tactics, a digital advertisement, social media post, a travel brochure, two web pages along with a blog each targeting specific publics, with detailed explanations of objectives and overviews of each tactic's implementation. If you have any inquiries regarding the Communication Audit and Plan or require a full PDF version, please feel free to reach out. Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with your organization; it has been truly enlightening and inspiring to work with the West Michigan Tourist Association.

Sincerely,

Annika Wimpari, Ad/PR Student at Grand Valley State University

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# COMMUNICATION AUDIT

# Communication Audit

## Introduction

The communication audit of the West Michigan Tourism Association (WMTA) provides a comprehensive evaluation of the current communication strategies, materials, and recommendations for refinement. The audit stems from an insightful client interview with Paige Bodine, representing WMTA, where discussions centered on the association's mission, products, target audience, and communication channels.

Founded over a century ago, WMTA has steadfastly dedicated itself to promoting the vibrant lure of West Michigan to a wide audience of travelers and tourists. WMTA's mission revolves around fostering collaboration among members to maximize marketing efforts and enhance traveler experiences, positioning West Michigan as the perfect traveling destination.

Paige Bodine's presentation provided a thorough overview of WMTA's mission, products, key publics, and media channels. It highlighted the association's national reach while emphasizing the importance of local community engagement. By shedding light on the different tactics and ideas of what WMTA has to offer, the presentation positioned the association as having a strong authority in West Michigan tourism.

WMTA's mass media initiatives effectively amplify their reach, with opportunities to further exposure beyond West Michigan. Pursuing media coverage beyond traditional boundaries can captivate audiences and bolster WMTA's prominence in the tourism landscape.

# Communication Audit

## Client Interview Summary

It was a pleasure to have Paige Bodine, from the West Michigan Tourism Association (WMTA), present not only the current communication methods in use, but the West Michigan Tourism Association's mission, products, and their key publics as well. The WMTA is an association dedicated to marketing the very best of West Michigan to travelers and tourists all over the world, and has been doing so for over 100 years. This audit will cover the current communication tactics, and will cover what is recommended as well.

The communication materials reviewed were four different categories of key publics; travelers, tourists, local communities, and business partners. Their different media outlets included magazines, maps, newsletters, the WMTA live cameras, social media, mass media marketing, and other forms of marketing. The materials will help decide if the WMTA is on the right path for the following mission:

“The mission of WMTA is to provide membership collaboration to maximize marketing efforts and traveler experience, making West Michigan the destination of choice. WMTA strives to be recognized as the first-choice comprehensive resource for West Michigan tourism industry and travelers.”

# Communication Audit

## Materials Review

### **Presentation**

The powerpoint provided by Paige Bodine was extremely thorough, covering their product, mission, key publics, all sources of media, stats, and social media.

Though their reach is national and will continue to grow, they still have a strong focus on the local communities that are so impacted by the tourism industry. They partner with different businesses throughout West Michigan to provide more business opportunities, and put these businesses on the map to travelers.

The overall objective of the presentation is to persuade individuals as to what makes the WMTA the number one choice when it comes to planning your West Michigan vacation. From their rich history, different involvements within the communities, travel guides, live cams and more, the presentation showed how dedicated and well rounded of a tourist association the WMTA is.

### **Carefree Travel Guide**

Since 1939, the WMTA has been issuing their 'Carefree Travel Guide', known for its iconic covers. The covers specifically have been something that have drawn travelers to choose the WMTA as their West Michigan guide. The 2024 issue of the 'Carefree Travel Guide' will have 110,000 copies printed and distributed in March.

# Communication Audit

## Materials Review

The overall objective of this guide is to draw attention to curious travelers with their creative cover art, and help tourists plan their West Michigan trips through WMTA. It's a very classic and thought out tactic, with a high success rate.

A recommendation for the Travel Guide would be to consider incorporating more of the trending topics and places for that specific year. Now that millennials and Gen Z are getting older and starting to travel more, it's important to incorporate the younger generations. Both generations are very drawn to what's trending, and what's online. Putting in trending topics along with underground topics and places similar to what's trending will not only engage the younger generations, but give them new recommendations as well that seem just as trendy.

### **Lighthouse Map**

Michigan, the "Great Lakes State", has always been known for its beautiful beaches and lighthouses. Knowing how important this is to not only Michigan tourists, but to Michigan's history as well, the WMTA created a map of all of the lighthouses in West Michigan. With 105 lighthouses named and pictured all over Lake Michigan and Lake Superior, the WMTA has the perfect map that is hard to compete with. 110,000 copies of the Lighthouse Map will be issued in March of 2024.

Knowing how much Michigan travelers love Michigan's history with the Great Lakes, the lighthouse is a great way to draw attention to tourists and stay engaged with

# Communication Audit

## Materials Review

different locations all over the West Michigan Coast. A recommendation would be to create either a page on their website or a separate app with a virtual lighthouse map. The virtual map could include 360 3D views of the lighthouse, travelers could post their own pictures of the lighthouses, and they could incorporate their live webcams into the app as well.

### **WMTA Live Cameras**

With eighteen different 24/7 live streaming cameras, the WMTA offers first hand visual experiences that intrigue curious travelers. Over 2022-2023, WMTA had 1.3 million pageviews on their live webcams, with over 1 Billion minutes watched. Travelers can watch the webcams anytime via WMTA's website, which is a great way to keep publics engaged with the organization's website.

To keep publics even more engaged with the websites live webcams, a recommendation would be to host online activities using the webcams. For example, WMTA could host a scavenger hunt using the live webcams, and viewers have to find every clue on each camera to complete the scavenger hunt. To motivate publics to participate, the WMTA could have a prize at the end of the scavenger hunt, where individuals are entered into a giveaway, or the first 10 people to complete the scavenger hunt win a prize.

# Communication Audit

## Materials Review

### **Traveler Newsletter**

The WMTA's travel newsletter is a consistent form of media, averaging a 30% annual open rate, 33.9 thousand Traveler Newsletter subscribers, and an average number of 631 link clicks per email campaign. The Traveler Newsletter gives suggestions on different places in West Michigan to go based on the month or season. The example provided in the presentation was an October issue, focusing on haunted attractions, best places to see the fall trees, harvest festivals and more. This gives their consumers a specialized travel guide for each season or month, helping them plan their trips accordingly.

One thing to recommend would be to use social media platforms to find out what key publics want to see more of in their Travelers Newsletter. Some examples could be hosting a livestream via Facebook or Instagram with the objective of gaining feedback from viewers, creating polls or posts dedicated to asking what the public wants to see more of, and more.

### **Social Media**

In the West Michigan Tourist Association's presentation, Paige shared that the WMTA focuses on Facebook and Instagram. WMTA's monthly Facebook engagement averaged around 26 thousand, annually 319 thousand. They have 19 thousand

# Communication Audit

## Materials Review

Facebook group members, with 30 thousand annual group engagements. From 2022 to 2023, they gained 2,958 followers.

With the strong media presence this company has, their social media presence is their weakest link. Only focusing on Facebook and Instagram truly limits the reach this company could have. Not being on Tiktok as a travel organization in 2024 is doing so much more harm than good, and putting their competitors above them when it comes to social media. Referring back to Gen Z and millennials, most of their generations conduct research from social media, especially when it comes to researching things such as traveling. Despite being on Instagram, they're still primarily focused on Facebook. A very strong recommendation is to expand their social media presence drastically, create a TikTok account, and post different videos on both Instagram and TikTok about the beautiful experiences Michigan has to offer.

### **Photo Contest**

The 2023 WMTA photo contest was an overall success, with 2,500 submissions. The photo contest had coverage from WOOD TV 8, WGRD RADIO, FOX17, Behind The Mitten, and more. Online, the contest had over 18,831 views, 269,000 impressions, and 8,933 votes from travelers. During the contest, over 235,889 travelers were reached through social media platforms.

# Communication Audit

## Materials Review

Since the photo contest was so successful, the WMTA should consider hosting other contests like the photo contest as well to continue engagement and keep the community involved. The WMTA, for example, could host social media contests where followers post their favorite lighthouse photo, tag WMTA, and the winner gets to be featured on their virtual lighthouse map (recommended tactic from previous section).

### **Mass Media Marketing**

The West Michigan Tourism Association regularly appears on numerous media platforms, such as their Behind The Mitten partnership to promote West Michigan locations and events. WMTA also continues member mentions in their time slots on FOX and Super Hits 103.7 Radio. Aside from being on the radio and different news platforms, the WMTA distributes West Michigan press releases and continues to grow their contact list, along with expanding their market by attending various trade shows, doing giveaways, and their website visitors.

The West Michigan Tourism Association does a great job with their mass media marketing. Having a partnership with Behind The Mitten, having air time on FOX, and different radio stations are all great ways to expand your market and be seen by individuals who were unaware of the organization. I recommend trying to be interviewed on other news platforms outside of West Michigan, such as FOX Detroit. This way,

WMTA is persuading individuals who might not hear too much about West Michigan to come experience what the west side of the state has to offer.

# Communication Audit

## Recommendations

The overall audit for West Michigan Tourism Association identifies various opportunities for enhancing communication strategies to better align with evolving trends and audience preferences. As a longstanding asset, the Carefree Travel Guide has been celebrated for its covers and content since 1939. To maintain relevance and appeal to younger generations, a recommendation would be to infuse the guide with trending topics and destinations. By incorporating elements that resonate with millennials and Gen Z, such as interactive content and online engagement, WMTA can ensure the guide remains a sought-after resource in today's digital landscape.

Similarly, the Lighthouse Map, celebrating Michigan's historical and scenic treasures, presents an opportunity for innovation through digital platforms. By developing a virtual map or app with interactive features like 360-degree views and user-generated content, WMTA can offer travelers a dynamic and immersive exploration of the region's lighthouses, catering to the preferences of digital audiences.

The utilization of WMTA's live cameras, providing real-time visual experiences for travelers, demonstrates a successful engagement strategy. To better enhance interaction and participation, hosting online activities such as scavenger hunts using the live webcams can foster community engagement and increase audience involvement, ultimately driving greater traffic to WMTA's website and social media platforms.

# Communication Audit

## Recommendations

In addition to traditional communication channels, the Traveler Newsletter serves as a valuable resource for subscribers seeking seasonal travel guides and recommendations. By leveraging social media platforms to gather feedback and preferences from subscribers, WMTA can ensure the newsletter remains relevant and responsive to the evolving interests of its audience, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. WMTA can find what they're publics are interested in through the use of social media, engaging in polls, questions, and livestreams, and apply their research towards the newsletter.

Despite a strong presence on Facebook and Instagram, WMTA's absence from platforms like TikTok represents a missed opportunity, particularly with younger demographics such as Gen Z. By expanding its social media footprint to include TikTok and leveraging video content to showcase West Michigan's attractions and experiences, WMTA can effectively reach and engage with a broader audience, driving increased awareness and interest in the region.

Expanding on the use of social media, initiatives such as the photo contest have proven successful in generating user-generated content and engaging with travelers across multiple media platforms. By extending similar contests to social media platforms and integrating winning entries into other promotional initiatives, such as the virtual lighthouse map or a giveaway via social media, WMTA can maintain engagement and community involvement while amplifying its brand presence.

# Communication Audit

## Recommendations

The recommendations given aim to build upon WMTA's existing communication strategies, leveraging emerging trends and technologies to enhance engagement, relevance, and reach across diverse demographics and platforms. By embracing innovation and adapting to evolving audience preferences, WMTA can continue to position West Michigan as a destination of choice for travelers worldwide.

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# **COMMUNICATION PLAN**

# Communication Plan

## Plan Overview

Publics	Objective	Message	Tactics	Evaluation
Travelers Considering Michigan	Persuade travelers to travel to West Michigan	Publics will see the options and attractions Michigan has to offer.	Showcase brochure tactics across US highways, welcome centers at state borders, etc.	Have travelers fill out a survey online on how they found out about WMTA
Michiganders (Michigan residents)	Persuading Michiganders to explore their state and find a sense of community	Publics will be educated on the attractions their home state has to offer.	Digital ads targeted towards Michiganders, brochure tactics across state highways.	Have Michiganders fill out a survey online on how they found out about WMTA
Out of state tourists (including Canada)	Convincing travelers to travel to West Michigan.	Publics will see the options and attractions Michigan and the Great Lakes have to offer.	Showcase brochure tactics across US highways, welcome centers at state borders, etc. Digital Ads on tourism sights.	Have Tourists fill out a survey online on how they found out about WMTA
Individuals on social media platforms	Increasing online engagement across WMTA social media platforms.	Capturing different landscapes, places to visit, publics will really see Michigan's personality through media content.	Using various social media platforms to promote WMTA and WMTA's website, such as Facebook, Instagram and X.	Collect analytics on engagement, clicks, likes, views, etc. on different social media platforms.
Local Businesses/ Communities in West Michigan	Engaging and building relationships with local businesses throughout West Michigan.	Helping different local businesses in West Michigan see their tourism potential.	Promote local businesses via social media, brochures, blogs, and different pages on the WMTA website.	Conduct a survey on how WMTA has helped tourism within local communities, and what they can do better

# Communication Plan

## Introduction

Paige Bodine, representing the West Michigan Tourism Association (WMTA), presented not only the current communication methods in use, but the West Michigan Tourism Association's mission, products, and their key publics as well. The WMTA is an association dedicated to marketing the very best of West Michigan to travelers and tourists all over the world, and has been doing so for over 100 years. The communication materials reviewed were four different categories of key publics; travelers, tourists, local communities, and business partners. Their different media outlets included magazines, maps, newsletters, the WMTA live cameras, social media, mass media marketing, and other forms of marketing.

In this plan, the focuses are towards incorporating more online engagement via social media platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok. There is also a primary focus towards bringing new and diverse target audiences to our association and West Michigan as a collective by spreading awareness through different media tactics across the country and state.

# Communication Plan

## Publics

The communication plan for West Michigan Tourism Association encompasses a diverse range of key publics, each with unique needs, preferences, and engagement strategies. Understanding and effectively targeting these publics is essential for maximizing the impact of WMTA's communication efforts and achieving its extensive objectives.

### **Travelers**

Travelers, as a broader overall public, represent a primary target audience for WMTA, as they are proposed visitors to the West Michigan area. The objective is to persuade travelers to choose West Michigan as their destination by showcasing diverse attractions and experiences. WMTA aims to reach travelers through various media tactics, including displays at U.S. highways and welcome centers, effectively capturing their attention and sparking interest in exploring the area. Evaluating the effectiveness of these tactics involves soliciting feedback from travelers through online surveys to understand how they discovered WMTA and what influenced their decision-making process.

### **Michiganders (Michigan residents)**

Engaging Michiganders is crucial for encouraging local exploration and fostering a sense of pride in the state's attractions. WMTA seeks to encourage Michiganders to

# Communication Plan

## Publics

explore their own backyard by highlighting the abundance of attractions within West Michigan. This involves leveraging news coverage and media tactics along state highways to reach local residents and promote intra-state travel. Evaluation includes gathering feedback through online surveys to assess awareness and perception of WMTA among Michiganders.

### **Out-of-state tourists (Including Canada)**

Attracting out-of-state tourists is another key objective for WMTA, as they represent a significant source of tourism revenue. Similar to targeting travelers, WMTA aims to persuade out-of-state tourists to visit West Michigan by showcasing the region's offerings. Media tactics across U.S. highways and state borders are employed to capture the attention of potential visitors, specifically around Michigan's bordering neighbors such as Canada, Ohio, and Indiana. Evaluation involves assessing the effectiveness of these tactics through online surveys and social media engagement to gauge awareness and interest in WMTA among out-of-state tourists.

### **Individuals on social media platforms**

Engaging with publics on various social media platforms is essential for increasing overall engagement and brand awareness for WMTA. The objective is to showcase West Michigan's personality and attractions through captivating media

# Communication Plan

## Publics

content, thereby coaxing followers to visit the region. Tactics include leveraging platforms such as Instagram, X (Twitter), Facebook and TikTok to reach younger demographics and collect analytics on engagement metrics such as likes, views, reactions, and clicks.

### **Local Businesses/Communities**

Collaborating with local businesses and communities is fundamental to WMTA's efforts to support and promote tourism within West Michigan. The objective is to engage with local businesses, helping them recognize their potential to contribute to the tourism industry. Tactics include participation in trade shows, local events, and fundraising initiatives to foster partnerships and collaboration. Evaluation would involve conducting surveys to gather feedback on WMTA's impact on local tourism and identify areas for improvement.

Effectively engaging with these key publics is crucial for WMTA to achieve its communication objectives and position West Michigan as a premier travel destination. By creating strategies to resonate with each audience segment and continuously evaluating the effectiveness of communication tactics, WMTA will successfully promote tourism and drive visitor engagement in the region.

# Communication Plan

## Rationale

To resonate with the younger generations, particularly millennials and Gen Z, the incorporation of trending and underground topics is crucial. Regularly updating content with lesser-known places or activities can pique their interest. Leveraging social media platforms for real-time insights into trending topics ensures relevancy and engagement. While WMTA has a strong media presence, the focus has been primarily on Facebook and Instagram. Recognizing the influence of platforms like TikTok among Gen Z and millennials, expanding the social media footprint is vital. Establishing a TikTok account and regularly posting captivating videos on both Instagram and TikTok can significantly enhance visibility and engagement.

The West Michigan Tourism Association should also actively seek opportunities to broaden its reach beyond West Michigan. Pursuing interviews on news platforms outside the region, such as FOX Detroit, presents a unique chance to influence individuals who may not be familiar with what the west side of the state has to offer. By strategically showcasing West Michigan's attractions in these interviews, the association can attract new visitors and diversify its audience base.

In addition to actively pursuing coverage opportunities, the West Michigan Tourism Association should implement diverse media tactics that extend throughout the state and beyond its borders. By strategically placing promotional materials at on-route

# Communication Plan

## Rationale

Rest stops across Michigan, along Michigan's borders, and along key U.S. Highways leading to the Great Lakes State, the association can effectively influence a wide range of target audiences. This approach aims to capture the attention of diverse demographics, enticing them to explore and discover the unique attractions that West Michigan has to offer.

By embracing these tailored strategies, WMTA can solidify its standing as a premier travel destination. Engaging younger generations, leveraging virtual experiences, expanding social media presence, and seeking broader media coverage are key components of a comprehensive approach. As the WMTA continues to evolve, these strategies will serve as a roadmap for sustained success in the competitive travel industry.

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# **EXAMPLE TACTICS**

# **Tactic One: Digital Advertisement**

# Example Tactics

## Digital Advertisement

### Overview

The primary objective of the digital advertisement for the West Michigan Tourist Association (WMTA) is to showcase why West Michigan is the best destination choice for tourists to plan their next vacation. When choosing which advertisement tactic to use, digital advertisements fit best into the company's overall objectives. Digital advertisements have access to multiple platforms, from websites to social media, and are interactive. This will not only reach targeted audiences, but also give them a chance to interact with the association, generating more clicks for the WMTA's website.

The topic of the digital advertisement was to show tourists why they should come to West Michigan through images, rather than just telling our targeted audiences why. By showcasing stunning visuals of the region, it aims to evoke a sense of wanderlust and curiosity, ultimately driving increased tourism to the area.

The strategic play of words within the ads creates a feeling for our audiences that they're exploring West Michigan as an idea themselves. We want our target audience to experience all the wonderful things West Michigan has to offer, and the suggestion "Travel with us" with the link attached to the WMTA association's website encourages individuals to take a closer look, without demanding them take action. A subtle call to action makes the targeted audience feel as if they're planning it on their own, already setting their trip in motion.

# Example Tactics

## Digital Advertisement

### Creative Brief

**Goal:** The goal of the advertisement aims to shed light on the beauty of West Michigan and encourage our target audience through showcasing what West Michigan has to offer in pictures.

**Key organizational Facts:** The WMTA finds it important for tourists to know what we do for tourists, the West Michigan communities, and offer knowledge on the activities and places to see in West Michigan.

**Key features:** The WMTA has a wide selection of places to see, a wide range of activities for all walks of life, and where to go and do these activities.

**Target Audience:** The target audiences include residents of Michigan seeking weekend getaways or day trips, tourists from across America looking for unique travel destinations, and adventure seekers, nature lovers, and culture enthusiasts.

**Benefits:** The WMTA increases the amount of tourism in West Michigan through providing information about these destinations and activities happening in West Michigan.

**Direct Competitors and Brand Image:** The WMTA stands out beyond their competitors because of the information they provide to tourists, and this advertisement gives publics a persuasive and easy way to seek information through the WMTA.

# Example Tactics

## Digital Advertisement

**Indirect Competitors and Brand Image:** Pure Michigan and other travel companies are competitors WMTA do have that not only promote West Michigan, but the entire state of Michigan.

**Product Brand:** The advertisement not only is digital, so it has access to being anywhere online, but it also is interactive. When clicking “travel with us”, it will take you directly to the WMTA’s website.

**Strategic Message Promise(SMP):** The promise to our publics is that by traveling with us, they will truly get to experience it all.

**Supporting Evidence:** The supporting evidence is that WMTA not only researches where to go and what to do, they also send out newsletters, magazines, have live cams, and so much more to keep the targeted audiences informed of all of the amazing things happening in West Michigan.

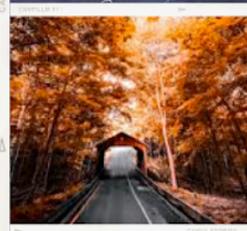
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**VISIT**

*West Michigan.*

**EXPERIENCE IT ALL**

**TRAVEL WITH US**



# **Tactic Two: Social Media**

# Example Tactics

## Social Media

### Overview

The targeted audiences for all three platforms are anyone who is interested in traveling to Michigan, Michiganders, and those who want to follow along information and updates to what is happening in West Michigan. The following social media tactics include Instagram, Facebook (Meta), and X (Twitter), due to the fact that those platforms are the best way to reach WMTA's targeted audiences.

On Instagram, the aim was to maintain a conversational tone to foster interaction within posts, striking a balance between entertainment and education. Posts frequently prompted users to explore further by clicking links for more information or engaging in online activities.

For Facebook, the tone leaned slightly more formal while still maintaining an entertaining edge, accompanied by a call to action for additional information. The giveaway posts on both Facebook and Instagram demonstrated how WMTA could employ the same topic with different conversational tones, uniting both followings for increased engagement for the targeted publics on each differing platform.

X, formerly known as Twitter, uses the most conversational and straightforward approach. Simplicity is key for X, as the goal is to let the audience do most of the talking. A poll was included to gauge audience preferences, along with easily accessible links for further information and a conversation starter regarding notable holidays

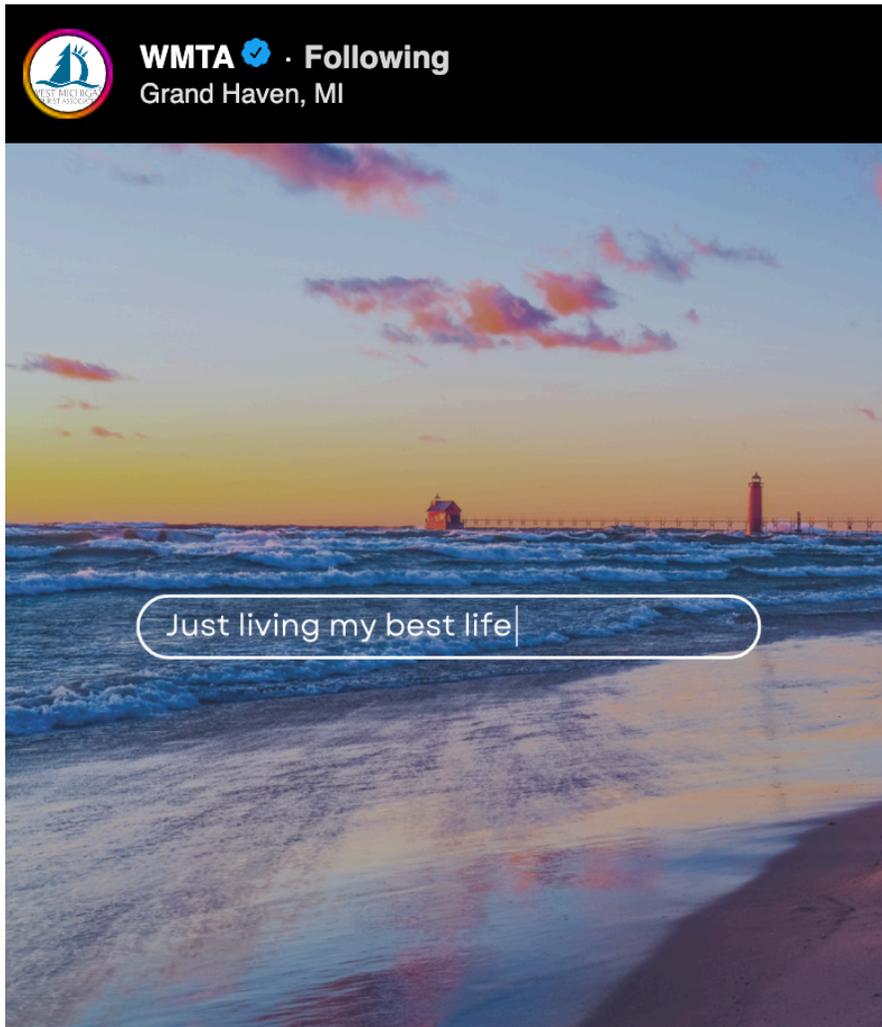
# Example Tactics

## Social Media

celebrated in West Michigan. Clicking the image in the third tweet would take individuals to a blog covering the western U.P.

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# Instagram: Post One



 **WMTA**  · Following  
Grand Haven, MI

Just living my best life

**24,367 likes**

**WMTA** Vacationing in West Michigan is living your best life, we would know! With over hundreds of activities, places to stay, and places to eat planned out on our website, you'll never run out of things to do. Click the link in our bio to learn about planning yours 🌊☀️🌴

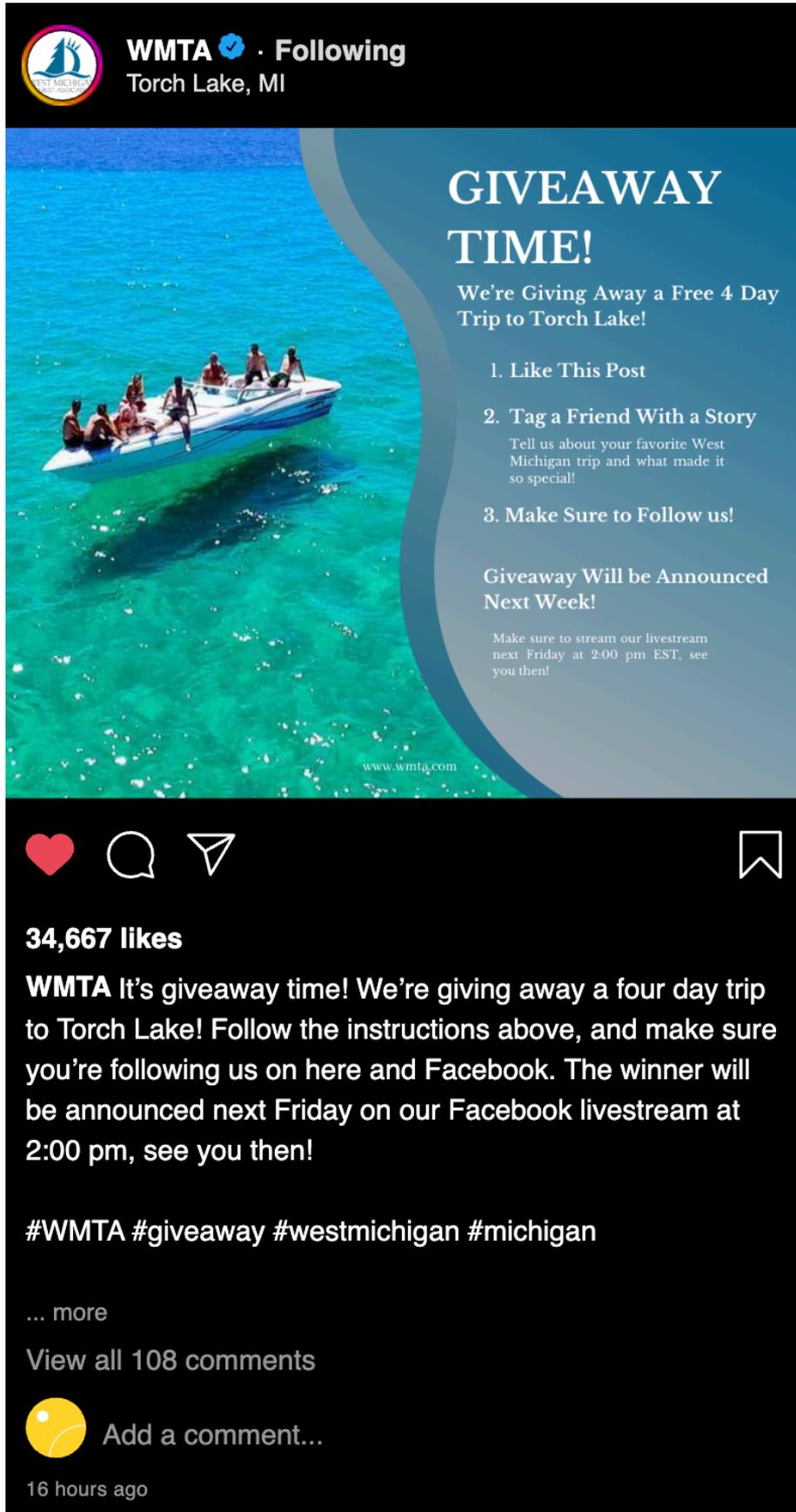
**#michigan #westmichigan #vacation #wmta**  
... more

View all 34 comments

 Add a comment...

23 hours ago

# Instagram: Post Two



 **WMTA** · Following  
Torch Lake, MI

## GIVEAWAY TIME!

We're Giving Away a Free 4 Day Trip to Torch Lake!

1. Like This Post
2. Tag a Friend With a Story  
Tell us about your favorite West Michigan trip and what made it so special!
3. Make Sure to Follow us!

Giveaway Will be Announced Next Week!

Make sure to stream our livestream next Friday at 2:00 pm EST, see you then!

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

♥    💬    📍    📌

**34,667 likes**

**WMTA** It's giveaway time! We're giving away a four day trip to Torch Lake! Follow the instructions above, and make sure you're following us on here and Facebook. The winner will be announced next Friday on our Facebook livestream at 2:00 pm, see you then!

#WMTA #giveaway #westmichigan #michigan

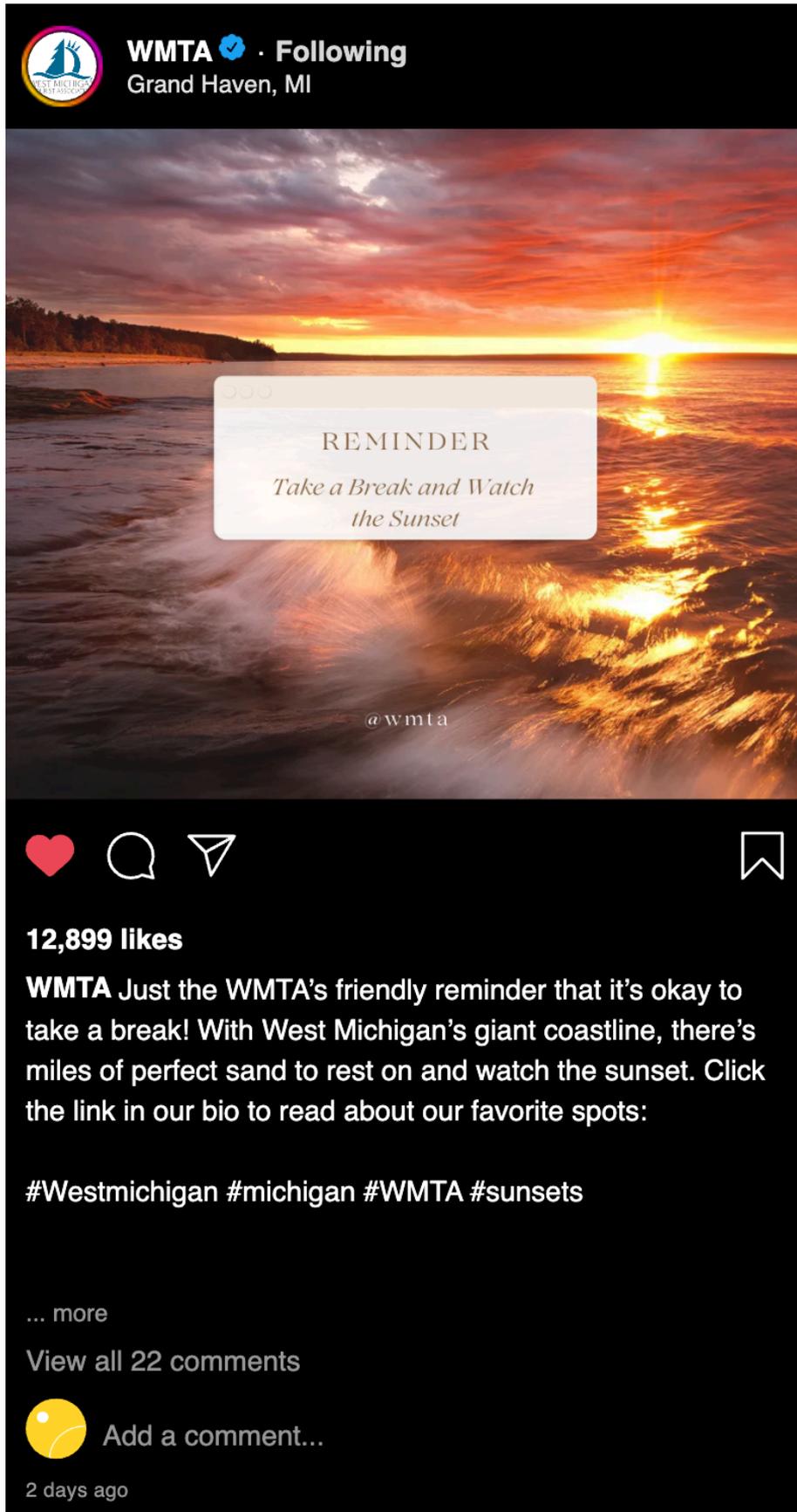
... more

View all 108 comments

 Add a comment...

16 hours ago

## Instagram: Post Three



 **WMTA** · Following  
Grand Haven, MI

000

REMINDER  
*Take a Break and Watch  
the Sunset*

@wmta

**12,899 likes**

**WMTA** Just the WMTA's friendly reminder that it's okay to take a break! With West Michigan's giant coastline, there's miles of perfect sand to rest on and watch the sunset. Click the link in our bio to read about our favorite spots:

**#Westmichigan #michigan #WMTA #sunsets**

... more

View all 22 comments

 Add a comment...

2 days ago

# Facebook: Post One



**WMTA Second Vibes, Grand Rapids**  
Yesterday at 10:30 am · 🌐

Business Spotlight! We're highlighting Second Vibes, located in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids. Second Vibes has changed the second hand apparel scene in Grand Rapids, all while helping their community. Sign up for our Newsletter to read more about Second Vibes: Link Below

[wmta.com/newsletter](http://wmta.com/newsletter)

#westmichigan #grandrapids #michigan #localbusiness



👍❤️😂 1.2k likes

21 Comments 10 Shares

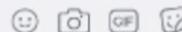
❤️ Love

➦ Share

View more 16 Comments



Write a comment...



# Facebook: Post Two



WMTA Torch Lake, MI  
Today at 8:30 am · 🌐

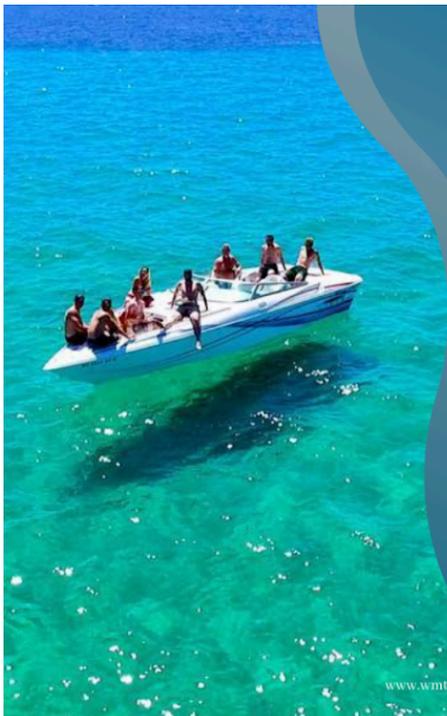
We're giving away a packed four day trip to Torch Lake this summer! Torch Lake is one of West Michigan's most prized possessions, with gorgeous water and great activities! Here's how to enter:

1. Like this post
2. Tag a friend below with your best West Michigan travel story

Make sure you're following WMTA on Facebook and Instagram!

That's it! The winner will be announced next Friday over our livestream, be sure to tune in!

#Westmichigan #michigan #michigander #WMTA #torchlake #giveaway



**GIVEAWAY TIME!**

We're Giving Away a Free 4 Day Trip to Torch Lake!

1. Like This Post
2. Tag a Friend With a Story  
Tell us about your favorite West Michigan trip and what made it so special!
3. Make Sure to Follow us!

Giveaway Will be Announced Next Week!

Make sure to stream our livestream next Friday at 2:00 pm EST, see you then!

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

👍❤️😂 10k likes

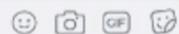
243 Comments 60 Shares



View more 243 Comments



Write a comment...



# Facebook: Post Three



Happy Mother's Day from WMTA! There's no better way to celebrate our mother's than taking them to Holland's tulip festival! Click the link below to learn more, love this post, and tag your mother's below! <3

#mothersday #mom #holland #WMTA #westmichigan



4.2K likes

100 Comments 52 Shares

Love

Share

View more 100 Comments



Write a comment...



---

## X (Twitter): Post One



WMTA   
wmtaofficial

We want to hear from you guys! What should be our main focus for our next newsletter?

Comment for vacations

Retweet for local businesses

#WMTA #west michigan #michigan

4:17 PM · May 26, 2024 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

---

**34 Retweets** **2.5k Likes**



## X (Twitter): Post Two



WMTA   
wmtaofficial

Happy Fourth of July Michiganders! Let us know how you're celebrating this patriotic day the mitten way!

#4thofjuly #michigan #westmichigan #america

12:15 PM. July 4, 2024 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

100 Retweets 15k Likes



## X (Twitter): Post Three



WMTA   
wmtaofficial

With the weather on the up, it's time to go UP to the U.P! Share the link below and read more about what to do in the way up north!

#Michigan #westmichigan #WMTA



12:30 PM · April 29, 2024 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

24 Retweets 10k Likes



# **Tactic Three: Travel Brochure**

# Example Tactics

## Travel Brochure

For the brochure, I focused on three specific camping locations, Petoskey, Silver Lake, and Porcupine Mountains, to provide a range of different locations and options for travelers. Petoskey offers campgrounds along the shores of Lake Michigan, and visitors can enjoy tranquil surroundings with a quaint downtown. Silver Lake has thrilling dune adventures, with off-road trails and waterfront camping options. The Porcupine Mountains are in the upper peninsula, making it an ideal destination for those seeking peace in nature.

By showcasing these diverse camping destinations in the brochure, it appeals to a broad audience of outdoor enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and nature lovers. This approach not only highlights the different options of West Michigan but also aims to encourage tourism to the region, promoting both economic growth and fostering appreciation for West Michigan's natural landscapes.

The brochure will serve as a compelling tool to showcase the knowledge that WMTA has to offer about West Michigan. Through strategic messaging and engaging visuals, it aims to inspire travelers to explore the beauty and adventure that our region has to offer.

## Outside of Brochure:



## EXPERIENCE WEST MICHIGAN CAMPING

Experience the unforgettable charm of camping in West Michigan, where pristine lakeshores, lush forests, and captivating sunsets create an unforgettable outdoor haven for adventurers of all ages. Explore a diverse landscape offering something for everyone, from tranquil hikes along scenic trails to thrilling water activities on the Great Lakes, ensuring an enriching camping experience for all. **For more information, visit:**

**<https://www.wmta.org/places-to-stay/west-michigan-camping-2/>**

## CONTACT US

**Email**  
[travel@wmta.org](mailto:travel@wmta.org)

**Website**  
<https://www.wmta.org/>

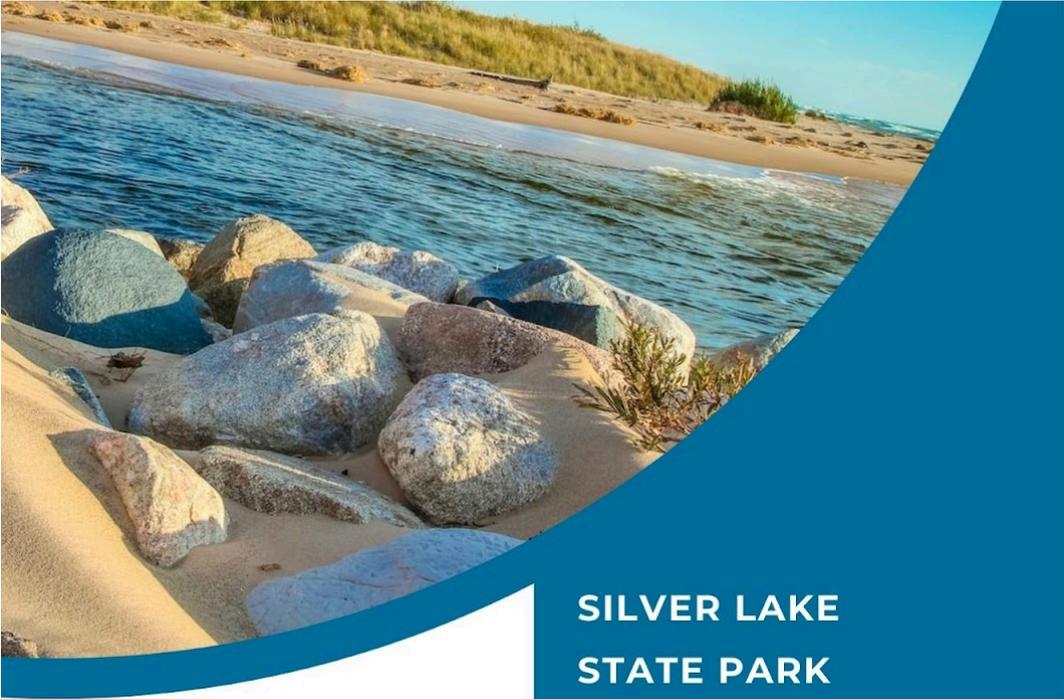


WEST MICHIGAN  
TOURIST ASSOCIATION

Let's Explore

# CAMPING IN WEST MICHIGAN

## Inside of Brochure:



### **PORCUPINE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS STATE PARK**

**\$15 Per Campsite**

- Explore into the heart of Michigan's untamed wilderness at Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. This majestic park is home to ancient forests and cascading waterfalls. Hike along scenic trails, paddle through lakes, and marvel at views that showcase the beauty of the Upper Peninsula.

### **PETOSKEY STATE PARK**

**\$15 Per Campsite**

Petoskey State Park offers a picturesque escape for outdoor enthusiasts. With its sandy beaches and clear waters, the park beckons visitors to swim, sunbathe, and stroll along the shoreline. Hiking and biking trails wind through lush forests,

### **SILVER LAKE STATE PARK**

**\$15 Per Campsite**

Nestled along the shores of Lake Michigan, this destination has towering sand dunes, serene beaches, and expansive forests, offering opportunities for outdoor recreation. From off-road adventures on the dunes to tranquil picnics by the beach, Silver Lake State Park has unforgettable experiences for nature enthusiasts and families alike.



# **Tactic Four: Web Pages/Blogs**

# Example Tactics

## Web Pages/Blogs

The targeted publics for these specific tactics are those who live in Michigan, or are within driving distance of Michigan that are searching online via WMTA's website to look for activities to partake in or places to eat and drink in the West Michigan area.

The purpose of having key information on WMTA's website and creating a blog to educate audiences is so publics can look through the information and find exactly what they are looking for without having to look to any other organization for help.

The tactics are intended to persuade publics by using expressive language, having an easy to read, conversational tone, and having information easy to find, while still being engaging through graphics and images. For the "Places to Stay" webpage, the intention was to set the scene of where the publics could see themselves for their spring and summer vacations. For the "Places to Eat" webpage, the intention was to educate publics on different culinary experiences they could indulge in, and educate them on places or culinary activities they may not have known about. For the blog, the focus was on Beer City USA, providing information on which breweries are a must to hit on the Grand Rapids Brewery Tour.

There are two "scrollable" sections, one for each page. For Places to stay, there is a section dedicated to glamping in West Michigan. For Places to eat, there is a section dedicated to Grand Rapids being Beer City USA. There were some difficulties trying to publish the website through Canva, so the two web pages will be attached separately.

# Places to Eat

West Michigan Tourist Association

[LEARN MORE](#)

## West Michigan's Vibrant Food/Drink Culture

West Michigan's culinary scene is a vibrant mosaic of flavors and experiences. Craft breweries are a staple, pouring inventive brews crafted with care. Experience scenic vineyards on the northern west side, wine aficionados can indulge in diverse varietals. Locally sourced freshwater seafood graces menus, showcasing the region's bounty. From cozy bistros to upscale establishments, the restaurant options cater to every taste, promising unforgettable dining journeys.



# Plan Your Culinary Experience



Some of the highest rated, best eateries on Michigan's West Side.

## Restaurants

100+ Options



Experience West Michigan's craft beer and wine culture.

## Breweries/Vineyards

100+ Options



Experience some of West Michigan's finest dining, from lake views to rooftop experiences.

## Fine Dining

100+ Five Star Options

## Beer City USA

Grand Rapids, Michigan, proudly bears the title of "Beer City USA," and for good reason. This bustling city is a haven for beer enthusiasts, boasting a thriving craft beer scene that continues to expand. With over 80 breweries within its borders, Grand Rapids offers an unparalleled variety of brews, from traditional ales to innovative concoctions pushing the boundaries of flavor. Each brewery adds its unique flair to the city's beer culture, creating a dynamic and vibrant atmosphere that celebrates the craft of brewing. Whether you're a seasoned beer aficionado or just dipping your toes into the world of craft beer, Grand Rapids is sure to delight with its endless array of brewpubs, taprooms, and beer festivals.



[Click Here to Learn More](#)

Visiting any of Grand Rapids' breweries, you'll find more than just great beer. You'll discover a community of passionate brewing geniuses dedicated to perfecting their craft. From the smallest microbreweries tucked into cozy corners of the city like Schmoz, to the grand establishments that have become landmarks like Founders, each brewery has its own story of innovation and dedication. It's not just about the beer, rather the people behind it, their creativity, and their commitment to excellence.

Beyond the brews themselves, Grand Rapids' beer scene fosters a spirit of exploration and community. Whether you're joining a guided brewery tour at New Holland, attending a tasting event at Founders, or simply striking up a conversation with fellow beer lovers at a Grand Rapids Brewing Co., there's always something new to learn and experience. The city's welcoming atmosphere makes it easy to connect with like-minded individuals who share a passion for quality beer and a sense of community.

Aside from its local appeal, Grand Rapids' reputation as Beer City USA extends far beyond its borders, drawing visitors from near and far to experience "Beer City USA" and all it has to offer. From beer tastings to weekend getaways, people travel to Grand Rapids to savor its diverse brews and experience the vibrant energy of its community. With each experience, visitors become part of the city's rich flavors, traditions, and shared experiences, creating memories that last.



# Activities



## Food Festivals

Celebrate West Michigan's vibrant food culture. [Click Here to Learn More.](#)



## Bar Crawls

Join the fun and exciting bar crawl atmosphere in West Michigan! [Click Here to Learn More.](#)



## Food/Drink Tours

Experience West Michigan's beautiful vineyards, fresh markets, and more. [Click Here to Learn More.](#)

# West Michigan Tourist Association

## General Information

 721D Kenmoor Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546

 (616) 245-2217

## Office Hours

Monday to Friday  
9:00 am to 6:00 pm

Saturday  
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

## Get Social



*Tag us in your photos!*



## Explore West Michigan, Stay Local

Experience the essence of West Michigan through the perfect stay. From sandy beaches along Lake Michigan to scenic hikes in state parks, every moment is an adventure. Explore historic lighthouses, indulge in local cuisine, and unwind in cozy accommodations. Your West Michigan getaway awaits, brimming with natural beauty and endless exploration.



# Lodging by Location



[Click Here to Learn More](#)

## Upper Peninsula

100+ Locations



[Click Here to Learn More](#)

## Northern West Side

100+ Locations



4 adults | 2 children below 7

## Southern West Side

100+ Locations

# Glamping Experiences

Glamping, for those stuck between camping and staying in a hotel, offers a luxurious twist to traditional outdoor adventures. It's the epitome of comfort in nature, where rustic charm meets upscale amenities. [Click Here to Read More](#)



[Click Here to Learn More](#)

Glamping, for those stuck between camping and staying in a hotel, offers a luxurious twist to traditional outdoor adventures. It's the perfect balance of comfort in nature, where the rustic charm of camping meets upscale amenities. In West Michigan, this blend of luxury and wilderness finds its perfect setting amidst the picturesque landscapes and serene lakeshores. Waking up to the sound of birds chirping and the gentle rustle of leaves, all while nestled in a plush bed inside a beautifully decorated tent or cabin offers the best of both worlds in the outdoors. This region has an array of glamping options, from cozy yurts tucked away in secluded forests to spacious safari tents overlooking shimmering waters. Each glamping experience is thoughtfully designed to provide guests with an immersive outdoor experience without compromising on comfort or style.

Aside from the extra accommodations, glamping in West Michigan offers a plethora of outdoor activities to indulge in. Whether you're an avid hiker, water enthusiast, or simply seeking relaxation, there's something for everyone. Spend your days exploring the miles of scenic trails that wind through lush forests and meadows, taking in gorgeous views of the surrounding landscape, or go on a kayaking adventure along West Michigan's rivers and lakes, discovering hidden coves and wildlife along the way. For those seeking relaxation, unwind by the campfire under a starry sky, roasting marshmallows and sharing stories. With nature as your playground and luxury in the heart of it all, glamping in West Michigan is an opportunity for unforgettable experiences.

After a day of outdoor adventures, glampers can retreat to their cozy abodes and indulge in the finer comforts of life. Private hot tubs under the canopy of trees, sipping on a glass of locally sourced wine, and watching West Michigan's beautiful sunsets is all a part of the glamping experience. Many glamping sites in West Michigan offer gourmet dining options, allowing guests to savor farm-to-table meals crafted with the freshest ingredients. Whether you're dining in nature's beauty or enjoying a romantic candlelit dinner inside your tent, your culinary experience can be just as significant as your residing situation. Glamping in West Michigan is more than just a getaway, rather a harmonious blend of adventure, luxury, and soulful connection with West Michigan's great outdoors.



# Affordable Finds



## Hotels

Find your perfect hotel for the perfect price. With over 100+ options, we'll help you find exactly what is right for your stay.



## Air BNB

Air BNB gives you the comfort of feeling at home, away from home. With hundreds of options, from condos, homes, and apartments, there's something for every trip.



## Campgrounds

Our cheapest options with the best views. Experience West Michigan's natural beauty with an outdoor lodging experience.

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### Get Social



Tag us in your photos!

# Blog

## Traveling Beer City USA: 5 Must Try Breweries on Your Grand Rapids Adventure

By Annika Wimpari

When traveling to Grand Rapids, also known as “Beer City USA”, most travelers love to partake in its authentic and unique brewing culture. With a rich history of beer-making and a vibrant community of brewers, Grand Rapids offers a wide range of breweries that cater to every beer lover's palate. Here are five must-visit breweries to include in your Grand Rapids adventure:

**Founders Brewery:** No visit to Grand Rapids is complete without a stop at Founders Brewery. Established in 1997, Founders has become an iconic figure in the craft beer scene, renowned for its bold and innovative brews. It is the biggest brewery in the Beer City USA scene, taking up an entire section of Cesar Chavez Street. Whether you're a fan of their legendary All Day IPA or eager to try their seasonal releases, Founders Brewery promises an unforgettable tasting experience.

**Schmohz Brewery:** For those seeking a more intimate and local atmosphere, Schmohz Brewery is the place to be. Nestled in the heart of Grand Rapids, this family-owned brewery takes pride in its traditional brewing techniques and commitment to quality. The sense of community in the atmosphere is electric, everyone feels like a friend. From classic lagers to experimental ales, Schmohz Brewery offers a diverse selection of beers that are sure to delight your taste buds.

**New Holland Brewery:** Voted best bourbon by Forbes, New Holland Brewery is a must-visit destination for beer enthusiasts and whiskey aficionados alike. With a focus on barrel-aged brews, New Holland Brewery showcases the artistry of aging beer in oak barrels, resulting in complex and flavorful libations. For those in town on Wednesdays, New Holland hosts a “Boot night”, where attendees receive a boot glass full of beer for a great price. Be sure to sample their award-winning Dragon's Milk Stout for a truly indulgent experience.

**Grand Rapids Brewery:** As one of the oldest breweries in the city, Grand Rapids Brewery holds a legacy of brewing excellence that spans over a century, located right off Fulton Street. Combining traditional brewing methods with modern innovations, this historic brewery offers a diverse lineup of beers that cater to every taste preference. Whether you prefer a crisp and refreshing pilsner or a robust and malty porter, Grand Rapids Brewery has something for everyone.

**The Mitten Brewery:** Named after the iconic shape of Michigan, The Mitten Brewery celebrates the state's rich brewing heritage with a creative twist. Located in a historic building off of Leonard Street in downtown Grand Rapids, this brewery prides itself on using locally sourced ingredients to craft its distinctive beers. From their signature Mitten IPA to seasonal specialties, The Mitten Brewery invites visitors to savor the flavors of the mitten state in every sip.

Grand Rapids truly lives up to its reputation as Beer City USA, offering a diverse array of breweries that showcase the passion and craftsmanship of its brewers. Whether you're a seasoned beer connoisseur or simply looking to explore the world of craft beer, a visit to these five must-try breweries is sure to be a highlight of your Grand Rapids adventure. Cheers to good beer, and West Michigan.

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# **EVALUATION & CONCLUSION**

# Evaluation & Conclusion

## Complete Overview

The overall tactics for West Michigan Tourist Association (WMTA) will successfully leverage the versatility and reach to promote tourism in the West Michigan region. By strategically showcasing the beauty of West Michigan through captivating visuals and compelling messaging, the plan aims to inspire a sense of curiosity and drive increased interest in the area among our target audiences.

### **Production**

The production phase involves the creation of engaging digital advertisements, social media posts, and WMTA's web pages and blogs that highlight the diverse attractions and activities available in West Michigan. These advertisements are designed to be interactive and accessible across various online platforms, maximizing exposure to our target audience.

### **Exposure and Outcome**

The digital advertisements and social media posts will be distributed across multiple online channels, including websites and social media platforms. This broad distribution strategy ensures that the campaign reaches a wide audience of potential tourists interested in exploring West Michigan. Metrics such as impressions, clicks, and engagement would be monitored to gauge the effectiveness of the plan's exposure.

## **Conclusion**

The Communication Plan and Audit for the West Michigan Tourist Association will effectively achieve its objectives of promoting tourism and generating interest among our targeted audiences. By using digital platforms and strategically planting physical tactics, the plan successfully shows the beauty and attractions of West Michigan, bringing increased awareness and engagement. Moving forward, I hope that by implementing the tactics in the Communication Plan results in sustaining and furthering the overall growth of tourism in West Michigan.