

Description: Please give a brief overall description of the project.

A key challenge to increasing the economic impact of travel in Illinois is that travel here tends to be dominated by day trips and shorter stays, rather than longer vacations. Shorter vacations mean less hotel/motel tax revenue. So we decided not just to attract more visitors but also to get our core visitors to stay longer in Illinois—and give hotel/motel tax revenue a welcomed boost.

But how do you get visitors to extend their Illinois vacation?

Our strategy was sparked by a U.S. Travel Association statistic that said Americans in 2014 failed to use 429 million days of paid time off. Given this striking statistic, the Illinois Office of Tourism decided to remind people of the wonderful benefits of travel. Through an emotionally charged campaign, we showcased places around the state as proof that Illinois is a great place for travelers to spend their precious vacation days.

Find Something More showcases how transformative the experience of travel can be, as travel allows us to reconnect with the most important people in our lives. To illustrate this point, we considered a lot of stories, but ended up with four: a grandfather bonding with his young grandson over his love of history; a hyper-tech connected family putting aside their gadgets to rediscover nature and each other; a young career woman taking a weekend to catch up with friends—not just catch up with work; and a married couple rediscovering forgotten feelings of their youth when they first met.

With all its wonderful contradictions and cultural diversity, Illinois is the perfect backdrop to tell stories that reveal basic human truths as to why we travel to begin with: not only to relax, have fun and see interesting sites but also to discover those places that connect us with the ones most important in our lives. Our goal was to tell the story of the profound emotional benefits of traveling throughout the state of Illinois, and to inspire our travelers to invest more time in their trips.

Time Frame

Campaign Start Date: March 16, 2015

Campaign End Date: July 26, 2015

Budget: Please indicate the cost or budget for this project. Entries in the Marketing Program should indicate the budget allocated for the promotion or program.

\$7,325,585

Target Market: Who is the target audience/market for this project?

Through research, we found that there was a core audience with a propensity for traveling to Illinois. We called this segment the Illinois Gene Holder. They are busy people who lead active lives and may need a reminder to take time out to enjoy themselves. When traveling, these Gene Holders like to learn

about art, culture and history. They would rather get out and explore than just sit on a beach. They also like to visit places off the beaten path. Illinois Gene Holders can be found throughout the Midwest and the entire United States.

Idea: Enter your objectives for this project. Objectives must be clearly stated, specific and measurable.

- *Communicate a Motivating Message:* Effectively communicate the concept that Illinois is a vacation destination that allows you to reconnect with family, friends and spouse. But it is also critical to communicate that Illinois appeals to “me” personally, as this is a key motivator for selecting our state, rather than another destination.
- *Generate Interest in Illinois Travel:* Drive traffic to the Enjoy Illinois website so people can learn more about what there is to see and do in Illinois and plan a trip.
- *Convince Travelers to Stay Longer in Illinois:* Increase visitors’ stay as a result of exposure to the advertising, thereby leaving fewer unused vacation days on the table.
- *Generate Positive Economic Impact:* The ultimate goal was to increase economic impact and state hotel/motel tax revenues, alleviating the tax burden on Illinois residents.

Strategy: Describe the various elements of the program, activity, campaign; techniques used:

- *Push/Pull Strategy:* We needed a fully integrated campaign that put out content to push Illinois Gene Holders out of their busy daily routines and plan more time away with loved ones, as well as to pull Illinois Gene Holders into EnjoyIllinois.com so that they could begin planning a trip to Illinois:
 - Television and pre-roll in 16 Midwest Markets on March 16, 2016, with a National Cable overlay for six weeks starting on April 27, 2016
 - Digital display banners, mobile, search and social
 - Native content
 - Spring/Summer Getaway Guide
 - Brand campaign landing page on EnjoyIllinois.com
 - Social Media Engagement Campaigns

Tactics: Describe tactics used and how they support the idea; creative steps taken; difficulties encountered. Identify partners and their roles. Describe the methodology used to evaluate this campaign/project. Please explain measurements used in obtaining results to-date.

The key objective of all media was to remind people of the upside of using all of their earned vacation days and to spend more time enjoying all the great things to see and do in Illinois.

We used native advertising to deliver content. This messaging reflected the format of the website(s) where it ran, so the content felt less like an ad and more like a third-party endorsement. For example, “17 incredible things on Route 66 you have to see to believe.”

Social Media Tactics:

Instagram “Find This” Program

We challenged Enjoy Illinois Instagram followers to “find something more”—as a natural extension for the summer campaign. These Instagram followers were challenged to travel and experience iconic Illinois destinations and then photograph them for a chance to be featured on Instagram. We posted a weekly photo of an Illinois destination and created an overlay that concealed part of the destination. The goal was to tease our Instagram followers to guess the attraction and then post their image of the destination as the correct answer. Through the use of #findsomethingmore, we were able to track user responses and engagement with the game.

Find Something More Quiz

IOT partnered with a digital company that creates high-impact, user-engagement advertising. The quiz we created was aligned with the idea that Illinois provides destinations that allow people to reconnect with family, friends and spouses. Simple visual choices lead consumers to test their fun levels of burnout, disconnection and historical trivia. The message we conveyed was focused around this idea: “It’s time for you to get away and take a vacation.”

Partnerships

We partnered with Yahoo! to create content that ran in a contextually relevant environment so travel-minded consumers could learn about the diversity the state has to offer. We also executed a one-day takeover of the Yahoo! login page (resulting in an increase of 546% in visits versus the previous day).

We also partnered with Orbitz to create custom content that included eight videos featuring travel adventurer Richard Bangs. This content highlighted unique, interesting facets of the entire state and 600 travel articles.

In terms of methodology used to evaluate this campaign:

- The Illinois Department of Revenue tracks hotel/motel tax revenues on a monthly basis
- Google Analytics is used to track traffic to the website
- IPSOS regional survey to track message communication, motivation and return on investment
- D.K. Shifflet & Associates Profile of Domestic Travelers to Illinois 2015

Results: Please state quantified results achieved. Results must be tied to the idea.

Communicate a Motivating Message:

A post-campaign survey showed that the campaign successfully communicated its core messages about Illinois as an appealing place for reconnecting with loved ones.

61% Completely Agree/Agree with the statement: “The destination would allow me to reconnect with family/friends/spouse.” (Source: Ipsos 2015)

62% Completely Agree/Agree with the statement: “This destination offers activities that appeal to me personally.” (Source: Ipsos 2015):

Generate Interest in Illinois Travel:

User web sessions showed the success of our “pull tactics”—as well as an increase in interest in planning a trip to Illinois versus the previous year.

45% Percentage increase in visits to EnjoyIllinois.com during the time the campaign was running versus the same a period year ago.

33% Percentage increase in total Enjoy Illinois Instagram account followers during the time of this campaign

Convince Travelers to Stay Longer in Illinois:

24% The proportion of Illinois visitors claiming to have increased their stay as a result of exposure to advertising increased significantly over 2014. Only 14% of visitors said they increased their stay as a result of exposure to the prior campaign. (Ipsos 2015)

3.1 The average number of days a trip was extended as a result of influence from advertising, achieving the highest level tracked to date. (Ipsos 2015)

2.6 The increase in the median number of nights for Illinois leisure travelers staying in paid accommodations. (D.K. Shifflet 2015)

Generate Positive Economic Impact:

25% Increase on Return on Investment for the 2015 *Find Something More* campaign versus the previous year among targeted Midwestern markets. (Ipsos 2015)

\$339 Average ROI per aware household (Ipsos 2015)

Hotel/Motel Tax Revenues:

13% Increase for March–July 2015 versus previous year.