

Executive Summary

Study Objective:

The objective of this study was to develop a research-based strategic marketing plan to position the Greenwood area as a travel and tourism destination of choice.

Study Methodology:

1. Initial Meetings, Reconnaissance and Mystery Shopping:

- ***Mystery Shopping and Reconnaissance:*** A professional reconnaissance team visited the Greenwood area August 28-31, 2008 and fully evaluated the region from the perspective of the traveler. In addition, RTM professionals visited Greenwood on multiple occasions during the period of November 2007 through February 2008 to conduct intercept interviews with travelers. During these trips observations were made about various aspects of the Greenwood travel experience. Findings from the trips to Greenwood are documented in a comprehensive written report herein.
- ***Initial Meetings:*** RTM professionals met with selected GRTVB staff and industry representatives to fully understand the objectives of this study.
- ***Marketing Materials Analysis:*** Samples of current promotional materials were collected for analysis.

2. Lodging Property Survey:

- A confidential survey was sent to all area lodging properties. RTM asked for a confidential report from these properties regarding their market mix (percentage of total rooms booked by market segment including business, convention, group, sports, leisure, etc.). The survey also asked for their top leisure feeder markets, marketing budgets and average daily rate (ADR).
- This data was compared to a Smith Travel Research Historic Trend Report to ensure thorough understanding of the lodging market in the Greenwood area. A final report with an analysis of the combined responses was developed.

3. Visitor Research:

- ***Visitor Intercept Surveys:*** RTM professionals visited Greenwood on multiple occasions during the period of November 2007 through February 2008 to conduct intercept interviews with travelers. Specific dates of interviews were November 9-11, February 8-10 and February 15-18. A total of 155 complete interviews were collected.
- ***Data Analysis:*** Completed research data was analyzed to develop recommendations and reports.

4. Organization and Performance Review:

- Analysis of existing tourism program funding and governance.
- Analysis of tourism marketing program of work.
- Analysis of marketing programs and results measures.

5. Strategic Marketing Plan:

Based on research findings a comprehensive marketing plan was developed including:

- Analysis of past growth.
- Lodging analysis and report.
- Current status of tourism in Greenwood and comparisons to national averages for funding, budget allocation, etc.
- Research results and interpretation/analysis.
- Recommended growth objectives, target audiences, marketing strategies, new product development, and long-term planning.
- Recommended tracking and evaluation procedures.

Executive Summary

Summary of Research Findings

Greenwood Civic leaders are to be praised for having the vision to create the Greenwood Regional Tourism and Visitors Bureau (GRTVB). The organization has been very successful in its initial start-up efforts and the research conducted in this study lays out a clear plan for the future. Notable research findings include:

- The reconnaissance team found the Greenwood area to have a scenic landscape and friendly people but the County is off-the-beaten path with the closest major Interstate highway thirty minutes away. There are no major attractors in Greenwood and the top activities for visitors are estimated to be (see visitor intercept surveys for actual visitor response) Lander University, Park Seed, Uptown Greenwood, Lake Greenwood and the Ninety-Six National Historic Site.
- Lodging occupancies fluctuate with no consistent annual pattern and room rates are low.
- Hoteliers report business travelers accounting for 50% of rooms sold. Leisure travelers are limited (14%) and come from within a three hour drive.
- GRTVB is well funded by lodging taxes to be competitive and aggressive.
- GRTVB allocates its funding appropriately and is well managed.
- Traveler's spending money in Greenwood pay sales taxes which in turn saves each household in Greenwood County \$125.54 in taxes they don't have to pay because the travelers pay them. This is travel generated tax relief!
- Intercept surveys with travelers in Greenwood revealed that business travelers stay longer than other segments (4.3 nights) and spend most (\$556) per trip.
- The average age of travelers to Greenwood is 48 years old.
- Travel parties are mostly adults traveling without children.
- 65% of travelers book lodging within 30 days of arrival.
- Overall trip satisfaction rated 3.9 on a five point scale (should be 4.2 or higher)
- Lodging in Greenwood rated well in satisfaction. However, the following areas rated low (below 3.8) and need to be improved upon: Range of choices for dining, Overall appeal of attractions, Ease of finding visitor information, Signage and way finding, Selection of shopping,
- Travelers to Greenwood come primarily from a three hour drive radius.
- Travelers to Greenwood are relatively well educated and typically travel with two or more people in the travel party.
- The vast majority of travelers are making repeat visits to Greenwood.
- The activities mentioned most often by respondents were dining out, business, convention/meeting, sleep/nap/rest, shopping, visit downtown area and driving/sightseeing.
- Clearly, friendly people, the beautiful nature and scenery, Lander University, and the small home town feeling appeal to visitors. Their dislikes primarily included the lack of information and signage, layout of the streets, and desire for more shopping.

The findings in this report reveal that the investment in travel and tourism marketing is working for the community with great potential for the future.

Executive Summary

Performance Review of GRTVB

The GRTVB was set up as a department of the City of Greenwood and receives guidance from a twelve person advisory board that is appointed by City Council. The GRTVB Executive Director, Kelly McWhorter, reports to the Greenwood City Manager and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the GRTVB. There is one other employee, Lindsay Briskin who was recently promoted from receptionist/bookkeeper to sales. The GRTVB maintains offices and a visitor center in the former Federal Building located at 120 Main Street in downtown Greenwood, South Carolina. The visitor center is located in the front lobby of the building which also serves as the local arts center. The GRTVB is directly funded through the collection of the 3% A-Tax on all lodging in Greenwood County and the City of Greenwood. The GRTVB also receives a portion of the 2% A-Tax collected on lodging in the City and County.

Greenwood City/County Accommodations Tax Three-Year Collection History

Year	3% County Accommodations A-Tax revenue	3% City Accommodations A-Tax Revenue	Total A-Tax Collections
Jul – Dec 2005	\$29,452	\$60,234	\$89,686
2006	\$72,149	\$146,039	\$218,188
2007	\$72,859	\$150,446	\$223,305

As of December 31, 2007 the GRTVB had a fund balance of \$238,000 cash on hand. The following table shows the actual and budgeted income for the GRTVB for 2007 and 2008. The accommodations A-Tax is the sole source of funding for the organization.

GRTVB Actual/Budgeted Income for 2007 & 2008

Income Category	2007 Actual Income	% of whole	2008 Budgeted Income	% of whole
GRTVB allocation from City 3% A-Tax	\$150,445	56%	\$150,000	55%
GRTVB allocation from County 3% A-Tax	\$72,859	27%	\$73,000	27%
City 2% A-Tax	\$25,996	10%	\$25,996	10%
County 2% A-Tax	\$12,000	4%	\$12,000	4%
Interest	\$7,274	3%	\$10,000	4%
Total Income	\$268,575	100%	\$270,996	100%

GRTVB Expenses as a Percentage of Total Budget

Budget Category	2007 Actual Expenses	% of whole	2008 Budgeted Expenses	% of whole
Salaries & Benefits	\$96,390	38%	\$159,305	63%
Operating Expenses	\$53,808	21%	\$61,500	24%
Outreach	\$39,305	16%	\$29,200	12%
Capital	\$63,248	25%	\$3,500	1%
TOTAL	\$252,751	100%	\$253,205	100%

A review of the budgets for the GRTVB's first two full years of operation reveals that the CVB is spending the money it receives appropriately as a percentage of the whole budget.

Executive Summary

Greenwood Lodging Research

The Greenwood lodging inventory has not grown since 2001/02 when the Holiday Inn Express (70 rooms) and the Fairfield Inn and Suites (76 rooms) were built.

- Eleven of the twelve lodging properties in Greenwood are limited service.
- The Greenwood market has only one full service lodging property.

Greenwood Lodging Properties by Age (as of 2007 STR)

Name of Establishment	Property Count	STR Room Count	% OF TOTAL
Unknown	3	81	11.5%
1970s	2	149	21.2%
1980s	2	110	15.6%
1990s	3	218	31.0%
2000s	2	146	20.7%
12 Properties	TOTAL	704	100%
Bed and Breakfast	1	2	

(Sources: GRTVB and Smith Travel Research Report - STR)

NOTE: RTM determined that the actual room inventory is 674 rooms. STR has not updated the older local owned motel room count which accounts for the discrepancy.

2006 Annual Overall Lodging Market Mix

RTM Surveyed local hoteliers to learn what segments of travelers are currently occupying lodging rooms in Greenwood.

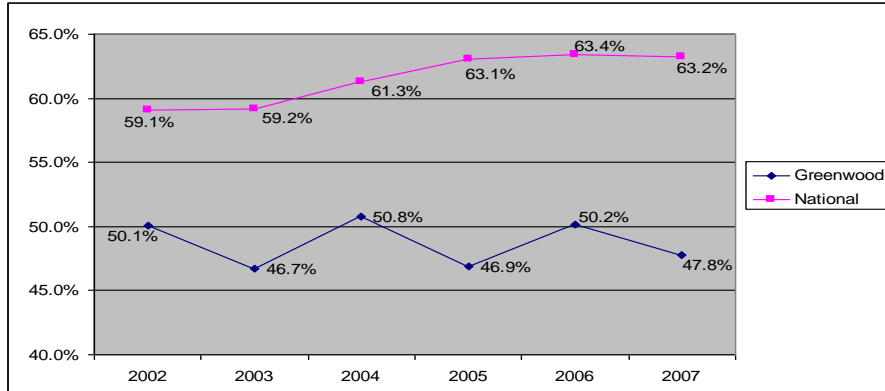
- Individual business travel (includes construction and commercial labor) accounts for the largest portion of lodging occupancy at 48.56%.

<u>2006</u>	<u>Category</u>	
67.36%	TOTAL LODGING RESPONSE RATE (by room count)	
48.56%	Corporate Business	
	48.56%	Individual business travelers
15.23%	Transient/University/Other	
	5.24%	Transient: Passing through as part of a longer trip
	4.82%	University-related
	5.17%	Other (specify): Masters Golf Tournament
13.66%	Leisure	
	6.90%	Visiting local friends & relatives
	6.76%	Tourists visiting the area (local attractions, historic sites, shopping, etc.)
12.70%	Group	
	5.00%	Team Sports, Tournament & Events
	7.05%	Wedding/Reunions/Family events/Social events
	0.65%	Group Tour/Motor coach
9.84%	Convention/Meeting	
	4.80%	Corporate
	2.87%	Government
	1.21%	Association
	0.96%	SMERF

Executive Summary

Six-Year Greenwood & National Occupancy Trends

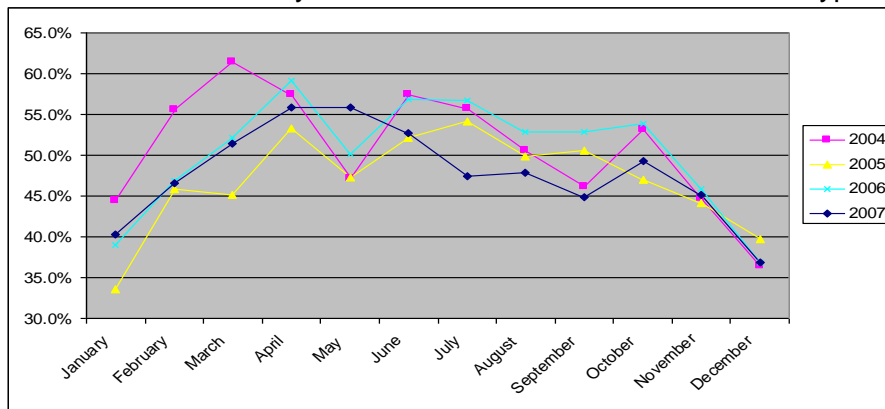
- Occupancy fluctuates too much. A smooth annual upward growth is preferred.



Source: STR Six-Year Trend Report for Greenwood

Greenwood Four-Year Monthly Lodging Occupancy Trend

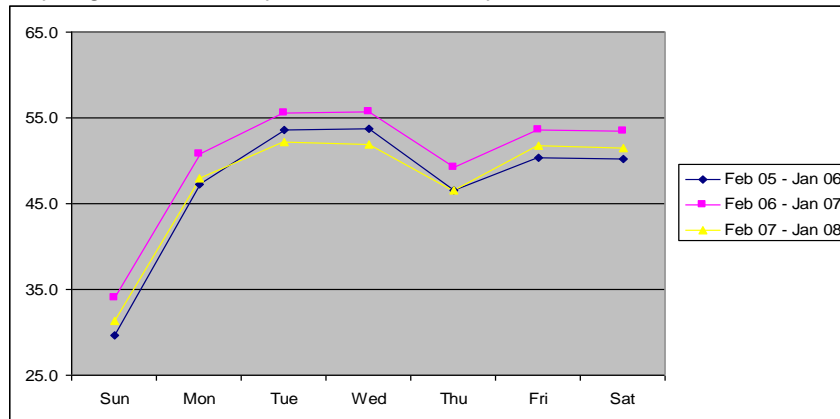
- Occupancy fluctuates too much. A smooth bell curve is more typical. The winter months of December and January are slowest while warmer months are typically highest.



Source: STR Six-Year Trend Report for Greenwood

Greenwood Occupancy by Day of the Week (Three Years)

- Sunday night is the slowest night of the week followed closely by Thursday and Monday nights. Tuesday and Wednesday are the busiest.

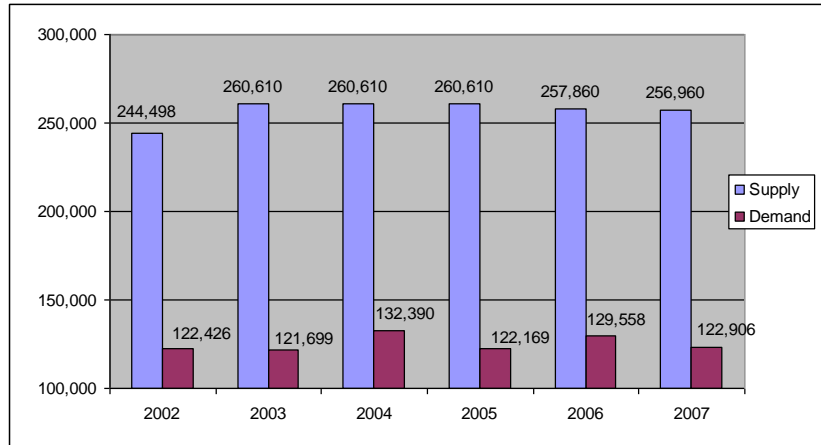


Source: STR Six-Year Trend Report for Greenwood

Executive Summary

Greenwood Lodging Annual Supply and Demand (2002-2007)

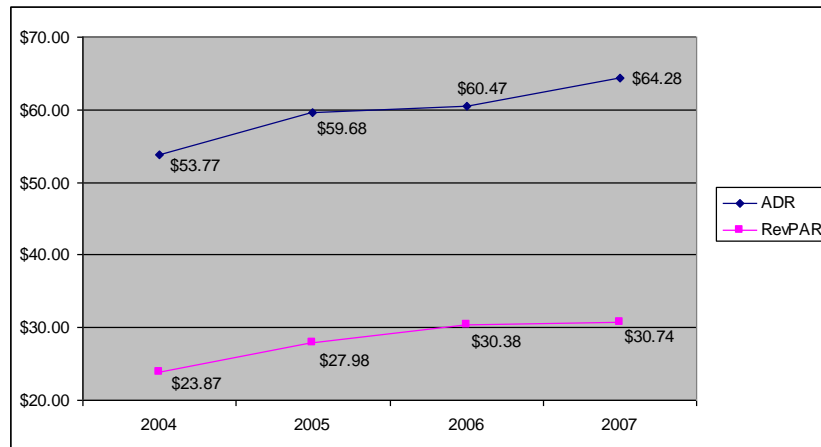
- Room supply has remained relatively unchanged over the last six years. The last new lodging property opened in August, 2002 and occupancies remain in the 50% range. Meanwhile, demand for rooms has shown an unpredictable up and down pattern over the last six years as seen in the chart below. When asked, hoteliers had varying opinions as to why the annual occupancy fluctuates. Large groups/events, construction laborers (large one-time projects) and corporate business cycles were mentioned most often.



Source: STR Six-Year Trend Report for Greenwood

Greenwood Four-Year ADR and RevPAR Trend

- The chart below reveals that both ADR (Average Daily Rate) and RevPAR (Revenue Per Available Room) have increased slightly over the past four years. Flat RevPAR in 2007 in spite of higher room rates reflects a decline in overall room demand as found in the chart on the previous page. A troubling trend.



Source: STR Six-Year Trend Report for Greenwood

Top Leisure Feeder Markets (as Reported by Greenwood Hoteliers)

- Charleston
- Atlanta
- Columbia
- Charlotte
- Greenville/Spartanburg

(Source: RTM Survey of Greenwood Lodging Properties)

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

Visitor Intercept Interviews

Visitor Intercept interviews were conducted by RTM professionals during three (3) visits to Greenwood. Specific dates of interviews were November 9-11, February 8-10 and February 15-18. A total of one hundred fifty-five (155) interviews were completed with the following segment mix:

Segment	Interview Count	% of total interviews
Meetings	50	32.66%
Business	48	30.97%
Leisure	26	16.77%
Sports	17	10.97%
University	14	9.03%
Overall	155	100.00%

Summary of Findings from Greenwood Intercept Interviews

Respondents Profile and Responses	Business	Leisure	Meeting	Sports	University	Overall
Quantity of Interviews:	48	26	50	17	14	155
Average Age	49.3	58.8	50.5	37.1	26.4	47.7
Gender: Male	76.7%	44.0%	43.5%	43.8%	21.4%	51.4%
Female	23.3%	56.0%	56.5%	56.3%	78.6%	48.6%
Point Of Origin:	S.Carolina N.Carolina Georgia	S.Carolina Georgia Florida	S. Carolina	N. Carolina S. Carolina Tennessee	S. Carolina N. Carolina	Carolinas Georgia
Typical Travel Party						
Adults traveling without children	100.0%	84.6%	95.7%	100.0%	92.9%	95.3%
Average number of people in party	1.5	2.6	4.2	6.8	8.4	3.8
Trip Planning, Duration and Activities						
1 week before travel	43.5%	17.4%	4.1%	41.2%	16.7%	23.8%
2 weeks before travel	23.9%	17.4%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	12.2%
1 month before travel	28.3%	26.1%	32.7%	35.3%	16.7%	29.3%
2 months before travel or more	4.3%	39.1%	57.1%	23.4%	66.7%	34.7%
Had visited the area before	72.3%	84.6%	60.0%	64.7%	21.5%	64.9%
Average length of stay (nights)	4.3	2.3	1.8	3.2	1.2	2.7
Most Popular Activities: Dining out	47.9%	57.7%	26.0%	41.2%	50.0%	41.9%
Business	79.2%	0.0%	30.0%	17.7%	35.7%	39.4%
Convention / meeting	0.0%	7.7%	68.0%	11.7%	42.9%	28.4%
Sleep / nap / rest	14.6%	23.1%	30.0%	35.3%	42.9%	25.8%
Shopping	16.7%	46.2%	24.0%	23.5%	7.1%	23.9%
Visit downtown area	12.5%	30.7%	24.0%	11.8%	0.0%	18.1%
Overall Trip and Amenity Satisfaction Ratings (1=low, 3=Average, 5=high)						
Overall Trip Satisfaction	3.67	4.50	4.07	3.69	3.36	3.92
Lodging value for price paid	4.13	4.56	4.23	4.07	4.00	4.21
Quality of the lodging room	4.18	4.61	4.02	4.40	3.67	4.17
Level of service/employee training	3.66	4.58	4.03	4.00	3.11	3.93
Scenic beauty of area	3.86	4.38	3.80	3.67	2.88	3.84
Range of choices for dining	3.77	4.11	3.77	3.87	3.30	3.79
Overall appeal of attractions	3.36	3.94	3.77	3.43	2.63	3.54
Ease of finding visitor information	3.24	4.07	3.64	3.21	3.00	3.46
Signage and way finding	3.36	3.95	3.48	3.38	2.67	3.44
Selection of shopping	3.10	3.78	3.55	3.14	2.14	3.30

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

Visitor Likes and Dislikes- In their own words, visitors cited the following as the reasons they liked Greenwood: friendly people, the beautiful nature and scenery, Lander University, and the small home town feeling. The dislikes primarily included the lack of information and signage, layout of the streets, and desire for more shopping.

Visitor Spending

Visitors spend a lot of money in Greenwood. The spending figures in the table below are similar to those found in similar semi-rural areas throughout the country and reflect travel habits identified in national research conducted by TIA. The largest daily expense for travelers to Greenwood is lodging at 30.7%. The second highest expense (25%) is shopping. The third highest expenditure is food and meals at (18%). The fourth highest expenditure is transportation at (14%) followed in last place by attractions/amusements (12%).

Visitor Spending By Segment (Daily and overall trip)

Spending Category	Business	Leisure	Meeting	Sports	Univ.	Overall
Lodging	\$88.97	\$94.57	\$83.12	\$102.86	\$82.50	\$88.94
Shopping	\$67.50	\$102.14	\$78.89	\$35.00	\$75.00	\$72.35
Food / Meals	\$42.23	\$56.94	\$66.20	\$61.82	\$22.50	\$52.88
Transportation	\$32.33	\$41.25	\$38.50	\$64.00	\$26.50	\$40.56
Attractions / Amusements	\$30.00	\$27.50	\$40.63	NR	\$20.00	\$34.64
TOTAL (as reported)	\$128.39	\$227.25	\$201.67	\$161.88	\$260.00	\$169.57
Length of Stay (question 4b)	4.31	2.33	1.77	3.23	1.17	2.72
Total Trip Spending (calculated)	\$1,125.04	\$751.19	\$543.99	\$851.69	\$265.00	\$787.08

Taxes Generated by Visitor Spending in Greenwood (overall trip)

Note: Based on overall average daily spending reported above multiplied by 2.72 night stay

2007 Spending Category	Overall Trip Spending	5% Total Lodging Taxes	1% Local Sales Tax	6% SC Sales Tax	2% Local Meals Tax
Lodging	\$241.92	\$12.09	\$2.42	\$14.51	~
Shopping	\$196.79	~	\$1.97	\$11.81	~
Food / Meals	\$143.83	~	\$1.44	\$8.63	\$2.88
Transportation	\$110.32	~	\$1.10	\$6.62	~
Attractions / Amusements	\$94.22	~	\$0.94	\$5.65	~
TOTAL	\$787.08	\$12.09	\$7.87	\$47.22	\$2.88

Desired New Activities and Products:

“Something garden related” scored highest in the survey indicating visitors to Greenwood are clearly seeking the “green” aspects of the County and want more. Perhaps this could be in the form of an expansion to the activities and retail available at Park Seed and the South Carolina Festival of Flowers already in place. Greenwood should make every effort to put the “green” in Greenwood and make flowers and gardens accessible to visitors at every turn.

Overall improvement to the shopping opportunities was indicated again by respondents as a desired new product with the next three highest scoring amenities being an antique mall, an artisan/craftsman venue featuring handmade items, and more shops staying open until 7:00PM in the downtown area.

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

Research Study Summary and Strategic Direction

The most salient points to emerge from the 2007-2008 travel and tourism research for Greenwood include:

- Greenwood currently has a travel industry that is primarily comprised of business, university, group and leisure travelers. Greenwood was wise to form the GRTVB.
- There are twelve lodging properties (mostly limited service) representing 674 rooms.
- Greenwood is off-the-beaten track (distance from Interstate highways) and must therefore market and sell itself to attract travelers as they are unlikely to pass thru.
- The mix of current travelers staying overnight in Greenwood lodging properties are:
 - 49% Individual business travelers (includes laborers)
 - 14% University and passing thru
 - 14% Leisure
 - 13% Group (sports, weddings, reunions)
 - 10% Conference & meeting groups
- Point of origin is South Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia.
- Average trip expenditures for travelers to Greenwood are approximately \$460 and vary by market segment.
- Signage and wayfinding are a serious issue that negatively affect visitor spending.
- While Greenwood has limited facilities to host groups and meetings, these markets show huge growth potential as they like coming to Greenwood and desire improved facilities, shopping and dining.
- The GRTVB is off to a good start and is well organized.
- In the short term the organization will deliver the biggest return on investment for the community through direct sales to groups (meetings, sports, social). In the long term, as Greenwood implements the Uptown Master Plan, improves shopping and dining overall and puts more “green” in Greenwood, the GRTVB will be able to increase leisure promotions. Currently Greenwood has limited appeal as a leisure get-away.

Recommended Short Term Strategies:

- GRTVB to build an aggressive direct sales program to drive occupancy in local lodging from current 50% to 65% in five years by targeting the following segments: Small conferences/meetings, Sports and Agricultural related events, Group Tour.
- Implement signage and wayfinding program focusing on gateways, bypasses and Uptown. The goal is to help visitors find the cash registers and spend more!
- Improve GRTVB marketing materials by focusing on positioning, segmentation and unique activities that are open to visitors regularly (3 days per week minimum). Website is top priority, then direct sales materials, padded maps and visitor guide.

Recommended Longer Term Strategies:

- GRTVB to encourage the completion of the Greenwood City Center Master Plan with an emphasis on developing Uptown Greenwood as a unique shopping and dining entertainment district.
- Put the “green” in Greenwood. Greenwood has Park Seed and the SC Festival of Flowers and a name that is “green”. Greenwood currently has limited appeal as a leisure destination. Greenwood’s best shot to develop something new is to expand on one of your best assets. Greenwood should be able to promote itself as, “There’s Always Something Blooming in Greenwood”.

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

- Develop a plan for a small Uptown conference center with 200 new lodging rooms to be located between Lander University and the Uptown district. Once market-wide lodging occupancy exceeds 60% (3-5 years) Greenwood will be ready for more rooms.

Key Strategies:

RTM recommends the following key strategies for Greenwood:

1. ***Acknowledge that the GRTVB has established a good initial foundation and the time is right for tourism growth.*** The GRTVB is a relatively new and developing marketing organization. It has established a good program that is well funded compared to its “competitive set” of destinations and it earns good results from its marketing investments. RTM was impressed to see the level of support that community leaders have committed to the development of the local tourism industry. An accomplished tourism marketing agency, leadership and a willing community is a recipe for success. Congratulations Greenwood leaders for a job well done!
2. ***Adopt a market segmentation approach for strategic tourism growth.*** Leaders of Greenwood need to clearly understand the current travel customer mix and how to target specific segments for growth. Focus on those segments that are most likely to grow and drive increased economic impact for Greenwood. The segments to focus on (in rank order) are individual business travelers, groups (sports, meetings, group tour & social), university related and leisure.

<u>2006</u>		<u>Category</u>
67.36%		TOTAL LODGING RESPONSE RATE (by room count)
48.56%		Corporate Business
	48.56%	Individual business travelers
15.23%		Transient/University/Other
	5.24%	Transient: Passing through as part of a longer trip
	4.82%	University-related
	5.17%	Other (specify): Masters Golf Tournament
13.66%		Leisure
	6.90%	Visiting local friends & relatives
	6.76%	Tourists visiting the area (local attractions, historic sites, shopping, etc.)
12.70%		Group
	5.00%	Team Sports, Tournament & Events
	7.05%	Wedding/Reunions/Family events/Social events
	0.65%	Group Tour/Motor coach
9.84%		Convention/Meeting
	4.80%	Corporate
	2.87%	Government
	1.21%	Association
	0.96%	SMERF

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

3. ***Tracking and growing the per-visitor expenditures and tax relief for residents of Greenwood County is the primary objective of the GRTVB.*** Greenwood County leaders need to clearly understand that it is growth in per-visitor expenditures that creates success. Visitors spend money and make a significant economic impact. "Tax relief" is created when visitors pay taxes and thus, relieve the local residents from generating that tax revenue. The current visitor generated tax relief is approximately **\$125 annually per household** in Greenwood County. This could double within five years by driving visitor spending higher and attracting more visitors to Greenwood. The current spending by segment is as follows:

Visitor Spending By Segment (Daily and Overall Trip)

Spending Category	Business	Leisure	Meeting	Sports	Univ.	Overall
Lodging	\$88.97	\$94.57	\$83.12	\$102.86	\$82.50	\$88.94
Shopping	\$67.50	\$102.14	\$78.89	\$35.00	\$75.00	\$72.35
Food / Meals	\$42.23	\$56.94	\$66.20	\$61.82	\$22.50	\$52.88
Transportation	\$32.33	\$41.25	\$38.50	\$64.00	\$26.50	\$40.56
Attractions / Amusements	\$30.00	\$27.50	\$40.63	NR	\$20.00	\$34.64
TOTAL (as reported)	\$128.39	\$227.25	\$201.67	\$161.88	\$260.00	\$169.57
Length of Stay (question 4b)	4.31	2.33	1.77	3.23	1.17	2.72
Total Trip Spending (calculated)	\$1,125.04	\$751.19	\$543.99	\$851.69	\$265.00	\$787.08

4. ***Monitor satisfaction levels with categories of tourism products in Greenwood. All ratings below a 4.0 are considered a failure. Bear in mind that some ratings are based on lack of awareness of existing products. Thus, more aggressive marketing can improve some ratings.***

Overall Trip and Amenity Satisfaction Ratings (1=low, 3=Average, 5=high)						
	Business	Leisure	Meeting	Sports	University	Overall
Overall trip satisfaction	3.67	4.50	4.07	3.69	3.36	3.92
Lodging value for price paid	4.13	4.56	4.23	4.07	4.00	4.21
Quality of the lodging room	4.18	4.61	4.02	4.40	3.67	4.17
Level of service/employee training	3.66	4.58	4.03	4.00	3.11	3.93
Scenic beauty of area	3.86	4.38	3.80	3.67	2.88	3.84
Range of choices for dining	3.77	4.11	3.77	3.87	3.30	3.79
Overall appeal of attractions	3.36	3.94	3.77	3.43	2.63	3.54
Ease of finding visitor information	3.24	4.07	3.64	3.21	3.00	3.46
Signage and way finding	3.36	3.95	3.48	3.38	2.67	3.44
Selection of shopping	3.10	3.78	3.55	3.14	2.14	3.30

5. ***Establish a clear mission statement for the GRTVB:***
RTM recommends: "The GRTVB is an economic development organization that improves the economy of Greenwood County and the region by increasing the number of overnight visitors to the area and driving higher average daily spending of all travel parties."

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

6. ***Improve visual gateways into Greenwood- Greenwood County and implement signage program.*** RTM recommends creating impressive gateways into Greenwood that create “a sense of place” for the area. The positioning statement recommended in this study would be used, and the gateway would also include directions to visitor information. The most critical aspects of a gateway according to visitors include:

- Prominent location upon entering the community
- Attractive and architecturally pleasing
- Directions to visitor information
- Landscaping and lighting
- Positioning statement (why should I stop here? What is unique here?)

The signage program recommended in the Greenwood City Center Master Plan should be implemented focusing on Gateways, Bypasses, major arteries into Greenwood, and the Uptown area.

7. ***Sales and marketing priorities for GRTVB:***

- GRTVB to build an aggressive direct sales program to drive occupancy in local lodging from current 50% to 65% in five years by targeting the following segments:
 - Small conferences/meetings – focus on South Carolina. Within the small meetings market there are target segments to go after and these include:
 - Corporate – local (work with local corporations)
 - Corporate – regional (insurance, manufacturing, distribution, construction, services, etc.)
 - Social – weddings, reunions, funerals
 - Fraternal - sororities, fraternities, lodges, affinity groups
 - Education – regional education related meetings
 - Religious – regional and state religious conferences
 - Sports and agricultural related events
 - Team sports – softball, baseball, basketball, volleyball, golf, soccer, tennis, triathlons, biathlons, marathons, etc.
 - Golf – individual golfers and small groups
 - Agricultural events – small equine and livestock events, equipment shows, etc.
 - Sportsmen - gun and knife shows
 - Group tour – Ninety-Six NHS, Cokesbury, Park Seed, GLEAMNS and Emerald Farm are all unique activities that would stand out for group tours. Work the GLAMER shows.
- Internet website (www.visitgreenwoodsc.com)
- Visitor guide (distributed in the area and along Interstates 85, 26 and 20)
- Padded maps – two-color tear-off maps for lodging, visitor centers, gas stations, restaurants, attractions, churches, hospital, etc.
- Public relations efforts targeted at winning coverage of visitor amenities in Greenwood in tourism media (newspapers, magazines, TV)

These are the marketing tasks that will drive the most visitors to the area.

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

- 8. Enhance existing products, attractions and activities to meet visitor expectations. Develop new products that fit the enhanced positioning.**
- GRTVB to encourage the completion of the Greenwood City Center Master Plan with an emphasis on developing Uptown Greenwood as a unique shopping and dining entertainment district. Develop the Uptown area as if it were a large attraction where shopping and dining are found in a small town garden-like setting. This will benefit residents and visitors alike.
 - Put the “green” in Greenwood. Greenwood has Park Seed and the SC Festival of Flowers and a name that is “green”. Greenwood currently has limited appeal as a leisure destination. Greenwood’s best shot to develop something new is to expand on one of your best assets. Park Seed should become Greenwood’s own smaller version of Callaway Gardens and the Uptown should be developed as a “garden district”. Every major street and intersection should be a scenic driving tour of gardens and landscaping. Greenwood should be able to promote itself as, “There’s Always Something Blooming in Greenwood”.
 - Develop a plan for a small Uptown conference center with 200 new lodging rooms to be located between Lander University and the Uptown district. Once market-wide lodging occupancy exceeds 60% (3-5 years) Greenwood will be ready for more rooms. A small upscale meeting center (groups of 400 people or less) with 200 rooms on site (could be in two separate lodging properties) that is walking scale to the university, and Uptown shopping and dining will complete Greenwood as a unique destination for all forms of travel. A 120 room select service property (Hilton Garden Inn) and an 80 room limited service property in direct proximity could be the best approach.
- 9. Maintain Visitor Center in current location and enhance as a sales center to drive increased visitor spending.**
- The Federal Building is the best location for the visitor center and is a nice facility.
 - A visitor center needs to be a dynamic sales center that promotes the community as a great place to visit or relocate. It should be exciting, dynamic, and interactive. It should be open weekends. It should be staffed by concierges who are there to book rooms, make reservations, sell tickets, provide direction and make plans for travelers.
 - Currently the visitor center is an information/reception desk inside the arts center with a brochure rack in an adjacent room and sporadic staffing based on events taking place.
- 10. Change GRTVB staff structure to accomplish recommended strategies.**
- **Kelly McWhorter – President**, responsible for overall program of work and staff, finance, marketing & public relations.
 - **Lindsay Briskin – Director of Sales**, responsible for direct sales program focusing on small conferences/meetings, sports and agricultural related events, and group tour. Direct sales includes attending trade shows.
 - **Immediate New Hire – Visitor Center Manager**, responsible for overall visitor services, volunteer program, inquiries and fulfillment.
 - **Future New Hire – Sales & Marketing Assistant**, supports President and DOS in all sales and marketing efforts. This position can be added when annual funding to the GRTVB exceeds \$310,000.

Visitor Survey Findings and Responses

11. ***Conduct on-going scientific research to monitor and track results.***
- Annual lodging market mix survey (every February for prior year data)
 - Annual visitor intercept surveys to track travel patterns (spending)
 - Visitor profile and conversion research every three years
 - Annual evaluation of inquiry point-of-origin
 - Website visitor interest and conversion analysis
 - Purchase contact and data management software
 - Inquiry database “data mining”

The positioning statement Randall Travel Marketing recommends for increasing tourism in Greenwood is:

Greenwood, South Carolina There's Always Something Blooming

Greenwood, South Carolina is home to world famous Park Seed Company and the South Carolina Festival of Flowers. Come any time of year to tour a Revolutionary War battlefield and shop amid the tree-lined streets in a community that is always planting something new for you to do.

This wording would be used on the front of the visitor guide, in the Internet website, in advertising, and in all tourism marketing efforts and materials. This positioning carries over into all segmented promotions because Greenwood will be developing its tourism infrastructure over the next decade and “blooming” implies new growth. It sounds fresh and upcoming.