



Tourism Work Group

August 15, 2011

Strengths

1. Location – physically, proximity to large cities,
2. Access to ground transportation
3. Natural resources – lakes, destination for family vacations, state parks, gorges
4. Cultural activities – operas, symphonies, performing arts centers
5. Water activities
6. Clean water
7. Recreation heritage and historic resources
8. Wine industry
9. Racing industry
10. Infrastructure – air service and accommodation range
11. Parks – hiking, swimming
12. Charm – unique charm, coolest town in America
13. Proximity to major population centers in NE US and Canada
14. Regional brand identity of the Southern Tier, tradition of being a vacation center
15. Hills, beauty of the landscape
16. Customer service
17. Tourism products: national auto racing; car clubs; unique special events; fishing and hunting; cultural, historic, recreation (canoeing, hiking) type visitors; wine; museums (Rockwell, Corning, Roberson, Soaring); agri-tourism; meeting and convention businesses; sporting groups; carousels; personalities, e.g., Rod Sterling; shopping; antiquing; cultural venues and events; golfing – competitive pricing, venues, no crowds;

Weaknesses

1. Customer service
2. Regional branding is a mish-mash
3. Some areas don't have zoning and planning to support tourism growth, people will build anything anyplace, visual appearance and inability to have the tools to deal with it
4. Lack of regional pride – in front lawns
5. Trouble getting public to buy in to looking better
6. Deteriorating main streets
7. Southern Tier is very diverse and diversity is a branding weakness
8. Eastern sector of the region highly regulated watershed and unable to expand tourism

9. Available and trained work force
10. Lodging (depending on where located in the region)
11. How prospective visitors get access to information; website are county websites
12. The counties fall under different tourism regions of the State (I love NY regions do not overlap the Southern Tier Region)
13. The grant model encouraging regional participation by county challenges the exiting regional funding model
14. Need more full time residents to keep stores open, retailers can only afford to be open Thursday, Friday, Saturday

#### Opportunities

1. Closeness and proximity to larger cities coupled with our scenic geography and natural beauty, concentrations of population within the region
2. Ability to create “trails”; build vacation trails and plans on different Southern Tier themes
3. Develop “connected vacation” plans/programs
4. Networking among ST to plan extensions of vacation stays or additional visits; maximize visitors already here
5. Tens of thousands first time visitors to the ST bringing their children to Higher Education institutions; market the ST to these people; expand the ST network; (others? - vacationers, families of HE students, corporate/business travelers, Empire State Games, Special Olympics, Odyssey of the Mind – Special events; golfers;
6. Proximity to airports – mid-station to other areas
7. Halfway between NYC and Niagara Falls (advertise there)
8. Travel the scenic route off of routes 87 and 90
9. Business off-sites – recruiting NYC businesses to planning meeting destinations; conferences; corporate retreats
10. Take advantage of HE faculty expertise to work with regional businesses, tourism groups, to help build marketing plans
11. Leveraging conferences at HE institutions and marrying with local convention and visitors bureau
12. Cornell hotel school
13. The grant model encouraging regional participation by county challenges the exiting regional funding model - may be able to tap funds from three different “tourism regions in I Love NY
14. Eco-tourism
15. Natural gas drilling for restaurant, hotels, etc.

#### Threats

1. Rural nature of the region

2. The grant model encouraging regional participation by county challenges the existing regional funding model
3. Watershed regulations, prevent expansion
4. Overall negative regional/community attitude – “why would you want to come here?” – need to treat tourist better, not as nuisances
5. Unwillingness to take a risk and make a change
6. 50% of Delaware county is second home owners, tourists are threat to their tranquility
7. Business owners take for granted a steady stream of tourist businesses – not aggressive about increasing this business
8. Lack of long-term funding commitment for tourism agencies – problem for existing agencies or for the Southern Tier Region; an attractive option would be
9. Neighboring States that do it better, i.e., marketing tourism, than NY or the Southern Tier
10. Extraction of natural resources, e.g., natural gas, water, etc. will shift customer profile and brand identity
11. Growth in other industries will impact tourism
12. Shale and natural gas is very immediate real threat to tourism and the promotion of natural beauty; may also leave excess capacity of buildings/room after the boom