

Green Gables Shore MC&IT Opportunities Study



Submitted by:



In association with:

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November 12, 2010

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Green Gables Shore is a storied land. The “home” and legendary playground of Lucy Maud Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* has an international reputation and for generations has been one of the most successful tourism destinations on Prince Edward Island. Its beaches are legendary. Superior golf product headlines a stellar array of activities and the seafood is fresh and abundant. In short, Green Gables Shore is quintessential Prince Edward Island.

The membership-based Cavendish, Beaches and the Dune Shores Tourism Association (CBDSTA) is a relatively new tourism association. In the face of a global shift in tourism activity CBDSTA is working to increase tourism revenues and increase length of stay in the region. The association employs a three point strategy - Family Market, Adult Market and MC&IT - to make that happen. The objective of this study is to provide market opportunities for Green Gables Shore in the Meetings, Conventions and Incentive Travel (MC&IT) sector.

Successfully penetrating the MC&IT will offer Green Gables Shore new visitors and enhanced revenues, improved occupancy in low periods of the year, and over time, season extension. It will enhance the destination’s awareness, offer current visitors a “new” reason to return and add benefits to members of the organization.

The consulting team has completed the deliverables requested – a Destination Inventory Analysis, Market Analysis Report and an MC&IT Action Plan. The team has consolidated the inventory information into a higher level Asset Map of the region, reviewed best practices in Canada, developed a number of specific recommendations, and created list of investments required and success/progress measures. We have conducted secondary research from print and online sources, interviewed individuals for their experience in MC&IT and background knowledge of the area, visited the region prior to and during the tourism season of 2010, and prepared an assessment of strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats (SWOT). We contribute decades of expertise to the discussion.

The cumulative work of this MC&IT Opportunities Study leads to five significant conclusions that form the basis for the MC&IT Action Plan.

1. *Success in the MC&IT business is built over time; it cannot be bought and is rooted in strong relationships.* Success in the MC&IT business is earned and takes time, patience, confidence in a strategy, and diligent effort. It does not happen overnight and return on investments made take years to realize.

- 2. Existing destination awareness provides leverage in the highly competitive MC&IT business.** Green Gables Shore benefits from an enviably high level of awareness as a leisure destination and can parlay this awareness into a profile as an MC&IT destination.
- 3. A rigid seasonal pattern along Green Gables Shore is a reality.** There is a critical mass of market-ready properties, dining, activities, and attractions open from June to October to satisfy the MC&IT expectations of target markets. Seasonality is an issue that will affect the scope of success of MC&IT development.
- 4. Initial target markets are close to home.** The study outlines target markets and products for a market development effort. Among them is a recommended focus on small meetings and corporate incentives in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.
- 5. A determined customer focus drives the plan.** A principle of this study, customer focus, guides all MC&IT action planning decisions and obligates participating operators along Green Gables Shore to offer a level of service expected by the marketplace at all customer contact points.

Fundamental to the successful execution of this strategy is a new and collaborative relationship and partnership with the newly refocused Tourism Charlottetown Prince Edward Island Conventions Partnership (TCPEICP). The action plan arms Green Gables Shore with a point of view on its role in MC&IT and therefore enables Green Gables Shore to be “first in the line” to contribute organized alternative rural-resort product to the marketplace. We suggest that whenever and wherever possible collaboration with the efforts of the refocused TCPEICP will contribute to MC&IT success on Green Gables Shore.

There are specific recommendations from the consulting team throughout the report. They are bundled in the Executive Summary for reference.

Recommendations:

- Incremental revenues from MC&IT efforts are achievable along Green Gables Shore when market-ready operators recognize the parameters of the commitment involved; recognize the realities of the marketplace outlined in the report; agree upon clear market-positioning for the region and can commit to a collaborative, three-year, phased-in plan to build the sector.
- A recommended market-positioning:
*For those visiting Prince Edward Island for meetings, conventions and incentive travel, Green Gables Shore is **the** choice rural-resort destination for small meetings*

of up to 50 people and incentives/retreats, specializing in seacoast-related and golf activities, and a comfortable change of pace combined with efficient customer service.

- The plan for entering the MC&IT market is recommended to unfold systematically over a three year period with the initial 18 months focusing on relationship building and generating awareness of Green Gables Shore as a credible MC&IT destination.
- Fundamental to the successful execution of this strategy is a collaborative, two-way relationship and partnership with the newly refocused Tourism Charlottetown Prince Edward Island Conventions Partnership (TCPEICP). Both organizations should strive to negotiate a proactive agreement offering flexible and creative solutions to a solid shared-vision working relationship.
- Participating operators begin an MC&IT initiative by assembling and developing four product categories:
 - pre and post convention packages;
 - spousal and special seacoast-related and golf activities to enhance international, national and regional meetings hosted elsewhere on the island;
 - all-inclusive meeting offers for a targeted regional and provincial market;
 - tailored incentive and corporate retreat programs.
- Two markets are priority targets for the Green Gables Shore MC&IT effort. The first target is those individuals and groups most influential in connecting Green Gables Shore with business in the MC&IT marketplace that will put Green Gables Shore product "on the shelf" for sale. Secondly, governments, associations and businesses in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island requiring meetings and corporate retreats for up to 50 people, incorporating seacoast-related and golf activities gathering between 01 June and 01 October.
- CBDSTA needs dedicated professional leadership to pursue the competitive MC&IT market. It is important for the wellbeing of CBDSTA that the MC&IT effort be integrated into the work of the association and not operated in a silo. The consulting team recommends that the in-house MC&IT Leader be either an existing or contracted CBDSTA employee.
- CBDSTA contract an MC&IT specialist (perhaps an experienced Destination Marketing Company) to assist in recommending and assembling product.

- Those facilities that cater to the MC&IT market should update their property descriptions to reflect their MC&IT offerings in all directories and marketing materials.

We trust that tourism and related operators and businesses along Green Gables Shore will engage in and profit from the work of this study.

2 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 History and Environment for a New Initiative

The Cavendish Beaches Dune Shores Tourism Association (CBDSTA) works to increase visitation and visitor expenditures to Green Gables Shore in Prince Edward Island and to provide services to its 120-plus members while strengthening the association as a regional industry voice¹. CBDSTA has identified three key market segments to achieve this goal: the Family Market; an Adult Couples Market; and a Meetings Conventions and Incentive Travel (MC&IT) market. This study was commissioned to define the market opportunity for MC&IT in the region.

CBDSTA efforts are aligned with strategic provincial efforts as outlined in *The New Product Culture: Prince Edward Island's Strategy for Tourism Competitiveness 2005-2010*. The provincial strategy is being refreshed now.

Green Gables Shore enjoys an enviable awareness as a summertime leisure destination and has long been a highly recognized tourism leader on PEI. Green Gables Shore is quintessential Prince Edward Island and within its boundaries embodies the key provincial visitor motivators: beaches, golf, Anne of Green Gables and family fun. There is little surprise that the "tourism plant" satisfies a customer who is most often (64 percent) Atlantic Canadian or Canadian (22 percent), travelling as a couple or in a family group, most frequently during the summer vacation months of July and August².

The accommodations, attractions and services available in Green Gables S are structured, for the most part, to service this customer. The majority of operators are open June through late September and traditionally there has been little motivation or business case to adjust the season. Operators in the area have cooperated to encourage new key motivators for the area in recent years, first among them is the fledgling and successful *Cavendish Beach Music Festival*. The region is geographically close to the capital city of Charlottetown and its airport. It does not have a public transportation system, seasonal or otherwise.

In the mid-1990s significant enthusiasm followed a proposal to build a theme hotel and conventions centre - *The White Sands* project³ - at Cavendish Beach. It was not realized. To

¹ Cavendish Beaches and Dunes Shores Tourism Association 2007 Plan

² Profile of Overnight Visitors by Origin, 2007-2008

³ White Sands Study – A Nineteenth Century Theme Period/Theme Resort Hotel 1994

date, efforts to promote MC&IT along Green Gables Shore have lacked coordination and several individual market-ready operators have been working with the Tourism Charlottetown PEI Conventions Partnership (TCPEICP) independently. Some of the current MC&IT industry players in the region are not members of the CBDSTA. As an organization CBDSTA has not found common ground with TCPEICP to build a sustainable working relationship. The organizations disagree philosophically. Some individual CBDSTA members who once participated with the conventions partnership have opted out feeling “it has little value to me”.

The TCPEICP is currently refocusing its strategy and reassessing the appeal of its brand *Seaside Social*. The Executive Summary of *Establishing New Directions - A Road Map to the Future: TCI/PEICP 2010-2013 Strategic Plan* released in late summer 2010 proposes options that enable the partnership to better realize an important element of its mandate “to sell PEI to an MC&IT market”. The Draft Report proposes governance changes such as revamping the Board composition to strengthen industry sector and geographic representation and to “better manage partner relationships.” The Executive Summary acknowledges that the *Seaside Social* brand “is not representative of the destination” and is being reassessed.

While CBDSTA is assessing an MC&IT future and the TCPEICP is rethinking its partnerships and positioning, important changes are underway in the PEI MC&IT landscape. A public-private effort to enhance existing infrastructure and redevelop major convention facilities in Charlottetown is funded and has been announced. It aims to encourage more and larger meetings and conventions to the Island. Meanwhile, a recent report shows that while 2009 was a banner year for MC&IT on PEI with a 35% year over year increase, MC&IT activity to PEI has fallen 20 percent in 2010 and is not expected to rebound again until 2012⁴.

There are many issues to consider as CBDSTA assesses the opportunities presented in this report.

2.2 How the MC&IT Industry Operates

The MC&IT industry is relationship-based and “works” when a destination, what it offers to the marketplace, and the operators who service the customer, are known and credible to meeting planners.

Larger meetings of national and international organizations, associations, and companies often use a network of professional meeting planners to organize their conventions. Key meeting

⁴ PEI Convention Bookings Down, CBC News, September 15, 2010

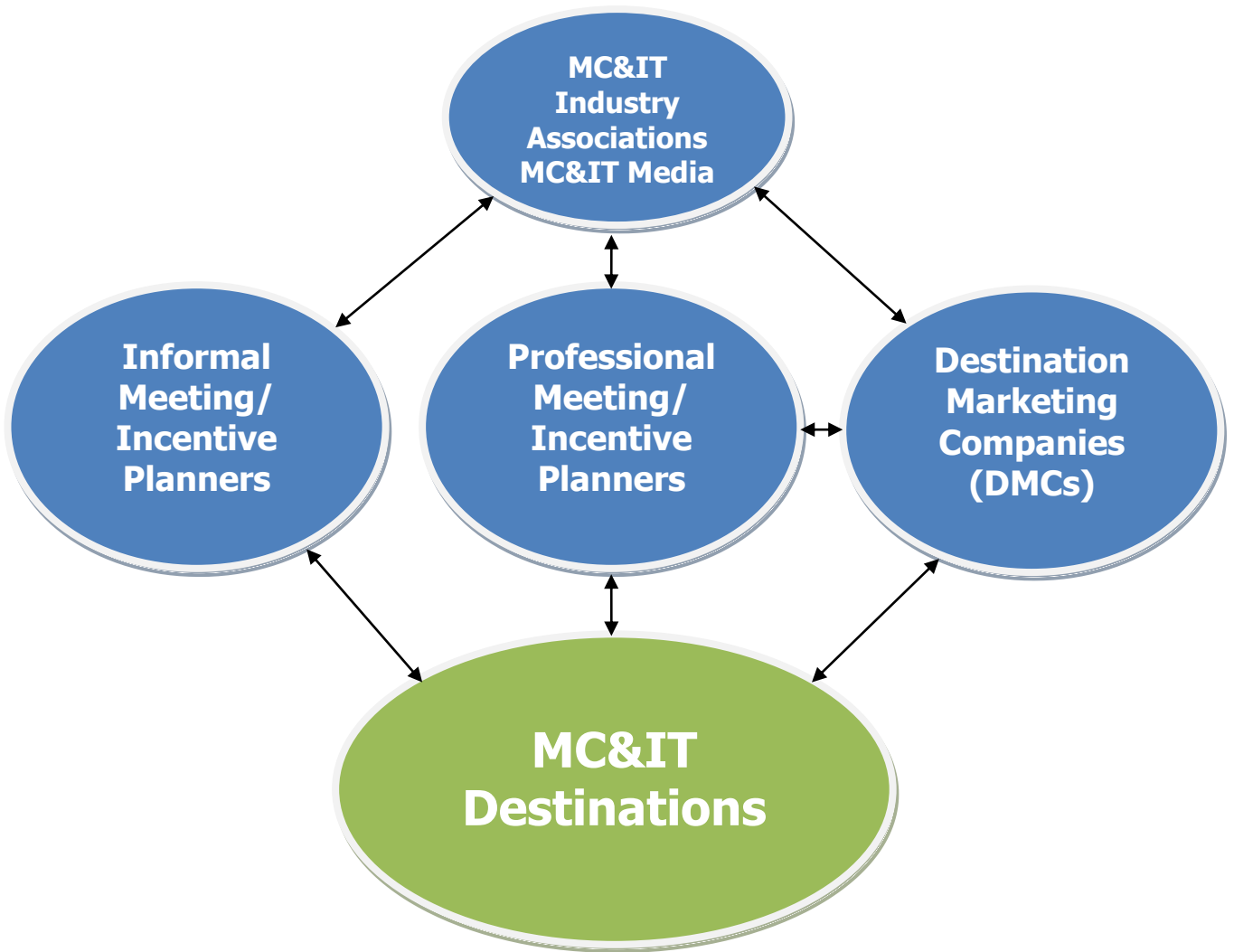
planner organizations, notably Meeting Planners International (MPI), connect buyers and sellers of larger meetings through formal networking and trade shows. Destination Marketing Companies (DMCs) - specialists in destinations and regions - influence the locations of meetings and the activities in which delegates participate. Industry specific magazines, websites and industry specialist writers focusing on MC&IT report on trends and influence the choice of planners.

Meeting planners seek detailed information on potential *WOW* locations and supplementary activities. They often act as MC&IT "general contractors" gathering all pieces of a project for a client. They choose to deal with a single contact who can deliver the elements of the meeting and effect changes effectively – seamless customer service. A high level of service is considered "table stakes" for larger meetings.

Smaller meetings, often those of a regional and corporate nature, are earned one at a time and, with successful execution, can be repeat business. The decision-maker for a meeting is often NOT an individual with this formal responsibility. The decision-maker therefore will seek a destination online, be influenced by word of mouth from a trusted colleague or a media article, and respond to a proactive "ask for business".

International, national and regional organizations most often rotate their meetings and conventions throughout jurisdictions in a formal or informal pattern.

Incentive trips are offered to achieving employees and partners, important clients and as "perks" by businesses and organizations. A *WOW* factor, the opportunity for "bragging rights" among recipients, and outstanding unique service drives a successful incentive business. Creativity - unique ways to package and present product to appeal to specific needs - is important in pursuing the IT customer. Exceeding expectations will bring them back.



3 DESTINATION INVENTORY ANALYSIS

A key deliverable for this project is a Destination Inventory Analysis for Green Gables Shore - a profile of the region's key attributes as a meetings and incentive destination. Information for the Destination Inventory was gathered through research of existing documents, marketing materials, websites and most importantly, by interviewing owners and operators of meeting facilities on Green Gables Shore.

The information is presented in two sections:

- Detailed individual *Community Inventories* of existing MC&IT facilities and attributes for each of the six communities- Cavendish, Brackley Beach, New Glasgow, North Rustico Stanhope, Stanley Bridge and North Rustico;
- An *MC&IT Asset Map* that describes the MC&IT assets that exist in the region synthesized from the Community Inventories.

The Community Inventories and Asset Map are objective snapshots of a community. They focus on strengths and capabilities, define tangible and intangible benefits, outline institutions and businesses within the community and describe the associations and relationships that make it advantageous and compelling.

Development of the Asset Map and Inventories began with designing a template to collect information from each of the six communities that included headings and sub-headings that are important requirements for an MC&IT destination. The template and headings/sub-headings were approved by the Steering Committee. They were developed in Excel so that CBDSTA can update the information in the region as changes occur. The descriptions throughout the Inventories were taken directly from the Tourism Prince Edward Island website - www.tourismpei.com. It is recommended that those facilities that cater to the MC&IT market update their property descriptions to reflect their MC&IT offerings in all directories and marketing materials.

The Asset Map and Community Inventories were developed against criteria from the MC&IT market and therefore reflect those operators in the region who provide services that can be considered market-ready for MC&IT.

The six Community Inventories and regional Asset Map are presented as a separate Excel workbook. The Inventories reflect the detailed MC&IT infrastructure and services available on Green Gables Shore. They will require regular updating and serve as the in-depth working document of the organization in MC&IT. The Asset Map is a consolidation of MC&IT

information and provides a regional profile of assets. The Asset Map may be used in promotional materials and online.

4 MARKET ANALYSIS

4.1 Best Practices

The best practice examples presented below have been selected based on established criteria for successfully managing rural-resort MC&IT business. We present examples from within Atlantic Canada and areas outside the region for comparison. It is important to note that managing the criteria is more about attitude and organization than money – you can't "buy" these. It is about the ability of operators to be competitors *and* collaborators at the same time.

A note about collaboration

Collaboration is an umbrella theme – a "must have" for the Green Gables Shore region to become established as an MC&IT destination. This means that operators must be prepared to work for the greater good even if the buyer finds another property or operation more suitable - this time around. This is challenging but rural communities that are successful MC&IT destinations have found a way.

Criteria for best practices for servicing MC&IT in a rural-resort setting

A description of the criteria is presented below followed by a table which shows some key comparable jurisdictions.

1. Common goals (example "own pre and post")

The group establishes common goals for things like:

- Product development focus;
- Geographic market focus;
- Meeting type;
- Actual number of meetings.

2. One positioning – "bring your meeting to *the* rural-resort PEI destination for small meetings and incentives...."

- Specifically for the MC&IT market;
- What do buyers want in a rural-resort setting?
- Does your positioning clearly speak to this?

3. Promotional materials consistent and integrated for MC&IT

Brochures that provide:

- Suggested packaging around themes;
- Capacities for meeting space clearly laid out in at least three set-ups - i.e., theatre, banquet and boardroom with floor plans for meeting space;

- Capacities presented for the collective region and individual properties.

One website for MC&IT for the region that provides:

- Emphasis on one positioning;
- Information including videos of other groups, site tours, interviews with happy buyers, etc;
- Location map and relative distances between meeting facilities, accommodations and supporting services;
- Awareness push, e.g. e-news;
- Links to all businesses.

4. One contact point for the buyer

- Buyers who are forced to carry out their own analysis and/or have multiple contacts within the region will move to a destination with a more convenient structure;
- This can be as simple as one email address that is monitored on a revolving basis by members of the group.

5. Agreed upon standards around response to enquiries

- Agreement on how leads are logged, distributed and tracked;
- Standard lead form capturing basic data;
- Allow buyers to define what they want and from whom re proposals. Buyers may want one proposal and, if so, the MC&IT Leader should consolidate the responses into one proposal;
- Properties should report outcomes to the MC&IT Leader for tracking and database purposes.

Comparative Locations	Best Practices				
	Common Goals	One Positioning	Promotional Materials	One Contact Point	Agreed Standards
Gatineau/Outaouais	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Gander	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Halifax	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Kawarthas	✓	✓	✓	✓	x

www.tourismeoutaouais.com, www.destinationgander.com, www.destinationhalifax.com, <http://thekawarthas.net/meetings/>

4.2 Market Trends

One constant in the world today is change. The MC&IT sector experienced major changes less than a decade ago when the events of 9-11 dramatically shifted the global travel industry. Airline travel and security were dramatically affected. US travel to Canada dropped significantly and has been failing since. In 2010, and for the next several years, the business of meetings, conventions and incentive travel will recalibrate to accommodate the most modern recession.

For an assessment of market trends for this study we have listened to those working in the MC&IT industry through the key informant interviews, we have researched resources such as www.meetingsnet.com and www.MPIWeb.org, and drawn from our own relevant experience and networks.

The shape of meetings is changing

There continues to be a demand for people to meet in groups. Despite technology, face-to-face gatherings remain the ultimate “chat room”. The shape of these gatherings is shifting however. Large national meetings of the past are regionalizing and becoming shorter in duration to economize on travel. Meeting planners are seeking meetings packages including services that used to be considered extras, such as audio visual equipment. Meeting planners are demanding more expedient turn-around on requests for information and proposals.

An increasing use of technology cannot be ignored

Meeting planners often look to online sources for MC&IT information, but not exclusively. They view online accommodations and meetings centre details as an effective and “green” way to source their needs. Online requests for proposals are increasing.

Web broadcasting and video conferencing of meetings to “delegates” not in attendance is becoming more popular and therefore requests for the equipment and resources to “share a meeting” are also growing. Social media - Facebook, Twitter, blogging - is an increasingly prevalent tool promoting meeting and convention attendance. Onsite, clients expect complimentary hi-speed internet in hotel rooms and public areas.

Expectations remain high while budgets are smaller

MC&IT budgets have been trimmed over the past two years and clients are searching for ‘value’ in their meetings; more for less money. Meeting planners continue to aim to *WOW* meeting attendees and expect creative ideas from suppliers to achieve that, while managing budgets. Meeting planners also seek to satisfy a growing customer demand for ‘green’ meeting spaces and facilities.

Simultaneously, delegates have high expectations and require meeting locations with reliable cellular service, complimentary access to fitness areas, and free hi-speed internet access.

Prince Edward Island MC&IT "Sands" are shifting

All efforts along Green Gables Shore to build the MC&IT sector must consider the provincial environment. Short months ago plans were unveiled for a public/private sector project to enhance and enlarge meetings facilities in Charlottetown to encourage more and larger groups; a great opportunity for the Green Gables Shore to offer enticing spousal programs, pre and post visits, and supplementary activities. However, despite a banner year for MC&IT in 2009 – a 35 percent year over year increase--convention business on PEI is slowing and 2010 will end with a significant 20 percent decrease in meetings and conventions and 2011 booking are down as well. Pre-bookings indicate it will be at least 2012 before PEI will regain meetings momentum.⁵

4.3 Market Profiles

The consulting team developed Market Profiles to help define MC&IT target markets for Green Gables Shores. While the previous trends discussion outlines significant ways in which the MC&IT environment in Canada is changing, the five Market Profiles which follow outline specific infrastructure requirements by market segment and by geographic market. The profiles have been developed specifically for this opportunities study with information drawn from key information interviews, literature reviews and research, and hands-on market experience.

The markets profiled include:

- Corporate and government meetings of up to 50 people;
- Corporate and government meetings of 50 to 150 people;
- Conventions of 50 to 200 delegates;
- Conventions for 200+ delegates;
- Incentives for up to 50 participants.

Corporate and government meeting planners traditionally choose to host meetings where all participants can be housed and serviced under one roof. As the majority of market ready facilities on Green Gables Shore have sufficient space for meetings of up to 50 people independently, we have profiled the resource needs for this market separately. Corporate and government meetings of larger than 50 people would have to choose a multi property combination to accommodate a meeting along Green Gables Shore.

⁵ PEI Convention Bookings Down, CBC News, September 15, 2010

Corporate and government meetings of more than 25 people will sometimes demand some of the same requirements as larger meetings – like a hospitality suite or a small office. Generally speaking however, the core list of requirements will cover most small meetings of up to 50 people.

Conventions are more apt to use a multi property approach when considering a meeting destination. We have outlined market profiles for two sizes of conventions as larger conventions (those of more than 200 delegates) generally have more complex requirements than those of fewer than 200 participants.

Core requirements for all segments:

- Guestrooms for the number of attendees*
- Meeting space for the number of attendees ('U' shape or boardroom style)
- High quality meeting tables and chairs**
- Banquet space for the number of attendees on site
- Restaurant onsite to accommodate the number of attendees onsite
- Audio visual equipment available (state of the art)
- Simultaneous translation available
- 3G Cell phone service
- No dropped calls, good coverage
- Hi-speed internet service
- Photocopying
- Transportation service for off site functions and activities and for free nights (taxi)
- Alternate dining available (restaurants, outdoor barbeque) within walking distance unless free transportation is available
- Activities close by (golf, tennis, kayaking, beach, shopping)
- Fitness facilities on site
- In-house staff who understand the meeting business - conference planning, reservations, banquet/food services.

	Corp/Gov't Meetings (Maritimes) Up to 50 p	Corp/Gov't Meetings (Nat'l/Atl Cda) 50 - 150 p	Conventions (Maritimes/Atl Cda/Nat'l) 50 - 200 p	Conventions (Nat'l/Int'l) 200+ p	Incentive up to 50 p
Season	Mid Jan-Jun, Sep - mid Nov	Mid Jan-Jun, Sep - mid Nov	May, Jun, Sep & Oct	May, Jun, Sep & Oct	Jun & Sep
Suite accommodation for at least one executive/VIP		✓	✓	✓	✓
Hospitality suite for # of attendees	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Breakout meeting space (up to 5 rooms depending on # of attendees)		✓	✓	✓	
Reception space for the number of attendees adjoining banquet space				✓	
Space for a small office	✓	✓	✓		
Space for 1 or 2 offices				✓	
Destination management company (DMC) services		✓	✓	✓	✓
Security available onsite		✓	✓	✓	
Concierge service onsite				✓	✓
Unique and different event venues***	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*All meeting planners would prefer to have all guestrooms in one facility, however those with groups requiring more than 25 rooms will generally agree to using more than one property as long as they are within close proximity and there is good transportation service.

**Chairs should have arms and a rounded edge on the front of the seat pan. Chair seats have a minimum width 18 inches, a minimum depth of 16 inches. The seat and inside back of the chair are fully upholstered. Tables that are at least 24 inches wide and that have a non-reflective, hard writing surface. Tables have sufficient length to allow at least 30 inches of space per occupant.

*** Many groups look for unique and different venues, but this is a CRITICAL component for the Incentive market.

4.4 Overview and Recommendations

Overview

The cumulative work of this MC&IT Opportunities Study leads to a number of informed conclusions that drive the core recommendation in this study and the action plan to support the recommendation. The key learnings are formulated based upon: information from the six individual inventories; review of best practices; industry trends; market profiles; information from key interviews and secondary research; and the collective experience of our consulting team.

There are five significant conclusions used to build the recommendation and Action Plan.

1. Success in the MC&IT business is built over time; it cannot be bought and it is rooted in strong relationships

Critical among these relationships: respect and collaboration among neighbouring operators to achieve a common goal; commitment within the provincial industry to urban and rural-resort success; relationships rooted in an understanding of the customers' needs and overall commitment to a quality product in the marketplace. Success in the MC&IT business is earned and takes time, patience, confidence in a strategy, and diligent effort. It does not happen overnight and return on investments take years to realize. Success depends upon building a reputation for exceeding customers' expectations efficiently and effectively, one client at a time.

2. Existing destination awareness provides leverage in the highly competitive MC&IT business

Green Gables Shore benefits from an enviably high level of awareness as a leisure destination throughout Canada. In fact, residents of neighbouring New Brunswick and Nova Scotia - target markets for MC&IT activity - are frequent repeat visitors. Green Gables Shore can parlay this awareness into a profile as an MC&IT destination.

3. A rigid seasonal pattern along Green Gables Shore is a reality

Seasonality is an issue that will affect the scope of success of MC&IT development. There is a critical mass of market-ready properties, dining, activities, and attractions open from June through September to satisfy the MC&IT expectations of target markets. Outside of this seasonal window, clients looking for a meeting destination will find limited offers and risk of disappointment in the destination. According to the TCPEICP, key months for meetings on PEI are April to November.

4. Initial target markets are close to home

The community inventories have identified 12 meeting facilities operators and additional support infrastructure on Green Gables Shore that are market-ready and offer the MC&IT marketplace:

- Pre and post-meeting opportunities for PEI meeting delegates;
- Spousal programs for meetings and conventions in PEI;
- Unique, supplementary entertainment and activities for meetings on PEI;
- Small meetings up to 25 people in the priority Social, Military, Education, Religious, Fraternal (SMERF), federal government and corporate sectors in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia;
- Corporate incentives and retreats primarily from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick;
- Meetings for PEI associations and government.

Some exceptions to the New Brunswick/Nova Scotia small meetings focus exist among operators who are now committing resources to marketing and attracting larger meetings from outside the province and the Atlantic Region. They are identified in the inventories' and the Asset Map. Some of them are not currently members of CBDSTA.

For operators active in a larger meetings market and who are now or will become members of CBDSTA, this strategy will enhance their individual marketing efforts by raising the region's profile as a destination for MC&IT and by funnelling more MC&IT leads into the region.

6. A determined customer focus

A principle of this study, intent focus on the needs and the motivations of the customer, guides all MC&IT action planning decisions and obligates participating operators along Green Gables Shore to offer a level of service expected by the marketplace at all customer contact points.

MC&IT Recommendation

The consulting team recommends that incremental revenues from MC&IT efforts are achievable on Green Gables Shore when market-ready operators:

- recognize the parameters of the commitment involved;
- recognize the realities of the marketplace: level of service, seasonality, etc.;
- can agree upon clear market-positioning for the region;
- can commit to a collaborative, three-year, phased-in plan to build the sector.

5 MC&IT ACTION PLAN

5.1 Overview

The Action Plan is built and organized to be realistic, achievable and measurable. It unfolds systematically over a three year period with the initial 18 months focusing on relationship-building and generating awareness of Green Gables Shore as a credible MC&IT destination.

At month 18, the CBDSTA MC&IT Marketing Committee, the MC&IT Action Team, any funding partners and the MC&IT Leader will evaluate progress and define the next steps in developing the market.

The Action Plan assumes that resources are available to engage professional and specialized assistance at various stages in the effort, to generate support materials and tools, and to support industry efforts. The plan defines roles and responsibilities and outlines methods for measuring progress and success.

5.2 Green Gables Shore and TCPEICP

Fundamental to the successful execution of this strategy is a collaborative, two-way relationship and partnership with the newly refocused Tourism Charlottetown Prince Edward Island Conventions Partnership (TCPEICP). Both organizations should strive to negotiate a proactive agreement offering flexible and creative solutions to a solid shared-vision working relationship.

This Action Plan arms Green Gables Shore with a Market Positioning and a regional point of view on its role in MC&IT and therefore enables Green Gables Shore to be “first in the line” to contribute organized, alternative, rural-resort product to the marketplace. We recommend that whenever and wherever possible collaboration with the efforts of the refocused TCPEICP will contribute to MC&IT success on Green Gables Shore. CBDSTA will use its relationship with TCPEICP to reach national and international markets and to add weight to its own regional target market efforts. You can’t score if you are not on the ice. It is fair to say that a prepared CBDSTA will benefit from participation in TCPEICP relative to its level of engagement.

Therefore, it is imperative for CBDSTA to join the TCPEICP as an engaged and progressive Associate member and to encourage its MC&IT Action Team members to join and participate in available programs that will benefit the region in addressing its MC&IT objectives. Green Gables Shore must establish its “position” in the industry.

From the outset CBDSTA and the MC&IT Action Team should negotiate a new and proactive agreement with the provincially mandated Conventions Partnership that could include a unique, interim membership program for Green Gables Shore. The Conventions Partnership needs Green Gables Shore, one of the most successful tourism destinations on PEI, “in the tent” to offer province-wide product. Green Gables Shore needs the marketplace profile, marketing weight and efforts of the Partnership to achieve its objectives.

5.3 Guiding Principles, Goals and Objectives

Guiding Principles

Expanding the Market Base

The CBDSTA MC&IT Strategy will be developed to contribute new customers to the visitor base of the region with new purposes to visit. The Strategy will focus on utilizing and enhancing existing regional products to satisfy new customers, and will identify factors that will distinguish the region’s MC&IT assets for the benefit of operators in the CBDSTA region.

Partner for Profit

The Strategy will outline the critical partnerships - within the region, the province and beyond - necessary for success.

Determined Customer Focus

The Strategy will concentrate on the needs and expectations of the MC&IT customer that are objective and deliverable.

Sustainability

The Strategy will make recommendations that are sustainable for the operators within the CBDSTA region.

Strategy Goal

A sustainable MC&IT business in the CBDSTA region which supports the organization’s strategic objectives of increased visitation and visitor spending within the region while contributing to the strength of the organization.

Strategy Objectives:

- To increase the MC&IT market’s awareness of the region as a developing and innovative destination;
- To position the region as innovative within the PEI Convention Partnership and the province;
- To identify and distinguish the region’s MC&IT assets;

- To promote extension of the operating season into prime MC&IT months;
- To offer new reasons to attract new CBDSTA members;
- To maximize occupancy and revenue in the region;
- To evaluate progress and success.

5.4 Swot Assessment

Strengths

- Green Gables Shore enjoys high visitor awareness as a leisure destination primarily in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick
- Green Gables Shore offers all of the quintessential PEI brand motivators (beaches, golf, Anne of Green Gables, etc) and enjoys the benefits of the PEI brand
- There is a critical mass of infrastructure and products available to satisfy MC&IT needs in the region:
 - Accommodations
 - Twelve meeting facilities
 - Dining – many options
 - Seven golf courses
 - Unique activities and attractions
- Local, fresh seafood and seafood experiences
- Space available in June and September, limited during July and August
- CBDSTA leadership demonstrating a commitment to developing sustainable MC&IT
- Close to Charlottetown – a major meetings/convention centre
- Driving distance from New Brunswick and Nova Scotia
- Meeting facility operators have a “will do anything” attitude towards servicing MC&IT customers.

Weaknesses

- Highly seasonal product and industry
- Season extension efforts are hampered by staffing pressures
- Lack of awareness of Green Gables Shore as an MC&IT destination with markets, DMCs, meeting planners, provincial partners etc
- Relationship with the TCPEICP has been unproductive and uncooperative in the past
- Transportation options to and within the region are minimal
- Much of the regional infrastructure and product is unconventional for MC&IT
- Key regional operators active in MC&IT are not members of CBDSTA
- Some industry operators do not understand or appreciate the MC&IT market opportunity
- Resources (human and financial) are not in place to support building the sector

Opportunities

- Position the area as an alternative MC&IT product to Charlottetown which will appeal to some market segments
- Address the 50 percent of meetings on PEI that are regional/Atlantic-based
- In the regional market leverage Green Gables Shore as an enjoyable and unique leisure destination for MC&IT
- Create packages for pre and post convention leisure opportunities
- Specialize in spousal and entertainment activities for larger meetings
- Use eventual success in MC&IT to promote season extension over time
- Undertake MC&IT training opportunities for industry that will improve the overall service base
- Use MC&IT opportunities to contribute new member benefits for CBDSTA
- TCPEICP is strategically refocusing to deliver its mandate and work more closely with regions – be first in line with a professional approach
- New convention facilities in Charlottetown will bring larger/ more meetings to the province, feeding a market-ready pre and post strategy

Threats

- Focus on booking new Convention Centre in Charlottetown pre-occupies MC&IT initiatives on PEI
- Green Gables Shore operators will have to be collaborators as well as competitors within the MC&IT marketplace
- Convention business on PEI dropped significantly in 2010 and is predicted to continue into 2011.

5.5 Market Positioning

Clear market positioning is customer focused and supports the complex efforts to build and develop this market. It defines what Green Gables Shore will and will not represent in the minds and the experience of the target MC&IT customer. The positioning statement articulates the deliverable “promise” to the customer and defines the special “space” that the region will fill in promoting MC&IT on Prince Edward Island. Importantly the market positioning must be understood and embraced by the industry who will deliver it.

It is precise enough to guide the tourism industry to develop leading product and services to support the MC&IT sector. The market positioning will serve as a clear focus - a point of view - for all marketing, partnering and industry development efforts.

*For those visiting Prince Edward Island for meetings, conventions and incentive travel, Green Gables Shore is **the** choice rural-resort destination for small meetings*

of up to 50 people and incentives/retreats, specializing in seacoast-related and golf activities, and a comfortable change of pace combined with efficient customer service.

5.6 Priority Product Offers

Participating operators will begin an MC&IT initiative by assembling and developing four product categories:

1. Pre and post convention packages that offer participants of international, national, and regional meetings opportunities to experience the unique Green Gables Shore seacoast-related and golf activities (with sensitivity to weather) combined with accommodations and food offers;
2. Spousal and special seacoast-related and golf activities to enhance international, national and regional meetings hosted elsewhere on the island;
3. Packaged all-inclusive meeting offers for a targeted regional and provincial market (meeting space and services, accommodations, and meals). These packaged services may be available from a single operator or a consolidation of services from several. Golf, supplementary activities and special services such as barbeques and beach picnics can be offered separately. Customers do not often purchase meeting packages “off the shelf” but it provides a client with an overview of the services, options and costs associated in order to make a decision.

There are instances where smaller (up to 50 people) national and international meetings will be successfully staged in the region. However, proactive marketing efforts for this MC&IT development initiative will be focused and targeted close to home.

4. Tailored incentive and corporate retreat programs to meet individual customer needs.

The Community Inventories and Asset Map identify core market-ready resources available from which to assemble products at the outset. Again, the positioning statement makes the small meetings customer “a promise” of an alternative, rural-resort experience by the sea. Packages and product assembly should reflect these unique offers.

5.7 Priority Target Markets

We recommend that the industry in the CBDSTA Region target two priority markets in its initial three years in order to establish relationships with partners and a reputation in the marketplace:

1. Channel partners - those fundamental to helping Green Gables Shore attract business in the MC&IT marketplace and putting Green Gables Shore product “on the shelf” for sale. These are the influential meeting and convention partners outside Green Gables Shore and meeting specialists and contractors attracting and servicing meetings on Prince Edward Island. A preliminary list is included in the Appendices to this report.
 - Priorities include the Prince Edward Island Convention Partnership and its members; destination management companies (DMCs) in Maritime Canada, and MC&IT organizations.
2. Governments, associations, and businesses in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island requiring meetings and corporate retreats for up to 50 people incorporating seacoast-related and golf activities, gathering between June 1 and October 1. A sample target market list is included in the Appendices to this report.
 - Priority segments for marketing purposes are SMERF (social, military, education, religious and fraternal) organizations and firms and federal government departments located in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI.

5.8 Roles & Responsibilities in Market Development

The roles and responsibilities of CBDSTA and the market-ready industry operators for this market development project are defined below. As a matter of principle CBDSTA, as represented by the MC&IT Market Committee, is responsible for “opening doors so that the industry can walk through those doors to make sales.” The general membership of CBDSTA must agree with the market development initiative and, from within the membership, the cluster of market-ready properties will self-select to participate in the MC&IT Action Team.

CBDSTA will establish an *MC&IT Market Committee* to manage the execution of the plan in context with the annual CBDSTA business plan.

MC&IT Committee responsibilities include:

- Negotiate and articulate a working relationship with the TCPEITP that:
 - Ensures Green Gables Shore is recognized as integral to the provincial MC&IT unique selling propositions

- Integrates Green Gables Shore objectives for MC&IT into the work plan of the TCPEICP
- Facilitates opportunities for market-ready tourism operators in Green Gables Shore to benefit from participation in the marketplace AND in the partnership
- Delineates an annual MC&IT work plan focusing on collaborative and incremental efforts;
- Source funding as required and budget annually;
- Identify a professional point person for the initiative - an *MC&IT Leader* - to implement the strategy. We recommend the in-house MC&IT Leader be either an existing or contracted CBDSTA employee;
- Organize and support the group of committed market-ready businesses who are members of the association - the *MC&IT Action Team* - to effectively penetrate the MC&IT market;
- Provide a platform for awareness of the region as a destination for MC&IT against a marketing positioning;
- Approve annual MC&IT work plan;
- Serve as a catalyst for developing MC&IT product.

MC&IT Leader responsibilities include:

- Serve as the day-to-day “face” of the MC&IT initiative;
- Point of contact for DMCs and meeting planners;
- Develop an annual MC&IT work plan;
- Support industry representation at trade shows;
- Ensure sales and marketing efforts and protocols are timely and appropriate;
- Facilitate product development and assembly;
- Manage industry MC&IT training and coordinate with other training within the association;
- Manage databases that will support the efforts of the MC&IT Action Team;
- Facilitate efficient hand-off of business leads to members of the MC&IT Action Team
- As required, coordinate a regional response to an MC&IT opportunity;
- Measure progress of the annual work plan and report to CBDSTA membership on the progress of the MC&IT initiative.

The MC&IT Leader will NOT speak for any member of the industry in terms of negotiating or writing a contract and will as efficiently as possible hand off a potential customer to the industry operator(s) who can best fulfill customer’s needs.

MC&IT Action Team responsibilities include:

- Understand and support the strategy, committing to participation for the three year development period;

- Help to define the competition;
- In a spirit of true partnership, assemble product and work with the TCPEICP, as required;
- Participate in the website, awareness generation and database initiatives;
- Participate in lead generation initiatives;
- Share leads as required;
- Contribute to industry development initiatives.

5.9 Priority Market Development Strategies and Tactics

Market development efforts have been categorized into six key activities:

- Build a Firm Foundation;
- Partnerships are Paramount and Profitable;
- Generate MC&IT Destination Awareness;
- Action Direct Sales and Marketing;
- Industry Development;
- Measuring Progress;
- Lead Management.

The strategic action plan is outlined in the pages that follow. The most important tactic is hand-off of enquiries and leads generated to the industry participants for fulfillment. This is outlined in the Lead Management section.

Build a Firm Foundation

1. CBDSTA Board approval of the project and the Action Plan

2. Appoint an MC&IT Committee

Lead: CBDSTA Board

Month: 1

3. Rally the industry to approach the market efficiently and with determination

Industry buy-in is critical. Present the business opportunity for MC&IT and the strategy to develop it to an industry meeting designed to inform and gather industry acceptance and to generate excitement for the initiative. The first responsibility of industry in implementation is to support the Positioning Statement, to understand the game plan and to participate as required.

Lead: CBDSTA MC&IT Committee/ Board

Timeline: Months 1-2

4. The MC&IT Action Team identifies itself

Among regional industry operators there are market-ready CBDSTA member businesses - an MC&IT Action Team. The key market-ready players, i.e. full service meetings facilities, accommodations, golf courses, food and beverage and activity operators are outlined in the Community Inventories and Asset Map. They must commit to supporting a three year program providing product, expertise and resources to build the MC&IT sector for Green Gables Shore. The MC&IT Action Team will be the core product group around which this market development initiative will grow. The MC&IT Action Team has a role in market intelligence and collectively contributes to defining the prime competition for Green Gables Shore within target markets.

The MC&IT Action Team will grow quickly as property owners recognize the incremental business opportunities and the market readiness demands of the sector.

The Action Team should receive regular, possibly monthly, information and updates on each aspect of the plan and their participation throughout the project

There should be a nominal "goodwill" fee, above and beyond the CBDSTA membership fee, to belong to this Action Team.

Lead: CBDSTA MC&IT Committee/ Board

Timeline: Months 1-2

5. Task a professional MC&IT Leader with implementation and reporting

Business in the MC&IT sector is relationship and reputation based and a professional "leader" to implement the customer-focussed, industry-led MC&IT plan is required. Success will depend upon the consistency and professionalism of the region's interaction with partners and the marketplace. Therefore, a point-person for MC&IT is necessary.

It is important for the wellbeing of CBDSTA that the MC&IT effort be integrated into the work of the association and not operated in a silo. The consulting team recommends that the in-house MC&IT Leader be either an existing or contracted CBDSTA employee. Existing staff understand the region and its industry and the learning curve is less steep. Additional support for the current administrative responsibilities of the existing staff can be contracted as required with less expense for 18 months. Specialists should be contracted to work on specific tasks in the MC&IT plan as indicated here.

Resources must be secured for three years to supplement salaries and expenses, any incremental office equipment, a database management system, collateral and evaluation tools.

Lead: CBDSTA MC&IT Committee/Board

Timeline: Months 3-4

Evaluate: Month 18

6. Position Green Gables Shore with TCPEICP as an active and influential MC&IT player

It is imperative for CBDSTA to join the TCPEICP as an engaged and progressive Associate member, and to encourage its MC&IT Action Team members to join and participate in available programs that will benefit the region in addressing its MC&IT objectives. Green Gables Shore must establish its "position" in the industry. CBDSTA and the MC&IT Action Team should work from the outset to negotiate a new and proactive agreement with the provincially mandated conventions' partnership that could include an interim membership program for Green Gables Shore.

Represented by the MC&IT Leader, CBDSTA must access all TCPEICP opportunities:

- to approach its target markets;
- to position Green Gables Shore as *the choice rural-resort destination for small meetings and incentives/retreats*;
- to put Cavendish and area product "on the shelf" for pre, post, spousal and supplementary opportunities for all meetings booked for PEI;
- to open opportunities for increasing awareness of the destination including trade shows, media relations and industry/media familiarization tours;
- to network, gain market intelligence and learn the MC&IT "ropes" by associating with industry leaders;
- to source information for regional industry education.

***Note:* as this document is being prepared, the TCPEICP is evaluating a report that will strategically refocus the organization. There are potentially game-changing onramps for strong regional involvement in the Executive Summary of that report and a new sense of cooperation is emerging. With its own plan in hand Green Gables Shore will benefit from a well-articulated association with the TCPEICP.**

Lead: CBDSTA MC&IT Committee/MC&IT Leader

Timeline: Month 5

7. Assembling product

The consulting team recommends that CBDSTA contract an MC&IT specialist (perhaps an experienced Destination Marketing Company) to assist in recommending and assembling product for pre and post convention trips, spousal and supplementary programs and the regional meetings and incentive/corporate retreat markets. The insights and expertise of a

specialist will help ensure that “the right product”, positioned and priced appropriately, is available from the outset with limited trial and error. The Community Inventories and Asset Map, which outline CBDSTA members who are prepared to a standard to satisfy MC&IT guests, should be the initial guide for matching partners as required. The contractor should also be asked to recommend the most effective collateral for Green Gables Shore to use in penetrating the marketplace. Once completed, the product and recommendations become property of the project and can be used to partner across the board. The MC&IT Leader will act as a catalyst for development of MC&IT product.

Lead: MC&IT Leader/ Contracted specialist

Timeline: Months 5 -7 (and ongoing)

8. Your database is golden!

From day one of the initiative it is critical to meticulously create and maintain databases and keep them updated regularly. Databases of industry participants and partners, of product, clients, trade show contacts, DMCs and meeting planners, and “friends of Green Gables Shore” who will provide testimonials will be critical to ensuring relationships are strong.

Ensure all contact information is accurate. Use the databases with care but connect with your contacts with news of the area and new product information at least twice a year. Database management systems are available.

Lead: MC&IT Leader

Timeline: Begin Month 5 and ongoing

Partnerships are Paramount and Profitable

1. Strong and collaborative industry operator partnerships on Green Gables Shore will result in appealing products

Collaborative partnerships among industry operators throughout the region will result in appealing product offers for MC&IT customers. The objective is to provide quality assembled product which appears seamless to the customer (see *Priority Product Offers*). As well as operators with full meetings services (meetings space, accommodations and catering onsite), partnerships among various accommodations operators, restaurateurs/caterers and those with meeting space are crucial.

Across the board, partnerships among those who provide seacoast-related and golf activities and services such as transportation and audio visual are critical to preparing pre and post meeting offers, spousal programs, regional meeting product, and retreat/incentive offers with Green Gables Shore “flavour”. Agreements among partners on rate, level of service, operating guidelines, and even shared staffing will be based on industry relationships and commitment to the common goal.

Lead: MC&IT Committee/ MC&IT Action team

Timeline: Beginning Month 2 and ongoing

2. Partner with influencers to access the marketplace

There are key influencers in MC&IT - specialists such as DMCs, meeting planners, and writers for industry publications - who interface with and are trusted by customers and have the ability to bring business to your doorstep. They are valuable partners! They are noted in this report as an important Target Market for this market development effort and, once convinced of the value of Green Gables Shore as an MC&IT destination, can encourage clients to use the area and recommend operators and activities.

The effort to partner with DMCs and meeting planners must be personal and with the objective of generating a relationship. Green Gables Shore will network with many of these influencers as a result of participation with TCPEICP. A preliminary list of the DMCs and meeting planners operating in Maritime Canada is included in the Appendices of this report.

It is always important to try to generate awareness in the MC&IT marketplace through the media. A travel writer familiar with the Green Gables Shore product from a leisure standpoint who also writes for MC&IT is based in Nova Scotia and would be a very good contact to expose to the new direction of CBDSTA. Contact information is in the appendices.

How?

Once product is assembled, on behalf of industry, the MC&IT leader will:

- Make direct calls to arrange individual face-to-face meetings to profile the MC&IT attributes of the area, key industry players, and the opportunity. Ensure that background on the clients of each DMC is researched and the "pitch" to include product to their inventory is tailored to the client list of the DMC.
- Invite the influencers to test-drive the product in Green Gables Shore and, in collaboration with participating operators, arrange site visits - hosted or self-guided - to the region. Ensure that the majority of properties are operational during site visits.
- Invite the media contact to either join an arranged site visit with meeting planners or enjoy a self-guided visit to experience the newly arranged MC&IT product.
- Follow-up to ascertain level of satisfaction, any additional needs, and next steps.
- Add contact and the most up to date information regarding product offers from Green Gables Shore to the database and make regular contact.

Lead: MC&IT Leader in collaboration with MC&IT Action Team

Timeline: Begin in Month 7 (once product is assembled) and ongoing

3. Source incremental services

There are services required by DMCs and meeting planners which are not readily available in Green Gables Shore or in PEI, yet can be deal-makers to secure a meeting. The MC&IT Leader must gather a database of service providers for use by MC&IT Action Team and partners. Such service providers include transportation and taxi companies, audio-visual services, those who provide tents, translation services and perhaps even costumers. This list will grow!

Lead: MC&IT Leader

Timeline: Begin in Month 7 and ongoing

4. Supportive government relationships are valuable

Municipalities and provincial and federal government departments must be supportive of the MC&IT initiative for it to grow without un-necessary hindrances and political complications. Once approved by the Board, the Chair of the CBDSTA MC&IT Committee should present to key councils and government agencies the market opportunity and the MC&IT plan, the industry's decisions around its implementation, and how the municipality or department can support it. It will be important to answer questions as specifically as possible.

Report on progress to the council and government department at least once a year.

Lead: MC&IT Committee Chair

Timeline: Within a 6 week period following adoption of the Plan

Report annually

Generate MC&IT Destination Awareness

A key activity of the MC&IT plan is to generate awareness of the region as a meetings destination - in fact, the "*choice rural-resort destination for small meetings and incentives/retreats on Prince Edward Island*". Green Gables Shore is a provincial tourism leader and, thanks to its preeminent leisure and golf product, the region enjoys high destination awareness and repeat visitation from Canada, primarily Maritime neighbours. The region has an outstanding opportunity to leverage that existing awareness to develop an MC&IT reputation.

1. Make an informative, credible and memorable impression online

Present the MC&IT positioning, participating operators, and product offers online for partners and customers. Using the model of www.cavendishbeachevents.ca and its association with www.cavendishbeachpei.com, build a micro site (perhaps www.cavendishbeachmeetings.com or www.greengablesshoremeetings.com) to profile MC&IT.

Regardless of the URL, the message is "Tour this site, understand our MC&IT offers, meet our operators, see the products we offer, and how they have appealed to customers. Book a meeting with us today. We will make it easy". The calls to action on the site will be clear. Questions and requests are directed to the MC&IT Leader (by email and phone) who can coordinate a response from operator(s) **AND** operators can be reached directly from the site.

Properties and services, virtual tours and testimonials associated with the MC&IT Action Team will be profiled online and linked with a reciprocal link from the new site to the appropriate information on individual property sites.

The website should be the root source of information on meetings, conventions and incentive offers from the region and will be the primary call-to-action for all promotional/ advertising and lead generation materials. The website will be the responsibility of the MC&IT Leader to update regularly. The site should be highly visual and designed to appeal to the information needs of the MC&IT customer and partners. The site should contain downloadable collateral and fulfillment materials, testimonials from satisfied customers, video of sites and activities, and all the offers for pre, post and supplementary offers that are presented universally.

The website should be professionally developed for tracking purposes and to best achieve web prominence and visibility. But the most motivating and useful of websites is less than effective if "eyes "of the target markets are not attracted to it. The MC&IT site will be professionally search engine optimized (SEO), linked broadly with all meetings, incentive, partner and industry sites on Prince Edward Island and beyond, with www.seasidesocial.com, and with participating operators.

Lead: MC&IT Leader with professional web assistance

Timeline: Begin in Month 7 -10 (once product is assembled)

Ongoing update

2. Generate a "look and feel" for the project

The website is the first piece of "collateral" that the MC&IT project will produce. However, its design, look and feel, tagline if required, and the key images must be constructed for application to print and other media. Collateral and fulfillment materials will be required over time and should include:

- A short lure piece on Green Gables Shore as an MC&IT destination with key information, testimonials and call to action;
- An abridged inventory of the services, resources and opportunities available from MC&IT Action Team members;

- A video "invitation" from the industry on Green Gables Shore to host a meeting here. The "invitation" would profile key features of the area and offer a short (under 3 minutes) virtual tour.

Lead: MC&IT Leader with professional design assistance

Timeline: Begin in Month 7 -10 (once product is assembled)

3. Leverage regional leisure awareness

More than 100,000 visitors annually, the majority from Maritime Canada, travel to Green Gables Shore annually for pleasure trips and vacations. The potential MC&IT customer from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick has probably been here before ... as a visitor. The *MC&IT Exit Survey 2009* states that "almost all delegates to regional conventions had visited PEI previously (99%) p5. Green Gables Shore has a unique opportunity to influence meetings to the region from tourists!

Green Gables Shore will devote space and prominence at points of leisure visitor contact for cross-promotional activities. Banners and posters at Visitor Information Centres, in-room tent cards at accommodations participating in the initiative, dedicated messages, space and a fulfillment card in the Green Gables Shore visitors' guide and on golf score cards to name just a few tactics to position the region as an MC&IT destination. The meetings website is the call to action for cross-promotional information. Ensure that frontline staff at VICs and accommodations are informed and prepared to gather leads and forward them for fulfillment.

Currently visitor materials that profile Green Gables Shore are exclusively designed to deliver the family, golf, summertime and events message. Whenever possible ensure that images that represent multi-cultural groups gathering in shoulder seasons are injected into regional and provincial visitor materials.

Lead: MC&IT Leader

Timeline: Two months in advance of upcoming season

4. Advertise strategically and with partners

Ensure that budgets capture strategic advertising opportunities in support of the plan. Whether online or in print, attempt to advertise with a DMC or customer-facing partner and ensure activity around the advertising can be tracked.

Lead: MC&T Leader

Timeline: As required

Participation with TCPEICP will open Green Gables Shore to additional opportunities for increasing awareness including trade shows, media relations and industry/ media familiarization tours which would otherwise be cost-prohibitive to manage effectively.

Action Sales and Marketing

1. Participate in trade shows and sales missions strategically

Engagement with the TCPEICP and associating with influential partners will open opportunities for the MC&IT initiative to showcase its offers in the initial 12 months of the plan's execution. Some of these opportunities will be more useful than others and each is assessed based upon the level of direct contact with primary target markets, building relationships to reach primary target markets, and prioritized based upon resources available. Trade shows and sales missions are defined well in advance and decisions on participation are made as part of the annual work planning process.

Whenever and wherever possible, industry operators should represent the region at trade shows and sales missions. Industry operators should be supported in preparing for the show and onsite by the MC&IT Leader who will coordinate representation, collect database contacts, pre-qualify leads onsite, speak for the industry as required, and report on the results.

Collateral and a display presence will be required to maximize exposure and promote follow-up at shows and on missions. If possible, a leave-behind - perhaps a golf tee, golf towel or a stress reliever shaped like a beach ball with the MC&IT website address and contact number – should be circulated. Collateral and display materials and leave-behinds should be planned for use in other applications.

Lead: MC&IT Leader with MC&IT Action Team input

Timelines: Beginning in Month 10 (with completion of website and collateral materials).

Planned annually

2. Using the Networks of others

There are two programs currently in place - the *PEI Champion Program* and the *Employee Convention Opportunities Program, ECHO* (inactive at the moment) - which enable Islanders who sit on committees and boards, and who meet on a regular basis, to encourage their meetings to Prince Edward Island.

Green Gables Shore should sign on to these two programs arming meetings champions with Green Gables Shore collateral information. The region should also extend the spirit of these programs, reaching out to its own industry, municipalities, local residents and ex-pats, a *Community Ambassadors Program*, asking them to refer meetings to the MC&IT Leader for direct follow-up.

Lead: MC&IT Leader

Timeline: Beginning Month 10 (when collateral material is available)

Annually, local residents and front line workers who have encouraged a meeting to the region should be publically thanked. Report back to the industry and the community at least once a year on progress to encourage the ambassadorial spirit throughout the region.

Lead: MC&IT Leader to promote and follow-up

Timeline: Month 12

Establishing a system to enter the market, raising awareness of Green Gables Shore as an MC&IT destination, collaborating and participating with TCPEICP initiatives in target markets, developing strong industry partnerships and select trade shows and initial marketing efforts are the focus of the first 18 months of development.

At month 18, CBDSTA, the MC&IT Committee, funding partners and the MC&IT Leader will evaluate progress and define the next steps in developing the market. The leadership of the initiative will also be assessed in month 18 as well. Pending the project and leadership assessment, CBDSTA can make a decision regarding investing in the complex and competitive tactics associated with proactive sales.

Should CBDSTA decide to accelerate its sales efforts at month 18, a proactive initiative for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick is outlined below.

Proactive Sales in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick

MC&IT business cannot be bought - it must be built. Penetrating the MC&IT sector and the regional marketplace will take discipline, diligent effort over time, investment and patience. Direct sales is a major commitment and one that demands precise execution, detailed follow-up and industry participation. It takes a concerted effort to achieve success in direct sales.

Once Green Gables Shore decides to initiate direct sales and the major activities outlined, the MC&IT Leader will take the lead in:

- Generating a direct mail project. Generate lists of potential customers—through online research, accessing lists and listings of target organizations, departments and companies by province, beginning with the “low hanging fruit” as identified in sample Client List in the appendix. Contact names of meetings decision-makers are sometimes available online. It may be possible to work in collaboration with partner DMCs and/or meeting planning partners to cooperate on generating a pre-qualified list.
- Creating and circulating to this database a “letter of introduction” to the MC&IT opportunities of Green Gables Shore with a lure piece (perhaps the same piece circulated at trade shows) directing a potential customer to the MC&IT website for further information.

It is important to indicate that a personal call will follow. It is recommended that this initial communication happen by mail as recent research indicates that even legitimate emails are often dismissed as "spam" when they arrive from an unfamiliar source and permission-based lists are required.

- Personal follow-up by telephone to each contact is required within a 7 day period. This contact will qualify the lead by assessing a contact's individual needs and requirements.

Mailings must be carefully circulated in manageable batches to allow for timely follow-up. Database results of contacts are required.

Lead: MC&IT Leader

Timelines: Months 18 to 22

- Once a critical mass of interest has been generated, arrange to meet key clients. Individual meetings or a sales trip to meet directly with individual clients can be arranged depending upon the number of contacts required. Industry and partners should participate if possible to secure the business. Sales mission participants will speak for the region and will assist in qualifying and reporting on details of the mission.

It may be possible to coordinate sales calls with trade shows or other activities in which Green Gables Shore is participating for either MC&IT or leisure. Always make the most of a visit to a target geographic area and pay a courtesy call to a local DMC or partner at the same time.

Lead: MC&IT Lead

Timeline: as required pending the direct mail effort

Industry Engagement and Development

Every industry operator along Green Gables Shore has a role to play in making this effort a success, whether currently market-ready for MC&IT or not. True collaboration among industry members and demonstrated commitment to work toward a common goal, knowing that everyone cannot "win the business" every time, is pivotal to success with this program.

Members of the MC&IT Action Team must commit to supporting a three year development program providing product, expertise, and resources to build the sector. They are the leaders and must be viewed as strident vocal proponents of the opportunity and the effort.

The more extensive the critical mass of product available for meetings and retreats for additional weeks a year, the more revenue can be generated. Owners and operators in the broad membership must be influenced to understand the positioning statement, to recognize

the value of the MC&IT sector, and to participate by enhancing service, offering product to the MC&IT mix and extending their operating seasons.

Frontline staff in visitor centres, at front desks, on oyster boats and in gift shops - those who interact with visitors each and every day must be alert to MC&IT opportunities and champion the attributes of the region for MC&IT. This can be achieved with a simple training and information package circulated to frontline workers, using www.cavendishbeachmeetings.com as a source for details.

As experience grows, the MC&IT Leader will develop and execute training opportunities for industry that will help achieve the strategic objectives of the plan. For those operators investigating MC&IT options, some Frequently Asked Questions are included in the Appendices of this report.

Lead: MC&IT Committee

Timeline: With annual planning beginning Month 12

Measuring Progress

"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it". Each of the tactics associated with the Action Plan can be measured to assess progress, evaluate attitude, adjust the plan, and use as reporting tools. The consulting team has committed to providing Green Gables Shore with tactics that are realistic, deliverable and affordable and therefore we recommend diligent measurement and reporting is concentrated on four areas as the most valuable and achievable.

We recommend that measures focus on:

- satisfaction of stakeholders;
- effectiveness of key sales and marketing tools;
- awareness of Green Gables Shore as an MC&IT destination;
- new business booked from the effort.

It is important to objectively evaluate and measure and to report results regularly to the membership, project participants, and the broader community.

To measure satisfaction of stakeholders:

Stakeholders in this case are the Action Team members - industry partners and local operators who are indirectly benefiting from the efforts and municipalities. To measure:

- Correlate the number of "charter" members on the MC&IT Action team with the number retained and gained over the three year project period;
- Correlate the number of MC&IT partners acquired during the initial 6 months with those gained and retained over the three year project period;
- Monitor any changes in opening and closing dates of industry operators;

- Assess, on an annual basis, the satisfaction of stakeholders - Action Team members, associated local businesses, partners, funding partners, TCPEICP - on the activities and achievements of the effort. We suggest using a questionnaire.

To measure effectiveness of key marketing and sales tools:

In order for effective market and sales tracking, techniques are best built into, rather than added onto, tactics at the creative development and production stages of production. To measure:

- Ensure the project website is equipped with appropriate tracking mechanisms and tools;
- Ensure Action Team member/partner websites can measure requests/leads from Green Gables Shore MC&IT website and report to Green Gables Shore;
- Track the requests/leads from individual marketing and cross-promotional efforts using unique response mechanisms;
- Track direct responses to advertising, promotions and mailings.

To measure awareness of the region as an MC&IT destination:

The most effective but costly tactic to identify level of growing awareness is pre and post research in the marketplace where awareness is measured against a target audience before and then after a project is implemented. We are not recommending this tactic due to cost. We therefore suggest measurement tactics from which Green Gables Shore can extrapolate a change in awareness. It will be important to gather information at the outset of the project to establish a baseline from which to measure progress. To measure:

- Monitor the number of contacts made to the destination by DMCs, meetings planners and potential customers by asking "how they heard of Green Gables Shore" for a meeting;
- Monitor requests for Green Gables Shore information and product coming to TCPEICP and DMCs;
- Gather the media coverage of the destination for MC&IT from TCPEICP, from Tourism PEI and independently;
- Always ask the customer directly!

To measure increase in new MC&IT business booked:

In order to accurately measure new business booked as a result of this effort there must be a credible baseline of information.

Each Action Team participating operator must establish, and preferably share with the MC&IT Leader for regional measurement purposes, the value, the number, and the average size of meetings and incentive groups realized in 2009 and 2010. With this as a baseline, operators can:

- Plot the change in and quality of requests for MC&IT information on an annual basis;

- Identify the new (not repeat) business secured, its size, and value;
- Track the new business to tactics of the MC&IT effort.

The MC&IT Leader will track:

- The business realized from circulating leads to Action Team members;
- The business funnelled to the region in light of participation with the TCPEICP;
- The supplementary business to service providers associated with the MC&IT effort in Green Gables Shore.

Lead Management

Perhaps the most important tactic on which to be clear is hand-off of enquiries and leads for fulfillment

The Green Gables Shore reputation with customers and industry colleagues and the expectations of the MC&IT Action Team rests on it. Inquires and requests for information and proposals will come from the Green Gables Shore meetings website and from marketing, cross-promotion, sales and partnership efforts. Each business lead must be handled professionally and in a timely manner. Cooperation and collaboration among partners is paramount.

Operators must be prepared to work for the greater good even if the buyer finds another property or operation more suitable - this time around. This is challenging but rural-resort communities that are successful MC&IT destinations have found a way.

Requests for information and details

Each request for information on MC&IT opportunities should be handled personally and within a specified time frame. We recommend within 24 hours. Although handled and addressed personally, the collateral used to fulfill the request is drawn from an inventory of materials which are used, and updated regularly, in all sales and marketing. These materials should include:

- A short lure piece on Green Gables Shore as an MC&IT destination with key information, testimonials and call to action;
- An abridged inventory of the services, resources and opportunities available from MC&IT Action Team members;
- A video "invitation" from the industry on Green Gables Shore to host a meeting here. The "invitation" would profile key features of the area and offer a short (under 3 minutes) virtual tour.

The MC&IT Leader will follow up on the request for information where possible, one week after the response is sent. Again, all contact information is added to a database.

1. Business leads to participating members of the MC&IT Action Team

Requests for information will be received directly by operators and properties from the www.cavendishbeachmeetings.com website and other activities of this initiative, from colleagues and from business partners. An operator is obligated to respond immediately (based upon project participants' agreement to 24 hour turnaround) that he can or cannot accommodate the request. If he can....make the sale!

If he cannot accommodate the request, an immediate hand-off to the MC&IT Leader is required to make a more appropriate contact for the customer.

In either case, the lead and its outcome must be reported to the MC&IT Leader for tracking and database purposes.

2. For leads that come to the MC&IT Leader from the website or via another source (from a VIC, trade show, partner contact etc) there are two options for processing

The MC&IT Action Team must decide on how to process the lead.

Option 1: Each lead is forwarded to all MC&IT Action Team operators with the capacity to manage the business for individual proposal responses to the customer.

Option 2: The MC&IT Leader consolidates a response with options from operators with the capacity to manage the business and incremental ideas. The response is forwarded for the customer to decide. Once a decision is made by the customer, it is handed off to the lead operator.

The consulting team recommends Option 2 for the initial 18 months. In either case adding the contact to a database and timely response is critical.

6 INVESTMENTS

A number of investments required for Green Gables Shore to undertake a market development effort in MC&IT are identified in the Action Plan. Investments of time, energy, share of mind and commitment by operators are critical and invaluable to this effort. They cannot be priced. Participating operators will incur some real costs and will need to allocate staff and budget to support the activities outlined in this plan. Although acknowledged, they cannot be identified here.

The consulting team suggests the following resource requirements for major activities in the MC&IT Action Plan over the initial 36 months of the project:

Investments: Phase One

Database Management System	\$ 1,000
<i>Prices of systems vary. Should attempt to coordinate system with TCPEICP</i>	
Membership in TCPEICP (<i>based on Associate membership/estimated</i>)	\$ 500
• Participation activities/opportunities	\$ 3,500
Contract: Product Assembly/Collateral Recommendations	\$ 8,500
Contract: Development of Graphic "Look and Feel"	
• Includes "electronic" letterhead and business cards	\$ 8,000
Cross-promotional Material (Production and Hardware)	
• Display stands/VICs and trade shows x 3 (@ \$300 each)	\$ 900
• Giveaways items/trade shows and promos	\$ 2,500
• Rack cards/VICs, hotel rooms, trade shows 10k x 3 years (@ \$1,600 per year)	\$ 4,800
Contract: Website Development	\$15,000
• Virtual tour/ invitations/applications	Included
• Search engine optimization	Included
• Ongoing updates (\$2,000 per year X 3)	\$ 6,000
<i>Web development costs may be modified if incremental to an existing contract</i>	
Advertising Opportunities Fund	
• For use with partners/ \$3,000 per year x 3	<u>\$ 9,000</u>
Phase one total	\$59,700

Investments: Phase Two

Direct Sales Collateral (production only)

- Kit folders/two colour (1,000) \$ 1,400
- Sales materials on CDs (1,000) \$ 1,000

Direct Mail (production only)

- Inserts (2,500) \$ 1,000
- Letters and envelopes (2,500) \$ 1,000
- Postage @ .56 \$ 2,800

Sales Trips

- Nova Scotia X 2 (\$500 each x 2 years) \$ 3,750
- New Brunswick X 2 (\$500 each X 2 years) \$ 3,750

Phase two total **\$14,700**

The consulting team recommends this project will require increased human resource hours to coordinate the destination for MC&IT market readiness. These human resource hours are not presently allocated in the association's operating budget. The actual amount of these costs will depend upon current employment arrangements and future employment negotiations. Attaching an exact dollar value at this stage in the project is premature, but is a recommendation of the consulting team to ensure new human resources with a supportive budget is allocated.

Total investments **\$74,400**

7 APPENDICES

7.1 MC&IT Asset Map and Community Inventories

Separate Excel document

7.2 Research Resources

Documents:

- A Profile Of Overnight Visitors By Origin: Results for Full Year from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, The Tourism Research Centre School of Business University of PEI
- Canadian Economic Impact Study, 2008, Meeting Planners International (MPI)
- Cavendish Adult Market Expansion Strategy, 2009, Forerunner Creative and Tourism Strategies Ltd.
- Cavendish Beaches and Dunes Shores Tourism Association 2007 Plan
- Establishing New Directions—A Road Map to the Future: TCI/PEICP 2010-2013 Strategic Plan – Executive Summary
- Meetings Deliver, MPI
- PEI Convention Bookings Down, CBC News, September 15, 2010
- PEI Central Coast Drive Marketing Strategy, September 2009
- PEI Convention Partnership Strategic Plan 2009/10
- PEI Convention Partnership Handbook 2009/10
- Profile of Non-Resident Meetings and Conventions Delegates: Results for 2009
- Tourism Prince Edward Island 2010 Marketing Plan
- White Sands Study – A Nineteenth Century Theme Period/Theme Resort Hotel 1994

Websites:

- www.cavendishbeach.com
- www.cavendishbeachevents.com
- www.cbdsta.com
- www.gov.pe.ca/tourism
- www.meetingsnet.com
- www.mpiweb.org
- www.peitac.com
- www.seasidesocial.com
- www.siteglobal.com
- www.tiapei.pe.ca
- www.tourismpei.com

Relevant Materials from:

- Canadian Society of Association Executives (CSAE)
- Canadian Tourism Commission MC&IT materials
- Department of Tourism and Culture Research and Statistics
- International Association of Conference Centers
- Meeting Planners International (MPI)
- PEI Tourism Research Center
- Society of Incentive and Travel Executives (SITE)

7.3 Key Informants

- Melody Beck,
Executive Director, PEI Business Women's Association
- Mark Carr-Rollitt
Director of Operations - Tourism Charlottetown
- Jennifer Caseley
Sales & Marketing Manager, Stanley Bridge Country Resort and Conference Centre
- Don Cudmore
Executive Director, TAIPEI
- Adam Doiron
Meeting Planner, Destination PEI
- Susan Freeman
Director of Sales & Conference Services, Stanhope Beach Resort & Conference Center
- Brenda Gallant
Director of Marketing & Communications, PEI Tourism
- Hennie Hoekstra
Owner, Marco Polo Land
- Matthew Jelley
President, CBDSTA
- Becky James
Owner, Kindred Spirits Country Inn & Cottages
- Myrtle Jenkins-Smith
CEO, Tourism Charlottetown/PEI Convention Partnership
- Chris Jones
Statistics & Research, PEI Tourism
- Joanne Keating,
Incentive Planner, Meridican Incentive Consultants
- Han Kim
Managing Director, Cavendish Gateway Resort
- Nicole Langille

Meeting/Event Planner/MPI Board Member, downeast destination management

- Dale Larkin
Owner, Inn at the Pier
- Dian Ling
PEI Dept. of Agriculture
- Sandi Lowther
MC&IT Study Committee Chair, CBDSTA
- Patricia Lyall
Chair, CTC MC&IT Committee
- Judy MacDonald
Innkeeper, Barachois Inn
- Thom MacMillan
President, TIAPEI
- Murray MacPherson
Owner, Brackley Beach North Winds Inns & Suites
- Helene Moberg
Executive Director of Sales & Marketing, Destination Halifax
- Kevin Murphy,
Chair, Tourism Advisory Council
- Doug Newson
CEO Charlottetown Airport Authority
- Michelle Posner
Meeting Planner, Grant Thornton LLP
- Robbie Shaw
Owner & Proprietor, Shaw's Hotel
- Doug Thompson
Canadian Dairy Commission
- Michelle Thompson
Owner/Special Events Coordinator, Dalvay by the Sea
- Jo-Ann Thomsen
Director of Sales, PEI Convention Partnership
- Jeff Trainor
General Manager, Glasgow Hills Resort & Golf Club
- Phil Wood
Owner, Resort at Cavendish Corner

7.4 Top Issues – Input from Meeting Planners

1. Meeting planners prefer to have everyone at one property because it is easier to manage. If that is not possible, the properties must be close to each other – walking distance to restaurants and shopping preferably.

2. Cavendish has a very good reputation as a destination for leisure travelers but little to no recognition as a destination for meetings, convention and incentive travel.
3. Seasonality is an issue for meeting planners who are generally looking for space in May/June and September/October time frame. Many operators in the Cavendish area are not open during this period.
4. Accessibility is very important to meeting planners – if activities within walking distance are not available, it is critical to have available top notch buses, limos and/or taxis.
5. In order to break into and maintain the MC&IT market, the community needs to work together as a group. They need to have a plan of how to work together. They need to recognize that they will not get a piece of everything. They need to see the bigger picture.

7.5 Target Market Details

PEI Convention Partnership Partners

DMCs, Meeting Planners and Tour Operators

Berni Wood & Associates

P.O Box 20141, Charlottetown, PE C1A 9E3

Phone: 902-566-1767 fax: 902-566-1702

Email: info@reelmedia.ca bwood@reelmedia.ca web: www.reelmedia.ca

CONTACT: Berni Wood, President

Compart Event Management Limited

P.O Box 29135, Moncton, NB E1G 4R3

Phone: 506-382-3107 toll free: 888-325-6767 fax: 506-382-3107

Email: blanchard@compartevents.com web: www.compartevents.com

CONTACT: Nancy Blanchard, Event Manager

Destination PEI Charlottetown

P.O. Box 2644, 6 Prince Street, Charlottetown, PE C1A 8C3

Phone: (902) 566-5466 fax: (902) 566-9070

Email: adam@princeedwardtours.com web: www.destinationpei.com

CONTACT: Adam Doiron, Vice President

Pinnacle Marketing Group Inc. Charlottetown

18 Queen Street, Charlottetown, PE C1A 4A1

Phone: 902-367-7789 cell: 902-393-7177 fax: 902-566-9070

Email: kevin@pinnacleofpei.com web: www.pinnacleofpei.com

CONTACT: Kevin Lewis, Managing Partner

Target Tours Charlottetown

PO Box 2693, Charlottetown, PE C1A 8C3

Phone: 902-739-3500 cell: 902-629-5642 toll free: 1-877-214-5367 fax: 902-739-3300

Email: jdunphy@targettours.ca web: www.targettours.ca

CONTACT: John Dunphy, Owner

The Quaich Inc Charlottetown

25 Bolger Drive, Charlottetown, PE C1A 7T2

Phone: 902-894-3399 fax: 902-626-3221

Email: patsy@thequaich.pe.ca web: www.thequaich.pe.ca

CONTACT: Patsy Beattie Huggan

MC&IT Media Contact

Allan Lynch

Phone: 902-681-2894

Email: scribble@ns.sympatico.ca

MPI Atlantic Chapter Members

Plan Ahead Events

P.O. Box 70016, RPO Cobequid, Lower Sackville, NS B4C 0B1

Phone: 902-482-8641 fax: 866-898-6310

Email: rdexter@planaheadevents-halifax.com

CONTACT: Roberta Dexter

Limelight Communications Group Inc.

Dartmouth, NS

Phone: 902-433-1986

Email: Info@LimeLightGroup.com web: <http://www.LimeLightGroup.com>

CONTACT: Kim George

downeast destination management

Halifax, NS

Phone: 902-423-1974

Email: nlangille@downeastdmc.com web: <http://www.downeastdmc.com>

CONTACT: Nicole Langille

Destination Halifax Members

Agenda Managers Inc.

Halifax, NS

Phone: 902-422-1886

Email: amcgill@agendamanagers.com web: <http://www.agendamanagers.com>

CONTACT: Alexia McGill

Alexander Richardson Inc.

Dartmouth, NS

Phone: 902-435-0350 902-452-3124

Email: arevents@ns.sympatico.ca web <http://www.HalifaxEventPlanning.com>

Tourism Moncton

Aquila

P.O. Box 6895, 124 Prince William Street, Saint John, NB E2L 4S3

Phone: 506-633-1224 fax: 506-658-0969 toll free: 1-800-561-9091

Web: www.aquilatours.com

JK Tours

P.O. Box 115, Moncton, NB E1C 8R9

Phone: 506-856-8687

Email: jolene@jktoursinc.com web: www.jktoursinc.com

Red It's Who I Am

30 Hampton Road, Rothesay, NB E2E 5L2

Phone: 506-849-4062

Email: rathdeb@nbnet.nb.ca web: www.reditswhoiam.com

Sectoral markets

Social **M**military **E**ducation **R**eligious **F**raternal (SMERF)

- Sport groups
- Clubs (bridge, wine, books, Rotary, Lions)
- Unions
- Religious groups
- School groups
- Universities and Community Colleges (UPEI, Societe educative de l'Ile-du-Prince-Edouard, Holland College, St.FX, Acadia, Mount Alison, etc)
- Canadian Forces Bases – and related

Government

Municipal, County, Provincial, Regional and Federal Government offices (especially with offices in the area – ACOA, Parks Canada, Revenue Canada, Veterans Affairs)

Corporate

- Law firms
- Accounting firms
- Engineering firms
- Corporate head offices (Sobeys, Irving)
- Shipping companies

7.6 Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a formula to estimate Return on Investment (ROI) in the MC&IT business?

As useful as that would be, there isn't such a formula. Core expenses such as the development of an MC&IT website, collateral, packaging, sales efforts and acquiring expertise are "table stakes" to become involved. The MC&IT business is relationship-based and takes time, partnership and patience to nurture and grow. Once product is developed, potential customers identified, and a brand is recognized, the potential for sustainability is strong.

How many calls do I need to make to generate one qualified lead?

Research generates suspects. Attention and hard work generates leads. As a rule of thumb, operators can expect that 10 percent of a well-researched contact list, contacted with appropriate lead generating collateral and followed up by a direct call to qualify can result in leads. For instance if 500 well-researched companies are approached, 50 companies can result in qualified leads. This is disciplined sales work. Often qualified leads will take months, perhaps years to generate a sale.

How long will each prospecting or cold-calling effort take?

Researching, generating and double-checking a list of potential companies will take time relative to the length and complexity of the list. The number of call-backs required within the seven day window of initial contact is determined by that list. On follow-up, it may take several calls to reach the meetings' decision-maker. An efficient, focused conversation by telephone to qualify the lead with the decision-maker should take no more the 20 minutes. Once completed the results of each discussion is added to the customer management database.

What is the standard collateral material required to support sales calls?

The Green Gables Shore regional initiative will have collateral as outlined in this report. Individual operators will use their business website as the call to action for collateral materials.

Market ready operator websites should profile individual MC&IT offers and partners, reflect images that are appropriate to MC&IT, and include a downloadable flyer to be printed for use at trade shows and sales calls. Personal business cards with a contact and a clear call to action will be required.

How much time do I need to devote to new business development every day?

At the least, a portion of a day each week should be devoted to business development and marketing all aspects of the operation such as website updating and networking. Developing an MC&IT base will consume some of this time. Always be alert to meetings opportunities outside this "marketing" time. Leads and ideas can surface from areas and contacts as diverse as a Chamber of Commerce or Rotary meeting to a newspaper article.

How many sales do I need each month to attain my year-end financial goals?

The answer to this question is as individual as the business itself. It is important to have a target and to ensure that target is conservative and realistic based upon experience in MC&IT for the first two years. Although one larger gathering could solidify that target, it will probably take a number of small meetings over time to achieve your financial goals.

