



# MARKETING AUDIT

## For Tourism Organizations



**WILDWOOD**  
CREATIVE

THE WILDWOOD TRAIL SERIES FOR TOURISM BUSINESSES

# WELCOME TO BASECAMP

*Your first step toward smarter, more strategic destination and experience-driven marketing.*

Tourism is all about connection—connecting people with places, stories, culture, and unforgettable experiences. But in a fast-changing world of shifting travel trends, crowded markets, and limited budgets, even the most beautiful destinations or experiences can get lost in the noise.

This workbook is your Basecamp. It's a place to pause, assess where your marketing stands, and get oriented before the next big climb. Whether you're part of a DMO, resort, tour company, visitor attraction, or regional tourism initiative, this guide will help you take a clear-eyed look at what's working, what's missing, and where to focus next.

You don't need a million-dollar campaign or a full in-house team to improve your marketing. You just need insight, intention, and a willingness to start where you are.

## WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This workbook is designed for tourism professionals who juggle a wide range of responsibilities and care deeply about sharing their destination, experience, or brand in a compelling way. Whether you're new to marketing or have years of experience, this guide will help you zoom out and see the big picture with fresh eyes.

It's especially useful for:

- ▶ Destination marketing professionals seeking more clarity and consistency across campaigns.
- ▶ Hotels, resorts, and tourism brands looking to reach the right travelers with the right message.
- ▶ Visitor attractions, cultural orgs, and tour operators who want to improve outreach and engagement.
- ▶ Agencies and freelancers supporting clients in the travel, hospitality, or tourism space.

Whether your goal is increased visitation, improved guest experience, better content, or stronger brand awareness, this audit will help you lay the groundwork.

## WHAT YOU'LL GAIN FROM THIS AUDIT

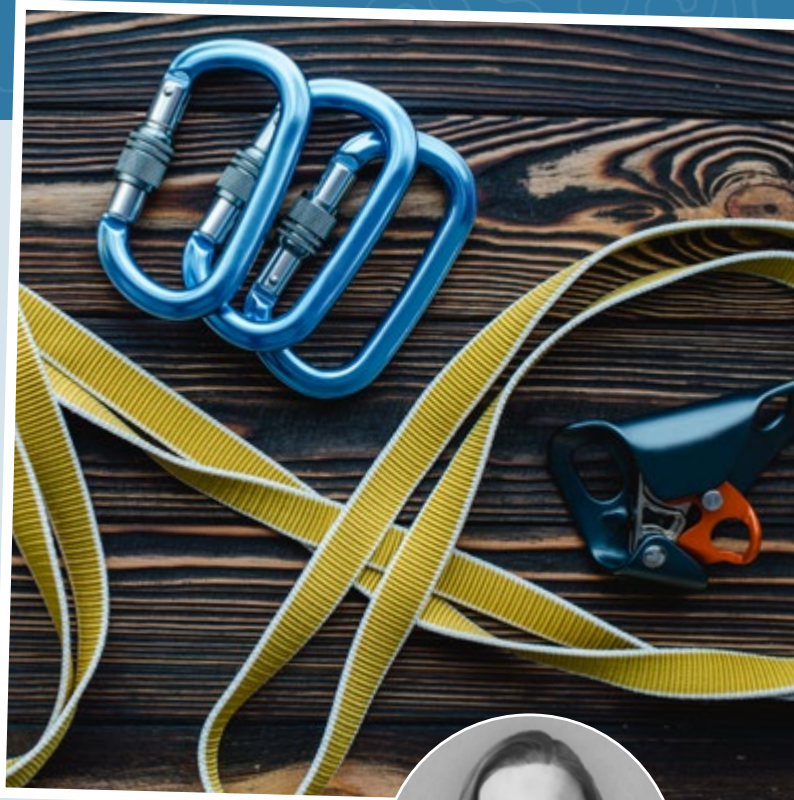
In the pages ahead, you'll evaluate four foundational areas of tourism marketing:

- ▶ Brand & Positioning
- ▶ Audience Understanding
- ▶ Content & Outreach
- ▶ Measurement & Optimization

Each section includes self-assessment prompts, scorecards, and reflection questions to help you:

- ▶ A better understanding of your strengths and gaps.
- ▶ Practical ideas you can implement right away.
- ▶ A clearer picture of what's holding your marketing back and where to go next.

You don't need to be a marketing expert to complete this audit—just a bit of time, focus, and an honest look at what's working (and what's not).



## WHY I CREATED THIS SERIES

Hi! I'm Shannon, a marketing strategist with over 17 years of marketing experience. I've worked with travel and tourism clients across destinations, sectors, and budgets. I know how hard it is to cut through the noise.

I also know how powerful it is when your marketing finally clicks. When your message matches your mission, when your content speaks to real travelers, and when your brand feels as unforgettable as the experience you're promoting.

The Wildwood Trail Series is designed to guide you through that journey, one thoughtful step at a time.

**Grab your gear, our climb to Basecamp starts now!**

# SECTION ONE:

# BRAND & POSITIONING

*Make your message as memorable as your destination.*

Your brand isn't just your logo or tagline, it's the feeling people get when they hear your name or imagine your experience. It's the way you tell your story, the tone of your visuals and voice, and the emotional connection you create before a visitor even arrives.

In the tourism industry, your brand is often your first impression. It needs to be clear, consistent,

and compelling across every channel. Whether you're a destination, an attraction, or a travel brand, how you position yourself can mean the difference between being a top choice or an afterthought.

This section will help you assess whether your brand is working for you or holding you back.

**Let's make sure your foundation is strong.**

## SELF-ASSESSMENT: BRAND FOUNDATIONS

STATEMENT	SCORE (1-5)*
Our brand identity (logo, colors, fonts) is consistent across our platforms and materials.	
We have a clear, compelling brand story that communicates what makes us unique.	
Our messaging speaks to the desires, values, and motivations of our ideal visitors.	
We stand out clearly from competitors or nearby destinations.	
People who see our materials understand what we offer—and why they should care.	
*RATING SCALE: 1 = Needs work, 5 = Totally dialed in.	TOTAL SCORE (OUT OF 25)

## REFLECTION PROMPTS

Take a moment to consider your current brand presence:

What first impression does your website or social media give a potential visitor?

What are you known for—and is that aligned with what you want to be known for?

Does your brand feel cohesive across all channels, or are you “winging it” depending on the audience?



## WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR SCORE

SCORE	WHAT IT MEANS	SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS
20 - 25	You've built a strong, consistent brand that inspires interest and trust.	Double down. Create a brand toolkit for staff and partners, refine your photography style or tone of voice, or expand brand storytelling into new formats (video, user content, testimonials).
14 - 19	You're on solid ground, but your brand may lack a unique spark or cohesive voice.	Revisit your brand story. Is it emotionally resonant and easy to communicate? Tighten your visual identity or messaging to create more impact—especially on high-traffic channels.
BELOW 14	Your brand might be unclear or forgettable and it could be costing you attention and trust.	Start with a core positioning statement: who you are, what you offer, and why it matters. Then build visual and verbal guidelines to bring that identity to life across all channels.

## CASE STUDY

### VISIT LAKE TAHOE'S REBRANDING INITIATIVE

**Background:** The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority (LTVA) promoted the South Shore of Lake Tahoe under the brand “Tahoe South.” Despite strong efforts, the organization struggled to differentiate its offerings and clearly communicate the unique experiences available on the South Shore.

**Challenge:** Visitors often saw Lake Tahoe as one unified destination, with little distinction between regions. This lack of differentiation led to confusion and weakened regional marketing efforts. LTVA needed a cohesive brand identity that would resonate with target audiences and highlight what made the South Shore stand out.

**The Strategy:** LTVA partnered with Noble Studios to rebrand from “Tahoe South” to “Visit Lake Tahoe,” creating a more inclusive and recognizable identity. Using research and visitor insights, they developed the tagline “Awe and then Some” to capture the region’s natural beauty and wide range of experiences. The visual identity was refreshed to connect with key audiences and ensure consistency across platforms.

**The Outcome:** The rebrand successfully repositioned the South Shore, emphasizing its diverse offerings under a unified name. The “Awe and then Some” campaign resonated with audiences, boosted brand recognition, attracted broader visitation, and strengthened the region’s competitive edge.

**Key Takeaways:** A research-driven rebrand with clear messaging can significantly boost a destination’s appeal. When you communicate your unique value clearly and consistently, you stand out—and connect more meaningfully with potential visitors.

## NEED HELP STRENGTHENING YOUR NONPROFIT BRAND?

If your brand feels scattered, generic, or underdeveloped you're not alone. Many tourism brands evolve over time without ever formally defining what makes them unique.

That's where I come in!

### I work with tourism brands to:

- ▶ Clarify your destination or brand promise.
- ▶ Develop a brand story and messaging strategy that connects with your ideal audience.
- ▶ Refresh your visual identity for consistency across platforms.
- ▶ Create brand toolkits your team, partners, or vendors can actually use.

Whether you're preparing for a rebrand, refreshing your website, or trying to make your messaging more compelling, I can help you shape a brand that reflects the experience you offer and inspires people to visit, share, and come back for more.

**Let's talk brand.**

[Schedule a free consultation >>](#)

# SECTION TWO:

# AUDIENCE UNDERSTANDING

*If you want to inspire action, you have to understand who you're talking to and what matters to them.*

You can have an incredible destination, a beautiful brand, and a world-class experience, but if you're not connecting with the right people in the right way, your marketing will fall flat.

Strong tourism marketing starts with strong audience understanding. That means more than just knowing your visitor demographics or top feeder markets.

It's about understanding your audience's travel motivations, decision-making behavior, and emotional drivers. The deeper your insight, the more effective your messaging, partnerships, and campaigns will be.

This section will help you assess whether you're building your marketing around your audience or simply broadcasting at them.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT: AUDIENCE ALIGNMENT

STATEMENT	SCORE (1-5)
We've clearly identified our key audiences (e.g. locals, planners, influencers, partners).	
We understand what motivates each group to engage with or visit our destination.	
Our marketing speaks directly to the needs, desires, or challenges of our audiences.	
We regularly gather data or feedback (surveys, reviews, analytics) to better understand our visitors.	
We tailor our content and messaging based on audience segment or travel persona.	
<i>*RATING SCALE: 1 = Needs work, 5 = Totally dialed in.</i>	<b>TOTAL SCORE (OUT OF 25)</b>

## REFLECTION PROMPTS

Think about your primary marketing efforts:

Are you speaking to one clear group or trying to be everything to everyone?

When was the last time you talked to actual visitors or partners to learn what they value most?

Do you know which platforms or channels your audiences actually use?

## WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR SCORE

SCORE	WHAT IT MEANS	SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS
20 - 25	You know your audience well and are marketing with empathy and intention.	Take it further. Explore content personalization, test segmented messaging by traveler type, or build journey maps that reflect behavior and timing.
14 - 19	You understand your audience generally—but might be missing insight into segments or motivations.	Interview recent visitors, analyze reviews, or talk to frontline staff. Use that insight to update your personas and adjust your messaging accordingly.
BELOW 14	You may be relying on old assumptions instead of actual audience feedback.	Define your top 2–3 audience segments. Go beyond demographics—what are they dreaming about? What’s stopping them from booking? Shape your messaging around those answers.

## CASE STUDY

### VISIT ICELAND’S “INSPIRED BY ICELAND” CAMPAIGN

**Background:** In 2010, Iceland faced a major challenge when the Eyjafjallajökull volcano erupted, disrupting travel and damaging its reputation as a tourism destination. To recover, Promote Iceland launched the “Inspired by Iceland” campaign to shift global perceptions and draw visitors back.

**The Challenge:** The eruption cast doubt on Iceland’s safety and appeal. The main challenge was to counter negative publicity and reignite interest by showcasing the country’s natural beauty and unique experiences.

**The Strategy:** Visit Iceland centered its campaign on authenticity, inviting locals to become the storytellers of their country. Through user-generated content, live cultural events, and multimedia storytelling, the campaign encouraged Icelanders to share what made their home special—using hashtags, videos, and social media engagement to amplify their voices and connect with travelers on a personal level. This grassroots approach humanized the destination and shifted the narrative from disaster to discovery.

**The Outcome:** The campaign quickly gained traction. One-third of the population engaged within 24 hours, over half within six weeks. Globally, it earned 60 million webcam views, 2 million shared stories, and 80% positive sentiment. It successfully restored Iceland’s image and repositioned it as a top-tier travel destination.

**Key Takeaways:** By understanding their audience and spotlighting authentic local voices, Visit Iceland rebuilt trust and interest. This case shows how audience insight and emotional storytelling can transform a brand—even in a crisis.

## NEED HELP TURNING INSIGHT INTO ACTION?

Too often, tourism marketing is based on internal assumptions or industry buzzwords—not real insight. But the most successful brands are the ones that listen well and speak clearly to the people they’re trying to reach.

### I can help you:

- ▶ Define your key visitor segments and understand what drives them
- ▶ Build audience personas or journey maps that guide your outreach
- ▶ Analyze your content and campaigns to see who you’re actually attracting
- ▶ Develop messaging that speaks to real needs, not just general benefits

Whether you want to connect with leisure travelers, meeting planners, content creators, or locals, I can help you tailor your message to meet them where they are.

### Let’s talk audience.

[View my tourism portfolio >>](#)

[Schedule a consultation >>](#)

# SECTION THREE:

# CONTENT & OUTREACH

*You can't be everywhere—but you do need to show up.*

Tourism marketing is about more than pretty pictures and catchy slogans. It's about consistently telling your story in ways that invite people to explore, connect, and dream about what their experience with you could be.

This section covers two types of key message content:

► **Evergreen content:** The long-lasting essentials like your website, itineraries, brochures, listings, or digital guides. Evergreen content helps travelers find you and trust you—it builds credibility and context.

► **Engagement content:** What keeps your brand active and relevant in real time, like social media, email newsletters, local events, blog posts, or seasonal campaigns. Engagement content brings energy to your brand. It shows what's happening now, what makes your destination unique, and why travelers should care.

Together, they help you stay visible in a competitive market, build emotional connection, and inspire people to take the next step.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT: SHOWING UP STRATEGICALLY

STATEMENT	SCORE (1-5)
Our website and core materials are up-to-date, accurate, and traveler-friendly.	
We consistently use at least one channel (e.g., social, email, blog) to stay engaged with our audience.	
Our content highlights things to do, reasons to visit, and what sets us apart.	
We create content that reflects current seasons, events, or timely moments.	
Our outreach efforts feel planned—not last-minute or only when something urgent comes up.	
<i>*RATING SCALE: 1 = Needs work, 5 = Totally dialed in.</i>	<b>TOTAL SCORE (OUT OF 25)</b>

## REFLECTION PROMPTS

**Think about your content from the past month:**

Was it more reactive or intentional?

Did it reflect your destination's true personality?

Was it created with your audience in mind—or just to fill space?

## WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR SCORE

SCORE	WHAT IT MEANS	SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS
20 - 25	You're showing up with consistency, creativity, and strategy. Well done!	Repurpose top content into new formats (like reels, blogs, or guides), build out an editorial calendar tied to seasonal travel trends, or invite partner co-promotion to expand your reach.
14 - 19	You're producing content, but may lack focus or consistent results.	Audit your last quarter of content. What got attention? What felt off-brand? Refocus your efforts around a few high-impact themes that reflect your destination's strengths.
BELOW 14	Your content may feel reactive, scattered, or easy to overlook.	Start with one channel and one theme. Build 3–4 weeks of intentional content based on what your audience wants to see. Measure engagement, then expand from there.

## CASE STUDY

### VISIT SAVANNAH'S INTERACTIVE INSTAGRAM CAMPAIGN

**Background:** Savannah, Georgia is known for its historic charm and southern hospitality. To stand out in a crowded travel market, Visit Savannah wanted to create a campaign that showcased the city's personality while actively involving potential visitors.

**The Challenge:** Most destination content is brand-directed. Visit Savannah set out to flip that by letting their audience shape the story—making the experience feel more personalized, engaging, and memorable.

**The Strategy:** Using Instagram Stories' polling feature, Visit Savannah asked followers to vote on how they'd spend a day in Savannah—"walk or ride?", "cocktails up high or down low?", etc. They used those poll results to script and film a day-in-the-life video itinerary, weaving in the poll questions and responses to spotlight the audience's role in creating the story.

**The Outcome:** The campaign drove high engagement across platforms. Instagram polls earned up to 900 votes per question, while the final video drew 64,000 views on Facebook, 10,000+ on Instagram, and 17,000 on YouTube—along with hundreds of shares and comments. It not only highlighted the destination, but also built a deeper connection with potential travelers by making them part of the experience.

**Key Takeaways:** By inviting followers into the story, Visit Savannah turned passive content into an interactive experience. The result? Stronger engagement, memorable storytelling, and content that truly reflected what travelers wanted to see.

## NEED HELP MAKING YOUR CONTENT WORK HARDER?

If your content feels rushed, reactive, or like it's not reaching the right people—you're not alone. Many tourism teams are juggling deadlines without a clear content strategy.

Here's how I can help:

- Build a simple, strategic content plan rooted in your audience's needs.
- Identify the best channels and formats to showcase your destination or brand.
- Refresh or reorganize your evergreen materials so they're clear, current, and compelling.
- Create story-driven content that inspires travelers—and builds trust along the way.

Let's make sure your content doesn't just look good—it moves people to action.

**Let's talk content.**

[View my marketing services >>](#)

[Schedule a free consultation >>](#)



# SECTION FOUR: ANALYSIS & OPTIMIZATION

*If you're not measuring, you're just hoping.*

Your tourism marketing efforts take time, energy, and resources—but how do you know they're working?

Whether your goal is more bookings, increased visitation, longer stays, better guest reviews, or stronger social engagement, you need a way to track progress. Data helps you make smarter decisions, allocate resources more effectively, and show your value to stakeholders, partners, and funders.

You don't need a full analytics team or complicated dashboards. You just need a few key metrics and a consistent habit of learning from what you see.

This section will help you assess whether you're making data-informed decisions or just doing what you've always done.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT: IS IT WORKING?

STATEMENT	SCORE (1-5)
We've defined clear marketing goals (e.g. increase site traffic, grow email list, attract off-season visitors).	
We track key performance indicators (KPIs) like website traffic, social engagement, or email metrics.	
We review campaign results and analytics regularly, not just at year-end.	
We adjust strategy based on what the data tells us (rather than guessing or going by feel).	
We can clearly report on what's working to leadership, board members, or partners.	
<i>*RATING SCALE: 1 = Needs work, 5 = Totally dialed in.</i>	<b>TOTAL SCORE (OUT OF 25)</b>

## REFLECTION PROMPTS

**Think about your last campaign or content push:**

What was your goal and did you track it?

What metrics did you pay the most attention to?

Did your team make any changes based on what you learned?

## WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR SCORE

SCORE	WHAT IT MEANS	SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS
20 - 25	You're tracking meaningful metrics and using them to improve results.	Take it further. Connect marketing KPIs to economic impact, partner ROI, or audience sentiment. Share key takeaways in leadership reports to elevate marketing's strategic value.
14 - 19	You're watching the data—but not always using it to drive your decisions.	Choose 3–5 key performance indicators that map directly to your top goals (e.g. off-season bookings, landing page conversions). Review monthly and adjust based on patterns.
BELOW 14	You may be unsure what's working or not using data at all.	Start small. Pick one campaign or initiative, define what success looks like, and track only 2–3 metrics that matter most. Build confidence through clarity, not complexity.

## CASE STUDY

### HILTON HOTELS' REAL-TIME DATA ANALYTICS FOR REVENUE OPTIMIZATION

**Background:** Hilton Hotels, a global leader in the hospitality industry, operates numerous properties worldwide. To maintain its competitive edge and maximize revenue, Hilton sought to enhance its pricing and occupancy strategies through advanced data analytics.

**The Challenge:** Hilton needed a platform capable of real-time data ingestion and analysis to inform pricing and occupancy decisions effectively. The goal was to optimize room rates and occupancy levels by leveraging timely and comprehensive data insights.

**The Strategy:** Hilton implemented a real-time analytics platform to monitor market demand, competitor pricing, and booking patterns. This allowed them to adjust rates dynamically, optimize occupancy, and make data-driven decisions faster than traditional pricing models allowed.

**The Outcome:** The shift to real-time data led to quicker, smarter pricing decisions, improved revenue per available room (RevPAR), and a stronger competitive edge through more agile response to market shifts.

**Key Takeaways:** Hilton's integration of real-time data analytics into its revenue management practices underscores the critical role of timely data in the hospitality industry. By leveraging advanced analytics, hotels can make informed decisions that enhance profitability and market positioning.

## NEED HELP TURNING NUMBERS INTO STRATEGY?

You don't need to track everything. You just need to track what matters and know how to act on it.

That's where I come in.

### I help tourism brands and destinations:

- Identify meaningful, goal-aligned metrics
- Set up easy-to-maintain tracking habits and review systems
- Analyze campaign results to understand what worked and why
- Turn data into clear, confident next steps

Let's take the guesswork out of your marketing—and help your efforts lead somewhere.

**Let's talk metrics.**

[Schedule a consultation >>](#)

# YOU MADE IT!

*You've made it to Basecamp—and that's a big deal.*

Taking a step back to assess your marketing isn't always easy. But it's one of the smartest things you can do—especially in a fast-moving, highly competitive industry like tourism.

By completing this audit, you've built a clearer picture of what's working, what needs more attention, and where your marketing can go next. Whether you're promoting a destination, a lodging property, an experience, or an attraction, this clarity is what helps you market more intentionally, communicate more effectively, and ultimately, connect with the right travelers.

## You've now looked at:

- ▶ How clearly and consistently your **brand** is showing up.
- ▶ How well you understand and speak to your **audience**.
- ▶ How strategically you're approaching your **content and outreach**.
- ▶ Whether you're using **data and measurement** to guide smart decisions.

This process isn't about doing everything perfectly. It's about doing the right things with purpose and alignment.

**Now it's time to decide what comes next.**



## CHOOSE YOUR NEXT STEP

- ▶ **Ready to take action?** Start with the section where you scored the lowest. Pick one achievable goal or improvement to work on and build momentum from there.
- ▶ **Need a guide?** I offer consulting and freelance services for tourism brands, destinations, and hospitality teams. From audits to strategy to hands-on execution, I'm here to help.
- ▶ **Want to keep learning?** Watch for future guides in the Wildwood Trail Series, including The Ascent (brand messaging) and The Ridgeline (content & campaign strategy).

## LET'S STAY CONNECTED

If this workbook gave you clarity, confidence, or just a helpful starting point—I'd love to hear from you.

- ▶ [Reach out for a free consultation.](#)
- ▶ [Connect with me on LinkedIn.](#)
- ▶ [Sign-up for my newsletter to be the first to know when new guides are released.](#)

Thanks for the work you do to make travel more meaningful, memorable, and impactful. I'm cheering you on and I hope to see you further up the trail.

**Let's keep climbing!**

