

OHIO TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

By working together, we create a vibrant Ohio through a strong, equipped, and more profitable tourism industry





Strategic Vision

MISSION

By working together, we create a vibrant Ohio through a strong, equipped, and more profitable tourism industry

VISION

Within 10 years, Ohio's tourism industry is vibrant and competitive, increasingly recognized for good jobs, business profits, government revenue, entrepreneurial opportunities, and an improved quality of life to the people of Ohio. It is stronger, better equipped, and more profitable because the Ohio Travel Association has been a catalyst, connector, and coach in its success (Figure 1).

OTA is the leading voice and shepherd of the industry, and its members include all who care about a thriving leisure and business tourism economy, including those who conduct business directly with guests, suppliers to those who service guests, and businesses who benefit from increased spending and a strong and positive Ohio image.

Employees throughout member organizations are involved and active, from front-line employees who recognize their important roles in the industry and who are launching careers in the hospitality and tourism industry to CEOs who count on OTA to speak up for their business interests. Because it shares the passion and mission of the industry, OTA is strong, better equipped and sustainable, allowing it to respond to challenges and opportunities in professional, dynamic, and unexpected ways to achieve success.

Catalysts

People who have wisdom, know-how and historical perspective about issues and places. They are respected and seen as unofficial "experts" in people's eyes. Others turn to them for guidance and help. They can offer insights and advice on what people really care about, what values they wrestle with, how people talk about issues and what they don't know. (Harwood Institute, 2007)

Connectors

People who move from organization to organization, like pollinating bees spreading ideas and social norms. Others turn to them to learn "what's going on." Connectors often can lead you to influential but hard to find leaders (such as other catalysts) and those who are part of less visible organizations. Connectors also can help you learn how the work of different organizations relates to one another. (Harwood Institute, 2007)

Coaches

People who love the game and share their enthusiasm, skills, and strategies so the athlete or entire team is victorious. Coaches listen to what you have to say, provide feedback, and thrive on being able to motivate and support others.

Figure 1

PUBLIC-PRIVATE TOURISM STRUCTURES IN OHIO

TourismOhio

State Agency within Development Services Agency

- Markets Ohio's tourism experiences to travelers through advertising, public relations, etc.
- Conducts economic impact and consumer studies
- Funded through public dollars (approximately \$10 million)

Ohio Travel Association

Nonprofit Organization

- Advocates for the needs of the travel industry at local, state and federal level (including making sure the Office of TourismOhio has the resources it needs to market Ohio)
- Provides education and resources for Ohio's travel industry (including the state's annual tourism conference)
- Coordinates travel intermediary marketing when not coordinated elsewhere (including group tour marketplace at Heartland Travel Showcase)
- Recognizes excellence and achievements of industry partners
- Funded through memberships from Ohio's travel industry buyers and sellers, program revenues, and contributions (approximate budget of \$650,000)

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY IS STRONG BECAUSE OF LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL POLICIES THAT PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES TO FLOURISH.

WE KNOW WHAT POLICIES ARE IMPORTANT FOR ENHANCING OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY AND CREATING STRONG COMMUNITIES

Work with industry to identify policies that should be in place

Connect with other state associations through the Ohio Tourism Roundtable and leverage our industry's strengths when issues of tourism importance emerge

Create a forum for identifying positions on key policies

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY HAS A SAY IN WHAT POLICIES ARE PURSUED

Facilitate discussions to evaluate policies and potential actions

Develop and implement strategies for change

DECISION MAKERS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT UNDERSTAND WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO OHIO'S BUSINESSES WHO RELY ON TRAVELERS

Coach industry members and elected officials on key issues

Move forward new policies to improve Ohio's tourism business climate

INDUSTRY MEMBERS WHO EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE IN SHAPING THEIR FUTURES THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Coach industry members on advocacy, including the need for civic involvement

Create a system for launching quick-response advocacy actions

DECISION MAKERS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT WHO UNDERSTAND THE POWER FOR TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

Create and present a strong, verifiable, and branded message regarding the power of tourism and hospitality contributions to local community, state, and national wellbeing

Coach communities on the power of tourism

Create a program to unite and empower front-line workers to speak up for the industry

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY HAS THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO BE A STRONG VOICE

Increase PAC and Legislation Action Fund contributions

Communicate to industry members the purposes of these funds

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY IS EQUIPPED TO HANDLE AN EVER-CHANGING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH A TRAINED WORKFORCE, EDUCATED LEADERSHIP, AND INFORMED MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

WE UNDERSTAND THE TRAINING AND EDUCATION NEEDS IMPORTANT FOR IMPROVING THE OHIO TOURISM EXPERIENCE AND FOR INCREASING THE BOTTOM LINES OF INDUSTRY MEMBERS

Identify existing research on core competencies

Conduct a hospitality needs assessment

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY IS MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE AT THEIR JOBS

Prioritize training programs for industry sectors not represented elsewhere statewide, such as attractions

Prioritize training programs that cross industry sectors but are not coordinated statewide (customer service, sales coaching, marketing strategies, media relations, etc.)

Prioritize professional development programs aligned with careers (such as human resources, safety, guest services, marketing, etc.)

Focus programs on achievement outcomes, not filling seats

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY IS CONNECTED TO TRAINING AND EDUCATION ALREADY AVAILABLE

Increase access to information needed by the industry by becoming involved in United States Travel Association and others

Filter and deliver information that is timely and relevant (roundup of industry news every Friday, enewsletter twice a month, resource archives,).

THOSE WHO EXCEL ARE RECOGNIZED AND CREATE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHERS IN THE INDUSTRY

Continue and expand individual professional award programs

Continue state tourism marketing awards program (RUBY Awards)

Develop a TEAM (Tourism Expert Assistance Mentors) to create a network of expertise

Create an Ohio Tourism Industry Chairman's Club for past Sherlock Award winners and OTA presidents

STRONG INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP EXISTS TODAY AND IS POISED FOR THE FUTURE

Continue Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy to train emerging leaders

Coordinate an Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy Alumni Club

Connect Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy graduates to leadership opportunities both within and outside the industry

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY GENERATES MORE ECONOMIC IMPACT, JOBS, AND TAX REVENUES THROUGH IMPROVEMENTS IN PRODUCT QUALITY, PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, INCREASED SALES, AND TACTICAL BUSINESS DECISIONS.

OHIO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY MAKES BUSINESS DECISIONS BASED ON REAL-TIME DATA

- Connect industry to partners who can conduct needed research
- Connect industry to existing research
- Serve as a catalyst to produce research needed by industry

OHIO'S TOURISM BUYERS AND SELLERS MAXIMIZE SALES

- Connect industry to travel intermediaries, such as group tour operators, meeting planners, travel leaders
- Connect industry to suppliers
- Work with suppliers to create new products and services to meet industry needs

OHIO'S TOURISM BUSINESSES HAVE THE RESOURCES THEY NEED TO GROW

- Connect tourism businesses to existing state economic development tools, such as incentives, workforce development funds, loan programs, etc.
- Connect tourism businesses to grants and development tools available through other organizations and agencies
- Serve as a catalyst for the development of new economic development tools for the tourism industry
- Coach economic development program providers on the needs of the tourism industry and how to make programs more attractive and accessible

NEW OHIO TOURISM EXPERIENCES AND MARKETS ARE AVAILABLE

- Connect industry professionals and communities looking to grow the tourism economy to those who excel and can help them
- Connect industry members to each other to explore new markets for Ohio
- Facilitate discussions to explore new markets and tourism products
- Coach communities and industry professionals seeking to grow the tourism economy

OHIO PROVIDES EXCEPTIONAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES

- Connect industry to existing tourism evaluation programs
- Create new programs to evaluate tourism experiences
- Create new programs to improve sustainable of tourism industry