



FY 18-19

Business Plan



Visit
HERSHEY &
HARRISBURG


**HERSHEY
HARRISBURG**
SPORTS & EVENTS
AUTHORITY

Dear Tourism Partners,

I'm pleased to share Visit Hershey & Harrisburg's FY 18-19 business plan that outlines next year's development opportunities and establishes measurable goals and objectives. Our team has put time, thought, and research into creating this plan to ensure we're executing effective destination marketing and sales that directly support the growth of the Hershey Harrisburg Region through tourism.



Just as we thoughtfully prepare our annual business plan, it is time again for us to appraise our overarching 2013-2018 strategic initiatives. Our destination continues to grow in popularity, and the way we market and sell our region is evolving, which is why we're excited to embark on another round of strategic planning to take us through 2023. The objectives of the strategic planning process include:

- Establishment of measurable, achievable organizational goals for the next 3-5 years
- Identification of resources (staff, funding, management systems, partnerships, etc.) necessary to achieve the identified goals
- Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by our organization and our destination

Tourism, once viewed as an industry of leisure and luxury, has established a profile of respect and credibility as a powerful economic driver for a destination. As the role of a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) evolves, so must its business model. Part of the strategic planning process incorporates the DestinationNEXT Futures Study, which identifies the trends and opportunities that will shape the future of destination marketing and management.

While we await the research outcomes of this strategic planning process, we will continue to be forward-thinking with technology opportunities to better understand the travel habits and trends of our potential guests. We will continually analyze this valuable data and incorporate it into our Sales, Marketing, Public Relations, and Media strategies.

On behalf of Visit Hershey & Harrisburg, I look forward to another successful year pursuing new business and nurturing beneficial relationships with you, our valued Partners in the region.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary E. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary E. Smith
President & CEO



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Mission Statement

The mission of Visit Hershey & Harrisburg is to generate economic growth and stability for Dauphin County through the marketing and promotion of the Hershey Harrisburg Region as a competitive meeting, corporate, and leisure destination, and to coalesce, develop, and expand its hospitality industry, products, and workforce.

FY 18-19 Budget

Anticipated Revenues: \$3,945,121

Expected Expenses: \$3,919,037



With travelers demonstrating a desire to do more than just sightsee, experiential travel is a leading trend in the travel industry. More than ever, travelers are looking for unique activities ranging from cooking classes to day cruises to multi-day adventure tours. It's all about the experience. Yet, while travelers are becoming increasingly interested in new experiences, they are still loyal to the tried and true iconic sites, landmarks, and experiences across many destinations.

See and do more when you skip the line.

More travelers are balancing their itineraries by mixing classic sightseeing options with unique local experiences, and many are willing to pay to save time. "Skip-the-line" tour options are among the fastest growing tours in the world, allowing travelers to see and do more.

History, heritage, and culinary

Several travel segments have seen skyrocketing sales, including historic and heritage experiences (+125% in bookings last year), and culinary is a clear trend with cooking classes and food tours satisfying travelers' appetites for delicious and unique experiences.

Nothing beats the great outdoors.

U.S. travelers are diving into a variety of aquatic activities including sunset cruises, snorkeling, sailing trips, catamaran cruises, kayaking, and canoeing.

Business travel meets leisure.

Bleisure, the practice of tacking some leisure time onto business travel, continues to rise. According to the Egancia 2018 Bleisure Trends study, 68% of global business travelers take at least one bleisure trip per year. 74% of North American business travelers are either planning or considering a bleisure trip in the next six months. The biggest factor contributing to booking a bleisure trip is the destination location, followed by proximity to both the weekend and friends and family.



The Sales department is responsible for promoting the Hershey Harrisburg Region to the travel trade as a destination to host their business.

Target Markets:

Religious, Meetings & Conventions, Military, Domestic Tour/Travel, and International.

SMERF/RELIGIOUS

Forecast:

Moderate growth nationally; however, the Hershey Harrisburg Region has potential to outpace national trends

Goal:

Increase religious room night bookings by 20% over FY 17-18.

Client Profile:

- Individuals responsible for planning meetings, conferences, and retreats for their religious organization
- Multi-faith, diverse demographic with 81% aged 64 years or younger
- Third-party planners are sometimes used by this market segment.
- Attendees are families, students, and church officials.
- Most utilize CVBs.
- Most are volunteers with little or no experience in planning meetings.
- Budget-sensitive, as attendees often cover expenses

Trends:

- Resort hotels are desirable for this market, but not a requirement.
- Planners expect hotels/venues to be culturally sensitive to their specific denomination.
- Faith groups will meet regardless of the economy, and meetings are held year-round.
- Typical meetings last 4-5 days. Many extend the stay and make it their family vacation.

Strategies:

- Devote appropriate resources to gain additional market share.
- Attend religious meeting planner trade shows and education sessions.
- Continue to build relationships with faith-based meeting and event planners.
- Educate our Partners about the needs and expectations of this market.
- Capitalize on regional religious attractions to attract FAMs to Hershey & Harrisburg.

Proposed Trade Show Schedule

■ Connect Specialty	August
■ Connect Faith	November
■ CMCA	March

MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

Forecast:

National forecast for the meetings industry is generally upbeat with slight moderate growth expected. While RFP submissions were flat last year, we are optimistic that the growth in room nights per RFP will continue.

Goal:

Increase meetings & conventions room night bookings by 15% over FY 17-18.

Key Target Markets:

- Association
- Government
- Corporate
- Medical

Trends:

- Seeing is believing: Face-to-face engagement is still the way to sell.
- Site inspection/FAMs are #1. Trade show meetings/networking events are also effective ways for DMOs to market to planners.
- Planners are looking for financial support from destinations to offset escalating costs and fees.
- Major changes to third-party commission structures
- Digital connectivity is a megatrend. High-quality Wi-Fi is the industry's #1 priority.
- Experiential events such as team building and guided hands-on activities are popular corporate meeting trends.
- Increased desire for non-traditional, unique venues
- Millennials are continuing to drive change and innovation.

Client Profile:

- Professional, savvy, know what they do and don't want
- Typically seek full-service hotels with F&B, A/V, suites, outside activities for attendees, airports with non-stop service to major airports
- Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials

Strategies:

- Focus on attending appointment-based trade shows.
- Host qualified client and co-sponsored events and networking receptions.
- Conduct sales missions, FAM tours, one-on-one sales calls.
- Maximize sales missions and partnerships with third party entities.
- Increase involvement with regional MPI chapters.
- Utilize Partner sales meetings to educate and communicate industry trends.
- Enhance sales-related marketing materials.

Proposed Trade Show Schedule:

■ CVent Connect	July
■ Connect Association	August
■ Connect Corporate	August
■ ASAE	August
■ PASAE Summer (Education)	Summer
■ Connect Medical	October
■ Connect DC	December
■ PCMA	January
■ RCMA Emerge	January
■ PASAE Expo	February
■ Conference Direct	March
■ HelmsBriscoe	April
■ Connect New England	June
■ MPI WEC	June
■ MPI Summer and Fall Outings	Summer/Fall

SMERF/MILITARY

Forecast:

Flat to moderate growth

Goal:

Increase military reunion room night bookings by 5% over FY 17-18.

Client Profile:

- Predominantly veterans who served between WWII and the 1970s
- Mostly accompanied by spouses, and sometimes grown children/grandchildren
- Experienced reunion planners

Trends:

- Typically do not repeat a destination, rotating across the U.S.
- Group size widely varies (20-500+).
- Typically stay 4-5 days with travel times in April/May and September/October
- Willing to be flexible to get the best rate
- Many Navy groups are combining their reunions with other ships.

Strategies:

- Maximize effort by hosting more streamlined site tours for military market.
- Continue to cultivate relationships with planners who have not hosted in our region.
- Educate our full-service hotels on the expectations of the military reunion market.
- Explore possibility of hosting Military ConFAM in our region.

DOMESTIC TOUR/TRAVEL

Forecast:

We are optimistic that recent increases, although minimal, will reverse trend of declining visitation from this market.

Goal:

Increase Domestic Tour/Travel room night bookings by 5% over FY 17-18.

Client Profile:

- Motorcoach and tour operators
- Group leaders
- Student camp groups
- Receptive operators

Trends:

- Student travel leads this segment for growth potential.
- Millennials desire luxury on a budget, authentic travel experiences, and connectivity.
- Wellness travel is fueled by Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials.
- Boomers desire luxury, expertise, and convenience.
- Seniors desire engagement and activity in a friendly welcoming environment.
- Experiential tours for active adults and seniors
- Girlfriend getaways with spas, wine tastings, and shopping
- Culinary tours
- Multi-generational tours (grandparent/grandchildren)
- Value-added packaging

Strategies:

- Dedicate less resources yet maintain an active presence at key industry trade shows and marketplaces.
- Leverage SYTA tour operator sponsorship (regional marketing partnership initiative).
- Continue to host FAM tours and site visits as requested using streamlined process.
- Position the Hershey Harrisburg Region as a “hub and spoke” destination for tours visiting neighboring counties.
- Conduct joint FAM tours for tour operators with neighboring CVBs.
- Research trends to assist Partners in developing products to promote to Millennials.
- Engage in statewide sales efforts (i.e. PA Sales Mission and/or Dine Around events).
- Investigate potential niche markets: wedding (group overnights), class reunions.

Proposed Trade Show Schedule

■ SYTA – Tour Operator Gift Sponsorship	August
■ NTA	November
■ ABA	January
■ PA Bus Association Marketplace	March
■ Maryland Motorcoach Association Marketplace	March
■ PA Bus Annual Meeting	June

INTERNATIONAL

Forecast:

Nationally, China remains the most notable growth market. There is a definite shift from Group Tours to FIT (foreign independent travelers). The U.S. remains the number one destination by far for this market. The India inbound market is rising, with visitation to the U.S. projected to increase 72% in six years. The Hershey Harrisburg Region is holding strong in attracting international guests. Visa Vue spending in the destination was up 10% in 2017.

Goal:

Increase international room night bookings by 10% over FY 17-18.

Target Markets:

China, Chinese Americans, India, UK, Europe

Client Profile:

- International inbound receptive operators
- Chinese Americans
- International tour operators

Trends:

- Experiential travel
- Experience local flavor
- Rise in visitation to 2nd and 3rd tier cities

Strategies:

- Utilize industry analyst *Tourism Economics* to conduct international market analysis.
- Utilize data/findings to develop future strategy/focus.
- Support co-op marketing opportunities with key receptive operator partners.
- Investigate potential initiatives with India in-country marketing.
- Investigate participation on regional sales mission to China with East West Marketing.
- Identify potential new key receptive operators.
- Highlight international activities and current/potential business at partners sales meetings.
- Conduct an East Coast and West Coast sales mission with front-line training.
- Attend industry trade shows for our top feeder markets (UK, China, India).
- Support statewide or regional partner initiatives when appropriate.
- Maintain presence in 2019 Brand USA Inspiration Guide.

Proposed Trade Show Schedule:

■ AA China Receptive Edition (special invite only)	September
■ RTO MICE	October
■ RTO West	February
■ Active America China	March
■ RTO East	April
■ IPW	June

The primary consumer marketing goal is to drive leisure guests to visit and stay in the Hershey Harrisburg Region.

Goals:

- Increase awareness of what our destination offers in our primary and secondary markets.
- Inspire visitation with the message that the Hershey Harrisburg Region is the perfect location to *Come Together*.
- Extend visitor stay by increasing awareness of the variety of experiences available.
- Become the indispensable resource for planning a trip to our region.
- Measure the effectiveness of our efforts, learn, and apply findings.

Create Content:

Creating high-quality content and capitalizing on our internal capabilities to produce rich media allow us to tell more stories and provide more engaging content.

Create Segmented Messages:

Primary messaging segments include Family and Adult/Couples with Outdoors incorporated throughout both segments. Vineyards & Breweries will become a new segment focusing on the many diverse offerings available in the Hershey Harrisburg Region.

Create an Umbrella Theme:

Utilizing our *Come Together* umbrella campaign theme will tie together our seasonal and continuity campaigns with cohesive messaging.

Deploy:

We will target the right people, on the right channels, at the right time, by utilizing various tactics and strategies that support VHH marketing objectives.

Our integrated marketing approach utilizes and leverages the strengths of a variety of channels.

- Website - Primary consumer-facing resource and inspiration hub
- Email - Sent monthly to approximately 17,000 subscribers
- Social Media - Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube provide real-time insights into what's happening in our region.
- Print – 275,000 Travel Guides are distributed annually and are designed to be a resource for pre-trip planning, as well as for in-market visitors.
- Paid Search – A very efficient tactic to drive website traffic by potential visitors who are in the consideration phase of planning a getaway
- Digital Display and Digital Video - Purchased for both primary marketing and continuity campaigns



Primary DMAs: High potential for overnight stay

New York (includes northern New Jersey)

Philadelphia (includes southern New Jersey)

Washington D.C. (includes northern Virginia and parts of Maryland)

Pittsburgh

Secondary DMAs: Day trippers with overnight potential

Baltimore

Wilkes-Barre/Scranton



Target Markets:

Our media executions are segmented to Women 25-54 and Men 25-54 so that we can effectively evaluate metrics and buying patterns.

Analyze:

VHH Marketing is committed to consistently evaluating all executions to ensure the best possible outcomes, and we'll apply learnings to enhance future campaigns.

- Google Analytics
- ADARA
- Email A/B subject line testing
- Adobe Advertising Platform



VHH Public Relations efforts aim to enhance the region's visibility as a premier leisure travel destination by promoting the area to traditional and online media to generate positive earned media regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Goals:

- Increase earned media placements by 10% over FY 17-18.
- Generate earned media that positions the region as a premier leisure travel destination.
- Support local earned media opportunities positioning VHH as leading economic driver through tourism.
- Develop and implement new tracking metrics and protocols to accurately reflect media coverage for our region.

Target Audiences:

Media with a focus on travel writers, reporters, bloggers, and online influencers within the following primary markets:

- Travel media and leisure travel consumer resources
- Local media and community news resources/influencers
- Trade media and meeting and group planner resources

Key Target Markets:

The primary target markets for earned media to include:

- New York City (includes northern New Jersey)
- Philadelphia (includes southern New Jersey)
- Washington D.C. (includes northern Virginia and parts of Maryland)
- Pittsburgh

Secondary markets include:

- Baltimore
- Wilkes-Barre/Scranton

Strategies:

- Host 25 travel writers for individual or group FAM tours.
- Host "Media Days" in spring and fall to promote the varied assets available in the Hershey Harrisburg Region.
- Continue to attract and host individual travel media through active outreach.
- Attend a minimum of three Travel Media Marketplaces to generate new media leads.
- Conduct 10 personal meetings with media from primary markets.
- Showcase the Hershey Harrisburg Region via seasonal media e-newsletters.



PARTNERSHIP

The VHH Partnership Department aims to attract, secure, cultivate, and retain a diverse group of tourism-related businesses reflective of our destination and with consideration of visitor needs and interests.

Goals:

- Increase Partnership revenue by 10% over FY 17-18.
- Retain 90% of existing investing Partners.
- Increase the total number of investing Partners by 10% over FY 17-18.
- Add 60 new Partners.

Strategies:

- Implement newly developed Destination Partnership program to increase revenue and drive visitation to smaller “destinations within our destination.”
- Research and attract new tourism-related business Partners.
- Retain existing Partners through quality education and networking opportunities.
- Maximize exclusive partnership benefits.
- Maximize partnership assets including website, video, and print materials to increase new Partner sales.
- Increase education/engagement in Partner Extranet activity.
- Implement new onboarding process and procedures.
- Increase awareness of Marketing Assistance and Co-Op Advertising programs.

Exclusive Partner Benefits:

- Inclusion in online and print materials promoting the Hershey Harrisburg Region
- Marketing Assistance and Co-Op Advertising opportunities
- Support from a team of Sales, Marketing, and Public Relations professionals
- Year-round networking and educational events
- Advocacy



Dear Tourism Stakeholders,

It is my pleasure to provide the following information related to our plan for the 2018-19 fiscal year. As we enter year three for the Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority (HHSE), we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.

Our Marketing and Communications Manager, Allison Rohrbaugh, has applied her skills and ideas to establish our brand and identity over the first two years. We will continue to build and strengthen that identity.



Dean Polk, our Business Development Manager, has spent countless hours exploring possible events for our destination. Now in his second year with HHSE, Dean has worked hard to get himself known among the events rights holders and national governing bodies of our industry.

We will continue to work within our allocated budget under the umbrella of VHH, to promote sports tourism and events initiatives in the Hershey Harrisburg Region. We fully recognize and appreciate the support of the Dauphin County Commissioners and Dauphin County Economic Development in helping us achieve our goals. With those goals in place, we will aggressively pursue any and all business opportunities that fit in our marketplace; we will continue to develop our brand through our website, social media channels, and traditional advertising; and we will further develop the relationships that are in place with our community stakeholders. All these elements will come together to help us establish ourselves as one of the leading sports and events organizations in the country.

We appreciate your continued support, and we look forward to further increasing the economic impact of sports and events in our community, making the Hershey Harrisburg Region a better place to live, work, and play. Here's to a fantastic 2018-19 year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregg M. Cook'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Gregg M. Cook
Executive Director



**HERSHEY
HARRISBURG**
SPORTS & EVENTS
AUTHORITY

The Hershey Harrisburg Sports & Events Authority (HHSE) is entering its second fully-operational fiscal year as the sports and events division of Visit Hershey & Harrisburg (VHH). With longer-term strategic recommendations in place, HHSE sets out to build on its initial success and continue to develop the brand.

Organizational goals for 2018-19:

- Empower local event promoters to build the foundation for long-term success.
- Focus on growth of non-peak (November-February) and shoulder (September-October; March-May) tourism seasons.
- Work to establish new annual events, such as a music festival, holiday basketball tournament, and Christmas season event/attraction.
- Develop community and stakeholder support for sports tourism and event enrichment efforts.
- Firmly establish HHSE as the leader for sports tourism and event marketing.

Goals:

- Increase room night bookings by 10% over FY 17-18.
- Increase economic impact of sports and events by 10% over FY 17-18.

Strategies:

- Attend six sports conferences/shows.
- Attend five events conferences/shows.
- Submit 18 bids for new sporting events.
- Host 15 site visits by sports/events rights holders.

Planning:

- Build partnerships and establish relationships with potential funding sources, and political and community leaders.
- Evaluate and assess estimated economic impact of potential sports and events and report actual economic impact of booked events.

Owned Events:

- Build statewide and local awareness of the Big 26 Baseball Classic®, HHSE's first owned event.
- Foster relationships with national, regional and local sponsors to help establish the Big 26 Baseball Classic as the region's "must-see" high school baseball event.



Business Development:

- Establish strong relationships with key officials and decision makers of regional and national sports organizations, leagues, conferences, and associations.
- Work with local and state agencies on sports and events permitting or land usage.
- Serve on key committees responsible for bringing sports and events to the Hershey Harrisburg Region.
- Serve on host and/or steering committees.

Marketing:

- Develop marketing and media relations plans to promote designated hosted events.
- Manage advertising content and placement for the organization and select events.
- Build brand and destination awareness branding.
- Participate in county-wide image development efforts.
- Manage the direction and content of HHSE website and other websites.
- Direct all social media efforts specific to sporting and city-wide events.

Media and Public Relations:

- Proactively contact and respond to local, regional, and national media associates to generate positive media coverage of the Hershey Harrisburg Region as a leading destination for sports and events.

Fundraising and Communications:

- Expand local revenue generating and fundraising activities to support existing program operations and regional expansion.
- Use external presence and relationships to garner new opportunities.

Event Services Responsibilities:

- Develop service promotion packages for sports and event planners.
- Act as liaison between event planner and partners in planning entertainment, tours, shopping, and family programs.
- Attend and organize pre-and post-event meetings with event planners and appropriate vendors.
- Maintain and update directory of event services.





VisitHersheyHarrisburg.org



HHsportsandevents.com