

IEDA Market Research and Plan Overview

Situation Analysis:

When people from other states see Iowa on TV or online, they want to visit. When they visit, they are more likely to stay. This is why IEDA's visitor and talent attraction strategies fit hand in glove through its This is Iowa initiative.

IEDA's marketing is helping Iowa address one of its major challenges: population. Slow population growth has not kept pace with a wave of retiring Baby Boomers. The state must attract more people – visitors and residents – from other states.

This is Iowa was built on a significant research study, with two key findings:

1. Most people simply don't know enough about the state to form an accurate opinion.
2. Tourism is critical: two-thirds of U.S. adults say they have seriously considered moving somewhere after visiting.

Following a pandemic-fueled pause in out-of-state marketing, IEDA leveraged a one-time infusion of federal COVID-19 recovery funds in FY2022 to take its marketing to places it had never been, including:

- Introducing Iowa to the nation for the first time through a national television ad that gave viewers a glimpse of Iowa's beauty and lifestyle.
- A tourism campaign that showcases the state from an entirely fresh perspective – that of a drone camera – and sets Iowa's tourism efforts apart from others.
- Investing in more everyday marketing tools that Iowa needs to stay competitive, including a refreshed digital presence and an inventory of photography and video that brings Iowa to life for prospective visitors.

Preliminary results show the investment is paying off: About one-quarter of U.S. travelers and one-third of U.S. job seekers saw Iowa advertising in the first half of 2022, according to a survey. Of those, 80% of travelers and 83% of job seekers said the advertising made them more likely to consider Iowa.

Target Audiences:

Based on the research, the consumer target audience has been divided into three sub-segments, recognizing that those at different life stages have different motivators and access information differently.

- Adults living in Midwest states, including Iowa, or with an affinity/connection to Iowa plus stretch markets, such as San Francisco, Detroit, Dallas and Denver

Sub-Segment	Description	Media Consumption
Young adults (Gen Z and Millennials ages 22 to 29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking to start and/or grow their career and to experience new things	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tech innate, use multiple screens, communicate with text and images

Young families (Millennials and Gen X ages 30 to 39)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to make family memories and find work/life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys traditional media accessed differently (e.g., podcasts, Hulu)
Middle aged adults (Gen X and Boomers ages 40 to 55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have disposable income and may recommend Iowa to younger generations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely to use traditional media; Facebook is go-to social media outlet

Strategic Framework:

INSIGHT FROM OUR TARGET AUDIENCE	My perception is my reality (and my perceptions are out of date)
WHAT WE WANT THEM TO BELIEVE	Iowa is more than meets the eye
IMAGINE IF WE COULD	Reveal the REAL Iowa
MAGNETIC IDEA / STRATEGY	Change the vantage point for our target audience so they can see Iowa “beyond the crop”

Messages:

The research found facts about Iowa’s tourism attractions and business-friendly attributes both equally increased favorability toward Iowa, interest in visiting and considering Iowa as a place to live. This reinforced the plan to roll-out one integrated marketing campaign with consistent messaging about Iowa’s benefits.

Messages will be focused around the topics best received in the research – affordability (of travel and cost of living/doing business), economic viability (of communities and careers), natural beauty (for visiting and quality of life) and culture & lifestyle (from art to festivals, breweries and restaurants).

Tactics:

- **Buzz** – Disrupt a cluttered media environment and capture target audience attention by creating an unexpected moment in time.
- **Influencers** – Leverage visibility of third-parties inside and outside the state to see Iowa “beyond the crop” and share their surprising discoveries with existing followers on social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, blogs).
- **Social Media** – Tell stories about surprising Iowa people and places around the four messaging pillars using the social channels most frequented by our target audiences.

- **Advertising** – Position surprising Iowa images and facts in digital (e.g., Google Display Network) and out-of-home venues (e.g., billboards, Uber car wraps) to inspire target to challenge expectations and learn more about Iowa.
- **Media Relations** – Pitch statewide, national, regional, industry trade and business reporters to write about the surprising facts, people and places Iowa has to offer in support of the stories and trends they are covering.
- **Digital** – Create a bridge website to house stories within the four message pillars and bring together the best of the live, work and play information already housed on the Travel Iowa and Iowa Economic Development websites into one place for users.