



**MRC Strategic Planning Session Notes**  
**November 10, 2009**  
**(revised December 15, 2009)**

- I. Introductions and State updates
  - a. Minnesota: Cheryl Offerman
  - b. Iowa: Nancy Landess
  - c. Illinois: Jan Kemmerling, Roger Carmack
  - d. Missouri: Deb Lee
  - e. Kentucky: Liz Chewning
  - f. Arkansas: Nancy Clark
  - g. Mississippi: Kristen McCaskill
- II. Objectives
  - a. Reviewed the outlined objectives from the past strategic planning session (2007-2010)
  - b. Revised and prioritized objectives
    - i. Increase travel into and within the ten states of Mississippi River Country, USA.
    - ii. Increase positive awareness of the Mississippi River and its attributes among all stakeholder and customer groups.
    - iii. Effectively leverage the resources of the travel organizations and businesses in ten Mississippi River States for marketing and awareness programs.
- III. Goals
  - a. Reviewed the goals set in the past strategic planning session.
  - b. Revised and prioritized the goals
    - i. Market the MRC in Japan to the travel trade and media
    - ii. Support Mississippi River states group tour marketing promotions
    - iii. Optimize domestic Web and e-marketing programs
- IV. Tactics and Tracking
  - a. Reviewed the tactics set in the past strategic planning session
  - b. Revised tactics and include tracking mechanisms
    - i. Market the MRC in Japan to the travel trade and media
      - 1. Maintain representation in Japan
        - a. Include representation in the budget and through a contract
      - 2. Host at least three media to Mississippi River Country
        - a. Report the media pick-ups including samples and media value
      - 3. Maintain regular travel trade communication



- a. Include quarterly e-newsletters in the budget
  - b. Provide statistics on the e-newsletters performance
  - c. Report the number of calls to travel trade
  - d. Report on the meetings attended with the travel trade
4. Maintain and update Japanese Web site
    - a. Provide usage statistic
    - b. Provide an annual report with website statistics
  5. Investigate and pursue providing travel agent training (through webinars, conferences, other ideas)
    - a. Train 100 number of travel agents on the Mississippi River states
  6. Generate tour operator product offering for MRC
    - a. Baseline based on quarterly reports by 10%
  7. Host tour operators or Japanese receptive operators
    - a. Two per year
  8. Leverage online opportunities including social media and travel blogs at advice of Advanced International
    - a. Provide the number of followers and fans in the quarterly website reports
    - b. Provide usage statistic
  9. Develop multi-state itineraries
    - a. 5 itineraries per year
  10. Attend JATA
    - a. Include JATA in the annual budget
    - b. Report the number of leads received from the show
- ii. Support Mississippi River states group tour marketing promotions
1. Develop multi-state itineraries
    - a. 5 itineraries per year
  2. Place itineraries on the Web and distribute to 10 states group travel representatives
    - a. 5 itineraries per year
  3. Maintain the MRC profile sheet
    - a. Distribute the profile sheet to 10 states group travel representatives
  4. Increase earned media regarding group travel opportunities
    - a. Distribute releases to group travel media at least ten times a year
    - b. Receive five group travel media-related pick ups
  5. Develop and distribute photo CDs to group travel representatives



- a. Maintain digital assets and look to update five times a year
- iii. Optimized domestic Web and e-marketing programs
  1. Consumer research on web functionality
    - a. Provide quarterly reports on website statistics
    - b. Establish a mechanism for states to access statistics on-line
  2. Continue to grow the number of opt-ins for email opportunities
    - a. Increase the number of opt-ins by 10% a year
  3. Send quarterly monthly e-newsletters
    - a. Provide statistics on the e-newsletters performance
  4. Optimize Web site
    - a. Monitor search engine optimization
    - b. Communicate website usage statistics
  5. Include video footage and links to videos on the website
    - a. Video representation of each of the 10 states on the website
  6. Develop social media and interactive marketing opportunities
    - a. Provide the number of followers and fans in the quarterly website reports
    - b. Provide usage statistic
  7. Provide annual reporting
    - a. Provide an annual report with website statistics
    - b. Establish a mechanism for states to access statistics on-line
  8. Add weather content to the website
    - a. Create an opportunity for website users to find weather information from the site
  9. Add an opportunity for weather related information to be
    - a. communicated on the website (especially in the event of flooding or other major weather events)
  10. Increase earned media
    - a. Distribute releases to media at least ten times a year
    - b. Receive five media pick ups
- iv. Provide an annual report