New York By Rail Program  
&  
What’s Possible for MIPRC?

MIPRC Annual Meeting  
October 22, 2019

Tom Martinelli  
Publisher/  
Chief Content Officer

A Few Things About Me…

- Graduate of American Univ. in D.C.
- Publishing Background
- Extensive Travel & Tourism Industry Exp.
- 16+ years Passenger Rail Experience
- Passionate about Passenger Rail
- While I’m a Yankee Fan from New York…  
I’ve Got a Secret Midwest Connection…
- Would love to take Hiawatha’s Green Bay  
Thruway Connection to a game!
Presentation Overview

1. Provide Overview of New York By Rail Program
2. Offer Perspective of Engaging Passengers Through Local, Curated Content
3. Provide Examples of Combining Compelling Content with Amtrak Offers to Enhance Results
4. Review a New & Existing Program Offering Passengers an Easy Way to Experience Amtrak
5. Discuss What May Be Possible for MIPRC

New York By Rail Story

• Approached by Amtrak’s New York State Marketing Director in 2003 (before PRIIA)
• Lack of local destination information provided by Amtrak to promote New York State –
  “One Size Doesn’t Fit All”
• Overall Goal: Increase Amtrak ridership
• Develop curated content (educate/inform) about New York State Routes
• First State-Centric Amtrak magazine
• Need for local content continues 17 years later
Integrated Marketing Program

• **Print Magazine**
  - Annual Frequency
  - 175,000 copies distributed 16 consecutive years (print isn’t dead!)
  - Onboard Amtrak Trains throughout NYS Routes
  - Amtrak Stations in New York State + Michigan
  - New York State Thruway Information Centers
  - Travel Shows
  - Amtrak Ticket Offices  (CA, NC, CO, ND, NJ)
  - Rebranding 2 years ago to keep content & design contemporary

Integrated Marketing Program

• **NewYorkByRail.com**
  - Complementary resource to print magazine – began in 2013
  - Year-Round Trip Planning Resource
  - Audience is completely different than print magazine
  - Content is driving traffic through search.
  - 30,000 unique visitors & >50,000-page views in Aug. 2019
  - Averaging 500 clicks/month to Amtrak.com last 6 months
    - 70% of clicks: “Amtrak SEE NY AND SAVE 15% Discount”
Integrated Marketing Program

- **Penn Station Travel Show**
  - Annual Event in NY City offers opportunity to reach train audience during journey

- **E-Blast**
  - 8,000 Opt-in subscribers
  - Timely information to stimulate Amtrak Getaways

- **StorySeller Blogs** (1st Person Experiences)

- **Social Media**

- **New York By Rail Travel Packages** (New)

Complementing Amtrak Marketing

- **Recent Amtrak State-Supported Marketing Changes**
- **States and Regions Know Their Local Markets Best**
- **State-Supported Goals vs. Amtrak Goals**
- **States Need to:** "Educate and Inform" –
  - Be an Invaluable Resource
  - Sell your Destinations, Attractions, Events & Other Great Experiences
  - Help Manage Train-Rider Expectations (train ride duration, connections available from train station, day-trip or overnight)
  - Don’t Assume they know it! (i.e. NY City vs. Upstate New York)
What’s Your State’s Story?

- Storytelling and great content provides the “Why”.
- Great way to complement Amtrak Fare Orders, Discounts and BOGO Offers
- 1st Person Experiences offer credibility
- Great Content = More Online Search Visitors
- Digital Content Examples
  - Adirondack Weekend Getaway
  - New York State Fair

New York By Rail/Amtrak – NYS State Fair

- **About**: State support. Blog promo for New York State Fair
- **Dates ran**: 8/21/19-8/26/19
- **Areas targeted**: Albany/Schenectady/Troy DMA, Buffalo DMA, New York DMA, Syracuse DMA
- **Amount spent**: $1,000
- **Bidding type**: Link clicks
- **Link Clicks**: 5,754
- **Unique Clicks**: 5,400
- **Cost per result**: $0.17
- **Avg. Time Reading Blog**: 2.12 min
Insights report:

**The good:**

- The ad received an above average quality ranking (meaning it performed better than ads that competed for the same audience).
- Compared to other state support ads we’ve run on social, this ad performed better than average in terms of engagement, number of link clicks, and cost per link click. This may mean several things: 1) the audience was correctly targeted, 2) the ad copy/image were compelling enough to drive people to learn more, 3) our bidding strategy (we paid for link clicks) was cost effective.

---

**Rail Travel Getaways**

Taking the train is part of your getaway and vacation experience.

- Enjoyable
- Eco-Friendly
- In-Demand
How a Travel Package Program Is An Asset To Promoting Rail & Overall Tourism

- Provides a Turnkey Product & Fulfillment Program To an Easier Decision-Making Process
- Many Travelers Are Yearning for Service & Help to Plan Their Vacations and Getaways
- Cars Are Left at Home = More Decisions & Planning is Needed For a Smooth Trip
- Travel Packages are a Great Advertising Tool for Content
- Opportunity to partner with your State & Regional Tourist Organizations, Hotels & Suppliers

NEW YORK BY RAIL

Modeled after Downeaster Travel Packages
- All-Inclusive Packages include Transportation to/from Amtrak stations – “The Last Mile”
- Make it Easy for Passengers to Experience Amtrak
- Opportunity to Provide Product to Tourism Industry
- Complement Amtrak Vacations – Fill in Gaps With Other Popular New York State Destinations & Experiences
- I Love New York/Tourism Alignment
- Work with Hotels, Attractions & Other Suppliers
• 17 Travel Packages Within NY State-Supported Routes
• 11 Travel Packages Not Offered by Amtrak Vacations:
  - Adirondacks (1 Multi-Stop Tour)
  - Hudson Valley (7)
  - Lake George (2)
  - Saratoga Springs
• 6 Other Packages With Different Experiences:
  - Montreal, Quebec
  - New York City (4)
  - Niagara Falls, USA
Amtrak Vacations
- Great Experiences Void!
- Opportunity to Develop Complementary NYS Route Travel Packages

DISCOVER BEAUTIFUL LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE U.S. AND CANADA

Amtrak Vacations - Great Experiences Void!
- Opportunity to Develop Complementary NYS Route Travel Packages

Steven Grasso - President
North American Traveler
Downeasterpackages.com

Working with a Travel Package Expert!
6th Year

35 “Car-Free” Travel Packages Currently Offered

Day Trips, Overnight Getaways & Multi-Stop Tours

Independent Vacation Travel Packages – People Can Travel When They Want (Without Assigned Dates)

1,200 Amtrak Passengers

626 Room Nights

>$300,000 in Supplier Payments
Downeaster.com CASE STUDY

- Well-known Boston band wanted to provide a fun way for their fans from the Boston area to travel up to Portland and enjoy a concert.
- NNEPRA or any state organization does not have the capacity to provide this service and fulfillment. Fulfillment is the key term.
- NAT, with the assistance of NNEPRA, reserved one train car for the group to travel up and back from Portland. The package included Rail, hotel transfers, 1 night hotel and a VIP concert ticket. Another package included just the rail and the concert ticket to advertise a lower price.
- 56 concert goers were booked and all parties were happy. Without the fulfillment company, this could not have happened easily.
- Lesson learned here is that a travel package provider can help vet potential clients and lower the hurdles for potential business.

Key Takeaways

- States/Regions Know Their Markets Best—“One Size Doesn’t Fit All”
- Maximize Content/Storytelling Opportunities
- Make Train Getaways Easy for Passengers!
- Complement Amtrak’s Marketing Support & Leverage Amtrak’s Nationwide Network
- Amtrak is Constantly Changing!
Why MIPRC Marketing?

- Good Story to Tell/Lot’s of Positives
  - New Equipment = Better Customer Experience
  - Alternative to Driving
  - “Rising Tide Floats All State Boats”
  - Economies of Scale With Combined Efforts
  - Common Ridership Target Market
  - Overall Passenger Rail Awareness is Low
  - Opportunity to Target Markets – (i.e. Students)
  - Help Change Regional Perceptions

Why MIPRC Marketing?

- Opportunity to “Educate & Inform”
  - ”Why the Train”
  - New Service/Expanded Services
  - Dozens of Destinations within 8 States
  - Events, Festivals & Other Activities
  - Thruway Bus Service
  - Last Mile Connectivity
    - Shuttle Service, Rental Cars, Ride Sharing, Bikes, etc.
What’s Possible for MIPRC?

What’s Possible for MIPRC?
What’s Possible for MIPRC?

- Anything or Everything
- What Makes Most Sense?
  - Print Magazine
  - Website
  - Travel Show
  - Travel Packages
- How Do We Start?
  - What are Objectives? What Data/Research/Studies are Available?
  - Facilitated Session(s) with Stakeholders
  - Opportunity to Develop a Marketing Plan
  - Implement the Plan
  - Flexibility to work with me as Marketing Consultant and Content Marketer
How Much Will It Cost?

- Facilitated Session(s)/Develop Marketing Strategy:
  $5,000-10,000
- Possible Marketing Components
  - Print Magazine: Frequency, 1-2x/year
    - 84 Pages; 50,000 copies:
      - $75,000-$85,000 + Distribution (per issue)
  - Website Content/Enhancements: $10,000-$12,500
  - Travel Show: $5,000 - $10,000 (+ possible site rental fees)
  - Travel Package Program: TBD
- Opportunity to Seek Sponsors/Advertisers/Grants to Help Subsidize Cost

Thank You for the Opportunity!

- Tom Martinelli
  publisher@newyorkbyrail.com
  845-462-1209 – Office
  845-453-0345 - Cell