

# IEDA Marketing Research and Plan Overview

August 2020

## Situation Analysis:

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted Iowa's tourism and travel industry. Early estimates show that, compared to 2019, spending and tax revenue from Iowa travelers dropped 25 to 30 percent in 2020. Furthermore, Iowa's population has stayed relatively constant in recent years. The state needs to attract more people – visitors and residents – to both explore within and to come to Iowa from other states as the travel industry recovers economically from the pandemic.

A significant, multi-phase research study found most people outside Iowa just don't know enough about the state to form an accurate opinion. Other key findings include:

- Current perceptions of Iowa are outdated (e.g., hyper rural, farming only, corn, no diversity), but overall neutral (46%) and they can be shifted by sharing facts.
- Tourism is critical – two-thirds of U.S. adults say they have seriously considered moving somewhere after visiting.
- Most important, Iowa can provide what adults say are the critical factors in deciding to move to a new place: job opportunities, affordable housing, recreation and low crime.
- After learning more about Iowa, three-fourths said they feel much more/somewhat more positive about Iowa. Additionally, more than two-thirds say they are likely to consider visiting Iowa (67%) and half (53%) said they might consider moving to 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
<b>Young adults</b> (Gen Z and Millennials ages 22 to 29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Looking to start and/or grow their career and to experience new things</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tech innate, use multiple screens, communicate with text and images</li></ul>
<b>Young families</b> (Millennials and Gen X ages 30 to 39)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Want to make family memories and find work/life balance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enjoys traditional media accessed differently (e.g., podcasts, Hulu)</li></ul>
<b>Middle-aged adults</b> (Gen X and Boomers ages 40 to 55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have disposable income and may recommend Iowa to younger generations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most likely to use traditional media; Facebook is the go-to social media outlet</li></ul>

**Strategic Framework:**

<b>INSIGHT FROM OUR TARGET AUDIENCE</b>	My perception is my reality (and my perceptions are out of date)
<b>WHAT WE WANT THEM TO BELIEVE</b>	Iowa is more than meets the eye
<b>IMAGINE IF WE COULD</b>	Reveal the REAL Iowa
<b>MAGNETIC IDEA / STRATEGY</b>	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).

To see examples of marketing messaging and tactics, click [here](#).