

# 2018 Tourism Marketing Review



This review summarizes why Connecticut invests in tourism marketing, what the Connecticut Office of Tourism has been doing to promote tourism in 2018 — and how well those tactics are working:

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All of the state's tourism marketing initiatives detailed inside strive to bring to life positioning based on market research about what is **TRU** about Connecticut — **True** to who residents think we are, **Relevant** to our target audiences and **Unique** from our competition.

## MESSAGING STRATEGY FOR TOURISM

*Connecticut offers a dynamic blend of complementary experiences — the natural and the cultural, the historic and the contemporary, the relaxing and the active. Better yet, they're all so close to each other — and all so close to you.*

## WHY INVEST in tourism marketing:

Connecticut tourism is a proven generator of business revenues, tax revenues and statewide jobs.



**\$14.7 billion**

in sales supported by traveler spending



**\$1.7 billion**

in tax revenues including **\$910 million in state/local taxes**



**82,688 jobs**

directly supported by tourism (total of 121,327 both direct and indirect jobs)

Source: Tourism Economics Study, Economic Impact of Travel in Connecticut, 2016

## HOW MUCH has been invested in tourism marketing:

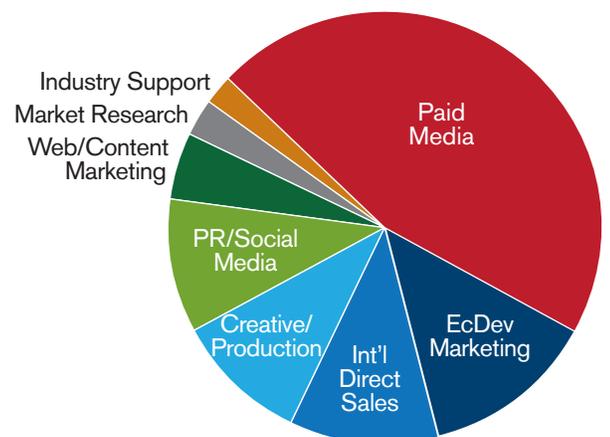
Our budget has been highly variable — declining 73% overall since 2012.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	<b>\$15.0M</b>	\$9.6M	\$12.0M	\$9.5M	\$6.5M	\$6.4M	<b>\$4.1M</b>
YOY Change		<b>-36%</b>	+25%	<b>-21%</b>	<b>-32%</b>	<b>-2%</b>	<b>-36%</b>

## WHAT TACTICS we employed to promote Connecticut tourism in 2018:

Despite budget cuts, we maintained an integrated mix of 21st century, modern marketing tactics.

- ✓ Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- ✓ Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest)
- ✓ Public Relations (national, regional and local)
- ✓ Familiarization (“FAM” Tours)
- ✓ Influencer Marketing
- ✓ Website Management
- ✓ E-Mail Marketing
- ✓ Video/YouTube Marketing
- ✓ Content Marketing
- ✓ Branded Content
- ✓ Content Seeding/ Distributed Content
- ✓ Trip Advisor Partnership
- ✓ Pandora Advertising
- ✓ International Travel Shows
- ✓ Out-of-Home Advertising (Including Billboards and Permanent Installations)

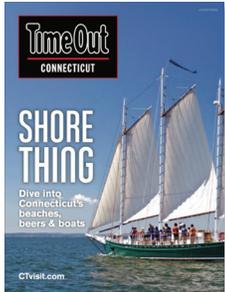


# WHAT RESULTS our key consumer marketing tactics delivered in 2018 (Calendar Year):

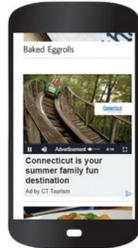
We continually optimize each marketing tactic to maximize the return on investment (ROI).

## PAID MEDIA: 280 Million Impressions

We invested in an array of highly efficient media tactics, a few of which are highlighted below:



We partnered with *TimeOut New York* to create/run a 4-page branded content print feature and 5 online articles. Through this initiative, we promoted 100+ tourism partners.



We ran video content seeding on such popular sites as *New York Post*, *Real Simple*, *HGTV* and *Travel +Leisure*.



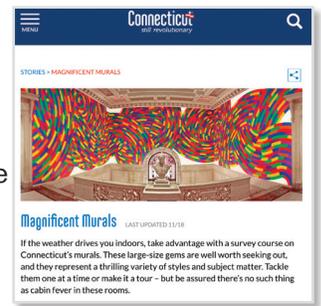
We worked with Pandora to create a custom streaming audio/video campaign on Pandora.



We ran billboards/out of home advertising in Boston/New York and Connecticut.

## CONTENT MARKETING: 2.7 Million Readers

We created/promoted ~50 content pieces *per month* — many featuring arts, culture and history — that **drove nearly 50% of the traffic** to CTvisit.com.



## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION/MARKETING

Over 2012, organic search traffic to CTvisit.com was up 175% and paid search traffic was up 2,807%.

## MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

We installed permanent tourism displays at Bradley International and Cross Sound Ferry.



We continue to work with Lite 100.5 FM WRCH on a weekly "Tell Me Something Good" feature. And we continue to partner with FOX61 on a "What's on Your Connecticut Bucket List" promo that has generated:

- ~4M PR impressions; ~4M social media reach; and
- 660K engagements and 539K video views.

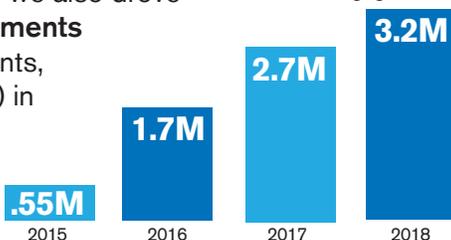
## PUBLIC RELATIONS: 1 Billion Impressions

In calendar year 2018, we secured 1,054 quality press hits across an array of national, regional, and local media outlets.



## SOCIAL MEDIA: 138 Million Impressions

Through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest, we also drove **3.2M engagements** (likes, comments, clicks, shares) in 2018 — a 6x increase over 2015.

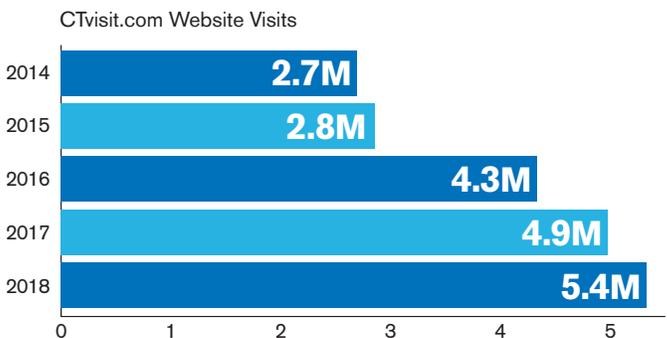


## EMAIL MARKETING: 2.4 Million Distribution

We sent email updates twice monthly to more than 100,000, opt-in engaged consumers — and **more than doubled the open rate** over the past 4 years.

## WEBSITE: 5.4 Million Visits

All tactics worked together to drive traffic to CTvisit.com — which reached an historic high in 2018.

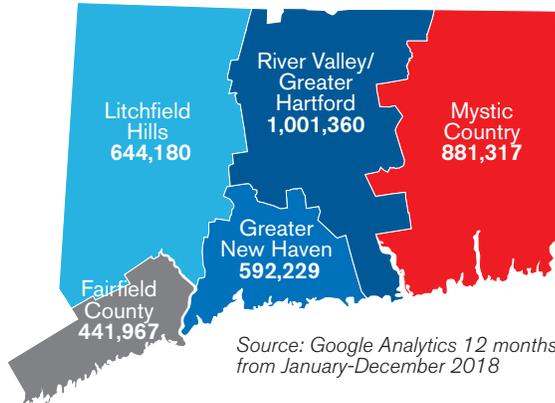


## WHAT WE PROMOTE through our statewide tourism marketing:

Our marketing promotes each region of CT, all industry sectors, and assets in every town/city.

### EVERY REGION:

2018 page views on CTvisit.com of partners' listings/deals/events by region



### ALL SECTORS, INCLUDING ARTS/CULTURE/HISTORY:

Percent of all promoted CTvisit.com articles that featured arts/culture/history



### THOUSANDS OF BUSINESSES:

4,224 tourism partners now have a free listing page on CTvisit.com (double since 2015)

CONTACT:  
860.572.5955  
<http://www.mysticaquarium.org>  
[info@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:info@mysticaquarium.org)

BOOK NOW

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

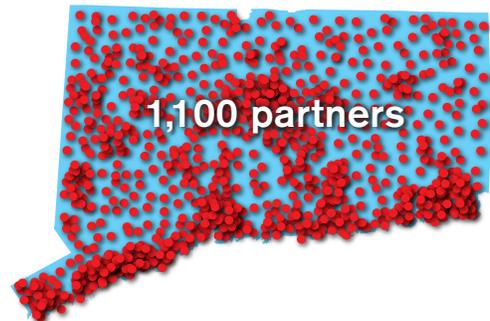
# of 2018 referrals (calls, clicks, emails) to tourism partners from CTvisit.com

Source: CTvisit.com Google Analytics

3+ million

### PARTNERS FROM ALL TOWNS/CITIES:

1,100 different tourism partners from 169 towns/cities promoted in our 2018 paid advertising/PR



## HOW EFFECTIVELY our marketing is driving actual visitors to the state:

In 2018, our research-driven organization continued to track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each of our marketing tactics. NEW this year, we deployed Arrivalist — a highly advanced GPS-driven analytics tool that monitors whether those who viewed our advertising actually visited Connecticut.

Those exposed to our digital marketing in NYC **actually visited Connecticut**



than those who were NOT exposed.

Those exposed to our digital marketing in NYC **actually stayed in Connecticut**



than those who were NOT exposed.

Source: Arrivalist, Spring/Summer 2018 data measuring actual travelers to Connecticut using GPS tracking; compared a control group that was not exposed to our digital marketing to those who were exposed to our digital marketing in the campaign's primary target market of New York.



ARRIVALIST

## WHAT OTHER SUPPORT we provided industry partners in 2018:

Here is a sampling of the other types of support the Connecticut Office of Tourism offers tourism partners.

### REGIONAL MARKETING PROGRAM:

Through the Regional Marketing Program, the Connecticut Office of Tourism:

- worked closely with town officials, associations, cultural organizations, and tourism businesses to promote partnerships, share ideas and solicit input;
- shared national/regional PR opportunities with local partners/towns/organizations;
- helped hundreds of local businesses maximize our no-cost marketing programs; and
- connected personally with 3,000+ partners across the state.

### EMAIL UPDATES TO PARTNERS/LEADERS

In 2018, we expanded our email mailing list to 8,500 (including industry partners, municipal/state leaders, associations and media) and reached out with timely updates/tips on PR and marketing opportunities at least monthly.



### OPEN HOUSE DAY



The Office of Tourism created/manages this in-state event each year. In 2018, we helped 225 tourism partners promote their offerings to a broader in-state audience and earned 564 PR placements.

### BIG E

Again this year, the Office of Tourism managed the Connecticut State Building at the Big E and helped local tourism partners optimize their participation/exhibition in this event.



### GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON TOURISM

We host the largest industry gathering of the year (400+ attendees). This year, the event offered keynote inspiration, networking opportunities and 12 professional development workshops. We also manage the annual Governor's Tourism Industry Awards program to recognize outstanding contributors to the tourism industry.

### INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

To encourage international tour operators, travel agents and travelers to visit Connecticut, we promoted Connecticut at 9 major international tourism trade shows and hosted 10 familiarization tours for international media and tour operators.

Connecticut's Director of Tourism also chairs the board for Discover New England (a consortium of state tourism directors across New England).

### CONVENTIONS/CONFERENCES

The Connecticut Convention and Sports Bureau (CTCSB) — funded in part by the Connecticut Office of Tourism — markets the state as a premier destination for meetings and events. In 2018, the CTCSB booked events that will:

- generate \$72M in future sales revenues; and
- contribute \$4.9M in state tax revenues.

### CTVISIT.COM DECAL

In 2018, we created/distributed free decals that local partners are using to cross sell other attractions in Connecticut.



## WHAT CHALLENGES we continue to address:

While we have continued to optimize the return on a declining marketing budget, the tourism industry faces several key challenges moving forward.

### EXPENSIVE TO REACH OUR AUDIENCE

- **We need to reach the #1 (NYC) and #9 (Boston) most expensive advertising markets** in the U.S. since research shows that the majority of our most likely visitors are from neighboring New York and Massachusetts.
- **We can only afford to reach a fraction of our target audience.** More than 31M people are in our target demographic households; the FY2019 media budget afforded us less than a 10% reach to that audience.



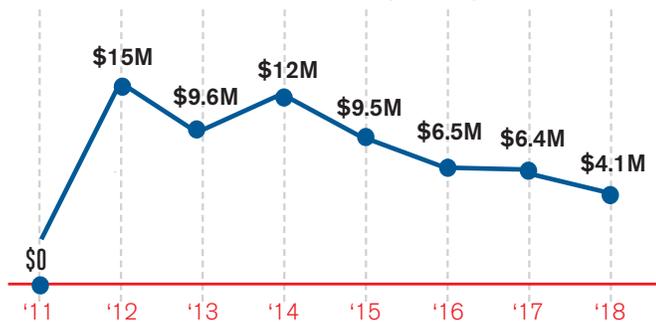
People in our Target Households: **31M**

Budgeted Paid Media Reach: **Less than 10%**

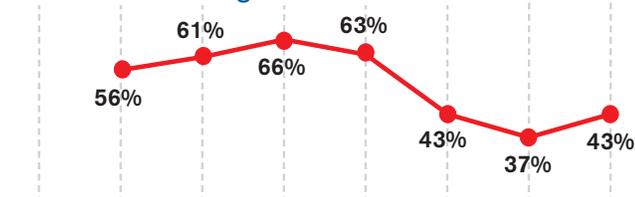
### INTEREST WANES WITH SPEND

- **Long-term indicators wane when we cut marketing spend.** While our robust content marketing program helped us regain interest in visiting Connecticut in 2018, in general, top-of-mind interest in visiting Connecticut declines when our spending declines.

#### Statewide Tourism Marketing Budget

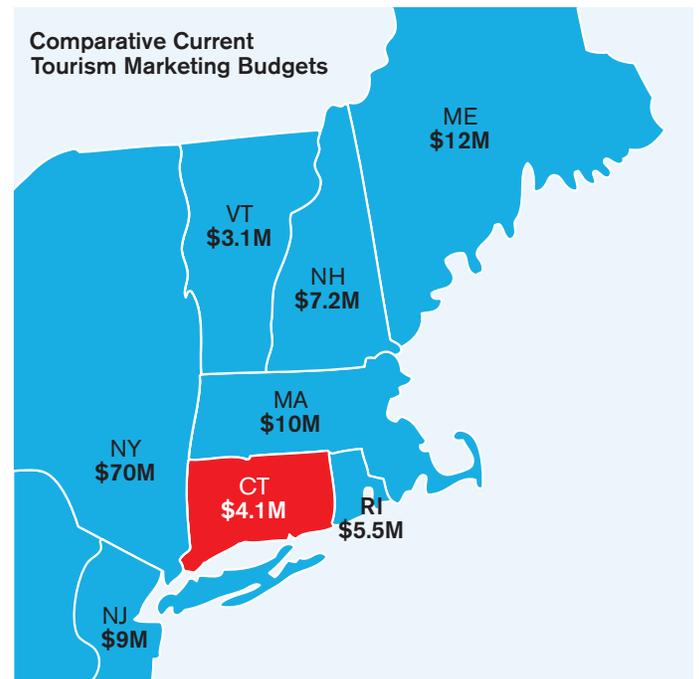


#### Interest in Visiting Connecticut



### COMPETITORS OUTSPENDING US

- **Connecticut is being outspent by the competition:** Nearby states are spending a combined \$114M on tourism marketing to reach similar target audiences.



### KEY ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN CUT

- **Statewide tourism marketing budget decreases have forced us to eliminate key activities.** Recent sacrifices have included:
  - mass media TV (eliminated 2016)
  - staffing of Welcome Centers (eliminated 2016)
  - printed Visitors Guide (eliminated 2019)

Thank you for all you do to support tourism in Connecticut. For more information, contact the Connecticut Office of Tourism, Department of Economic and Community Development  
 450 Columbus Blvd., Suite 5  
 Hartford, CT 06103  
 (860) 500-2300  
[www.CTvisit.com](http://www.CTvisit.com)

