

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF JACKSON

Contractor's Tax ID # _____
County Budget Code 24-4926-393-10
Compensation Not to Exceed: \$58,240

INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR SERVICES AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT (the "Agreement") shall be effective this the 15th day of August, 2018 and is hereby made and entered into by and between: **JACKSON TDA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY** ("TDA"), who's Contract Administrator hereunder shall be: Nick Breedlove, Executive Director; and Young Strategies Inc. (the "Contractor"), A Tourism Planning and Consulting Firm duly established under the laws of the State of North Carolina with the following contact information:

Berkeley Young
Post Office Box 38306, Charlotte, North Carolina 28278
704-677-4018
byoung@youngstrategies.com

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, the TDA desires to engage the Contractor to perform the "Work" hereinafter described; and

WHEREAS, the Contractor desires to perform such work for the TDA for the consideration described herein.

NOW THEREFORE, for and in exchange of the mutual consideration set forth below and other good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. Term: This Agreement shall be deemed effective on the date first stated above, and unless terminated earlier pursuant to this Agreement, shall continue until the last day of June next occurring thereafter, which coincides with the end of the TDA's fiscal year. Notwithstanding the foregoing:
 - a. ☐ Automatic Renewals: If this box is marked, this Agreement shall be deemed to automatically renew for successive additional one (1) year terms, unless and until either party provides the other with notice that this Agreement shall not automatically renew.

- b. ☒ **Termination:** If this box is marked, this Agreement may be terminated at any time by either party for any reason or for no reason, by providing written notice thereof to the other party.
- 2. **Work:** The Contractor shall provide all of the services described within **Exhibit “A” (labelled ‘Contract for Visitor Profile Research, Seasonal Analysis, Annual Visitation Volume & Tourism Master Plan and Gap Analysis for Jackson County, N.C.’)** attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference which services shall be referred to herein collectively as the “Work”. Clarification to any questions from the TDA related to **Exhibit A** are hereby incorporated as **Exhibit B** and shall serve as additional information related to the “Work”.
 - a. **Additional Work:** The parties reserve the right to add additional Work to this Agreement at a price agreed upon by the parties. Any such additions shall be in writing and signed by both parties. Any such additions shall become a part of this Agreement and shall be subject to all of the terms and conditions hereof.
- 3. **Compensation/Billing:** Unless otherwise described within Exhibit “A”, the TDA shall pay the Contractor as follows: **\$7,820 per month for eight months** for the satisfactory performance and/or delivery of the Work described herein. The TDA may request itemized invoices or statements reflecting the Work provided in order to help facilitate the processing of payments.
 - a. ☒ **Annual NTE Compensation Limit:** If this box is marked, the maximum total amount of compensation to be paid to the Contractor for the provision of the Work during the initial term shall not exceed (\$58,240). The Contractor shall obtain written confirmation from the TDA as to the applicable maximum compensation limits for any subsequent terms thereafter prior to performing any work during any such subsequent terms under this Agreement.
 - b. **Expenses:** The TDA shall not be liable for any out of pocket expenses paid or incurred by the Contractor in connection with the work unless otherwise agreed in writing prior to such expenses being incurred.
 - c. **Equipment:** Unless otherwise agreed in writing by TDA, the Contractor shall be solely responsible for providing all equipment, tools, materials, and/or supplies required to perform the Work hereunder.
 - d. **Contingent Funding:** Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, all financial obligations of the TDA under the terms and conditions of this Agreement are dependent upon, and subject to, the continuing allocation of funds by the TDA Board of Directors for such purpose. This Agreement

shall automatically terminate if such funds cease to be allocated or available.

4. Contract Administrator: The TDA's Contract Administrator designated above is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Contractor's performance hereunder, and for approving TDA payments and/or serving as the point of contact for TDA, but does not have independent signatory authority for the TDA under this Agreement.
5. Independent Contractor: Contractor is and shall at all times be considered an independent contractor, and as such shall be solely responsible for compliance with all applicable tax withholding, worker compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, or other licensures or insurances as may be required under local, state, or federal laws. The Contractor agrees to provide the TDA with the Contractor's correct taxpayer identification number upon execution of this Agreement. The Contractor agrees that failure to provide the TDA with a correct taxpayer identification number authorizes the TDA to withhold a certain percentage of any amount due and payable under this Agreement pursuant to the provision of the Internal Revenue Code, Title 26 of the United States Code.
6. Contractor's Employees: No employee of the TDA shall be utilized by the Contractor as an employee, subcontractor, and/or agent thereof without the prior written consent of the TDA. The Contractor agrees to provide the TDA with a list of the names and addresses of all Contractor's employees, subcontractors, and/or agents that will be working upon the premises in performing this Agreement. If the TDA disapproves of any of the foregoing, the Contractor agrees not to use such party upon the premises. The Contractor further agrees to use reasonable care in selecting and supervising trustworthy employees.
7. EEO Provisions: During the performance of this contract, the Contractor agrees that he shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation or belief, age or handicap. The Contractor in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor shall state that all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation or belief, age or handicap.
8. Health & Safety: The Contractor shall be responsible for initiating, maintaining, and supervising all safety precautions and programs in connection with the work. The contractor shall take all necessary precautions for the safety of, and shall provide the necessary protection to prevent damage, injury or loss to all employees, subcontractors, agents, or other representatives from the Work and other persons who may be affected thereby.
9. General Legal Compliance: The Contractor is and shall remain an independent contractor and, as such, shall be wholly responsible for the Work to be performed under this Agreement, and for the supervision of any employees, subcontractors, or

agents. The Contractor shall be responsible for compliance with all state, federal and/or local rules, regulations, codes, ordinances, laws, licensing requirements and/or other regulatory matters that are applicable to the conduct of the Contractor's business and the performance of the Work under this Agreement.

10. E-Verify. The Contractor shall be solely responsible for complying with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the General Statutes, and for ensuring that any subcontractors utilized also comply therewith. The Contractor shall execute affidavits verifying such compliance if requested by the TDA.
11. Iran Divestment. The Contractor hereby certifies that as of the date listed below, it is not on the Final Divestment List as created by the state Treasurer pursuant to NCGS § 143C-6A-4. In compliance with the requirements of the Iran Divestment Act and NCGS § 143C-6A-5(b), Contractor shall not utilize in the performance of the contract any subcontractor that is identified on the Finance Divestment List.
12. General Indemnification. Contractor agrees to hold and save completely harmless, and to fully indemnify TDA (including any and all officials, officers, employees, and/or agents thereof) from any and all litigation, and against any and all actions, liability, claims, suits, damages, cost or other expenses of any kind whatsoever (including without limitation attorneys' fees incurred for actual or threatened litigation) which may be brought or made against, or which may otherwise be incurred by TDA (including any and all officials, officers, employees, and/or agents thereof), or which may otherwise accrue and result to any other person, firm, or corporation furnishing or supplying any work, services, materials, or supplies in connection with any person, firm, or corporation that may be injured or damaged (including both personal and property damages) from the negligent or tortious action(s) or inaction(s) of Contractor (including any and all subcontractors or the respective officers, employees, and/or agents of either and/or all of them), or which TDA must otherwise pay and/or incur by reason of, or in any manner resulting from, any injury, loss or damage to persons or property resulting from any negligent or tortious action(s) or inaction(s) of Contractor (or of any and all subcontractors or the respective officers, employees, and agents of either and/or all of them), in the performance of this Agreement including specifically but without limitation the performance of the Work specifically described herein.
13. ☐ Liability Insurance: If this box is marked, the Contractor agrees to obtain and keep in force during its acts under this Agreement a comprehensive general liability insurance policy in the minimum amount of \$ _____, which in addition to naming and protecting the Contractor together with Contractor's employees, subcontractors, or agents shall also name as an additional insured the TDA, and shall protect the TDA together with its officials, officers, employees, and/or agents from and against any and all claims, losses, actions and judgements for damage or injury to persons or property arising out of or in connection with the Contractor's acts under this Agreement. The Contractor shall provide proof of liability coverage as set forth above to the TDA prior to commencing its performance as herein provided, and shall

require insurer to notify the TDA not less than ten (10) days prior to any cancellation, reduction or other modification of said policy. Contractor's obligations under this provision may be waived or modified in writing by the TDA.

14. Worker's Compensation Insurance: The Contractor shall obtain and keep in full force and effect worker's compensation for Contractor and any agents, employees and staff that the Contractor may employ, and shall provide proof to the TDA of such coverage, or that such worker's compensation insurance is not required under the circumstances. Under no circumstances shall TDA be responsible for providing such insurance or for covering the Contractor or any agents, employees and staff thereof under any worker's compensation insurance otherwise maintained by TDA for its employees.
15. TDA Property: The Contractor shall be responsible for the custody and care of any property furnished for use in connection with the performance of this Agreement and shall reimburse the TDA for any loss or damage to said property. The Contractor further agrees not to release any information concerning the TDA or its operation provided to or obtained by Contractor without the express written approval of the TDA. All reports, documents, or other products of the work performed pursuant to this Agreement or by the Contractor in the performance of this Agreement shall become the sole property of the TDA, and shall not be released by the Contractor without written approval of the TDA.
16. Notice: All notices and other communications required or permitted by this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be given either by personal delivery, fax or certified United States mail, return receipt requested, addressed as follows:

To the TDA:

**Attn: Legal Notice
TDA Executive Director
116 Central Street
Sylva, NC 28779**

To the Contractor:

**To the name/address stated on the
first page of this Agreement**

17. Choice of Law and Forum: This Agreement is made and entered into in Jackson County, North Carolina and shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina. Any claim for breach or enforcement of this Agreement shall be filed in the appropriate court located in the jurisdiction of Jackson County, North Carolina.
18. Assignment: This Agreement or any interest therein shall not be assigned or transferred by the Contractor. The Contractor shall not subcontract any work to be performed pursuant to this Agreement without the written approval of the TDA.
19. Advertising: This Agreement shall not be used for any advertising by the Contractor.

20. Entire Agreement: This Agreement and any exhibits and amendments annexed hereto represent the entire Agreement between the parties and supersede all prior oral and written statements or Agreements. This Agreement may be amended only in writing duly executed by the TDA and Contractor.
21. Severability: The provisions of this Contract are intended to be severable. Any and all provisions of this Contract that are prohibited, unenforceable, or otherwise not authorized in any jurisdiction shall, as to such portion and/or jurisdiction only, be deemed ineffective to the extent of such prohibition, unenforceability, or non-authorization, without invalidating the remaining provision(s) hereof in such jurisdiction, or affecting the continuing validity, enforceability, or legality hereof in any other jurisdiction.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the TDA and the Contractor have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized agents or officers, or if applicable have personally executed this Agreement, effective as of the date specified above.

CONTRACTOR

By: _____
SIGNATURE (SEAL)

PRINT NAME CLEARLY ABOVE

Its: _____
PRINT TITLE IF APPLICABLE

JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

By: _____
Nick Breedlove, Executive Director and
Contract Administrator

By: _____
Vick Patel
President of the Board

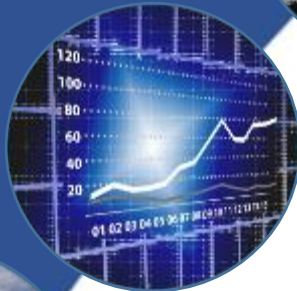
“This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.”

By: _____
Darlene Fox
Jackson County Finance Officer

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Contract for:

Visitor Profile Research
Seasonal Analysis
Annual Visitation Volume
Tourism Master Plan and
Gap Analysis for Jackson
County, NC.



Submitted by:

YOUNG  **strategies, inc.** | fresh.
travel.
research.

Post Office Box 38306
Charlotte, North Carolina 28278
704-677-4018



**Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Visitor Profile Research, Seasonal Patterns & Visitor Count
Tourism Master Plan and Gap Analysis**

Contract Submitted: August 3, 2018

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

Young Strategies will provide a visitor profile study for Jackson County TDA that:

- Identifies the current visitor segmented markets, visitor geo/socio-demographic profile and spending levels
- Identifies seasonal visitation patterns
- Identifies the attractors/motivators that drive visitation to Jackson County and cities within the County
- Identifies target/growth markets, visitor segments and strategies with the optimal ROI
- Develops a model to calculate annual visitor volume
- Develops a solid, reliable annual economic impact model
- Engagement of staff, Board, community and travel industry leaders
- Identify gaps and opportunities for growth and development
- A shared vision and plan for growth
- Clearly defined goals and objectives

Contract Accepted and Approved:

Jackson County TDA

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Title/Authority: _____

Contract Amount: \$ _____

Young Strategies, Inc.:

Principal: Berkeley W. Young

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Young Strategies, Inc. (YSI), a Charlotte, NC based destination research and planning firm proposes to conduct market research with Jackson County hoteliers, leaders, residents and travelers (leisure, business, group, etc.) to determine specific travel behavior and spending patterns throughout the year. Each of these segments will demonstrate unique travel party characteristics and behavior patterns. YSI will partner with the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (JCTDA) staff to develop research-based strategies and future visitor profile targets.

Young Strategies, Inc. specializes in the development of strategic plans for destinations. Our record of success with destinations across the United States is demonstrated best by asking our clients. A list of recent YSI client contacts is provided herein for the committee to verify our reputation.



The YSI research process provides you with a segmented visitor profile and overnight visitor impact analysis that leads to a smart strategic plan. That plan will identify the visitor segments that have the potential to drive the highest spending during the periods when hotels have vacant rooms available.

The YSI survey of lodging properties in Jackson County will identify the current guest segments (leisure, group, team sports, business transient, etc.) that drive room nights by percentage of total rooms sold. A detailed analysis of room supply/demand by month, week, weekday/weekend will identify the periods when the hotels need group and transient business.

The seasonal visitor profile survey and awareness/image survey will identify the planning, behavior and spending patterns of the same visitor segments identified in the lodging surveys. This allows the team to develop an impact model of visitor volume that leads to smart strategic planning for the Jackson County area.

The DestinationNext research and final strategic planning process will provide a roadmap for the future development of sustainable tourism development in Jackson County.

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Research & Planning Process

1. CLIENT MEETING, DESTINATION AND ORGANIZATION REVIEW

Developing a familiarity with the destination and its leaders helps the YSI team make smarter recommendations from the research gathered in this methodology.

- Three-day site visit and meetings – YSI representatives will tour the Jackson County area, meet with the JCTDA staff, gain market knowledge first-hand and meet key travel industry leader/partners.
- Meetings with the JCTDA tourism staff will include a detailed review of project objectives, current marketing programs and project materials for the research study.
- NOTE – this is the same three day visit included in the Strategic Planning proposal and will not need to be duplicated.

2. LODGING MARKET ANALYSIS - LODGING SURVEY, STR ANALYSIS AND HOTELIER and RENTAL MANAGER INTERVIEWS:

Overnight visitors typically spend 2-3 times as much as day-trippers. Taxes on lodging typically fund tourism marketing efforts. A detailed analysis of the lodging market and the guest segments that drive spending leads to a smart plan to drive increases in visitor spending. The Jackson County lodging market includes hotel/motel, rentals, resorts and campgrounds thus requiring a detailed analysis of occupancy and growth patterns in each type of lodging.

- YSI will survey all lodging managers in Jackson County to determine market segmentation, booking sources, primary feeder markets, walk-in occupancy, and taxable room percentages.
- Interviews with Jackson County area hoteliers and rental managers.
- Analysis of STR (Smith Travel Research) data reports already obtained and tracked by Jackson County TDA - detailed analysis of the Jackson County market statistics and trends by lodging type including ADR, RevPAR, Supply & Demand as well as annual, monthly, weekly and daily occupancy analysis.

3. VISITOR PROFILE RESEARCH BY MARKET SEGMENT (ONLINE SURVEYS):

You must understand the profile and planning behavior of the varying visitor segments in order to drive increased room demand. Surveys will document the size (universe) of the potential market from each of the identified transient and group segments, identify the perceptions of Jackson County as a destination, assess satisfaction levels, expenditures (economic impact) and unmet needs.

- YSI will develop a custom survey methodology that addresses the unique aspects of the Jackson County travel market. No two destinations are alike. The survey must be custom designed to provide the best results for Jackson County. Response target is 1,000 – 1,500 survey respondents.
- The segments recommended to be surveyed (pending client approval) include: leisure travelers (day-trip and overnight), sports (university), meeting / conference attendees, and individual business travelers.
- Analysis of visitors to Sylva/Dillsboro vs. Cashiers/Glenville/Sapphire will be included.
- NOTE: Partnership from the JCTDA staff, hoteliers, attractions and other travel related businesses in sending survey links to 2016-2018 Jackson County visitors and inquirers is essential to the success of this research. Survey links can be deployed on social media platforms and in emails directly to Jackson County visitors and inquirers. Travel partners that deploy the visitor survey invitation to their database of visitors using the unique link provided will be rewarded with a PDF file of the research data collected from their visitors at the end of project.
- Final Report Data to Include (Segmented by Market and/or season):
 - Profile of overall size (universe) of each identified segment
 - Profile of visitors by season
 - Profile of current and most likely potential groups by segment
 - First time vs. repeat patterns
 - Rank order of desired new experiences

Developing a close familiarity with the destination and a partnership with its leaders helps the YSI team make smarter recommendations from the research gathered in this methodology.

4. TARGET MARKET AWARENESS & DESTINATION IMAGE RESEARCH

A survey of potential first-time visitors and prior visitors awareness and image of Jackson County will be conducted online in primary target feeder markets. This unique research will determine the image and awareness of Jackson County as a visitor destination. YSI will purchase a curated database of active travelers who meet the target demographics of those most-likely to travel to destinations like Jackson County. The survey will be limited to 15 questions and will cover: intent to travel, destination preferences, awareness of Jackson County, and can test possible future marketing themes and/or messages. Response target is 400 - 600.

5. ANNUAL VISITOR VOLUME CALCULATION

YSI will work closely with JCTDA to develop a model to calculate annual visitor volume in Jackson County. Close partnership with all types of lodging as well as attractions will be necessary. The volume of overnight visitors will be calculated and an estimate of day-trip volume will be provided. A calculator model will be provided for JCTDA to estimate future visitor volume levels.

6. STRATEGIC MARKETING RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic recommendations will be developed based on research findings. The recommendations will include an analysis of each season's visitors in the study with suggested steps for growth in each.

- New product development/infrastructure anticipated and/or needed to remain competitive.
- Recommendations and conclusions for improving Jackson County's competitive position, demand generators, product/destination development and ROI.
- Recommended on-going research and tracking.

7. DestinationNEXT – SURVEY/SWOT ANALYSIS/GAP ANALYSIS

YSI will partner with DestinationNEXT to conduct an online survey of local travel industry and community leaders to identify destination strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The online DestinationNEXT diagnostic tool is designed to assist DMOs do an objective self-assessment which can help them determine priorities and strategies for the future. The tool presents a framework that DMO leaders and communities can use to critically assess the destination.

7. DestinationNEXT (CONTINUED)

It also helps to start a conversation and provide focus on what needs to be done in the future. An online survey delivers more comprehensive results than a tedious multi-hour SWOT analysis session that tends to exhaust leaders. Strategies will be recommended to overcome any market challenges and a product develop plan will be prepared to address issues within the destination.

8. STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOPS

YSI will conduct planning workshops with any selected community/travel industry leaders desired to be in attendance.

The format of the sessions will include:

- Presentation of destination trends and best practices.
- Review of DestinationNEXT community leader survey & diagnostic tool.
- Analysis of the Jackson County market as a travel destination.
- Proposed research identified recommendations for Jackson County TDA sales and marketing programs.
- Proposed and potential new product development projects as well as existing experience enhancements.
- Staff, board and leader input and discussions of research and recommended strategies.

9. STRATEGIC PLAN

A strategic plan for Jackson County TDA will be developed based on research findings and leader input. The recommendations will include an analysis of the market and coordination with existing plans.

- Organizational and staff structure
- Gap analysis of opportunities for growth
- Alignment of board and staff roles and duties
- Focus and allocation of resources to direct sales efforts and marketing/promotions needed to target each travel segment.
- Recommendations and conclusions for improving Jackson County's competitive position, marketing messages, demand generators, product/destination development and ROI.
- Recommended on-going research and tracking.

DestinationNEXT

Online Assessment

The DestinationNEXT online diagnostic tool is designed to assist DMOs do an objective self-assessment which can help them determine priorities and strategies for the future. The tool presents a framework that DMO leaders and communities can use to critically assess the destination. It also helps to start a conversation and provide focus on what needs to be done in the future. The tool is not intended to be a benchmarking index to rank DMOs or destinations. The tool is based on 20 variables related to destination strength and community support and engagement. Within each variable, a series of metrics are also identified which offer the opportunity for DMOs to gather data and provide a more in-depth look at the variable. In consultation with the client, a survey will be prepared using the DestinationNEXT scenario model. Additional questions to address some specific issues and topics can be added. An email with a link to the survey will be prepared to be sent out by the client to key stakeholders. Workbooks can also be provided to the participants to help them respond to the survey.



The online diagnostic tool is built upon two key inputs:

- An assessment of how important each variable is to the destination. In some cases, a variable may not be relevant to a destination. For example, some rural communities may not see air access as very relevant to their success. Likewise, a leisure destination may not find that convention and meeting facilities are important. The tool is designed to account for these situations.
- An assessment of the destination's perceived performance across each variable. This is done by indicating the level of agreement to a statement for each variable. The results would be analyzed with a scenario plot and detailed diagnostics report provided. The results can be segmented to show response patterns of different groups of individuals.
- The assignment would be managed by Paul Ouimet. Paul would be supported by a team of analysts who would produce the diagnostics report.

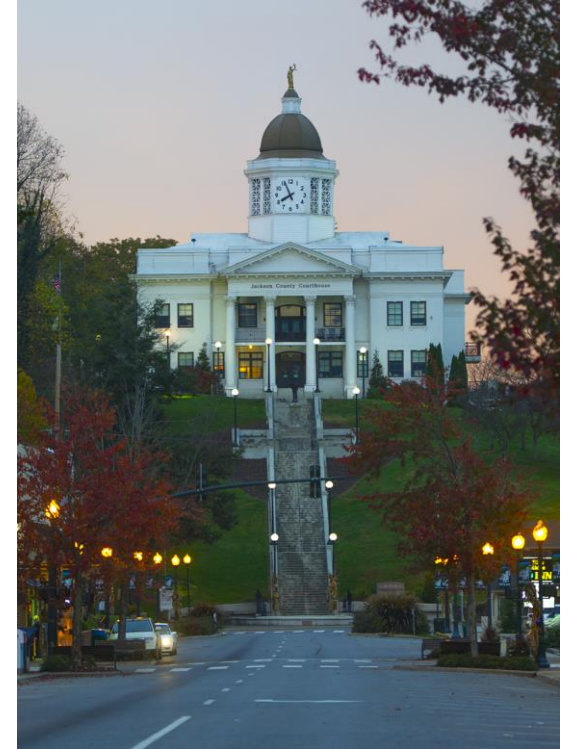
PROJECT FEE STRUCTURE

TIMELINE

- **Eight months from project initiation.**
- Surveys and interviews with lodging/rental managers are critical to the project success and are time-consuming. Slow response to surveys from lodging/rental managers and visitors can slow project. These potential delays and the seasonal timing of the project have been taken into account and project completion by April, 2019 is mostly assured but cannot be 100% guaranteed.

PROFESSIONAL FEES – FLAT COST

- **Project cost is \$58,240 including all research and travel expenses.**
- Client is requested to obtain comped or discounted lodging rooms to defray billable travel expenses.
- **Fees will be billed in eight monthly payments of \$7,280.**
- The research team is based in Charlotte, NC and has budgeted for four trips to Jackson County, NC:
 - Project Initiation & Reconnaissance – Month One (Four people, three nights)
 - Visitor Profile & Lodging Market Research Presentation – Month Five
 - DestinationNext Strategic Planning Workshop – Month Seven
 - Final Report Presentation – Month Eight



RESEARCH STUDY DELIVERABLES

- PowerPoint presentations of research findings and recommendations to Jackson County travel industry leaders in planning workshop format.
- Digital format final report including all research segments and recommendations.
 - Visitor Profile Research data and analysis
 - Season Visitor Profile and Volume
 - Annual Visitor Volume (Count)
 - Strategic recommendations
 - DestinationNext Report of findings
 - Strategic Plan

PROJECT TEAM

BERKELEY YOUNG, PRESIDENT, YOUNG STRATEGIES – PROJECT TEAM LEADER

20+ years of travel/tourism marketing and management experience including destination marketing and hotel management. Young's experience includes serving as the Executive Director of a start-up convention and visitor's bureau and chamber of commerce in which he oversaw the creation and success of a research-based tourism marketing program for a rural county in the mountains of North Carolina. Then, Young was hired as Director of Sales and quickly promoted to General Manager of a large golf resort managed by Interstate Hotels Corporation. Young joined Randall Travel Marketing in 1998 as Vice President conducting research for DMOs throughout the United States. He opened Young Strategies in November 2004 focusing on strategic planning and research for destination marketing organizations. Young is a top rated speaker at regional and national conferences. As the project team leader Berkeley Young will serve as the primary client contact and chief strategist. Young's experience as a hotelier uniquely qualifies him to lead lodging market analyses for destinations. The total research methodology will be tailored to the needs of New Hanover County and actionable strategies will be developed from the resulting data and community leader input. Young is known for his consensus building, active listening and thoughtful consideration when developing a plan for a community.

AMY STEVENS, VICE PRESIDENT, YOUNG STRATEGIES – RESEARCH OVERSIGHT

More than 15 years of travel, tourism and marketing experience. As Vice President/Research Director, Stevens is responsible for writing surveys, conducting research, analyzing data and writing reports for Young Strategies. Stevens worked with Randall Travel Marketing prior to working for Young Strategies. Stevens also worked with Navigant International, the second largest travel management company in the United States, and was responsible for sales, business travel accounts, training/development and conflict resolution. She handled written and multi-media presentations and developed marketing materials and programs to increase both leisure and corporate business travel. Stevens will take the research lead on the New Hanover County market research study to keep all steps in the process on schedule and well organized to deliver maximum results for the client.

MCKENZIE GRAHAM, YOUNG STRATEGIES – RESEARCH COORDINATOR

A University of South Carolina graduate, McKenzie has been with Young Strategies for the last 3 years as Office Manager and Research Coordinator. McKenzie specializes in running the office, data analysis, compilation and report development.

LARRY GUSTKE, PHD, PROFESSOR EMERITUS NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Over 30 years' experience in conducting research on outdoor recreation, tourist behavior and tourism marketing. Dr. Gustke has conducted research in over 30 U.S. states and internationally. As professor emeritus, NC State University, Dr. Gustke has designed the research methodology proposed in this study based on his years of experience with destinations across America. He received his Ph.D. from Texas A&M, and is considered one of the most accomplished tourism researchers in the field today. Dr. Gustke is active in many academic and professional networks related to tourism research.

Berkeley Young, President

byoung@youngstrategies.com

704-677-4018

Post Office Box 38306

Charlotte, North Carolina 28278





Nick Breedlove <director@discoverjacksonnc.com>

RE: Pre-Interview questions for RFP Response

1 message

Berkeley Young <byoung@youngstrategies.com>
To: Nick Breedlove <director@discoverjacksonnc.com>
Cc: Amy Stevens <amy@youngstrategies.com>

Sun, Jul 22, 2018 at 2:47 PM

Hi Nick -

Thank you for the opportunity to reply to these questions regarding the RFP for research and strategic planning services. I have provided my responses to each question below. The Young Strategies team is eager to work with you and the Board of Directors of Jackson TDA on this project.

Berkeley

Berkeley W Young

(M) 704-677-4018

www.youngstrategies.com

From: Nick Breedlove [mailto:director@discoverjacksonnc.com]
Sent: Tuesday, July 10, 2018 3:28 PM
To: Berkeley Young <byoung@youngstrategies.com>
Subject: Pre-Interview questions for RFP Response

Berkeley,

I hope you're having a great week. I wanted to share with you questions we have on YSI's proposals. If you want to prepare any brief responses in advance of our July 25 telephone call, it may be helpful to distribute to board members in case there's any follow up discussion that we can do on the 25th, making the best use of our time then.

1. There is no mention of any data collection in addition to the STR data. How is rental property (Airbnb) data intended to be acquired? This is a growing segment for us year over year, so it's important that it not be left out of the lodging analysis.

We will use multiple methodologies included in our proposal and pricing to provide a detailed analysis of your vacation rental market.

work with a number of destinations where the vacation rental market is larger than the traditional hotel/motel market. The hotel market is far easier to track than the vacation rental market (VRM). For that reason we are flexible in our methodology and will do whatever is necessary to get you the answers you need. Panama City Beach and South Padre Island are two of those among our vacation rental markets. We would conduct our lodging market analysis for Jackson County using the same methodology as those destinations. I should have provided that wording in our proposal to you as it is definitely included in our pricing and planning .

1. We will **meet with your Jackson County tax office** to obtain a detailed understanding of how the taxes per unit are collected and tracked. We need as much detail related to the hotel/motel and VRM revenue. We have had many successes with tax offices who see us as a resource due to experience in working with over 100 destinations.

2. We will create a **survey unique to the Vacation Rental Managers** who manage multiple properties. We will meet with the rental managers during our first visit to the region

3. We will review the **AirDNA data** that you have collected and determine if additional data is required. Our experience with AirDNA data in both Panama City Beach and South padre Island has been that the demand data (dates occupied) is accurate but the revenue figures are exaggerated because AirDNA does not obtain actual revenue data from Airbnb. AirDNA forecasts using the average rate charged during the month for each unit. Therefore they assume every night is revenue generating which greatly inflates their figures. We have had conference calls with AirDNA to resolve the discrepancies with their reporting.

4. Our **visitor/resident survey** has a series of questions for those respondents that identify themselves as **vacation property owners**. Our questions identify the # of nights each that the property is rented vs owner use, the rates charged for the unit, where they list the unit (local VRM, Airbnb, Home Away, etc.), typical party size for family friends and rentals, activities participated in, etc. The **visitor survey also covers those who rented** and establishes where they stayed, what they paid, what they did, party size, etc.

2. Estimate of annual visitation – will visitors who stay in unpaid lodging (with friends/family) be represented? If so, what is the methodology?

Yes **we will provide estimates for each of the following:**

- **Paid overnight lodging guests** (hotel/motel and Vacation rental)
- **Vacation home owner usage** – survey with owners, number of nights owner occupied (non-revenue), party size, visitor spending, etc.

- **Guests staying in local resident homes - VFR market** (often 25% of annual visitation). We have resident survey that asks residents the number of guest they house in their homes annually, activities participated in, money spent, etc.
- **Day-trippers** – this is the most difficult category of visitation to estimate. We survey tourism related business owners to determine a ratio of daytrip to overnight visitation and then calculate based on the determination of overnight visitation numbers.

3. What is the sample size for the Visitor Profile survey? There is not a mention of it (the 400-600 is for the target market survey). We want to make sure it is sufficient for breakouts between in-county destinations.

We will collect **the vast majority of our data through online surveys** to capture visitors through a twelve month window of visitation. We will send the survey out to a scrubbed database of inquiries and visitors provided by JCTDA. We will also provide unique links to your VRM partners and any other tourism businesses/Chambers that are willing to send the survey invitation out to their databases. Using this approach we typically collect 1,200 – 2,000 completed surveys. We want to have at least 100 completed surveys to provide any cross-tabulation subset in our reporting therefore **a minimum response of 1,200 surveys is desired.**

4. Will any intercepts be conducted for the Visitor Profile? Can you speak to the difference between conducting online research vs. in person and which is preferred?

Intercept surveys provide a snapshot of a specific time period when the surveys are collected. Our goal is to provide you with a full year/twelve month visitor profile with seasonal and travel segment (leisure, group, business, etc.) profiles. The online survey methodology provides a larger response and the data is collected after visitors have completed their visit to Jackson County. Intercepts are often collected mid-trip and therefore don't cover all travel activities and spending. We use intercepts if a specific festival or event requires data specific to that event. We can add intercept surveys if you feel there is a particular audience that is not covered in our online survey methodology.

5. Who do you determine to be the most appropriate stakeholders represented in strategic planning? (Hotels, Attractions, Board, Government, Local Citizens, Skeptics/Naysayers of tourism, etc.)

All of the above. We want to include everyone with an opinion when we survey business/community/tourism leaders. The resulting plan will have more "buy-in" and support if we cast a wide net in our information gathering. We will hopefully gather 100 or more surveys from leaders and then review the data and formulate a strategic plan in a planning workshop with the Jackson County TDA Board and a few additional leaders they select to participate. I started my careers in Rutherford County as the TDA Director. I have worked with numerous TDA's in North Carolina and in the NC Mountains. **I know how to wade through the myriad of opinions to find the best path forward for Jackson County TDA. I also know how to present the final strategic plan in a way that gains maximum support.**

6. The DestinationNEXT assessment tool seems geared toward much larger destinations. Can you provide examples of where it has been used successfully with smaller DMOs such as us?

Young Strategies is currently implementing Destination Next in Dutchess County, NY a destination of similar size and scope to Jackson County. The vast majority of questions in the Destination Next survey apply to destinations of all sizes. We can tailor the survey to your needs by eliminating questions that don't apply and adding questions that do.

7. In the project timeline, how will appropriate seasonal data be acquired from visitors in a five-month window? I do see that they are going to send survey links to past visitors (page 3), but going back to 2016 is problematic in terms of trip recall. Please elaborate.

We will collect the vast majority of our data through online surveys to capture visitors through a twelve month window of visitation. The vast majority of respondents will come from the current twelve month study period. We collect those from prior years to have a robust data set and rely primarily on the current year respondents for reliability and accuracy. We will send the survey out to a scrubbed database of inquiries and visitors provided by JCTDA. We will also provide unique links to your VRM partners and any other tourism businesses/Chambers that are willing to send the survey invitation out to their databases. Using this approach we typically collect 1,200 – 2,000 completed surveys. We want to have at least 100 completed surveys to provide any cross-tabulation subset in our reporting therefore a minimum response of 1,200 surveys is desired.

8. In the research objective on Visitor Profile Research, it states the plan will “develop a solid, reliable annual economic impact model”. Is this different than annual county-level spending estimates that Visit NC provides?

Yes, our model is a “bottom-up” calculation that starts with room demand for hotel/motel, vacation rentals and those staying in local resident homes. **Once we establish the number of nights occupied and the number of people per night and the average daily spending we build up to an annual spending economic impact.** The annual County level impact reporting is a top down model using tax figures and SIC codes to create a formula that is applied to counties all over America.

9. We are excited to see the component on Target Market Awareness, which we think will be valuable. Is there any research planned on lapsed visitors or visitors who chose another destination?

Yes, we will have questions in the awareness survey as well as the visitor survey to identify those who chose another destination, which destination and why not Jackson.

10. What work have you done with College and University towns and how has that affected the Visitor Profile or seasonality of visitation? What nuances have you found?

We have worked with a large number of university destinations including, but not limited to: Oxford, MS (Ole Miss); Auburn/Opelika, AL (Auburn); Montgomery, AL (Troy State); Syracuse, NY (Syracuse); Buffalo, NY (multiple); Laramie, WY (UofWY); Norman, OK (OU); Nacogdoches, TX (Stephen Austin U.); Staunton, VA (Mary Baldwin).

Our survey questions will cover the types of visitation driven by WCU. Universities drive 10% or more of the overnight visitation in many communities.

11. Is it possible to include a visitor profile question as to 'Why people made the decisions they did' (to visit Jackson County, and to do the activities they did) vs. just what they did?

Yes! We will create a draft of our standard visitor profile survey and then work with closely to tailor the questions adding and deleting until you are satisfied and sign-off. We want the visitor profile data to provide you with the answers to all of our questions.

12. In regard to Cherokee, we have several attractors (Casino, Convention Center, Cultural Attractions), but do not receive occupancy tax from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Will Visitor Profile research be conducted in Cherokee and if so, how will that be represented in the visitor profile?

We work with a large number of gaming destinations in LA, MS, WY, NY, OK & PA. Most of those are Native-American affiliated and we are accustomed to working with the unique nuances of this market segment. We will work with the Jackson County TDA and the Cherokee Nation leadership to deliver the most accurate and detailed profile of all visitor segments. **We will tailor our reporting and observations to provide you with an honest and reliable report.** We will provide a disclaimer and our best estimates if a local tourism partner/segment refuses to partner in the research leaving a void in the visitor profile.

13. How do you plan to account for the differences in essentially two different destinations within a destination (Cashiers and Sylva) in Visitor Profile research and Strategic Planning?

We will ask the visitor respondents to identify the community within Jackson County that was their primary destination (from a list) and then we ask the respondents to identify all the communities they visited within Jackson County. We will report any differences in behavior based on those who visited the two primary communities.

14. Do you foresee any challenges or barriers in completing the work?

We are persistent and detailed in our pursuit of providing and an accurate and comprehensive report for you. **The only obstacle that will prevent us from succeeding is lack of sharing and participation from your travel industry partners.** that's why we begin our process on our first visit to the destination with a presentation to your partners where ask for their partnership and sharing of data with us. We will not proceed unless we have the majority of partners agree to work with us on this project. The critical partners in terms of data collection and overall research are: Lodging and vacation rental managers/owners, attractions owner/managers, retail owner/managers, restaurateurs, Tribal tourism leaders, Gaming managers, Chamber staff, County Tax Office and of course TDA Staff and Board.

If you need any clarification on the above questions, please do reach out or give me a telephone call.

Best,

Nick

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