

**MORICETOWN TOURISM MARKETING PLAN:  
CAPITALIZING ON CULTURE**

by

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## **Abstract**

Tourism is big business in British Columbia; a \$13.4 billion dollar industry. A small but fast emerging segment is aboriginal tourism. Although aboriginal cultural tourism accounts for a mere 0.3% of the market it translates to a \$40 million dollar sector. In six short years aboriginal tourism has doubled from a \$20 million dollar segment in 2006 to a \$42 million dollar segment in 2012. It's no wonder a planned growth initiative is being spearheaded by Aboriginal Tourism BC and the provincial government. Expectations are ten percent annually, totaling \$68 million in 2017.

Thirty-two kilometers west of Smithers is Moricetown, home to the Witsuwit'en people. The valley around the Moricetown canyon was once a traditional fishing ground visited by five clans of the area. Today, Moricetown continues to be a popular destination with hundreds of visitors lining the banks of the canyon eager to see the spawning salmon and traditional fishing methods.

With the increased popularity of cultural tourism it is important that Moricetown market itself effectively to earn its share of this profitable and growing sector. Without a marketing plan to date, the band's marketing activities have been sporadic and without measure.

This paper examines Moricetown's history and culture, its current marketing mix; tourism product offerings, price, place and promotional activities questioning how Moricetown can capitalize on the culture to exploit its tourism opportunities.

Through literature review, focus groups, stakeholder and tourist interviews, the research data collected helps to refine the target market and segments. Other tools used to examine the

market include various strategy models such as PESTEL; SWOT and VRIE. These serve to clarify competitive advantage and analyze the product-market fit.

In the case of aboriginal tourism sites, those in the target market want to experience what it was like for aboriginal people before “contact.” The delivery of a valuable aboriginal tourism product that meets the needs of the consumer must be a reliable, authentic experience preferably involving nature. To be able to connect the market to the product, cultural sites must effectively promote themselves. This is where many aboriginal tourism sites don’t know where to begin.

Major findings in this report indicate the target market is identified as two segments; the local resident who wants something unique and interesting to do and the regional traveller.

While local residents are the first segment, they are often missed when determining target market but they potentially represent a two-fold opportunity. The second segment of visitors whom are most interested in the site are 55+ travellers seeking a unique cultural experience or enrichment. Secondary research indicates visitors are interested in learning about animal and plant life in the region, aboriginal culture, history and stories and dance or drum performances. Primary research supported this data and further highlighted a primary concern for an authentic quality experience of historical value and enrichment.

Regarding the marketing mix, key findings show that the tourism site could be further developed, the prices are in-line with offerings and comparable properties, the location is good but proximity to Smithers is under exploited and finally the promotional plan is undeveloped. This paper outlines an appropriate promotional mix.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	II
LIST OF TABLES .....	V
LIST OF FIGURES .....	VI
ABBREVIATIONS.....	VII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	VIII
INTRODUCTION .....	1
INDUSTRY PROFILE .....	1
CHALLENGE/PROBLEM .....	2
PURPOSE OF PAPER/STUDY .....	2
INDUSTRY OVERVIEW & ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TOURISM.....	4
UNDERSTANDING THE AREA OF STUDY .....	7
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN.....	9
<i>Competitive Advantage</i> .....	13
INDUSTRY BENCHMARKS .....	15
METHOD .....	17
LITERATURE REVIEW /SECONDARY DATA .....	17
PRIMARY DATA .....	18
<i>Depth Interviews</i> .....	18
<i>Survey</i> .....	19
<i>Focus Group</i> .....	22
KEY FINDINGS .....	24
MARKETING AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	26
TARGET MARKET .....	27
<i>Promotional Strategy and Message</i> .....	29
MARKETING MIX .....	31
<i>Product/Service</i> .....	31
<i>Price</i> .....	31
<i>Place</i> .....	32
<i>Promotion</i> .....	32
CONCLUSION .....	41
CRITIQUE OF METHODS .....	43
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	45
ENDNOTES .....	47



## **List of Tables**

Table 1 – PESTEL Analysis Moricetown.....	10
Table 2 – SWOT Analysis Moricetown .....	12
Table 3 – VRIE Analysis Moricetown .....	13
Table 4 – Tourism Survey Arts/Culture/Leisure .....	21
Table 5 – Focus Group Results .....	23
Table 6 – Direct Visitor Expenditures .....	29
Table 7 – Promotional Schedule and Budget.....	35
Table 8 – Promotional Strategy .....	36
Table 9 – Evaluation and Control .....	41

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1 – Map of Region.....	8
Figure 2 – Moricetown Organizational Chart.....	14
Figure 3 – Poster .....	38
Figure 4 – Brochure .....	39
Figure 5 – Billboard .....	40
Figure 6 – Banner .....	40

## **Abbreviations**

ATBC – Aboriginal Tourism BC

ATTC – Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada

CTC – Canadian Tourism Commission

FIT – Fully Independent Travellers

MICE – Meetings Incentives Conferences and Events

VFR – Visiting Friends and Relatives

VIC – Visitor Information Centre

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## **Introduction**

### ***Moricetown Tourism Marketing Plan; Capitalizing on Culture***

#### ***Industry Profile***

Aboriginal tourism has become an increasingly popular topic of discussion in British Columbia business. Although only a small fraction of the province's \$13.4 billion dollar tourism industry, with steady growth aboriginal tourism has doubled from a \$20 million industry in 2006 to a more than \$40 million dollar industry today.<sup>1</sup>

The industry has been gaining traction since the Winter Olympics in 2010. At the beginning of 2012 Aboriginal Tourism BC unveiled a \$10 million dollar plan to increase aboriginal tourism revenues from \$45 million to \$68 million by 2017 – a ten percent growth per year.<sup>2</sup>

A vote of confidence from the Provincial Government's tourism strategy report, *Gaining the Edge*, named aboriginal tourism as a key tourism product. Listed as a priority product, emphasis is placed on distinct aboriginal tourism experiences within the four themes for success under World Class Visitor Experiences. The report also states, "The development of aboriginal cultural tourism provides social, cultural and economic benefits to BC's Aboriginal communities."<sup>3</sup>

The Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC cites a current trend towards increased visitor demand for authentic aboriginal cultural experiences due in part to aging baby boomers and a desire to have educational and experiential travel. It is estimated 3.7 million tourists experienced some form of Aboriginal cultural tourism in 2010, which is almost double the number from 2006.<sup>4</sup>

According to ATTC the market trend was moving towards greater interest in experiential products and experiences as early as 2003:

This growing demand includes increasing interest in Aboriginal tourism products when related to 'learning and enrichment' experiences or included as a half or full day component of a multi-day touring itinerary as well as other forms of special interest tourism, such as ecotourism, adventure tourism and cultural tourism. Aboriginal tourism has great potential in all of these areas, whether as a stand-alone product or "layered" onto non-Aboriginal tourism product offerings. Clearly, this growing demand includes increasing international interest in Aboriginal tourism products. At the same time, domestic tourism markets are often forgotten in developing marketing strategies and must be included in the mix.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Challenge/Problem***

Despite the tourism trends and huge opportunity some aboriginal sites aren't realizing the full benefit while others are booming so the question then becomes, why is it that some aboriginal communities are successful at exploiting their culture for economic benefit while others are not? In some cases aboriginal organizations have facilities, sites and market-ready product but have fundamentally been reactive rather than proactive in their efforts to market themselves. Many small aboriginal communities, although interested in exploring more opportunities through ecotourism or cultural tourism, do not know where to begin. Moricetown is in exactly that position; not fully capitalizing on the potential opportunities and therefore not maximizing the benefits. It is possible for aboriginal communities to capitalize on their own culture – to be successful even on a smaller scale with a limited budget.

### ***Purpose of Paper/Study***

This project compares Moricetown as a destination, with that of other regional aboriginal cultural tourism products in the area to develop best practices guidelines. Utilizing existing marketing tools and standards with these guidelines and applying them to the products

and services offered by Moricetown, this paper primarily discusses the creation of actionable marketing plan and the resulting promotional campaign for Moricetown.

The community's goal is to attract more visitors to the area so it can realize more cultural and economic benefits. The report will examine the aboriginal cultural tourism industry and analyze Moricetown's tourism offerings in relation to industry benchmarks and target market expectations.

Through primary and secondary research I will determine the target market and market segments. The first objective of marketing is to discover the needs of the prospective consumer; the second is to satisfy those needs while trying to achieve the organizational goals.<sup>6</sup> Literature on aboriginal cultural tourism is broad but not all findings are relevant to remote Northern BC locations. Although there are a variety of markets that could be explored, for this paper the specific segments that have been chosen offer the best product-market fit and would garner the most positive results. Consumer profiles and preferences have been studied in order to create an effective comprehensive marketing plan with accompanying promotional materials. This paper will enable Moricetown to better understand its tourism products relative to the marketing mix and the target audience. Once developed, the marketing plan for the campground, canyon and museum in Moricetown, can be utilized to capitalize on the current opportunities.

Once implemented the plan will assist Moricetown in improving and promoting its product, resulting in increased tourism, cultural and economic benefit. The goal is to draw more traffic and revenue to Moricetown. In addition to the marketing plan, collateral material will be created to promote the site. The paper will explain the methodology and reasoning behind the marketing plan and promotional materials.

## **Industry Overview & Aboriginal Cultural Tourism**

Aboriginal tourism is revitalizing First Nations culture. The demand for cultural tourism products has given First Nations peoples in British Columbia an unprecedented opportunity to develop businesses that showcase their traditions, histories and cultures. Tourism is helping create sustainable and meaningful employment for aboriginal communities, and providing the inspiration for elders to pass down culture, history and tradition to youth.<sup>7</sup> Thanks to cultural tourism, First Nations traditions and customs are being revitalized for the benefit of communities across British Columbia. The numbers are as follows:

Adventure Tourism (31%), Tourism Services (22%) and Accommodation (21%) collectively comprise almost three quarters (74%) of existing Aboriginal tourism businesses in B.C.<sup>8</sup>

Tour operators are seeing growing consumer demand for authentic cultural experiences, with 89% indicating in a recent Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC survey that they would consider offering or expanding Aboriginal experiences as part of their packages.<sup>9</sup>

Over a third (36%) of travellers surveyed in a study commissioned by ATBC for the Blueprint Strategy indicated that they had visited Aboriginal sites/attractions and events on previous trips to B.C. On average, they had included such experiences on four trips in the past three years.<sup>10</sup>

Two-thirds (63%) of Aboriginal cultural tourists indicated that they planned to return to B.C. for Aboriginal tourism within in the next three years.<sup>11</sup>



There is clear desire to develop the Aboriginal tourism industry from both government and First Nations. Aboriginal tourism creates significant value in terms of economic development, community development and cultural benefit. Demand is increasing and new travel trends are reshaping the development of tourism products. Studies show there is strong demand for experiential, authentic, cultural tourism. Additionally, travellers are looking for opportunities to connect with nature, sightsee and increase their knowledge or education about culture. The first step in attaining a program-market fit is to know and understand the target market.<sup>12</sup> A target market is defined as one or more specific groups of potential consumers toward which an organization directs its marketing program.<sup>13</sup> What we want to learn is the consumer's wants, needs and purchase behavior. In doing so, we can promote directly to those specific consumers a product which they desire. Ultimately the transaction is made their needs are met and the organizational goal of revenue is achieved. Even when aboriginal culture is not the primary draw for tourists, it is something visitors are interested in if it is in the proximity that they are. This is because it meets their need for learning and enrichment. Other data collected by ATBC highlights the following significant patterns:

Those who have participated in Aboriginal cultural experiences before are likely to do so again.

Pre-trip information seeking is minimal, especially among North American travellers

Information seeking during trips relies heavily on local knowledge and word-of-mouth

Different travelers will pay very different prices for Aboriginal cultural experiences

Most travelers interested in Aboriginal culture are primarily looking for a learning-centered experience

There is interest in both contemporary and historical events and culture

Aboriginal people are viewed as being closely connected with "nature" and possessing unique knowledge of the natural environment

Older travelers are often more interested in passive learning experiences, while younger travelers desire more active adventures.<sup>14</sup>

In 2003 the ATTC found that the majority of participants of cultural tourism were in fact North Americans and specifically Canadians.

In keeping with broader travel trends in Canada, the primary markets for Aboriginal tourism are domestic and American travellers. Overall, Canadians account for approximately 70% of total Canadian tourism revenues and 80% of total visitation.<sup>15</sup>

The 2005 report commissioned by TBC, *Value of the Smithers Info Centre* recorded a total of 67.8 % North American visitors with 27% from British Columbia and 32.2% overseas visitors. Of those interviewed 66.1% were over the age of 45, 52.3 % had a university degree and 47.7% earned an annual income of 65,000 or higher. The focus of this paper is the BC traveller. On average BC travellers indicated an average stay in Smithers of five days.<sup>16</sup> From this information we have a clearer impression the target market, what would appeal to that market and expectations.

The ATTC report on Aboriginal Tourism in Canada, discusses a “dual track” niche market. This is a market of individuals whom have recently taken an overnight trip and participated in some kind of Aboriginal experience or attraction in a remote location. This market is more interested in experiencing different ways of life, seeing historical sites and natural wonders.<sup>17</sup>

A target segment is a subgroup of a target market. In this case the target segments we will focus on are: domestic travellers, regional and local residents. These travellers and residents are key for small northern communities because they are already in the area. Much of the product in this region is authentic and rural but not developed to the extent that it would be a destination point in and of itself.

Based on the research, surveys and focus group conducted for this project the target consumers discussed can be further defined. One segment is mature couples over the age of 55 whom like to travel, sightsee and partake in a learning experience. Not all but many, travel by RV and all wish to connect with nature.

The CTC commissioned *Aboriginal Tourism Opportunities for Canada* to study markets in U.K, Germany and France. Although the focus of this paper is not the European market, it is of note that the demographic profile is almost identical to that of our Canadian travellers, therefore the report is useful in confirming visitor profile and identifying emotional needs. The report found European travellers had the following responses:

There were concerns centered on previous bad experiences with Aboriginal travel where they had been made to feel unwanted and as spectators, mainly there as an opportunity for the Aboriginals or the coordinators to make money and to sell souvenirs.

The overall need for these travellers is to have a sense of discovery and adventure. In the context of Canadian Aboriginal travel, this means authentic interaction with natives guiding them through Canada's beautiful and scenic nature.

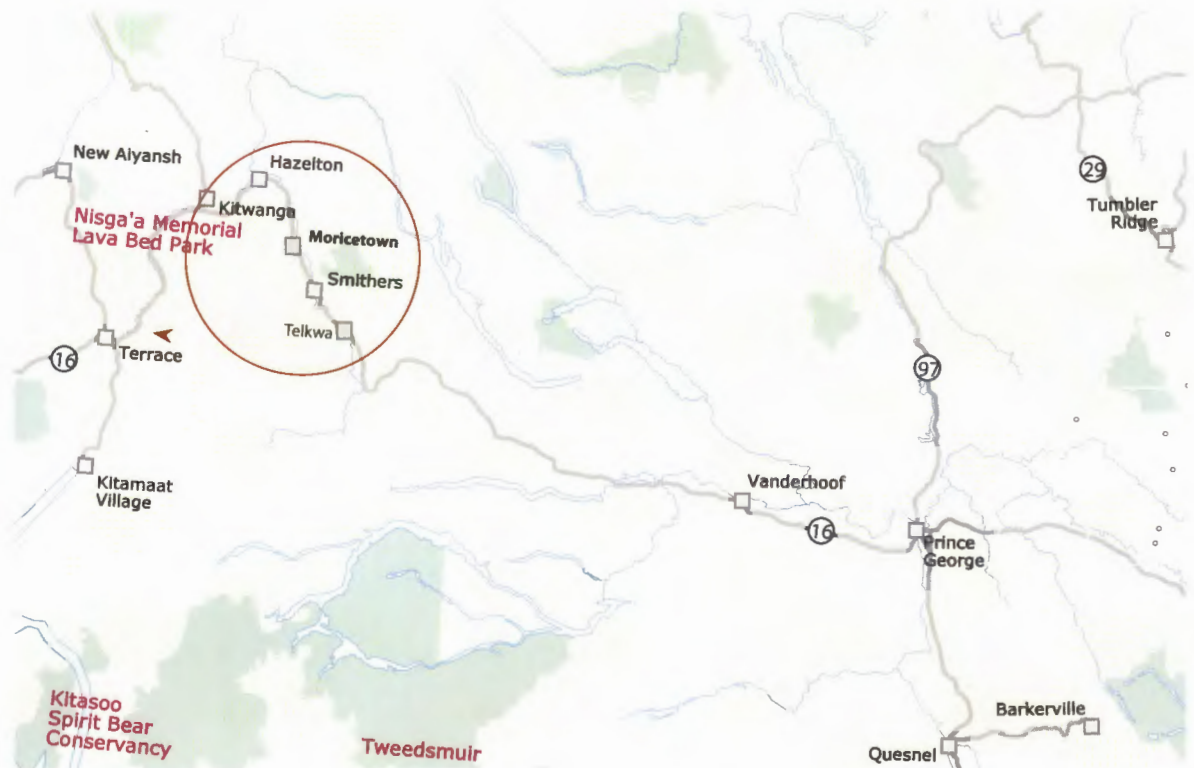
The opportunity to feel something different and do something different in a unique environment through a unique culture is the strongest emotional trigger.<sup>18</sup>

Although Canadians use the term enrichment, both Canadians and Europeans are interested in achieving self-discovery and self-reflection through aboriginal travel therefore authenticity is paramount. The aboriginal tourism product need not be grandiose but rather, simply needs to deliver what is promised and be a good experience for the consumer.

### **Understanding the Area of Study**

Thirty kilometers west of Smithers is Moricetown (see Figure 1). Moricetown is home to the Witsuwit'en people. The valley around Moricetown Canyon was once a traditional

fishing ground visited by five clans of the area. The Laksilyu small-frog clan, Gilseyhu big-frog clan, Gitdumden bear /wolf clan, Tsayu beaver clan and the Laksamashu fireweed clan occupied the region.<sup>19</sup> Today Moricetown is home to approximately 693 on-reserve members, 1228 off-reserve members with a total population of 1921 people.<sup>20</sup> It is estimated that the village has been in existence for hundreds of years.



**Figure 1:** Map of the region

Historically the Witsuwit'en people would travel from their territories and gather in the spring season near Telkwa. There they would set up camp and stay for weeks enjoying each other's company and visiting. Once everyone had gathered and was accounted for the group would pack up and travel to Moricetown for summer fishing activities. Throughout the spawning season the Witsuwit'en people would set up fish traps and smoke houses, and gather herbs preparing for feasts and the winter season. At the end of the fishing season and into the

fall the Witsuwit'en traded goods with each before returning to their home territories. The feasts were considered celebrations but were often used to deal with clan business.

The Moricetown Indian Band is a forward-thinking organization interested in economic development. Moricetown commissioned an economic development plan several years ago; the resulting recommendations included a variety of cultural tourism and ecotourism opportunities. The community has focused on some of them including the canyon attraction, the campground and the museum/interpretive centre. Band Manager, Lucy Gagnon is interested in obtaining additional marketing research, recommendations and promotional materials for these existing Moricetown tourism products. With the provincial interest in aboriginal cultural tourism, the Moricetown Band has a good opportunity to apply and obtain marketing funding.

### ***Environmental Scan***

Researching the tourism market, studying Moricetown's history, culture and existing product the report will examine the products using various strategy models including PESTEL, SWOT and VRIE analysis.

The purpose of the PESTEL analysis (Table 1) is to provide a context for the organization's position in reference to the external environment.<sup>21</sup> The acronym stands for: political, social, technological, legal and environmental factors. The PESTEL analysis examines these factors at a macro level. In this case, macro being the region, not meaning internationally. This analysis illustrates Moricetown's position within the regional external marketing environment.



**Table 1: PESTEL Analysis for Moricetown**

<b>Political</b>	The Moricetown Indian Band has a collaborative relationship with Tourism Smithers and the community. The Smithers Bridging Community was developed. Ecotourism and cultural tourism are increasing in popularity. Moricetown and Smithers host the Festival of Nations in February which is a collaboration of history, storytelling and a feast.
<b>Sociocultural</b>	Regional residents are interested in Moricetown's history and culture. Many are "outdoorsy" people and tourists are drawn to the area because of the natural beauty and for recreational activities like sport fishing and skiing. There is a certain level of consumerism provided the museum/interpretive centre is selling the right products.
<b>Environmental</b>	Currently the biggest environmental issue is the concern involving pipeline development. The majority of residents in the region have similar apprehensions.
<b>Economic</b>	The region is looking for economic development opportunities and tourism is a front-runner.
<b>Technological</b>	With increased spotlight on Aboriginal Tourism, additional resources are being allocated to assist aboriginal originations with their marketing efforts.
<b>Legal</b>	Moricetown must ensure it has adequate insurance and adhere to regulations if it plans to increase offerings.

Conducting a situational analysis is about taking stock of where the product has been, where it is now and where it is headed.<sup>22</sup> The SWOT (Table 2) analysis is an appraisal of the organizations strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats while the VRIE (Table 3) is used to establish competitive advantage. After conducting both a VRIE and SWOT analysis it is evident that there are several competitors in the region but that Moricetown does have unique attributes. Two of the largest advantages are the fishing opportunities and proximity to Smithers, which is somewhat of a cultural and sporting hub. Highlights of the SWOT include strong community relations and support, which will aid in the word of mouth marketing, potential partnerships and further economic development. This is progress for Moricetown that celebrates the Witsuwit'en history and culture. Furthermore, the increase in the baby-boomer demographic and its interest in aboriginal tourism indicates continued growth and opportunities. The SWOT illustrates that Moricetown although perhaps in competition with

other cultural sites, is in an advantageous position because of location and offerings that are of value to the target market.

As we can see from the SWOT analysis product gaps for Moricetown include a reliable restaurant with regular hours. The VRIE analysis illustrates other potential product offerings to include canyon tours, fishing groups/tours, partnerships with local operators, seasonal museum memberships, salmon sales, increased craft and retail sales and multi destination tours with other sites.

Other specific areas for improvement include; lack of cohesive marketing plan, an incomplete website, information about campground is not easily available, particularly online, and an inability for travellers to see what Moricetown's offerings are from the highway.

**Table 2: SWOT Analysis for Moricetown tourism products**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Promotion of Moricetown creates enhanced cultural awareness and benefit	Lack of cohesive marketing	Promote site locally at tradeshow, on the internet with social media and enhanced webpages	Ability to maintain consistency i.e. restaurant
Strong community relations and support	Lower quality promotional products	Increase local traffic through more promotion and events or feasts	Not meeting expectations
Increased popularity of cultural tourism Increased awareness Increased resources for Government	Incomplete website	Increase camping by adding a camping page to website and driving traffic to the website with hyperlinks on other related websites	Other more developed sites may become more preferable
Increase in baby-boomers means more people in the target market	Lack of information about campground easily available	Continue to develop offerings; guided fishing or traditional fishing lessons, fish/souvenir sales	Poor weather
Campground is favorable because it is full service and offers fire pits and is close to water.	Lack of reliable restaurant	More events/ story telling Could offer traditional smoke house facility	Lack of travellers due to fuel costs
The site highlights include scenery, abundance of fish, and the interpretive centre	Difficulty knowing from the highway what the offerings are	Partnerships with local tour operators or other cultural sites	Lack of travellers due to economic conditions
Increased activity in the region		Arrange shuttles to and from Smithers	
Proximity		Better signage	

The VRIE model also known as the resourced-based view of strategy, is based on the perception that competitors in a given industry have different resources and capabilities.<sup>23</sup> This model provides a basis to compare resources and capabilities determining competitive advantage. This analysis is useful to further examine Moricetown's position among industry competitors. Moricetown has similar resource and capabilities as its competitor but we see from the VRIE that Moricetown although somewhat imitable, has rarity and value that can be exploited for economic and cultural benefit. Because the foundation of the cultural tourism



opportunity is built on nature and history, Moricetown is simply using what it has so there is no lost opportunity cost. Additionally, the band already has the organizational structure and human resources (Figure 2).

**Table 3: VRIE Analysis for Moricetown tourism products**

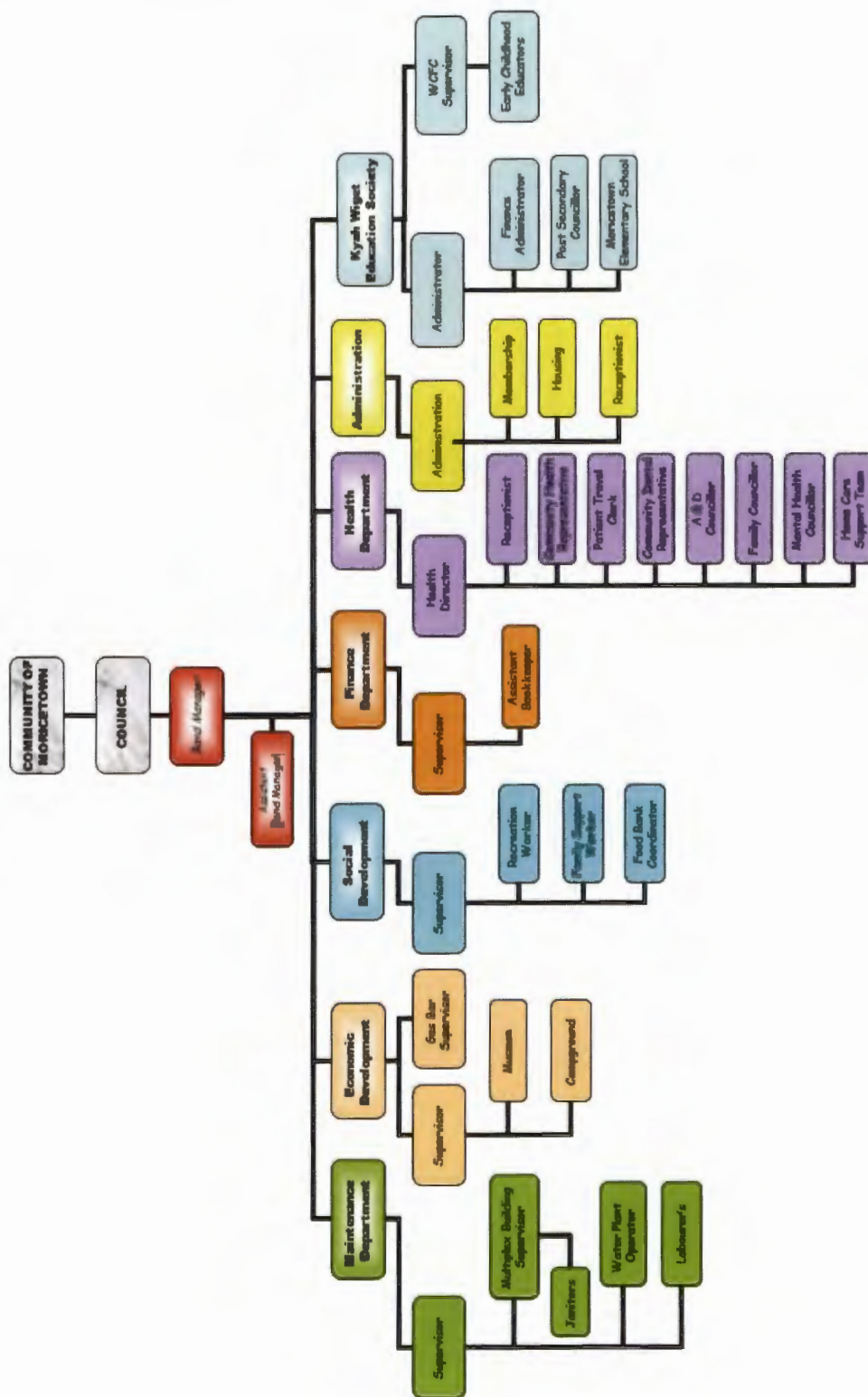
<b>Value</b>	Moricetown has cultural and historic significance. Visitors watch native people use traditional fishing methods. There are areas for non-native people to fish, full service camping facilities, museum/interpretive centre. Salmon isn't very popular with tourists and locals. Large multiplex facilities for feasts. Revenues are earned from admissions to museum, merchandise, camp ground and multiplex rentals.
<b>Rarity</b>	The natural beauty of the canyon makes it scenic and quantity of fish is very high. There are other places to fish and other canyons but what makes Moricetown unique is the easy access and proximity to Smithers. 'Ksan, Nisga'a and Kitselas have more developed products but they are farther away and only Nisga'a promotes fishing.
<b>Imitable/ Nonsubstitutable</b>	Other aboriginal destinations do not focus around fishing as much but they could. Other sites cannot change location to be closer to the town.
<b>Exploitable</b>	Moricetown can better exploit its history, culture and fishing. Proximity to Smithers creates opportunity with FIT, VFR and MICE. Human resources are available. Financial resources are limited but could be matched through other funding to create cohesive marketing materials. Further development and promotion of product could lead to steady growth and increased awareness. Opportunities include: canyon tours, fishing groups/tours, partnerships with local operators, seasonal museum memberships, salmon sales, increased craft and retail sales and multi destination tours with other sites.

### Competitive Advantage

The Moricetown Band has a strong organizational structure comprised of five departments: maintenance, economic development, social development, finance, health, administration and education. Through a number of managers and supervisors, band manager Lucy Gagnon oversees all of the programs that the band offers. The band is open to change, advancement of tourism offerings and economic development. Human resources are available to implement the recommendations.

Figure 2: Moricetown Band Organizational Chart

# Moricetown Band Organizational Chart



Externally, Moricetown has an opportunity to implement an effective marketing plan strategically pursuing continued economic development opportunities in the tourism sector. Because aboriginal and cultural tourism are gaining popularity more resources are becoming available through the province; Tourism BC, the Northern BC Tourism Association and ATBC. Other Aboriginal organizations have developed renowned tourism facilities and programs. Moricetown should look to these successful operations to learn from others best practices. Cases in the immediate region include: 'Ksan Historical Village, Kitselas Canyon National Historic Site, and the Nisga'a museum.

By identifying prospects for funding, learning from other successful cultural sites and focusing on the expectations of its target market, Moricetown can attract more visitors, which will translate to increased revenues. The largest area of visitor growth for Moricetown is domestic travellers visiting Smithers and area residents.

### ***Industry Benchmarks***

Other aboriginal cultural tourism sites in the region this paper will examine include 'Ksan Historical Village, Kitselas Canyon National Historic Site, and the Nisga'a museum.

Located near Hazelton at the confluence of the Bulkley and Skeena river, 'Ksan Historical Village is a replicated ancient village, which emulates a Gitksan village from past. This too was an important fishing site however in addition to its history, there are three tourism products 'Ksan emphasizes: the houses, totem poles and unique structures. 'Ksan offers guided tours. The first and foremost impression from the website is a focus on tourism and heritage.

Houses include a museum gift shop and administration building, which opened in 1970. There is also the Workshop or House of Carving, which is home to the Gitanmaax School of

Northwest Coast Indian Art. The Silkscreen Studio is not open to the public but is for local print artists and part of school curriculum. The Eagle House offers traditional food and refreshments. Ceremonial clothing is featured in the Fireweed House or Treasure House, which was once the original museum. The Wolf House is also known as the Feast House and is the place for ceremonies. Finally the Frog House focuses on the distant past and the lifestyle of the Gitksan people before contact with the outside world. The houses all form a single line that is visible from the water. The village also features five totem poles, and what is referred to as unique structures; a replica of a grave house and a smoke house.

The Kitselas have developed a National Historic Site located at the heart of the Canyon - adjacent to the community of Gitksan. The site offers history, culture and canyon tours and consists of four long houses that house artifacts and totem poles. Regular tours of the Canyon are offered for \$8.00 for seniors, \$10.00 children and \$16.00 for adults. Features include good scenery, cultural artifacts and longhouses. The website has many administrative purposes and is not designed to focus on the primary target market we discuss in this paper.

The Nisga'a area features a 179 square kilometre Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Park, which is jointly managed by the Nisga'a Nation and British Columbia. The park offers a 16-site campground a new attractive museum building filled with a treasuring of art and culture; more than 300 artifacts and art. The building set in front of a scenic of mountainous backdrop. Admission prices range from \$3.00 for children to \$8.00 for adults. Tourism offerings include: guided tours of the lava beds, sport fishing, backcountry excursions, and walks across the Nass River on a 400-foot long extension bridge and totem poles. The obstacle for Nisga'a is the remote location 90 kilometres north of Terrace.

The products for these other aboriginal sites are more developed than Moricetown but these sites are arguably still not developed enough to be destinations in and of themselves for the majority of travellers, rather they are day trip destinations for locals and visited by travellers as part of another trip. Unlike Moricetown, these sites face the more difficult challenge of proximity to a larger centre. A primary advantage for Moricetown is the number of visitors Smithers sees and its distance from Smithers (Table 6).

## **Method**

The methods used for this paper include a combination of primary and secondary data. In addition to literature review, in consultation with Moricetown band manager surveys were distributed and a focus group was conducted. In depth interviews were held with the band manager and stakeholder Tourism Smithers. Authorization to conduct the interviews, focus group and survey was obtained from the ethics board prior to the events and only those willing to participate were interviewed.

## ***Literature Review /Secondary Data***

The scope of the literature review includes Witsuwit'en history and culture; aboriginal tourism destination best practices, reports and articles on aboriginal cultural tourism trends, product features and visitor needs and profiles as well as presentations, slides and workshop minutes on marketing the aboriginal tourism product. Additionally, this study utilizes academic texts and papers discussing, traditional marketing methods, E-marketing and strategy.



## ***Primary Data***

### **Depth Interviews**

Data was collected from interviews with Moricetown band manager Lucy Gagnon and tourism coordinator, Gladys Atrill at Tourism Smithers. The interview with the band manager reviewed Moricetown's history and the three tourism products of focus; a campground, museum/interpretive centre and the canyon. Questions regarding prices, staffing, current marketing practices, and promotions revealed that to date the marketing has not been strategically planned. Current promotional marketing activities include: some flyers, a website, an advertisement in an RV publication, and community public relations activities. Visitors range from regional residents who come for a few hours or days to annual fishermen who stay for up to a month at a time. The peak season is from June to September. During that time Moricetown can experience up to 200 visitors a day on the banks of the river either fishing or watch traditional native fishing methods. Gagnon emphasized, "It's all about the fish." This is true from a high-level perspective, or from the band's historical perspective but for tourists it is about their experience learning about the fishing culture and history.

The interview with the Smithers' tourism coordinator assisted in profiling regional travellers, their expectations and potential pulls. Key findings confirmed secondary research results that profiled the target market.

Potential visitors are baby boomers over the age of 50 with an above average income and university education.<sup>24</sup> Interview questions also revealed other regional aboriginal sites and tourism offerings. It is apparent Moricetown should focus its marketing effort on travellers already in, or planning to come to, Smithers and regional residents. Extensive research has been conducted regarding the target market for aboriginal tourism products. I found the work

of Kutzner et al. (2009) to be particularly useful. Findings are expanded under the target market section of this paper.

The information shared at Northern British Columbia Aboriginal Tourism Development Workshop in April of 2009 is still the same and as relevant today. Visitor preferences and motivators are clearly outlined based on research conducted in 2005 and information supplied by Racelle Kooy, the former marketing director of AtBC. Kooy answers “Who is the Aboriginal tourism traveler?” discussing the baby-boomers, higher education, higher income segment. The other local segment was discovered based on the depth interviews with both the band manager and the tourism coordinator. Their first-hand knowledge of the site, the locals as well as current habits and trends, provided the foundation for understanding the younger local segment.

My small focus group and number of survey participants were merely samplings to test whether prior findings by researchers were accurate and still timely. I am confident additional research would garner the same results.

## **Survey**

Survey participants were chosen based on their self-identification as persons who travel and their willingness to complete the survey. Survey participants are BC residents from around the province, some who have already visited the area and some who have not. There were eight survey respondents from various parts of BC between the ages of 30 and 60. Participants were asked 18 questions pertaining to leisure activities, experience at heritage sites and galleries, interest in the arts and expectations as an audience member. The survey questionnaire was

ethics approved and each respondent signed a consent form explaining the project and purpose of the data collection.

These survey results prioritize activities and preferences of participants (see Table 4 for the results). Regarding leisure time, respondents were asked; how they spend their leisure time, what the most important factor are when making decisions about how to spend their time, if they would travel to rural areas for leisure activity, if so what type of leisure? They were also asked if they go camping; how often and what their expectations are? Under the category experience at a heritage site, gallery or museum the participants were asked again about frequency, preferences and expectations.



### Moricetown Survey Results

LEISURE TIME PREFERENCES		EXPERIENCE AT HERITAGE SITES/GALLERIES/MUSEUMS	
<b>How you spend your leisure time?</b>		<b>How many times a year do you go to a museum?</b>	
Sports	5*	1-4	8
Arts	5	5-10	-
Culture	5	10+	-
Outdoors	5		-
Other		<b>How many times a year do you go to a heritage site?</b>	
		1-4	8
<b>Most important factors in your choice?</b>		5-10	-
Entertainment	2	10+	-
Education	1		
Cost	5	<b>How many times a year do you go to a gallery?</b>	
Location	5	1-4	8
Duration of Time	5	5-10	-
		10+	-
<b>Do you travel to rural areas</b>			
Yes	7	<b>What arts or cultural activities do you participate in?</b>	
No	1	Events	7
		Planning Activities	4
<b>For which activity do you travel?</b>		Committees	7
Sports	4	Creating Art	
Arts	3		
Culture	1	<b>What are your expectations at an arts/culture event?</b>	
Outdoors	6	Service	2
Other	-	Quality	3
		Value	5
<b>Do you go camping?</b>		Family & Friends	3
Yes	7	Entertainment	6
No	1	Education	4
<b>Your camping frequency</b>		<b>How do you obtain leisure information?</b>	
1-4	5	Radio	3
5-10	1	Posters	-
10+	1	Community papers	4
		WOM	5
<b>Your expectations of a campground</b>		Internet	6
Quiet	4		
Family Oriented	2	<b>What are preventative factors of participation?</b>	
Party	-	Time	4
Fire Pit	5	Info	4
Near water	5	Cost	1
Rustic	3	Lack Appeal	3
Amenities	1	Distance	5

\* Indicates the number of respondents who chose this option.

**Table 4:** Leisure and Culture Survey Results

In all cases museums, galleries and heritage sites were visited between one and four times annually. Most of those surveyed were willing to travel to a rural community for a leisure activity they enjoy. Furthermore, six of eight would travel to a rural community for the outdoor activity or nature. All participants surveyed except one, goes camping at least once a year. Of the seven campers, five expect a fire pit and proximity to water.

### **Focus Group**

Five self-identifying travellers volunteered to participate in a focus group. The individuals ranged in age from approximately 40 to 65 years. The focus group was held at 2:00pm on January 22<sup>nd</sup> in the boardroom of Community Futures. Participants were asked questions regarding leisure activities, experience at heritage sites and galleries, interest in the arts and expectations as an audience member, preferences, and opinions of existing Moricetown marketing materials. Key findings indicated the most likely individuals to travel to Moricetown are couples over the age of 55 most likely retired or semi-retired, interested in an educational or historical, cultural experience in a nature setting. Travelling the area these visitors would either stay at a campground in a RV or at a hotel. Four out of five of the focus group participants had been to Moricetown and had stopped to watch the fishing yet none were aware of the museum/interpretive centre and only one knew of the RV park and campground.

## Moricetown Focus Group Findings

Question	Response
How do you spend your leisure time?	community service, volunteering, travel, Rving around BC & Alberta visiting family, enjoying nature, cross-country skiing entertaining, learning new things, geneology, history
Important factors when considering how to spend leisure time?	cost, time learning/educational/historical
Camping expectations	family atmosphere, social has to have room for RV water and fire pit
How do you find out about cultural events?	word of mouth internet brochures locals
What are important factors at a heritage or cultural site?	show me don't tell me talking to people who experience it, i.e. elders learning, someone to answer questions seek out new things, see and do myself
What other cultural memorable experiences have you had?	cultural museum in Prince Rupert grizzly bear tours in Terrace and Hyder touring cultural areas of eastern Canada exploration place, railway museum
What do you think of this marketing material?	looks busy, too much info, not professional wouldn't pick it up, wouldn't notice it
What other amenities do you prefer?	restaurant
What mediums do you use?	internet word of mouth brochures locals
Would you visit Moricetown?	no if I was in the area and I found out about it yes have been there
Would you purchase items at a gift shop?	souvenirs authentic crafts fish educational items

**Table 5: Leisure and Culture Focus Group Results**

The preference for the museum/interpretive centre was to be able to tour and explore independently or in small groups without a guide but that there also be a resource available should he or she want more information and details. Respondents were likely to purchase authentic souvenirs, fish or educational pieces. Travellers also indicated a desire for food and beverage as a preferred amenity.

Participants with young children were more likely to go to a local heritage site rather than travel any great distance, while highly educated and high earning middle-aged participants were unlikely to travel to a remote location for this type of experience unless it was a social group camping experience with friends. This finding is contrary to some provincial data that profiles the target market for heritage sites as a younger demographic<sup>25</sup> but similar to information obtained in the stakeholder interview with Tourism Smithers.

When asked about the existing marketing material and in which ways they find out about leisure activities respondents answers included: internet, brochures at VIC, and word of mouth from locals. The focus group felt the existing printed promotional material was not professional enough to attract their attention or encourage them to go to the site.

## **Key Findings**

### **Issue**

The Moricetown museum/interpretive centre is dedicated to showcasing the history and culture of the Witsuwit'en people; people of the lower river. It is said the village that is now Moricetown has been in existence for hundreds of years. The Moricetown museum/interpretive centre provides visitors with a glimpse of Witsuwit'en art and artifacts dating back several hundred years while the canyon offers visitors a chance to watch the people of Moricetown



traverse dangerous fishing spots and practice traditional fishing methods. The campground has 25 sites and is fully serviced with washrooms, showers, fire pits and laundry facilities.

The museum is staffed by one full time and one part time individual from June to September and contains a small retail gift shop. The campground is also staffed by one full time, and one part time person. Due to the proximity of Moricetown to Smithers and Hazelton, there is a reasonably sized regional audience for the museum and canyon. There are many travellers who drive along highway 16. By ensuring the success of the museum and campground Moricetown can increase economic and cultural benefit for the village. Success requires better branding and increased awareness of the site and its offerings as well as a boost in attendance and campsite bookings.

Key findings from the primary research suggested couples over the age of 55 are the most likely individuals to travel to Moricetown. Many would be retired or semi-retired. Their interests include educational or historical, cultural experience in a natural setting. While travelling the area, these visitors would either stay at a campground in a RV or at a hotel. Eighty percent of the focus group participants had been to Moricetown and had stopped to watch the fishing yet none were aware of the museum/interpretive centre and only twenty percent knew of the RV park and campground.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Continue to promote Moricetown national heritage to local and distant communities
- Improve online presence
- Partner with other museums/tour operators
- Tie advertisement to other local cultural events.
- Increase/expand partnerships with educational facilities and social clubs
- Improve awareness by going to trade shows.

## **Positioning**

Moricetown is best known for its canyon. Every year millions of migrating salmon pass through on their way to their spawning grounds. The Witsuwit'en have been fishing here for thousands of years. Traditionally they would create temporary villages and move throughout the area ending in Moricetown for the summer where they would set up fish traps and smokehouses, trade with other nations and have feasts.

Today, during peak season, hundreds of people stop to watch the local fishing and travellers from all over the region, come to marvel in the beauty of the canyon, stay at the campground or fish. There are a number of cultural tourism destinations in the area but for Moricetown, key factors include the quantity of salmon, the beauty of the canyon and the convenient location. Based on this information the following tag lines were developed: Experience the tradition; Living on the land, sustained by the sacred; Feast on the Salmon of the Widzin Kwah. It was also determined incorporate "See you in 15 minutes."

## **Marketing and Recommendations**

### **Strategic Focus and Plan**

#### **Mission**

Serving our community with pride, providing services and programs to enhance the development of our nation.

#### **Vision**

To capitalize on tourism opportunities focused around cultural education, traditional ecological knowledge and eco tourism.

## **Goals**

Increase local and regional awareness and tourism activities in Moricetown. Earn more revenues from tourism activities.

## **Core Competency**

Moricetown is best known for its salmon. Every year millions of migrating salmon pass through the canyon on the way to their spawning ground. From June to September hundreds of people can be seen on the banks of the river.

## ***Target Market***

From the research collected I have identified two segments within the target market for Moricetown. There is the local resident who wants something unique and interesting to do and the regional traveller.

While local residents are the first segment, they are often missed when determining target market but they potentially represent two-fold opportunity. There is common and frequent visitor potential because of proximity and they also serve as ambassadors and advocates of the site; encouraging others to visit, providing information on the area its services and various activities. Residents will be repeat visitors to the site to fish and camp.

The second segment of visitors whom are most interested in the site are 55+ travellers seeking a unique cultural experience or enrichment. Many of them are travelling by RV. The importance of discovering and satisfying consumer needs is critical to understanding marketing. If we can conceptualize this sub group of similar consumers, we can better meet their needs with specialized product and marketing program.<sup>26</sup> This market segment was chosen primarily due to their needs, profile and the ability for Moricetown to generate

awareness, effectively reaching the market and resulting in greatest visitor volumes. Kutzner's research indicates what visitors are interested in:

Top activities visitors were very interested in were: 'woodcarving', 'collecting plants to eat' and 'outdoor survival'. Most preferred tourism topics included the 'animal and plant life of the region', 'stories and legends of Aboriginal culture' and 'Aboriginal history post-European contact'. The three top-ranked features were 'taking photos of scenic landscapes or wildlife', 'demonstrations by artisans of artefacts', and 'drumming and dance performances'.<sup>27</sup>

Recent primary research although a very small sampling, supports this data. Participants in both the survey group and the focus group were primarily concerned with an authentic quality experience of historical value and enrichment. One participant describes his motivation for choosing leisure activity to be that of an interesting and unique experience while another seeks something informative and interactive. A third respondent describes a period themed role-playing situation with First Nations costumes as extraordinarily meaningful and enjoyable.

For Moricetown the main draws are salmon fishing, stunning scenery and the strong history and culture of the Witsuwit'en people. Looking at the numbers, we see why it is a worthwhile goal for Moricetown to try and attract more visitors.

Annual direct expenditures from visitor to the area are \$21,370,000 dollars. While half of the spending is from business travellers, leisure travellers amount to 65,900 visitors and contribute \$7,869,000 to the coffers. 13,200 visitors are attributed to visiting friends and relatives which accounts for a \$2,340,000 expenditure.<sup>28</sup>



## Estimates of Direct Visitor Expenditures

Type of Visitor	# Visitors	Average length of stay (days)	Average total spend (\$) per visitor per trip	Totals (\$)
Leisure (commercial accommodation)	65,900	1.5	\$120	\$7,860,000
Business	30,100	1.7	\$370	\$11,100,000
Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR)	13,200	4.0	\$180	\$2,340,000
Day Visitors	900		\$80	\$70,000
<b>Annual Direct Visitor Expenditures</b>				<b>\$21,370,000</b>

**Table 6:** Direct Visitor Expenditures

### Promotional Strategy and Message

The Moricetown canyon is a natural beauty. For hundreds of years villagers have sustained themselves with the salmon from the river and berries and herbs of the land.<sup>29</sup> The river is the lifeblood of the community.

The museum ties together the culture and history of Moricetown people and the river with links to current Moricetown life and nature. The campground provides a full service scenic area to stay and the canyon is a natural wonder. The positioning strategy for Moricetown is that of a niche attack in terms of the overall tourism market. A niche attack involves providing a different value offer to a smaller segment of consumers; in this case cultural enrichment, interaction with nature to people whom are likely to be or already in the vicinity.<sup>30</sup>

The main purpose of the promotional campaign is to increase awareness in the local community, and regionally by attracting tourists already visiting, or planning to visit, the area.

Once awareness has been generated, there is a need to develop metrics for evaluation and control purposes. If consistency and quality of product offerings can be maintained there will be an increase in awareness and positive word of mouth. When visitors have a satisfying and enjoyable experience, they will tell other people, which will lead to additional, credible advertisement.

The target market has two segments: local and regional residents, and the regional traveller who is also referred to as long-haul visitors to Northern BC, Prince Rupert and Alaska. The market can be further defined as containing FIT (fully independent travellers), VFR (visiting friends and relatives), and MICE (meetings incentives conferences events).<sup>31</sup> In all cases it is important to remember the visitors already are, or are planning to be, in the vicinity. For small northern BC communities it is essential to focus on the domestic tourism market.<sup>32</sup> Part of the promotional plan will be to ensure that information relating to the Moricetown is widely available. Moricetown needs to direct its advertisement and communications plan to the end users (to achieve “pull”) and the purchaser of its services. There is a need for be greater awareness, which is why the campaign will focus on supplying information and attracting the attention of local residents and visitors already planning to visit the wider area.

Part of the promotional plan is to ensure that information relating to the Moricetown is widely accessible. Due to the availability to long-haul visitors to Northern BC, E-marketing is essential. When planning their trip we want them to be aware of Moricetown and to consider visiting.

The promotional materials will be professional, appealing and culturally relevant so as to attract the preferred target market. Creating the right message involves understanding the

information needs and perspectives of the target audience, and anticipating their reactions to various approaches.<sup>33</sup>

## ***Marketing Mix***

### **Product/Service**

Moricetown's primary draw is the canyon and specifically the fish. Peak season is June through to September. The site consists of the canyon, a campground and a museum/interpretive centre. The museum/interpretive centre is dedicated to showcasing the history and the culture of the Witsuwit'en people – people of the lower river, their heritage and tradition of fishing. The tourism site could be further developed in a number of ways. Because travellers desire experiential opportunities,<sup>34</sup> services such as traditional fishing lessons or tours, access or use of smoke houses and storytelling sessions would be valuable. Once the marketing materials are developed retail sales can be increased to include small souvenir items such as key chains, mugs, and T-shirts. Finally, research has shown travellers would also like to access food and beverage therefore, developing a reliable restaurant is an opportunity. Events such as the learning feast are a great way to further strengthen relationships with stakeholders and community members. Local school tours and storytelling would further enhance awareness.

### **Price**

The largest draws to the area are the beauty of the canyon and watching native fisherman. Travellers are amazed at the number and size of fish. There is no fee for spectators. The museum sees approximately 10 people a day during the season and current pricing for entrance to the museum/interpretive centre is by donation. This is a change from the original admission price of \$2.00 per person yet the band has experienced an increase in admission

revenues due to larger donations. Part museum, part interpretive centre the site also has a small gift shop, which sells local crafts.

The campground is high above the canyon and offers full service complete with washrooms, showers, laundry, fire pits and wood. Campsite fees are \$12.00 for tents, \$19.00 for full service and \$20.00 for additional wood. This is inline with provincial park camp pricing which ranges from \$10 - \$30 per vehicle, per night.<sup>35</sup>

There is no charge to fish on the canyon but a fishing permit is needed and Moricetown does not currently offer any paid fishing tours or traditional lessons.

The price for the camping is appropriate. The admission to the museum could be a seasonal membership for an increased price, or travellers could be given a small souvenir as part of a higher price. More revenues could be generated by adding product as mentioned above, packaging offerings and continue working with local stakeholders such as the college and tour operators.

## **Place**

Being located a mere 30 km west of Smithers Moricetown is a short drive for Smithers' tourists and locals alike. Moricetown is good at maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders and Smithers' residents. There is a need for Moricetown to develop marketing products that create a greater desire to make the 15-minute trip.

## **Promotion**

The Smithers VIC, racking carries folded photocopied Moricetown brochures, but they do not create a desire to visit. Moricetown has website which is somewhat incomplete and advertises annually in RV West magazine.

Morictown has an initial budget of \$5,000. By accessing matching dollars through ATBC and Northern Initiatives Development Trust or other organizations it could increase the marketing budget to as much as \$20,000. The tourism market is seasonal but promotional activities must occur year-round.

Some promotional activities will focus on a pulse schedule spending dollars at spaced intervals throughout the year utilizing the objective and task approach while a basic amount of advertising will be purchased monthly through the local print media to maintain top of mind awareness year-round.

The website will be improved to have additional pages promoting tourism, the museum and activities as well as an independent page for the campground with rates and the functionality to book online. The history and other incomplete pages will be completed. The look of the site will be updated to match the other collateral materials. Website search engine optimization will be utilized to increase visits to the website. Facebook and twitter accounts for the site will be created. These will be primarily used during the peak season to update followers of weather and fishing conditions. The use of a CRM system such as an e-newsletter would also distribute this information. All the marketing materials need to be updated, enhanced and cohesive.

Year round public and media relations will include sending stories, story ideas and press releases to the media. The prime season for tourism is May to September but to create sustainability ongoing campaigns in the non-prime tourism season (October to April) will concentrate on advertising to the region about news, history and special events.

Moricietown will purchase a monthly ad in the local newspaper. Outdoor media in the form of a billboard (Figure 5) will provide a long reach and will be displayed along highways where heavy road traffic is travelling through the region.

Brochures (Figure 4) and posters (Figure 3) will be distributed at the VIC and other stakeholders such as local accommodation sites and other cultural tourism sites.

Presentations and storytelling at schools or service clubs will increase awareness that will lead to visits and create opportunities for networking, cross-promotion and partnerships. Participation at tradeshow with banners (Figure 6) would also lead to increased awareness and local visitation.

The budget to accomplish the objectives is \$20,000. Initial development costs of \$1,500 have been earmarked for brand development. The remaining funds will be divided between direct marketing, print and internet and e-marketing.



# Promotional Plan for Moricetown

		Budget	Month												Total	
	Time per (yr)		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec		
PRINT																
Media Relations: Editorial stories in local paper and regional publications	consecutive	\$0	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	\$0	
	1.00	\$1,000	\$1,000												\$1,000	
	RV Magazine	12.00	\$600	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$600	
	local newspaper	2.00	\$2,000				\$1,000					\$1,000			\$2,000	
	Magazines - cultural, historical	1.00	\$1,500												\$1,500	
Brochures (2500/yr)	consecutive	\$7,200	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$7,200	
	Billboards	4.00	\$650												\$650	
Exhibit Posters (250/4 times/year)																
			Total Print												\$12,950	
DIRECT																
Events (trade shows etc.)	2.00	\$1,000					\$500			\$500					\$1,000	
	Learning Feast	1.00	\$3,000								\$3,000				\$3,000	
Advertise to schools' opportunities to come to the canyon or have in-class visits from the museum - It, generate awareness resulting in increased visitation	\$3	N/C*	N/C*												\$0	
			Total Direct												\$4,000	
INTERNET																
Add pages/Update existing website	1.00	\$1,000	\$1,000												\$1,000	
Hyperlinks to other sites i.e. Tourism Smithers, ATE	1.00	\$0	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	\$0	
			Total Internet												\$1,000	
E-MARKETING																
Social Media/Blogs - Facebook, Twitter	1.00	\$250	\$250	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	\$250	
Website	1.00	\$0	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	N/C*	\$0	
E-Newsletter (1/month)	12.00	\$240	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$20	\$240	
			Total E-Marketing												\$490	
Other tactics																
New Branding		\$1,500													\$1,500	
Banners (2)	0.00	\$600									\$600				\$600	
			Total Other												\$600	
Totals			\$16,940	\$3,420	\$1,670	\$2,270	\$1,170	\$1,670	\$1,020	\$610	\$1,170	\$4,370	\$1,670	\$670	\$770	\$19,940
															960	
															Contingency	
															Total budget	
															20,000	

N/C indicates no charge, Moricetown band would utilize existing staff

Table 7: Promotional Schedule and Budget

**Table 8: Promotional Strategy**

<b>Plan</b>	<b>Tactic</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Medium</b>
Have other websites add Moricetown as a hyperlink	Drive traffic to website, increase awareness	N/A	Tourism websites, retailers other stake holders
Update website	Create a more comprehensive understanding of the culture, community and offerings	Add a page each for the museum, campground and history. Upgrade appearance to match with new branding. Add option to subscribe to newsletter	Website
E-Newsletters	Keep in touch with previous visitors	Fishing data water and fish levels/weather and upcoming events	Social media distribution lists and subscribers
Billboard	Encourage visitors to come	Offerings, location, contact information	Billboards available around Smithers and Hazelton
Social Media	Improve awareness	Fishing data water and fish levels/weather and upcoming events	Facebook Twitter
Posters	Gain attention of target market	Stimulating design with fishing and listing offerings and contact info/address	At partner destinations and stakeholder operations
Magazines	Promote Canyon and RV park/ campground	Campground booking information and website	RV Magazine Sports Fishing Magazine Travel Magazine
Brochures	Gain visitors from Smithers and area to Moricetown Informative	History, offerings	Visitor Info Centre
Banners	Improve awareness Gain visitors	Stimulating design with fishing and listing offerings and contact info	N/A
Presentations at off- site meetings, and events/Storytelling	Build relationships Improve awareness Create partnerships	Goals, shared resources	Tour operators/ Travel industry Service Clubs Schools
Feasts	Build goodwill, maintain relationships	Learning	N/A



## **Creative Work & Execution**

In the creative work I have chosen to mirror that of the Witsuwit'en. Learning their history and methodology has been fundamental to the design process. The traditional art exhibits strict rules of design: symmetry and the use of bold and contrasting colors, particularly red and black. As these images demonstrate, Witsuwit'en art celebrates and honours a mystical spirituality. The design of the campaign pays tribute to the Witsuwit'en, the salmon and the river.

The main font used is Birch. I chose this strong serif font because it is bold yet still traditional, historic and decorative. The other font used is Corbel. This sans serif font represents the modern aspects of the Witsuwit'en. It was chosen for its simple but stylized appearance.

As mentioned, looking at the Witsuwit'en artifacts and traditional dress we can see the use of bold and contrasting colors. I have chosen to further emphasize those traditional colours by combining them with the traditional turquoise, which in this case, represents the river.



VISIT

# MORICETOWN



## EXPERIENCE THE TRADITION

LIVING ON THE LAND, SUSTAINED BY THE SACRED  
**Feast on the Salmon of the Widzin Kwah**

Moricetown Canyon

Museum/Interpretive Centre

World Class Fishing Site

Campground & R.V. Park

HIGHWAY 16, 32 KLM WEST OF SMITHERS  
MORICETOWN BAND (250) 847-2133  
SEE YOU IN 15 MIN

Figure 3: Poster

## Moricetown Canyon

Moricetown Canyon is located in the Witsuwit'en Nation (Kyab Wiget) known as Moricetown, BC. It was built on the Moricetown Canyon on the Bulkley River around 4000 years ago.

Moricetown is the summer gathering place of the Witsuwit'en, who are the friends and neighbors of the Gitksan.

**Stop by and watch the Witsuwit'en fish the rapids the old fashioned way with dip nets.**

## Idiot Rock

A popular non-native fishing site nearby is called Idiot Rock. Here you can fish with rod & tackle. A permit is required. Fishermen are known to sleep at the rock to keep their fishing spots. This may have contributed to the name. At the nearby campsite where you can purchase your fishing permit, there is a stairway that takes you to the river's edge to enjoy more fishing. Fishermen also launch their boats behind Moricetown in order to access a small island, not far from Idiot Rock.



## Witsuwit'en People

The Moricetown Canyon is a territorial fishing ground held by the 5 clans of the Kyab Wiget people: Laksilyu small frog clan, Gilsayin big-frog clan, Gildumden bear/wolf clan, Tsayu beaver clan and the Laksamashu fireweed clan. These clans hold 13 houses presided over by chiefs and sub chiefs. They follow their mother's clan and her house. The chiefs are the spokespeople for their clan and the well-being of their clan members is their responsibility. The highest hereditary chiefs take care of the fishing sites of each clan. The native fisherman use dip nets.

## World Class Fishing Site



At this point of the Bulkley River, the body of water rushes through 1/4 mile wide canyon making beautiful white cascading falls. The combination of the carved rock walls and foaming water makes an incredible site.



## Museum/Interpretive Centre

Located off Highway #16 – turn @ Telkwa Highway, cross the bridge and you will find us at the RV Park site overlooking Moricetown Canyon. You will find artifacts, historical photos and information. Small retail available: local crafts, T-shirts, souvenirs and hats.

Phone (250) 847-1471

Open seasonally June – August



## Campground & R.V. Park

- Fully Serviced
- Washrooms
- Free Showers
- Laundry
- Shaded Areas
- Fire Pits
- Firewood
- Spectacular views
- Salmon BBQ on special occasions
- Sports Fishing (permit required)

Phone (250) 847-1461

## EXPERIENCE THE TRADITION

LIVING ON THE LAND,  
SUSTAINED BY THE SACRED



Moricetown Canyon  
& the Witsuwit'en People



32 Km West of Smithers  
Moricetown Band (250) 847-2133  
See you in 15 min

Figures 4: Brochure



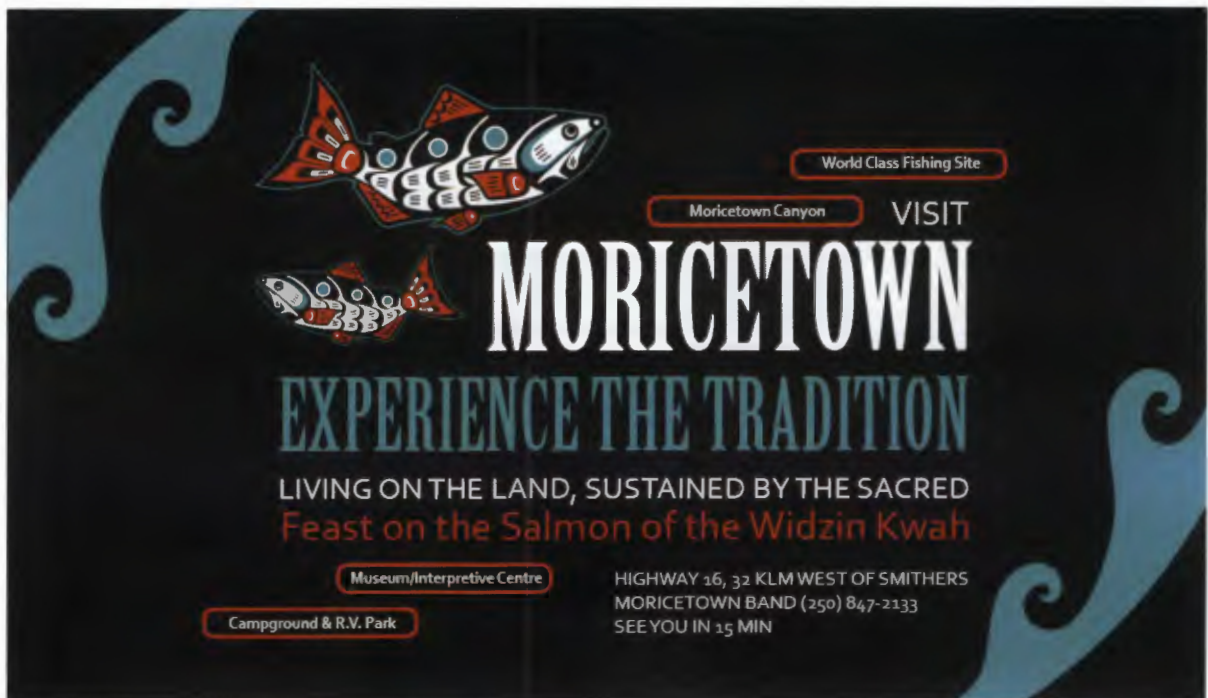


Figure 5: Billboard



Figure 6: Banner

## **Conclusion**

To remain successful in its marketing efforts Moricetown will have to implement evaluation and control measures. Quantifiable measures would include increased traffic to the website, most visited web pages, increased traffic in visitors, enquiries, survey on website, number of phone calls to the band for tourism information. Website metrics would include number of unique visitors to the website and various web pages. Evaluation of print media would include the number of brochures distributed and replenished. All results would be compared to those of previous years.

**Table 9:** Evaluation and Control

<b>Method Channel</b>	<b>Timing Frequency</b>	<b>Increase in \$</b>	<b>Increase in #</b>
Guest book	end of season	Increase in revenue	Number of visitors to museum
Registrations	monthly	Increase in revenue	Campground bookings
Online registration	monthly	Increase in revenue	Online campground booking
Verbal	weekly	Increase in revenue	VIC referrals
Verbal	weekly	Increase in revenue	Partner referrals
Records	monthly	Increase in revenue	Quality of items sold
E-newsletter	monthly	Discount coupon	Redemption frequency Readership frequency
Internet Metrics	monthly		Number of website hits and page hits
Telephone Inquiries	monthly	none	Number of calls Number of calls that lead to bookings
Media	10 annually	none	Number of stories in the news

Effective marketing is key to the success of any business endeavor. Defining ones target market and the segments within enable an organization better conceptualize and comprehend who the consumer is and what they want. By clearly understanding the customer it is possible to more efficiently promote the product, which results in greater revenues and awareness. Often consultants recommend large-scale marketing plans requiring onerous amounts of money and wholesale changes. This is not always necessary. If we look at the product honestly, what the organization is capable of from an operational perspective and its goals; often small adjustments and a more focus effort is all that is needed to achieve positive results.

After collecting various forms of research the project has clearly defined the segments of the target market that Moricetown should promote to. By utilizing different strategic tools to appraise Moricetown and competing cultural sites we learn the value, competitive advantage, areas for improvement and opportunities. From there, the paper outlines what branding will best resonate with the consumer and what promotional tools should be used.

In the case of aboriginal tourism sites, it is not necessary to be the biggest and the best. Over commercialization is exactly the opposite of what the consumer wants. The demand is growing but that demand is for authentic experience and the ability for non-natives to learn about aboriginal culture and history while exploring nature. The market wants to experience what it was like for aboriginal people before "contact." This desire for knowledge and experience is helping to revitalize First Nations culture and pride. There is great sociocultural benefit from an increased level of understanding and acceptance and stronger communities.

Fundamentally the delivery of a valuable aboriginal tourism product that meets the needs of the consumer is simple. It must be an authentic experience, it must be reliable, what you

promise is what you provide and the offering must be promoted. It takes planning and organization. Once those requirements are met, it is up to individual sites to grow the product and increase marketing efforts and promotion. Smaller sites should strive to excel through quality.

### **Critique of Methods**

The research methods used in this study were intended to establish the value of Moricetown tourism offering and pinpoint potential consumers. The resulting project was to create a marketing plan, promotional schedule and brand that the site could implement to increase awareness, visitation and revenues. The secondary data available on aboriginal tourism is quite extensive and although the primary data was acquired through a very small sample the results were supportive.

This project was limited to Moricetown's existing facilities and existing budget however, areas for further research include creating a sustainable, reliable restaurant onsite, and working with stakeholders and partners in the region to develop a series of cultural tourism packages. One of the key strategies is to partner with Tour Operators (look to obtaining Circle Tour destination status) and Trade Shows with "Tourism BC" and "Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC". There are as mentioned, many cultural sites in the area aboriginal and non-aboriginal. These packages would tour visitors from Smithers to Prince Rupert stopping at all the cultural destinations from Moricetown to 'Ksan, Kitselas and Nisga'a, to the Northern BC Museum in Prince Rupert. This would be of benefit to the province, the regional district, cities such as Smithers, Terrace and Prince Rupert. ATBC is offering a number of workshops and funding



opportunities to bring aboriginal tourism development to fruition. Packages would be promoted to travel trade organizations and the European market.

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