

SHENANDOAH VALLEY

TOURISM PARTNERSHIP CONTENT STRATEGY REPORT

Content Strategy - Final Report
Content Strategy - ICM513DE_20SP - Prof. Phillip Simon

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a high-level overview of SVTP content in relation to its business goals. We found that in its current state, the SVTP content for the primary website only partially supports the stated goals of the partnership. Although well written and reusable, it lacks organization and is not presented in a way that engages users and prompts them to act. Our audit revealed several areas where content could be generated for maximum outreach effectiveness. In addition, we have crafted a messaging framework and style guide that aligns closely with SVTP market research. We feel that the best approach is to make the website more transactional. All pages on the website will be designed to guide the user through a sales funnel that ends in a conversion. A booking, reservation or sign up prompted by relevant and careful call-to-actions.

It is also important to establish SVTP as a trusted source of information for the valley. Utilizing user generated content and collecting analytical data will make the website a portal for users. It will allow the organization to evaluate partners and vendors to ensure that all listings on the site will provide visitors with a positive impression of the region. As your reputation grows, so will the tourism.

Included are key performance indicators that would be used if these tactics are agreed upon and adopted. We feel that approaching the layout and configuration of pages with the end goal task completion and user transaction is the best way to meet SVTP engagement goals and requirements as stated in the RFP. As a result, all content must support that strategy.

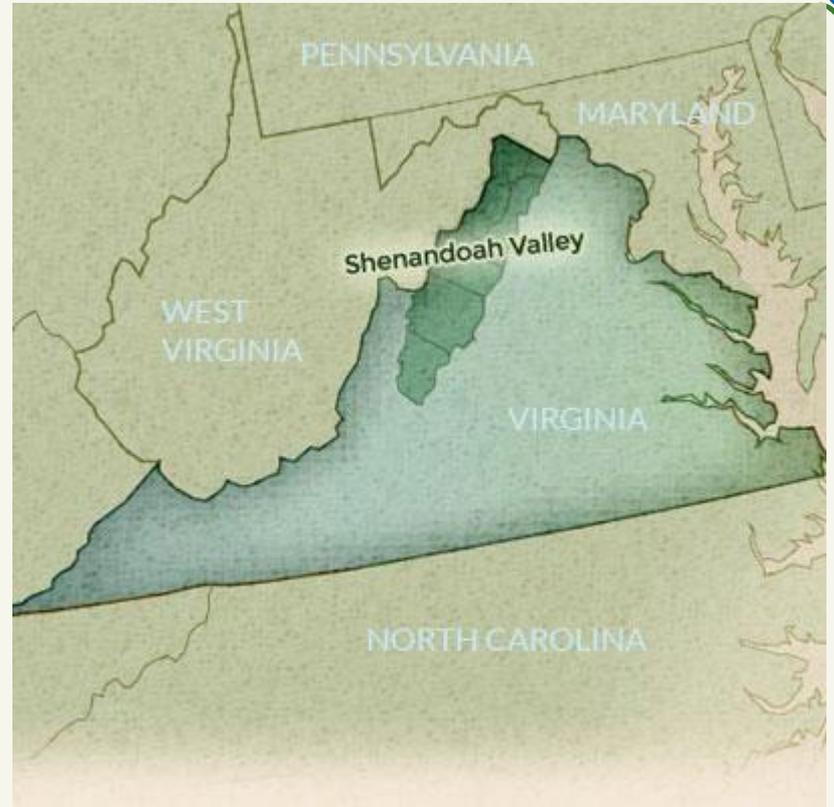
A person in a dark t-shirt and shorts stands on a large, light-colored rock formation, looking out over a vast, green valley. The sky is filled with dramatic, blue and white clouds. The text "INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

INTRODUCTION:

WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?

ABOUT THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY

The Shenandoah Valley is a geographic region nestled between western Virginia and West Virginia. The valley is bordered on the east by the Blue Ridge Mountains, to the west by the eastern front of the Appalachians. It is south of the Potomac River and north of Roanoke Valley. Historically known for farming, it has several towns and popular landmarks such as the Luray Caverns and Shenandoah National Park. There is significant historical importance to the region, preserving cultural artifacts from colonial westward expansion to the civil war. It features several wineries and breweries, food producers, making it an exciting melting pot of southern cuisine, Appalachian delights and fresh farm to table dining. It is an exceptional place to hike, bike, fish, view wildlife or take a scenic drive.





THE PROJECT

Recently, the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership awarded Shawn Torres Communications (STC) a contract to design and develop its future website at

<https://virginiasshenandoahvalley.com/>

The report presents an analysis of SVTP current content and readiness for migration. The purpose of the report is to present a website content strategy that will support the partnership's goals for the new website. It provides recommendations and guidance for prioritization, organization, and presentation of content. Upon approval, the analysis, charts, site-map, and wireframes contained within will lay the foundation for the design & development teams as they begin the prototyping process.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

This report is intended for the SVTP executive team and stakeholders with approval responsibility for this stage of the project. Once we have an approved content strategy in place, design, development and migration stages will begin. It is also for the STC design and development team leads for use as a guiding document in later stages of the project. In addition, we recommend sharing this documentation with any future SVTP online content creators and marketing staff. We feel SVTP content creators would benefit from better understanding the website foundation groundwork as it would help determine how their work fits within and supports the overall content strategy.



HOW DOES THIS REPORT FIT INTO THE LARGER PROJECT?

The following report addresses SVTP RFP requirements in **Section I, items 4, 5 and 7** including migration of content and the development of new content. The report provides an assessment of current SVTP content, identifies strengths and weaknesses. It describes current practices in the tourism industry and offers a comparison with similar sites. It provides guidance for revisions, missing content and new content creation including messaging framework and style recommendations that will better support SVTP goals.

As requested, the report will also provide information and recommendations on how to maximize SEO standards and will present findings of a content audit based on metadata, titles, and descriptions provided by SVTP. The content strategy will inform the development of the website by establishing content priority categories. Through sitemaps and wireframes, we will identify focus areas and the core content model. This will assist the design and development teams in creating the relational database, navigation, labeling and presentation of key items on pages. The content strategy is the cornerstone that guides the development of both public-facing and back end efforts.

SVTP GOALS

The mission of the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership (SVTP) is to

- increase awareness of the Shenandoah Valley as a visitor destination in our target markets
- stimulate overnight stays
- promote our partner destinations,
- increase visitor spending

SVTP has identified several brand pillars that are currently driving economic growth and wants to better support those marketing initiatives with its online presence. These include, but are not limited to, Family-friendly travel, Four-Season Outdoor Recreation, and Farm to Table Culinary Scene and Agricultural Experiences.



OUTDOOR RECREATION

IS A KEY REASON FOR TOURISM IN THE VALLEY.

29%

Of visitors cited outdoor recreation as their primary motivation for coming to the region.

AUDIENCE PROFILE

Key target markets include millennials, gen-Xers and baby boomers within drive markets including Canada, Philadelphia, Charlotte, and Raleigh-Durham. These are adults with purchase decisions over family and group travel. **Ninety percent of tourists travel by car** are within a four-hour drive radius and come from metropolitan markets such as New York, Pittsburgh, Charlotte, and Washington D.C.

48% reported their reason for traveling to the valley is to **visit family and friends** with an additional **29%** citing outdoor recreation as their primary motivation. The website audience is mature with 40% of visitors aged 25 - 44 years old. **66%** are married and **37%** are traveling with children. The takeaway is that favorable shared experiences are as important to this audience as amenities, costs and lifestyle matters.

It would be helpful to gather website traffic analytics such as the browser and device profiles, high visitation times, types of referring sites but we do know that **39%** of visitors **consider** visiting Virginia less than a month before their visit and **53% decide** to visit Virginia **less than a month** before their visit. It is important to note that **45%** of potential visitors **rely on information from others such as family and friends** and social media to make their booking decisions.



90%

of tourists travel by car from within a four-hour drive radius and come from metropolitan markets such as New York.

48%

are visiting family and friends.



CONTENT AUDIT FINDINGS

HOW MUCH CAN WE SALVAGE?

METHODOLOGY

To explore the competitive landscape and find other websites with similar content, services, and audiences, we compiled information from 3 sources: Alexa.com, Skift Research, and Awwwards.com. **Awwwards** is a widely respected organization specializing in interactive communications and development that recognizes the best web designers, developers, and agencies in the world. They regularly publish a list of notable online tourism website experiences. <https://www.awwwards.com/>. **Skift Research** products provide deep analysis, data and expert opinion on the companies and trends that are shaping the future of travel. **Alexa** publishes data measuring how a website is doing relative to all other sites on the web over the past 3 months. The rank is calculated using a proprietary methodology that combines a site's estimated average of daily unique visitors and its estimated number of pageviews over the past 3 months.

You can find detailed keyword comparisons and SEO traffic insights for the current site at:

https://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/virginiasshenandoahvalley.com#section_audience

THE CURRENT STATE OF SVTP CONTENT

Overall, the quality of the current content is good. Well written, authors present the region beautifully and stay “on message” highlighting both culinary and family-friendly aspects of visiting the valley. It is conversational and the correct tone. However, it lacks organization and organization that effectively motivates a user to engage. It is key to note user behavior when reading on the web.

Research conducted by the Nielsen Norman Group found that **79%** of our test users always scanned any new page they came across; only **16%** read word-by-word. It also found that promotional copy imposes a cognitive burden on users making it harder to find the information they seek. So, despite the quality of promotional writing, it is crucial to frame the content with keywords, headings, lists, and subheadings to improve website usability.

Users today are also more likely to find your website through a search engine or booking site and will not necessarily encounter the homepage initially. In the next section, we have documented our findings on the existing content’s structure, metadata and search engine friendliness.

SEO, META-DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

An official content audit was performed on February 15, 2020, site crawler software, **Screaming Frog SEO** was used. The software allows you to crawl website URLs to analyze and audit technical and onsite search engine optimization. It finds broken links, compiles errors and redirects, list page titles, metadata and descriptions.

Information that was collected was:

- URL/Page numbers
- Image numbers
- Titles and meta descriptions

BASIC SVTP WEBSITE STATS

713 Total URLs encountered

709 Total URLs crawled.

(other items missing or blocked)

385 Total internal URLs

(Links to assets that are on the Shenandoah Valley domain www.virginiasshenandoahvalley.com)

328 Total External URLs

(Links to third-party content)

107 unique HTML pages.

221 images

Note: "URL" is an abbreviation that stands for "Universal Resource Locator." It's another name for a web address. The location of a World Wide Web page, script, application or other assets that allow the website to function.



100%

of the content is missing
meta descriptions

35%

of images are missing
alt tags

SHENANDOAH
VALLEY TOURISM
PARTNERSHIP

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

The preliminary content audit helps us avoid repeating previous mistakes in the current development project and gives us a good idea of what content needs to be revised, improved. It also lets us know what is missing and will need to be developed from the ground up. A list of missing types of content is included in the strategic alignment summary section.

The audit revealed serious weaknesses in the metadata. **100% of the content was missing meta descriptions. 80% of the existing content was missing meta keywords.** Meta descriptions serve the function of advertising copy. It draws readers to a website from search engines and thus is a very visible and important part of search marketing.

Crafting a readable, compelling description using important keywords can improve the click-through rate for a website. In addition, meta keywords are an important way to “tag” and cross-reference related content in a relational database. Having the ability to pull all related content to a specific place, activity or topic will make the website more useful to both visitors and staff.

35% of the images on the website are **missing alt tags**. Alt-text is important to provide contextual relevance about the page where the image resides. When you use an optimized alt attribute with a target keyword, it gives your page a relevance boost.

PAGE TITLES

Page titles are often the first part a user sees of a website in search results; so you need to make a good first impression if you want them to click through. Using generic or non-descriptive page titles can hurt the possibility of visitors finding your website or associating your content with desired categories and public topics.

Google typically displays the first **50–60 characters** of a title tag. If you keep your titles under 60 characters, our research suggests that you can expect about 90% of your titles to display properly. During our audit of the SVTP website we found many duplicate and generic page titles such as “Shenandoah Valley -”. This hurts your search engine rankings.

Poor page title example: “Shenandoah Valley Fishing” The page is filled with important knowledge on the best locations, types of fish and businesses associated with fly fishing in the valley, but the titles reflect none of that. Easy to overlook if it comes up in google search results.

Good page title example: “Anglers guide to the best fly fishing in Shenandoah Valley” better reflects the hard earned insider knowledge bestowed to the reader on the page. It is descriptive, very specific to the type of fishing and indicates that it is a useful article.

According to research by BuzzSumo, a powerful online tool that allows any user to find out what content is popular by topic or on any website. The top five most clicked and shared headlines/page titles included the phrases “will make you...”, “this is why...”, “can we guess...”, “only in X can....” and “the reason for/is...” because they speak directly to a users needs and interests in a conversational tone. Writing guidelines and a messaging framework are included in later sections of this report.



INDUSTRY LANDSCAPE

WHAT ARE OUR COMPETITORS DOING?

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Many tourism boards are simplifying their websites on the front end. The best sites are adopting **full-width modular designs**, flat architecture and **streamlined navigation** due to the demand for speed and efficiency on **mobile**.

Skift Research reports that they are seeing much more **social media integration** including Instagram and other user-generated content. Broadband connections and more powerful smart devices have allowed video use to grow in online outreach.

Utilization of popular third-party sites API's like Groupon and LivingSocial help aggregate promotional deals and discounts making the sites more **useful** to bargain hunters and group experience planners. Customer relationship management (CRM) platforms have evolved and many are capable of generating endless amounts of data analytics for tourism boards to use to target travelers with relevant content, learn which partners provide the best return on investment, and leverage the site as a testbed for larger marketing initiatives.

10 SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS, WEBSITES, AND AUDIENCES

STC selected several regional tourism board websites that represent areas with similar landscapes, features, and audiences. These websites also focus on culinary, family-friendly travel, and outdoor recreation for comparison and research criteria:

<https://www.visitshenandoah.org/>

<https://www.poconomountains.com/>

<https://heartofappalachia.com/>

<https://visitwinchesterva.com/>

<https://www.visitroanokeva.com/>

<https://www.visitnh.gov/>

<https://www.travelok.com/>

<https://www.tnvacation.com/experiences/eat-drink>

<https://traveloregon.com/>

<https://www.clarevalley.com.au/>

WHAT IS THE STRATEGY?

The **core strategy statement** is a key part of your content strategy focus. It serves to align the audience and user's needs with the business/organization's services and goals.

To create a website that supports SV tourism goals, we will create and provide content that establishes SVTP as a trusted and useful source of planning information, persuades visitors to make the Shenandoah Valley their next travel destination, and supports travel task completion at every opportunity

A STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT SUMMARY

The current website is characteristically a static brochure and blog with magazine-style stories highlighting features of the valley. It would need to be recreated in the form of a resource portal to accommodate much of the functionality requested in the RFP. The content will focus on and support transactions through the website.

When grouping existing content topics we found that most of the copy was written for general audiences, **40%** of the blog stories were related to food/culinary topics and only **5%** of the writing was related to outdoor recreation.

Very little of the content was written for specific types of travelers such as families, couples, outdoor sports enthusiasts, students, business travelers, etc. **Of 107 pages** scanned there were **only 2 stories** with a header topic for families: “Four Seasons of Fun in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley” and “11 Fun Family Outings with a Side of History - Shenandoah Valley”.

Much of this content is valuable and will be repurposed on “router” and “pillar” pages as introductory material for those who are new to Shenandoah Valley.

THE MISSING MATERIALS

- Content designed to speak directly to the motivation and **needs** of your known audiences.
- **Venue and area profiles** necessary for an interactive map
- **Event information, dates, locations, descriptions**
- **Specific outdoor and venue information** and resources sorted by activity (for example fishing or golfing)
- **User-generated data** such as reviews, posts, tips and recommendations, testimonials and photography
- Logistical booking and travel **information for groups**
- Instructions for **local businesses** who wish to collaborate with the board
- **Historic site and Agricultural information** for academic outings
- **Useful directories** for wedding planners, sports enthusiasts, and tour planners
- **Rail, Airport, Bus routing** in, around and out of the valley
- **Business and Conference Travel Planning** information



DRINK IN
THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY
beerwerkstrail.com



THE STYLE GUIDE

WRITING STRUCTURE AND GRAMMAR

The style guide documents how you want to talk to your audience, as well as any specific guidelines you want your writers to follow. New SVTP website content will use AP style and adhere to the **2020 AP Stylebook for grammar**. In general, the structure of all articles, blogs, descriptions, and copy should follow the inverted pyramid style. The **Inverted Pyramid** format has been widely adopted from article writing to online writing, particularly in web pages, blogs, and emails. It uses the principle of **front loading** throughout the piece.

With the exception of blog articles, it is also important to keep things **short**. We are in the age of distraction and twitter. A maximum of 300 words is all that will be required for any descriptions. Headers will need to be about 50 to 60 characters, the same guidance we use for titles.

- Readers start at the top. Front-loading places your **main point at the top of the page**, above the fold, so readers get the main point even if they don't finish the piece.
- Readers skim online. Front-loaded content allows them to decide whether or not they want to read the entire page or post. Front-loading allows them to read subheads to get a quick overview.
- The main point is supported by important information further into the piece
- The piece **concludes with a call-to-action**, contact information or references to related information or further reading.

TONE AND BRAND VOICE

The key to building trust with clients is creating a brand ‘voice’, used throughout all forms of marketing and communication, including written content. Having a **consistent voice** gives an impression of honesty, solidity, and authenticity reflecting the Shenandoah Valley culture.

A consistent style can also help with SEO by repeatedly using standard terms to use where possible. We will also provide guidelines for writing SEO-friendly headlines

Inconsistency, on the other hand, can be extremely disconcerting. Nothing is more jarring than a brand that see-saws between formal and teen slang in the space of a paragraph. Since **45%** of potential visitors rely on information from others such as family and friends, we will strive for a **warm conversational tone throughout the site to resemble a knowledgeable friend or family member.**

Much of the existing blog articles already have it. But it is important to consider our context and target audience in the process. The SVTP website will offer services to several different types of visitors with various needs. The following personas and tone directions will provide guidance for what style and tone would resonate best with them.

BRAND VOICE PERSONAS

Persona Type	Brand Voice Guidance
Sports Activity & Outdoor Recreation Seekers	Adventure. Use the phrase “Four-Season Outdoor Recreation” instead of “year-round” or “all-year”. Use a fast-paced, exciting voice. Avoid adverbs that end in -ly. They’ll slow the pace of your copy down. Focus on strong, verb-driven imperative sentences (Plunge into the waves...) Always opt for action-focused adjectives that suggest power or speed. Set a quick pace with your copy.
Culinary Experience Seekers	Eat Good. Highlight the best Farm to Table Culinary Scene and Agricultural Experiences. The writing should accentuate quality and craftsmanship. It should conjure images of fresh, healthy and refined living. Shenandoah Valley visitors become connoisseur explorers. Vacation as a transformative experience for your palettes. Terms like “members”, “insiders” and “in the know” set mood.
Family Fun Seekers	Value. Emphasize convenience, affordability, and safety. Avoid hyped or exciting language. Keep command-focused verbs to a minimum. Ask questions to demonstrate you understand your prospects’ concerns or objections. (Worried you might miss your flight? No problem, our guides will wake you in the morning.) Use words and phrases that feel warm and friendly.
Visiting Friends & Family (VFR) travelers	Be Kind. 48% of visitors come to the valley to visit family and friends. That presents special spending opportunities for group experiences, gift-giving, and extended personal lodging. Phrases like “while you’re in town”, “show thanks”, “make this trip special” might resonate better with return visitors. Focus on what is new, novel and pleasurable. Shopping and event descriptions should have a timely urgency for in-town hosts seeking entertainment for guests. Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) tourism accounts for a substantial amount of valley travel and speaks to personal relationships and special occasions. The authenticity of small towns and cities of the region work as a wonderful background for those interactions.



MESSAGING FRAMEWORK

The **messaging framework** gets more specific about how the user's needs align with content. The framework is used to make decisions about content. It's the conceptual bridge to content design. It assigns value statements to core content ideas.

The key message:

“Shenandoah Valley is your premier destination for family fun, outdoor recreation, culinary delights and truly enriching vacations. Make great memories now.”

MESSAGING FRAMEWORK

SVTP Goal	Persona	Messaging
Increase awareness of the Shenandoah Valley as a visitor destination	Sports Activity & Outdoor Recreation Seekers	Adventures await. From novice to expert, there is something for every level.
	Culinary Experience Seekers	Culinary trail guides. Spirit & Wine Trails. Sip & Play. Enjoy the good life, serenity, and beauty of mountain ranges.
	Family Fun Seekers	Tired of the same old options, try something new, convenient and close. They will love it.
	Visiting Friends & Family (VFR) travelers	What's new? What's happening this month? A premiere destination right in your backyard. Focus resident communications on upcoming events and activities.
Stimulate overnight stays	Sports Activity & Outdoor Recreation Seekers	Be close to the action. A weekend isn't enough to perfect that XXXXXX.
	Culinary Experience Seekers	Bed and breakfast packages. Multi-day culinary tours with transportation included.
	Family Fun Seekers	Multi-day attraction discounts. Don't drive back late.
	Visiting Friends & Family (VFR) travelers	"You can't explore the region without a proper night's sleep". "Upgrade from the spare bed", "We don't have to stay there the WHOLE time right?". "Don't want to impose, we got you covered" .Play to the convenience and luxury of staying at a hotel.
Promote our partner destinations	Sports Activity & Outdoor Recreation Seekers	Partner sponsored competitions, events. Partner sponsored lessons and activity courses. Partner sponsored awards and recognitions.
	Culinary Experience Seekers	Recommendations, patron testimonials. Exclusive partner events, tastings.
	Family Fun Seekers	Make Memories, Bundle & Save, Vacation Packages. Partner promotional guest swag.
	Visiting Friends & Family (VFR) travelers	Loyalty programs. Multi-visit discounts. Resident discounts.
Increase visitor spending	Sports Activity & Outdoor Recreation Seekers	Gear up. Subscription pricing. Group membership plans. Friend referral programs.
	Culinary Experience Seekers	Rare and exclusive offers. Limited editions. Small batch.
	Family Fun Seekers	Vacation add-ons. Unique and essential Shenandoah items and activities.
	Visiting Friends & Family (VFR) travelers	"Don't show up empty-handed" "Say thanks" "Treat your guests", "Treat your host". "This one is on us". Guest referral programs.



CONTENT DESIGN

PRIORITIZATION MATRIX

The content strategy is to guide users to core pages based on their interests, which support the primary business goals and encourage the user to take some action. This matrix below provides content examples and breaks them into 4 different interest categories.



DRIVE - (action oriented) Important to advancing business goals but not users necessarily	FOCUS - Important to users and business goals
Hotel Booking application Dinner Reservation page Get Tickets Newsletter Sign-up/Login Website registration - Members sign-up Highlights/ Blog Travel Guide Download/Brochure	Location Profiles - Regions, towns, landmarks Lodging Profiles - Hotels, B&B, campgrounds Venue Profiles - Theaters, stadiums, clubs Activity Pages - types of outdoor sports and recreation Event listings Trip ideas - Amusements, Attractions, Sightseeing, Experiences, Seasonal
MEH - Required	GUIDE - Important to users but does not necessarily advance business goals
About SVTP Tourism resources/Press kit Privacy Policy Sponsors & Partners Business Registration/Event submissions Newsletter Archives History	Travel Information - Car, Bus, Rail, Plane Weather Reviews Discounts Directories

ORGANIZATION

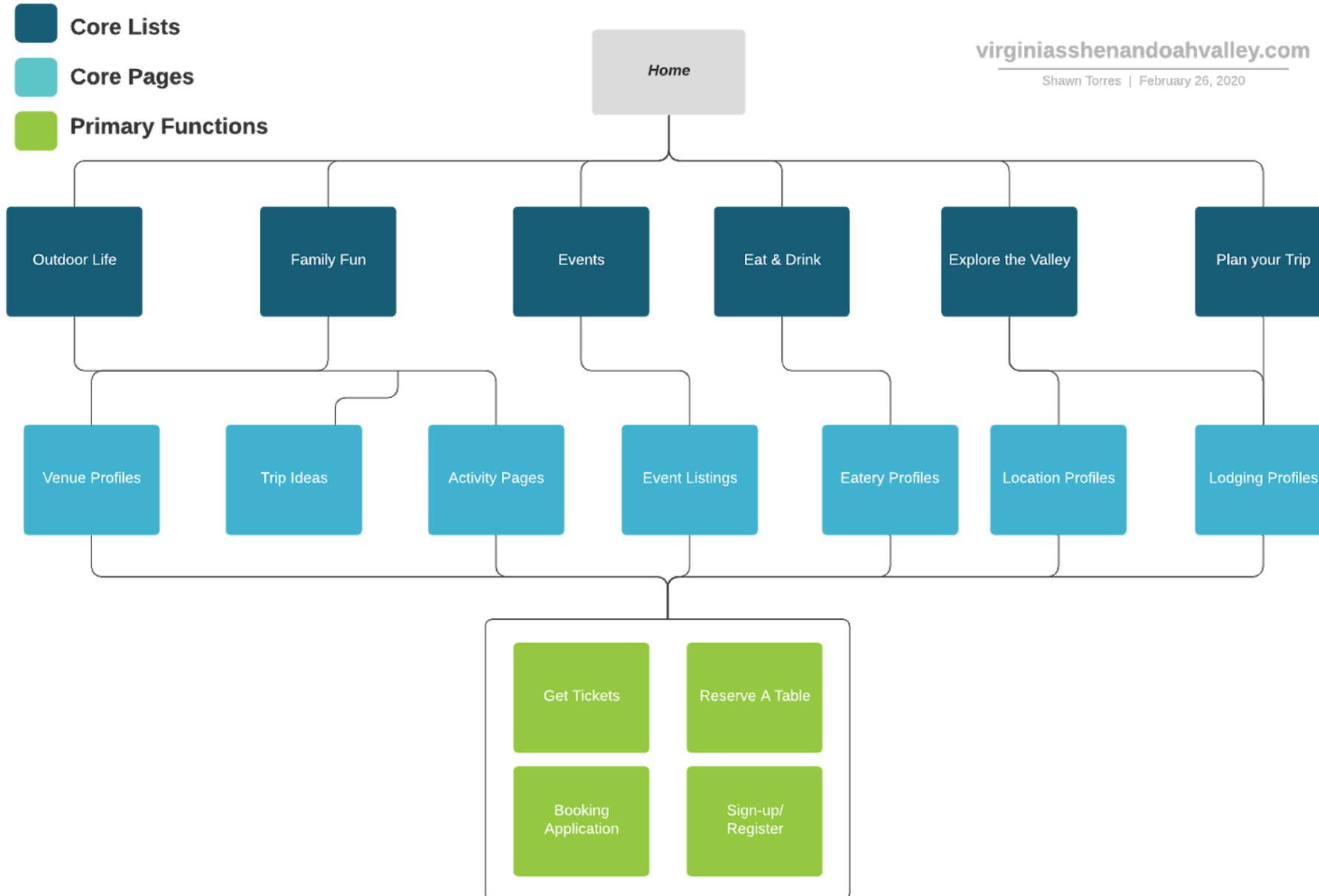
All content will be developed and presented in a way that drives users to action or engagement for future contact and relationship building. Providing users with an optimal path (an incentive funnel) to book lodgings, get tickets, reserve tables or provide contact information.

The sitemap below provides a high-level overview of the page organization.



virginiasshenandoahvalley.com

Shawn Torres | February 26, 2020



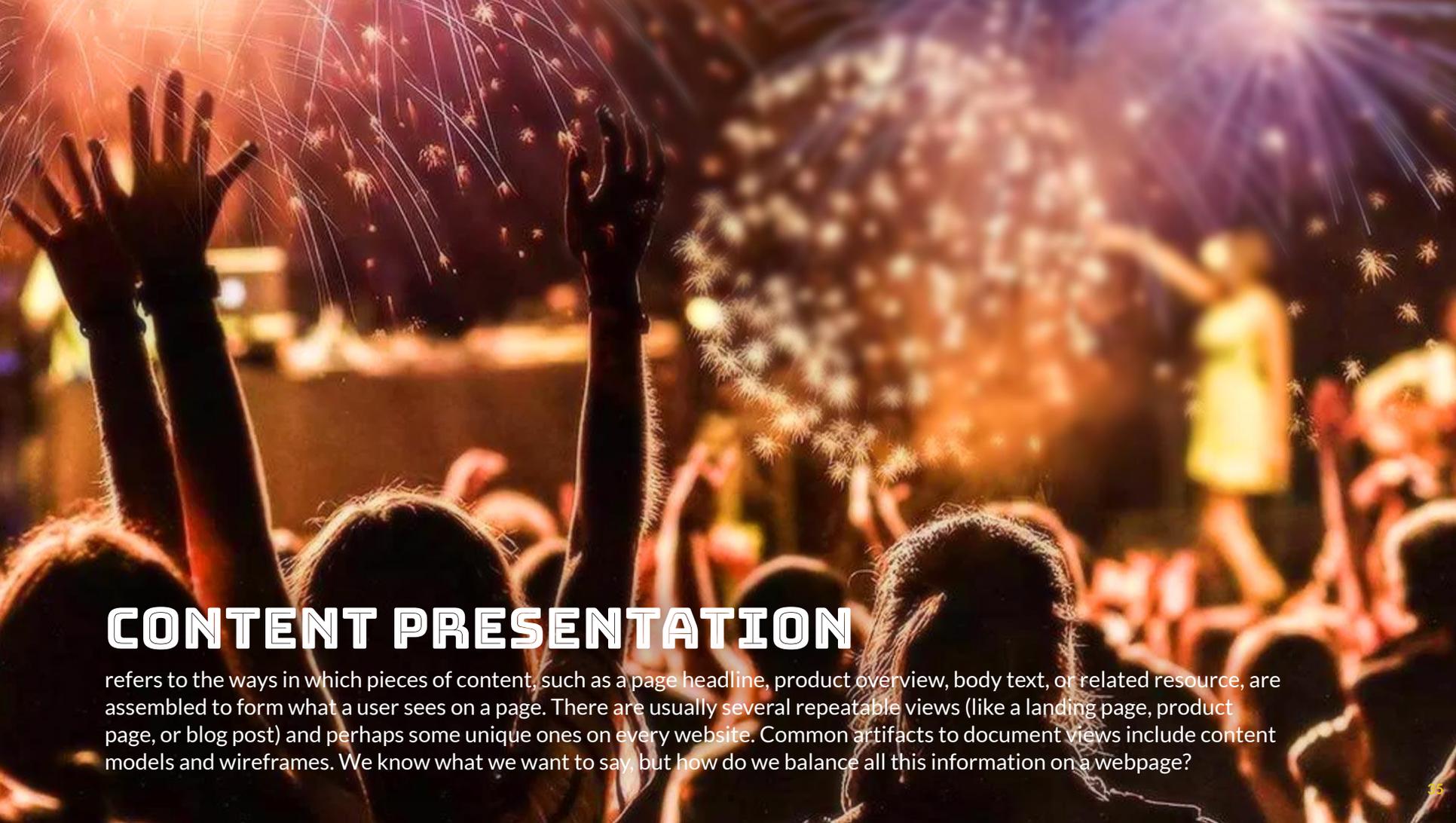
CONTENT MATRIX

After auditing SVTP marketing information and existing website content, we were able to identify some key categories and align content with your current goals. Core pages represent points in the user's journey where they are likely to take action. They are normally inner pages with specific topical content where a user can accomplish a task or finds information that meets their specific need. Below you will find core page types with example headers.



Goal	Core Lists	Core page(s)	Core Page Content
Increase awareness of the Shenandoah Valley as a visitor destination	Explore The Valley Explore by region Explore by season Premier vacation spot For Families For Couples Group outings Visiting Friends & Family? Top10 Visitor favorites	LOCATION PROFILE	Interactive Map Booking Application What's happening this month - CALENDAR
Stimulate overnight stays	Plan Your Trip/Places To Stay Road Trips Trail Guides Bed & Breakfast Hotels Conference center Campgrounds/RV parks/Cabins Couch upgrades - Family	LODGING PROFILE	Custom Itinerary Planner Lodging Directory Booking Application
Promote Farm to Table Culinary Scene	Eat & Drink Farmers Markets Vineyards Brewers/Distillers Agricultural tours Farm-to-Table Restaurants Food Trails Spirit Trails Wine Tours Tastings	VENUE PROFILE	Seasonal Highlight - Culinary Interactive Cuisine Guide Reserve a table/Open table Special Occasion & Celebration Tips Restaurant Directory Get the discounts - Sign up

Goal	Core Lists	Core page(s)	Core Page Content
Promote Family-friendly travel	Family Fun Attractions/Sightseeing Parks History/Science Festivals Entertainment/Theater Day trips	TRIP IDEA	Booking Application Seasonal Highlight - Family Get the discounts - Sign up What's happening this month - CALENDAR
Highlight Four-Season Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor Activities Winter Activities Spring Activities Summer Activities Fall Activities Parks information Competitions	ACTIVITY PAGE Hiking Skiing/Snowboarding Rock Climbing Hunting Boating/Fishing Swimming	Booking Application Seasonal Highlight - Outdoor Select an activity Upcoming sporting events Where to gear up/Pro shop Where to learn
Increase visitor spending	My Shenandoah (After login) Discounts/ Add-ons Only in Shenandoah - Unique Products & Experiences Essential Shenandoah Shopping/Gear up Top rentals Show your hosts around town - 10 ways to say thank you.	USER DRIVEN/ PERSONALIZED	Insider Discounts Travel Packages Your Itinerary Recommendations My profile Weather/Safety Information Roads/Travel Information Community announcements Business Directory
Promote our partner destinations	Plan Your Trip Explore The Valley Eat & Drink Family Fun	BLOG ARTICLE/ROUTER/ SECTION PILLAR Places to stay Travel Packages	Booking Application
Calendar	Events	EVENT LISTING	Event Filters by Type of traveler Event Filters by Type of activity Event Filters by Location Event Filters by Interest



CONTENT PRESENTATION

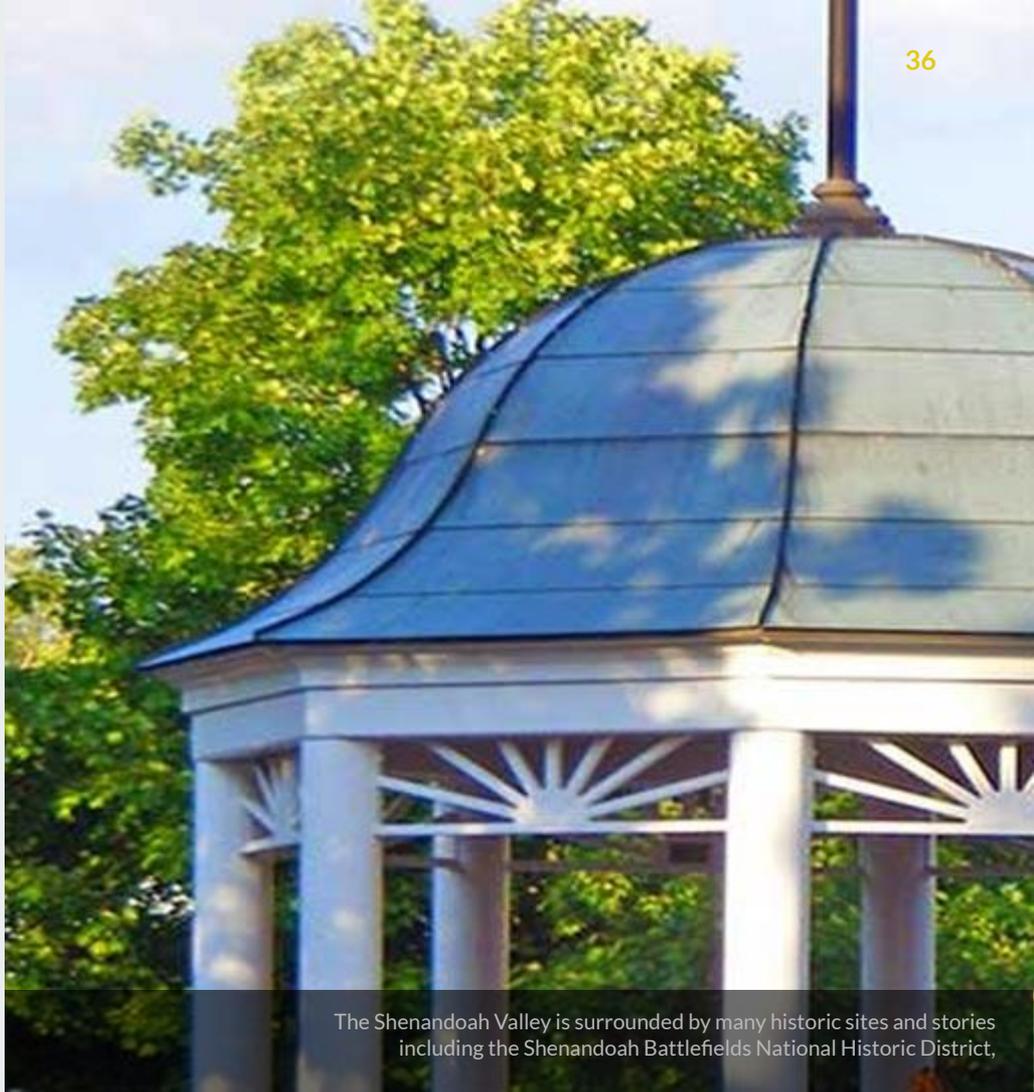
refers to the ways in which pieces of content, such as a page headline, product overview, body text, or related resource, are assembled to form what a user sees on a page. There are usually several repeatable views (like a landing page, product page, or blog post) and perhaps some unique ones on every website. Common artifacts to document views include content models and wireframes. We know what we want to say, but how do we balance all this information on a webpage?

HOMEPAGE

The homepage functions as a **“router” page** with very little copy and modular, **image driven layout** to get visitors quickly into section “pillar” pages and content that interests them. Permanent features of the top navigation will include a **user login** and **newsletter sign-up** links. If the user is logged in, these will be replaced by a user greeting/link to account page and “latest stories” link to the blog section page. Many of the posts will be online versions of the newsletter and social media content topics.

There is a space allotted for **sub navigation based on user activity** such as hover, clicks. The same area can also be used for “bread crumb” navigation to assist the user orient themselves throughout the site.

These are approximations and low fidelity placements for content strategy purposes, the UX/UI team will develop more detailed designs once the content strategy is in place.



The Shenandoah Valley is surrounded by many historic sites and stories including the Shenandoah Battlefields National Historic District,

← → ↻ ⬆

search

Logo/ Branding

Newsletter Sign Up Register/ Login

FOLLOW US

Main navigation

Family Fun Outdoor Life Explore The Valley Events Eat & Drink Plan Your trip

Sub navigation area - dynamic (based on selection) or breadcrumb

Splash/ Media, Video, Photos Highlights

Premiere Vacation Spot/ Things To Do Seasonal Outdoor Culinary Delights

Travel packages Visiting Friends & Family Shenandoah Shopping

Explore the Valley Interactive Map Prompt

Top 10 visitor favorites Popular Links/Posts List Social Media Highlights

GET DISCOUNTS PROMO AREA

Email address field Sign up CTA button

OUR SPONSORS

Footer Area

Business Resources Tourism resources/Press kit Shenandoah Valley Data Advertising Sponsorship Submit your event	Directories Eateries & Restaurants Retail Directory Lodgings Special Occasions Group Itineraries Conference/Business Meetings Weddings Academic/Field Trips	About SVTP Contact Travel Information Trail Guides Map Nuts & Bolts Terms & Privacy Policy Help & Feedback Accessibility Information Sitemap	Free Travel Guide Promo Area
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Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership (SVTP)
600 North Main Street, Suite 101, Woodstock, VA 22664 ** info@VirginiasShenandoahValley.com

FOLLOW US

search

Logo/ Branding

LOCATION CORE PAGE

Are informational pages on regions, areas, towns within the Shenandoah Valley. These pages will be linked from the **interactive map** and will provide detailed information on the selection.

Events, Trails and Activity core pages will all be **aggregated dynamically** to these pages as well as any recent articles or blog posts related to the location making these a useful reference for local residents and visitors who will explore the Valley based on location.



Hotel Madison & Shenandoah Valley Conference Center
Harrisburg, Virginia

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Main navigation

Family Fun Outdoor Life Explore The Valley Events Eat & Drink Plan Your trip

Sub navigation area - dynamic (based on selection) or breadcrumb

H1: NAME OF PLACE

Background Representative Image or Video

Description/ Highlights

Upcoming Events

Current Promotions

Things to do here

Map

SHARE THIS ☒ ☒ ☒

Similar or Related Places

GET DISCOUNTS PROMO AREA

Email address field

Sign up CTA button

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Footer Area

Business Resources Tourism resources/Press kit Shenandoah Valley Data Advertising Sponsorship Submit your event	Directories Eateries & Restaurants Retail Directory Lodgings Special Occasions Group Itineraries Conference/Business Meetings Weddings Academic/Field Trips	About SVTP Contact Travel Information Trail Guides Map Nuts & Bolts Terms & Privacy Policy Help & Feedback Accessibility Information Sitemap	Free Travel Guide Promo Area
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ACTIVITY CORE PAGE

Pages of this type will be **driven by calls to action**.

Whether it is hiking, mountain biking, fishing (you name it) after the title and short description, **event listings** will be highly visible. Also displayed will be articles, venues and **API's featuring discounts, lessons and other promotions** for outdoor recreation seekers. For example, if this were the skiing page, a user would be able to find a group, event or learn where to get gear and rentals. It could provide weather conditions, announcements and safety tips.

For beginners there might be getaway packages with lessons and lodgings from partner destinations. To encourage VFR travel and spending, they may see a blog article entitled "Top 5 things to buy a Ski buff for the Holidays". The core page is meant to serve as a "**one-stop-shop**" for all skiing in Shenandoah.



Fly-fishing is a popular Spring/Summer activity in the valley.

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Main navigation

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Sub navigation area - dynamic (based on selection) or breadcrumb

H1: Activity - Example: Fishing

Background Representative Image or Video

Description/ Highlights

Upcoming Events

SHARE THIS

Blog articles related to this activity

Locations where activity takes place

Activity Venues, Outfitters, Rentals

Groupon API - Lessons/Discounts

Pro Tips/ Competitions/ Advanced Info

Map

Other Activities or Sports

GET DISCOUNTS PROMO AREA

Email address field

Sign up CTA button

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Footer Area

<p>Business Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Tourism resources/Press kitShenandoah Valley DataAdvertisingSponsorshipSubmit your event	<p>Directories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Eateries & RestaurantsRetail DirectoryLodgings <p>Special Occasions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Group ItinerariesConference/Business MeetingsWeddingsAcademic/Field Trips	<p>About SVTP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">ContactTravel InformationTrail GuidesMap <p>Nuts & Bolts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Terms & Privacy PolicyHelp & FeedbackAccessibility InformationSitemap	<p>Free Travel Guide Promo Area</p>
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LODGING CORE PAGE

Are by far the most technically complex pages on the website as they will call on many **third-party data API's for room availability, calculate prices and present nearby activities based on GPS data.**

These pages are designed to achieve the greatest conversions. **Conversions** are the moment when a user makes the decision to buy or book. Conversion web design includes detailed elements that are intended to guide your site's visitors through the **sales funnel** and encourage them to convert. To meet the SVTP goal of stimulating overnight stays, there must always be an actionable link or function on these pages. For example, if the venue is a campground and there is no expedia data on hand like hotels, then the content manager must enter a link or phone number and instructions, rates for a conversion manually. This information will need to be gathered and periodically checked for accuracy.



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Main navigation

Family Fun Outdoor Life Explore The Valley Events Eat & Drink Plan Your trip

Sub navigation area - dynamic (based on selection) or breadcrumb

H1: Lodging Name

Background Representative Image or Video

Description/ Amenities

Adults Children

March 2010

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Check Availability

Address/ Contact

Ratings/ Reviews

SHARE THIS

Map

Nearby/ Activities

Similar or related lodgings

GET DISCOUNTS PROMO AREA

Email address field

Sign up CTA button

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VENUE CORE PAGE

Will also be **call-to-action driven** with prominent “Reserve/Get Tickets” buttons at the top of the page. These will be dynamic and will change appropriately for the type of venue.

User generated content will be featured on these pages such as photos and reviews as they are strong “**convincers**” as users weigh their options. It will be important for local businesses to maintain their reputations and encourage positive reviews.

Venues with poor ratings and frequent complaints would be evaluated for removal maintaining the value of the board as a trusted and verified source of Shenandoah Valley listings



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Main navigation

Family Fun Outdoor Life Explore The Valley Events Eat & Drink Plan Your trip

Sub navigation area - dynamic (based on selection) or breadcrumb

H1: Venue Name - Example: Shakespeare Theater

Background Representative Image or Video

Description/ Highlights

Gets Tickets

Reserve

SHARE THIS

Address/ Contact

Upcoming events

Map

Current Promotions or Discounts

Reviews/ Related Blog Posts/ Articles

Similar or related venues

GET DISCOUNTS PROMO AREA

Email address field

Sign up CTA button

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CTA Buttons are dynamic based on venue type

ALL CORE PAGES

All core pages will offer **similar or related items**, much like an amazon style shopping experience, to keep users engaged and on the website. At some point in the future, SVTP may consider a “favoriting” or “**bookmarking**” feature for logged in users so that they can quickly go to their regular gathering places. This would also be valuable behavioral data for partners and marketing purposes.

It might be helpful to include a way for users to report bad links or outdated information on the website.

FAT FOOTERS

All pages will have a **secondary search bar** and navigation in the footer area of the page, with links to pages by traveler interests, traveler type. A fat footer is useful because it increases usability for visitors that didn't find what they were looking for. It also improves SEO by taking visitors to the most popular and beneficial pages within the site. It is a functional space, exposing **important links for business users** and other functions that are slightly outside the core promotional functions of the site. It also provides an opportunity to **recognize partners and sponsors** who are vital to the organization's success.





MEASURING SUCCESS

Ultimately success will be defined by an increase in overall tourism. You may notice a change in motivation and travel reason responses in your marketing research. You may find an increase in other demographics. But the organization should be able to measure its impact by monitoring specific performance indicators.

The most important metric overall will be actions taken on the website. How many people have downloaded travel brochures, subscribed to the mailing list or booked an experience. These can only be measured over time with an established analytics baseline.

Success can also be measured by operational efficiency. Content implementation roles and responsibilities are likely to be spread across multiple people or job titles. It will take a full team effort to maintain and manage all the new features and functions the new website will offer. The speed and cohesiveness of the resulting product will be testament to a successfully executed roll out.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Site account registrations
- Newsletter sign-ups
- Brochure downloads
- Bounce rate, time on the website
- Traffic to core pages
- Conversions - Outbound traffic to booking/reservation sites
- Inbound traffic from search engines and referring sites



RECOMMENDATIONS

FEATURES

Social Media. Establish social media presence and Integrate the site content with social media tools such as blog, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc and include the ability to add or delete social media tools as technology changes. Offer these as community building and follow up actions to all site confirmation emails and task completion messages.

Calendar of events. Create a procedure for submitting and managing events subscriptions. Ensure that events populated by a data-feed from Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) are properly tagged and categorized.

Interactive map. GPS data will need to be collected for map content. In addition, categories will need to be defined in order to filter the map for specific interests.

Blog. Subjects and topics will need to be defined for article submissions and other posts on the website. Archiving criteria will also need to be set in order to retire content that is no longer relevant to visitors.

Streaming video. Could be used in place of images if appropriate for core pages. Attraction, Event and Activity pages seem like natural locations for video integration.

FEATURES

Custom itinerary planner allowing potential visitors to customize an individual itinerary based on their interests, travel party details and dates of travel will require individual personalized account access with logins. This advanced functionality will also require the development of technical “how to” materials, support guides, onboarding documentation and walkthroughs.

Operating and content management procedures. All new website functionality will require documentation and new business practices for requested features that fall outside of existing workflows and responsibilities.

Rolling out new interactive features will entail some announcements, promotional content. Both technical and promotional content is different in tone and style from the existing magazine style writing and may require content matter experts to be added to the production team.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS

- Establish a **seasonal publishing calendar** and **periodic review** for all online content.
- Create **incentive programs** for generating and collecting **user generated content**. We often find that contests, helpful review rewards and other programs are effective community builders.
- Create a **“tagging” system** for all content whereas it can be cross-referenced by topic, activity, area or venue
- Create **meta descriptions** for all pages during migration. Ensure that all new content has **unique page titles**, meta descriptions, keywords and proper use of headers to maximize SEO.
- Add **footer navigation** to highlights some of the **secondary content** throughout the site and provides available resources to partners and local businesses.
- **Place search prominently at the top** and footer of the website (See wireframe diagrams)
- Embed **call-to-action links on all sidebars**, once pages are categorized correctly, this will happen automatically through the CMS. All navigation on the website should end in a transactional decision.
- **Ensure that all content has a reference image**, and headers (h1, h2) to establish context for users
- When appropriate, **collect and add location**, GPS coordinates and address information to all event, venue and lodgings listings for addition to the interactive map database.

FOR LONG TERM CONSIDERATION

- Better **integrate third party APIs** such as Groupon and LivingSocial into activity and venue pages.
- Begin integrating **user-generated material** into listings such as photography, reviews and activity tips, articles. This will provide valuable qualitative information for partners and criteria for inclusion into directories.
- Develop a **digital storytelling program** that produces videos about organizations' activities.
- Ensure that the site has universal appeal by offering **translation**, this can be achieved through low-cost tools such as google translate.
- Develop a content contributor and approval system that **allows businesses to manage their own listings**



CONCLUSION

LET'S DO THIS

Transforming the website from a static brochure to a transactional data driven portal will not be easy. Developing a content strategy that focuses on call to actions with a technical framework that supports visitors as they seek information about the Shenandoah Valley will be the most powerful tool in our outreach toolbox.

But it is just not about making sales, long term gain will be about building an online community and positive reputation. Establishing the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership as a valued and trusted source of regional information. One that puts the best interests of its partners and travelers first and foremost. Making connections between user interests and business offerings. That will take thousands of completed transactions and positive tourism experience. It will require returning customers and logged in users sharing and saving their interests. Having a website that performs like a tool and guides users through a funnel of core lists and core pages achieves those goals.

This is just the beginning of an iterative process, a conversation. We look forward to your feedback and input as we align all the project stakeholders during this discovery and diagnosis phase. We want to ensure we craft and execute a content strategy that is designed to get specific results SVTP is expecting and deserves.

THANK YOU

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn more about the SVTP. It has been a pleasure exploring the region and the positive impact your work is having on valley tourism. We look forward to partnering with you beyond this initial analysis to develop an in-depth cohesive content strategy that realizes your goals and brings great prosperity to the Shenandoah Valley region.

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