

ROAM THE EMPIRE

▣▣ New York State Tourism Industry Association

Roam The Empire

SITUATION

The pandemic was devastating for New York state's tourism industry. By the end of 2020, the industry had lost more than 330,000 workers, and state and local tourism-related tax revenues sank 45%. Mower was enlisted to help NYSTIA, New York state's tourism industry association, bring together their highly competitive members with a common message—one that would get New Yorkers exploring their own state again.

INSIGHT

After a year of lockdown, we knew people were itching to travel. But we also know that not all travel is created equal. At the time, consumers saw road trips as less risky than air travel. We saw this as an opportunity. After all, our vast state is filled with things to do and places to explore without ever leaving its borders. From there, our rallying cry was born.



New York State Tourism Industry Association

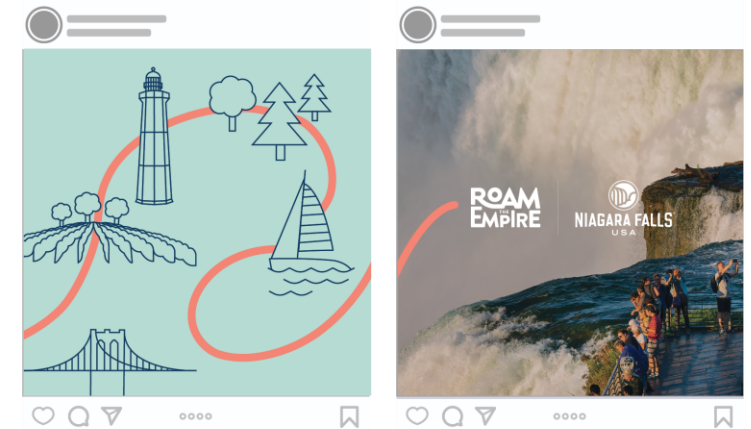
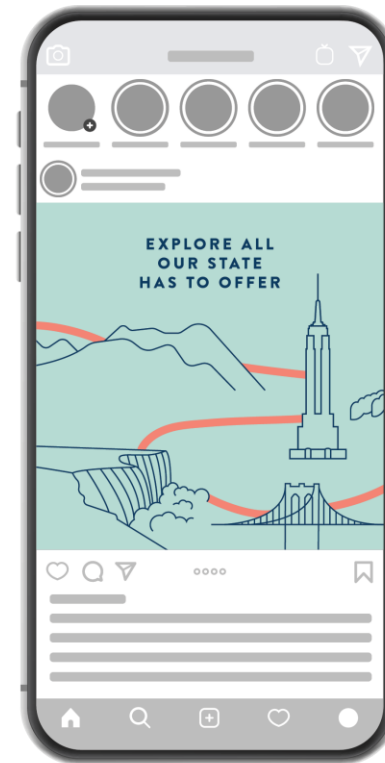
Roam The Empire

SOLUTION

Get New Yorkers to *Roam the Empire*. We created a campaign celebrating everything that's waiting to be explored right here in New York, the Empire State. We started by developing a toolkit containing everything the state's tourism industry partners needed to start getting the word out: key messages, logos, branded digital and print assets in varying sizes, a templated news release and social media guidelines. Then, we got to work getting the word out to the people of New York. We developed a series of animated videos to bring random New York state adventures to life. They were posted to our Roam the Empire Instagram page along with other engaging content to support the initiative.

RESULTS

Within the first 90 days, more than 100 previously competitive tourism partners agreed to band together and participate—more than twice as many as expected. More than \$60,000 in advertising grants and pro bono press services were contributed by statewide media groups to help encourage New Yorkers to roam. On social media, #roamtheempire gained well over 100,000 earned media impressions, all with an entirely organic social presence. Even NY Governor Kathy Hochul publicly lauded the effort with a letter to NYSTIA members.



visit
Westchester
County ny

Westchester County Tourism

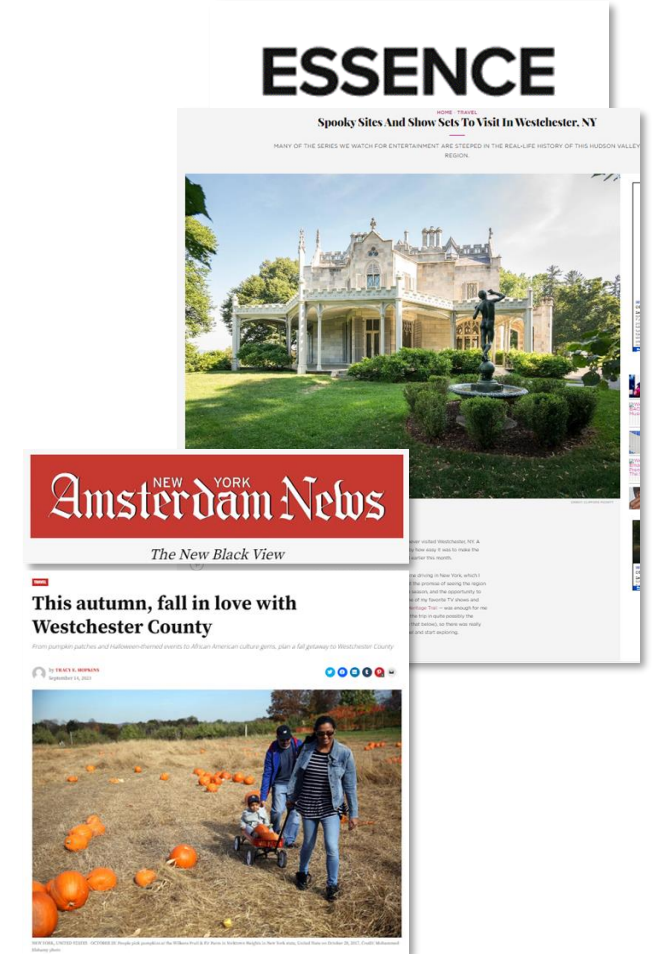
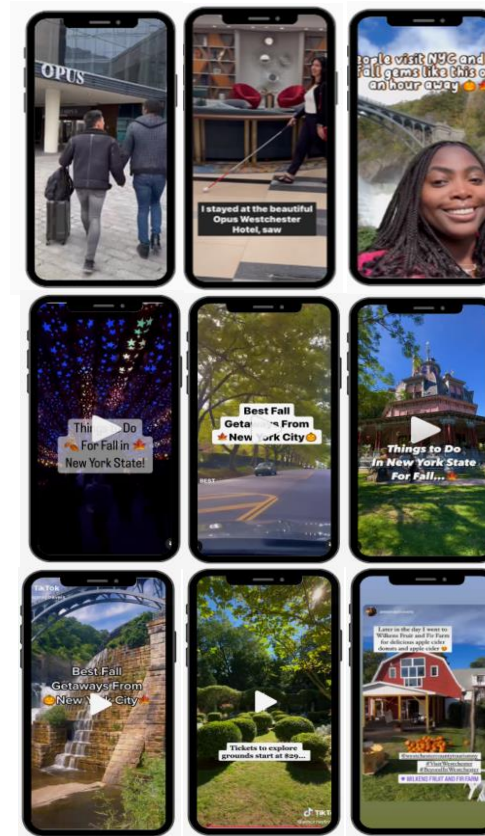
Beyond the Everyday: Westchester County Inclusive Influencer Marketing Campaign

SITUATION

Second only to New York City's five boroughs, Westchester County is the state's most diverse county. Spanning 500 square miles of cities, towns, and hamlets, Westchester suffered in the wake of COVID-19—and was looking for a way to revitalize area travel. A campaign was needed to not only reflect the county's population and all its different communities, but also to ensure potential visitors of all races, genders, orientations, abilities and backgrounds could see themselves safely enjoying all that Westchester has to offer.

INSIGHT

Through focus groups and quantitative research, Mower's Insights team discovered that while prospective travelers knew Westchester as one of New York City's suburbs, its diversity and the inclusive and welcoming communities within weren't as well-known. To change that, we'd need to actively target creators whose content resonated with priority audiences, including Black, Latinx, Asian, LGBTQ and uniquely abled travelers, to spread awareness about Westchester. So, we set out to find a cluster of media and content creators who mirrored the county's vibrant and culturally diverse population, and designed enticing itineraries for each creator's unique audiences.



Westchester County Tourism

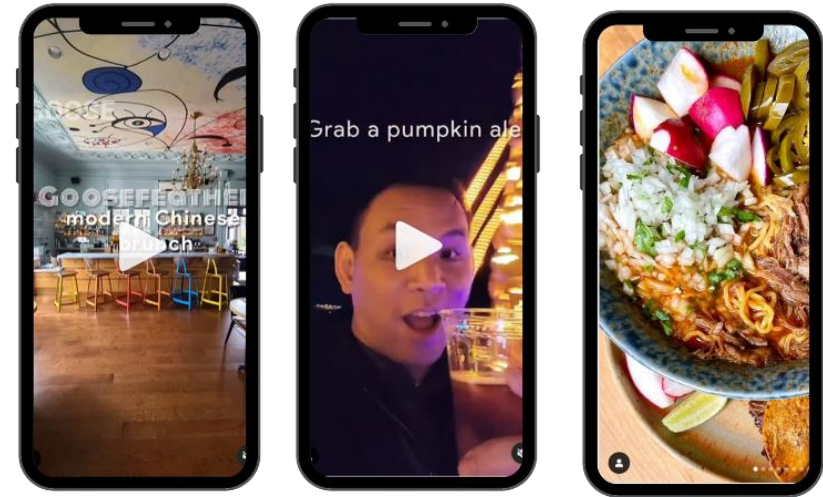
Beyond the Everyday: Westchester County Inclusive Influencer Marketing Campaign

IDEA

Take Westchester County's earned and social media beyond where it had ever been—in a campaign called "Beyond the Everyday." Smart negotiation and budgeting enabled us to secure 27 media and content creators against our initial goal of 10—and **41% of those we worked with came from multicultural backgrounds, were LGBTQ+, or were uniquely abled, eager to explore inclusive and accessible travel.** We identified creators with solid editorial platforms, engagement rates and multiplatform audiences, like Brande Victorian, Tracy Hopkins, Gerry Isabelle, Kirstie Pike, Christine Diaz, Bary Hoy, Noelle Foley, Catarina Rivera, Ron Lai and Amorray Marcano. And we monitored their content to confirm everything followed FTC and contract terms.

RESULTS

In a word: Staggering. In 2022, buoyed by incredible new creator content, Westchester County tourism's Instagram page saw chart-topping metrics, including a 91% increase in total engagement and a net follower growth of 45%. We calculated a 12.7X return on investment for Westchester County in the first year alone and, based on estimated ad value, the campaign paced to over \$500,000 in value by the end of 2023. The campaign won several influencer marketing, content marketing and social media awards in 2022 and 2023, including PRSA Bronze Anvil, PRNews Platinum & Digital Awards, Bulldog Award and HSMIA Gold Adrian Award.



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▣▣ CIE Tours International

Finding inspiration in the art of Irish storytelling

SITUATION

Ireland and Britain's largest tour operator, CIE Tours, offers fully inclusive and expertly guided vacations to Europe, from group travel to highly curated private itineraries. Over its almost 90-year history, the company has earned a reputation for excellence that is rooted in its signature Irish hospitality, the genuine warmth and expertise of its guides and hosts, and a talent for fostering lasting friendships on the road. CIE Tours makes it easy for travelers—buyer personas they call Heritage Seekers, Knowledge Questers and Dream Travel Chasers—to immerse themselves in a new place with exclusive access, authentic experiences and in-depth knowledge that, in the spirit of Celtic heritage, often begins with a story.

INSIGHT

- Online family history research in the U.S. had grown 14-fold in the past decade, and inexpensive home DNA kits were impacting the genealogy travel trend. For Knowledge Questers, a guided vacation is a seamless way to connect with their European heritage. The company's deep bank of native Irish guides is an incredible on-the-ground resource for the ~37 million North Americans with Irish ancestry.
- CIE Tours can be a champion for Knowledge Questers (both "students of life" and traditional academics) in their pursuit of growth.
- Dream Travel Chasers are influenced by popular culture references and connections that can make an Irish voyage enticing.
- The majority of business is booked via North American travel advisors. This remained vital to profitability for CIE Tours, but brand building demanded more consumer awareness.



- While guests may have a personal travel advisor, when there are complaints, they'll turn straight to social media to get public and personal attention. CIE Tours needed a strong game plan.

IDEAS

- Meet local guides and record their favorite tales from the road, particularly exploring genealogy storylines for owned content and pitching fodder.
- Become the authority on heritage tourism, with live interviews for the CEO during the New York City St. Patrick's Day parade, and a custom genealogy tour experience for The Trip Sisters on PBS.
- Turn CIE Tours' more mature audience into online advocates by demystifying how to connect, consume and share on social channels. Place dynamic American students with a passion for the Emerald Isle on select tours, serving as social media subject-matter experts, bridging the digital divide for boomer guests through a multigenerational learning experience.
- Arrange for hardworking educators to feed their own quest for learning and travel through Europe in summer's high-season at off-season rates.

▣▣ CIE Tours International

Finding inspiration in the art of Irish storytelling

IDEAS CONTINUED

- Jump on the news cycle as media buzzed about the final season of HBO's *Game of Thrones*, offering examples of how Westeros can live on through CIE Tours via stops in the rolling hills of Winterfell (Belfast) and the icy chill from Beyond the Wall (Iceland).
- Prepare a detailed customer communications process for managing social media inquiries and complaints, which often came through in real time from Ireland's time zone.

RESULTS

- Extraordinary tales of personal discovery were revealed during interviews with Irish guides, illuminating the connections local experts can create for travelers interested in their Irish roots. Mower used those tales to create a blog, "I Know That House: Finding Family and Childhood Letters on an Irish Tour," which became the baseline for media outreach, securing relevant stories in *The Washington Post* and inspiring a PBS special on genealogy travel.

- Student ambassadors helped guests navigate social channels, sparking better sharing and a surge in community engagement, including a 40% increase in user-generated content on Ireland that incorporated CIE Tours-specific tags and hashtags. Mower's organic Facebook program—with little paid support—grew by leaps and bounds (+185% in organic post reach and +167% in organic post impressions YOY).
- Care for teachers became a positive story during a tumultuous news cycle for the education community, which was experiencing a wave of strikes across the country. The Teacher Appreciation Month deal earned over 64 million media impressions and a story that syndicated nationwide, helping the company surpass sales goals.
- Mower seized the *Game of Thrones* moment, earning placements like *Good Morning America* online and *Architectural Digest*, plus key trades like *Recommend* and *TravelPulse*.

AD



Travel Destinations for *Game of Thrones*
Superfans Who Love Design
*AD's insight on the most notable homes, sites, and of course, filming locations from Ireland to *Thrones*.*

[Game of Thrones Campaign](#)



[Heritage Tourism and Tour Guide Spotlights](#)

CIE Tours International
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Introducing our newest social media concierges, Caroline and Evelyn! See their travels through Ireland and Britain by following CIE Tours on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn!



[Placing Students on Tours to Support Guests with Digital Devices and Social Sharing](#)



[Teacher Appreciation Campaign](#)