

SNOHOMISH COUNTY STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN

BRAND REVIEW AND ANALYSIS REPORT

—

RESONANCE

November 29, 2016





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BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

As part of the process for the creation of a Strategic Tourism Plan designed to help stakeholders articulate and share a clear vision for the future, it is important to review the current Snohomish County travel and tourism brand standing and its relevant applications in digital, social and print arenas to determine opportunities for positioning the brand and the region to meet the goals for the future.

To serve this purpose, this Brand Review and Analysis Report undertakes a high-level review of marketing and communications channels and published / online material provided by Snohomish Tourism Bureau.

Please note that this report does NOT provide for a comprehensive assessment of all marketing materials, strategies or activities. As such, there may be activities and marketing collateral already in process or circulation which may address some of the findings of this report.

In addition, these findings reflect the consultants' expert opinion based on extensive experience working with a wide variety of destinations around the world. And, as with all qualitative research, alternative findings may result from different interpretations, a review of alternative materials or a different consultant.

As a result, the findings should not be considered absolute or definitive. Instead, they should only be considered indicative of the Snohomish County brand standing or its relevant applications.

Situation

As a result of the 2010 Snohomish Tourism Plan, investment was made into the development of a cohesive tourism brand for the region, branded as *Open Up*.

Formally rolled out in 2013, *Open Up* identified the target audience for the county tourism brand as “those wanting to explore and pursue, (extreme recreation, a great buy, a big casino win)”. Indirect target audiences also include tourism partners, local businesses, residents, convention customers and more.

This brand has been successful in aligning messaging for the region and day-to-day implementation and improvements have been actioned across partners and regions.

This review incorporates the following research:

- A. Review of online and printed materials provided by Snohomish County
- B. Review of plans, strategies, brand documents and guidelines provided by Snohomish County including: Magazines, Email Newsletters & Blasts, Strategic Plan, Operating Plan, Brand Manual, Languages for Online Listings, Social Media Platforms, Logos, Typography, Typefaces, Brochures and Flyers

This Brand Review and Analysis Report will lay a framework for the Snohomish County Tourism Plan update and will form a basis for program and positioning recommendations. This report outlines:

- What works
- What doesn't and how it can be improved
- Gaps, areas of duplicated effort and potential opportunities
- Findings to effect Snohomish County's brand and marketing priorities

BRAND REVIEW



OPEN UP BRAND

In today's increasingly competitive marketplace, high performing destinations adapt to new toolsets, engage directly with targeted audiences, and communicate the "why" that drives their vision. Advances in technology and new communication channels now open unprecedented opportunities to emotionally connect to hyper-targeted prospects while establishing intense brand affinity and top-of-mind recall.

Snohomish County clearly has a wealth of adventure, nature and diverse assets to offer. While the overarching brand identity of the Open Up brand clearly calls the adventurous visitor to action, varying secondary messaging and current brand application leaves the brand fractured without clear brand pillars to anchor the region.

Summary

The table below provides a summary of the review's key findings. It illustrates that on a five point scale (where 0 is not performed and 5 is optimized) Snohomish County has operationalized most platforms. Please note that because this review is not comprehensive, marketing teams may have addressed certain findings included in this review. However, marketing examples that have been reviewed show areas in need of improvement and optimization for best results. The average scores are between 1 and 3.

5. Optimized				
4. Evaluated				
3. Executed	X		X	X
2. Planned	X	X		
1. Ad Hoc		X		X
0. Not Performed				
	Website	Social Media	Advertisements	Marketing Collateral

Notations are defined as follows:

1. Ad Hoc (implemented with varying degrees of planning, evaluation and results)
2. Planned (marketing platform planned or operational to some degree but is not fully executed across the board)
3. Executed (marketing platform operational, would benefit from further evaluation (possible new strategy, human resource or project budget allocation and optimization)
4. Evaluated (marketing platform operational, and evaluated with clear new strategy, human resource or project budget allocation noted)
5. Optimized (marketing platform operational, and operating at a high level of effectiveness in terms of market comparison, connection to brand platform and integration with other marketing tactics)

Strengths

- Open Up brand lends itself to a variety of applications from culinary to outdoor adventure
- Diversity of anchor attractions, offerings and opportunities to market
- Brand messaging positioned to leverage location as Seattle's backyard
- Initial investment in brand applications, social media platforms established
- A wealth of content available from website and brand applications such as travel itineraries

Weaknesses

- Open Up Brand brand pillars are not positioned as clearly as possible throughout marketing applications. There is some brand confusion from the breadth of messaging across collateral. As the Snohomish team has noted, the key messages have evolved across collateral since their inception and may need to be further refined and refreshed across platforms.
- The beauty and intrigue of the region is not portrayed by the associated brand imagery and videography
- Lack of emotional connection in marketing applications to the target market
- Applications are copy heavy and design poor with a risk of losing opportunities to convert an interested visitor into a customer

Opportunities

- Clarify application and key messages of brand pillars and possible key sub brands to strengthen the key 3-5 features the region is known for
- Improve brand imagery, videography and supporting brand collateral design to create an alluring and emotionally appealing story for the target market
- Simplify brand applications, reduce text, improve design
- Improve brand resources for travel and tourism partners
- Identify and brand key sub-brands for important program, region, or event strategies

Brand Guidelines

Current brand guidelines were a proactive step forward for Snohomish County when introduced in 2013, bringing brand continuity and positioning Open Up for the target market of outdoor adventurers.

Three years later it is clear that while the brand platform is still anchored on a valuable premise, the brand is in need of a refresh in imagery, streamlined messaging, fresh design and consistent application. Application of the brand and brand pillars varies widely in advertisements, social media and the website. Current brand guidelines contain six brand colors without designated application or hierarchy, so brand colors are used in various weights throughout print and digital applications.

BRAND COLLATERAL ASSESSMENT

Brand collateral was reviewed for effectiveness, content and brand consistency across the website, social media platforms and select print materials provided by the Snohomish Tourism Bureau. Below is the summary of findings for website, social media, print collateral and digital assets.

I // WEBSITE

Strengths

- Content rich website with various resources throughout
- Type and relevance of content to Snohomish County
- Robust regional travel itineraries as downloadable PDFs
- Detailed drop down menus for access to information

Weaknesses

- User experience
- Site structure and organization: double navigation bar is confusing to users.
- Ease of navigation and search functionality
- Lack of consistency in brand messaging
- Lack of consistency in brand application in design of web pages, many pages are content and text heavy with small links to downloadable resources such as itineraries which then have images embedded, however visitors could easily miss this content link or move on since text only pages are less appealing.
- Overall dark design doesn't align to bright outdoors Open Up theme

Opportunities

- Begin with the 'Why'. Integrate storytelling and vivid digital imagery and film into a pull strategy for engagement
- Refresh overall design, imagery and layout to create an inviting visual experience for visitors
- Improve interactive functions, maps, itinerary creation tool
- Integrate immersive digital content and inviting imagery
- Curate specific journey sections into more detailed itinerary landing pages to track web analytics of success, which could include much of the itinerary

content which is embedded in pdfs - if these activities are pulled into the main structure of the website they could be clickable and trackable by activity or link to offers and third party booking sites.

- Redesign search functions, title hierarchy and content for simple user interface that walks a visitor through a seamless user experience
- Content planning that integrates regional thought leaders and tourism partners
- Develop Group/Conference portal with attendance marketing toolkits, media portals, image libraries, film assets, social media partner resources, destination marketing copy, templates, advertisements, discount partnership resources, and interactive planning resources for organizers
- Develop Press Resources through story ideas, image and films assets, and a full press portal
- Develop Travel Trade portal with products & suppliers, planning assistance, itineraries, market research, images, films & b-roll



Above: www.snohomish.org

An example of home page which is currently dark and muted – which contrasts the invitation to open up to the outdoors.

// EXPLORE / TRAVEL / JOURNEYS

News & Information | About | Contact | Groups/Conventions | Sports | Weddings | Events Calendar | My Itinerary

SNOHOMISH COUNTY WASHINGTON

EXPLORE TRAVEL JOURNEYS

TASTE LOCAL DELIGHTS

Home » Journeys » Taste Local Delights

A Perfect Weekend in Snohomish and the Skykomish River Valley

Come sip the many flavors of Western Washington in Snohomish County's boutique wineries, breweries or the new micro-distilleries. Taste freshly sourced food that will leave you wanting more. Be inspired by local farms that contribute sustainable and eco-friendly products. Wander the farmers markets to score some fresh, homegrown and homemade products. Or find a local shop featuring cultural cuisine items. Sprinkled throughout this journey are other fun and exciting adventures.

Day 1

Plan to arrive in Snohomish County by mid-afternoon. You will spend time exploring liquid arts, culinary delights, rich history and inviting entertainment opportunities in this great riverside city.

Day 2

Day two is jam-packed with experiences. As you busy yourself tasting local favorites and fine dining, learning about alpacas and iguanas, enjoying scenic back-road drives, exploring small communities and cultures through shopping, or watching a "must see to believe" local phenomenon, you will discover much of what makes Snohomish County unique.

[Print the Itinerary](#)

[Download a printer-friendly version of the full itinerary for you to Taste Local Delights.](#)

TWEET SHARE SEND TO A FRIEND PRINT

Trip Details

- Two days in Snohomish and the Skykomish River Valley
- 21 stops
- Ideal for an adult "escape the city" weekend
- A great companion itinerary is a day to Breathe Deeply in the Country

Book A Hotel

Rooms:	Adults:	Children:
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>
Check In:	Check Out:	
<input type="text" value="mm/dd/yyyy"/>	<input type="text" value="mm/dd/yyyy"/>	
BOOK NOW		

Book Online or Call
1-888-998-1299

Above: <http://www.snohomish.org/journeys/taste-local-delights>

An example of content and text heavy page with link to download itinerary. Page would benefit from more image rich and immersive film robust content to interest visitors in the full itinerary.



Wide-open land, fresh cut flowers and U-pick berries are the sights, aromas and flavor of Snohomish County. Get lost in a corn maze, browse through a pumpkin patch, taste ripe berries from the bush, or pick a handful of flowers for that favorite vase. Come sip the many flavors of Western Washington in Snohomish County's boutique wineries, breweries or the new micro-distilleries. Wander the farmers markets throughout the county for a fun, community atmosphere and score some fresh, homegrown and homemade products.

If you love to explore the culinary side of travel destinations, get ready to delight your taste buds in Snohomish County. Experience the culture of this beautiful destination on this two-day tour.

Day 1

Plan to arrive in Snohomish by mid-afternoon. As the hub for your weekend activity, try our cozy B&Bs, a farm stay, quaint inn or sleep under the stars. Whatever your choice, you're sure to sleep in comfort. A few recommendations:

- [Countryman Bed & Breakfast](#) (Snohomish)
- [Cadyville Carriage House](#) (Snohomish)
- [Cabins at Flowing Lake Country Park](#) (Snohomish)
- [Inn at Snohomish](#) (Snohomish)
- [Hagen Farm House](#) (Snohomish)

Make your way to downtown Snohomish. Make your way to [Skip Rock Distillers](#) to sample some local spirits. Founders Ryan and Julie Hem-bree have a passion for using local ingredients from farmers they personally know. Every bottle is hand-made from scratch. Many of their products have received awards from prestigious competitions around the country, including their rums, vodka, nocino, whiskey, and raspberry liqueur. Ask Ryan for the backstory on the nocino walnut liqueur. Take a tour of the distillery to learn more about this craft.



Indulge in some shopping in Historic Downtown Snohomish. This genuinely historic community is listed on both the Washington State and National Registries of Historic Places. Snohomish is the oldest and best-preserved city in the county. Aptly named the "Antique Capital of the Northwest," enjoy strolling among the city's late 19th- and early 20th-century architecture as you explore the wonderful selection of antiques from over 350 dealers. From native Indian artifacts to Tiffany art glass, there is a seemingly endless array of quality antiques and collectibles from which to choose. First Street is the main drag in town, and there are endless shopping options along the way and on adjoining streets.



www.snohomish.org

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Above:

http://www.snohomish.org/content/uploads/general_content/TasteLocalDelights_Itinerary-10-26-16.pdf

An example of the robust content in downloadable itineraries, which is valuable for visitors yet may be overlooked given the access to it is through a small link on the bottom of the page. Design and layout could be improved for a stronger Open Up feel and more structured high-level overviews for visitors to get a teaser of what a weekend could look like.

News & Information | About | Contact | Events Calendar | My Itinerary
 Snohomish County WASHINGTON | EXPLORE | Groups/Co | TRAVEL | JOURNEYS | Sports | Weddings

JOURNEYS

Aviation & Aerial | All Regions

Home » **Journeys**

Aviation & Aerial Adventures

Experiencing Snohomish County's four aviation attractions, as well as other aerial adventures.



Aviation & Aerial Adventures

Whether you're an experienced aviator, a student of history, or a newcomer to the adventures in the skies, this...

© 2016 Snohomish County Tourism Bureau - Site by Paramore | the digital agency

Above: <http://www.snohomish.org/journeys?categories=176>

Example of a Journeys landing page. Lacking content on this first page to draw interest. Currently requires a visitor two more navigation clicks to get to the downloadable PDF content below which has more intriguing journey content.



Home » Journeys » **Aviation & Aerial Adventures**

Experience Thrilling Aviation & Aerial Adventures

If aeronautical adventures are your passion, Snohomish County is sure to please with its four world-class aviation attractions at Paine Field in Mukilteo and Everett. Explore rare collections of aircraft and see spectacular warbirds from the earliest days of flight. Be amazed at the detailed restoration of vintage aircraft from the late 1920s through the 1960s, including the very first Boeing 727. And be inspired as you view the aviation industry progressing literally right before your eyes.

Once you've seen aviation at work, experience aerial adventures first-hand. Enjoy an early morning scenic hot air balloon ride through the Snohomish River Valley. Then soar high above Snohomish County and skydive from 13,500 feet.

Day 1

Your adventure begins with visiting four aviation attractions around Paine Field -- a Snohomish County airport bordered by Everett and Mukilteo. Get up close and personal with vintage aircraft that has been carefully restored. Feel the excitement of aeronautical discovery. And see the future of flight unfolding right before your eyes. Your day includes visits to the Mukilteo waterfront and the Lowell Riverfront Trail in Everett, both of which boast incredible views that you'll see from a different vantage point on day two. Cap off your evening with a satisfying meal in the community you're staying at for the night.

Day 2

Day two begins with a scenic hot air balloon flight.

Trip Details

- Two days in Everett, Mukilteo, and Snohomish
- 11 stops
- Ideal for those who are passionate about aviation and adventures in the sky
- A great companion itinerary is a day to [Breathe Deeply in the Country](#)



Book A Hotel

Rooms: Adults: Children:

Check In: Check Out:

Above: <http://www.snohomish.org/journeys/aviation-aerial-adventures>

Journeys Aviation page 2nd tier. Valuable content yet lacking active links, vivid imagery and visitor appeal.



If aeronautical adventures are your passion, Snohomish County is sure to please with its four world-class aviation attractions at Paine Field in Mukilteo and Everett. Explore rare collections of aircraft and see spectacular warbirds from the earliest days of flight. Be amazed at the detailed restoration of vintage aircraft from the late 1920s through the 1960s, including the very first Boeing 727. And be inspired as you view the aviation industry progressing literally right before your eyes.

Once you've seen aviation at work, experience aerial adventures first-hand. Enjoy an early morning scenic hot air balloon ride through the Snohomish River Valley. Then soar high above Snohomish County and skydive from 13,500 feet. Whether you're an experienced aviator, a student of history, or a newcomer to the adventures in the skies, this two-day itinerary will provide a thrill!

Day 1

Plan to arrive in Everett by early Saturday morning. Many lodging accommodations offer early check-in with room availability. To find the option that works best for you, visit www.snohomish.org/explore/lodging. Select from the "All Categories" drop-down menu to select from a wide selection of accommodations, from waterfront retreats or lodging close to urban attractions to quiet bed and breakfasts or full-service hotels.

Start your morning on the east side of Paine Field with a visit to the [Museum of Flight Restoration Center](#). Step back in time as you see vintage aircraft from the late 1920s to the 1960s, including the very first Boeing 727. An army of volunteers are busily restoring engines and repainting aircraft bodies. Their passion for **meticulous restoration work** is catching, and you will marvel at the intricate details that haven't escaped their notice. Volunteers also know the history of the aircraft under their care and provide the dramatic details that bring each one to life.



Continue your aviation tour at the [Future of Flight Aviation Center & Boeing Tour](#). Explore the **dynamics of flight** and experience new aviation innovations in the Aerospace Gallery. Be fascinated by the materials used in aircraft design. For the 90-minute Boeing Tour, you will be shuttled to the actual Boeing assembly plant, which is the largest building by volume on the earth. From several stories up, you'll be intrigued with the commercial jet assembly lines for the Boeing 747, 777, and 787 Dreamliners. Be amazed at the advancements in production that are displayed before your eyes. After the tour, head to the Strato Deck atop the Future of Flight to take in sweeping views of Paine Field, and the Cascade Mountains from Mount Baker to Mount Rainier. It is the perfect place for aviation enthusiasts to spot airplanes, including test flights of the aircraft built at the factory.



Tips: It is strongly recommended to purchase tickets in advance; tours regularly sell out. Also, children must be at least 4 feet (122 cm) to participate in the Boeing Tour; this is strictly enforced.



www.snohomish.org

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Above: http://www.snohomish.org/content/uploads/general_content/AviationandAerialAdventures_Itinerary-10-26-16_1.pdf

Journeys Aviation page third tier downloadable PDF. Downloadable is content rich, but text heavy.

// MY ITINERARY

Current itinerary building tool is easily overlooked and could benefit from redesign for user experience. Consider repositioning such a tool integrated throughout the website with more featured design for usability.

News & Information | About | Contact | Groups/Conventions | Sports | Weddings [^] | Events Calendar | My Itinerary

SNOHOMISH COUNTY
WASHINGTON

EXPLORE TRAVEL JOURNEYS

MY ITINERARY

Home » My Itinerary

Your Itinerary Is Empty

As you explore all the things that you can do or see throughout Snohomish County, click on "Add to Itinerary" to create your list. Open up to adventure in Snohomish County.

For ideas to get you started, check our [suggested itineraries](#).

TWEET SHARE SEND TO A FRIEND PRINT

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// EVENTS CALENDAR

Snohomish County Events Calendar is filled with relevant visitor content. However, it is easy to miss the page as navigation is small in the upper right hand title menu of the home page. Consideration could be made to integrate events calendar search more prevalent into home page

The screenshot shows the Snohomish County Events Calendar website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for News & Information, About, Contact, Groups/Conventions, Sports, Weddings, Events Calendar, and My Itinerary. Below this is a dark header with the Snohomish County logo and navigation options: EXPLORE, TRAVEL, and JOURNEYS. A search bar is also present. The main heading is "EVENTS CALENDAR" in large white letters over a background image of a person with their arms raised. Below the heading are filters for Start Date, End Date, and All Categories. A date range of "November 19 – December 17, 2016" is displayed, along with a "TODAY" button and an "ADD AN EVENT" button. The main content area features three event cards: 1. "Everett - Schack Yoga" on November 19, 2016, from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM. 2. "Camano - Camano Center Holiday Gift & Craft Bazaar" on November 19, 2016, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. 3. "Book A Hotel" section with fields for Rooms (1), Adults (1), and Children (0), and a "BOOK NOW" button. Below these are two more event cards: "Holiday Bazaar" at the Snohomish Senior Center on Saturday, November 19th, and "Snohomish - Holiday Gift & Craft Bazaar at the Snohomish Seior Center".

Above: <http://www.snohomish.org/events-calendar>

// GROUPS & CONVENTIONS

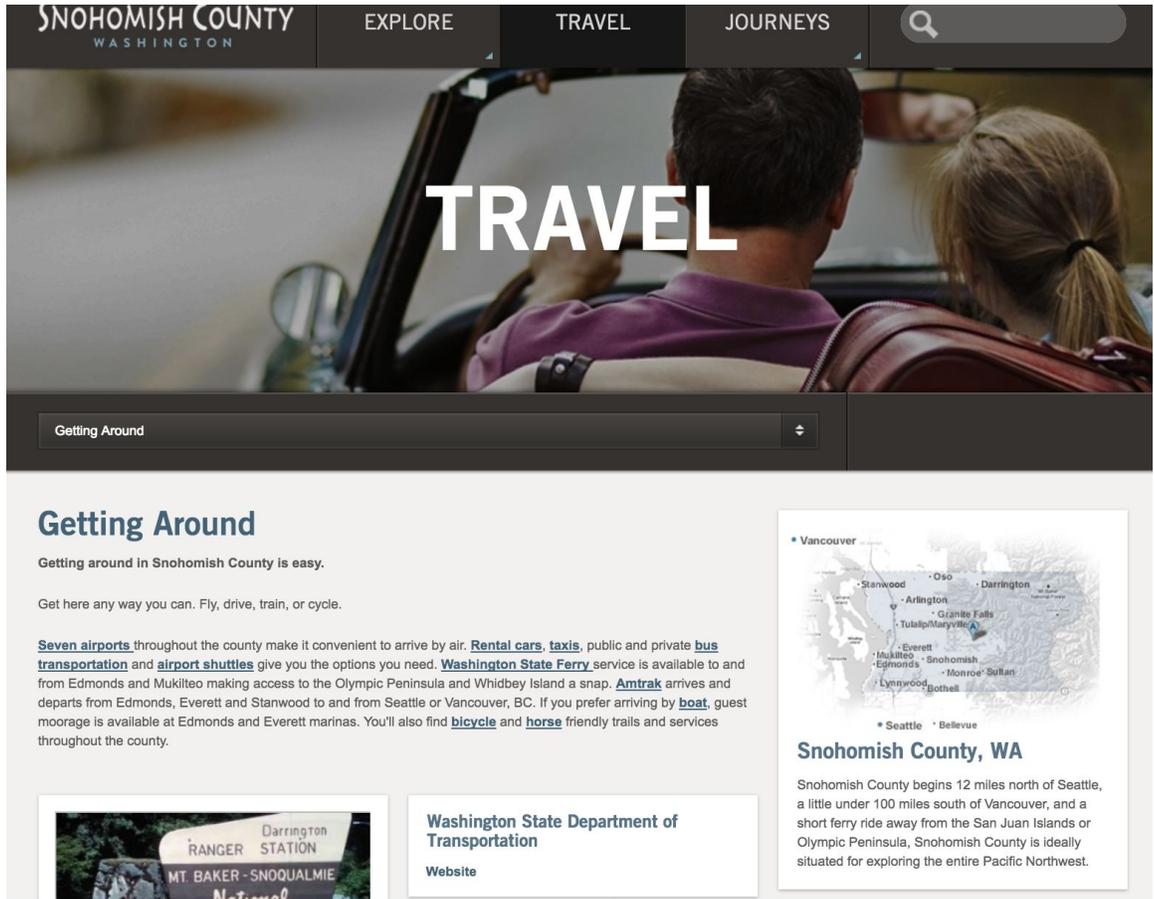
Groups & Conventions portal as seen below could be expanded with an interactive convention planner tool, destination marketing toolkit, and more image and film content to draw planners into the possibilities of hosting their event in Snohomish County. Partnerships could also be designed for shared content with Casinos and anchor locations with active marketing programs.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Snohomish County website with links for News & Information, About, Contact, Groups/Conventions, Sports, Weddings, Events Calendar, and My Itinerary. Below this is a dark header with the Snohomish County logo and navigation buttons for EXPLORE, TRAVEL, and JOURNEYS, along with a search bar. The main content area features a large image of a forest with the text "GROUPS/CONVENTIONS" overlaid. Below the image is a breadcrumb trail: Home » Groups/Conventions » Meetings, Groups & Packaged Travel Services. The main heading is "Meetings, Groups & Packaged Travel Services". The text describes the services offered by the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau, including conference centers, hotels, and event spaces. A list of services is provided, including Sample Itineraries, Lodging - Hotel Blocks, Motor Coach & Charters, Package Travel Guide, and Groups Tour Request for Proposal (RFP). A "Request a proposal" button is highlighted in green. On the right side, there is a vertical menu with links to Meetings, Groups & Packaged Travel Services, Group Tour & Packaged Travel, Meetings & Convention Planning, Convention Services, Event Planning Tips, and Sample Itineraries.

Above: <http://www.snohomish.org/groups-conventions/groups-and-conventions>

// TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION

The travel and transportation section of the website could be improved with an integrated trip planner or interactive attraction and transportation map.



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Snohomish County Washington website. The 'TRAVEL' menu item is highlighted. Below the navigation is a large hero image of a couple in a car with the word 'TRAVEL' overlaid in large white letters. A dropdown menu is open, showing 'Getting Around'. The main content area features a 'Getting Around' section with a sub-header 'Getting Around in Snohomish County is easy.' and a paragraph: 'Get here any way you can. Fly, drive, train, or cycle.' This is followed by a paragraph detailing transportation options: 'Seven airports throughout the county make it convenient to arrive by air. Rental cars, taxis, public and private bus transportation and airport shuttles give you the options you need. Washington State Ferry service is available to and from Edmonds and Mukilteo making access to the Olympic Peninsula and Whidbey Island a snap. Amtrak arrives and departs from Edmonds, Everett and Stanwood to and from Seattle or Vancouver, BC. If you prefer arriving by boat, guest moorage is available at Edmonds and Everett marinas. You'll also find bicycle and horse friendly trails and services throughout the county.' To the right is a map of Snohomish County, WA, with a list of cities: Vancouver, Stanwood, Arlington, Darrington, Granite Falls, Tulalip/Marysville, Everett, Snohomish, Edmonds, Monroe/Sultan, Lynnwood, Bothell, Seattle, and Bellevue. Below the map is a box for the 'Washington State Department of Transportation' with a 'Website' link. At the bottom left is an image of a 'Darrington RANGER STATION' sign for 'MT. BAKER - SNOQUALMIE National'.

2 // SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

–

Snohomish County has established social media accounts across LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube. Content scheduling and visitor engagement varies greatly across platforms. Social media management currently includes a social media plan and regular content calendar updates. It is important to note that the Snohomish Tourism Bureau facilitates the social media activities of their partners and as such is somewhat limited by the content provided, which may not always have the same level of quality the brand desires, but still adds value to the local visitor.

Overall the Open Up brand would benefit from greater investment in cohesive social media strategy and implementation across key social media platforms integrating user generated content, vivid photography, immersive films and event focused activity.

Following is a summary review of each platform.

/// LINKEDIN

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile for the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau. The profile header includes the organization's name, 'Events Services', '1-10 employees', and '85 followers'. A 'Follow' button is visible. The main content area features a large image of a ferry on a lake at sunset. Below the image is a text post describing the bureau's role in tourism and convention marketing. The post includes a link to the bureau's website and is dated '12 months ago'. To the right of the main content, there are sections for 'How You're Connected' (showing 12 employees on LinkedIn), an advertisement for 'B4B' (Business Builders for Business), and 'Featured Groups' (including 'MPI - World Education...').

Strengths

- Base of 85 followers
- Twelve employees connected

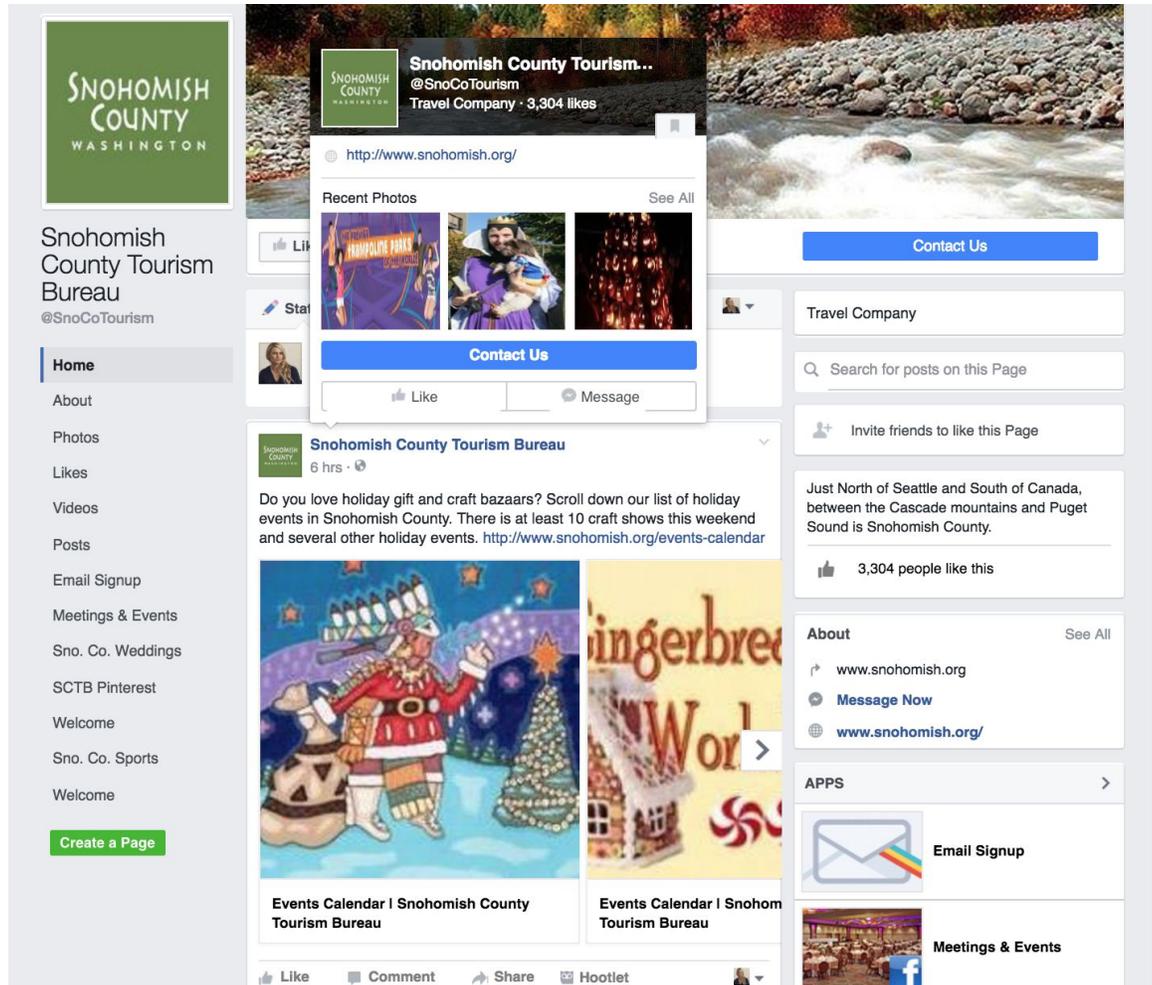
Weaknesses

- Lack of content (last post 12 months ago)
- Lack of integration with web content with links to build economic development
- Lack of staff-engagement
- Lack of thought leadership
- Comparatively, Visit Seattle has nearly 3000 followers

Opportunities

- Invite staff, partner and tourism industry engagement including staff-generated content postings within brand guidelines
- Content plan across social media including LinkedIn
- Utilize LinkedIn to access the business visitor, convention marketing opportunities and tourism trade partners
- Become a thought leader and news source for the region
- Integrate immersive digital content

/// FACEBOOK



Strengths

- Current and relevant content including community events, travel opportunities and local engagement
- Base of 3300 Likes

Weaknesses

- Lack of leveraging Open Up brand through campaigns and hashtags
- Low number of Likes
- Likes among Competition: Travel Oregon 368k, Washington State 11k , Seattle 460k
- Inconsistent quality and professionalism of imagery and films

Opportunities

- Invite staff engagement
- Leverage surrounding Seattle/Washington/Travel Oregon followers through targeted advertising
- Improve quality and consistency of digital content, imagery and films

/// TWITTER



Strengths

- Current and relevant content including community events, travel opportunities and local engagement
- Base of 3500 followers

Weaknesses

- Inconsistent quality and professionalism of imagery and films
- Lack of clear campaign objectives and themes
- Lack of leveraging Open Up brand through campaigns and hashtags
- Use of unengaging stock photography

Opportunities

- Leverage surrounding Seattle/Washington/Travel Oregon followers through targeted advertising
- Improve quality and consistency of digital content, imagery and films
- Integrate

/// INSTAGRAM

Strengths

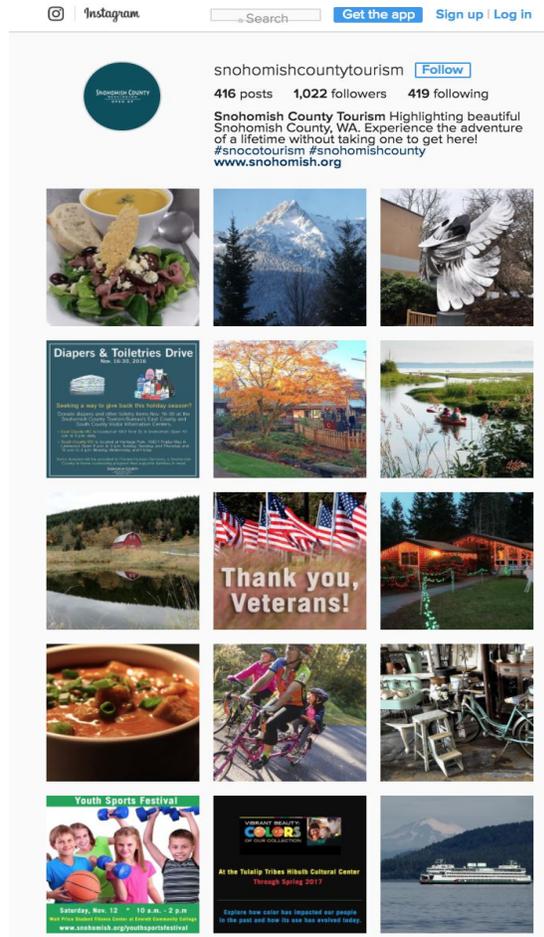
- Visually appealing content
- Base of over 1000 followers

Weaknesses

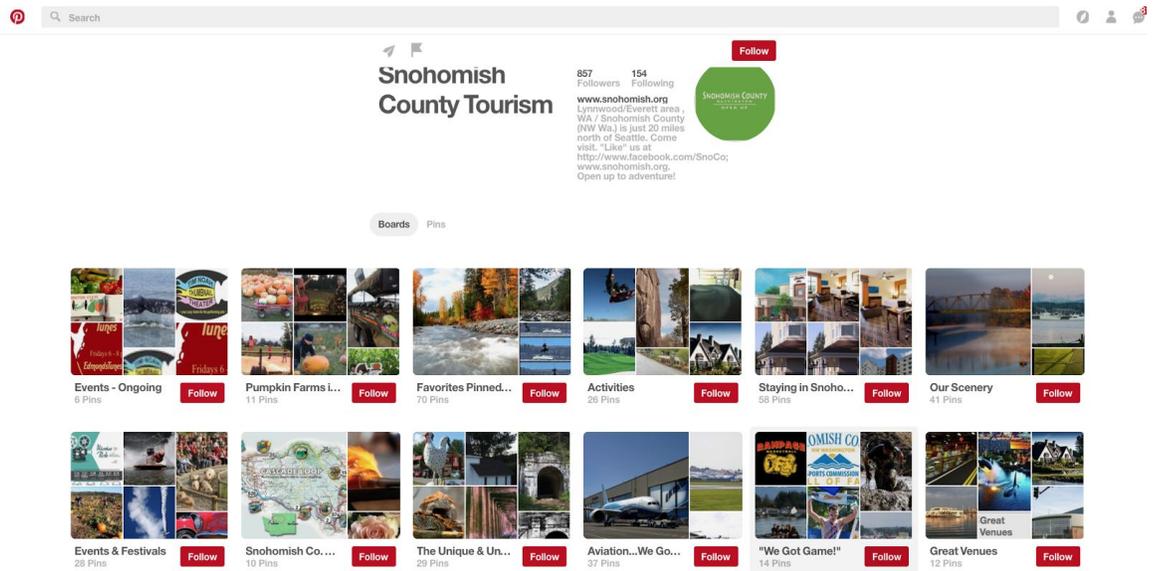
- Followers among competitors: Seattle 61k, Travel Oregon 179k
- Inconsistent quality and professionalism of imagery and films

Opportunities

- Leverage surrounding Seattle/Washington/Travel Oregon followers through targeted advertising
- Improve quality and consistency of digital content, imagery and films



/// PINTEREST



Strengths

- Visually appealing content
- Good base of diverse content
- Easy user generated content integration

Weaknesses

- Low number of followers
- Inconsistent content schedule
- Lack of design focus with multiple tiles images rather than a brand pillar image

Opportunities

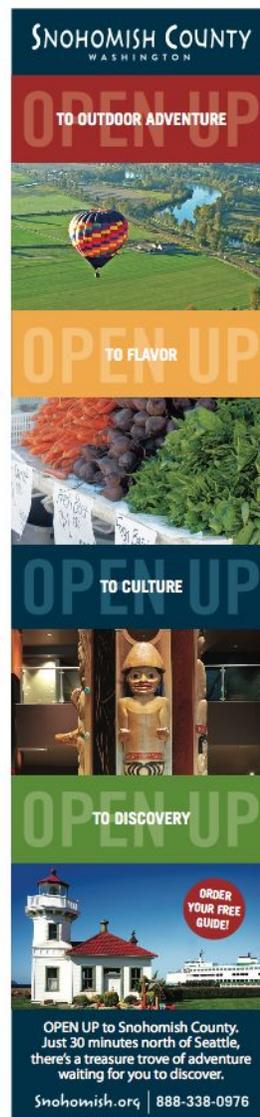
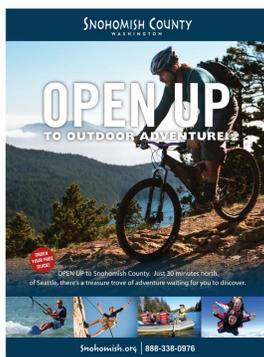
- Leverage sample itineraries as board postings
- Integrate marketing brochure content into boards such as *Top 10 Marketing Collateral* including *Top Ten Outrageous Adventures*, *Top Ten Strange and Wonderful Oddities* and *Top Ten Wildlife Viewing Locations*
- Integrated user-generated contests for content creation

3 // PRINT & BRAND MATERIALS

/// ADVERTISEMENTS

Snohomish County utilizes a variety of advertisements featuring outdoor adventures, shopping, weddings and conferences. While these advertisements portray some of the valuable features of the region they appear cluttered from a design and messaging point of view.

Some of the ads use multiple applications of the brand colors which can be distracting to the imagery of the region. It is recommended that Snohomish County develop a targeted advertising campaign following the refresh of the brand design and messaging with a goal of elevated and streamlined design, image rich layout and simplified content and brand colors in order to attract the target audience to the region's most valuable assets.

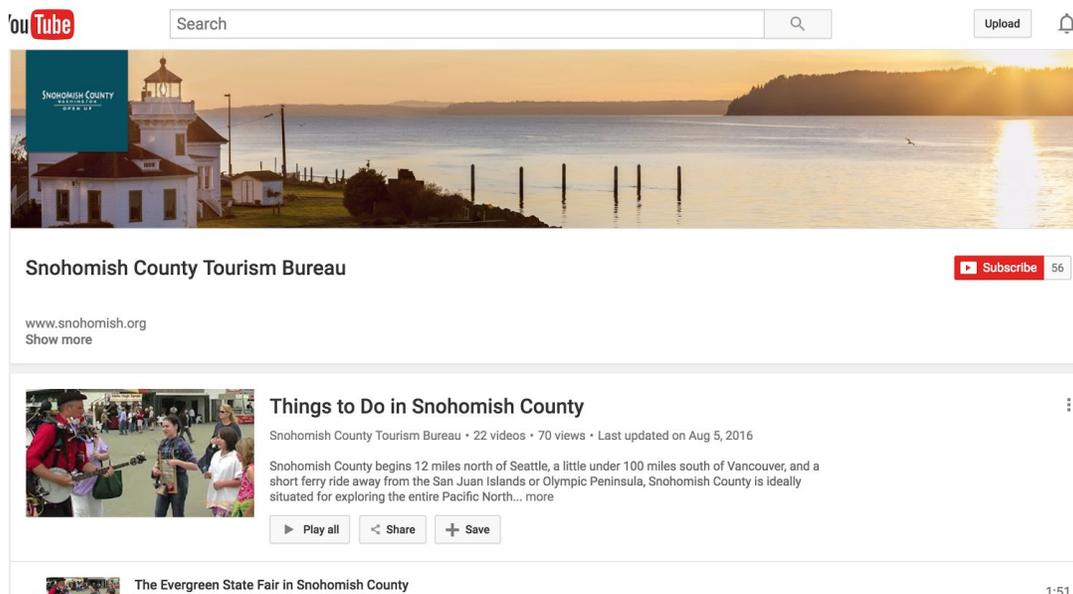


/// FILMS

Snohomish County hosts a YouTube page containing a variety of organic and planned short films. This content is largely untapped in terms of absence from social media and website platforms. Over 22 films are listed under “Things to do in Snohomish County”, but this content is hard to find or absent. Visitors would have to search for it separately through YouTube to benefit from the content and ideas.

Focus Films such as “*Visit Snohomish County Washington*” cover key attractions and regional sights, however the quality and professionalism of the film could significantly improve. Integration of title overlays, documentary scripts and refreshed b-roll, storylines and music would greatly improve the value of these digital assets.

Featured advertisement films for Aviation, Shopping and Outdoor Adventure feel dated and incongruent with the use of still photography intermingled with b-roll film. Given the importance of digital marketing and emotive film, it is recommended that a digital film strategy be created to better portray the beauty, attractions and intriguing story of the region.



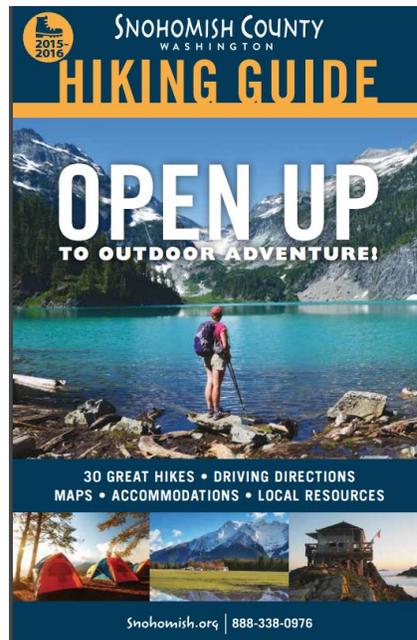
The image shows a screenshot of the Snohomish County Tourism Bureau's YouTube channel page. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation icons for 'Upload' and a notification bell. The channel banner features a scenic view of a white lighthouse on a waterfront at sunset. Below the banner, the channel name 'Snohomish County Tourism Bureau' is displayed with a 'Subscribe' button showing 56 subscribers. The website 'www.snohomish.org' is listed with a 'Show more' link. A video titled 'Things to Do in Snohomish County' is featured, with a thumbnail showing people at a fair. The video description states: 'Snohomish County Tourism Bureau • 22 videos • 70 views • Last updated on Aug 5, 2016. Snohomish County begins 12 miles north of Seattle, a little under 100 miles south of Vancouver, and a short ferry ride away from the San Juan Islands or Olympic Peninsula, Snohomish County is ideally situated for exploring the entire Pacific North... more'. Below the video are 'Play all', 'Share', and 'Save' buttons. At the bottom, a video titled 'The Evergreen State Fair in Snohomish County' is partially visible with a duration of 1:51.

/// MARKETING COLLATERAL

Snohomish County produces a variety of targeted and detailed marketing collateral resources for visitors. Overall the design and content of these resources appears to be the most current and favorably designed in comparison to advertisements, social media and website content. However improvements could still be made through simplifying content and text and highlight vivid imagery.

Brand applications such as the 2016/2017 Visitors Guide and the 2015-2015 Hiking Guide are a good example of where the brand is favorably displayed with vivid imagery and detailed visitor content.

- 2015/2016 Hiking Guide uses fresh, vivid photography and regional imagery alongside step by step instructions and maps to guide a visitor throughout their exploration



- *Top 10 Marketing Collateral* including Top Ten Outrageous Adventures, Top Ten Strange and Wonderful Oddities and Top Ten Wildlife Viewing Locations all combine vivid imagery, practical maps and headline highlights for visitor intrigue. It is recommended that future publications follow this content and image mix with a refreshed and refined layout.



4 // FINDINGS

As can be seen throughout this Open Up Brand Review and Analysis, the Snohomish County brand and supporting collateral contains a wealth of information for visitors about the region. Notwithstanding, many of the brand and marketing assets explored during the review process showed scope for improvement.

Snohomish County clearly has a wealth of adventure, nature, and diverse travel and tourism assets to offer visitors and as such the following recommendations are given to better position the Open Up brand for success in the future:

Key Priorities:

1. Refresh Open Up Brand Platform

- 1.1. Refresh Open Up typeface, logo and graphic assets to be used in all marketing applications
- 1.2. Refine messaging and application of brand pillars with clear positioning features that highlight the anchor attractions of Snohomish County
- 1.3. Consider logo refresh and expansion with visual iconography to mark anchor attributes
- 1.4. Refresh Brand Style Guide accordingly outlining brand colors, reducing the number of colors used, font choices, text treatments, iconography, image-use guidelines and quality control and tone of voice

2. Refresh and Refine Brand Messaging

- 2.1. Clarify naming and key messages for each brand pillar to be used consistently across brand applications of Snohomish County becomes known for these anchor pillars.

3. Refresh Open Up Digital and Design Assets Across Platforms

- 3.1. **Develop Immersive Short Films:** Given the importance of digital marketing and emotive film, it is recommended that a digital film strategy be created to better portray the beauty, attractions and intriguing story of the region.
- 3.2. **Develop or Utilize Existing Alluring Photography Assets:** New, original lifestyle photography, outdoor photography, event photography and anchor location photography for use across all relevant collateral

4. Refresh and Expand Interactive Website

- 4.1. **Expand Interactivity:** We believe that the website has a far larger role to play than it does at the moment, and could easily be the portal for information for many stakeholder groups. We also acknowledge that some visitors will not utilize a web based service, so we recommend centralization of available documentation through visitor bureaus airports partner venues etc. Consider expanded Media Portal, Conference and Events Portal, Itinerary Portal, etc.
- 4.2. **Expand Travel and Transportation pages** to integrate interactive resources such as Roadtrippers.com, or interactive local transportation maps via Google maps to improve
- 4.3. **Develop second and third tier travel itinerary pages** to be more easily accessible and searchable with immersive films, itineraries and images interactively embedded in the website.
- 4.4. **Improve User Experience:** minimize page clicks to get to pertinent information, refresh design look, feel, usability, and navigation.
- 4.5. **Improve Mobile Experience:** Current website does not translate well to mobile, which is a significant weakness for the site. More users now use mobile than desktop computers for research planning and information. It is recommended that the refreshed website be designed for mobile first as a priority then adapted for desktop.

5. Develop International Visitor Content

- 5.1. The Pacific Northwest is fast becoming a well frequented destination for international and Asian visitors. International visitors need access to translated website content, translators and dedicated international travel guides in their language of choice. Consider partnering with local international groups to co-produce visitor guides and digital content for key audiences in Japan, China, Korea, and European Countries. At minimum design refreshed website with multi-lingual options.

6. Create Multi-year Outdoor Adventure Campaign

- 6.1. Capitalize on targeted messaging and itineraries for the “Where Seattle gets outside (escapes, gets outdoors, where Seattle meets the outdoors, go out socially, go out shopping, get outside of yourself)” messaging

7. **Expand Consistent Social Media Campaign Strategy and Implementation:** utilizing new digital assets or alluring photography and emotive films.
 - 7.1. Content should be directed with brand standards on postings, photography and messaging
 - 7.2. Social user generated content should be encouraged through competitions, partner promotions, hashtag campaigns and live event social media integration

8. **Simplify Copy Content and Language Across Platforms:** making it simple and clear / aspirational yet reduce overall quantity of type content using active links, interactive digital tools such as maps, search functions etc.

9. **Develop Digital Portal for Partners and Media:** Centralize imagery, film and messaging resources and access through web based platform
 - 9.1. **Groups & Conventions:** Could be expanded with an interactive convention planner tool, destination marketing toolkit, and more image and film content to draw planners into the possibilities of hosting their event in Snohomish County.

10. **Strategy Application.** Recommendations were made in the 2013 Brand Roll out which were unable to be verified including extent of partner branding, *“cross promotional marketing to encourage visitors to experience anchor clusters, anchor attractions, sustaining clusters and sustaining assets.”*
 - 10.1. We recommend revisiting these recommendations with a particular focus on giving partners the tools and strategies to support the Open Up brand in their endeavors.

Summary

Snohomish County clearly has a wealth of adventure, nature and diverse assets to offer and has come a long way since the implementation of the new Open Up brand in 2013.

The opportunities for the overarching brand identity of Snohomish County and the Open Up brand are many. It is recommended that a refreshed and repositioned brand look and feel and applications across the website, social media and print collateral move forward with a fresh focus on vivid imagery of the region, minimised copy content and immersive documentary and emotive narrative films. As seen in the table below, there is great value in the ad hoc, planned and executed brand assets to move toward optimization through the recommendations above. We believe the efficient and effective implementation of the above recommendations adapted for the new Strategic Tourism Plan will add great value to positioning Snohomish County and the Open Up brand to those “wanting to explore and pursue, (extreme recreation, a great buy, a big casino win)” as well as key secondary target audiences of conference planners, media and regional travelers in the years to come.

5. Optimized				
4. Evaluated				
3. Executed	X		X	X
2. Planned	X	X		
1. Ad Hoc		X		X
0. Not Performed				
	Website	Social Media	Advertisements	Marketing Collateral



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