

Gulf Savannah Digital Transformation Strategy

“To drive sustainability and profitability in the Gulf Savannah tourism sector, the region’s digital capability needs to meet the expectations of today’s consumers.”

Objective

To improve the digital capability of Gulf Savannah businesses, particularly those in the tourism sector, to meet the current and future expectations of consumers of tourism and events services.

Outcomes

- ◆ Increased bookings and increased revenue from accommodation and tours;
- ◆ Increased lead time on bookings of accommodation and tours;
- ◆ Increased revenue from sales of food, beverage, fuel and other items;
- ◆ Increased effectiveness of marketing and promotions strategies;
- ◆ Improved data acquisition and data analytics capabilities leading to improve decision-making;
- ◆ Gulf Savannah region more effectively integrates with, and leverages marketing and promotions power of Tropical Tourism North Queensland.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Increase the number of accommodation and tour transactions per tourism season.

MEASURE: room occupancy, tours sold

2. Increase the number of accommodation and tour transactions outside of the traditional tourism season or on the shoulders of the traditional tourism season.

MEASURE: room occupancy, tours sold outside of April-September period

3. Increase efficiency and effectiveness of tourism promotions and advertising leading to the achievement of Goals 1 and 2.

MEASURE: return on investment of advertising/promotions budget

Global Stats

1700% increase in mobile bookings for travel between 2011 and 2015 (Gonzalo, 2016).

30-40% increase in bookings following implementation of online booking system (TrekSoft, 2016)

GSD Stats (2017)

75% of websites not updated for 2+ years

70% of websites do not cater to online bookings or transactions.

60% of websites are not mobile-enabled

50% of websites do not have any analytics in place.

10% of websites using User Generated Content

0 little to no evidence of search engine optimisation (SEO)

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Fee-for-service

1. GSD to develop a membership package for businesses incorporating IT services: annual (and scalable) package comprised of website/social media upgrade and maintenance services, data acquisition, analysis and reporting, coordinated promotion/advertising services.

Policy & Legal

2. GSD to adopt the Digital Transformation Strategy as a core GSD initiative
3. GSD to develop a Data Sharing Agreement that effectively manages data privacy and data security. Agreement to cover local governments, visitor information centres, businesses and other entities.

Funding Capability

4. GSD to fund a pilot project and report on impact of improved digital capability for 2-5 businesses each year over three years.
5. Utilise Australian Small Business Advisory Services (ASBAS) or similar funding buckets to progress and incentivise the implementation of the Strategy on a business-by-business basis.
6. GSD to partner (as appropriate) with key stakeholders to develop a regional information, booking, transactions and marketing hub/application for the Gulf Savannah region (with Gold to Platinum functionality as per Appendix 2).

Data

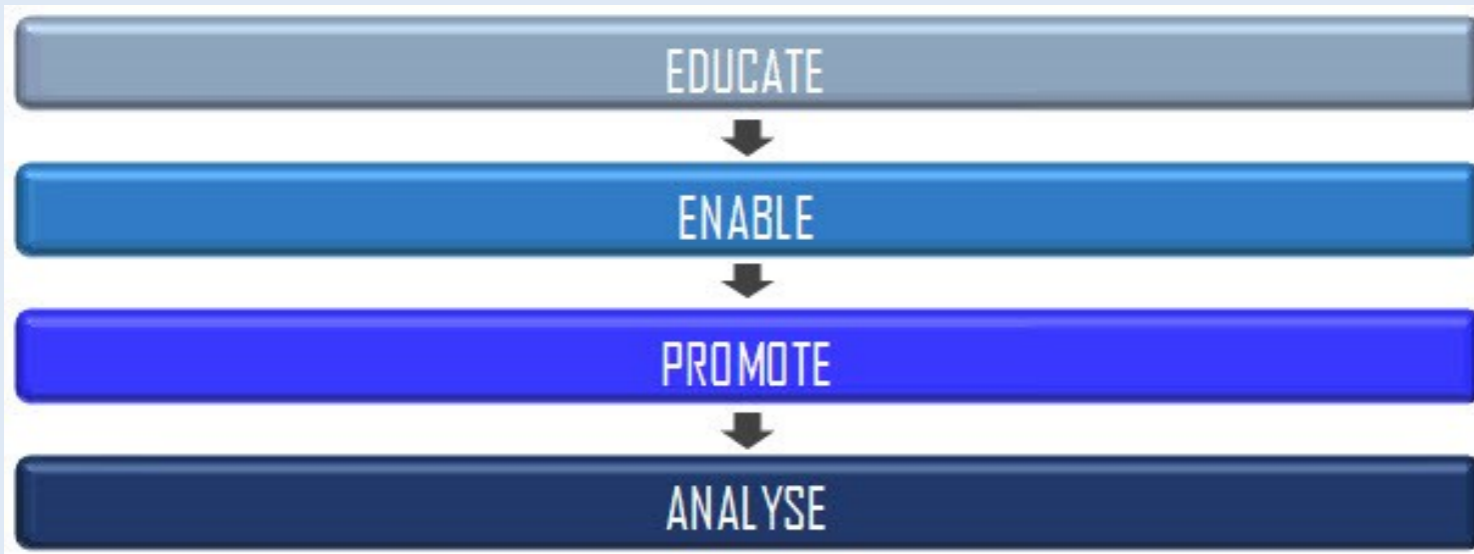
7. GSD to work with Savannah Way Limited to deliver an annual tourism report to members featuring de-personalised data and analytics to drive evidence-based decision making.

Education & Training

8. GSD to work with Savannah Way Limited to arrange stakeholder education/promotion session for the Digital Transformation Strategy.
9. GSD to maintain panel of providers capable of assisting businesses to implement the Strategy.

Promotions

10. GSD to work with Savannah Way Limited, Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) and tourism businesses to develop and deliver a range of coordinated promotional campaigns for the region.



Educate: embark on a process of education in relation to what digital capability means, the importance of improving the digital capability of businesses (and other stakeholders) and outlining pathways to implementing improvements.

Enable: provide a co-funded pathway toward enabling improved content, functionality, promotion and data management in the Gulf Savannah region. Degrees of enablement will be crucial to consider here, with some levels of digital capability more appropriate to some stakeholders than to others.

Promote: develop a centralised marketing hub/platform for the region. Develop promotional tools and campaigns for GSD, Shires and local businesses. Development of regional Apps, podcasts, video etc. to assist in promoting the region.

Analyse: all online activity is logged, which means it can be measured. The adoption of a region-wide data acquisition and analysis arrangement has the potential to drive more effective policy, resourcing and marketing decisions for the region.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

If you're not digital, you're dead: as digital platforms increasingly structure how people research, plan, book and review their holidays, the long-term financial sustainability and profitability of tourism businesses in the Gulf will correlate closely with the digital capability of businesses (and the region).

It's not about you, it's about your audience: regardless of your own interest in IT or the speed of digital networks in your own town, it is a fact that tourists research online and that they book online. If you're digital footprint is faint, it is likely that long-term revenue streams will be similarly light.

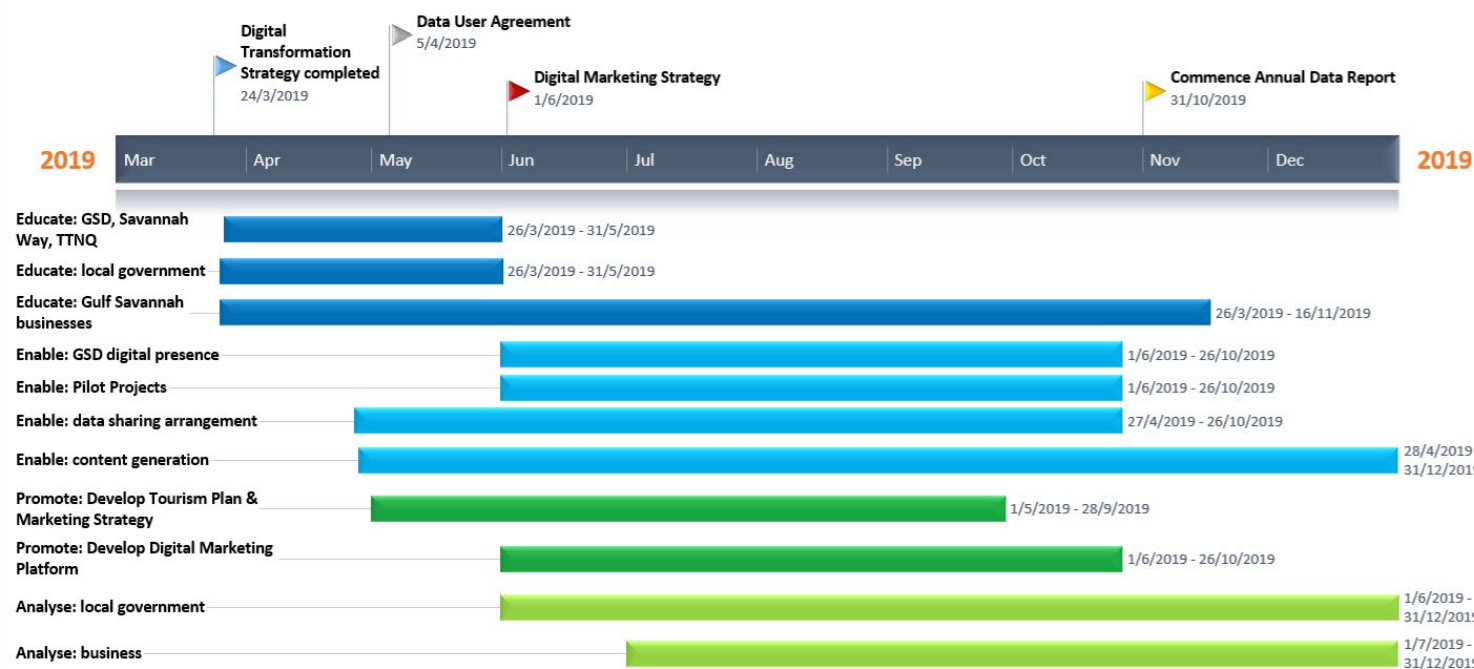
If it can be measured, it can be managed: It is hard to log reactions to a billboard or a pamphlet or a television commercial. Surveys can be useful, but they are often labour intensive and rarely comprehensive.

On the other hand, it is the easiest thing in the world to measure and map the way people interact with web pages and social media sites: how people respond to promotions or videos, how people book accommodation and tours, how people navigate a webpage. Accordingly, digital platforms deliver easier insights and are conducive to the evidence-based refinement of strategy.

A rising tide lifts all boats: the more businesses that are committed to improving their digital capability, the more the region will benefit. Regional clusters of businesses can use branding and strategic marketing to improve their visibility, attractiveness and overall competitiveness and strengthen their domestic and international profile to attract new tourists and to encourage return visitations.

"Set and Forget" is not an option: Having a secure and effective digital presence is an ongoing activity and it must be resourced as such.

Gulf Savannah Digital Transformation Strategy – Roll Out Schedule 2019



Gulf Savannah Digital Transformation Strategy – Roll Out Schedule 2020

