

AUGUST 2015

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# RHODE ISLAND COMMERCE CORPORATION

## RFP Response



weber  
shandwick  
engaging. always.

RHODE  
ISLAND



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# WHAT MAKES RHODE ISLAND?

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Sons and daughters and fans of Little Rhody are fierce advocates for the state where the progressive ideas of Roger Williams – religious freedom, separation of church and state – took root; the state that was first to declare independence on May 4, 1776; the state that was last to sign the Constitution.

Rhode Island **STILL** goes its own way nearly 240 years later.  
That is a long time to be an icon of true American spirit.

Your challenge is to form the modern free-thinkers of Rhode Island and their home state into a brand that once again stands out from the pack and attracts travelers and businesses to a place of enrichment.



## THE NEW YORK OFFICE

- Work for the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation would be based in our New York City office, located at 909 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue:
- More than 300 employees
- Assignments for more than 100+ clients across a range of industries
- 125+ digital/creative/production specialists

## AWARD-WINNING TEAMS SPECIALIZING IN:

- Advertising and media buying
- Consumer marketing
- Content creation
- Corporate communications
- Digital
- Economic development
- Healthcare
- Financial communications
- Issues/crisis management
- Strategic media relations
- Travel and lifestyle marketing
- Technology





# OUR WORK

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## PURE MICHIGAN

It isn't like consumers are not aware of the state of Michigan, it's just that before the iconic Pure Michigan campaign a lot of people didn't realize they wanted to go there. Weber Shandwick provides media relations, economic development support and social media programming for the much admired campaign.

The goal has always been to increase tourism's contributions to the economy of the state by attracting more out-of-state visitors and raising awareness of Michigan as a four season destination. To achieve this, we have told, shown and told again, the stories of Michigan.

By maintaining communities across a Wordpress blog, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr, Pure Michigan has been able to build loyalty among existing fans while introducing the brand to new audiences in the process.

- Facebook is Michigan's most active channel with more than 1 million fans

- Instagram has gained 270,000+ followers and more than 700,000 photos have been tagged with #puremichigan as consumers share their experiences and endorsement of the state

Social channels amplify Michigan's work with travel and lifestyle media, for example:

- Syndicating recipes "Made in Michigan" with Chef Mario Batali; media on site also covered the media day
- Interacting with media throughout press trips to promote real-time content long before a publishing date



In 2013, more than four million trips were made to Michigan by out-of-state visitors influenced by the Pure Michigan campaign; their economic impact was a record **\$1.2 billion and their spending generated \$86.5 million in tax revenue**. Pure Michigan has received many awards including the Travel + Leisure SMITTY Award for “Best Overall Use

of Social Media” by a Tourism Board in 2014; named No. 1 state destination social media presence by Think Social Media; 8 Adrian Awards from Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI) including the Best in Show for Public Relations.





A photograph of four business professionals (three men and one woman) sitting around a conference table in a modern office setting. They are engaged in a discussion, with one man gesturing with his hand while speaking. The table is set with papers, glasses of water, and coffee cups. The background is a blurred office environment.

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Soliciting and incorporating input from stakeholders is an essential component to the development of an overall marketing strategy. Working with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, Weber Shandwick will identify all stakeholders with an interest in promoting the state of Rhode Island and taking part in the larger integrated communications effort. These stakeholders will be representative of local and state businesses, community leaders, current state employees and other groups identified with the input of your team.

This stakeholder research will influence program initiatives, but also the protocols set for reporting and updating industry partners across the state and maximizing collaboration.





## CONFLICTS

Weber Shandwick does not represent clients we feel would compromise our work on behalf of Rhode Island. Additionally, our client service model helps mitigate any potential conflicts. At the start of each client engagement a dedicated, distinct team is assembled to match the client's program. All documents are housed in password-protected segments of our server files and every person at Weber Shandwick is trained in matters of confidentiality.



# A STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR RHODE ISLAND

## OUR STARTING POINT: RESEARCH

We always start our strategy development process with research. We use our trusted sources such as media and social analysis to understand what's being talked about. We take a close look at SIMMONS data to better understand our target consumer's behavior and attitudes. For Rhode Island, we engaged our partner, KRC Research, to conduct iPad intercept surveys with visitors over the weekend of July 17-19<sup>th</sup>. Finally, we sent two teammates to Rhode Island, because a winning strategy is only born of the authentic truth of a place.

We also held numerous strategy sessions leading to days of thinking, debating and ultimately aligning on a direction forward. To get to a strategy, we take your business challenge and analyze it through the lenses of your Category, Competition, Brand and the broader Culture. This takes us to a strategic direction that we call an INCITE, a single-minded idea that is rooted in what's true and aimed at inciting action.





## OUR GOAL

In coordination with the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, is to develop a communications campaign to help position Rhode Island as a perfect destination for “Mature Millennials.” Demographically, we are defining them as Adults 25-44, with a combined household income of \$75K+ (with and w/out children in household). Our communications will be designed to do the following:

- **Educate.** Confront the “perception gap” among our audience - driving awareness of Rhode Island as great place to live and visit.
- **Engage.** Cut through the communications clutter to raise awareness with targeted, compelling, relevant messages that engage audiences where they live, work, communicate and socialize.
- **Motivate.** Over time, go beyond raising awareness to change behavior by engaging our target audience with creative and relevant content that would compel them to go online and visit our dedicated campaign page, and take some type of “action.”





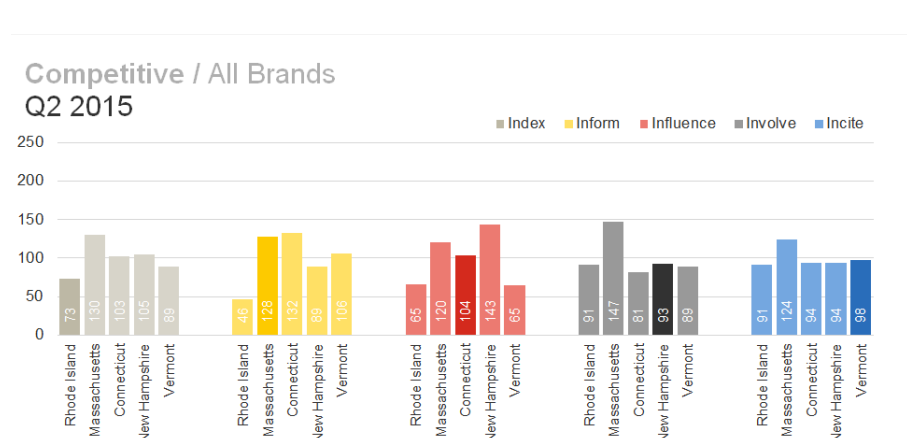
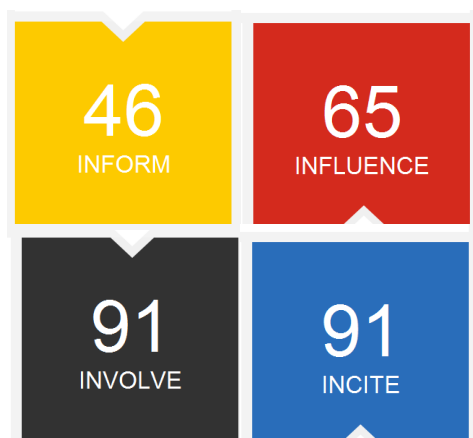
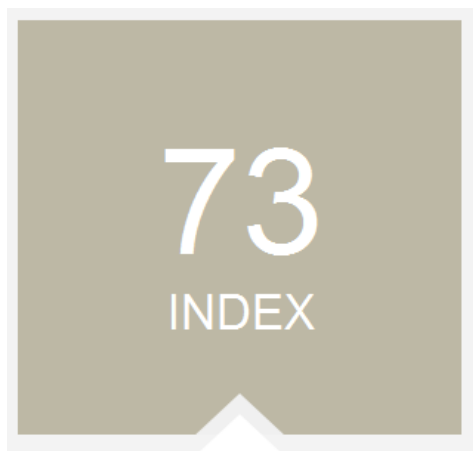
# RHODE ISLAND CURRENTLY OVERSHADOWED BY MORE VISIBLE AND ENGAGING REGIONAL COMPETITORS

Rhode Island's overall Index score (73) was the lowest of all regional competitors. This was largely due to:

**Less Visibility in News and Social Media** – Rhode Island secures a fraction (about one-third) of the news coverage secured by its larger neighboring destinations- Connecticut and Massachusetts (Inform).

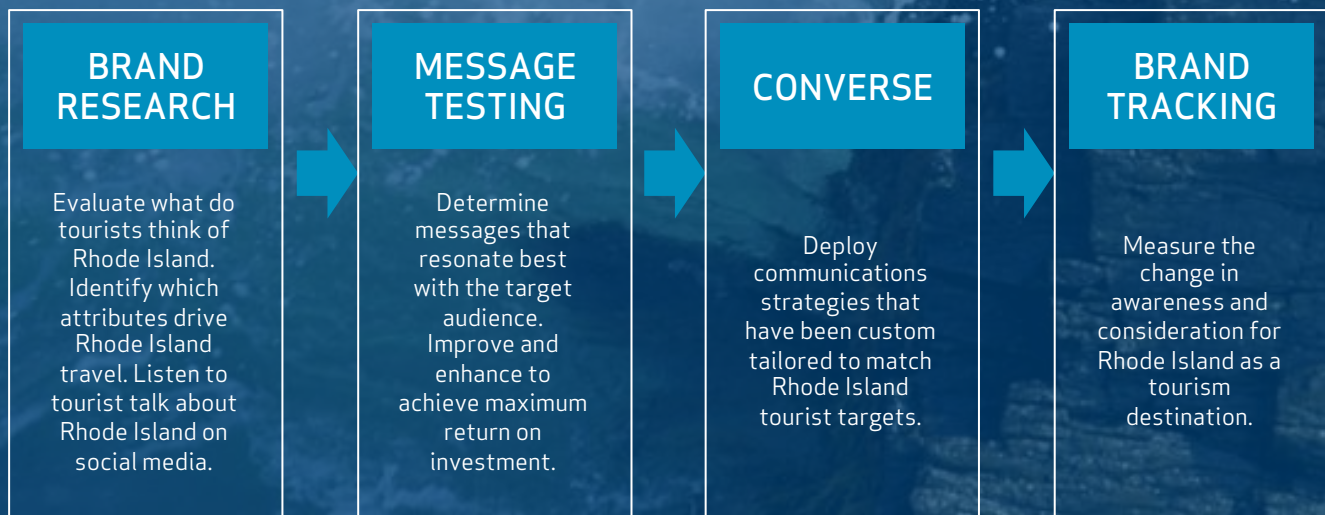
**Fewer Influential Entities Referencing the Destination** – Rhode Island also had far fewer influential people and organizations referencing the state in social media; 82 mentions among entities with Kred scores of 800+, compared to almost 300 mentions each of Connecticut and Massachusetts among entities with scores in this range (Influence).

**Lower Levels of Owned Content Involvement and Sharing** – Involvement with Rhode Island's owned digital content was also lower compared to that of Massachusetts, which had four times the volume of site traffic and a higher volume of owned social content activity (Involve, Incite).





# RESEARCH STRATEGY FRAMEWORK





# ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

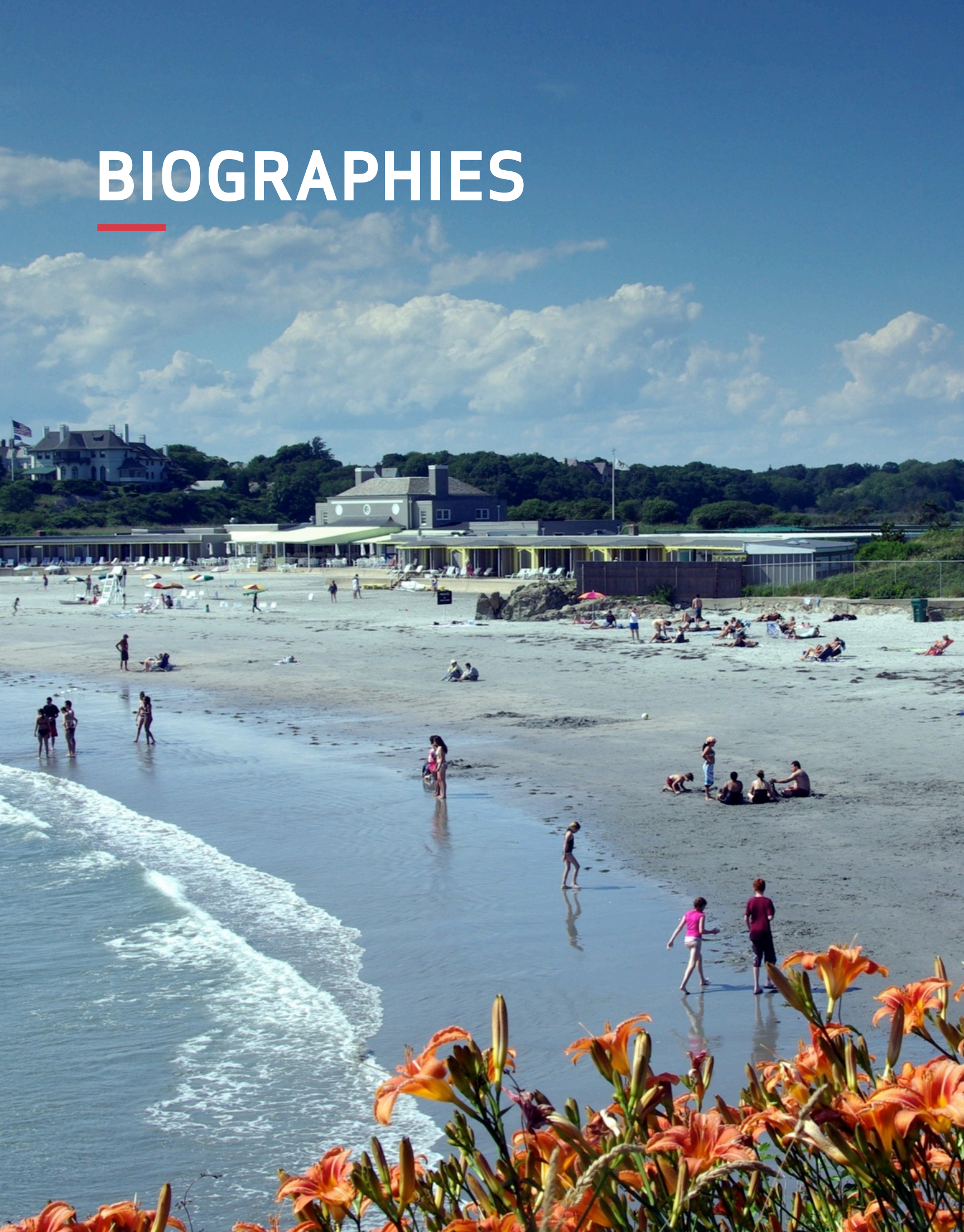
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# BIOGRAPHIES

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# BUDGET

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# GETTING STARTED

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