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Bonjour Canada: a case study of the 1995-2000 Louisiana public relations campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana

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**BONJOUR CANADA:
A CASE STUDY OF THE 1995-2000 LOUISIANA PUBLIC RELATIONS
CAMPAIGN TO ATTRACT CANADIAN VISITORS TO LOUISIANA**

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
Master of Mass Communication

in

Theanship School of Mass Communication

by
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ABSTRACT

The research undertaken in this study explores five years of the Louisiana Office of Tourism's public relations campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana. The study considers how the campaign's organizers used the cultural bond between French-speaking Canadians and Louisiana to attract Canadians to Louisiana. The study also examines how important the public relations strategy of highlighting the cultural bond between host and tourist was in attracting Canadian visitors to the state. In addition, the study uncovers whether or not campaign organizers considered the impact their campaign would have on Louisiana's Cajun citizenry.

The research method employed was the case study method. Interviews were conducted with campaign organizers, and a case description was used to organize and analyze the data. The findings of the study show that the campaign's planners segmented the Canadian market into two distinct demographics, French-speaking Canadians and English-speaking Canadians. In its campaign to attract French-speaking Canadians to the state, highlighting the cultural bond between the two regions was vital to the campaign's success. The strategy included the hosting of a year-long celebration of the state's French heritage as well as a mammoth Cajun family reunion and event sponsorships throughout French-speaking Canada. Ultimately, the Louisiana Office of Tourism concluded that its campaign positively impacted the state's Cajun community, both economically and culturally. For their part, representatives of the Cajun community expressed concern about the campaign. Specifically, they said they believed the way in which Cajuns were sometimes portrayed in the campaign served to perpetuate stereotypes. Lastly, the study

shows that the campaign jibed with one of the four tourism public relations models developed by prominent tourism public relations scholar, Don Stacks. Stacks translated the four historic models of public relations developed by J. Grunig for application to the tourism industry. The campaign is a clear example of Stacks' two-way asymmetric model, the research shows.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1700s, thousands of French-speaking Canadians from the province of Acadiana set out for Louisiana after being expelled by British conquerors. Today, more than 200 years later, French-speaking Canadians are again flocking to Louisiana—drawn to the state by a desire to rekindle the bond cemented two centuries ago when the first boatload of their ancestors took refuge on its swampy shores.

In 2000 nearly 116,000 Canadians visited Louisiana, up from 78,000 visitors in 1999.¹ Since 1995, the Louisiana Office of Tourism (LOT) has deployed an aggressive marketing campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana. These public relations initiatives have in large part focused on promoting the cultural bond between French-speaking Canadians and the transplanted “Acadians,” who settled in Louisiana—today referred to as “Cajuns.”

“We have a very heavy focus on Canada,” pointed out then Lt. Gov. Kathleen Blanco, who oversaw the efforts of LOT. “We don’t exclude English-speaking Canada from our efforts, but we know we have a particular attraction to French-speaking Canada, and we work hard to cultivate that.”²

The efforts of Blanco and her staff to attract Canadian tourists to Louisiana by highlighting that cultural bond falls in line with a new niche in the tourism industry called “cultural tourism.” Having emerged in the mid-1980s, cultural tourism highlights the cultural component of the tourism experience. Cultural sites, events, and attractions are

¹ Chris Deweese, telephone interview, 30 May 2001.

² Gov. Kathleen Blanco, personal interview, 5 May 2000.

marketed as the primary tourist experience.³ A number of factors have contributed to the rise of cultural tourism, including greater sophistication and travel experience among tourists, international competitiveness between similar destinations, the declining popularity of traditional tourist attractions, and the globalization of culture and international dissemination of cultural knowledge.⁴ According to visitor profiles, the “cultural tourist” is a chic traveler, who is wealthy, culturally sensitive, and ecologically responsible.⁵

As the second largest industry in Louisiana, tourism is a major moneymaker for the state. In 1999, the tourism industry employed 118,000 Louisianans. And in 2000, Louisiana tourism, one of the fastest growing tourism economies in the United States, experienced a record year when visitors spent more than \$8 billion, generating more than \$566.2 million in state and local taxes.⁶

With its rich history and variety of unique cultures, Louisiana is a natural destination for cultural tourists. LOT’s marketing and public relations efforts rely heavily on the promotion of the state’s history and culture. In fact, one of the office’s major divisions is its Heritage Tourism Development Division, which works to identify and develop the state’s cultural and historical resources.⁷

³ Jennifer Craik, “The Culture of Tourism,” Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory, ed. Chris Rojek and John Urry (New York: Routledge, 1997) 113.

⁴ Craik 119.

⁵ Craik 121.

⁶ Phillip Jones, “2000-2001 Louisiana Marketing Report,” address, 2001 Louisiana Tourism Summit, address, Lake Charles, Louisiana, 5 Jan. 2001.

⁷ Jones.

The research proposed in this thesis provides a case study of five years of Louisiana's public relations initiatives to promote the state as a tourism destination for Canadian visitors. The study will document the goals, preparation, execution and results of the campaign executed by LOT. The study seeks to answer the question: How did LOT use the cultural bond between French-speaking Canadians and the Louisiana Cajuns to attract Canadians to Louisiana? Finally, the study examines how important the public relations strategy of highlighting the cultural bond between host and tourist was in attracting Canadian visitors to Louisiana. More specific to public relations research as it relates to cultural tourism, this study will explore the successes and failures of marketing a destination to a population by highlighting a cultural bond—research that is lacking in the study of cultural tourism. To date, the bulk of cultural tourism research centers around exploring the reasons for its growth and the negative impacts of tourism on the host culture. This study seeks to add to the body of knowledge of the fast-growing niche of cultural tourism. A case study of the five-year campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana provides a unique research opportunity as the public relations campaign was aimed at two distinct segments of the same international market—both French-speaking Canadians and English-speaking Canadians were targeted in the campaign. LOT employed its typical public relations strategy to sell Louisiana as a tourism destination to English-speaking Canadians. The strategy involved participating in trade shows and print and broadcast advertising campaigns and contracting with marketing representatives in the area. However, in its campaign to attract French-speaking Canadians to the state, LOT was able to employ a more direct public relations strategy. Campaign organizers focused their strategy on highlighting the common cultural bond between tourist and

destination. The fact that two strategies were deployed in the singular campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana provides the researcher the added benefit of being able to compare the result of highlighting a cultural bond to attract an international market to the state versus not highlighting a cultural bond to attract the same international market.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature focuses on scholarly and trade journal articles regarding public relations as it pertains to the travel/tourism industry. In addition, there is a discussion of cultural tourism.

Tourism

The twentieth century is called the century of travel and tourism. The tourism industry has emerged as a significant international economic activity, with estimates by the World Tourism Organization showing that in 1996 nearly 600 million international trips were made. WTO forecasts that by the year 2020 that number will be closer to 1.6 billion.⁸ In fact, the number of tourists visiting certain countries and cities in a given year often exceeds the numbers of those places' native populations.⁹ Some scholars theorize that tourism has replaced religion as the quest for meaning, with tourists seeking transcendence from everyday life through engagement with 'otherness' or escape from the familiar.¹⁰

During the past decade, several new types of tourism have cropped up as the industry has matured and tourists have become more demanding. Examples of these new products include: special interest tourism, where the tourism product is developed around a particular special interest, for example, a playing tour of golf courses in Scotland for golf enthusiasts; adventure tourism, where travel is centered around an element of

⁸ Nezar Alsayyad, ed., Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism (New York: Routledge, 2001) 35.

⁹ Alsayyad 1.

¹⁰ Craik 114.

adventure, such as a trip to the country of Nepal to climb Mt. Everest; ecotourism, where the tourism product is nature-based, for example, polar bear watching excursions to Antarctica; and cultural tourism, which will be covered in depth in this literature review.¹¹

Public Relations and the Travel/Tourism Industry

“The role of effective communication in the travel/tourism industry cannot be underestimated nor can it be underrated,” Stacks writes.¹² Public relations plays a key role in the success or failure of marketing a particular tourist destination to consumers.¹³ Stacks argues that the basic public relations principles, with certain adjustments, ought to be applied to PR in the travel/tourism industry.¹⁴

There are four steps involved in executing an effective public relations campaign, write Cutlip et al. First, the problem or opportunity must be defined. To do this the public relations practitioner studies the knowledge, opinions, attitudes and behaviors of those concerned with the acts and policies of the organization or opportunity. Second, the campaign must be planned. In this step, the practitioner uses the information gathered in the first step to determine program publics, objectives, tactics, goals, and action and communication strategies. Third, the campaign must be put into action. Putting a campaign into action calls for a designated spokesperson to deliver messages to specific

¹¹ Craik 116.

¹² Don Stacks, “Travel Public Relations Models-Public Relations and Travel: A Programmed Approach to Communication in the 1990s,” Southern Public Relations Journal 1 (1995): 24.

¹³ Stacks 25.

¹⁴ Stacks 27.

audiences while other parts of the communications plan, like special events, are carried out. Lastly, the program's success or failure is evaluated.¹⁵

Stacks argues that the research available on public relations in the travel/tourism industry is over simplified, focusing only on the external audiences—the tourist and the travel industry. In order for the industry to be successful, four parties—two external and two internal—must be considered. The external parties are the tourist and the travel industry and the internal parties are the travel agents and the individuals living and working in the destination area. Stacks criticizes public relations practitioners for not paying enough attention to the “intervening public,”—the people living and working in the destination area. Public relations practitioners must not ignore the intervening public, as these individuals are the most critical parties in the public relations equation, he writes.

Furthermore, Stacks points out, advertising and marketing that focus only on an image campaign can be “counter productive,” and may even serve to weaken the message. To illustrate his point, he describes the following scenario. A major tourist area is working to promote a new image, using the slogan, “Area Beautiful.” The campaign showcases the destination's beautiful beaches, gardens, people and nightlife. However, at the same time, the local media is highlighting crime, drug abuse and prostitution. While devising the campaign, the public relations practitioners have failed to take the local media or the area's residents into consideration. As a result, the two messages—“area beautiful” and “municipal decay” cancel each other out. Stacks stresses that advertising alone, especially image advertising, is not adequate to combat a crisis situation. For crisis management, public relations is necessary. Stacks notes that to date, most public relations

¹⁵ Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen M. Broom, Effective Public Relations 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1994): 317.

strategies in the travel/tourism industry involve setting up advertising “junkets” to specific resort areas or hotels for special publics—travel agents, governmental regulators or journalists working for industry-specific publications.

Stacks writes that travel/tourism promoters should seek guidance from the four historic models of public relations.¹⁶ The four models Stacks has developed evolved from models that were originally devised by public relations scholars, J.E. Grunig and T. Hunt. It was in 1984 that the two scholars revealed their four models to the public relations community. The first model, which originated in the mid-19th century, was evident in the rise of press agents such as P.T. Barnum. Barnum’s specialty was grabbing the attention of the press and the public through sensational stunts. Thus the model was coined the press agency/publicity model of public relations. The second model evolved in the beginning of the 20th century in response to muckraking journalism the public distrust that ensued. At the time, large corporations and government agencies began hiring their own journalists charged with distributing press handouts, which explained the actions of the organizations.¹⁷ “This public information model was based on the dissemination to the press and public of supposedly truthful if not highly selective information.”¹⁸ These first two models used one-way communication. A third model began to surface that incorporated the principles of behavioral and social sciences into the practice of public relations. Organizations that put this method to work began to undertake research in an effort to better understand the publics to which they were communicating. Consequently, the communication was two-way in that information was being disseminated from the

¹⁶ Stacks 27.

¹⁷ Michael Karlberg, “Remembering the Public in Public Relations Research: From Theoretical to Operational Symmetry,” Journal of Public Relations Research 4.8 (1996): 269.

organization in the form of research on the habits, attitudes and values of various publics. The purpose of this model was to persuade and manipulate. The fourth model is known as the two-way symmetrical model. In this model, “organizations employ two-way balanced communications such as conflict resolution strategies, bargaining and negotiating to facilitate the mutual understanding and adaptation of the organization and the public. In the two-way symmetrical model, the organization and various publics engage in dialogue for the purpose of mutual understanding and change.”¹⁹ Stacks relates these four models to the travel/tourism industry:

1. Press Agency/Publicity model: In this model, the public relations function is to serve as product promotion where the message is transmitted via all possible media sources to a passive receiver. This model serves a propaganda purpose, one where the truth is not essential to the reception of the message and message flow is one-way, source to receiver. Much of what is considered today as travel advertising falls into this model. Idealistic settings far removed from both political and economic reality are portrayed as the norm. As with most propaganda the messages are often intentionally incomplete and distorted. They do not consider the industry’s internal audiences. Because of this they tend to be ignored as “PR” by most audiences.
2. Press Information model: Public relations serves to objectively report the happenings or events of an organization or institution. Although the receiver is still a passive recipient, the information received reflects the realities of the situation and focuses primarily on “getting the news out.” But the information is slanted, often reflecting a less than real view of what is happening, however it is a step beyond propaganda. Messages resulting from this model will report negative events and reflect the reality of the situation, but such coverage is typically buried in later portions of the message. The one-way nature of the communication fails to prepare the institution or organization for potential crisis situations and does not provide adequate guidance for managing a crisis.²⁰

¹⁸ Stacks 270.

¹⁹ Stacks 271.

²⁰ Stacks 27.

3. Two-Way Asymmetric model: This model focuses on persuading publics based on research on attitude and opinion change. Information gained from market research allows for audience segmentation, focusing on specific message appeals aimed at modifying or changing opinions about an organization or industry. While this model is a step forward in understanding the different publics and their needs, the significant time lag between research, message and evaluation is a problem. Because of the time constraints, the major focus of the research is on the tourist and travel agency. However, it is possible that the intervening public may be addressed if preliminary research indicates it is a particularly strong predictor variable.

4. Two-Way Symmetric model: Public relations is a mediator between an organization or industry and its various publics. This model focuses not on prediction and control, but on mutual understanding between all publics. The emphasis is less on scientific persuasion and information processing than it is on understanding how communication can be best used to promote the mutual objectives of all involved. Inherent in this model is the role of the intervening publics as they relate to the organization or industry. Communication from this approach stresses a dialogue where each side has the opportunity to influence the other.

Stacks contends that each of the four models “has its place in a public relations model of travel and tourism.” The “press agency/publicity” model is best used when image manipulation is needed—when the focus is on portraying the positive appeal of a destination not involved in controversy or disruption. Although the flow of information in the “public information” model is one-sided, this model can be used to provide an immediate response to a crisis. While the “two-way asymmetric” model focuses heavily on information, it does offer the potential for feedback. Lastly, the “symmetric” model is the one that provides the most potential for understanding between all parties. However, it is also the one that requires the most research. Promoters using this strategy must have knowledge of all publics, and should constantly evaluate the campaign for potential problems.

Stacks concludes that the most effective model is the one that best fits the particular situation or opportunity.²¹ Further, the travel/tourism model of public relations that will be the most effective is one that is three-fold. First, the model takes “the pulse of all publics and audiences.” Second, the public relations strategy is constantly updated and reflects the realities of the travel destination. And third, the campaign is monitored to ensure that behavioral change is occurring, and feedback is taken from all publics.

In addition, the travel industry is best served by a campaign that combines advertising and public relations, he writes. Advertising should appeal to external publics, and public relations, especially the two-way models, should establish a mutual understanding between all publics involved in travel and tourism.²²

The bulk of the existing public relations research concerning travel/tourism examines the use of public relations as an instrument of damage control following a crisis situation. Stacks’ multifaceted approach to public relations in the travel/tourism industry is illustrated in the public relations campaign of the tourism industry in Miami, Florida, to counter negative perceptions of the city.

The 1980s marked a tumultuous time for Miami as a slew of negative events made both national and international headlines. In 1980 the Mariel boatlift deposited 125,000 Cuban refugees on Miami’s shores, adding to an already growing number of Haitian refugees in the city. That same year, the city was the backdrop for one of the worst race riots in U.S. history when five local policemen were acquitted on charges of

²¹ Stacks 28.

²² Stacks 29.

beating a black man to death.²³ The incident left 18 dead, 400 injured and \$100 million in property damage. The following year, *Time* magazine ran a cover story titled, “Trouble in Paradise,” which explored the city’s social and economic problems in explicit detail. The article was a “harrowing public relations nightmare for a city created by promotion, nurtured on image and dependent on tourism.”²⁴

In their study, Tilson and Stacks examine data from a period of 10 years from the travel industry and crime statistics, as well as several public relations campaigns undertaken to counter negative publicity and pro-actively promote the city.²⁵ The study provides examples of the city’s efforts to counter the negative publicity. For starters, city leaders established an \$8 million assistance center through the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce to promote economic development in black neighborhoods. In addition, city residents formed “Miami’s for Me,” an organization of young professionals that worked to promote civic pride and “Miami Citizens Against Crime,” a group of business and community leaders that lobbied government officials for federal help in the war against drugs. Moreover, in 1983, government and tourism officials invited hordes of travel agents, tour operators and media on “familiarization trips” to the city. These “junkets” served to counteract some of the negative publicity. About one year after *Time*’s expose, *Esquire* ran an article dubbing Miami “the city of the future,” and *Vogue* magazine described the city as “outward looking, open-hearted...an aggressively international city.”

²³ Donn Tilson and Don Stacks, “To Know Us is to Love Us: The Public Relations Campaign to Sell a ‘Business-Tourist-Friendly’ Miami,” Public Relations Review 23 (1997): 99.

²⁴ Tilson 100.

²⁵ Tilson 95.

However, opinion surveys conducted during the period reflected negatively on the city. For instance, findings of a 1984 Metro-Dade Planning Department survey reflected a poor image of a city wracked with problems “related to crime, drugs and social disruptions.” And to further engender the city’s negative image, the television show, “Miami Vice” aired nationally. Miami’s travel/tourism industry began to suffer the consequences of the city’s tarnished image. In 1984, the number of annual visitors to the city was down about 1 million compared to a high in 1980 of 6.7 million.

In response, the city kicked off “Miami Nice,” a be-kind-to-tourists campaign designed to teach taxi drivers courtesy and local government officials invested \$5 million in the establishment of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau to oversee the city’s tourism efforts.

But the GMCVB had its work cut out for it in the late 1980s and early 1990s when an unfortunate number of visitors fell victim to a string of violent crimes, setting off a cavalcade of public relations disasters and frenzied damage control efforts.²⁶ For example, in 1994, a Chilean family on their way to Disney World in Orlando got lost in Miami, where they were robbed and beaten. City officials lobbied the family to continue their vacation and, as compensation, covered the bill for the entire trip. Shortly after the incident the city embarked on a massive public relations campaign. The campaign kicked off with a summit of international tour operators and media, as well as local officials and residents to discuss the future of Miami tourism.²⁷

²⁶ Tilson 100.

²⁷ Tilson 107.

Tilson and Stacks conclude “South Florida and state government and tourism officials approached the area’s image problems correctly, with a strategic communication plan that mixed both marketing and public relations tactics, one that targeted all primary publics, including the intervening audiences of local residents and industry workers.” Further, the campaigns employed whatever public relations models, i.e., press agency, public information, two-way asymmetric and two-way symmetric, were appropriate for the given situation. During the initial phase of the campaign, one-way models were used to send “emotionally laden” messages to key publics. For example, media and travel agents were invited on familiarization tours. And later, emphasis shifted to two-way models, as officials sought to “build dialogue and participatory decision-making with tourism representatives and with intervening publics,” such as residents and taxi drivers.²⁸

Herrero and Pratt also examine crisis management in tourism. Their research compares the crisis-response strategies of public relations practitioners in tourism organizations in the United States and Spain. Through this country comparison they seek to uncover dominant market-driven, crisis-response strategies in travel and tourism and identify those that are appropriate. The two countries were chosen for comparison because at the time of the study, Spain ranked second, after the United States, in the amount of annual revenue from tourism.²⁹

The study uncovers significant differences between the practice of damage control in the tourism organizations of the United States and Spain. In the U.S. tourism industry

²⁸ Tilson 113.

²⁹ Alfonso Herrero and Cornelius Pratt, “Marketing Crises in Tourism: Communication Strategies in the United States and Spain,” Public Relations Review 24 (1998): 83.

it is more common for organizations to have a pre-prepared crisis-response system in place. Tourism organizations in the United States seem to recognize more than their Spanish counterparts the importance of resolving a conflict before it actually unfolds.³⁰

Tourists consider safety a key factor in their selection of a destination with major issues of concern including crime rates, airline safety, terrorism threats, and medical care access. Consequently, the marketing of tourism depends on the degree of perceived risk potential tourists will tolerate. As a result, public relations practitioners must have a crisis-response system waiting in the wings at all times, concludes Herrero and Pratt.³¹

The public relations trade journals also offer many relevant examples of case studies involving damage control in the travel/tourism industry. In “Weathering the Storm,” Mitchell writes about the crisis management campaign undertaken by tourism officials in Hot Springs, Arkansas, a city known for its natural springs and spas, following severe flooding right before the Memorial Day weekend. Immediately after the flooding, national media reports were filled with descriptions and pictures of the flood’s worst. Consequently, the Hot Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau began implementing a three-pronged crisis communications plan. The efforts included: community relations; media relations that focused attention on recovery efforts; and external communications targeting individual tourists as well as those in charge of group tours. These initiatives were designed to accomplish two key objectives: motivate the community to work in unison to solve problems and prepare for the holiday weekend and prevent a possible downturn in tourism and revenues.

³⁰ Herrero 92.

³¹ Herrero 86.

Community relations efforts included setting up an information center and holding a community rally. The rally and the information center gave public relations practitioners several positive stories, which were fed to and successfully picked up by the national media.³² In addition, PR practitioners contacted every travel agent, with a group tour scheduled to visit the area. These calls were cited by the agents as the main reasons plans were not canceled. In conclusion, Mitchell advises PR practitioners never to rely on the mass media to reach key audiences. Rather, other sources should be used, such as personal phone calls, faxed letters, town meetings, and a video news release that can be modified into a brief informational video shown to gain support. What's more, media should not be counted on to report recovery efforts.³³

In "Live Issue: Agencies Bring in PR to Push Holiday Blackspots," Martin writes about the campaign undertaken by Saatchi and Saatchi/BD & A Advertising in Cairo to sell Egypt around the world after Moslem fundamentalists murdered a group of tourists there. In the article, Joe Ayache, the advertising company's CEO, explains that before an advertising campaign could be undertaken, the country first had to hire a PR firm to overcome the negative publicity caused by the killings. Without damage control, advertising would be meaningless or could serve to antagonize the audience, he said. "Consumers do not trust commercial messages that contradict editorial. A way around the problem is for tourist boards to warm up the media environment with PR before spending money on advertising," explains Ayache.³⁴

³² Elise Mitchell, "Crisis Management: Weathering the Storm," Public Relations Journal Feb. 1999: 11.

³³ Mitchell 25.

³⁴ Michele Martin, "Live Issue: Agencies Bring in PR to Push Holiday Blackspots," Campaign 23 April 1993: 1.

Advertising is less effective than PR when it comes to selling difficult holiday destinations, Ayache adds. PR creates a sympathetic environment, without which even the best advertising campaign cannot work.³⁵

Coverage of travel/tourism in the public relations trade journals also contains a vast amount of how-to articles for public relations practitioners. In “Sales from the City,” Miller writes that for cities that want to attract investment or host a major event, marketing is essential. “When a place is your product, you certainly have your work cut out,” he writes. “To start with, you have very little control over your brand. You also have to work with a large number of stakeholders, each with their own agenda. Then you have to find a promotional message that convinces everyone, from the locals to the outside world.”³⁶ Miller advises public relations practitioners charged with marketing a brand to employ the same guidelines they use when marketing a corporate brand: mission statements, logos, slogans and promotional identities.

The challenge involved with selling a city is that local people see a city in a very different way to those outside.³⁷ Like Stacks, Miller contends that in order for tourism to be successful, both the external and internal audiences must be considered. “A crucial first step is to have a positive self image before you project an external image. Then you have to settle on one stance for the brand, and use it consistently with each sales message, whether it is for tourism or business,” he advises.³⁸

³⁵ Martin 2.

³⁶ Rachel Miller, “Sales From the City,” Marketing 11 September 1997: 31.

³⁷ Miller 31.

³⁸ Miller 32.

In The International Marketing of Travel and Tourism: A Strategic Approach

Batchelor writes about the strategies used to market a destination to potential tourists. He begins by isolating the various kinds of destinations. The six different types of destinations he lists are: self-contained resorts, such as country club hotels and holiday villages; villages, towns and cities; areas extending beyond administrative boundaries, but with a cohesive identity and a specific theme, such as national parks; regions defined by administrative boundaries or brand names, like Tuscany or the Riviera; countries; and groups of countries, like the Caribbean.³⁹

The organizations charged with marketing these destinations also vary, he writes. They are: private sector operators, public sector bodies, public/private sector partnerships and co-operatives of destination marketing agencies.⁴⁰

And just as there are several types of destinations and marketing bodies, there exist several different customers marketers must work to satisfy. While potential visitors are always the main clients, tour operators, retailers, the media and the destination's residents must also be considered when marketing a destination.⁴¹

In order to successfully market a destination, writes Batchelor, marketers and tourism suppliers must work hand-in-hand to fulfill the following six tasks:

1. Current and emerging markets with the best potential must be identified.
2. The appropriate destination image for each market must be projected and the image must be defended against any ensuing negative publicity.
3. "Market intelligence"—market structure, key influencers and contacts and distribution channels—must be developed.

³⁹ Francois Vellas and Lionel Becherel, ed., *The International Marketing of Travel and Tourism: A Strategic Approach* (London: MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1999) 183.

⁴⁰ Vellas 184.

⁴¹ Vellas 185.

4. Destination information must be communicated to consumers, tourism agents and media.
5. Cost effective promotional opportunities where suppliers can interact with consumers and tourism agents must be provided.
6. Visitor satisfaction must be monitored and product development, improvement and presentation must be undertaken.⁴²

In order to get the most bang for their buck, destination marketers strive to isolate key markets through market segmentation and prioritization, writes Batchelor. The process entails the selection of only a few prime segments in each market, which are concentrated on with the exclusion of others.⁴³

Cultural Tourism

In the mid-1980s, tourism promoters began to see the value of marketing cultural components of a destination with the rise of a new niche in the tourism industry called cultural tourism. Cultural tourism seeks to highlight the cultural component of the tourism experience.⁴⁴ A number of factors have contributed to the rise of cultural tourism, including greater sophistication and travel experience among tourists, international competitiveness between similar destinations, the declining popularity of traditional tourist attractions, and the globalization of culture and international dissemination of cultural knowledge.⁴⁵ According to visitor profiles, the “cultural tourist” is a chic

⁴² Vellas 187.

⁴³ Vellas 192.

⁴⁴ Craik 118.

⁴⁵ Craik 119.

traveler, who is wealthy, culturally sensitive, and ecologically responsible.⁴⁶ Moreover, cultural tourism holds a greater appeal to women and young people than to men and older people.⁴⁷

The term cultural tourism has become an umbrella term to identify specially organized culture-based tourism experiences, writes Craik. Cultural tourism can be divided into “experiential tourism,” where tourists partake in the performing arts, visual arts, and festivals and “heritage tourism,” where tourists visit landscapes, historic sites, buildings or monuments, hoping for an encounter with nature or out of a desire to feel a part of the history of a place.⁴⁸

Fertitta researched the public relations campaign to market an “experiential” cultural tourist attraction—FrancoFête, Louisiana’s yearlong festival celebrating the state’s French heritage. FrancoFête, the first yearlong celebration of cultural tourism in the United States, had two objectives. One, to restore pride among the state’s citizens in their French culture and heritage, and two, to attract tourist dollars to the state.⁴⁹ Fertitta’s research found that without first accomplishing the first goal—stirring pride in communities throughout the state in their French heritage—, the second goal would not have been attainable. “The key to the campaign’s success was the call to unification under the FrancoFête umbrella. Parishes geographically distant from one another celebrated a statewide event across the state. A number of towns modified existing

⁴⁶ Craik 121.

⁴⁷ Craik 133.

⁴⁸ Craik 119.

⁴⁹ Allyson Louise Fertitta, Bienvenue En Louisiane: A Case Study of the Louisiana Public Relations Campaign to Promote Francophone Tourism for FrancoFête ’99, The Louisiana Tricentennial, thesis, Louisiana State U, 2000, 4.

festivals by adding a French twist and joined the league of “FrancoFête Friendly” communities, while several others created events specifically for the celebration.”⁵⁰ In total, Louisiana municipalities sponsored more than 1,500 individual events, while the state hosted a few larger scale one-time events.⁵¹

While Fertitta’s research focused on experiential cultural tourism, Richards’ research focuses specifically on “heritage” cultural tourism. He seeks to uncover how the consumers of heritage tourism attractions and the manner, in which the attractions are consumed, influence the production, form and location of the attractions.

His research focuses specifically on the consumption and production of heritage tourism in Europe.⁵² By focusing the research on heritage tourism in more than one country, Richards hopes to present a fuller evaluation of the significance of heritage consumption and production in relation to wider social and economic change.

In the summer of 1992 at 26 cultural attractions in nine European Union member states, Richards conducted a questionnaire survey. More than 6,400 participants were asked about personal characteristics, the purpose of their visit, the length of stay and about any previous cultural tourism consumption.⁵³ The study noted a 100 percent increase in heritage tourism in Europe between 1970 and 1991. Richards concludes the increase in heritage tourism in the past 30 years has been “stimulated largely by increasing levels of income and education levels signaled by the emergence of the new

⁵⁰ Fertitta 151.

⁵¹ Fertitta 2.

⁵² Greg Richards, “Production and Consumption of European Cultural Tourism,” Annals of Tourism Research 23 (1996): 262.

⁵³ Richards 268.

middle class.”⁵⁴ What’s more, Richards’ study uncovered a high level of employment in the cultural industries among heritage tourists, indicating that the “tourism consumption engaged in by this specific type of cultural tourist is part of a lifestyle in which the boundaries between work and leisure, production and consumption, are becoming increasingly blurred.”⁵⁵

“Tourism has been promoted by governments as the answer to economic decline, providing cultural industries with the opportunity to develop as industries with export potential, as well as a vehicle to cultivate the cultural life of visitors,” notes Craik.⁵⁶ Two of the consequences of cultural tourism Craik points out are: 1.) growing governmental interest in tourism and the dollars it brings in and 2.) links being created between the cultural and tourism industries.⁵⁷

To date, the majority of the literature and research on cultural tourism has focused on exploring the reasons for its growth and the negative impacts of cultural tourism on the host culture.

Craik explores the question of whether cultural tourism in general is a fad or a new social form. She writes “the cultural experiences offered by tourism are consumed in terms of prior knowledge, expectations, fantasies and mythologies generated in the tourist’s origin culture rather than by the cultural offerings of the destination.”⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Richards 278.

⁵⁵ Richards 278.

⁵⁶ Craik 114.

⁵⁷ Craik 135.

⁵⁸ Craik 119.

As an example of her theory, Craik points to the case of the United Kingdom's marketing of the former home of Beatrix Potter, author of *Peter Rabbit*. Most of the attractions and activities presented appealed to adults—drawing on their memories of childhood—rather than engaging contemporary children in the story telling of Potter. Consequently, visitors ended up comparing Potter's home to their own experiences of childhood and nostalgic images of simple living in a rural setting.

What's more, Craik writes that while cultural tourism and cultural components of tourism may serve to revitalize an existing tourism industry, it can also threaten the culture of the destination. There is growing evidence that cultural destinations may become victims of their own success, she warns. Visitor management strategies such as daily quotas, steep entry fees and time/activity restrictions are techniques employed to satisfy the desire of visitors to see and experience sites, while at the same time limiting their impacts on locals and on the sites themselves.

Niche developments like cultural tourism will incur significant disbenefits and will undermine rather than enhance the recent commitment to cultural development, Craik concludes.⁵⁹

Robinson also examines the dynamics of the relationship between tourists and host communities.⁶⁰ Tourism is a force for social, cultural and environmental change, contributing to both physical changes in the natural and created environment and changes in the cultural meaning attached to places, he writes.⁶¹ Although "tourists" continue to be defined as "sun-seeking" hedonists traveling within the confines of their own

⁵⁹ Craik 120.

⁶⁰ Alsayyad 35.

“environmental bubbles,” a more complex type of tourist has entered the arena.⁶² This new tourist seeks more exotic experiences and cultural encounters, and has the financial resources to buy into whatever cultural experiences are available. For the tourism industry, culture is simply another product to be packaged, writes Robinson.⁶³

Inequalities exist between the economic and social benefits of tourism in First and Third World countries, Robinson notes.⁶⁴ Case in point: Third World countries earn less than two percent of all global tourism revenue.⁶⁵ What’s more, there is an underlying assumption that certain areas of the world exist strictly for tourists. For example, the Pacific Islands are viewed as the “backyard” of Australians and the Caribbean is seen as the “playground” for North Americans.

Robinson writes that for the most part, the tourism industry offers tourists “reconstructed ethnicity,” shaping religious rites, festivals and ethnic traditions to meet their expectations. Consequently, host cultures tend to lose the deeper meanings and social function of their cultural practices.⁶⁶

Robinson describes two types of tourism destinations: “those which are purposely built to cater to tourist desires and those which tourists converge upon and actively share with the host community.”⁶⁷ Whatever the type of destination, a dramatic and complex

⁶¹ Alsayyad 38.

⁶² Alsayyad 47.

⁶³ Alsayyad 43.

⁶⁴ Alsayyad 38.

⁶⁵ Alsayyad 40.

⁶⁶ Alsayyad 46.

⁶⁷ Alsayyad 52.

interaction is sure to take place between tourist and host. “The tourism industry often dramatically alters the built environment and thus the cultural landscape and cultural evolution of a host community,” Robinson points out.⁶⁸

Tourism, then, has an ambiguous role in the globalization process, he contends. Through airline routes and well-developed distribution and booking systems, the industry promotes a sense of “interconnectedness” between cultures and communities around the globe. While tourism is guilty of perpetuating cultural homogeneity, it seems the more homogenous the world becomes through the promotion of tourism, the greater the desire to reinvent those values that set different cultures apart. Consequently, the tourism industry seeks to offer tourists an increasing variety of cultural destinations to choose from—some authentic and some staged. Concludes Robinson, “Few prospective tourists seek total immersion in a different culture, and few host societies wholly seek not to adapt to the needs of tourists. Instead, the tourist seeks safe glimpses of cultural difference and can often be satisfied with simulacra.”⁶⁹

The impact tourism can have on a host culture is illustrated in Leong’s case study of tourism in Singapore. In particular, Leong looks at how the government of Singapore influenced the culture of its citizens with its policy of national tourism.

Tourism can be an important part of the nation-building process in newly independent nation-states, like Singapore, where governments actively work to create a national culture to project onto the international stage. In addition, governments employ the culture of the past as a tool to unify, manage and rule the populace, Leong points out.

⁶⁸ Alsayyad 53.

⁶⁹ Alsayyad 53.

“National tourism projects to the international polity a distinctive image of what the nation is, as well as a selling image for drawing visitors and travelers into the country,” he notes.

As a result of these economic and political benefits, national leaders have a vested interest in tourism, and most play a role in their country’s tourism development and marketing efforts. Consequently, national leaders become both “marketers of cultural meaning and arbiters of cultural practices,” writes Leong.⁷⁰

Often, certain aspects of a country’s culture and history are chosen, manipulated and then marketed for tourism. These versions of culture and history, although created for the tourist’s benefit, also affect the locals, who visit tourist destinations in their own country. “Images of the past in this way can serve the dual function of national tourism and nationalism,” continues Leong.⁷¹

For Singapore, which gained its independence from Britain in 1959, tourism is big business, with the number of tourists visiting the country each year exceeding its population.⁷² Singapore’s promotion as a tourism destination has greatly transformed its physical and cultural landscape. Before the country’s government launched its aggressive campaign to market Singapore as a tourist destination, it was like any other Southeast Asian city: a mix of diverse land use with high-rise commercial skyscrapers next to low-rise merchant shops and peppered with hawkers and street peddlers selling their goods along the sidewalks, notes Leong.

⁷⁰ Wai-Teng Leong, “Culture and the State: Manufacturing Traditions for Tourism,” Critical Studies in Mass Communication 6 (December 1989): 359.

⁷¹ Leong 359.

⁷² Leong 361.

Efforts to create a new environment for tourism have transformed the country. For example, streets and roads were rebuilt in the American gridiron pattern style, parks and open spaces were landscaped and littering became a punishable offense. These efforts also included the “cleaning up” of certain cultural traditions considered unattractive to tourists. For example, street vending was outlawed, as was the keeping of domestic fowl and the growing of vegetables in home garden plots.⁷³

Leong points out that tourists demand novelty and uniqueness of place, and if uniqueness does not exist it must be manufactured. Singapore, a small country, consists mainly of commercial buildings and commercial apartments—all mostly uniform in design.⁷⁴ So in place of scenery and landscape the tourist industry highlights the country’s cultural heritage, focusing on the diverse ethnic traditions, lifestyles, food, religious rituals and customs of four selected ethnic groups—the Chinese, Malay, Indian and Pakistani and “Others.” These groups are neatly packaged and their peaceful coexistence is stressed.

But, contends Leong, the presentation of these groups is over simplified. For example, the “Chinese” group can be broken down into 16 different categories, each with different languages, provinces of origin, cuisines, celebrations and customs. Therefore, this ethnic breakdown is unrealistic and oversimplified. Further, the manufactured traditions of each group has little to do with the actual life of the people. For example,

⁷³ Leong 362.

⁷⁴ Leong 366.

folk dances of Chinese peasants planting rice, which are put on for the sake of tourists, is unreal, rice has never been grown in Singapore.⁷⁵

The manufacture of these cultural traditions by the state has affected the cultural practices of everyday life in Singapore, writes Leong. Because of the country's small size, it is impossible for its citizens to ignore the mass-produced tourist images. For example, while each of the four individual ethnic groups promoted by tourism officials are aware of the cultural distinctions within their own groups, they tend at the same time to harbor the stereotypes of the other groups presented to tourists.⁷⁶

“Ultimately, in the process of shaping cultures for the sake of tourism, states play a crucial role in defining, manufacturing and directing social relations among various groups. National tourism, by amplifying the cultural consciousness of different social groups can sustain those groups that are being singled out and sponsored, can suppress those groups that are ignored or denied, and, through such differential attention and neglect, can heighten ethnic tensions among groups,” Leong concludes.⁷⁷

Erismán, like Leong, studies the possible negative impact tourism can have on the host culture. In his research, Erismán considers the concept of cultural dependency and examines tourism as a possible agent for facilitating its development in the West Indies.⁷⁸

The eastern Caribbean is a natural destination for North American tourists, points out

⁷⁵ Leong 363.

⁷⁶ Leong 366.

⁷⁷ Leong 373.

⁷⁸ H. Michael Erismán, “Tourism and Cultural Dependency in the West Indies,” Annals of Tourism Research 10 (1983): 337.

Erisman.⁷⁹ Supporters of the tourism industry there contend that tourism benefits the region by creating employment, earning hard currency and contributing to general economic development.⁸⁰ Meanwhile, opponents point to tourism's role in placing the Caribbean in a position of economic subservience to the United States.⁸¹

Most tourists require something familiar around them, notes Erisman—something to remind them of home when they travel. “Many of today's tourists are able to enjoy the experience of change and novelty only from a strong base of familiarity, which enables them to feel secure enough to enjoy the strangeness of what they experience. They want to be transported abroad within an environmental bubble of their own culture,” he contends.⁸²

In his study, Erisman presents three theories showing a causal relationship between mass tourism and the development of cultural dependency in the West Indies. In the first, the “trickle down theory,” Erisman describes how “the creation of environmental bubbles serve the vacationing hordes, and the importation of U.S. nationals to manage them produce a sizable Yankee colony on practically every Caribbean island—transforming the dominant local subculture into a dependent one.”⁸³ In his second theory, the “commodization theory,” Erisman tells of how “the Caribbean tourism business is controlled by North American capitalists. These entrepreneurs have one major concern—to maximize their profits by providing a desirable product to as

⁷⁹ Erisman 346.

⁸⁰ Erisman 338.

⁸¹ Erisman 339.

⁸² Erisman 347.

⁸³ Erisman 350.

many consumers as possible while keeping overhead costs to a minimum. The item being offered is the West Indies as a vacation playground, and the islands are looked upon as commodities to be sold to vacationers.”⁸⁴

Erisman’s final theory, which he labels the” black servility theory,” describes tourism as “a service industry, which pressures those involved to adopt an accommodating manner toward the customers.” In the West Indies all the visitors are white, and the locals who serve their needs as waiters, maids, housekeepers and chauffeurs are mostly black. Erisman contends that U.S. society has always been racist, and does not leave this attitude behind when visiting the islands. “By continually playing host/servant to the white vacationers, the black West Indian unconsciously adopts this racially discriminatory scenario that relegates non-whites to an inferior position,” he writes.⁸⁵

Erisman concludes that each of the three theories point to the conclusion that “the massive influx of foreign goods, people, and ideas associated with the travel industry has had a negative impact, retarding the emergence of a strong sense of social self-esteem by reinforcing the traditional local prejudice that thinks West Indians are inferior and thus rendering the population highly vulnerable to a new form of the external domination from which it has long suffered.”⁸⁶

While Leong and Erisman consider the negative impacts of cultural tourism on the host culture, Rudd and Davis look at cultural tourism as a tool to counteract specific

⁸⁴ Erisman 352.

⁸⁵ Erisman 357.

⁸⁶ Erisman 350.

public relations problems. In a case study, they research how Utah's Bingham Kennecott Canyon Copper Mine employs tourism as a public relations tool. Kennecott uses tourism to address public concerns about pollution, environmental degradation and the stability of the corporation.

At Kennecott's Copper Mine, the most productive copper mine in the world, tourism is an important component of the company's public relations efforts. More than 160,000 out-of-state visitors, local residents and youth groups visit the mine annually, making it a practical venue for Kennecott to address its public relations problems. The tourist's experience has been carefully crafted to emphasize two distinct themes: Kennecott's commitment to the environment and its commitment to the community. These themes address the public relations problems the mine has experienced in the past. The major public relations problem facing the company is the negative impact of mining on the natural environment.

At the visitor center, Kennecott presents the mine as a natural landscape, like the Grand Canyon, to counteract public perceptions of the area as a "ravaged landscape." Among other things, visitors are welcomed to the mine at a single entrance booth where fees are collected. The entrance price is based on the type of vehicle, not the number of people, which is similar to how fees are assessed at national and state parks throughout the United States. What's more, the collection booth resembles the entrances of Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon. And once inside the gates, tourists are greeted by "khaki-clad" guides and security personnel, reminiscent of park rangers, to accompany them through the mine, answer questions and give lectures.

Meanwhile, displays and instructive panels, modeled after those found in federal parks describe the mine's geologic history and explain mining processes.⁸⁷

Summary

As illustrated in this review of the literature, the current body of research concerning public relations and the travel/tourism industry has focused mainly on public relations used for crisis management purposes. In addition, scholarly research concerning cultural tourism focuses on explaining the reasons for its rise in popularity and the negative impact it has on the host culture. Directed specifically at cultural tourism, this study seeks to explore a topic not covered in the current scholarly literature—highlighting a cultural bond between host and tourist in a public relations campaign to attract tourists to a destination. By building on the current research, this thesis attempts to address this void in the literature. In addition to exploring how LOT used the cultural bond between Canadians of Acadian descent and Louisiana Cajuns in its public relations efforts, the study will seek to uncover to what extent LOT considered internal audiences while designing and implementing its campaign to attract Canadian tourists. The study will also look at which of Stacks's four models of tourism public relations—press agency/publicity, press information, two-way asymmetric or two-way symmetric—were used in the campaign. What's more, the research conducted in this study sets the stage for future research on the impact of cultural tourism on the host culture. For example, future researchers may wish to examine how highlighting the Cajun culture when marketing the state as a potential tourism destination affects the self-image of the Cajun community.

⁸⁷ Michelle Andreadakis Rudd and James A. Davis, "Industrial Heritage Tourism at the Bingham Canyon Copper Mine," *Journal of Travel Research* 36 (1998): 87.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The study provides a qualitative case study of LOT's public relations efforts to promote Louisiana as a tourism destination to Canadians. The research method employed is the case study method as it offers the best means of examining the full details of a particular public relations initiative.

Yin defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.”⁸⁸ When “how” or “why” questions are being asked, case studies are the preferred research method. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence.⁸⁹ In addition, case studies are the more appropriate research method when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus of the study is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.⁹⁰ What's more, the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events when the relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated.⁹¹ While the case study relies on many of the same techniques as a history, it adds two research techniques not usually included in the historian's research protocol: direct observation and systematic interviewing.⁹² The case

⁸⁸ Robert Yin, Case Study Research Design and Methods. (New York: Sage Publications, 1989) 13.

⁸⁹ Yin 1.

⁹⁰ Yin 6.

⁹¹ Yin 7.

⁹² Yin 8.

study's unique strength is its ability to include a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations—beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study.⁹³

The case study presented in this thesis will examine how LOT promoted the state as a tourist destination to Canadian visitors between 1995-2000, an initiative that resulted in a significant increase in Canadian visitation to Louisiana.

The major research question under investigation is: How did LOT use the cultural bond between the French-speaking Canadians and the Louisiana Cajuns to attract Canadian tourists to Louisiana? The study seeks to determine how important the public relations strategy of highlighting the cultural bond between host and tourist was to attracting Canadian visitors to Louisiana.

In addition, the study will seek to uncover to what extent LOT considered internal audiences while designing and implementing its campaign to attract Canadian tourists. Did campaign planners consider their role in shaping culture by highlighting different aspects of life in Louisiana? Did they consider the long-term effects highlighting a particular culture would have on that culture?

The study will also determine which of Stacks's four models of public relations—press agency/publicity, press information, two-way asymmetric or two-way symmetric—were used in the campaign.

Data Collection Technique

The primary research technique employed in the study will be interviews with campaign organizers. The study will contain interviews with the following list of

⁹³ Yin 9.

participants: Gov. Kathleen Blanco, then lieutenant governor and head of the Louisiana Office of Tourism; Phillip Jones, then secretary of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism; Bruce Morgan, director of communications for the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism; Kristian Sonnier, senior PR executive at Peter Mayer Advertising and Partners, the agency responsible for advertising, public relations and marketing for LOT; Judy Williams, president of Williams Creative Group, one of Peter Mayer Advertising's partners; Mark Northington, director of research at LOT; Jesse Woltz, LOT's domestic and Canadian marketing specialist; Marie Tremblay, president of Express Conseil, LOT's Canadian representative in the French-speaking regions of Canada; David Chermie, director of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana; Carl Brasseaux, director of the Center for Cultural and Eco-tourism at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Ray Brassier, associate at the Center for Cultural and Eco-tourism at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Data Analysis

A case description, which provides a chronological framework, was used to organize and analyze the data. Interviews were transcribed, and transcripts were coded for emerging themes. The coded themes were then examined to see if they could be expanded into sub themes or collapsed into other themes or sub themes. The data contained in the transcripts was then coded according to the appropriate theme.

CHAPTER 4

BACKGROUND

The Acadian Cajun Connection

“Cajun” is a word that is synonymous with Louisiana. Indeed, Cajun food and music have become some of the state’s most sought after exports. But what most people don’t realize is Louisiana’s Cajun citizenry, who have lived in harmony with the land of South Louisiana for more than three centuries, are a Canadian export. They’re descendants of the displaced Acadians of Eastern Canada, who came to Louisiana very much against their will more than 300 years ago. And their journey from Acadia to Cajun Country, their evolution from Acadians to Cajuns is one of the most celebrated cultural phenomena in history.

The Acadians of Eastern Canada

In 1604 the first wave of French colonists settled Acadia, now Nova Scotia, Canada. The land, a peninsula surrounded by four bodies of water—the Atlantic Ocean, the Bay of Fundy, Northumberland Strait and the Gulf of St. Lawrence—was among the most desirable in North America. It was fertile and rich with game, and the surrounding waters were abundant with fish. The French colonists who settled the area were mainly of peasant stock. Most were refugees from the host of religious civil wars that plagued France for centuries. They were a peaceful, hardworking people, and in their new environment, they prospered. In their new homeland, these French settlers managed to evolve a way of life uniquely their own. In fact, they were the first group of colonists in the New World to use a name for themselves that had nothing to do with the Old World.

Acadia changed hands nine times in the first 100 years between the French and the British. As a result, the Acadians did not pay much attention to who owned the colony at any given time. In turn, they were left to go about their business. In 1713 the colony was ceded to the British for the last time. At first, the British decided not to disturb the Acadians because they depended on the food the Acadian farmers produced to feed their garrisons. However, the British did try to assimilate the Acadians. But the Acadians refused to swear an unconditional oath of allegiance to the British crown. They were Catholics and they had no interest in converting religions or learning English. What's more, they refused to take up arms and fight against the enemies of their British governors—enemies that included the local Native Americans with whom they had excellent relations.⁹⁴

In the mid-1700s the British, who were again preparing to go to war with France, decided it was time for the Acadians to go. On September 5, 1755, the Acadian men were ordered to report to church for “negotiations.” Once inside they were taken prisoner. The British announced the Acadians would forfeit their land to the British crown and be deported. The British, who intended to resettle the area with British subjects, proceeded to burn the homes of the Acadian settlers.⁹⁵

The British navy and a force of 2,000 New England militia then began the deportation of the Acadians. More than 10,000 would be scattered by force throughout North America. Entire families were split apart. “Acadians were sprinkled by the shipload along the coast of the American seaboard, from New England to Louisiana,

⁹⁴ Zachary Richard, dir. Against the Tide, PBS Video, 2000.

⁹⁵ Clive Doucet. Notes From Exile: On Being Acadian. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1999) 2.

across the Atlantic to both Britain and France, and as far south as the Falkland Islands. The idea was not to exterminate them, but to dismantle their communities and sense of themselves as an independent people so that they could never again challenge British interests in North America. “It was an eighteenth-century precursor to ethnic cleansing,” writes Clive Doucet. The deportation is known among descendants of the Acadian exiles as “The Grande Derangement.”⁹⁶ It was immortalized in the famous poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “Evangeline.”⁹⁷

The deportees were scattered far and wide. There were two main concentrations: one that resettled in other parts of Canada, in what is today’s Quebec, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island and another that settled in Louisiana, a former French colony that at the time of the Acadian deportation belonged to the Spanish.⁹⁸

The Cajuns of South Louisiana

The first Acadians arrived in Louisiana in 1764. At the time, Louisiana was owned by Spain, but it had retained its French culture. The first group, which consisted of about 20 Acadians, settled along the Mississippi River around what are today St. John and St. James Parishes. It was an entirely different environment than what they were used to. At first, they had to adjust to the new semi-tropical climate. Some died of malaria and yellow fever the first year. But, after a decade they had settled in. For the next 20 years, about 4,000 Acadian exiles came to settle in Louisiana in an attempt to foster a New Acadiana.

⁹⁶ Doucet 3.

⁹⁷ Doucet 2.

⁹⁸ Doucet 1.

As they began to acclimate to their new land, the culture of the Acadians began to take on a new flavor. They grew different crops, made clothes of different materials and built their homes in a different style. In many areas, they were the dominant culture. However, they began to absorb certain characteristics of neighboring cultures, which included German, Spanish, French, English and Native Americans. For example, the accordion, which is considered the staple of Cajun Zydeco music, actually came from the Germans and filet, a root that acts as a thickener for one of the most common Cajun dishes, gumbo, came from the neighboring Native Americans.

Thus began their transformation into Cajuns. The reason for the name change is simple. The “A” in Acadian was spoken softly by the Acadians and to the English speaking settlers living within the vicinity the “di” sounded like “j.” So, their English-speaking neighbors began referring to them as Cajuns. And the name stuck.

By 1800 the Acadians had established what is today referred to as Cajun Country. Cajun Country is a triangle whose southern border is the Gulf Coast and northern border is the city of Alexandria. It is made up of 22 parishes, and includes cities like Eunice, Abbeville, Church Point, Opelousas, Breaux Bridge and Crowley. The city of Lafayette is considered the unofficial capital of Cajun Country.

Cajun country was divided into east and west. In the west, the area to the west of the Atchafalaya Basin, the land was mainly pasture land. So the Cajuns that inhabited this area mainly raised livestock, but some grew rice. The area east of the Atchafalaya Basin, what is today Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, consisted of both rich fertile land and

bayous. The Cajuns that lived in the bayous hunted, trapped and fished. And the Cajuns that lived in the fertile land along the rivers and bayous of the region, around what is today the city of Opelousas, raised cotton, corn and sugar cane.

The Cajuns continued to practice Catholicism and to speak French. However, the French their ancestors brought with them began to take on words and annunciations of the languages of their neighboring cultures. The resulting dialect came to be known as Cajun-French. The average Acadian was on the lower end of the economic scale living simply and working enough to provide for their families and be self-sufficient. For the most part, they did not go out of their way to accumulate wealth.⁹⁹

Up until the beginning of the 20th century most Cajuns were illiterate. Surprisingly, it was an effort to provide them with formal education that turned out to be the beginning of the unraveling of their cohesive culture. The Cajuns carefree way of life started to become undone in 1916 when the state's Compulsory Education Act went into affect. The new law mandated that residents start sending their children to school, and the state constitution called for all state schools to teach classes in English. Consequently, Cajun students suffered many years of punishment and humiliation from teachers who wouldn't allow them to speak French in school and classmates who teased them for their "ignorance." So began the unwilling acceptance of Americanization within the Cajun community, along with a collective negative self-image. For instance, Cajun parents stopped teaching their children French at home because they didn't want them to go through the humiliation they had suffered. It was only in the smallest fishing and farming communities that French continued to be taught at home. As a result, the number of

⁹⁹ Carl A. Brasseaux, Acadian to Cajun (Mississippi: Mississippi University Press, 1992) 3-44.

Louisianans who spoke French at home dropped by more than half from 1910 to 1980. In 1910, about 570,000 Louisianans spoke French; by 1980, that number had dropped to about 260,000, with 70 percent of French-speaking Louisianans over the age of 45.

In the meantime, progress began to encroach upon the relative isolation the Cajuns had enjoyed for nearly three centuries. For instance, the state built roads that connected remote Cajun villages to other villages and to the rest of the state. Moreover, the oil and gas industry, which began to blossom in the earlier part of the century, attracted Texans and Oklahomans to South Louisiana. In addition, when television caught on in the 1950s, it seemed the Cajun culture would surely become extinct.¹⁰⁰

Efforts in the 1960s to revive the culture by reviving the language failed when the revivalists, members of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODIFIL) brought in French instructors who were mainly from French-speaking countries who insisted on teaching standard French. The Cajuns bristled. It was happening all over again. Once again, Cajun-French was being deemed inferior.

However, things took an unexpected turn in the 1980s. That's when Louisiana chef, Paul Prudhomme, opened a restaurant in New Orleans. After opening the restaurant, Prudhomme spent one month in Manhattan promoting the Cajun cuisine of his new restaurant. New York City's chefs, among the most influential in the world, fell head over heels in love with Cajun cuisine. This started a windfall that put Cajun food, along with Cajun music, on the map. Soon all things Cajun were the rage in the United States and throughout Europe, Canada and Australia.

This chain of events has served to reinstill pride within the Cajun population, now estimated at about 400,000. Since the 1980s, renewed efforts have been launched to save

Cajun-French. For example, a handful of Louisiana schools have begun French immersion programs, whereby entire curricula are taught in French. And Cajun-French is now considered a worthwhile academic pursuit—the University of Louisiana in Lafayette, Louisiana State University and Southeastern Louisiana University all offer classes in Cajun-French. Some call this resurgence in Cajun pride a cultural renaissance, while others say it's merely the last spark of a dying culture. But, whatever the result, it's given Cajuns throughout South Louisiana a cause for celebration, not to mention, an economic opportunity—cultural tourism.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ron Thibodeaux. "Vive Le Francais," Times-Picayune 17 July 2001, national ed: 1+.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: THE CAMPAIGN

In 1995 the Louisiana Office of Tourism (LOT), the state entity charged with promoting the state of Louisiana as a tourist destination, set out to lure Canadian visitors to the state. To that end, LOT launched an aggressive public relations effort that has since resulted in positioning Canada as Louisiana's number one international market. The campaign was a two-pronged one. The efforts deployed to attract English-speaking Canadians were notably different from those deployed to attract French-speaking Canadians. Furthermore, LOT placed a special emphasis on one subset of the French-speaking Canadian population, Canadians of Acadian ancestry.

This chapter of the thesis will describe LOT's five-year long public relations campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana. Scott Cutlip provides four steps to executing a public relations campaign. First, the problem or opportunity is defined. Second, the campaign is planned. Third, the campaign is put into action. Lastly, the program's success or failure is evaluated.¹⁰² The data is presented in a format that follows this four-step model. Throughout this format, the data is organized into recurring themes and sub themes.

Step One: Opportunity Defined

In January of 1995, a handful of top staffers assembled for a meeting at LOT. The topic on the agenda: identify the top target markets for potential tourists for the upcoming year. Essentially, this was a regular annual exercise at LOT. However, this meeting was

¹⁰¹ Ron Thibodeaux, "With New Appreciation for Heritage, Cajuns Fighting to Reclaim Culture," Times-Picayune 15 July 2001, national ed.: 8+.

¹⁰² Cutlip 317.

far from typical. It was the first of its kind since a change in the office's leadership. Three weeks earlier, the citizens of Louisiana had elected a new lieutenant governor, Kathleen Babineaux Blanco. One of Blanco's duties as lieutenant governor was to oversee the state's Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism (CRT) of which LOT is a major branch. Upon taking office, Lt. Gov. Blanco appointed Phillip Jones as secretary of CRT. And it was Jones who steered the meeting. Although there was behind-the-scenes debate about a few of the target markets that ultimately landed on LOT's list, there was one demographic region all the participants agreed on: Canada.¹⁰³

Fish Where the Fish are Biting

A number of factors influence LOT's decision making when it comes time to choose target markets. For one thing, LOT looks at statistics that reflect the demographics of past visitors to the state. If visitors from a particular demographic are already visiting the state in significant numbers, then LOT will likely target the region. (It wasn't a given that LOT would target regions it determined were already visiting the state, it was only one factor in the decision making.)¹⁰⁴ Prior to 1995 Canadian visitation to Louisiana was significant. "We were already receiving Canadians, I would say between 60,000 to 80,000 back in the early '90s."¹⁰⁵ "If you look at our numbers, our research that indicates where visitors come from, there were a lot who came from Canada. So that was a logical place to fish where the fish were biting," said Judy

¹⁰³ Kristian Sonnier, personal interview, 30 May 2001.

¹⁰⁴ Judy Williams, telephone interview, 21 July 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Mark Northington, telephone interview, 21 July 2004.

Williams, president of Williams Creative Group. To be sure, one study showed that more than one-third of all Canadian travelers to the United States said that they would seriously consider visiting Louisiana.¹⁰⁶

Another consideration for LOT is the established methods of transportation between the state and a given regional demographic. If it's expensive and inconvenient for visitors from a particular region to travel to Louisiana than LOT will think twice about targeting the region. In 1995, Canadians had a large number of affordable connecting flights to choose from when visiting Louisiana. In addition, certain areas in Canada are considered so-called drive markets, meaning visitors will drive to their destination. Public relations practitioners consider a drive market easier to reach because the fact that travelers can drive to their destination increases the chances that they will visit. Many travelers consider driving to be less of a hassle than flying.¹⁰⁷ Another major factor LOT considers is the U.S. Department of Commerce's market growth statistics. The Department of Commerce provides a number of industry sectors—including the travel and tourism industry—with information on growing markets. And according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Canada was expected to be one of the fastest growing markets for the travel and tourism industry from 1995 to 2005.¹⁰⁸ “Purely simply we took a look at what U.S. Department of Commerce numbers were projecting for growth markets in the decade 1995 to 2005.”¹⁰⁹ For a variety of reasons, Canadians are frequent travelers. For one thing, many Canadians travel to warmer climates during the long, harsh

¹⁰⁶ Menlo Consulting Group, Canadian Visitation to Louisiana (Palo Alto, 1997).

¹⁰⁷ Williams.

¹⁰⁸ Phillip Jones, personal interview, 11 July 2001.

¹⁰⁹ Jones.

winters that plague most of the country. Indeed, the phrase “snowbirds” was coined to describe the large number of Canadians that flock to warmer climates during the winter months.¹¹⁰ “We call them snowbirds because it’s so cold there that they come to get away from the snow. They come to Florida, Mississippi and Louisiana,” says Jesse Woltz, LOT’s Domestic and Canadian Marketing Specialist. These so-called snowbirds typically take trips lasting four weeks or more. For another thing, a high percentage of the population is well educated, and well-educated individuals tend to be interested in both eco- and cultural tourism. Lastly, the majority of the population falls into a middle-class or above income bracket providing them with disposable incomes, which enable them to take advantage of travel opportunities.¹¹¹

The French Connection

But it wasn’t just quantitative reasoning that helped the group at LOT arrive at its decision to put Canada on its list; qualitative factors played a role as well—namely the cultural bond that exists between Louisiana and certain areas of Canada.¹¹²

We recognized that Louisiana had a special opportunity because of the long-term relationship that exists between Canada and Louisiana—the fact that we were once part of the New France territory, which once extended from Quebec to New Orleans. There was a strong tradition of trade relations and family linkage between Louisiana and eastern Canada. And as a result, we really began to explore the links. We really thought that was a natural marketing opportunity to take advantage of, said Phillip Jones, former secretary of Louisiana’s Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

¹¹⁰ Jesse Woltz, telephone interview, 14 July 2004.

¹¹¹ Woltz.

¹¹² Jones.

The cultural ties that bind Canada to Louisiana are a result of a shared French heritage. Both eastern Canada, which includes the Provinces of Quebec along with the Maritime Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, and Louisiana were founded and settled by the French. The culture in eastern Canada continues to be rooted to its French heritage. French is the dominant language spoken in the region. Louisiana too continues to be influenced by its French origins. The French heritage is particularly alive and well in New Orleans and throughout southern Louisiana, the area that has been dubbed “Cajun Country.” “The French connection is an obvious draw for us with the Canadian market. We have such a rich culture here that the Canadian French can relate to,” said Woltz. Woltz points to another perhaps even stronger cultural link. “Another reason is that the Acadians from eastern Canada when they were exiled made a beeline for Louisiana.” When it decided to add Canada to its list of international target markets, LOT recognized the potential of highlighting these cultural links in its public relations efforts.¹¹³

Why Now?

The cultural links that existed between French Canada and Louisiana were not new. So why was LOT choosing to take advantage of them at this particular point and time? As described above, the burgeoning potential of the Canadian market was the major reason LOT looked to Canada in 1995 as a viable target market. But, tourism officials recognized that Canadians were visiting Louisiana in significant numbers even before 1995. The fish were already biting. So, why hadn’t LOT taken advantage of the cultural links sooner? The reason that LOT decided to act on the cultural ties when it did

¹¹³ Woltz.

is that its new leader, then Lt. Gov. Blanco, was herself of Cajun/Acadian descent. It was Blanco who pushed LOT to focus on the cultural links that existed between French Canada and Louisiana. In fact, as will be described in more detail later in this chapter, Blanco often acted as an emissary for Louisiana in French-speaking Canada. “It didn’t hurt us a bit that our lieutenant governor was Cajun, so that was a real calling card for us,” said Williams.

Step Two: Making a Plan

Once Jones and his colleagues decided that Canada was to be one of LOT’s international target markets, they set about organizing a local team to execute the campaign. First, they charged Doug Bourgeois, who is presently the head of LOT’s Canadian and Domestic Marketing Office, with spearheading the effort. Bourgeois, along with another LOT employee, a domestic and Canadian marketing specialist, were assigned the task of coordinating and overseeing the initiative.¹¹⁴ Second, Bourgeois planned to work closely with the firm that LOT had a long-standing contract with to handle the bulk of its public relations, marketing and advertising efforts, the Peter A. Mayer and Partners Team, which is four agencies--Peter A. Mayer Advertising, the Graham Group, G.Mc & Co. and Williams Creative Group.¹¹⁵ Third, Bruce Morgan, director of communications at LOT and Jeffrey Richard, a public informations officer at LOT, were put on the case to handle a portion of the media relations work.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Woltz.

¹¹⁵ Williams.

¹¹⁶ Bruce Morgan, telephone interview, 7 July 2004.

Lastly, Northington, LOT's director of research, was assigned the task of heading up research efforts to both familiarize LOT with its new international target market and track Canadian visitation to the state on an ongoing basis.¹¹⁷

Once the marketing team was firmly in place, the next step was to isolate the areas in Canada that warranted the most aggressive marketing push. To be sure, the country, which consists of ten provinces and three territories, was far too big to target in its entirety. So, the team chose four regions to focus its resources and energy. To arrive at its decision, the team used both in-house research and research conducted by a California-based consulting firm, Menlo Consulting Group. "When we look at Canadian visitors, we mainly look at British Columbia in the west, Ontario in the central part of the country and Quebec and the Maritime Provinces in the east," said Northington. It was Quebec and the Maritime Provinces that shared a cultural heritage with Louisiana.

Research and Segmentation

Next, the team compiled provincial profiles of the four regions in order to gain a better understanding of the areas in which it would be focusing. LOT used information it gleaned from both its own research, and third-party consultants. First, the team set its gaze on the English-speaking western province of British Columbia, population: four million. The planners at LOT singled out the city of Vancouver as offering Louisiana's best prospects in that particular region. The team identified Vancouver as an "emerging and important market" full of affluent, well-traveled citizens. The citizens of Vancouver were especially interested in the cruise industry. Second, the team turned its attention to the English-speaking central province of Ontario, population: 12 million. In the Province

¹¹⁷ Northington.

of Ontario, the city of Toronto offered Louisiana its best possibilities for potential tourists, the team concluded. The citizens of Toronto were a bit on the conservative side, and were “not much into festivals.” Toronto was pegged as a drive market for the state, meaning some tourists would drive the distance from Toronto to their Louisiana destination. Lastly, the team concluded that the media was an influential force in Toronto, and would be an important tool for marketing purposes. Next, the team turned its attention to the French-speaking Province of Quebec, population: seven million. The first thing the team noted about Quebec was its strong French culture. In addition, the province could be classified as a drive market. Lastly, the Quebecois were extremely fond of festivals and Zachary Richard, a Louisiana born Cajun musician. Lastly, the team turned its attention to the French-speaking Maritime Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The citizens of these two Maritime Provinces are not as affluent or well traveled as those in other parts of Canada, however, the planners at LOT were most interested in one particular characteristic of the region: that it was the original homeland of the displaced Acadians who eventually evolved into the Cajuns of Louisiana. Many of its citizens were of Acadian ancestry.¹¹⁸

Setting up Shop in Canada

Once the team at LOT identified the regions that offered the best prospects for potential visitors, it began to consider the best way to reach each of the target regions. As a means of establishing a marketing presence in Canada, LOT decided to hire two Canadian-based marketing representatives. “Well, the first thing we did was we took the initiative, and hired representatives to represent LOT in both the French-speaking market

¹¹⁸ Mark Northington, “The Canadian Market,” 1998, internal document of the Louisiana Office of Tourism.

and the English-speaking market,” said Jones. The local Canadian reps are “responsible for making sales calls in their region, studying trends, keeping up to date with local trade shows, and maintaining relationships with tour operators,” said Woltz. The plan was to have the reps in Canada work to compliment the efforts of the team LOT had established back home in Louisiana. “The reps that LOT hires in different markets work to do PR and advertising on their own,” said Williams. “It’s a real coordinated effort. There are trade shows, there is advertising, there are PR opportunities. So we just tried to use a real synergistic effort where everybody is on the same page all the time.” To represent Louisiana in the province of Quebec, and the Maritimes, LOT hired Express Conseil, and to represent the state in Ontario, LOT hired Discover the World Marketing. (The Toronto-based rep changed in June of 2004, the new company is a firm called Access Marketing.) Sometimes the Louisiana team and the marketing reps worked together on a particular initiative, and other times the efforts of the two parties were separate.¹¹⁹ Marie-Josée Tremblay, president of Express Conseil, says her efforts to market Louisiana in both the Canadian Province of Quebec and the Maritime Provinces were two-pronged. Her first line of approach was to work with local tour operators and travel agents to package Louisiana vacations to sell to clients. And her second line of approach was to create an awareness of and desire for Louisiana among the public. To accomplish this objective, she handpicked local festivals for the state of Louisiana to co-sponsor, and thus establish a presence.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Sonnier.

¹²⁰ Marie-Josée Tremblay, telephone interview, 7 July 2004.

The great thing about representing is that it is your job to entice, but it is not your job to sell. So my job is to make it interesting for tour operators and travel agents that organize groups, and entice the public to buy the product by investing money in events that will make them go to their tour operators and travel agents and buy tours. Event sponsorship has been the core selling strategy. I make it very easy for group planners and tour operators to organize groups by taking them to Louisiana, and have them sample the actual product. Our second job is to create awareness in the market by either events or advertising to create consumer demand to buy whatever product you have gotten the tour operators to sell, said Tremblay.

So, in effect, Tremblay worked to target two parties through her efforts: travel agents and travelers.¹²¹

A Multi-faceted Strategy

From the beginning, LOT planned to deploy a multi-faceted public relations strategy to attract Canadian visitors. The enlistment of the Canadian reps was only one piece of the puzzle. The other pieces included the deployment of so-called PR missions to call on travel agents in Canada (both the Louisiana team and the Canadian reps spearheaded such missions).¹²² “With Canada we send missions in with people who represent the various attractions around Louisiana, and they call on travel agents.”¹²³ At the same time, the Louisiana team worked to host travel agents in Louisiana. “We also set up meetings where we invite all of the travel professionals to come in,” said then Lt. Gov. Blanco.¹²⁴ As part of their efforts to market to Canadian travel agents, the marketing team worked hard to “package” the state’s tourism opportunities for the agents.¹²⁵ “By

¹²¹ Tremblay.

¹²² Blanco.

¹²³ Blanco.

¹²⁴ Blanco.

¹²⁵ Woltz.

‘package it’ we mean create an itinerary, and make it easy for the tour operators to put together a trip. It’s easier to sell a trip if the work is already done for them,” said Woltz.¹²⁶

Other important parts of the strategy included television and print advertising; the sponsorship of special events in Canada; the state’s hosting of various events in Louisiana designed to attract Canadian visitors; participation in travel shows, such as the Toronto and Montreal International Travel Show and the Snowbird Extravaganza, and ongoing efforts to nab Canadian media coverage of the state and its tourism possibilities.¹²⁷ And besides travel agents and travelers, LOT worked to reach a third target: the media. LOT saw the media as a potential messenger to help spread the word about Louisiana as a tourist destination. “We also target the media,” said Blanco. “We set up media opportunities for ourselves to market Louisiana with all Canadian media outlets—newspapers, radio, television, magazines—anything we can target. We work it, and we work it hard.”

Finally, an important component of LOT’s plan to attract Canadian visitors to the state was to convince a major Canadian airline, Air Canada, to set up a direct round trip flight from a destination in Canada, Toronto, to New Orleans.¹²⁸ “We realized there was a strong need for air service as a way to make ease of access,” said Jones. “It was one of the key issues we felt we needed to address.” “We went into that airline and started talking about what we could do for them,” said Blanco. Blanco said LOT convinced the

¹²⁶ Woltz.

¹²⁷ Blanco.

¹²⁸ Jones.

airline that its aggressive marketing campaign would fill airplanes going to and from Louisiana.¹²⁹ “We were able to secure meetings with Air Canada, and provide them with a number of documents and information about travel trends and opportunities that existed. And we were able to convince Air Canada to start service to New Orleans in the fall of 1998,” said Jones.

Common/Unique

In some ways LOT’s public relations campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana contained characteristics that were typical of all its campaigns. For example, as in all of its campaigns, it worked to host travel agents in Louisiana, worked with travel agents to set up packaged tours, used television and print advertising to sell Louisiana to its audience, hosted journalists and attended trade shows. But in other ways, LOT’s Canadian campaign was unique. For one thing, it was common for LOT to hire representatives to represent it in specific international markets and take an approach that relied on synergy and coordination. In the Canadian campaign, as with many of its international campaigns, three parties worked together—LOT, a third-party advertising agency and representatives in Canada. Yet, it was unique for LOT to hire two different representatives to represent it in one designated market. But, Canada has two drastically different regions—each with drastically different audiences. Therefore, it was necessary for LOT to take the unique step of separating Canada into two distinctly different markets. Within those two markets, it deployed three different strategies because one of the markets—French-speaking Canada actually had two distinct demographics. In segmenting in this way, LOT was able to pitch a greater portion of the state, both Acadiana and New Orleans. In the majority of its campaigns, New Orleans is pitched as

¹²⁹ Jones.

the major draw. Also, while it was common for LOT to target both travelers and travel agents, what was unique about its Canadian campaign was that it worked to encourage participation from a particular segment of Louisiana's citizens, its Cajun community. Other tools that were unique to LOT's Canadian campaign was its use of event sponsorships and its efforts to host events in Louisiana that were specifically designed to attract Canadians. In addition, while it was common for LOT to work with travel agent to package Louisiana tours, in the case of its work with agents who packaged tours for Canadians of Acadian descent, LOT took the unique step of encouraging them to package tours that took visitors to destinations that highlighted the Cajun culture, like Lafayette, the city that's considered the capital of Cajun country. Lastly, it was unique for LOT to petition an airline to offer direct service from a destination to Louisiana as LOT did with Air Canada. In most cases, LOT simply worked within the parameters of a destination's already established flights.¹³⁰ "The campaign to attract Canadian tourists was a unique opportunity that called for thinking that was outside of the box," said Sonnier.

Step Three: Action

So with a team and a plan in place, the state was ready to jump into action. From the get go, the marketing team decided there would be a difference in the way it approached the English-speaking Canadian market versus the French-speaking Canadian market.¹³¹ "They are two different markets," said Jones. "It's like tailoring your message for New York as opposed to California. If you're going after the California market, you

¹³⁰ Sonnier.

¹³¹ Jones.

don't use the same message that you use for New York. The same thing goes for Canada. Canada is a massive country, eastern Canada is very different from western Canada.”

Calling All English-speaking Canadians

Armed with the demographic knowledge it had gleaned from both its research and the research of third-party consultants, LOT's marketing team began working to highlight a number of the state's attractions in its marketing push to lure English-speaking Canadians to Louisiana. Its efforts were focused on the two target provinces of British Columbia and Ontario. At the top of its list of offered enticements were Louisiana's world-renowned Cajun/Creole food and music—both Cajun music and jazz.¹³² “We emphasized what we think our strengths are for anybody, not just Canadians, which are food and music, and the fact that Canadians, like everybody else, like to have a good time,” said Williams. On top of Louisiana's food and music, the team threw on a dash of the state's warm weather. “In the English areas, we highlighted the fact that Canadians are snowbirds, and this is a warm climate where you can be out a lot of the year, and we emphasized that,” said Williams. But, it wasn't just the food, music and weather that LOT deployed to lure English-speaking Canadians to Louisiana. Shopping, golfing and cruising were three other activities the team highlighted in its marketing efforts. In British Columbia, for example, the team worked to highlight the fact that New Orleans was a stellar cruise port.¹³³ “There's a lot of people from British Columbia who come for our cruises. Even though Vancouver is a huge cruise place, they want to go somewhere different. Louisiana actually has the third largest cruise port in the nation. Vancouver is

¹³² Williams.

¹³³ Woltz.

an English-speaking market, and that's one of the things we highlight when targeting the English-speaking market," said Woltz. "The emphasis was on the fact that there is a lot to see and do in Louisiana, that it's part of the United States—tax-free shopping, golfing. More like the U.S. consumer message is delivered to the western Canadian market. Whereas for eastern Canada, its culture, history, the linkage between the two areas—eastern Canada and Louisiana," said Jones.

For English-speaking Canadians, "New Orleans was the major draw," says Bruce Morgan. Morgan, LOT's director of communication, worked to host out-of-state and international journalists in Louisiana in the hopes of getting positive media attention for the state. In the case of Canada, Morgan's involvement was "to host journalists who were sent by our marketing representatives in Canada."¹³⁴ Morgan took different routes when dealing with English-speaking Canadian journalists versus French-speaking Canadian journalists. "We do see a difference between the French-speaking Canadian and the English-speaking Canadian. So that leads us down slightly different roads," said Morgan. Morgan found that English-speaking journalists had "a stronger interest in plantation visits and New Orleans. They're going to stay closer to that New Orleans base because that's where their readers are more focused. Their readers are less aware of the French heritage, and possibly less interested in that French heritage."¹³⁵

To deliver its list of enticements to English-speaking Canada, LOT used its multi-faceted marketing approach. It deployed television and print advertisements; embarked on PR missions to call on travel agents in the region; hosted travel agents in Louisiana in

¹³⁴ Woltz.

¹³⁵ Woltz.

order to give them a first-hand look at what the state had to offer; participated in travel shows aimed at the English-speaking Canadian market, like the Snowbird Extravaganza, and worked to get positive media coverage of the state. The two strategies that were omitted from the push to attract English-speaking Canadians were the sponsorship of special events in Canada and the state's hosting of various festivals in Louisiana designed specifically to attract Canadian visitors.¹³⁶ The fact was, when it came to event marketing strategies, English-speaking Canadians weren't biting. "English-speaking Canadians are not interested in event marketing," said Tremblay, president of Express Conseil. LOT's marketing representative in English-speaking Canada had a different strategy than its representative in French-speaking Canada.¹³⁷ "They have completely different personalities, completely different approaches, but both are successful in their own ways," said Jones.¹³⁸ LOT's representative in the English-speaking regions in Canada relied more on traditional print, radio and television advertising.¹³⁹

Calling all French Canadians

Emotional Link

Marketing to the French-speaking Canadians was an altogether different story. To nab the French-Canadian target markets, LOT worked double time to highlight the French heritage the two regions shared. "In the French area, obviously we highlighted our shared French heritage," said Williams. "They're authentic," said Jones of the cultural links between French-speaking Canada and Louisiana.

¹³⁶ Woltz.

¹³⁷ Jones.

¹³⁸ Jones.

¹³⁹ Williams.

“They exist, they’re real. There’s a strong connection. You go to eastern Canada, and you mention Louisiana, and people’s eyes light up, and they say, ‘Oh, Louisiana. I love Louisiana. I read about it. I’ve always wanted to go there.’ There’s a strong emotional link between the eastern Canadians and Louisiana. It’s a dream that people have of visiting Louisiana. It’s the same with the Cajuns who wish to visit eastern Canada or France. There’s that instant, automatic connection and bond that exists between France, eastern Canada and Louisiana. They all had French rulers. They all once paid allegiance to the French king,” said Jones.

By many accounts, the bond between the two regions is a strong one.

“The cultural bond still exists, and it’s very, very strong. When I say Louisiana, people think French. It’s so easy to make the link, and even though I have to tell them in all honesty that only 20% of the people speak French, it doesn’t matter, because I tell them that the culture in Louisiana is French, even though the language that is spoken is English. The people in Louisiana in their hearts you will find the same passion for music, for food as you will find in French Canada. In Louisiana I find that whether your name is from French descent or not, if you are from Louisiana, the passion of the French culture inhabits you, and that’s what I sell,” said Tremblay.

For the French-speaking province of Quebec, it was the shared French culture that LOT worked hard to play up. However, at the same time, LOT was conscious of the fact that there was a small population of Quebecois that were of Acadian descent. “They didn’t only stay in the Maritimes. They went to Quebec. A lot of Acadians escaped to Quebec,” said Tremblay. So, LOT worked to also include this segment of the Quebec population in its efforts to play up the cultural bond between Canadians of Acadian descent and Louisiana’s Cajun population. Meanwhile, for the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which are heavily populated by Canadians of Acadian descent, the Acadian-Cajun connection was LOT’s main calling card.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Williams.

FrancoFête

One of the major marketing initiatives that allowed LOT to highlight its French ties with both Canadians of Acadian descent and Canadians who traced their family lineages directly to France was FrancoFête. FrancoFête was Louisiana's yearlong, statewide celebration in 1999 of its French heritage. The event, which consisted of more than 1,540 events held throughout the state, was designed to commemorate the founding in 1699 of Louisiana as a French colony. Some of the scheduled FrancoFête events were planned specifically for the FrancoFête celebration, while others were already long established, annual state events and festivals that were given a French twist in order to be integrated into the celebration.¹⁴¹ "It was slapped together. We basically just took things that existed already and we just kind of put the FrancoFête seal of approval on them," said David Cheramie, the director of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), who helped the state plan and organize a handful of FrancoFête events. FrancoFête was designed to lure visitors from international markets that had a shared French heritage. The state focused its marketing efforts for the celebration on five regions: France, Belgium, Switzerland, Senegal and, of course, Canada.¹⁴² "This is as much their heritage as ours. We have a shared history. We share a lot of our history with the Acadians of the Maritime Provinces and the Quebecois in Quebec Province. We saw them as a key market. We were successful in getting quite a few people to come over," said Cheramie of the Canadian market.

¹⁴¹ David Cheramie, telephone interview, 21 July 2004.

¹⁴² Cheramie.

While FrancoFête consisted of hundreds of events, a handful of so-called stellar events were central to the celebration. Those events included: BonneFête, a weekend food and music festival commemorating the 300th birthday celebration of Baton Rouge; the Festival International de Louisiane, a monumental music and cultural festival held in Lafayette; the Congres Mondial Acadian (CMA), a gigantic Acadian family reunion designed to reunite individuals of Acadian ancestry from around the world and the Degas art exhibit at the New Orleans Museum of Art. While the state marketed to both of the French-speaking regions in Canada, a particular emphasis was given to the Maritime Provinces when it came to marketing specific events that had a heavy Acadian/Cajun focus, like the Congres Mondial Acadian and the Festival International de Louisiane. Those events were also heavily marketed to the Quebecois of Acadian descent.¹⁴³ To market the celebration the state relied on television and print advertisements, as well as public relations efforts and promotional tours targeted at both the media in the French-speaking regions in Canada and travel agents in the region.¹⁴⁴

By many accounts the FrancoFête celebration was an important initiative in the state's efforts to attract French-speaking Canadians to Louisiana. The celebration generated a number of positive results, financially and otherwise. In 1999, statistics show that 115,000 Canadians traveled to Louisiana. That's compared to the 62,900 who visited in all of 1998.¹⁴⁵ "It showed that our French heritage has some commercial value. It does have to resonate beyond the fact that our grandparents spoke French. That's very important also, but people have to realize that it has relevance in today's world," said

¹⁴³ Cheramie.

¹⁴⁴ Williams.

CODOFIL's Cheramie of the FrancoFête success.¹⁴⁶ FrancoFête was also seen as an opportunity to showcase the state's French heritage to the French-speaking Canadians living in Quebec. "That was a very powerful marketing opportunity because most of the Acadians who are familiar with Louisiana are in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, but they are not in Quebec. So there was a lot less awareness (in Quebec) of Louisiana and all of the ramifications of us in terms of our French. Not many people in Montreal were aware of Louisiana's connection to Canada," said Blanco.

Congres Mondial Acadian

The Congres Mondial Acadian (CMA), the centerpiece of FrancoFête, played a key role in attracting Canadians of Acadian ancestry to Louisiana, particularly the Acadian descendants of the Maritime Provinces.¹⁴⁷ "The Congres Mondial was geared to focus primarily on the Maritimes, although about a quarter of the Quebecois population is of Acadian ancestry," said Carl Brasseaux, the director of the Center for Cultural and Eco-tourism at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The CMA was a gathering of Acadian descendants held during FrancoFête from July 31 to Aug. 15. It was the second such event held. The first took place in Nova Scotia in 1994. In fact, it was while attending the Nova Scotia event in 1994 that Blanco hatched her plan for Louisiana to host the gathering during FrancoFête.¹⁴⁸ "Everyone was having such a good time, and the lieutenant governor in the heat of the moment said, 'Why don't we do this again in '99 in Louisiana,'" remembers Cheramie. (CODOFIL was involved in the planning and

¹⁴⁵ Northington.

¹⁴⁶ Cheramie.

¹⁴⁷ Carl Brasseaux, telephone interview, 21 July 2004.

¹⁴⁸ Cheramie.

promotion of the CMA.) Blanco was not the lieutenant governor at the time, she was a member of the state's Public Service Commission. The underlying goal of the CMA was to reunite Acadians from around the world. During the two-week long gathering, dozens of family reunions were held throughout Cajun Country in south Louisiana. Among others, Thibodeaux, Broussards, Aucoins, Bourgeois, Sonniers, Robichaux from around the globe came together.

Twinning

Along with the family reunions, concerts, lectures, genealogical symposiums, cooking activities, and so-called twinning celebrations were part of the event. "Twinning" is when two cities decide to come together and become sister cities. The CMA twinings were between cities in south Louisiana and cities in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick in Canada. The twinned cities achieved cultural exchange in a variety of ways. For example, schoolchildren in twinned cities became pen pals to learn more about each other's ways of life. A party was held during the CMA to celebrate each of the twinings.¹⁴⁹ It was LOT's hope that the twinings would do their part to draw Canadian visitors to Louisiana.¹⁵⁰

Reconnection of Emotional Link

By most accounts, the CMA achieved its goal of reuniting thousands of Acadian descendants from around the globe.¹⁵¹ "It was a tremendous success in reinforcing ties that were first forged back in '94 with the first Congres Mondial Acadian in New

¹⁴⁹ Cherie.

¹⁵⁰ Blanco.

¹⁵¹ Brasseaux.

Brunswick,” said Brasseaux.¹⁵² LOT’s goal in underwriting the event, however, was to foster a bond with Canadians of Acadian descent that would ultimately serve to bring Canadian visitors to Louisiana. That goal was achieved.¹⁵³

“We had a number of people who came from Canada. It translated into visitation,” said Blanco. “It (the Congres Mondial Acadian) has affected this tourism business more than the general campaign for Canada. The tie to the Acadians is so powerful because of the connections, the family and genealogical connections, the same family names, the same shared history of exile, that kind of thing and that is hugely powerful,” said Ray Brassier, associate at the Center for Cultural and Eco-tourism at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.¹⁵⁴ Brassier provides an anecdotal example to explain how such a bond translates into tourism for the state:

For example, I’ve got a friend in Canada now. He’s from Cecilia, Louisiana and his name is Feran Serrett, and he’s having the opportunity to go to New Brunswick. And he’s going to go to the Serrett family reunion and it’s going to take place on Shediac Island, and he’s going to meet people who are related by blood to him, and they are going to greet him as kin and as someone that they are very, very interested in learning about and knowing about. He’s a musician and a boat builder, and he’s going to share his music with them—they’re going to love it and it’s going to make another connection, and when they get a chance, they will come down here. They are going to visit Feran. And they’re going to go to places he recommends. And so there’s this personal thing that goes far beyond anything that the state tourism department can do, it has to do with personal connections.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Brasseaux.

¹⁵³ Blanco.

¹⁵⁴ Ray Brassier, telephone interview, 21 July 2004.

¹⁵⁵ Brassier.

Blanco describes the desired affect of the kind of cultural exchange that took place at the CMA: “When I’m in Canada I like to tell Canadians that the goal of every Cajun, person of Acadian descent, is to eventually make a pilgrimage to Canada to what is considered an ancestral home. And also to France. Those are two trips that I think a lot of people of Cajun heritage really want to take. And so what we want to happen in the hearts and minds of Canadians is that we want them to want to come to Louisiana. Eventually it’s going to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you want to do something, one day you are going to have the opportunity to do it.”¹⁵⁶

The CMA also had the affect of strengthening LOT’s resolve to continue its efforts to play up the cultural bonds between the Cajuns of Louisiana and the Acadians of Canada.¹⁵⁷ “At the Congres Mondial Acadian we really began to realize there were so many similarities—culturally, from a food perspective—just from all aspects of culture that tied us together very strongly with our Canadian counterparts, and we really thought that was a natural marketing opportunity to take advantage of,” said Jones.¹⁵⁸

Cajun Hosts

In its efforts to attract visitors of Acandian descent to Louisiana, LOT looked to a segment of its internal audience for help—the Cajun community. For example, although LOT participated in the planning of the CMA, its main role was to market, advertise and fund the gathering. For the most part, Louisiana’s Cajun community stepped up to undertake the specifics of the planning of the event. Activities were held throughout Cajun Country from Lafayette to Thibodaux to Vacherie to Houma to Eunice to Cut Off

¹⁵⁶ Blanco.

¹⁵⁷ Jones.

to Pierre Part.¹⁵⁹ “That whole Cajun community really pulled together to make the Congres Mondial effort happen,” said Williams. “Twenty towns hosted reunions of Acadian families, and I think that about 80 or 90 families were represented in these reunions, and each reunion group extended an invitation into Canada to family members of the same name or descendents of those family members,” said Blanco. In addition, the state involved CODOFIL in its efforts to plan and publicize the Congres Mondial Acadian. And CODOFIL itself hosted a couple of other Franco Fete events. On top of that, part of LOT’s general public relations strategy involves working with the state’s local tourism bureaus to develop ways to best market the individual attractions throughout the state. So, on an ongoing basis LOT worked closely with the various local tourism bureaus throughout the Cajun community to assist them in marketing their various attractions, oftentimes allowing the local bureaus the opportunity to take the lead in deciding how their attractions were to be presented.¹⁶⁰

Personifying the Cultural Bond

Throughout its campaign to attract French Canadians, LOT was able to personify the shared cultural ties—twice over. For one thing, then Lt. Gov. Blanco, using her Cajun/Acadian background as a calling card acted as an emissary for Louisiana in French-speaking Canada, especially in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Blanco’s efforts to connect with her Canadian kin culminated in her receipt in 2000 of an honorary doctorate of law from the University of Sainte-Anne in Pointe-de-L’Eglise in Nova Scotia. Blanco was also asked to deliver the commencement address to the university’s

¹⁵⁸ Jones.

¹⁵⁹ Cherie.

graduating class. The university bestowed this honor on the lieutenant governor because of her efforts to build a strong cultural exchange between Louisiana and its Acadian cousins.¹⁶¹ “The reason that they offered it to me was because of our efforts to build and to amplify the French culture and the French language here in Louisiana,” said Blanco.

Secondly, LOT had at its disposal a veritable Canadian superstar, Zachary Richard. Richard, a singer, songwriter and poet, was born in south Louisiana, and is of Cajun descent, yet he rose to fame as a musician in Montreal. The citizens of both the Provinces of Quebec and the Maritimes are enamored with Richard. From the beginning of its marketing campaign, the state worked to forge an alliance with Richard, and was never shy about piggybacking on his celebrity in its efforts to woo French-speaking Canadians.¹⁶² “Another one of the factors that plays to our advantage is the Louisiana musician Zachary Richard. Zachary is a cult hero in Canada,” said Morgan. “Zachary Richard is a huge success in Canada. He is as popular there as Harry Connick Jr. is in the U.S. So we have some ambassadors who by virtue of their daily work help us,” said Blanco. “The number one selling artist in Quebec is Zachary Richard. He’s from Louisiana, and so there are a number of musicians from Louisiana who are incredibly popular in Quebec,” said Jones. Richard was a presence at FrancoFête. He was a featured entertainer throughout the event; was involved in a promotional tour for the CMA in Canada prior to the event and hosted the CMA’s closing ceremony. In addition, LOT in 1999 underwrote a documentary that Richard produced titled “Against the Tide.” The documentary chronicled the tragedy of the Acadian deportation by the British in the mid-

¹⁶⁰ Cheramie.

¹⁶¹ Blanco.

1700s.¹⁶³ “That was all part of the FrancoFête initiative. We were trying to get something permanent and something worthwhile and something lasting that focuses on Louisiana and that part of its culture,” said Blanco.

Cajun Tour Packaging

The team at LOT also worked to convince tour operators in the French-speaking regions of Canada to push Cajun tour packages. While trips to New Orleans were typically tacked onto these tours at either the beginning or end of the trip, the packages also included Cajun-related destinations, such as guided tours of Cajun Country or the Acadian memorial in Saint Martinville, Louisiana. Many packages were also designed around specific Cajun celebrations, like Lafayette’s annual Zydeco Extravaganza, the Cajun Mardi Gras or Lafayette’s signature music festival, the Festival International de Louisiana.¹⁶⁴

Event Marketing

In its efforts to market Louisiana as a destination to the majority of Quebec, which had a somewhat different cultural link to Louisiana than Canadians of Acadian descent—the link was more centered on the fact that both Louisiana and Quebec were settled by the French, along with traditional advertising, LOT turned to event marketing. LOT would sponsor or co-sponsor events throughout the region. In return for the sponsorships, the state would get an opportunity to establish a presence at the sponsored event. Tremblay, president of Express Conseil, LOT’s Canadian representative in the French-speaking regions of Canada, hand picked events for the state to sponsor. The

¹⁶² Morgan.

¹⁶³ Blanco.

festivals the state sponsored in Quebec between 1995 and 2000 included the Montreal Jazz Festival, the Blues Festival at Mont Tremblanc and the New France Festival in Quebec City.¹⁶⁵ “When we sponsor an event we feature the music of Louisiana, we feature the food of Louisiana,” said Tremblay. Tremblay said in her mind, event sponsorships were always more effective than regular advertising in Quebec.

If you put a traditional ad in the biggest newspaper in Montreal for easily \$5,000 to \$6,000 per ad, you will have that one-time, three second attention span on that one Saturday, and you might get people to ask questions, and you might not. Usually with regular advertising, the return on the investment is five to one. With a \$5,000 investment in a small event like the Cajun Music Festival of St. Hyacinth, Quebec, for example, I get about a ten to one advertising return, said Tremblay.

The biggest and most high profile festival LOT sponsored was the Montreal Jazz Festival.¹⁶⁶ “The state has put up \$250,000 for the past three years to have a presence there,” Sonnier. “It’s been a really successful partnership,” said Sonnier. The Jazz Festival lasts for 11 days, and is held in downtown Montreal. LOT cordons off an area it calls “The Louisiana Quarter” where it sets up an information booth. In addition, LOT sets up a food kiosk that sells authentic Cajun food and brings in a chef that gives cooking demonstrations every day. On top of that, there is a Louisiana stage. “The turnout for the Cajun music is huge. They flock to see the Cajun music,” Sonnier said. Also, each day LOT representatives simulate a New Orleans Mardi Gras parade complete with marching band, floats and beads. Sonnier described what he believes is the affect of the state’s presence at the Montreal Jazz Festival: “People from Montreal will come and visit Louisiana. They will have seen the music and tasted the food. They are an affluent

¹⁶⁴ Williams.

¹⁶⁵ Tremblay.

traveler. They have the money to say, ‘Well that was nice, I got a little taste of it at the Jazz Festival, but now I’m ready to go experience Louisiana in Louisiana.’”

They can taste the food, they hear the music, feel the ambiance, and there is a tourism information booth right there next to the stage. It’s awesome. How can you allow people to taste food in an ad? It’s an awesome tool, and it’s a tool that has year after year brought the numbers up. So it’s the way we have chosen to market Louisiana, through events and through experience, you experience a little bit of Louisiana through the events that we choose—you might want more. And that’s what worked for us,” said Tremblay of investing in the Montreal Jazz Festival.

Step Four: Program Evaluation

When it comes time to evaluate a particular campaign for success or failure, LOT does not have a formal, standard process in place. “It’s not a sophisticated process. I guess it’s judged by pretty much the overall feeling by the marketing staff, and the numbers that are projected by Statistics Canada.”¹⁶⁷ Statistics Canada is a federal organization in Canada that produces statistics on Canada’s population, resources, economy and culture. It collects data on the number of Canadians who travel out of the country along with data on where they travel to. It’s this data that LOT refers to when evaluating its marketing/public relations efforts to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana.¹⁶⁸ All of the participants conveyed the “feeling” that the campaign was a success. “The real goal is to move the meter, which is increase the visitation. Everything we do is meant to come down to more people visiting Louisiana. So based on that goal the campaign was a success,” said Williams. Williams said the combined efforts of everyone on the team contributed to the success of the campaign. ““Obviously I think it

¹⁶⁶ Sonnier.

¹⁶⁷ Northington.

worked well. I would love to take complete credit for it, but the truth is we didn't work in a vacuum. We worked with international reps. We worked with advertising. We worked with the fact that we had a lieutenant governor, and a head of the office of tourism who were willing to travel up there a good bit, do lots of media interviews. So given all that we felt like we were very successful. As much as I'd like to take credit for it, we were just one piece of the pie."¹⁶⁹ Blanco said LOT's original goal was to increase Canadian visitation to Louisiana, and that goal was achieved.¹⁷⁰ "The original goal was to build it," said Blanco. Blanco pointed to the numbers as proof of the campaign's success:

Let's just say that in the last five years we have increased traffic out of Canada by some 65 percent. That's a very dramatic increase. That's not something we could have predicted. You can do a lot of work in any particular region and not get that kind of increase. We have been very pleased. Coming out of Quebec, the Montreal area we saw a 54 percent increase. Prior to that most of the traffic had come from the Maritime Provinces like Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and not so much Montreal.

Jones also looked to the numbers to illustrate the campaign's success. "Based on the numbers, we have been very successful," Jones said.

The Numbers

Below are Statistics Canada's statistics on visitation to Canada from 1994 to 2001.

The numbers show Canadian visitation to Louisiana increased during that time.

In 1994, about 72,000 Canadians visited Louisiana.

In 1995, about 75,000 Canadians visited Louisiana.

In 1996, about 100,000 Canadians visited Louisiana.

¹⁶⁸ Northington.

¹⁶⁹ Northington.

¹⁷⁰ Blanco.

In 1997, about 91,600 Canadians visited Louisiana.

In 1998, about 62,900 Canadians visited Louisiana.

In 1999, about 103,900 Canadians visited Louisiana.

In 2000, about 115,800 Canadians visited Louisiana.

In 2001, about 124,200 Canadians visited Louisiana.¹⁷¹

Canada is the only one of LOT's targeted international markets that provides LOT with numerical data regarding the amount of tourists visiting Louisiana per year.

Therefore, it is impossible to compare the increase in Canadian tourism with increases or decreases in tourism from LOT's other international target markets, which include Italy and Mexico.¹⁷²

Impact on Cajun Culture

Highlighting the cultural bond between the Cajuns of Louisiana and the Canadians of Acadian ancestry was an important component of LOT's campaign. What, if any impact, did this have on Louisiana's Cajun population? Some say the campaign's focus on the Cajun community had only positive ramifications for Louisiana's Cajun population. It was good for the Cajun community's collective self esteem, Jones, for example, said.¹⁷³

I think there's a re-awakening of pride in the Cajun community. Not just because of what we do at LOT, but it certainly contributes to it. When they see in the newspaper that we are number one in the country in growth of the Canadian tourism market, I think if you are Cajun, it makes you proud. I'm not Cajun, but my boss is and she's real proud. Today there is an across-the-board mass marketing of the Cajun culture. This re-awakening is not happening because of us. What we are doing is using the Cajun to

¹⁷¹ Mark Northington, "Tourism Research Announcement!!!" 30 May 2002, internal document of Louisiana Office of Tourism.

¹⁷² Northington.

¹⁷³ Jones.

authenticate what we are doing. Reminding the eastern Canadians that there is a strong bond that exists. I think it works very well. It makes people proud. For so long the Cajun culture was repressed, ridiculed. It was an example of what not to do, and now everything Cajun is hot. It's nice to see a resurgence of pride in the Cajun culture, said Jones.

In addition, LOT's efforts resulted in an increase in visitation to the various Cajun towns and communities, which translates into more money into their economies. "I think we brought a lot more visitors to their area," said Williams. Williams also said LOT's efforts may have even resulted in healing of old wounds. "To have those kind of cultural ties strengthened benefits Louisiana Cajuns too because the Cajuns for so long suffered from isolation, not just physical isolation of language, lots of things. So it kind of gives them a cultural bridge to another group, so that that isolation that they felt from being ousted from the Maritime Provinces was no longer strongly felt."¹⁷⁴ It was to the benefit of the Cajun community that the state's lieutenant governor was Cajun. The result was a certain amount of sensitivity to the culture and a lack of exploitation. "It was a benefit that the lieutenant governor had a sensitivity to the culture. One of the things she did was allow her heritage in some ways to guide what she was doing. In general I think the work that's been done through LOT has been a great success. In many ways Louisiana should be seen as a model for the rest of the country in ways that heritage can be combined with economic development. You can critique individual decisions along the way, and you can say what could have been done better, but I'm very proud of what's been done," said Brassier. But not everyone is pleased with the way LOT approached the inclusion of the Cajun culture in its marketing efforts. "The biggest challenge in cultural tourism is avoiding becoming a caricature of ascriptive stereotypes that surround the culture and

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

that's certainly a problem here. No, LOT has not done a good job of being sensitive to that. The experts who attend their cultural tourism seminar are usually shocked and dismayed by the sneak previews that we get to the latest tourism promotion. The way the people in general are portrayed, I think reinforces negative stereotypes," said Brasseaux. Brasseaux said oftentimes the marketing material portrayed Louisiana Cajuns as dimwitted and simple.¹⁷⁵ Another concern is that the way in which LOT is commercializing the Culture will have the affect of eroding its authenticity. "It's a double edged sword. Whenever you have a situation where there's a commercialization of a culture there's a trade off of sorts. You might lose a little bit of the authenticity because a lot of the culture is staged for the benefit of tourists," said Cheramie.

¹⁷⁵ Brasseaux.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

LOT's public relations campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana is an exemplary case study for a number of reasons. For one thing, it is an example of a public relations campaign focused heavily on highlighting a shared cultural bond between visitor and destination. For the most part, as is reflected in the review of the literature, the current research dealing with public relations as it relates to tourism, cultural or otherwise, examines either crisis management or the impact of tourism on a particular culture. Public relations scholars have not delved into a case such as the one presented in this study, which provides a unique public relations/cultural tourism perspective. For another thing, by all accounts, the public relations campaign analyzed in this study was a great success. The goal of the campaign, to increase Canadian visitation to Louisiana, was achieved. The fact that the campaign was a success makes it appealing not only to scholars who study public relations and or cultural tourism, but also to public relations practitioners who wish to emulate LOT's success. To be sure, the case can act as a model for other state tourism organizations. The case is also exceptional because part of the cultural bond that LOT highlighted was itself a unique situation. The Cajun culture, which evolved from a culture that was scattered throughout the globe hundreds of years ago, was used to attract a demographic market that represented the Cajun culture's motherland—Canadians of Acadian descent. The fact that the Cajuns were exiled from Canada provided a ready-made emotional link that contributed to the success of LOT's campaign. Lastly, the case is special because it analyses a public relations campaign that was geared for one market, the Canadian market, but was segmented into three distinct

campaigns with three distinct strategies aimed at three different demographics, English-speaking Canadians, French-speaking Canadians and French-speaking Canadians of Acadian descent. This, combined with the fact that the campaign was an overall success, begs for the case to be used as a model for public relations practitioners who find themselves targeting a singular market with two or more demographics.

LOT's public relations efforts, which did ultimately result in positioning Canada as the state's number one international market for tourism, sparked a host of questions, and this study's findings seek to answer some of those questions.

For one thing, how did LOT use the cultural bond that exists between Canadians of Acadian descent and the Cajuns of Louisiana in its efforts to attract Canadians to the state? For the two French-speaking regions, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, LOT's chief calling card was the cultural bond that exists between the regions and Louisiana. Initially, this study set out to uncover how LOT used the cultural bond between French Canadians of Acadian descent and the Cajuns of Louisiana to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana. As it turns out, that question, while still a valid one, does not take the complete picture into account. While LOT did play up the cultural bond between Canadians of Acadian descent and the Cajuns of Louisiana in its public relations campaign, this was only part of its approach. It turns out, the approach was a two-pronged one. LOT also emphasized a cultural bond when marketing to French-speaking Canadians who were not of Acadian descent. In doing so, LOT simply focused on the French heritage these French-speaking Canadians shared with Louisiana. So, in order to tell the complete story, the question must be broadened to ask: How did LOT highlight the cultural bond between French Canada and Louisiana?

First, a look at the way in which LOT worked to highlight the cultural bond between French-speaking Canadians of Acadian descent and the Cajuns of Louisiana. In the case of the efforts used to sell Louisiana as a tourist destination to the Canadian Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, which has a citizenry that is predominantly of Acadian descent, and the small, but significant population of Canadians of Acadian descent who lived in Quebec, the state designed the vast majority of its efforts to highlight the Acadian/Cajun connection. For example, tour operators in those regions packaged many tours that featured Cajun-related destinations, such as guided tours of Cajun country. In addition, tour packages were designed around Cajun celebrations, like Lafayette's annual Zydeco Extravaganza. On top of that, much of the radio, television and print advertising in these regions featured Louisiana's Cajun culture. Also, LOT treated tour operators and journalists from those regions to tours that focused on Cajun attractions. The efforts to attract Canadian tourists of Acadian descent peaked at Franco Fete. As discussed under the sub theme, "Franco Fete," many of the more than 1,500 events associated with Franco Fete had a Cajun theme. So, as much as possible, in its marketing of Franco Fete to Canadians of Acadian descent, the state highlighted the Cajun themed Franco Fete events. Also, as discussed under the sub theme "Congres Mondial Acadian," the state worked hard to market that particular event to Canadians of Acadian descent. Lastly, as discussed under the sub theme "Personifying the cultural bond," LOT frequently deployed two Cajun emissaries to Canada, then Lt. Gov. Kathleen Blanco and musician Zachary Richard, to strengthen the cultural bond.

Now, a look at the way in which LOT worked to highlight the cultural bond between French Canadians not of Acadian descent. The majority of Quebecois fit this

bill. From the beginning of its campaign, the focus of the public relations efforts that LOT focused on this region of Canada was the shared cultural heritage and characteristics of French Canadians and Louisianans. While LOT did depend on its usual public relations methods in Quebec, like tour packaging and familiarization tours, the dominant strategy it deployed with this audience was event sponsorship. As is described in the sub theme “Event marketing,” LOT sponsored or co-sponsored a host of events in the region, and at each event worked to establish a presence that conveyed the message: Like you, their French cousins, Louisianans have a passion for food, music and laissez le bon temps roulet! What’s more, in its other efforts targeted at Quebec, like tour packaging or familiarization tours, LOT worked to convey that same message. In Quebec, LOT did not leave out the Cajun connection in its approach, but the connection was only a small part of the image of the state that it was working to present, not the focus, as was the case with the Maritime Provinces. As with the Maritime Provinces, LOT worked hard to market Franco Fete in Quebec. The difference was that the Cajun events were not the main focus of the marketing efforts; rather, the focus was the shared French heritage.

Another question the research seeks to answer is: just how important was the strategy of highlighting the cultural bond between host and tourist to attracting Canadian visitors to Louisiana? Stacks notes that most public relations strategies in the travel/tourism industry involve setting up advertising junkets to specific resort areas or hotels for special publics—travel agents, governmental regulators or journalists working for industry specific publications.¹⁷⁶ While LOT did concentrate some of its efforts on hosting such junkets throughout Louisiana for travel agents and journalists, it went well

¹⁷⁶ Stacks 27.

above and beyond this typical strategy. Most notably in its efforts to highlight the cultural bond shared by host and tourist. As the results of this study show, LOT deployed two distinctly different strategies in its efforts to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana. In its efforts to attract English-speaking Canadians, the state highlighted any and all of its positive attributes: the city of New Orleans, along with the state's food, music, warm weather, tax-free shopping, golf and access to cruise ships. But, for French-speaking Canadians, LOT focused its public relations efforts on the cultural bond that exists between the two regions. Unfortunately, LOT would not provide the researcher with comprehensive information on the regional profiles of Canadian visitors to Louisiana over the five-year period that is covered in this study. So, it is unclear whether more visitors came from English-speaking Canada or French-speaking Canada during the five-year span. While there may not be quantitative data available to assist in the understanding of the importance of LOT's use of a cultural bond in its marketing efforts, there is qualitative data. For one thing, the cultural bond was one of the main factors that convinced LOT to target Canada in the first place. So, from that perspective, the shared heritage was key to the initial launch of the public relations effort. Furthermore, the cultural bond between the Canadians of Acadian descent and Louisiana's Cajun population is the only reason LOT chose to spend its resources targeting the Maritime Provinces. To be sure, the citizens of the Maritimes are not wealthy nor are they frequent international travelers. However, because of LOT's efforts to highlight the cultural bond that existed between the two regions, they have and are traveling to Louisiana in order to mingle with their Cajun cousins. The fact that LOT was willing to target the Maritime Provinces in its campaign sheds light on the importance of the existence of a cultural

bond when it comes to public relations: it was the existence of a cultural bond that drove a host to spend its resources on marketing itself as a destination to a particular region. Also telling is the fact that the biggest surge in Canadian visitation to Louisiana occurred in 1999 when Canadian visitation jumped some 60% over 1998. In that year, the majority of Canadian visitation was due to Franco Fete. In conclusion, it appears that the state's efforts to highlight the cultural bond that exists between French Canada and Louisiana has enabled it to better focus its public relations efforts in Canada. In turn, this focus has resulted in a public relations campaign that has been successful in achieving its goal of increasing visitation.

Another question the results address is: to what extent did LOT consider internal audiences while designing and implementing its campaign? Did campaign planners consider their role in shaping culture by highlighting different aspects of life in Louisiana, namely the Cajun culture, an important subset of its internal audience? Did they consider the long-term effects highlighting a particular culture would have on that culture? Stacks argues that in order for public relations in the tourism industry to be successful, in addition to two external parties, the tourist and the travel industry, two internal parties, travel agents and the individuals living and working in the destination area must be considered. In fact, Stacks criticizes public relations practitioners for not paying enough attention to the “intervening public,”—the people living and working in the destination area. The intervening public is critical to a successful public relations campaign, he writes.¹⁷⁷ It does seem that yes, LOT did consider these two internal audiences—travel agents and at least one subset of its internal audience, the Cajun

¹⁷⁷ Stacks 24.

community—while designing and implementing its campaign to attract Canadian tourists to Louisiana. To be sure, planners worked with travel agents in Canada throughout the campaign, both calling on them in Canada and hosting them in Louisiana. In addition, the state encouraged Canadian travel agents to package Louisiana tours. The state also considered at least one of its intervening publics, the Cajun community, in its campaign. In fact, as is described in the sub theme “Cajuns as hosts,” the state worked to encourage the Cajun community to help it carry out some of its efforts. LOT recognized early on that in order for its efforts to be successful, it must involve the state’s Cajun community because it embodied a part of the cultural bond it planned to highlight in its campaign. If the Cajun community had not participated, LOT would not have been able to tap into this particular cultural link.

As for whether campaign planners considered their role in shaping the Cajun culture by highlighting it in their campaign, the answer is yes, they did. To be sure, planners stated repeatedly that the state’s efforts to highlight the Cajun community in its campaign to attract Canadian visitors to the state had only positive affects on the Cajun community. Public relations expert, Rachel Miller, writes that when selling a destination to tourists “a crucial first step is to have a positive self image before you project an external image.”¹⁷⁸ The inclusion of the Cajun culture in LOT’s campaign was good for the Cajun community’s collective self-esteem, and served to create a positive self-image within the Cajun community, the campaign’s planners claimed. As is described in the theme “Impact on the Cajun Culture,” not only did the Cajun community’s involvement in the campaign puff up the community’s self-esteem, it boosted the local economies of

¹⁷⁸ Miller 32.

the state's Cajun community, and even went so far as to heal old wounds. So, planners did consider the impact their efforts would have on the Cajun community, and concluded that the impact would be, and ultimately was, a positive one.

Furthermore, as is described in the sub theme "Cajuns as hosts" LOT did, to a certain extent, work to include the state's Cajun community in the actual execution of its campaign. However, despite its efforts to include the Cajun community in its campaign, a certain disconnect existed between the way the campaign's planners viewed the impact their efforts had on the Cajun community and the way representatives of the Cajun community viewed the impact. In the eyes of various leaders of the Cajun community, the affects were not always positive. As discussed under the theme "Impact on Cajun Culture," one complaint was that the marketing efforts oftentimes served to stereotype Louisiana's Cajun culture. Carl Brasseaux, director for the Center for Cultural and Eco-tourism at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, complained that LOT did not consult with experts (presumably the experts at the Center) when creating marketing materials to market Cajun attractions. LOT was accused of being insensitive to the Cajun community in other ways when it came to creating marketing materials that promoted Cajun events and attractions. For example, the Peter A. Mayer and Partners Team, the third-party firm LOT hired to assist it in its marketing, public relations and advertising efforts, used a Quebec agency to translate marketing materials into French. "We were really pushing for them to use more of our local French expressions in there, and they used more of an international type of French and we had a difference of opinion in that," said David Cheramie, director of CODOFIL.¹⁷⁹ Nonetheless, leaders of the Cajun community did

¹⁷⁹ Cheramie.

acknowledge that LOT's efforts impacted the Cajun community in positive ways providing an economic incentive for people to rediscover their roots.

The researcher believes that the separate goals of the two parties—the campaign's organizers and the representatives of the Cajun community—may be the root cause of their dissimilar viewpoints. In the case of LOT, its goal was to increase visitation to the state. In the case of the Cajun representatives, their goal is to protect and instill pride in the Cajun community. While LOT's goals are primarily economic, the goals of these leaders of the Cajun community are focused on cultural preservation. It's the opinion of the researcher that it is inevitable given their different positions that these two factions would find themselves at odds. For instance, it seems the underlying current of the criticism voiced by the Cajun community leaders was that LOT often ignored or overlooked their expertise. The campaign's planners, for their part, were hesitant to criticize the Cajun community leaders; however, former Lt. Gov. Blanco did mention that CODOFIL had for years discussed the possibility of hosting a mammoth family reunion in the state. But that the organization's efforts never bore fruit. Blanco hinted that the reason for this was a lack of strong leadership and resources—two things she was able to offer, and in turn make a Cajun family reunion a reality.

While this case study provides answers to the above questions, its results also corroborate prior scholarly research. Analyzing the results against prior scholarly research can illustrate how LOT's campaign measured up to pre-established models and theories. Public relations researcher Don Stacks translated four historic models of public relations to apply to the travel/tourism industry. These four models are: the press agency/publicity model; the press information model; the two-way asymmetric model

and the two-way symmetric model. Does LOT's public relations campaign to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana fall into one of these four models? The answer is yes. The campaign falls into the third model, the two-way asymmetric model. This model focuses on "persuading publics based on research on attitude and opinion change. Information gained from market research allows for audience segmentation, focusing on specific message appeals aimed at modifying or changing opinions about an organization or industry. While this model is a step forward in understanding the different publics and their needs, the significant time lag between research, message and evaluation is a problem. Because of the time constraints, the major focus of the research is on the tourist and travel agency. However, it is possible that the intervening public may be addressed if preliminary research indicates it is a particularly strong predictor variable."¹⁸⁰ In keeping with this model, LOT's campaign did consider research it undertook to better understand the attitudes of its audience. Then, using the data it gleaned from its research efforts, it segmented its audience into two markets: French Canadians and English Canadians. For each of its two audiences it focused on specific message appeals aimed at modifying or changing opinions about an organization or industry. (The initial "opinion" of its Canadian audience was: "I have no plans to travel to Louisiana. LOT, through its efforts changed the opinion of some members of its audience to: "I will travel to Louisiana.") And while LOT did focus its research on the tourist and travel agencies, it did address at least one intervening public—Louisiana's Cajun community.

Stacks also concluded that the travel/tourism model of public relations that is the most effective is one that is three-fold. First, the model takes "the pulse of all publics and

¹⁸⁰ Tilson 99.

audiences.” Second, the public relations strategy is constantly updated and reflects the realities of the travel destination. And third, the campaign is monitored to ensure that behavioral change is occurring, and feedback is taken from all publics.¹⁸¹ Stacks would be pleased with LOT’s campaign, which fulfills nearly all of these criteria. LOT, through its initial and ongoing research took the pulse of its audiences (however, it did not “take the pulse” of the campaign’s intervening public); constantly updated the realities of the state to the audience by focusing on the constantly changing landscape that is Louisiana tourism and throughout the five years under investigation, monitored to ensure that behavioral change was occurring by tracking Canadian visitation to the state.

What’s more, the travel industry is best served by a campaign that combines advertising and public relations, Stacks writes. The advertising aspect should appeal to external publics, and public relations, especially the two-way models, should establish a mutual understanding between all publics involved in travel and tourism.¹⁸² Throughout its campaign, LOT did combine the two—advertising and public relations. However, the campaign, which was a two-way model, did not work particularly hard to “establish a mutual understanding between all publics involved...”. While it did seek the occasional participation of at least one of the campaign’s intervening publics, the Cajun community, it was not a priority for LOT to have the community involved in the bulk of the planning and execution of the campaign.

In order to successfully market a destination, writes Bronson Batchelor, marketers and tourism suppliers must work hand-in-hand to fulfill six tasks:

¹⁸¹ Tilson.

¹⁸² Tilson.

1. Current and emerging markets with the best potential must be identified.
2. The appropriate destination image for each market must be projected and the image must be defended against any ensuing negative publicity.
3. “Market intelligence”—market structure, key influencers and contacts and distribution channels—must be deployed.
4. Destination information must be communicated to consumers, tourism agents and media.
5. Cost effective promotional opportunities where suppliers can interact with consumers and tourism agents must be provided.
6. Visitor satisfaction must be monitored and product development, improvement and presentation must be undertaken.¹⁸³

To its credit, LOT carried out each of these six tasks. First, it identified Canada as a market with the best potential. Second, it established the appropriate image for each of the three segments of the Canadian market in which it intended to focus its efforts. In the English-speaking market that image was: Louisiana, a warm destination that offers delicious food, great music plus tax-free shopping, golfing and cruising. In the French-speaking market of Quebec that image was: Louisiana, a place where, like in Quebec, there is a passion for food, music and laissez le bon temps roulet! And in the French-speaking Maritime Provinces: Louisiana, a place to reconnect with your Cajun cousins. Third, LOT deployed “market intelligence.” Two Canadian representatives, travel agents throughout Canada and the Canadian media were all mobilized in its campaign. Fourth, destination information was communicated to consumers, tourism agents and media. To

¹⁸³ Vellas 183.

communicate destination information to consumers, LOT relied on traditional advertising and packaged tours. To communicate destination information to tourism agents, LOT both called on the agents in Canada and hosted them in Louisiana. To communicate destination information to the media, LOT frequently hosted Canadian media in Louisiana and made sure its Canadian representatives were in constant contact with Canadian media outlets. As for the fifth task, LOT did seek cost effective opportunities where suppliers could interact with consumers and tourism agents. For one thing, LOT frequently attended tourism trade shows. For another, it sponsored festivals throughout Quebec for the purpose of allowing consumers to interact with its Canadian representatives. Lastly, with its informal evaluation process, LOT gauged visitor satisfaction. And it was constantly working with its third-party advertising agency and its Canadian representatives to improve its strategies.

Batchelor also writes that in order to get the most bang for their buck, destination marketers strive to isolate key markets through market segmentation and prioritization. The process entails the selection of only a few prime segments in each market, which are concentrated on with the exclusion of others.¹⁸⁴ As is described in the theme “Research and Segmentation,” LOT segmented the Canadian market into four regions: British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces.

Jennifer Craik notes that two of the consequences of cultural tourism are: 1.) growing governmental interest in tourism and the dollars it brings in and 2.) links being created between the cultural and tourism industries.¹⁸⁵ As for the first consequence Craik

¹⁸⁴ Vellas 192.

¹⁸⁵ Craik 114.

lists, in the case of Louisiana, the state has long been involved in the tourism industry. To be sure, the agency that oversees tourism in Louisiana is state-run, which is not the case in every state. Whether or not the state has in any way increased its resources or interest as a result of the rise in cultural tourism is unknown. (This is perhaps an area for further study.) However, the second consequence Craik lists does hit home in this case. Because of its decision to highlight the cultural bond that exists between the Cajuns of Louisiana and Canadians of Acadian descent LOT aligned itself with two cultural organizations—CODOFIL and the Center for Cultural and Eco-tourism at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. In addition, it struck alliances with various cultural festival coordinators in Canada, a cultural superstar, Zachary Richard, and various other cultural promoters throughout Louisiana.

Many scholars, including Craik, Mike Robinson, Wai-Teng Leong and H. Michael Erisman write of the potential harm cultural tourism can have on host populations. Robinson writes that for the most part, the tourism industry offers tourists “reconstructed ethnicity,” shaping religious rites, festivals and ethnic traditions to meet their expectations.¹⁸⁶ Indeed, much research has been done to examine the dynamics of the relationship between tourists and host communities. In the case of cultural tourism, research has focused on the consequences of cultural tourism on the host culture. This case study provides a jumping off point for further research on the consequences of cultural tourism on one segment of the host culture under investigation—Louisiana’s Cajun population. Was the Cajun community impacted positively or negatively by LOT’s campaign? In what way, if at all, was the Cajun community changed by the campaign?

¹⁸⁶ Craik 46.

Did LOT promote the Cajun community as a tourist attraction in a way that did not compromise its authenticity? Another topic for future research would be determining to what extent J. Grunig's situational theory of publics applies to the case outlined in this study. Grunig's situational theory seeks to explain how and when individuals communicate and when particular communications aimed at particular individuals is most likely to be effective. The theory "segments publics from a larger population based on the activeness or passiveness of communication behavior."¹⁸⁷ These are all possible areas of further study.

In conclusion, this study describes in detail a case that involves a relatively new trend in tourism—highlighting a particular cultural component of a destination. In this case, an important cultural community in Louisiana—the Cajun community, along with an equally important cultural heritage—the state's French heritage—was highlighted in a public relations campaign for the express purpose of attracting an audience with a historic tie to that community and heritage. From the perspective of the campaign's planners, that effort was a success—the targeted audience responded, and visited the state. So, this case study could be viewed as a useful "how to" for travel/tourism practitioners interested in replicating LOT's success. At the same time, the study raises a host of interesting questions about the consequences of this public relations strategy on a segment of the host culture—the Louisiana Cajuns. Therefore, cultural tourism or public relations scholars should view it as an important jumping off point for further investigation.

¹⁸⁷ Peter Hamilton, "Grunig's Situational Theory: A Replication, Application and Extension" *Journal of Public Relations Research* 4 (1992): 123.

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APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Questions:

1. Why did LOT choose to target Canada as one of its key international markets?
2. Who were the major players involved in the public relations/marketing activities?
3. What aspects of Louisiana were highlighted to the Canadian tourism market? Why?
4. How did LOT highlight the cultural ties between French-speaking Canadians and Louisiana?
5. Why was it important to highlight the cultural ties between French-speaking Canadians and Louisiana?
6. Did LOT include the Cajun community in its marketing efforts? How? If so, what impact, if any do you think this had on the community?
7. What were the original goals and objectives of tourism officials regarding the Canadian tourism market?
8. What methods did LOT employ to attract English-speaking Canadians?
9. In the past five years, what percentage of Canadian visitors to Louisiana was French-speaking and what percentage was English-speaking?
10. How successful were LOT's efforts to attract Canadian tourists to Louisiana?
11. What methods did LOT use to evaluate its success?
12. What was the overall economic impact of Canadian visitation to Louisiana from 1995-2000?

13. Judging by the original goals and objectives, was the campaign considered a success?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW #2

Why did LOT choose to target Canada as one of its key international markets?

Purely simply we took a look at what U.S. Department of Commerce numbers were projecting for growth from the Canadian market and recognized that was expected to be one of the fastest growing markets in the decade to follow 1995 to 2005, and as a result we recognized that Louisiana had a special opportunity because of the long term relationship that exists between Canada and Louisiana, the fact that we were once part of the New France territory, the family ties, the historical ties, the cultural ties, and we recognized there was a lot of potential in that market so we aggressively began to pursue travelers from the Canadian market. As part of the New France territory, which once extended from Quebec to New Orleans, there was a strong tradition of trade relations and family linkage between Louisiana and eastern Canada, and as a result we really began to explore the links, at the Congres Mondial Acadian, that was one of the events that took place in 1995, then again in 1999, we really began to realize there were so many similarities, culturally, from a food perspective, just from all aspects of culture that tied us together very strongly with our Canadian counterparts and we really thought that was a natural marketing opportunity to take advantage of that and we have been really pleased with the results. Clearly that led to our investment in the Montreal Jazz Festival and will lead into next year's development of the New France festival, which will take place in Quebec City, which is a festival that celebrates the whole territory of New France, a history festival, over a five-day period that celebrates New France territory from Quebec

city to New Orleans. The state will be a featured partner, will have a Louisiana stage and a Louisiana area with food, music, arts, crafts, cultural exhibits on the river front in Quebec city.

How has LOT highlighted the cultural bonds?

Well the first thing we did was we took the initiative and hired representatives to represent LOT in both the French-speaking market and the English-speaking market. And secondly, we realized there was a strong need for air service as a way to make ease of access one of the key issues we felt we needed to address, we were able to secure meetings with Air Canada and provide them with a number of documents and information about travel trends and opportunities that existed and we were able to convince Air Canada to start service to New Orleans in the fall of 1998, and as a result we began to really focus on cultural links that bind Louisiana and Canada together and that ranges not only from family traditions and the Acadian exile that took place, but we have the number one selling recording artist, the number one selling artist in Quebec is Zachary Richard, he's from Louisiana, and so there are a number of musicians from Louisiana who are incredibly popular in Quebec, as a result of that as a result of the family connections as a result of the similarities that exist between the food and the sort of jois de vivre that we have that they also have, an appreciation for the cultural aspects that we are so proud of, outdoor recreation is a big big part of the Canadian life, same thing in Louisiana, fishing, hiking, biking, hunting, both soft and hard adventure, an appreciation for art, for music, for nature, an appreciation for good food, those are strong links.

What aspects of Louisiana are highlighted the most to French-speaking Canadian markets?

The music. The food. The outdoor recreation.

Does LOT highlight the Cajun culture to a specific area?

We do. We highlight the Cajun culture to the French-speaking Canadians in Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, we do a lot of the trade activities and a lot of the advertising activities that we do highlight our Cajun influences, some Cajun music, Zydeco music, we bring Cajun chefs and musicians up from Louisiana to participate in festivals and activities, there is a very strong emphasis on Cajun and Zydeco music. Works out well, that is why Zachary Richard is so popular in Quebec. And interestingly if you go to Canada and you listen to some of the traditional Acadian music, it sounds the same, it sounds just like Cajun music there is clearly a strong music link, a lot of the Babineaux, the Robicheaux, the Sonniers if you go to Quebec or French-speaking Canada and you see the same names.

Are the public relations initiatives different when LOT is targeting English-speaking Canadians?

Yes. They are two different markets. It's like tailoring your message for New York as opposed to California, if you're going after the California market you don't have the same message that you use for New York. The same thing for Canada, Canada is a massive country, so eastern Canada is very different from western Canada. For example, next week we will be in Toronto at the Hot and Spicy Blues Festival, emphasis on New Orleans? Emphasis on that there is a lot to see and do in Louisiana, it's part of the United States, tax-free shopping, golfing, more like the U.S. consumer message is delivered to

the Western Canada market, whereas for Eastern Canada, its culture, history the linkage between the two areas, Eastern Canada and Louisiana, it's two different markets.

Why was it important to highlight the cultural ties between the French-speaking Canadians and Louisianans?

Because they're authentic, they exist, they're real, there's a strong connection, you go to Eastern Canada, and you mention Louisiana and peoples eyes light up. "Oh, Louisiana, I love Louisiana, I read about it, I've always wanted to go there."

There's a strong emotional link between the Eastern Canadians and Louisiana.

It's a dream that people have of visiting Louisiana, same with the Cajuns who wish to visit Eastern Canada or France, same thing when you go to France, there's that instant, automatic, connection and bond that exists between, France, Eastern Canada and Louisiana, had French rulers, all once paid allegiance to the French king.

Is the Cajun community involved in the marketing efforts?

Yes we do as much as we can. We utilize Cajun musicians, Cajun Chefs, Cajuns who speak Cajun French, to help us deliver that message, we do, the biggest exposure we have been able to get is the last couple of years at the Montreal Jazz Fest. And we bring a number of Canadian journalists on an ongoing basis on familiarization tours of Louisiana.

What impact does highlighting their culture have on the Cajun community?

I think there's a re-awakening of pride in the Cajun community, not just because of what we do at LOT, but it certainly contributes to it, when they see in the newspaper that we are number one in the country in growth of the Canadian tourism market, I think if; you are Cajun, it makes you proud, I'm not Cajun, but my boss is and she is real proud, she's a wonderful ambassador for us, across the board mass marketing of the

Cajun culture, this re-awakening is not happening because of us, what we are doing is using the Cajun to authenticate what we are doing, reminding the Eastern Canadians that there is a strong bond that exists, I think it works very well, it makes people proud.

For so long the Cajun culture was repressed, ridiculed, was an example of what not to do and now every thing Cajun is hot, it's nice, there's nice to see a resurgence of pride in the Cajun culture, census data, coverage in The New York Times.

Judging by the original goals and objectives, was the campaign considered a success?

Both strategies are successful in their own way.

How successful were LOT's efforts to attract Canadian visitors to Louisiana?

Based on the numbers we have been very successful.

VITA

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