

# THE MDT CY26 MARKETING STRATEGY



# WHERE WE'RE GOING

- Our Goals
- The Competitive Landscape
- Research & Travel Trends
- Opportunities & Advantages
- The Strategy for 2026
- The MO DMO Planning Worksheet

# OUR GOALS

(EVERY YEAR...)



**BRING MORE TRAVEL  
\$\$\$ INTO MISSOURI**  
(i.e., out-of-state traveler spending)

**KEEP MORE TRAVEL  
\$\$\$ IN MISSOURI**  
(i.e., in-state traveler spending)

IN ORDER TO  
DO THAT, **WE NEED TO**  
**IMPROVE SHARE**

The percentage of all trips in the Central U.S. that are visits to/within Missouri.

AND IN ORDER  
TO DO THAT, **WE NEED TO**  
**SHIFT PERCEPTION**

How travelers perceive Missouri as a destination compared to other states.

PERCEPTION IN TERMS OF

**BRAND**

What Missouri *represents* as a travel destination.

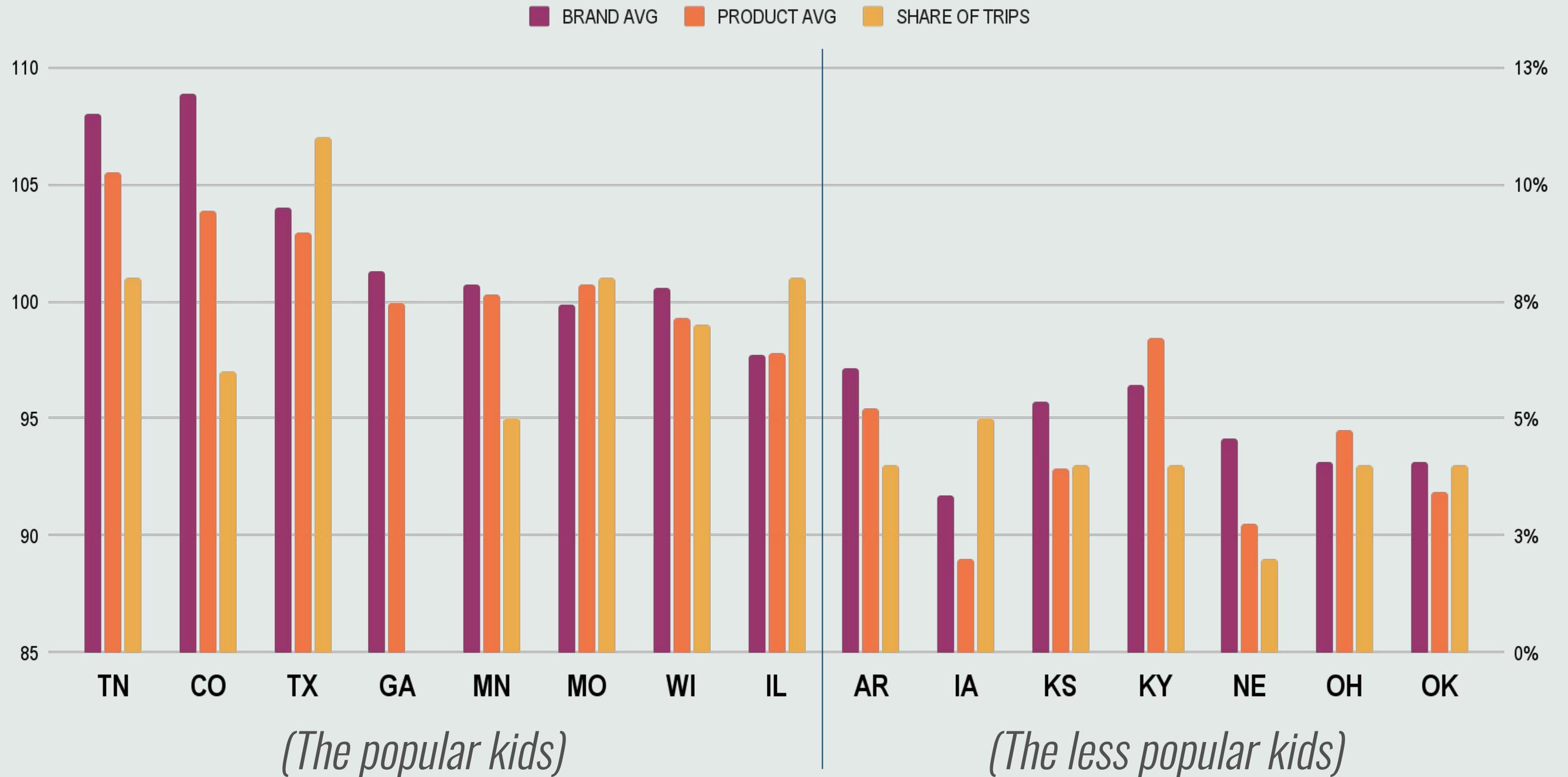
AND

**PRODUCT**

What Missouri *offers* as a travel destination.

*(as measured by SMARInsights)*

Because the states with the most *positive perception* tend to have the *highest share* of trips.



THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

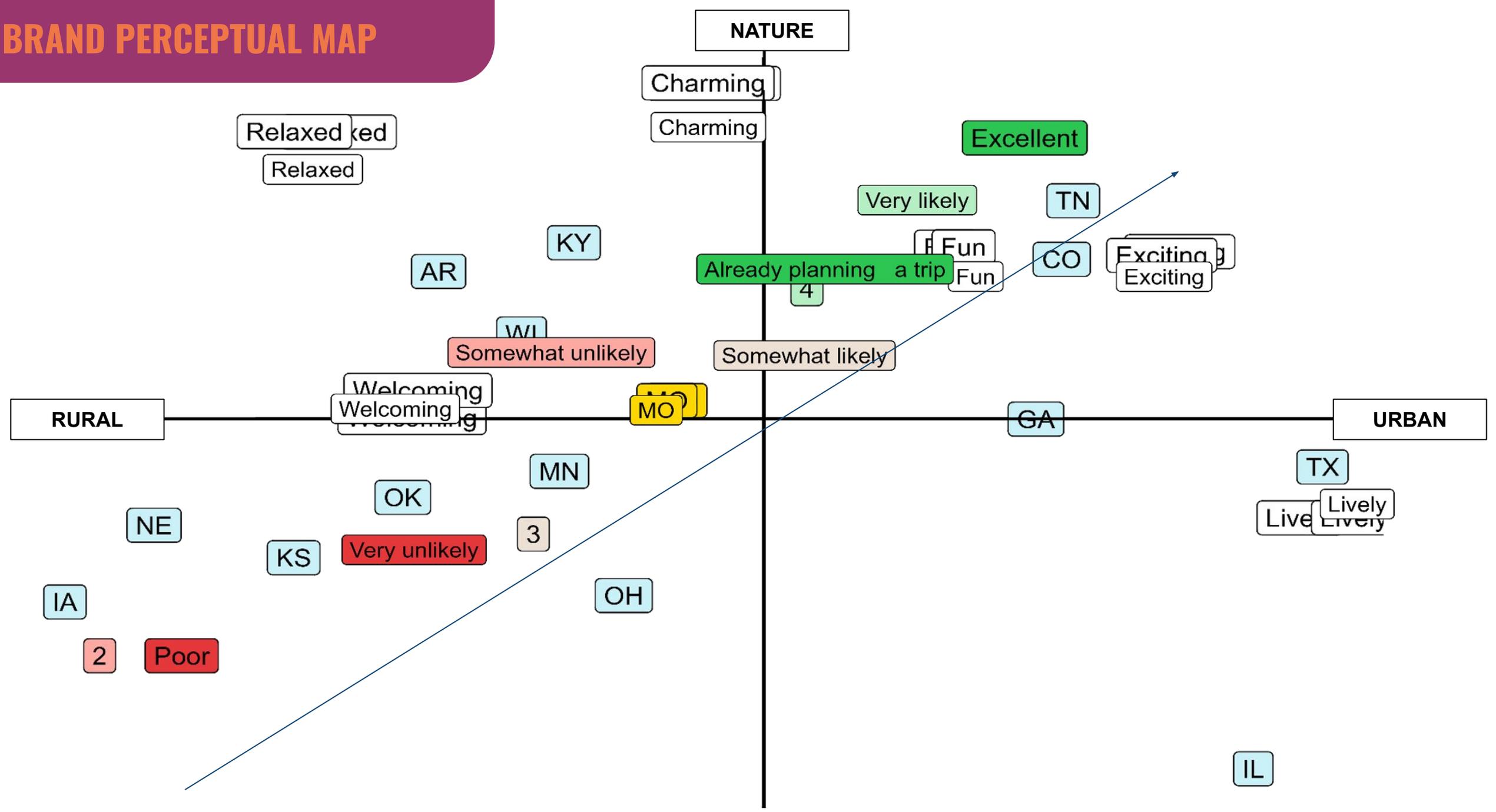
# What travelers think about states' travel "brand" & "product" ...

THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

		TN	CO	TX	GA	MN	MO	WI	IL	AR	IA	KS	KY	NE	OH	OK
BRAND	Welcoming	106	104	98	98	103	101	102	92	99	98	100	100	103	95	97
	Relaxed	102	105	94	95	101	102	104	87	107	100	103	100	102	94	101
	Fun	110	112	108	102	99	99	102	99	98	87	93	95	88	94	88
	Charming	110	107	100	104	102	100	103	92	99	95	94	101	95	92	92
	Lively	114	110	113	106	96	99	96	108	91	82	89	93	84	92	91
	Exciting	111	117	113	103	99	99	96	102	94	82	91	95	87	89	89
	Intelligent	103	107	102	101	105	99	101	104	92	98	100	91	100	96	94
PRODUCT	Fishing & Boating	100	98	97	92	111	104	107	90	104	90	87	101	90	93	92
	Affordable	100	82	94	95	99	103	103	85	102	106	102	105	103	102	102
	Winery Trails	104	102	99	97	95	103	98	98	93	92	92	102	91	92	88
	Good Value	102	91	96	96	101	102	102	88	101	101	100	102	100	100	99
	Sporting Events	93	99	109	103	102	101	99	107	83	82	96	94	86	102	89
	Breweries & Distilleries	108	108	99	93	97	101	105	96	87	87	93	113	91	93	85
	Family Fun	107	106	101	97	101	101	102	92	96	89	92	98	90	95	92
	Golf	95	96	102	103	96	101	101	96	95	99	97	97	96	96	94
	Variety of Entertainment	111	103	107	103	96	101	95	104	91	83	90	94	85	96	90
	Road Trip	108	105	100	97	101	101	101	95	99	90	93	99	92	94	95
	Cultural & Historical	105	99	108	105	96	100	93	102	95	87	94	99	92	94	98
	Quaint & Interesting Small Towns	103	101	96	99	101	100	103	92	101	100	97	102	99	97	96
	Exciting Attractions & Destinations	110	111	107	103	98	100	97	100	93	79	89	95	85	94	88
	Outdoor Recreational Activities	104	114	101	95	105	100	102	90	101	88	91	100	93	92	95
	Outdoor Adventure	107	117	101	94	108	100	104	86	104	90	90	102	91	89	93
	New Activities	105	111	104	100	101	100	100	99	96	88	92	96	90	93	91
	Lively City Experiences	109	101	110	107	99	100	90	111	84	81	91	91	82	95	88
	Nightlife & Entertainment	113	102	112	107	94	100	91	110	87	82	90	92	84	94	89
	Wide Variety	108	109	108	102	100	100	98	102	93	82	89	95	86	95	89
	Shopping	107	101	108	104	102	100	95	109	93	88	96	92	87	96	89
Beautiful Scenery	110	115	97	100	106	100	103	89	104	89	89	103	89	90	91	
Food & Drink	105	102	111	103	99	99	97	109	91	87	95	97	91	93	90	
Romantic	113	116	100	104	98	99	98	99	102	87	90	95	89	89	90	

# BRAND PERCEPTUAL MAP

THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

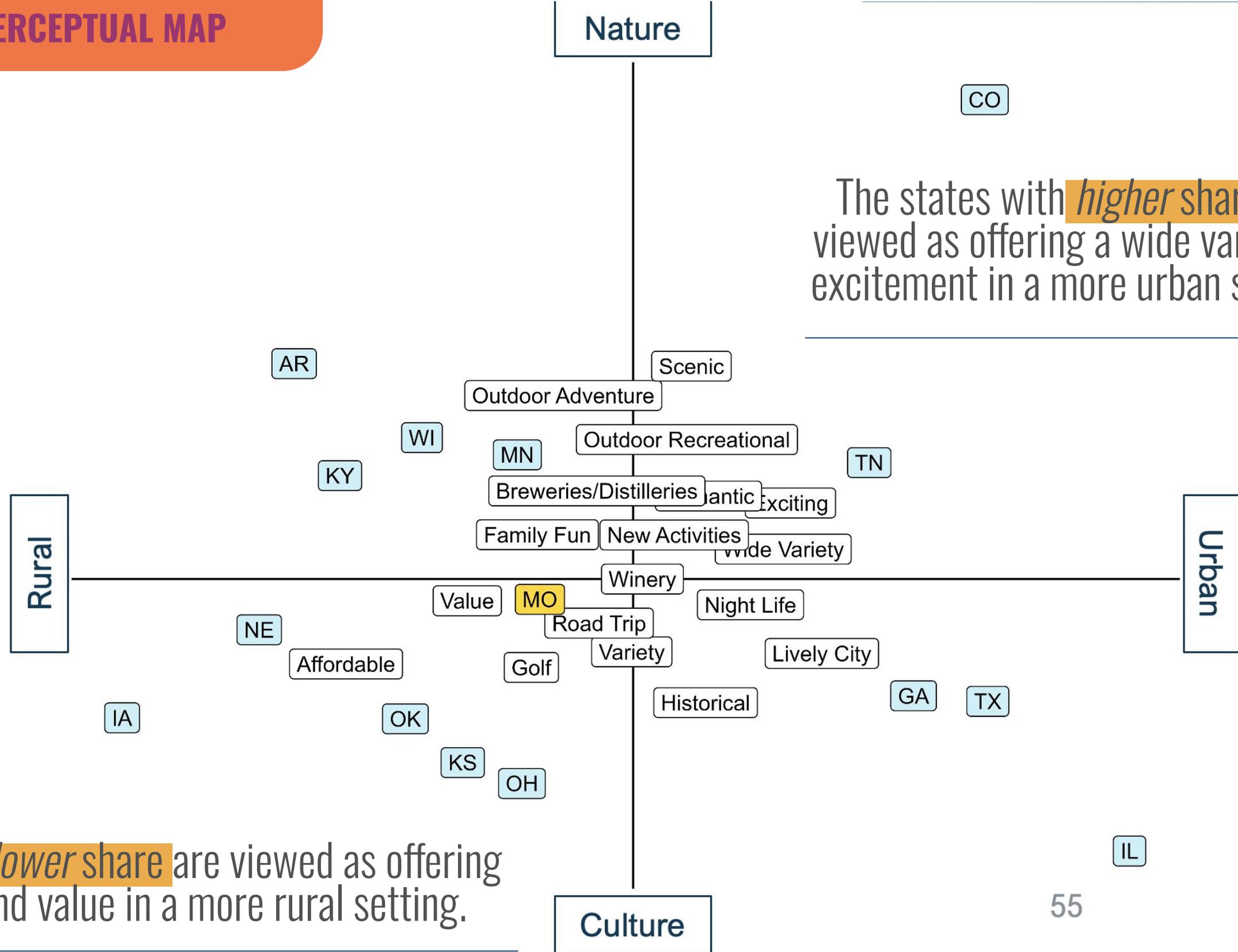


The more that someone saw Missouri as an urban/nature blend of fun & excitement, the **more positive** their perception, and the **more likely** they were to visit.

CULTURE

# PRODUCT PERCEPTUAL MAP

THE COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE



The states with **higher share** are viewed as offering a wide variety of excitement in a more urban setting.

The states with **lower share** are viewed as offering affordability and value in a more rural setting.

## Relevant trends we've spotted in the industry...

**71%**  
OF US  
TRAVELERS

Looking for  
relaxation and  
stress relief<sup>1</sup>

**56%**  
OF GLOBAL  
TRAVELERS

Want to travel  
to rest and  
recharge<sup>2</sup>

**61%**  
OF US  
TRAVELERS

Will drive five  
hours or less  
on their next  
trip<sup>2</sup>

**72%**  
OF U.S.  
TRAVELERS

Indicate cost  
is their top  
travel  
concern<sup>1</sup>

**20%+**  
OF GLOBAL  
TRAVELERS

Sports or  
music event  
was the  
reason for  
travel<sup>2</sup>

**80%+**  
OF GLOBAL  
TRAVELERS

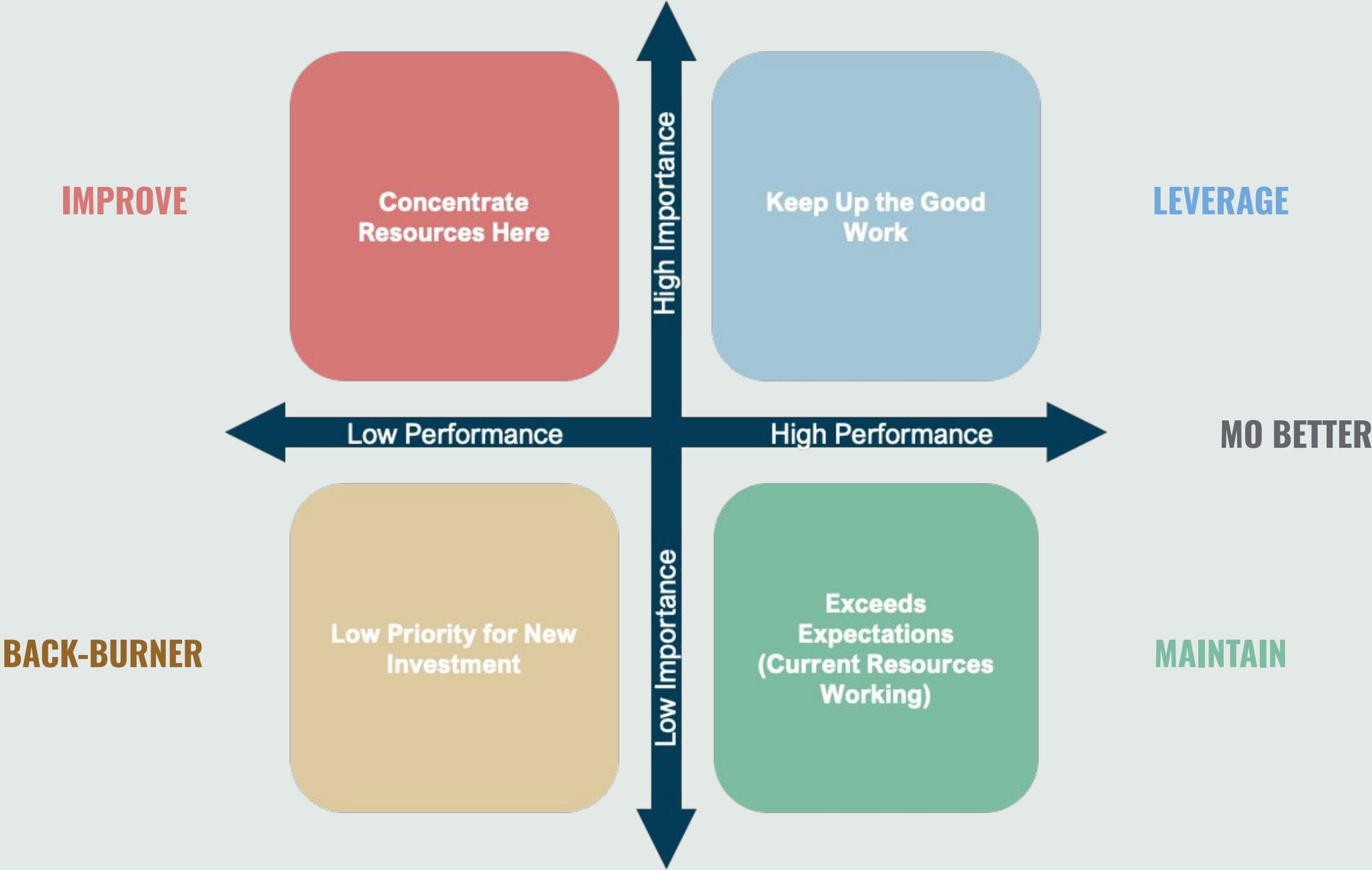
Influenced by  
music or  
sports event<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [beach.com](https://www.beach.com)

<sup>2</sup> [hilton.com](https://www.hilton.com)

<sup>3</sup> [chase.com](https://www.chase.com)

# Where the research indicates we should focus...



1 Why they come

2 What else they do when they're here

	SCHEDULED ANCHOR (56-75%)	CORE ACTIVITY (41-55%)	SECONDARY ACTIVITY (34-41%)	ADD-ON ACTIVITY (14-33%)
<b>POPULAR</b> (15%+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family event or activity</li> <li>Attending entertainment or live shows (music festival / concert)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family attractions (zoos, water parks, etc.)</li> <li>Visiting a theme park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visiting state parks</li> <li>Museums/cultural events (science, technology, art, African American, childrens)</li> <li>Visiting a city or city attractions</li> <li>Touring historic sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shopping (local/nat'l)</li> <li>Dining at unique, local restaurants</li> <li>Driving tours or scenic drives</li> <li>Visiting quaint attractions and small towns</li> </ul>
<b>EVENTS</b>				
<b>COMMON</b> (6-14%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attending a professional sporting event</li> <li>Attending a reunion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fishing, boating or other water activities</li> <li>Gambling/casinos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canoeing, rafting or kayaking</li> <li>Attending a festival or fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Route 66 activities</li> <li>Visiting caves</li> <li>Visiting breweries &amp; distilleries</li> <li>Visiting wineries</li> <li>Biking, mountain biking, hiking trails</li> </ul>
<b>EXPERIENCES</b>				
<b>NICHE</b> (<6%)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amateur or school-sponsored sporting event</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participating in sports such as golf, tennis or pickleball</li> <li>Hunting</li> <li>Motorcycling</li> <li>Agritourism (orchards, pumpkin patches, mazes, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visiting planetariums and observatories</li> <li>Visiting a place that was the site of a film or TV show</li> <li>Attending a film festival</li> </ul>

THE KEY IS AT THE INTERSECTION OF

**OPPORTUNITIES**

AND

**ADVANTAGES**

Traveler mindsets, interests and behaviors, as well as the travel landscape, economy, etc.

Things that Missouri already has a strong reputation for, or boasts as a strong but underappreciated offering.

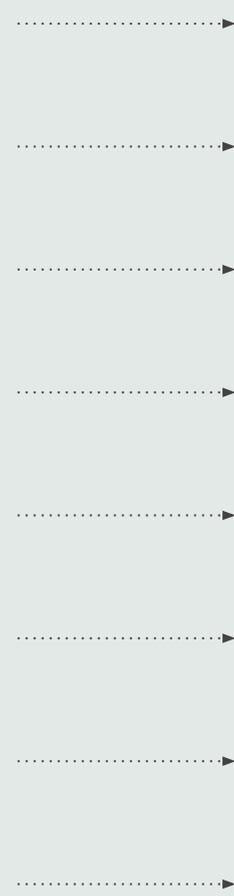
# THE INTERSECTION OF

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Seeking stress relief
- Shorter, closer, driveable trips
- Saving money
- Traveling for big events
- Family travel activities
- State parks, water activities and caves
- Food, drink and sports
- Demand for urban/nature blend of fun & excitement (TN, CO, GA, TX)

## ADVANTAGES

- Welcoming, relaxing, charming variety
- Geographic proximity
- Value and affordability
- 2026 events, games, concerts & conferences
- Strong reputation for family fun
- Best in the Midwest
- Offering is stronger than reputation
- Unique balance of cities and outdoor activities



## THE STRATEGY FOR 2026

Part 1: **BRAND** What we want Missouri to *represent*.

Be seen as  
the *easy, fun, customizable*  
**“GETAWAY THAT GETS YOU”**

A personalized combination for however you like to get away (i.e., **your travel M-0**).  
We get that you need a getaway. And, we get that not everyone needs the same getaway.

In Missouri, *we get you*, and no matter what kind of getaway you need, *we got you*.  
Missouri lets you mix and match whatever it is you want/need to escape the everyday.

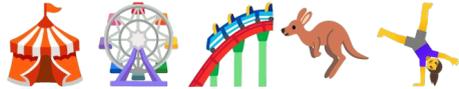
# THE STRATEGY FOR 2026

Part 2: **PRODUCT** What we want MO to be seen as *offering*.

Be seen as offering  
the ideal setting for *big events* and *tailored experiences*

 **GAME DAY GETAWAY**

**CONCERT WEEKEND** 

 **FAMILY FUN**

**CUTE, COOL & LOCAL** 

 **NIGHTLIFE & ENTERTAINMENT**

**LAKES & RIVERS** 

 **OUTDOOR ADVENTURE**

**NATURE RELAXATION** 

 **FOOD & DRINK**

**HERITAGE & HISTORY** 

# THE STRATEGY FOR 2026

## Part 2: **PRODUCT** What we want MO to be seen as *offering*.

### **GAME DAY GETAWAY**

Come for the *game*, stay for the weekend, explore the state, follow your fandom.



### **CONCERT WEEKEND**

Come for the *show*, stay for the weekend, explore the state, follow your fandom.



# THE STRATEGY FOR 2026

## Part 2: **PRODUCT** What we want MO to be seen as *offering*.

### **FAMILY FUN**

Theme Parks, Zoos, Aquariums,  
Family Entertainment Centers, Festivals

### **CUTE, COOL & LOCAL**

Boutiques, Antiquing, Historic Districts,  
Trendy Dining, Art, Urban Parks, Festivals

### **NIGHTLIFE & ENTERTAINMENT**

Clubs, Bars, Standup, Live Shows,  
Concerts, Casinos, Festivals

### **LAKES & RIVERS**

Boating, Marinas, Lake Resorts, Fishing,  
Swimming, Float Trips

# THE STRATEGY FOR 2026

## Part 2: **PRODUCT** What we want MO to be seen as *offering*.



### **OUTDOOR ADVENTURE**

Hiking, Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing,  
Zip-Lining, Off-Roading, Caving

### **NATURE RELAXATION**



Glamping, Nature Paths, Botanical  
Gardens, Bird-Watching, Scenic Drives



### **FOOD & DRINK**

Wineries, Breweries, Distilleries, BBQ,  
Fine Dining, Greasy Spoons, Festivals

### **HERITAGE & HISTORY**



Route 66, Civil War, Museums,  
Landmarks, Genealogy, Tours, Festivals

The image shows the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts at dusk. The building's facade is composed of large, curved, metallic panels that reflect the ambient light. The sky is a deep blue, and the building's interior lights are visible through the openings. In the foreground, there is a concrete wall with the name of the center engraved on it. The overall mood is serene and modern.

# THAT'S MY M-O "SEASON 3" SNEAK PEEK

KAUFFMAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS



The background image shows a natural landscape with a rocky riverbed and a waterfall. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. The text is centered and reads:

**THE MO DMO**  
**2026 PLANNING WORKSHEET**

# MDT 2026: STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

## PART 1: LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES & BRAND POSITIONING

### OPPORTUNITIES

**What emerging trends are shaping your area?**

- Identify local shifts in traveler behavior.
- Which trends have the highest growth potential?

### ADVANTAGES

**What is stronger than its reputation?**

- Identify "hidden gems" with global appeal.
- List local flavors found nowhere else in MO.

### GETAWAY

**How do you help travelers unplug from the "noise"?**

- What are the biggest stressors that visitors are escaping?
- What "unpolished" local experience feels like a reset?

### EASY

**Can you be the "Easy Button" for major hubs?**

- What are three ways to make visits more "frictionless"?
- How can you market yourself as an "essential side-trip"?

### CUSTOMIZABLE

**What "Personalized Combination" can you offer?**

- Define a few "paths" (e.g., "History Nut" vs. "Local Foodie").
- Create mix & match ideas: Trail @ 10 a.m., diner @ noon.

### POV EXPERIENCE

**How can they see themselves in your town?**

- Describe your town using only sounds and smells.
- Leverage the trusted voices of local legends.

# EXPERIENCE ECOSYSTEM

## PART 2: PERSONAS, EVENTS & NICHE MARKETS

### GAME DAY

**Can you be a retreat from game day chaos?**

→ How can you be somewhere to explore before or after?

### CONCERT

**What would make them extend their trip?**

→ What "hidden gem" would be the ideal balance to the show?

### FAMILY

**What is your must-do spot for kids?**

→ What can you offer for three-generation extended family travel?

### CUTE/COOL/LOCAL

**Where does unique and charming meet trendy?**

→ What are the most Instagrammable spots in town?

### NIGHTLIFE

**What does a night out on *your town* look like?**

→ What can you offer groups of adults looking for evening fun?

### WATER

**Where can they spend time on the water?**

→ What are some "views from the water" that no one knows about?

### ADVENTURE

**What outdoor "micro-adventures" are around?**

→ What are the "best-kept secret" trails or thrilling climbs, rides or jumps?

### NATURE

**What natural spaces can provide them a reset?**

→ Where can they unplug, relax and connect with nature?

### FOOD/DRINK

**What beloved local flavors are "must-taste"?**

→ What are the locals eating and drinking on the average day?

### HERITAGE

**What's your tangible slice of "Classic MO"?**

→ How can you connect to the nostalgic moments of USA 250 & R66 100?



# QUESTIONS?

ASK AWAY!

