OLD SYDNEY SOCIETY

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY

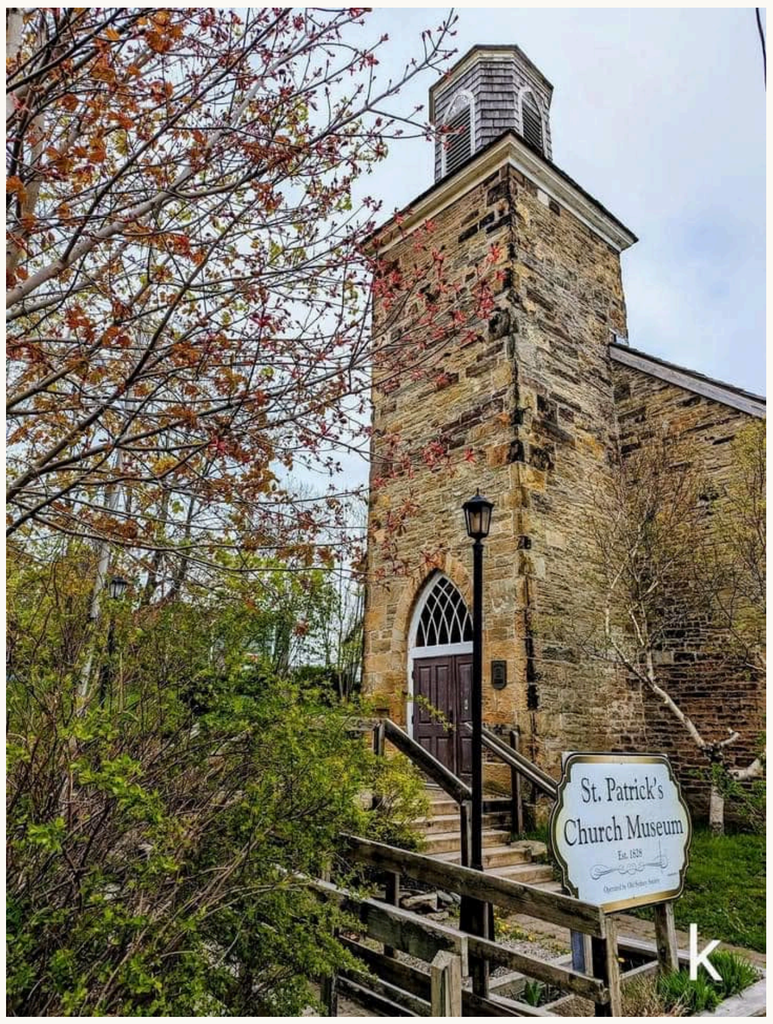
Preserving history. Growing community. Building digital connection.

Sydney, Nova Scotia • 2026

A historic organization with a living mission

Local heritage, community access and public engagement

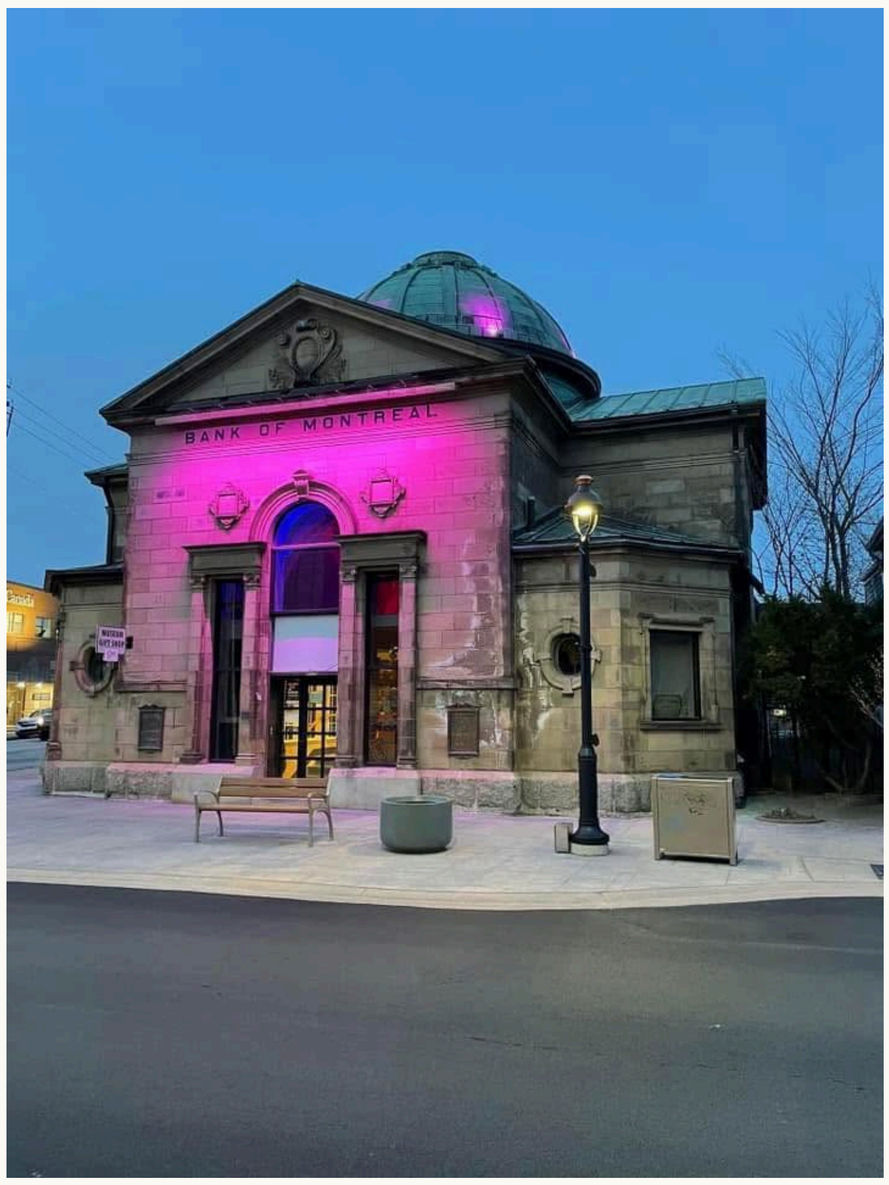
The Old Sydney Society is a non-profit volunteer organization located in Sydney, Nova Scotia. It was founded in 1966, and its goal was to preserve local history, landmarks, and culture. The Old Sydney Society operates multiple museums. They include the Sydney Museum (in the former Bank of Montreal Building), St. Patrick's Church Museum and Cossit House Museum as well as Jost house. Some of the services they offer are museum exhibits, hosting various events, a long-standing lecture series, and conducting historic walking tours.



As a non-profit organization, the Old Sydney Society faces challenges related to limited staffing, government funding, and marketing resources. Currently, many museums are feeling the impact of a reduced budget and public engagement. The Old Sydney Society has limited online visibility and social media engagement. They also face challenges related to volunteer recruitment, public awareness, sponsorship opportunities, and membership growth. At the same time, Old Sydney Society is trying to increase public awareness, visitor engagement, memberships, donations, and community participation through digital platforms.

Digital outreach can support revenue and participation

Low-cost opportunities to build awareness and action



The Old Sydney Society hosts a lecture series, and this would be a good way to increase revenue by having a local business sponsor a lecture series. An increase in membership would be beneficial as well. Doing a targeted email campaign asking for donations from individuals who are interested in what The Old Sydney Society does and who are passionate about the society would be a low-cost option. Another challenge the Old Sydney Society is experiencing is a lack of volunteers. With this digital marketing strategy, we are hoping to increase awareness and attract additional volunteers.

This digital marketing strategy focuses on providing low-cost recommendations to improving OSS's online presence and audience engagement, community participation, memberships, sponsorship opportunities, donations and volunteer recruitment and will help generate some additional revenue.

Strengths provide credible stories to share

Established heritage assets already support a strong digital foundation



STRENGTHS

Some of the strengths of OSS are its strong local history and heritage value. OSS has buildings that are in central locations, and it is now in its 60th year as a long-established reputation with Cape Breton University. For digital marketing, OSS already has an existing Facebook page, YouTube channel, and an established website that can serve as a central platform for sharing information, promoting events, and attracting visitors. They host various museum activities, and one main activity is the long-standing lecture series. In addition, OSS has a unique collection of historical resources and community stories that can be transformed into engaging digital content for social media platforms.

Capacity and consistency are the main digital gaps

Clear ownership and reliable updates will matter

WEAKNESSES

On the other hand, there are some weaknesses in regard to their online presence as nobody is essentially responsible for this piece. They have limited social medica engagement, low online visibility outside the local community, and the OSS website isn’t currently working. The Executive Director position had been vacant, but the position was filled starting June 1, 2026. They have a limited number of volunteers, and it is sometimes hard to find volunteers. Their current digital content is not updated consistently, which may reduce audience engagement and limit opportunities to attract new visitors. In addition, the organization has limited staff capacity to manage multiple marketing channels and monitor online performance.



Growth opportunities come with real operating constraints

OPPORTUNITIES

Some opportunities for OSS include the growth of their digital marketing platforms and also the growth of TikTok and Instagram as it is a short form of content. One big opportunity is cruise ship tourism and the various possibilities to connect with these tourists. Partnerships with CBRM would be a great area to expand and increase colorations for office space rentals. Another opportunity would be a student employee to help with the marketing plan. OSS could also collaborate with local tourism organizations, schools, and community groups to increase awareness and expand its audience. The growing interest in cultural and heritage tourism presents an opportunity to attract both domestic and international visitors through targeted digital campaigns.

THREATS

Some threats that face OSS are the fact that they have a limited marketing budget and have been experiencing funding cuts. They also have competition from other local tourist attractions and there are always fluctuations in the number of tourists. Building maintenance would also be a threat, especially with the cost of everything increasing and the amount of funding decreasing. Having only a limited number of volunteers is also a threat as they rely on them heavily, especially during peak season. Economic uncertainty and rising operating costs could further reduce available funding for programs, marketing activities, and facility maintenance.

Audience priorities span visitors, residents and supporters



PRIMARY AUDIENCE

- Cruise ship tourists
- Local families
- History enthusiasts
- Seniors/community members
- Local businesses

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

- Students
- Potential sponsors
- Visitors from outside Nova Scotia
- Ex-pat Cape Bretoners

The strategy targets measurable engagement and support



- Increase Facebook engagement by 30% within 6 months
- Increase membership awareness number of memberships by 15%
- Promote OSS events to tourists and local community for increased uptake and participation
- Encourage increased and potentially annual donations and develop a means to attract sponsorship participation
- Increase office space rentals



Social Media Strategy

PLATFORMS

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- YouTube

CONTENT

- Historical photos
- Local history posts
- Event promotion
- Volunteer/member stories
- Benefits of being a volunteer/member/sponsor
- Short videos

POSTING FREQUENCY

- 2-3 posts per week during peak season (could be less during non-peak times)
- 2 short videos weekly
- This date in history event weekly



The website should make participation easier

Clear paths for events, support and visitor planning

- Improve event visibility by creating a dedicated events page and regularly updating upcoming lectures, exhibitions, and community activities.

- Add clear donations and membership buttons throughout the website to encourage community support and increase online conversions.

- Implement mobile-friendly updates to ensure visitors can easily access information and navigate the website on smartphones and tablets.

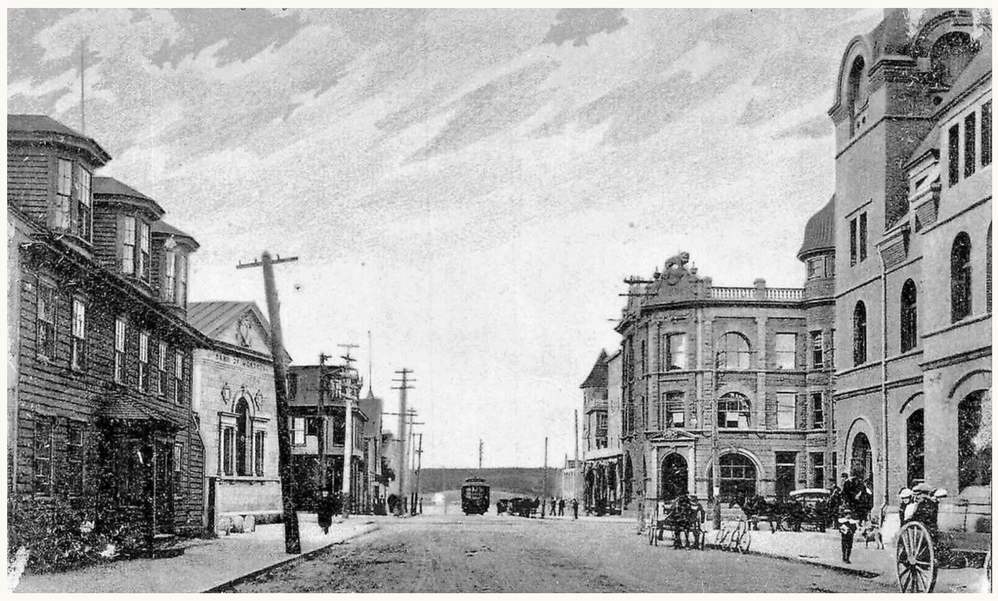
- Include online registration forms for events, memberships, and volunteer opportunities to make engagement easier for visitors.

- Add links to social media platforms and encourage visitors to follow OSS for updates, events, and historical content.



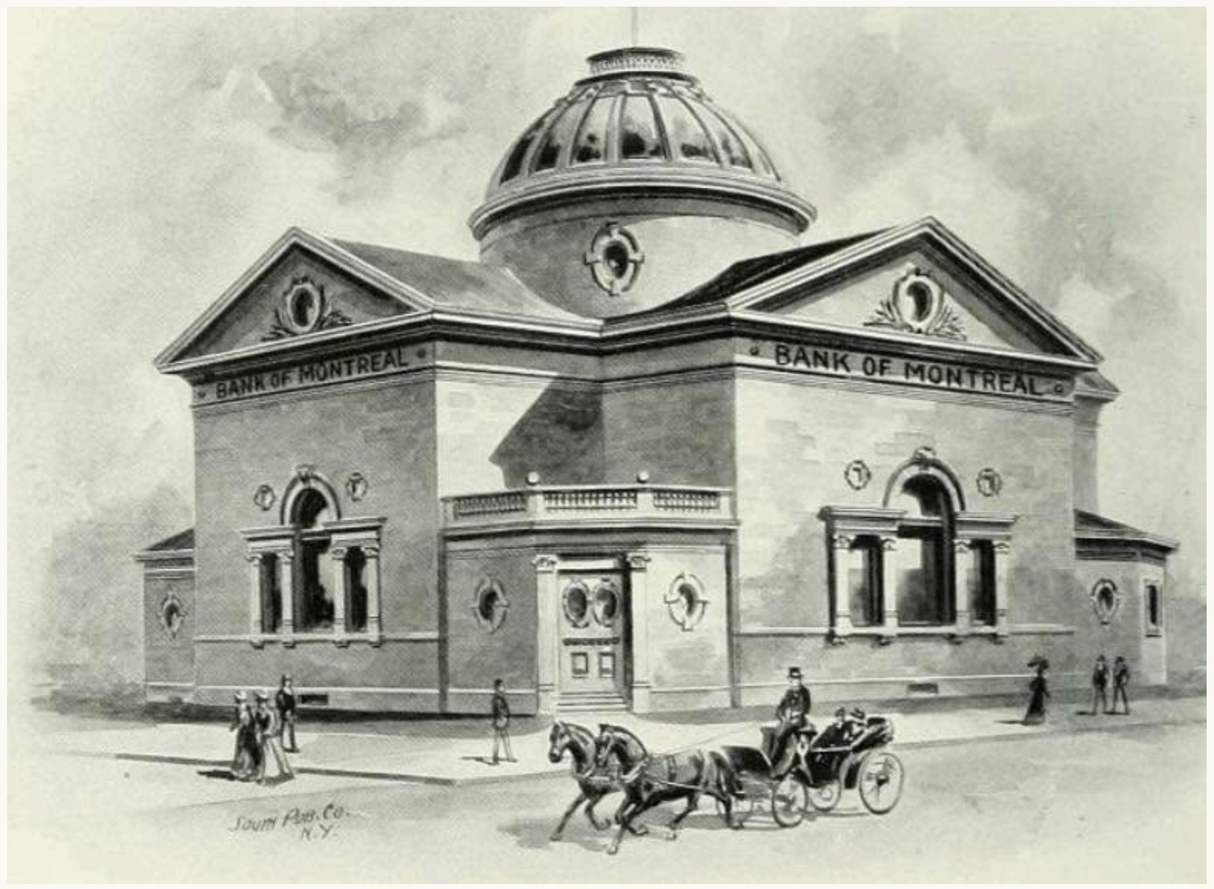
Digital heritage content can extend reach beyond the museum

- Create a dedicated cruise visitor section highlighting nearby attractions, walking tours, and museum experiences for tourists arriving in Sydney.
- Develop virtual museum tours and exclusive video content that visitors can access for a small fee (e.g., under $5), allowing remote audiences to experience local history and heritage from anywhere.
- Create an online historical photo archive featuring old photographs of Sydney and Cape Breton, encouraging community engagement and preserving local heritage in a digital format.
- Feature “Then and Now” photo comparisons showcase how local landmarks and neighborhoods have changed over time, creating engaging content for both residents and tourists.
- Include digital storytelling sections highlighting historical artifacts, community memories, and oral histories to strengthen visitor connections with local heritage.





Email can build repeat contact at low cost

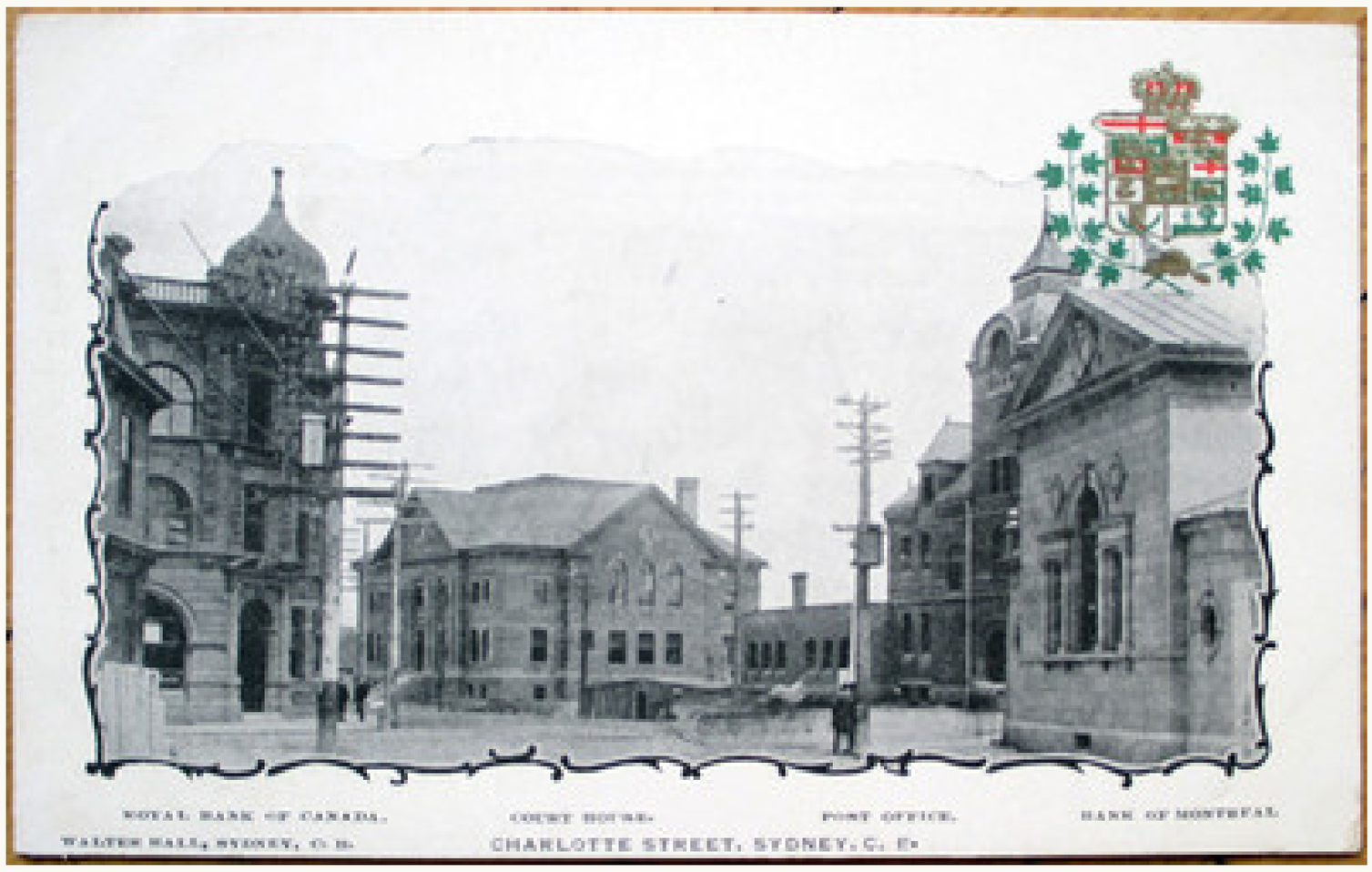


- Monthly newsletters (template design: research and creation of 4 editions during the summer and the preparation of others for fall/winter distribution)

- Event reminders (branded template so audience knows immediately they are from OSS)

- Membership campaigns (begin with work around membership development and to work on the membership database to ensure it is up to date and with current email and contact information)

Cruise visitors are a focused seasonal opportunity



CRUISE TOURISTS

- Promote attractions before cruise season
- Destination Cape Breton- further develop this relationship to ensure engagement with local tourism campaigns and promotion of OSS offerings
- Collaborate with local tourism pages (CBRM, Destination Cape Breton, CBC)
- Use hashtags related to Nova Scotia tourism

A simple publishing rhythm keeps channels active

PLATFORM	CONTENT TYPE	FREQUENCY
Facebook	Event updates	3 times/week
TikTok	Short history videos	2 times/week
Instagram	Historical photos	3 times/week



Content Plan / Example Content

Consistent, repeatable formats can make publishing manageable while giving audiences a reason to return.

The plan is designed around low-cost capacity

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

We recommend lost cost options. There are currently 9 students hired through various summer grants. One of the students will be assigned membership information updates, another to manage the development of communication content. Other students will be Heritage Interpreters and can also assist with research, content creation and programming development and execution.



Performance tracking connects activity to outcomes

- Number of people attending speaker series
- Number of sponsorships for speaker series
- Number of hits on website
- Number of new memberships
- Number of new volunteers
- Number of new followers on social media platforms
- Number of YouTube followers

