



Intelligent Imagination™

RIVERFRONT SHOPS OF DAYTONA BEACH 2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

**ROUGH
DRAFT**

THE VERANDA

814 State Road A1A North

Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

T 904.285.5669

W StrikeGold.com

DAYTONA BEACH DDA
2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY2

II. METHODOLOGY5

III. CONSUMER FINDINGS5

IV. MERCHANT FINDINGS 11

V. ADDENDUM..... 15



DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning in February of this year, a series of quantitative research surveys were launched among specific constituencies regarding Riverfront Shops of Daytona Beach area marketing for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Board. In partnership with the City of Daytona Beach staff, this study was developed, deployed, and analyzed pro bono by GOLD Marketing. GOLD also donated two special VISA gift cards to encourage consumer participation. The findings from this study will now provide actionable data and insight to strengthen the Riverfront Shops Strategic Marketing Plan (SMP) moving forward, and they will help the DDA Board and City Staff construct a tactical plan and budget for FY 2025-2026.

The quantitative surveys were used to collect critical data. They engaged large statistically significant samples of Riverfront Shops customers, prospects, and businesses – especially retail merchants. Such statistical analysis enabled this methodical data-collection process that will help the City of Daytona Beach maximize marketing Return on Investment (ROI), with better-informed decision-making and increased marketing innovation. The data collected is also highly reliable, with a very low Margin of Error.

The DDA's database of 2,875 past and present customers and prospects (*whose demographics match the area's most frequent customers*) was used in the consumer survey, which engaged 773 respondents. The merchant survey employed the DDA's database of 121 Riverfront Shops merchants, and it engaged 44 respondents.

All groups of respondents combined ranked online marketing tools as the most effective at driving customers to the area, as well as to merchants' particular places of business. (*Specifically, search and social media advertising and e-marketing were cited as the most effective marketing tools.*) This 2025 finding matches the results seen in the two prior years. Additionally, special events once again proved to be a major driver of initial consumer visitation, receiving a slightly higher ranking among merchants.

Previously, the leading deterrent to increasing visitation frequency and trial was the widespread sentiment that the area was somewhat unsafe. To address this, the City launched an innovative security program that led to fewer prospects and customers citing safety as a barrier in the 2025 survey than in past years. And merchants felt safer too.

The charts that follow elaborate on each of these key findings, and the full research report provides detailed information that supports them. Marketing conclusions are also included throughout the report.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these findings and this report.

DAYTONA BEACH DDA 2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consumer Research Data

The following illustrates how consumers – both *customers* and *prospects* – evaluated the Riverfront Shops of Daytona Beach and its marketing:

A	TOP VISITATION REASONS*	2024	2025
		1. Shopping	Dining
		2. Dining	Shopping
		3. Special Events	Esplanade

* Among Customers

B	BEST FORM OF AREA MARKETING*	2024	2025
		1. Online Marketing*	E-Marketing
		2. E-Marketing	Online Marketing*
		3. Special Events	News Articles

* Among Prospects & Customers

*NOTE: Search, social media & web marketing

C	BEST OVERALL DOWNTOWN EVENTS*	2024	2025
		1. Art Festival (HAF)	Art Festival (HAF)
		2. Wine Walks	Food Trucks
		3. St. Paddy's Day	Wine Walks

* Among Customers

*NOTE: The Christmas Parade and holiday events ranked low

D	BIGGEST VISITATION CHALLENGES*	2024	2025
		1. Safety & Security	Reduced by 64%
		2. Condition/Appearance	Reduced by 72%
		3. Additional Parking	Reduced by 12%

* Among Prospects & Customers

*NOTE: Parking was not a major concern. The lack of variety is the biggest challenge.

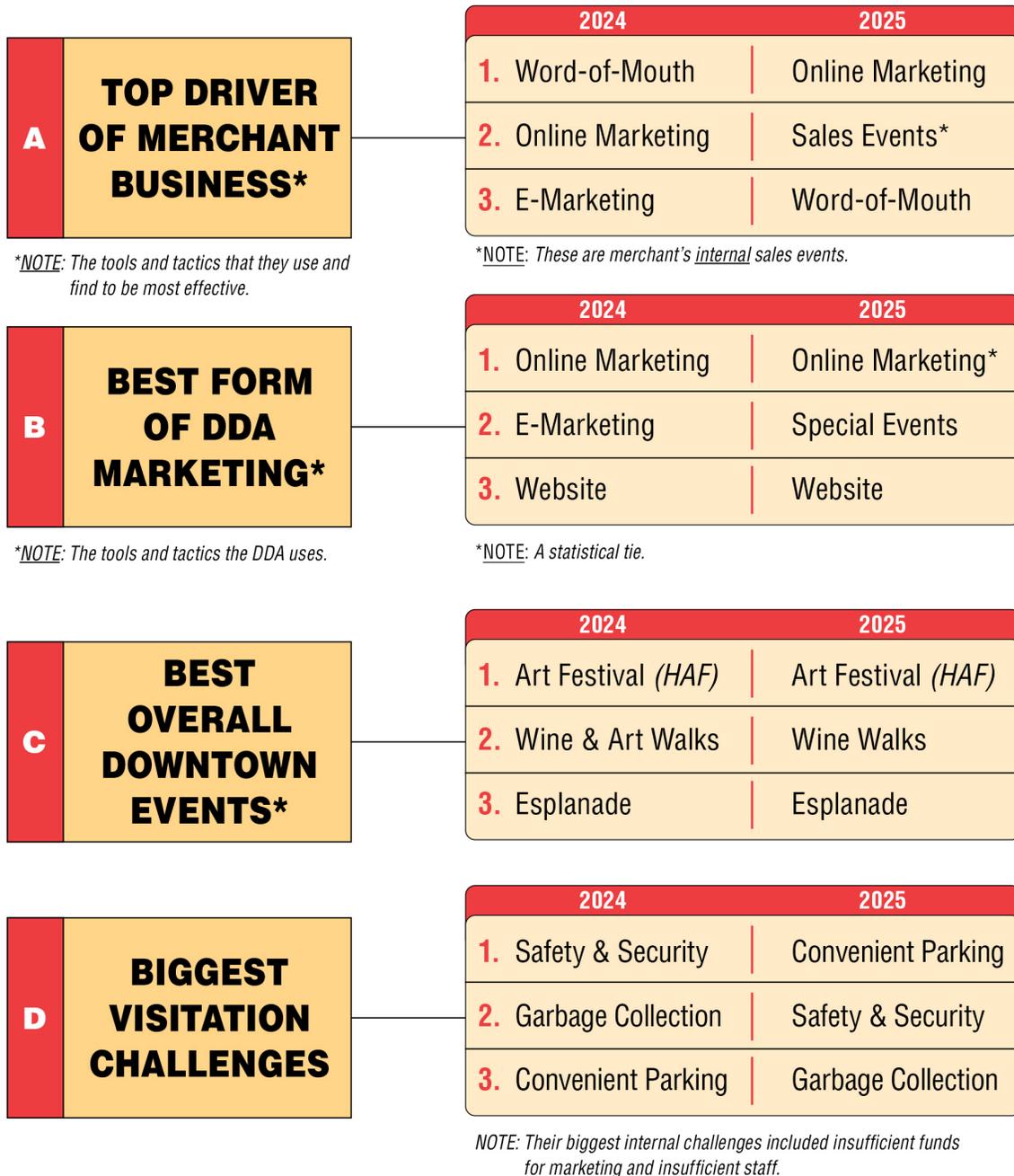
DAYTONA BEACH DDA 2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Merchant Research Data

The following illustrates how *merchants* evaluated the Riverfront Shops of Daytona Beach in statistical research. Preferences among merchants and consumers differ in some cases:



DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

II. METHODOLOGY

GOLD's most recent research studies were conducted among Riverfront Shops customers, prospects, and merchants in February/March 2025. The purpose of these surveys was to strengthen the area's strategic planning and future marketing initiatives. This report presents the key findings for each survey, with the annual results analyzed and compared to those of the past. Importantly, GOLD has once again provided these research and strategic planning services pro bono.

THE APPROACH

GOLD prepared and launched two surveys – one aimed at consumers (*customers and prospects*) and another for Riverfront Shops merchants. To encourage participation, GOLD donated two \$100 Visa Gift Cards for drawings among merchant and consumer respondents. In keeping with the statistical research Central Limit Theorem (CLT) and the law of large numbers, this study endeavored to engage a very large sample, as the results become more accurate as the sample size increases. Plus, the Krejcie and Morgan formula was applied to adjust the samples' tabulation values.

The *consumer survey* was sent multiple times to the DDA's opt-in consumer e-mail database of 2,875 customers and prospects, engaging 773 respondents (26.88%). The *merchant survey* was distributed multiple times as well to the DDA's opt-in database of 121 Downtown business owners and managers, engaging 44 respondents (36.36%). Overall, the 2025 response rate was similar to previous years.

NOTE: *The total percentage of responses may exceed 100% due to rounding, plus, as participants could in some cases select or list as many activities as they wanted. And using CLT, the Margin of error at the 95% confidence level was 3.01 pts for the consumer populations surveyed, but considerably higher among merchants, which has been considered in our analysis.*

III. CONSUMER FINDINGS

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customers were asked to evaluate the Riverfront Shops area based on several criteria. They included the overall appearance of the area; the appearance of the businesses visited; the safety of the area; the variety of amenities found; the quality and variety of the events they attended; and their most recent experience overall. In every case, better than 5-out-of-10 gave a rating of *very satisfied* or *extremely satisfied* as follows:

2025

- CONDITION/APPEARANCE OF THE AREA – 83.03% (1.31 pt. increase, which is flat);
- CONDITION/APPEARANCE OF BUSINESSES – 75.9% (67 pt. increase);
- AREA SAFETY – 70.27% (37.76 pt. increase);
- VARIETY OF RESTAURANTS, SHOPS, AMENITIES – 62.50% (which is flat);
- QUALITY OF RESTAURANTS, SHOPS, AMENITIES – 70.54% (6.35 pt. increase);
- VARIETY OF EVENTS – 63.40% (9.65 pt. decrease); and
- QUALITY OF EVENTS – 68.47% (3.95 pt. increase).

Page 5

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

III. CONSUMER FINDINGS

(Continued)

2024

- CONDITION/APPEARANCE OF THE AREA – 81.72%;
- CONDITION/APPEARANCE OF BUSINESSES – 79.57%;
- AREA SAFETY – 32.51%;
- VARIETY OF RESTAURANTS, SHOPS, AMENITIES – 61.29%;
- QUALITY OF RESTAURANTS, SHOPS, AMENITIES – 64.19%;
- VARIETY OF EVENTS – 73.05%; and
- QUALITY OF EVENTS – 64.52%.

IMPORT: Consumer satisfaction levels increased, with 84.82% being very or extremely satisfied overall. Most significant was consumers' feeling that the area was safe, as prospects largely saw safety as a deterrent to visiting the area just a year ago. Additionally, positive sentiment continued to grow among customers for the condition and appearance of the Downtown area, as well as for the quality of the events offered.

VISITATION FREQUENCY

Customers were asked how many times they visited the historic Downtown Riverfront Shops of Daytona Beach during the last 12 months for shopping, dining, special events, or other leisure activities. The leading responses were:

2025

1. 10+ VISITS – 33.04% (*down 16.98%*);
2. 5-9 VISITS – 31.24% (*down 14.50%*); and
3. 1-4 VISITS – 10.71% (*down 62.06%*).

2024

1. 10+ VISITS – 39.80%;
2. 1-4 VISITS – 36.54%; and
3. 1-4 VISITS – 28.23%.

IMPORT: As noted later in this report, the overall number of visitors to the Riverfront Shops continued to increase, while the frequency and number of trips decreased and remain improvement opportunities. In short, customers need to have more reasons to visit more frequently.

VISITATION REASONS

Customers were asked to identify their main reasons for visiting, and the top responses were: *(Please note that customers could provide multiple answers.)*

2025

1. DINING – 68.75% (*up 10.23%*);
2. SHOPPING – 41.07% (*down 6.85%*);
3. ESPLANADE – 34.82% (*flat*); and
4. SPECIAL EVENTS – 25.89% (*flat*).

2024

1. SHOPPING – 62.37%;
2. DINING – 44.09%;
3. SPECIAL EVENTS – 33.23%; and
4. ESPLANADE – 26.88%.

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

III. CONSUMER FINDINGS

(Continued)

IMPORT: Dining and Shopping continued to be the leading reasons for visiting the Riverfront Shops (*with dining experiencing a 10.23% pt. increase*). Special Events and the Esplanade, while somewhat flat, continued to draw many visitors. (*Other significant reasons for visitation included business meetings and sporting events.*)

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The following demonstrates changes in levels of key concerns among prospects and infrequent customers (*those who visited 1-2 times in the last 12 months*), as they are critical in order to increase both visitation and sales. The percentage of those who had a negative impression of the area regarding safety and appearance was much lower than just a year ago:

<u>NEGATIVE IMPRESSIONS</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2014</u>
SAFETY <i>(63.74% less negative)</i>	28.83%	79.51%	33.60%	52.50%	66.15%
CONDITION/APPEARANCE <i>(74.03% less negative)</i>	15.18%	58.84%	25.28%	39.50%	45.82%

IMPORT: The perceptions of customers – especially prospects and infrequent customers – changed greatly. The percentage of those who were displeased with the safety of the area and the condition and appearance of the area dropped significantly.

NOTE: *Safety concerns were reduced by 63.74% and condition/appearance by 74.03%. Parking is not shown as it was not evaluated every year. Additionally, the concern about ample and convenient parking was less of a concern among customers in the 2025 survey than it was in 2024 and 2023.*

VISITATION INTENT

Customers and prospects were asked how likely they were to visit the Riverfront Shops area within the next month. Overall, in 2024, better than 7-out-of-10 customers indicated that they were **very likely** or **extremely likely** to do so, and 8-out-of-10 in 2025.

MARKETING ENGAGEMENT

Customers and prospects alike were asked what forms of **Riverfront Shops marketing** they recalled seeing or hearing during the last 12 months. (*Certainly, they could not recall tools or tactics that were not utilized.*) Only 2.8% had not seen or heard some form of marketing. The following were what both groups combined recalled the most:

2025

1. E-MARKETING (*E-Blasts/E-Newsletters*) – 71.03% (*down 19.08%*);
2. ONLINE MARKETING (*Social/Search Advertising/Posting*) – 65.41% (*flat*);
3. ARTICLE/NEWS STORY – 31.75% (*down 14.09%*); and
4. BROCHURE/FLIER – 15.89% (*flat*).

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

III. CONSUMER FINDINGS

(Continued)

2024

1. ONLINE MARKETING (*Social/Search Advertising/Posting*) – 87.78%;
2. E-MARKETING (*E-Blasts/E-Newsletters*) – 67.55%;
3. ARTICLE/NEWS STORY – 36.96%; and
4. BROCHURE/FLIER – 14.29%.

Additionally, the Riverfront Shops website continued to be viewed by more than 7-out-of-10 regular customers.

IMPORT: E-marketing and online marketing continued to be considered the most effective forms of marketing. With the exception of TV, offline marketing such as print continues to be less important to customers and prospects. And even though website visitation and utilization have increased (*as proven by Google Analytics*), the website needs to be refreshed to have greater impact.

The marketing tool that both customers and prospects use frequently that is not part of the Riverfront Shops marketing campaign is Internet/Streaming TV (*also known as “OTT”*). This has not been utilized, as it is unaffordable with the present marketing budget.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Customers were asked to cite the *special events* that they had attended during the last 12 months in the historic Downtown Riverfront Shops area. The most popular answers were:

2025

1. HALIFAX ART FESTIVAL – 70.60% (*a 7.59% pt. increase*);
2. FOOD TRUCKS – 29.23% (*a 21.47% increase*); and
3. WINE WALKS – 18.46% (*6.86% decrease*).

2024

1. HALIFAX ART FESTIVAL – 65.62%;
2. WINE WALKS – 19.82%; and
3. ST. PADDY'S DAY – 13.79%.

St. Paddy's Day, Cinco de Mayo, and Christmas events averaged 4.61% in 2025 compared to 6.94% in 2024. Other events mentioned at very low levels in 2025 included Tortugas Games, car shows, and music events.

NOTE: *Lower recall for events that occurred longer ago could be due to a common misperception found in research known as “recall bias.”*

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

III. CONSUMER FINDINGS

(Continued)

IMPORT: The biggest gains among consumers were for Food Truck Rallies, followed by the Halifax Art Festival, which ranks the highest every year. The attendance (*and perception*) of the Christmas events fell in 2024, and they continued to have low recall in 2025 despite substantial budget increases in recent years.

DEMOGRAPHY

Every adult demographic cohort throughout the catchment area was represented in the survey, either as a customer or a prospect. In 2025, the majority of customers— especially frequent customers – were women (69.81%) 65+ (47.66%) with much higher-than-average Household Income (HHI), with the largest group earning \$100k or more. These demographics have varied somewhat over the years based on the timing of the surveys.

IMPORT: The population of respondents was similar to those who participated before, and who are the most frequent Riverfront Shops customers. Still, the number of younger constituents who visit the historic Downtown area continues to increase.

GEOGRAPHY

The *geographic areas* with the largest number of respondents follow. These origins were similar among frequent customers and prospects, with the most frequent customers residing closer to the Riverfront Shops.

2025

1. DAYTONA BEACH (*Including Daytona, Daytona Beach Shores, South Daytona*) – 53.74%;
2. PORT ORANGE – 19.50%; and
3. ORMOND BEACH (*Including Ormond-By-The-Sea*) – 19.19%.

2024

1. DAYTONA BEACH (*Including Daytona, Daytona Beach Shores, South Daytona*) – 51.67%;
2. PORT ORANGE – 19.12%; and
3. ORMOND BEACH (*Including Ormond-By-The-Sea*) – 18.62%.

New Smyrna Beach and the greater Orlando area also comprised roughly 5% of the respondents. And origin markets with 3% or less participation included the communities of Edgewater, Flagler Beach/Palm Coast, Florida's Panhandle, Holly Hill, St. Augustine, and Vero Beach/Merritt Island. “Snowbirds” and others who indicated an address outside of Florida were also represented.

IMPORT: The changes in geographic origins of respondents largely reflected the changes in geographic targeting of Riverfront Shops marketing, with more attention being given to close-in areas (*which is why Orlando continues to be soft*). Overall visitation increased, however, even though the primary geographic areas have remained the same.

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

III. CONSUMER FINDINGS

(Continued)

KEY CONCLUSIONS

As would be expected, customers who had the highest opinion of the area also visited it more frequently. The City has made tremendous strides in many areas over the last few years, with *safety* and *parking* in the historic Downtown area being cited as less significant concerns – especially among infrequent customers and prospects. The City’s enlistment of paid security officers patrolling the area seems to have increased the sense of security among patrons and has fostered positive “word-of-mouth.” An improvement opportunity cited year-after-year, but more so in 2025, was the need to increase the variety of offerings in the Riverfront Shops area. *(More restaurants, shops, and events.)*

The key marketing tools and tactics that were recalled the most by both customers and prospects alike were *social media/online advertising* and *e-marketing*, which should continue to be campaign mainstays. However, the data suggests that the campaigns should be updated. Customers and prospects also continued to use television (*primary Internet/OTT TV*), but the media costs to achieve the requisite frequency, along with the production costs to create commercials, remain key barriers given the DDA’s limited budget and focus on special events.

Regarding traditional forms of media, billboard and radio advertising were used for a short time to promote the Halifax Art Festival and both were recalled. However, other traditional forms of media were not used during the holiday season as in years past. Additionally, rack brochures need to be used consistently to engage more prospects, especially out-of-town visitors in local lodging.

Special events continue to represent the largest marketing spend by the DDA. Two of the events that were preferred and attended the most were once again the Halifax Art Festival and Wine Walks, with the largest gains coming from Food Truck Rallies. The Riverfront Esplanade also continues to increase its visitation and overall awareness.

There are important differences between what merchants believe are the most productive forms of DDA marketing and what customers have indeed cited as highly effective. Therefore, it is recommended that a synopsis of this report be sent to each merchant.

Lastly, the Riverfront Shop website’s utilization continues to grow in every key measure, according to Google Analytics. However, as reported the last few years, top-of-mind awareness for the website and URL are not increasing at the same pace, which suggests it is time for the site to be refreshed. Upgrades will also increase site security, enhance visitors' experience, and improve site searchability and search engine rankings.

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

IV. MERCHANT FINDINGS

The largest group of merchant survey respondents in 2025 (*4-out-of-10 each*) were *shops/retail stores* and *restaurants*. The remainder consisted of the other business types located in the Riverfront Shops area. They included attractions/entertainment companies, galleries/museums, professional service companies, and others. The merchant findings that follow appear as broader numerical expressions than the specific percentages shown for customers, as the base of respondents was smaller. Overall, the survey provides critical, actionable insights for the City of Daytona Beach and DDA to consider moving forward.

MERCHANT MARKETING

Merchants revealed that the *most effective* means of marketing their businesses were:

2025

1. ONLINE MARKETING: 9-out-of-10 (93%);
2. INTERNAL SALES EVENTS: 8-out-of-10 (81%); and
3. WORD-OF-MOUTH: 5-out-of-10 (52%).

2024

1. WORD-OF-MOUTH: 9-out-of-10;
2. ONLINE MARKETING: 8-out-of-10; and
3. E-MAIL MARKETING: 4-out-of-10.

IMPORT: The use of online marketing among merchants increased significantly, with 9-out-of-10 citing its regular application. In contrast, various forms of traditional marketing (*such as print or radio advertising*) scored very low.

The biggest *marketing challenges* merchants expressed were the same as in previous surveys, including the *lack of funds* for effective marketing cited by 8-out-of-10, and a *more advanced website* cited by 5-out-of-10 (54%). A number of respondents also indicated a desire to place Internet TV. The biggest *operational* challenge merchants cited was insufficient staff cited by 4-out-of-10 (42%), which was not as high as found in 2024. Challenges in the historic Downtown area cited by merchants included:

2025

1. SAFETY AND SECURITY: 4-out-of-10 (39% – a 50% decrease);
2. CONVENIENT PARKING: 6-out-of-10 (62% – a 47% increase); and
3. GARBAGE COLLECTION AND CLEANLINESS (*of Downtown area streets and sidewalks*): 2-out of-10 each (23% – a 45% decrease).

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

IV. MERCHANT FINDINGS

(Continued)

2024

1. SAFETY AND SECURITY: 8-out-of-10 (78%);
2. GARBAGE COLLECTION AND CLEANLINESS *(of Downtown area streets and sidewalks)*: 6-out of-10 each (57%); and
3. CONVENIENT PARKING: 4-out-of-10 (42%).

IMPORT: The need for greater safety and security continued to be critical among merchants, although to a much lesser degree than in 2024. Merchants indicated a need for additional convenient parking and better garbage collection much more than customers did.

DDA MARKETING

The DDA *tools and tactics* that merchants cited as the most effective were similar to those that they use themselves. Likewise, those that they thought were least effective were largely those that they did not use themselves. This was a change from past years, when merchants mostly indicated tools and tactics that they did not use themselves *(such as broadcast advertising and public relations)*. The marketing tools and tactics that merchants selected as most effective were:

2025

1. SPECIAL EVENTS *(Esp. HAF and Wine Walks)*: 10-out-of-10 (98% – a 188% increase);
2. ONLINE MARKETING *(Esp. Search, Social Media Adv. & Posting)*: 10-out-of-10 (97% – a 44% increase and a statistical tie with special events);
3. RIVERFRONT SHOPS WEBSITE: 6-out-of-10 (57% – a 19% increase); and
4. E-NEWSLETTERS: 4-out-of-10 (39% – a 28% decrease).

2024

1. ONLINE MARKETING *(Esp. Search, Social Media Adv. & Posting)*: 7-out-of-10 (67%);
2. E-MARKETING *(E-Blasts and E-Newsletters)*: 6-out-of-10 (57%).
3. RIVERFRONT SHOPS WEBSITE: 5-out-of-10 (48%); and
4. SPECIAL EVENTS *(Especially HAF and Wine Walks)*: 3-out-of-10 (34%).

IMPORT: Many of the tools and tactics that merchants believed to be the most effective are also those that are used by the DDA the most, primarily online marketing *(Google and social media advertising and posting)* and special events. Fewer respondents cited e-newsletters than in previous years, and indeed the open rate among merchants is much lower. Additionally, only one merchant was interested in participating in co-op advertising.

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

IV. MERCHANT FINDINGS

(Continued)

SPECIAL EVENTS

When asked what DDA-sponsored events were the most effective at driving traffic to the Downtown area and as a result to their place of business, merchants listed the following:

2025

1. ART FESTIVALS (*Esp. the Halifax Art Festival*): 8-out-of-10 (78% – a 26% increase);
2. WINE WALKS (*Incl. chocolate and beer walks*): 5-out-of-10 (53 – a 26% increase);
3. ESPLANADE EVENTS (*Incl. charitable events, runs, and more*): 3-out-of-10 (34% – a 26% increase); and
4. CHRISTMAS PARADE: 1-out-of-10 (13% – flat).

2024

1. ART FESTIVALS (*Esp. the Halifax Art Festival*): 6-out-of-10 (62%);
2. ART WALKS: 4-out-of-10 (42%);
3. WINE WALKS (*Incl. chocolate and beer walks*): 4-out-of-10 (42%); and
4. ESPLANADE EVENTS (*Incl. charitable events, runs, and more*): 3-out-of-1 (28%).

IMPORT: Art Festivals (*particularly the Halifax Art Festival*) continued to be the most cited by – and praised by – merchants by a significant margin. A recurring event that was selected by customers as among the best that was not cited by merchants was Food Truck Rallies. However, the rallies were significant draws for visitors to the Riverfront Shops area.

The Christmas Parade, along with other holiday events that were funded by the DDA, scored very low again among merchants, with customers preferring it somewhat more. One respondent's comments regarding this and many other events may be revealing: "Have more events when we're open for business than when we are not."

A number of merchants also expressed an interest in having more music festivals (*especially during daily hours*), but they wanted these performances to be better aligned with their hours of operation and their customers' tastes (*and presumably their own*), such as "The Great American Songbook." (*That is, the canon of influential and popular American standards often sung by Frank Sinatra era singers.*)

DAYTONA BEACH DDA

2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

IV. MERCHANT FINDINGS

(Continued)

MERCHANT COMMUNICATIONS

As in all previous merchant surveys dating back to 2014, participants were asked to indicate the best way for the DDA to communicate with them regularly and to receive their input. And since 2017, the overwhelming preference has been ***e-mail communications*** (such as regular e-newsletters). In 2023, 2024, and again in 2025, statistically 10-out-of-10 merchants preferred to receive e-mails versus meeting in person, with only one respondent each year wanting to meet in person and/or by video conference (such as Zoom or Teams).^{*} And they, along with their fellow merchants, are certainly invited and encouraged to attend the monthly DDA meetings to provide input. As previously stated, though, the newsletters need to be refreshed in order to attract and engage more merchants. Additionally, the e-mail addresses of all merchants should ideally be included in the DDA database. (A proposal was presented by GOLD to collect this information.)

***NOTE:** *The respondents who have preferred video conferences were generally not retail merchants.*

When regular, separate in-person meetings were held in the past, attendance was very low – even when free services and instruction were offered. Annual meetings had better attendance, although still modest. However, these were prior to the dissemination of frequent e-blasts and merchant newsletters.

***NOTE:** *Examples of past in-person meeting themes included: “How to create social media posts,” “How to conduct sales events,” “How to optimize your website,” “How to launch an e-marketing campaign,” and more.*

KEY CONCLUSIONS

The primary communications tools used should continue to be ***online marketing*** (including search and social media advertising) and ***special events***. The Riverfront Shops website must continue to be strengthened, with e-marketing refreshed to engage more merchants. The ***safety and security*** of both merchants and customers alike have improved, but they are still paramount. And improving ***garbage pick-up*** (and thus the appearance of the area) remains top-of-mind among merchants.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this report. We look forward to your questions and comments concerning these findings.

DAYTONA BEACH DDA
2025 STRATEGIC MARKETING RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared by GOLD Marketing • Thursday, March 27, 2025

V. ADDENDUM

