

2017 - 2018

# Marketing Plan



# Contents



## 5

### WELCOME

- About Visit Santa Barbara
- Mission
- Key Objectives
- Metrics
- Key Programs & Activities

## 12

### FACTS, FIGURES & FORECASTS

- Impact of Tourism
- Regional Highlights
- Lodging Forecast
- Research Highlights
- VSB Highlights





## 22

### ADVERTISING STRATEGY

- Recap of “Miss Nothing” Campaign Development
- Approach to FY 17-18
- Audience
- Geographic Priorities
- Messaging & Media

## 30

### DEPARTMENT PLANS

- Marketing
- Public Relations & Communications
- Group Sales
- Travel Trade
- Film Commission
- Membership









# Welcome

Dear Community Partners:

Visit Santa Barbara is looking forward to another productive year working together to promote the Santa Barbara South Coast as a premier destination for leisure and business travel. This Annual Marketing Plan details how we intend to build upon last year's progress to not only maintain visitation levels but also position the regional tourism industry for sustained future growth.

After a period of record growth, occupancy has leveled off, and, according to the South Coast Lodging Forecast, flat is the new up. That said, our research also reveals a handful of significant opportunities we can leverage to strategically increase business among key audience segments—from the super affluent worldwide to regional targets like the Bay Area and nonstop flight markets. Furthermore, timely promotional opportunities will enable us to capitalize on the unique selling points of The American Riviera® while putting a fresh lens on the destination.

An unprecedented big wave of new and expanded hotel and attraction product coming online creates an incredibly rich opportunity to shine the spotlight on Santa Barbara and drive demand. This new product, coupled with our collaborative community-wide efforts to enhance the visitor experience once they arrive in Santa Barbara, is ushering us into a significant period of reinvention. This is a prime time to refresh the brand and burnish Santa Barbara's already iconic image.

All of these factors inform our comprehensive, fully integrated 2017-18 Marketing Plan, which aligns all disciplines—advertising, content marketing, social media, public relations, travel trade, sales, film marketing, and industry and community relations—to the same high-priority objectives. Ultimately, we are reviving and upgrading how we portray the Santa Barbara experience to attract new and existing customers while ensuring tourism remains a thriving economic engine for our community.

Sincerely,

*Kathy Janega-Dykes*

President/CEO  
Visit Santa Barbara





VISIT  
**SANTA BARBARA**  
THE AMERICAN RIVIERA™

President/CEO **KATHY JANEGA-DYKES**

Vice President of Marketing & Strategy **JENNIFER WALKER**

Director of Sales **MICHELLE CARLEN**

Film Commissioner **GEOFF ALEXANDER**

Director of Communications **KARNA HUGHES**

Director of National Accounts **CATHERINE PUCCINO**

Director of Marketing & Events **NOELLE BUBEN**

Director of Digital Marketing & Content Development **JESSYLYNN PERKINS**

Administrative Manager **ANGELICA RAMIREZ**

Travel Trade Manager **JOCILYN SCHUMACHER**

Communications Manager **NATALIE BOVEE**

Industry Relations Manager **SARAH WARMAN**

Marketing Associate **ISABELLA MILL**

Sales Associate **DANIELLE METHMANN**

Tourism Coordinator **LINDSEY LIEBERKNECHT**

Industry Relations Coordinator **PAULINA WINE**

Regional Sales Representative (Northern California) **MARK FELDMAN**

Regional Sales Representative (Southern California) **SUZY KAY**



# About Visit Santa Barbara

Visit Santa Barbara (VSB) is a non-profit 501(c)(6) organization jointly funded by the City of Santa Barbara, the County of Santa Barbara, the South Coast Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) and by a membership of hospitality-related businesses. As the official destination marketing organization for the Santa Barbara South Coast, VSB is contracted by the City of Santa Barbara to market the area nationally and internationally as a premier destination for leisure and business travel.

VSB's Board of Directors is comprised of business owners and professionals who have the experience and willingness to serve the community beyond the scope of their demanding work schedules. Their volunteer responsibility includes steering company policy, building relationships with local government, interpreting the needs and interests of the community to the corporation and staff and determining the future course of Visit Santa Barbara's mission.

## Mission

The primary mission of Visit Santa Barbara is to enhance the economies of the City of Santa Barbara, South Coast communities and Santa Barbara County areas through tourism marketing that increases business revenue, tax revenue and creates jobs.

As one of Santa Barbara's largest industries, VSB is committed to the continued viability and growth of tourism, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all who live, work and play here.





# Key Objectives for 2017-2018



## 1 Maintain and Increase Overnight Stays

According to the MMGY Global 2016 Portrait of American Travelers (POAT) study, 40 percent of U.S. travelers are interested in visiting Santa Barbara. However, according to Destination Analysts Q3 Visitor Profile Study report, the vast majority of visitors to the Santa Barbara South Coast still represent day-trips (68 percent), originating primarily from short drive markets, such as Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura County.

The POAT study suggests there is an untapped opportunity to gain incremental overnight visitation by focusing on new geographic priorities outside the Los Angeles Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), such as Northern California and nonstop flight markets.

However, so as to not lose potential share to nearby competitive destinations, VSB must also remain dedicated to keeping Santa Barbara top of mind among Southern California residents by presenting compelling content and reasons for local visitors to stay overnight.

VSB should also prioritize audience verticals such as group, wine tourism, weddings and luxury who demonstrate a higher likelihood, and the financial means, to stay overnight and to assist in filling need periods.

## 2 Drive Demand for New Product & Diverse Experiences

For the first time in decades, Santa Barbara is fortunate to be experiencing a significant increase in hotel inventory, renovations and exciting new product.

Hotel projects such as Hotel Californian and the Harbor View Inn, and attractions like MOXI, The Wolf Museum of Exploration + Innovation, stand to transform lower State Street, giving visitors new reasons to consider Santa Barbara.

To remain competitive however, VSB must also explore innovative, creative ways to reposition existing Santa Barbara product and experiences to appeal to changing consumer behaviors and expectations for authentic travel experiences.





### 3 Maximize the Visitor Experience

Visitors are brand champions. And word of mouth has always been a compelling and trusted marketing tactic. But due to changes in digital technology, the influence of visitors on future travel is growing. Consider for example that in 2016, nearly half of all visitors to the Santa Barbara South Coast (45.9 percent) used the opinions of friends or relatives as a resource to plan their trip (compared to only 19.7 percent in 2013).

Today's consumers are equipped to reach exponentially larger audiences and demonstrate a desire and ability to share their experiences immediately, in effect making visitors to the Santa Barbara South Coast our best potential marketers.

To help ensure a positive visitor experience on all levels, VSB must take a proactive and intentional approach to align resources and further collaborate with community partners including Downtown Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Department, Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce, Santa Barbara Airport, and Santa Barbara Vintners to prompt, manage and amplify visitor endorsements and the destination story.

### 4 Influence Long-Term Development of the Destination and its Brand

Tourism is an economic engine for the Santa Barbara South Coast. The destination welcomes over 6 million visitors annually who generate \$1.5 billion in visitor-related spending. Without tourism, each resident in the Santa Barbara South Coast would need to spend an additional \$10,317 annually to maintain current economic standards.

To ensure tourism remains a bright spot on the economic horizon, VSB must actively participate in and contribute to the strategic planning for growth and sustainability of the visitor industry. Collaborating with local entities and stakeholders on topics including infrastructure, transportation, wayfinding, new product development and downtown improvements is critical to the long-term success of the visitor industry, and Santa Barbara's reputation as a world-class destination.

*Department plans have been crafted with these objectives in mind to ensure a common vision, voice and consistency in all that VSB does. To allow for adjustments to changing market conditions, select marketing plan objectives and/or tactics may change throughout the year.*



# Metrics

| PROJECTED GOALS: FY 2017-18  | RESULTS: FY 2016-17  |
|--|--|
| <b>Advertising/Marketing</b>   |  |
| *Impressions: TBD<br>Website unique visits: 3% increase y/y<br>Website page views: 5% increase y/y<br>Visitors Magazine Requests: 10,000<br>Enewsletter opt-ins: 7,000<br>**Social Media:<br>Awareness: 31,600,000 in reach<br>Interest/Affinity: 3,234,500 engagements<br>Action: 92,100 website referrals<br>Advocacy: 1,080,000 | Impressions: 123,823,646<br>Website unique visits: 868,989<br>Website page views: 2,508,016<br>Visitors Magazine Requests: 9,603<br>Enewsletter opt-ins: 6,593<br># social media followers:<br>Facebook: 229,335<br>Instagram: 63,591<br>Twitter: 32,589 |
| <b>Group Sales &amp; Travel Trade</b>  |  |
| Leads: Increase by 15% year-over-year<br>Room nights contracted: 52,000  | # of Leads: 431<br># of Bookings: 128<br>Room nights contracted: 48,684 (21,635 group/27,049 TT)   |
| <b>Membership</b>  |  |
| Total co-op advertising revenue: \$150,000<br>Membership count: 275<br>Membership Revenue: \$97,000  | Total co-op advertising revenue: \$137,698<br>Membership count: 276<br>Membership Revenue: \$97,471  |
| <b>Film</b>  |  |
| # of Productions: 170<br>Total Direct Production Spending: \$6,700,000<br># of Days: 310<br># of Room nights: 4,700  | # of Productions: 155<br>Total Direct Production Spending: \$6,173,500<br># of Days: 283<br># of Room nights: 4,295  |
| <b>Communications</b>  |  |
| Total media placements: 695<br>Total media impressions: 1,312,840,017  | Total media placements: 675<br>Total media impressions: 1,292,840,017  |

Results July 2016 – June 2017

\*Impressions to be determined upon approval of 17-18 media plan.

\*\*Social media metrics for 17-18 have shifted to focus on fan engagement and driving traffic to SantaBarbaraCA.com. Increased fan growth shifts to be a secondary priority.




# Key Programs & Activities

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>January - February</b></p> <p>Official Drink of Santa Barbara<br/>Cocktail Competition</p> <p>MPI Northern CA</p> <p>ACE San Francisco, CA</p>  | <p><b>March - April</b></p> <p>Meetings Industry Council</p> <p>i am Santa Barbara</p> <p>Film Commission Television &amp; Film<br/>FAM Tour</p> <p>NY Media Mission</p> <p>HelmsBriscoe Business Conference</p> <p>LMGI Awards</p> <p>LA Media Mission</p>  | <p><b>May - June</b></p> <p>International Pow Wow - Denver, CO</p> <p>Annual General Meeting &amp; Tourism<br/>Celebration</p> <p>Film in California Conference</p>        |
| <p><b>July - August</b></p> <p>New Member Orientation</p> <p>Connect Marketplace<br/>New Orleans</p>   | <p><b>September - October</b></p> <p>Visit CA Canada Sales Mission in<br/>Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto</p> <p>Mega Mixer / i am Santa Barbara</p> <p>AICP Awards / New Member<br/>Orientation</p> <p>IMEX America in Las Vegas, NV</p> <p>Film Commission Commercial &amp; Print<br/>FAM Tour</p> <p>CEO Media Event</p> <p>Travel Outlook</p> | <p><b>November - December</b></p> <p>American Film Market, COLA Awards</p> <p>i am Santa Barbara</p> <p>Visit California Media Boot Camp</p> <p>ILTM Cannes, France</p>  |







An aerial photograph of a coastal city, likely Los Angeles, featuring a multi-lane highway (I-10) curving through the urban landscape. The city is densely packed with buildings, parking lots, and greenery. In the background, a large hill (Beverly Hills) is visible, topped with a prominent structure. The sky is clear and blue. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the top right corner, containing the text "FACTS, FIGURES & FORECASTS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

# FACTS, FIGURES & FORECASTS



## Impact of Tourism

Tourism in Santa Barbara is a key economic sector that delivers revenues, employment and tax benefits. It has long been an important part of the region's economic development strategy. Tourism revenue generates approximately \$1.5 billion in visitor spending, which translates into tax savings for households in the region.

VSF is currently conducting an update to the 2013 visitor profile study – results including new economic impact analysis will be available in fall 2017.

## Regional Highlights

Below is a recap of recent and upcoming destination highlights, developments and product offerings, which are expected to help drive additional awareness, interest and visitation to the Santa Barbara South Coast.



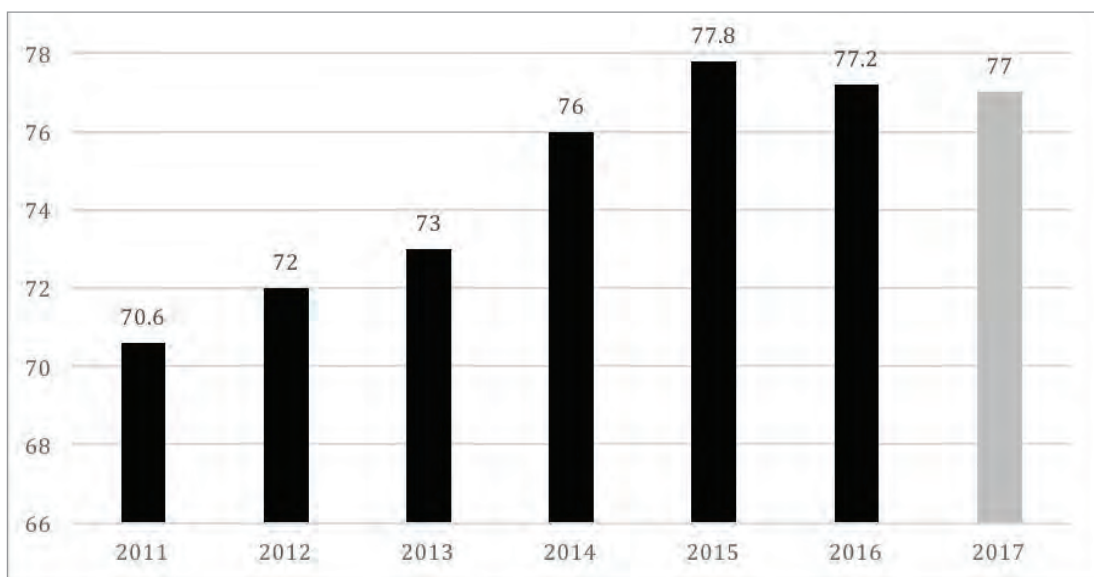
|   |   |
|---|---|
| Santa Barbara Inn reopened in summer 2016 after a multi-year renovation. It features 70 rooms and suites including meeting space.   | MOXI, The Wolf Museum of Exploration + Innovation, Santa Barbara's highly anticipated new science and technology museum, opened in February 2017.   |
| The Waterfront Department and SEA Landing made improvements to better accommodate cruise ship visits, creating a new gangway and a wooden boardwalk along the beach.  | The arrival of larger regional jets flown by Alaska Airlines, American Airlines and United Airlines at Santa Barbara Airport improved air service from Santa Barbara to Denver, Dallas/Fort Worth, San Francisco and Seattle. |
| Stage Three of the bridge enhancement project along Cabrillo Boulevard and lower State Street was completed.  | Phase One of the installation of wayfinding signage in the El Pueblo Viejo District downtown and along the waterfront was completed.  |
| Hotel Californian, a 121-room major resort complex, will open in 2017 on lower State Street.  | A new MTD electric shuttle fleet will arrive in 2017, improving service along State Street and the waterfront.  |
| The new Waterline complex in the Funk Zone; new restaurants, including Loquita, Convivo and Somerset; a new Central Coast Beer Trail; and several eateries opening in the next year are bringing attention to Santa Barbara's culinary scene. | Goleta will have new hotel inventory, including the Hilton Garden Inn, nearing completion, and Marriott Residence Inn, opening in fall 2017. Hyatt Place on upper State Street is expected open in 2018.                      |
| An expansion of Harbor View Inn will add an additional 34 rooms and suites to its existing 115 room/suite inventory in summer 2018.   | Rosewood Miramar Beach Montecito, with 124 guestrooms and 37 suites, will open in summer 2018.  |

## Lodging Forecast

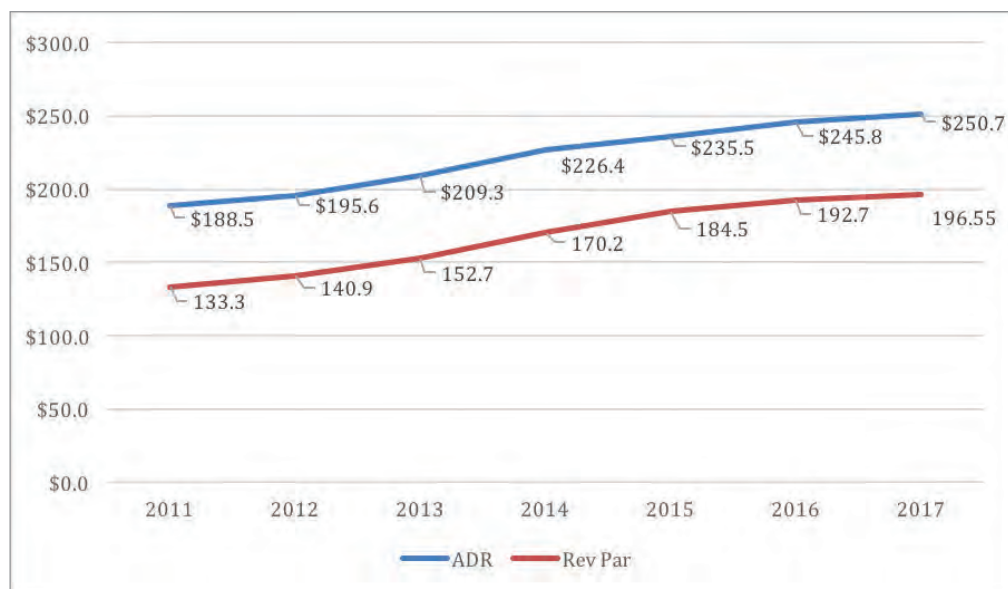
As a premier California destination, Santa Barbara has experienced strong growth in occupancy, Average Daily Rate and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR) since 2011, making it one of the strongest performers in its competitive set.

Looking ahead to 2017-18, it is anticipated that increased competition in the Southern California market combined with uncertainty in the national economic and political climate and anticipated new lodging supply will see occupancy rates stabilize. It is further anticipated that both Average Daily Rate and RevPAR will increase but at a lower rate of growth than the South Coast has recently experienced.

### Santa Barbara South Coast 2017 Occupancy Forecast



### Santa Barbara South Coast 2017 Average Daily Rate & RevPAR Forecast



Source: Smith Travel Research/SMG Consulting



# Research Highlights



## CRUISE SHIP STUDY

In 2016, VSB commissioned Destination Analysts, a leading industry research firm, to administer and conduct an updated Cruise Ship Passenger Survey & Economic Impact Study (Destination Analysts also conducted the last study completed in 2013). The primary objective of this initiative was to arm the local hospitality industry with timely, critical information about Santa Barbara South Coast area cruise ship visitors, as well as other data to help VSB better sell Santa Barbara as a premier destination for leisure and group travel.

To collect this data, Destination Analysts provided a brief 14-question self-administered survey to cruise line passengers from five different cruise lines as they re-boarded their ships after a day in Santa Barbara. The cruise ships were specifically selected to obtain an even representation of both budget and luxury cruise lines. Respondents were given a small gift for their participation and a total of 804 completed surveys were collected.

Survey topics included travel party size, purchase of excursions from the cruise line, place of origin, activities participated in, satisfaction with their stay, expectations to return and the amount spent in Santa Barbara.

### Visitor Profile

Economic impact of the cruise industry to Santa Barbara is estimated to be **\$3.9M**, up **61 percent** from 2013 (\$2.4M).

The largest components of spending are restaurants **(36.7%)** and retail **(31.9%)**.

**61%**



Cruise ship passengers reported spending an average of **\$109.25** per travel party (compared to \$100.30 per travel party in 2013).

Overall, the cruise ship industry injected nearly **\$647,000** into the city's coffers in 2016.

## Visitor Perception

SB cruise ship passengers are likely to visit the destination again within two years.

In total **48.7%** of passengers surveyed said they are likely to return within 1-2 years, including nearly **8%** reporting they are likely to return within 1-2 months.



**56.4%** of SB cruise ship passengers were first-time visitors to the destination.

Domestic residents accounted for **72.9%** of cruise passengers surveyed, while the remaining 27.1% were international residents.

**Canadian** residents (18.5%) represent the largest percentage of international cruise line passengers, followed by visitors from the **U.K.** (2.1%), **South Africa** (1.0%) and **Australia** (1.0%).

Santa Barbara provides a **“highly satisfactory”** visitor experience – with **96%** of passengers reporting being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their visit.

Santa Barbara cruise line passengers engaged in a variety of activities while in the destination – with **sightseeing** (62.5%) and **shopping** (61.1%) being the most common.



Santa Barbara’s **scenic beauty** and overall **friendliness** were the top attributes that exceeded cruise ship passenger expectations.

A large majority of cruise line passengers found the **hospitality desk** hospitality desk to be a helpful source of information. Two-thirds of cruise passengers said the desk was “helpful” (13.2%) or “very helpful” (53.4%).

Adding more bus lines/improving shuttle service was the top cited recommendation for improvement (14.1%). Other top recommendations were alleviating cruise ship onboarding congestion (8.5%) and addressing the issue of homelessness in the area (7.7%).

Half of the domestic cruise line passengers surveyed reside within the state of **California (50.5 percent)** while the remaining 49.5% reside outside of California with **Washington (6.7%), Florida (4.7%)** and **Arizona (4.7%)** contributing significant amounts of cruise ship passenger visitors.

The largest proportion of domestic cruise line passengers surveyed resided in the Los Angeles-Long Beach, California Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Top MSA feeder markets outside the Los Angeles-Long Beach, California market were Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, California (7.3%), San Francisco-Oakland, California (6.5%) and San Diego, California (6.5%).



# Visit Santa Barbara Highlights

Visit Santa Barbara is pleased to share the following successes from 2016-17, all aimed at driving awareness, consideration and ultimately, visitation to the Santa Barbara South Coast.

## Advertising & Promotions

### "Miss Nothing" Campaign Launch



Paid Media Results\*

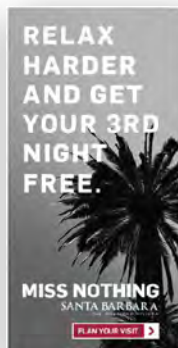
103,806,050 Impressions

270,118 Clicks



\*Time period: Oct. 2016 – June 2017

### "Revive & Thrive" Promotion



Inaugural Official Drink  
of Santa Barbara  
Cocktail Competition



## Website and Social Media



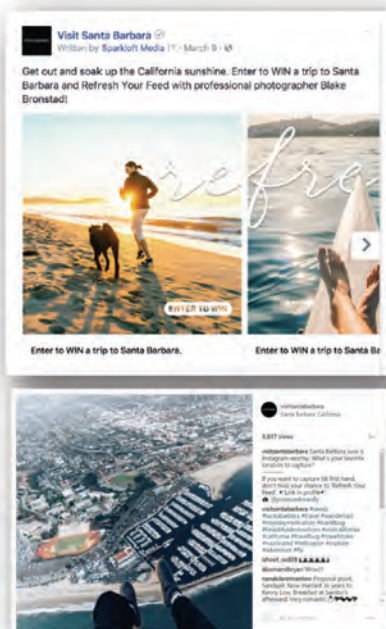
Total followers across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest and LinkedIn:  
**329,990**

Social media metrics: as of July 2017



Website metrics: July 2016 - June 2017

## "Refresh Your Feed" Photo Contest



Enticed our social audience to enter for a chance to win a photo-worthy getaway to Santa Barbara

**10,072 contest entries**  
Highest # of contest entries to date

**1,237,108 Impressions**  
**17,262 Clicks**  
**884,907 Social Reach**  
**30,743 Landing Page Views**



## Public Relations

*Destination features in...*



704

Total media placements

1,529,960,436

Total media impressions

*2017 Visitors Magazine*



The new magazine featured stunning photography from local influencer Blake Bronstad, interviews with musician Jack Johnson and filmmaker Mike Mills and two cover designs

Winner of the 2017 APEX (Awards for Publication Excellence) Award for Design & Illustration – Design Layout presented by Communications Concepts

*Film Commission Secured High Level Studio Meetings with...*



## Membership Events



*Travel Outlook*



*Marketing Launch*



*Santa Barbara Training Program*

## Group Sales & Travel Trade



Hosted FAM's and Client Events



**431 Leads**      **128 Bookings**

**48,684** Room nights contracted  
(21,635 group sales / 27,049 travel trade)



Showcased Santa Barbara through experiential culinary and spa events to meeting planners in key markets

- Hosted international wholesale travel buyers from markets in the U.K., China, Germany, France, India and Australia
- Participated in the first-ever Middle East market FAM
- Targeted niche meeting planner groups in California



### Tradeshows

IncentiveWorks - Toronto, Canada  
IMEX America - Las Vegas, NV  
World Travel Market, London - U.K. and Australia  
Incentive & Luxury Travel Market - Cannes, France  
Meetings Industry Council - Denver, Colorado



Face-to-face presentations to international markets including Canada, U.K. and Australia

Met with corporate, association & third party planners in Chicago, Denver, Dallas, Orange County, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and Toronto



### Sales Missions









# ADVERTISING STRATEGY





## Recap of "Miss Nothing" Campaign Development

Given the vast majority of visitors to the Santa Barbara South Coast represent day-trips (68 percent), Visit Santa Barbara focused on the following geographic priorities in 16-17 in order to generate incremental, overnight hotel stays during the off-season:

- Northern California
- Nonstop flight markets
- Southern California

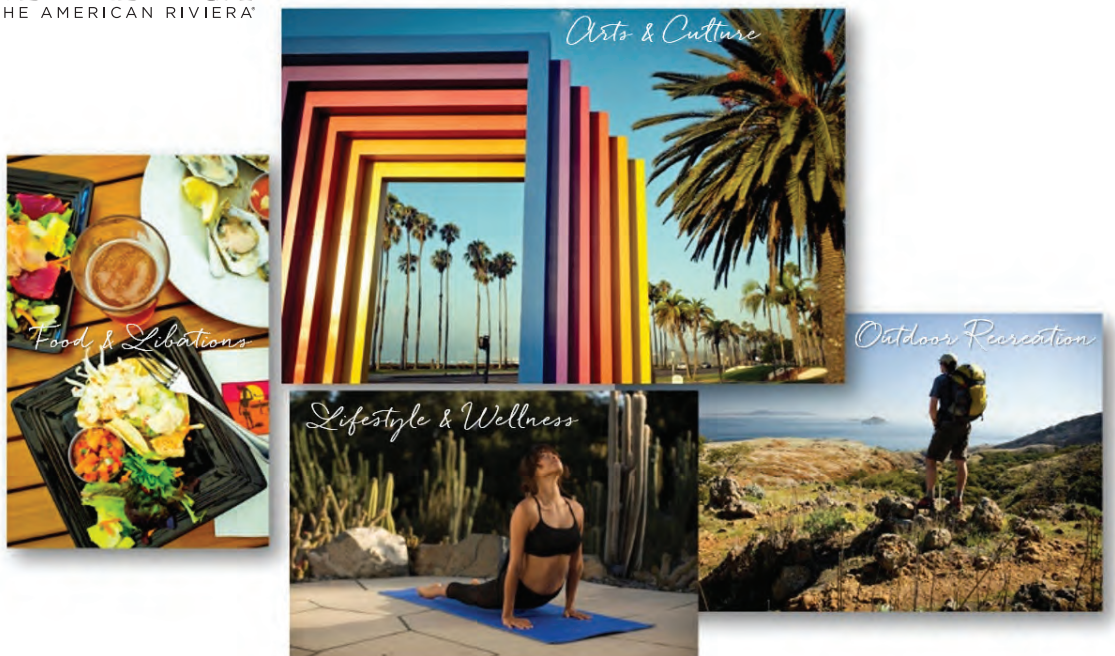
With a primary focus on Northern California, the opportunity audience was identified to be between the ages of 25 to 44, with a household income of over \$100,000. These consumers were identified as "experience collectors" looking to get away from their challenging lives and who believe that relaxation should be a multi-dimensional experience.

As more consumers are spending their extra income on travel and experiences rather than products, the brand needed to disrupt conventions and set new standards for authentic travel experiences in the Santa Barbara South Coast.

Cutwater, VSB's previous Agency of Record, created the "Miss Nothing" advertising campaign to shift perceptions and reframe what a visit to Santa Barbara could do for people. Ultimately this was a shift in emotional benefit. It repositioned Santa Barbara from your average beach town or a place to "relax" to an active destination that offers a diversity of experiences and an opportunity to "revive," while maintaining Santa Barbara as a luxury and premium California experience.

Media spend was concentrated during the need period of October 2016 to March 2017 and was underpinned by four key audience passion pillars: Food & Libations, Arts & Culture, Lifestyle & Wellness, and Outdoor & Recreation.

## MISS NOTHING SANTA BARBARA THE AMERICAN RIVIERA



# Approach To 2017-2018



This year, VSB contracted a long-term partner, Sparkloft Media to refresh and evolve the “Miss Nothing” campaign and the Santa Barbara destination brand, while continuing to drive overnight visitation and demand.

In order to maintain overnight stays and gain incremental visitation, Visit Santa Barbara will have to respond to several challenges and opportunities in the tourism marketplace. These include, the competition from central and southern California destinations, the strength of the domestic economy, an anticipated slowdown in international travel to the U.S., and the challenge of sustaining a high Average Daily Rate (ADR). Hence, Sparkloft’s strategic approach will prioritize:

- Defining and developing the long-term vision for The American Riviera®. By anchoring brand-based programs around trends in consumer expectations and Santa Barbara’s tourism and hotel products, Sparkloft’s priority is to build upon the distinct equity in The American Riviera® brand to help differentiate Santa Barbara among central and southern California destinations that are increasingly competing for hotel market share.
- Simultaneously expand Visit Santa Barbara’s reach among high opportunity audience segments such as older travellers, while using interest based segmentation and communication to identify audiences that demonstrate a high propensity to stay overnight in Santa Barbara.
- Proactively grow Visit Santa Barbara’s share of California direct visitor spend (\$125.9 billion in 2016, a 2.8 percent increase from 2015\*) by capitalizing on the marketing investment Visit California has made in driving visitation to the state.



# Audience Development

In 16-17, Visit Santa Barbara targeted a 'bullseye' demographic concentrated in Northern California with a HHI of \$100k+ between the ages of 25-44. In 17-18, Sparkloft will continue to grow marketing spend efficiencies by adding a layer of interest-based segmentation.

The interest-based segments within the previous identified 'bullseye target' include:

- 1 Up & Coming Career Builders:** 25-35 year old young professionals with a propensity to choose brag- and share-worthy destinations.
- 2 Modern Families & Solid Single Parents:** Families looking for an easy getaway that caters to everyone.
- 3 Professional Wealth:** Established higher-income professionals motivated by service, amenities, and the ability to escape from the pressures of being 'always-on.'
- 4 Baby Boomers:** In order to capitalize on existing equity that Santa Barbara has with established, older, audiences – Sparkloft has identified an additional sub-segment of the 55+ 'baby boomer' demographic who represent an opportunity to drive incremental visitor spend.

Both the family and wealth sub-segments are key priorities for Visit California. Sparkloft's strategy is to capitalize on the awareness and interest that their efforts generate for the state in these segments.



Career Builders



Modern Families



Professional Wealth



Baby Boomers

## Geographic Priorities

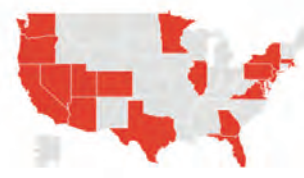
VSB's geographic priority markets remain in-line with 16-17 focusing on the Fly and Long Drive markets. However, this year Sparkloft will test the addition of another long drive market, Las Vegas, to tap into the 6.4 million\* anticipated Nevada visitors to California.

Target Markets for 17-18 include:

- Long Drive (Northern California and Las Vegas, Nevada)
- Fly Markets (Seattle, Portland, Phoenix, San Francisco, Dallas, Denver)
- Short Drive (Central & Southern California)

In addition, due to Google Search trend evidence of Santa Barbara and California Central Coast hotel demand in markets such as New York City, Chicago and Washington D.C., Sparkloft will actively evaluate opportunities in these markets throughout the year.\*

## Regional Interest in Stays: Google Searches for Hotels



Finally, because of instability in the global travel market and the relative strength of the U.S. dollar, Sparkloft will also evaluate opportunities with Brand USA and Visit California to support international efforts to reach Canada, Western Europe & the U.K., China and India.



# Messaging & Creative Strategy



For 17-18 Visit Santa Barbara will work with Sparkloft to clearly define *The American Riviera*® brand and lay the ground work for a clear and distinct positioning of the destination in the California landscape.

Sparkloft's creative work will define for VSB's consumer segments the unique selling propositions of a new vision of *The American Riviera*®. This will be accomplished by using foundations of the "Miss Nothing" campaign that align with trends in the consumer marketplace that prioritize experiential vacations, wellness and personal growth, accessible luxury, and an alternative from the hectic, always-on, media-saturated world.

Sparkloft will also continue to utilize the "Miss Nothing" campaign in 17-18, while building upon the core brand promise identified in 16-17 – that the best vacations don't just relax you, they revive you.

While the campaign will be refreshed to expand upon the black and white concepts that so effectively distinguish the campaign's visual identity, the campaign will also expand to offer new opportunities in targeting. While the black and white photography excels at being visually arresting and intriguing, future expansions for niches such as food & libations, family and destination hotel product will include color executions.

# Media Strategy

The core elements of the 17 /18 approach to media distribution will place an increased emphasis on:

- Always-on paid search focused on driving web traffic and maintaining hotel search market share
- Brand campaigns supported by rich media, video and content distribution opportunities
- Increased emphasis on native content marketing to generate interest in niche product
- Evaluation of high-impact, in-market activation opportunities
- Attribution through Adara on digital and social channels
- Streamlining cooperative marketing opportunities

In order to bolster demand for overnight revenue, the plan flighting will focus heavily on shoulder season and mid-week demand generation in Q2 and Q3.









# DEPARTMENT PLANS





# Marketing

## Department Overview:

The VSB Marketing Department promotes Santa Barbara through paid, owned and earned channels including digital and print media, broadcast, social media, experiential marketing, content marketing and more. The Marketing Department oversees the VSB ad campaign, the Santa Barbara brand and collaborates with all departments to ensure a seamless and consistent voice.

## Branding, Advertising & Promotions

### KEY STRATEGIES:

- 1** Extend and refresh the “Miss Nothing” campaign to drive consideration and ultimately overnight visitation among target audiences.
  - Capture new photography and video to ensure a rich asset collection, improve creative performance and allow for a variety of innovative media platforms and ad formats.
  - Explore new segmentation and targeting for group, wine, luxury and weddings.
  - Integrate the “Miss Nothing” positioning across all communication channels to amplify messaging and recall – including traditional and non-traditional advertising, publishing, social media and public relations efforts.
  - Develop tactical programs, tailored messaging and promotions during need periods (Q2, Q3 and mid-week) specifically focused on driving incremental overnight visitation.
  - Produce collateral and compelling content that serve to differentiate Santa Barbara from other California coastal destinations – and that speaks to the diverse experiences the destination offers.





## 2 Evaluate, place and optimize integrated media and experiential activations based on audience design and geographic priorities, including long-drive and nonstop flight markets.

- Explore a richer variety of media tactics - including sponsored video placements, new ad formats, rich media networks, and storytelling to break through competitive clutter.
- Refresh creative units and re-engage audiences during two to four different campaign periods and seasons throughout the fiscal year to optimize creative and media performance.
- With mobile visits to SantaBarbaraCA.com now surpassing desktop visits, develop creative and select media placements that are primarily consumed on digital and mobile channels.
- Partner with Visit California, Brand USA and other strategic entities to stretch marketing dollars and extend reach.

## 3 Effectively position Santa Barbara as a premier destination for group business and film production.

- Work with agency of record to evaluate paid media options and creative development/messaging as appropriate.
- Explore development of new and updated sales and film tools, including trade show banners, destination videos and collateral.
- Provide resources and expertise to assist meeting professionals with attendance building and buzz.
- Work with the Film Commission to leverage new films, television shows and projects to create cross-promotional marketing opportunities.





#### 4 Build upon Santa Barbara's equity as The American Riviera.®

- Refine and extend the “Miss Nothing” campaign to better integrate with The American Riviera® brand.
- Utilize campaign, collateral and communications channels to showcase why Santa Barbara can own the distinction of American Riviera® - particularly as a point of differentiation among the competitive set.
- Collaborate with community partners and stakeholders to align resources and manage the destination story.
- Ensure campaign, editorial photography, publications, website and general content reflect diverse interests.

#### 5 Execute events and promotions designed to keep Santa Barbara top of mind.

- Explore seasonal promotions and activations to encourage visitation to the destination during the shoulder season.
- Hold second “Official Drink of Santa Barbara” craft cocktail contest to create in-market programming and leverage as future content for social media, SantaBarbaraCA.com and public relations. The event will also enable VSB to collaborate with members and industry partners, further developing and strengthening relationships.
- Create a turnkey weather-related or “rainy-day” promotion that can be launched quickly based on occupancy trends and needs.

# Website & Content Development

## KEY STRATEGIES:

**1** Ensure messaging across all Visit Santa Barbara's digital marketing channels is frequent, consistent, and engaging.

- Work with agencies to assist in the development of an organization-wide content calendar to create synergies between website, social media, paid advertising and newsletter distribution.
- Create compelling new content which includes short and long form articles, high-quality imagery, video assets and informational graphics.
- Weave "Miss Nothing" campaign messaging into the look and feel of all VSB digital channels.
- Prioritize the brand voice, personality and visual style in all content while keeping audience insights, keyword analysis, site structure and meta data top of mind.
- Utilize keyword research and SEO optimization to target new areas of opportunity in content development.
- Develop content with a mobile first approach.

**2** Curate content specifically tailored to visitors who are in the consideration phase by highlighting VSB members and offerings unique to the destination.

- Engage with visitors who are already aware of Santa Barbara as a destination and provide content that focuses on activities, attractions and other area "Things to Do."
- Produce unique content that differentiates Santa Barbara's specific offerings and highlights one-of-a-kind experiences.
- Craft content to give users an understanding of the destination, overlaid with practical, contextual information to spark the desire to visit.
- Monitor and analyze content to ensure it is aiding in moving the visitor from consideration to planning to booking.





**3** Provide a better, more personalized experience to site visitors with the help of Get Smart Content, a web-based platform that will dynamically serve custom messaging based on user attributes such as location, language and interests.

- With Get Smart Content’s real-time ability to serve targeted experiences, VSB will be able to use geographic targeting tools to segment site visitors based on fly and drive markets, showing each market personalized messaging relevant to their proximity to Santa Barbara.
  - o *Example:* Someone from Dallas will receive information on “Things to Do in Santa Barbara” more than four to six weeks in advance, while someone from Los Angeles will be targeted with “Reasons to Stay Longer in Santa Barbara”
- Location segmenting will allow visitor messaging to be reflective of seasonality and large shifts in weather.
  - o *Example:* If it’s cold and rainy in the Pacific Northwest, the platform will highlight the numerous outdoor activities that can be experienced in Santa Barbara’s sunshine.
- The ability to identify new site visitors versus returning visitors to the site will better assist in providing informational or editorial content.
  - o *Example:* If it’s a new site visitor, VSB can serve up messaging to join its newsletter distribution for more information on Santa Barbara.



**4** Focus efforts to assist in the trip planning process.

- Utilize “Next Month in Santa Barbara” to showcase activities and upcoming area offerings specific to a certain timeframe.
- Continue to maintain a robust Calendar of Events and Special Offers section to provide potential visitors with additional travel incentives.
- Include JackRabbit booking widget on key pages to enable visitors to search for hotel rates.
- Direct visitors to member microsites to facilitate partner referrals for visitors to learn more, make reservations, and/or book.
- Continue to increase responsive-design functionality to seamlessly provide users with the content and planning tools they need, regardless of the device they use.

**5** Perform a Website Usability Study at the start of the fiscal year.

- Serving the needs and interests of our website visitors is the key to success for Visit Santa Barbara and its members. VSB will analyze current site data with live usability testing to continue to improve upon the consumer experience with SantaBarbaraCA.com.

# Social Media

## KEY STRATEGIES:

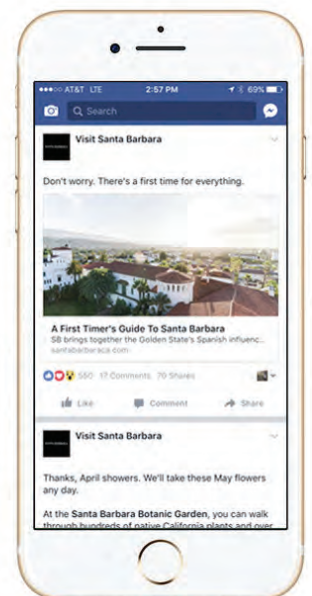
### 1 Identify and develop distinct, unique strategies for Visit Santa Barbara's social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and LinkedIn) catered specifically to each platform's strengths.

- Maximize time spent and media spend on platforms that have a high return on engagement and cost effective media offerings.
- Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have been identified as Visit Santa Barbara's active channels, to which continual content will be developed, posted and promoted to all identified leisure audience segments.
  - o Due to low cost per engagement rates and targeting capabilities, Facebook will account for a large majority of social advertising spend.
  - o Instagram's highly visual nature will be used to promote aspirational content of Santa Barbara to its followers.
  - o The real-time nature of Twitter will be used to proactively engage with followers to inform them of upcoming events and activities.
- Pinterest, YouTube and LinkedIn have been identified as opportunity platforms that will be utilized for niche audience sets, such as wedding and business travel.
- YouTube will be utilized as a hosting platform for all produced video content.



### 2 Increase social media reach and exposure by developing content that is relevant to audience consumption habits, including:

- Stackable content that is highly entertaining and will encourage audiences to share with their own social followings.
  - o Example: "Santa Barbara Taco Trail" map graphic
- Text content that is informative but can be digested easily and quickly
  - o Example: Article of "Top 5 Tips Before Coming to Santa Barbara"
- Inspiring visual imagery that can quickly show off the destination's beauty and attributes
  - o Example: Live-Stream of area activities and lookout points
- Long-form content that can tell the many stories of Santa Barbara and all its offerings
  - o Example: Video series highlighting the artisans of Santa Barbara





### 3 Develop rich content that capitalizes on the popularity of video and live streaming.

- Virtually 100 percent of social users watch videos, with the majority of consumption between the first 3 to 10 seconds.
- At this time, Facebook prioritizes live streaming and 360 degree video content. VSB will work to leverage this in its favor by creating sharable and engaging content within these new content types.
- Instagram Stories are another opportunity to tell the story of the destination during a 24-hour span by highlighting locations, events, artisans, etc.



Important strategy for the year will be gathering and streaming content in real-time

### 4 Utilize social media advertising opportunities to drive top of mind awareness and consideration of Santa Barbara as an overnight destination.

- Develop and position content to highlight unique Santa Barbara experiences aimed at audience priorities.
- Re-position existing experiences through interest targeting, segmented by audiences.
- Re-engage visitors with promotion of new attractions in Santa Barbara.
- Combine fly market targeting with audience targeting to ensure message resonance.
- Target drive markets around specific verticals and messaging catered to spending the night in Santa Barbara.
- Leverage low cost per click to drive incremental visitation to SantaBarbaraCA.com.

### 5 Maximize the authentic Santa Barbara experience with touch points that span influencer marketing, community management and local creators.

- Work with social media influencers to leverage new fan base and to facilitate peer-to-peer recommendations for why one needs to visit Santa Barbara.
- Utilize community management as a customer service tool for visitors before, during and after visitation.
- Work with local creators, VSB members and past visitors to create brand advocacy and awareness for the destination, highlighting positive visitor experiences.









# Public Relations & Communications

## Department Overview:

The Public Relations (PR) & Communications Department creates demand for visitation through earned and owned media coverage that excites and inspires travelers, while elevating brand awareness and enforcing key messages about the Santa Barbara South Coast. The department further supports all Visit Santa Barbara platforms through communication and creative content development.

## KEY STRATEGIES:

**1** Generate press and public awareness of the Santa Barbara South Coast among targeted audiences, including long-drive and non-stop flight markets.

**2** Work with PR firm to assist with securing national press coverage and developing key PR projects.

- Develop new story pitches and thoughtful campaigns that heighten interest and differentiate the destination, including angles that support overnight stays and off-season travel.
- Host domestic and international individual press trips, creating customized itineraries to showcase the destination.
- Partner on earned media opportunities with Visit California, Central Coast Tourism Council, Brand USA and other strategic entities to extend reach.
- Refresh and maintain online Press Room, including press section of photo/video library, up-to-date, compelling press releases and destination fact sheets to support story development.



LA-based media tour the Urban Wine Trail on a Santa Barbara Vintners group FAM

### 3 Build and strengthen relationships with target media, generating awareness of the destination, new product and diverse experiences.

- Conduct one-on-one meetings with media in key U.S. markets. Bring along partners to promote niche travel as appropriate.
- Produce and host an interactive media event in collaboration with partners in a targeted domestic market.
- Participate in Visit California's media receptions and media missions, as well as media networking events sponsored by other professional organizations in key markets.
- Update and refine media distribution lists and database.

### 4 Advocate for the brand in destination and serve as a resource for the local and regional hospitality industry.

- Develop pitches and press releases for local media about Visit Santa Barbara programs, tourism industry news and messages about the positive impacts of tourism and film production.
- Disseminate Visit Santa Barbara reports, newsletters and collateral to the local hospitality industry.
- Host PR Lunch & Learns to discuss techniques, trends and opportunities for working with editorial media.
- Crisis Communications: As needed, provide emergency information and resources to the local hospitality industry and tourists in emergencies, working with public agencies and emergency services personnel.

### 5 Produce a visitors' magazine that communicates key inducements for travel to the region and conveys the brand's distinctive attributes.

- Present inspiring and fresh editorial content, special features and bold imagery to create a strong emotional appeal for the reader.
- Feature compelling reasons for off-peak, mid-week and extended stays.
- Integrate references to Visit Santa Barbara's marketing campaign and digital channels.
- Distribute print magazines through regional, state and out-of-state channels and explore new locations.
- Produce digital version of the *Visitors Magazine* for distribution on SantaBarbaraCA.com.
- Create awareness of magazine through owned, earned and paid marketing channels.





# Group Sales

## Department Overview:

The Sales Department serves to attract group business of 10 room nights or more specific to organizations looking to hold conferences, meetings, retreats and other programs in Santa Barbara. Ideal targets are meeting planners or other key decision makers from the corporate, incentive, state, regional and national association markets and third-party planning entities in desired geographic and vertical market segments. Sales efforts are direct and indirect through dedicated research, sales call prospecting solicitation, in-person client appointments, tradeshow, organized client events, site inspections and familiarization (FAM) tours.

## KEY STRATEGIES:

**1** Maintain and continue to focus primary proactive sales efforts in the following markets: Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties), Northern California (Monterey, San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland/East Bay, and Sacramento) and Santa Barbara Airport direct flight out-of-state markets (Dallas, Denver, Phoenix, Portland and Seattle). Secondary sales efforts will focus on key group markets including: Minneapolis, Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C.

- Evaluate and match team strengths against clientele and verticals in respective target markets.
- Schedule in-market meetings at specific tradeshow and industry events within these areas to maximize opportunity to meet with potential clients.

**2** Identify strategic vertical markets including Agriculture, Automotive, Entertainment, Financial, Health & Wellness, Insurance, Law, Medical and Technology in key geographic regions.

- Within verticals, identify key local companies that have other offices or locations that could hold and plan meetings in Santa Barbara.
- Utilize the Knowland Group global meetings and conventions historical database and Destinations International's meetings industry database tool to uncover new business opportunities for VSB members.

**3** Continue to develop targeted action plans that focus on growing group business for Santa Barbara hotels during mid-week and off peak (November to March) time periods.

- Continue existing booking incentive for meeting planners to book their business at Santa Barbara hotels and meeting venues.
- Work with VSB member hotels to communicate hotel value dates.



Meeting Planners enjoy San Diego Sur La Table cooking class

**4** Remain in a strong competitive position by engaging clients through in-person sales activities including: sales appointments, client events, tradeshow, site inspections and FAM's.

- Create opportunities for VSB members to attend cooperative activities, meet and develop relationships with clients, and prospect business.
- Attend key tradeshow such as IMEX America to increase VSB's visibility with meeting planners.
- Host customized site inspections for qualified meeting planners to increase propensity that they will book Santa Barbara.
- Work with key third parties and large meeting planner teams to host familiarization trips in order to educate and increase likelihood that they will book Santa Barbara.

**5** Leverage industry association memberships and local partnerships to ensure maximum exposure to Santa Barbara as a group destination.

- Activate sponsorship opportunities to promote and elevate visibility of the destination with meeting planner organizations including CalSAE, MPI, PCMA and SITE.
- Maintain and engage highest level of partnerships with third-parties: e.g. Cvent, HelmsBriscoe and Senior Planners Industry Network.

**6** Develop more cohesive group messaging through collateral and digital means.

- Explore creation of a comprehensive meeting planner brochure for distribution.
- Integrate group sales messaging with VSB's "Miss Nothing" campaign to ensure consistency.



VSB and Co-op partners at U.S. Travel's IPW tradeshow in Washington D.C.



VSB's Director of Sales Michelle Carlen (also Vice President of the Central Coast Tourism Council) with Central Coast colleagues at IPW



# Travel Trade

## Department Overview:

The Travel Trade department assists with the planning of individual and group trips to Santa Barbara offering a variety of complimentary services. Travel agents, receptive tour operators and international tour operators look to the Travel Trade team to assist with Foreign Individual Traveler (FIT) or group hotel leads, arranging customized excursions or itineraries or simply making connections with attractions, restaurants, wineries, transportation and more within the wholesale travel segment. The Travel Trade team is responsible for educating these industry representatives to help influence the decision to buy and sell travel to Santa Barbara, both domestically and internationally.

## KEY STRATEGIES:

**1** Continue to develop and execute a targeted plan to attract key international business from primary (United Kingdom and Ireland, Canada, Germany and France), secondary (Australia, Brazil, China and Mexico) and tertiary markets (India, Italy, Japan, Scandinavia and South Korea).

- Utilize research data and insights from Visit California (VCA) and Central Coast Tourism Commission to better understand and serve key markets.

- Collaborate with VCA and VSB's international offices to raise awareness of Santa Barbara as a premier destination for international travelers by hosting familiarization tours and scheduled sales missions.

**2** Uncover new opportunities for international wholesale buyers to add Santa Barbara to their existing California products.

- Attend key industry tradeshows like IPW, NAJ Receptive Tour Operator Summit and ILTM.
- Schedule sales visits to Los Angeles receptive tour operator offices to inform and update buyers on new product in Santa Barbara.



Chinese Tour Operators enjoying the Double Dolphin

**3** In partnership with the City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Department, maintain strong cruise ship visitation and drive consideration of Santa Barbara as a return overnight trip.

- Partner with the City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Department to enhance the visitor experience once cruise ship passengers arrive to Santa Barbara.
- Partner with the City of Santa Barbara Waterfront Department to implement recommendations for improvement noted in the VSB 2016 Cruise Ship Passenger Survey & Economic Impact Study including more bus lines and better shuttle service.
- Explore more cohesive welcome signage, messaging and collateral.
- Work with VSB marketing team to continue bounce back program to encourage day trippers to return for overnight stays.

#### 4 Further develop new business opportunities from wholesale domestic buyers to increase Santa Barbara product share.

- Utilize sales tools like the National Tour Association directory of tour operators to call on and uncover new business opportunities. Educate and train travel agents and travel buyers on Santa Barbara product.
- Schedule opportunities for VSB members to cooperatively participate in destination presentations and tour operators and travel agent offices.
- Explore participation with VCA's STAR program aimed at educating travel agents through a certification program.

#### 5 Explore cross promotion and packaging with local tour companies and local hotels to better sell the Santa Barbara product.

- Create a workshop session for VSB members to brainstorm and develop ways they can partner together to leverage and elevate Santa Barbara experiences.
- Develop and promote new travel itineraries focused on niche experiences.



Chinese Receptive Tour Operators from Los Angeles touring Santa Barbara in Hot Rod Limo



Karen Earp, general manager for Four Seasons and Visit Santa Barbara at ILTM tradeshow in Cannes, France



VCA's first-ever Middle East FAM attendees all aboard with the SB Sailing Center



# Film Commission

## Department Overview:

The Film Commission promotes Santa Barbara County as a production destination in order to create direct economic spending in our jurisdiction, facilitates planning and execution of physical production, and identifies and executes Special Projects, in particular Film Tourism opportunities, in order to generate positive PR for the destination.

## KEY STRATEGIES:

### 1 Increase feature film production days in Santa Barbara County.

- Leverage State Incentive Program to increase film and television production.
- Secure in person meetings with companies who are awarded incentives.
- Execute familiarization tours for feature production personnel.

### 2 Increase commercial production days in Santa Barbara County.

- Obtain face to face meetings with key Commercial Production Houses in Los Angeles.
- Educate Production Teams on Santa Barbara's locations and incentives.
- Follow up with Production team meetings with FAM's designed for the needs of commercial production.

### 3 Promote Santa Barbara County as a premier production destination to a comprehensive spectrum of potential clients.

- Promote Santa Barbara County through the Film newsletter by covering local production trends and introducing new, diverse locations.
- Sponsor, exhibit, attend and advertise at various tradeshow and conferences including:
  - o American Film Market
  - o Film in California Conference
  - o California on Location Awards
  - o Location Managers Guild International Awards
  - o AICP Next Awards
- Maintain, streamline, and update the FilmSantaBarbara.com website.
- Host one general FAM tour per year open to print, commercial, television and film personnel.
- Continue work with the statewide California Film Commission consortium and Film Liaisons in California (FLICS), to maintain access to decision makers in Hollywood.
  - o Serve as Vice President, FLICS
  - o Serve as Legislative Chair, FLICS
  - o Serve on Communications working group with MPAA, Teamsters 399 & DGA to promote filming through California State Incentive.



"20th Century Women" Filming in Santa Barbara



The American Film Market is the gathering place for hundreds of production companies and thousands of entertainment professionals to buy, sell, and market films

#### 4 Promote Santa Barbara as both a production and tourism destination through integrated branded content.

- Create original concepts for branded integration and pitch them to production entities.
- Identify opportunities with productions planning to shoot in Santa Barbara for branded content integration and cross-promotion with VSB and pursue and execute partnerships.



Geoff Alexander exhibiting and networking at the AFCI International Locations Tradeshow in Los Angeles



# Membership

## Department Overview:

The Membership Department serves to generate private source revenue for Visit Santa Barbara through co-op and membership dues, while maximizing programs, events, exposure and value for all VSB members. The membership department is also responsible for outreach in the community at large.

## KEY STRATEGIES:

### 1 Maintain a 90 percent member retention rate by improving the value of membership to current members.

- Update Lunch and Learn program to include a focus on specific member segments (lodging, dining, winery, attractions, etc.) and utilize various departments within VSB to attract and enhance business.
- Continue the growth of the i am Santa Barbara Ambassador Program by including specific experiences and messaging targeted to relevant audiences.
- Explore opportunities for member round table events to create a two-way discussion on strategy and service offerings for VSB.
- Improve membership communication and engagement through monthly member newsletters, calendar of events, and expansion of the digital VSB member portal.

### 2 Increase number of active members by 10 percent in 2017-18.

- Improve the ease of onboarding for new members through video tutorials as well as the ease of annual renewal to VSB through a pay online system.
- Utilize VSB research insights to inform potential members of ways to optimize participation within various VSB programs.
- Explore initiatives aligning with our community partners including Downtown Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara Waterfront, Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce, Santa Barbara Airport, and Santa Barbara Vintners to expand offerings and opportunities for greater exposure.

### 3 Generate \$150,000 or more in co-op advertising revenue.

- Offer co-op advertising options that are relevant to the member through SantaBarbaraCA.com, print and social media options
- Demonstrate value of co-op ad program by improving reporting and providing insights on KPI's.
- Streamline and segment the portfolio of offerings to allow a more tailored approach for VSB members to select opportunities based on their size and needs.



Annual Tourism Luncheon Keynote Speaker, Kevin Jorgeson





