

San Luis Obispo County
Business Improvement District
Brand Marketing Plan
&
Core Marketing
Team Scope

July 2014-June 2016



Presented By
John Sorgenfrei, john@tjaadvertising.com
Mark Elterman, mark@mentalmarketing.com
5.28.14

Summary

- San Luis Obispo County is one of the most attractive and affordable destinations in the state, and with several metropolitan travel hubs within reasonable drive times, it offers easy access to the nation and the world. Marketing the accessibility and enriching experiences throughout the region enables WineCoastCountry to welcome visitors to each of the 10 destinations of the County Unincorporated Business Improvement District (CBID).
- By creating and marketing the 101 Mile Highway 1 Discovery Route, WineCoastCountry is delivering compelling experiences and benefits for visitors to make the region their vacation getaway choice. The effort to brand the Highway 1 Discovery Route as a regional attraction offers WineCoastCountry a strong platform to convey a unique sense of place and compelling multi-day thematic experiences travelers actively seek.
- As the local unincorporated county tourism boards have developed their local marketing initiatives, this plan embraces a proactive, bottom-up collaboration to gain efficiencies, and maximize the local content and outreach generated by local funds, as well as a, top-down CBID service that offers greater depth of destination branded content tools for the 10 destinations. The process involves a newly formed Collaboration Committee that seeks to better understand each areas marketing initiatives, and help support the local area marketing tactics. This committee will to meet with partners such as Visit SLO County, CCTC and VIsitCA to pursue collaborative efforts, help reduce consumer confusion and lessen duplication of effort. WineCoastCountry will lead the way in this new level of cooperation, and this will be a goal for the next year & beyond.
- A survey of the CBID local fund members tabulated on June 3, 2014 provided actionable insights on the marketing and operational interests this constituency desires of WineCoastCountry and the Core Marketing Team. The requests addressed in this plan include: more marketing content tools, evolving the Highway 1 Discovery Route with local adventures, seasonal themed promotions, small group travel programs, cooperative marketing programs, supporting Stewardship Travel and more journalist coverage within each area.
- At the direction gained from the CBID Advisory Board workshop, and subsequent feedback from the CBID Marketing Committee, a review of the Core Marketing Team efforts and a local fund survey, the priorities guiding this 24-month plan include:
 1. Evolving the brand for the unique benefits of our regional offering
 2. Increasing overnight stays, length of stays and repeat stays
 3. Creating marketing efficiencies throughout the constituency

This plan outlines the activities to accomplish the stated goals – with strategies, tactics, performance indicators, estimated resources and a scope of work for the Core Marketing Team. With CBID Advisory Board and County approval, this plan will initiate team assignments beginning July 1, 2014.

Goal: Evolve the WineCoastCountry brand for its unique benefits by utilizing the Highway 1 Discovery Route as the primary asset that clarifies the sense of place and what it offers the visitor.

The WineCoastCountry brand offers the consumer, stakeholders and the media an organization that can deliver many enriching experiences and accommodations throughout a region. It does not exist to establish the collective impressions of San Luis Obispo County; but merely offers visitors *10 destinations, 1 fantastic vacation* available through WineCoastCountry.com, the destination websites and thematic microsites.

Strategy: Bolster the Highway 1 Discovery Route attraction by clarifying location and experiences. Continue to establish WineCoastCountry.com for *10 Destinations, 1 Fantastic Vacation* and as an online source for unique vacation experiences along the Highway 1 Discovery Route.

Travelers seeking vacations and accommodations often search/explore/book by specific destination and/or desired experiences. The 101 mile Highway 1 Discovery Route offers a world-renown scenic coastal byway, 10 distinct artisan towns and thematic experiences travelers seek.

Bottom-Up Tactics = Originated with Local Funds

As each local destination connects with the Highway 1 Discovery Route through marketing promotions, routes, top local favorites, storylines, the WineCoastCountry team will work with the local funds to develop local experiences and leverage in all WCC outreach efforts:

1. Create and integrate local routes/loops to deepen the presence of the Highway 1 Discovery Route within each destination. Los Osos de Oro Loop has already been fully integrated into the local marketing effort and the route map is a popular local tool. Each destination is developing top 10 things to do in the local market which will be leveraged system-wide.
2. Leverage local Stewardship Traveler experiences and content. Through Di Strachan, the local funds and the actual attractions we will develop more enriching activities, travel packages, getaway experiences and social content. WineCoastCountry will extend the reach of the content throughout our web/mobile/social/media relations channels. The various activities envisioned within this plan include scheduled strategy sessions with the Stewardship Travel Director to orchestrate campaigns breathing life into the latest/greatest in Stewardship Travel experiences, including Coastal Discovery and Stewardship Month. As Stewardship Travel has been fully integrated into the PR key messaging, the activities that are developed on a local level become instant “what’s new” pitches.
3. Support local fund tour and travel programs, and media relations with the Highway 1 Discovery Route content, itineraries, images, story ideas and video.

4. For added promotional impact, local event organizers may leverage the WCC API feeds, messaging, visuals, collateral, itineraries, and multi-regional getaways and lodging packages.

Top-Down Tactics = CBID Originated:

The evolution of the brand began with the creation and launch of the Highway 1 Discovery Route. The Route map is one of the most popular, sought after navigational pieces at many welcome centers throughout California. Highway 1 is recognizable, and the route makes it easy to navigate and simple for the guests to connect with. This requires a much more 'coastal' visual identity and consistent key messaging. As WineCoastCountry is the organization responsible for marketing the Highway 1 Discovery Route and related experiences, there are a number of important tactics to support the brand messaging.

1. Enhance Highway 1 Discovery Route key messaging to clarify the organization and route location. For example, below is a revised, draft boilerplate for press releases and media kits:

About WineCoastCountry.com & the 101 Mile Highway 1 Discovery Route:

WineCoastCountry.com - *10 destinations, 1 fantastic vacation* – is the tourism organization for the coastal region of San Luis Obispo County, located midway from Los Angeles and San Francisco. From lush farmland to the sparkling Pacific Ocean, the area boasts vast stretches of white sandy beaches and picturesque rugged coastline, renowned wineries, the world famous Hearst Castle, bucolic farmland, wildlife, pristine forests, beautiful state parks and untouched natural beauty as far as the eye can see. Visitors can experience the best of "wine, coast and country" by touring the [Highway 1 Discovery Route](#), a breathtaking 101 mile road trip that showcases 10 diverse artisan towns and seaside villages rich in character and history: [Ragged Point/San Simeon](#), [Cambria](#), [Cayucos](#), [unincorporated Morro Bay](#), [Los Osos/Baywood Park](#), [Avila Beach & Valley](#), [Edna Valley](#), [Arroyo Grande Valley](#), [Oceano](#), and [Nipomo](#). The region offers visitors the next step in eco-tourism through WineCoastCountry's [Stewardship Travel](#) program where visitors can do good by caring for the region's natural and cultural heritage when on vacation. More than 70 fun and meaningful Stewardship Travel activities are available from naturalist-lead preservation hikes, hands-on citizen science days, preserving California's coastal Lighthouse and locomotive heritage, and supporting early California Mission settlement restoration.

2. Establish messaging hierarchy matrix with consistent brand voice and use in execution of media kits, journalist pitching and story development that supports the Highway 1 Discovery Route location, destinations and vacation experiences.
3. Evolve Highway 1 Discovery Route Map visual within all communication vehicles.
4. Web/mobile widgets will be provided to all members and local funds.
5. WineCoastCountry templates and content feeds will be provided.
6. Leverage relationships and cooperative programs with Visit SLOC, Visit California and CCTC that actively promote the Highway 1 Discovery Route and each of our 10 destinations.

Measurement:

As an organization, the CBID will assign resources to evaluate the progress toward achieving our primary goals. As it relates to brand progress, the following measurement tools are appropriate:

- Intent to Influence mechanism on WCC/Highway 1 Discovery Route

A mechanism to measure consumer attitude and awareness must also be considered.

- **Goal: Increase overnight stays, repeated stays and extend length of stay to WineCoastCountry's 10 destinations, particularly during shoulder season.**

The primary goal of the WineCoastCountry marketing effort has always been to develop programs that demonstrate measurable benefit to all assessed lodging members. Generating overnight stays drives our efforts and determines our tactics. The emphasis on increasing awareness through Fall, Winter, and Spring campaigns benefits the constituency by focusing on the off-season. As such, this plan places high priority on programs that will not only increase overnight stays from leisure travelers, but also the length of stay.

Strategy: Articulating the brand promise of WineCoastCountry through the use of the Highway 1 Discovery Route helps define the unique region and creates reasons to explore several, if not all 10 destinations in one or more visits. The brand marketing approach will help more travelers plan ahead for longer, more enriching stays as they become repeat visitors. To accomplish this strategy, there are a number of tactics and activities below.

1. Create and promote multi-day experiences along the Highway 1 Discovery Route will be our main tactic to build length of stay. This will particularly be helpful to vacation rentals, but applies to all lodging categories.

Consumers are looking for ideas and assistance in the planning of their vacations. Our marketing efforts will help guide them through the Highway 1 Discovery Route and point them toward the itinerary of activity options that best suits them. Along with things to do, we will be featuring events in each of the destinations to offer more reasons to come and stay. These itineraries will be targeted by demographic group to provide ideas and reasons to visit the region and explore the Highway 1 Discovery Route.

Multi-Generational travel is growing fast as families decide to take everyone on the road. Grandparents, parents and children are traveling more together as the baby boom generation ages. Grandparents get assistance from their children in traveling to a destination, and in return help care for their grandchildren so parents have an opportunity to get away.

2. The growth of interest in vacation rentals and B&B's helps to illustrate the demand for the entire family to find lodging under one roof. This is also true for other lodging properties with the offering of suites and adjoining rooms. Our marketing efforts will offer several itineraries and packages along the Highway 1 Discovery Route for these families who choose to travel together. This offers opportunities to provide themed itineraries including family reunions, birthday celebrations and anniversaries.
3. Target couples who travel during shoulder season. This primarily consists of the aging Boomers who are now entering into senior status. This group makes up those in the 55 plus age groups. Their children are grown and now these empty-nesters can get out and

explore the Highway 1 Discovery Route for themselves. We will develop itineraries around these couples for their exploration along the Route.

4. Target younger singles, couples and groups with themed itineraries-golf, girlfriend getaways, wine tasting, adventure, cyclists, hikers, Stewardship - interpretive groups. We will utilize our new branded photography to establish this connection visually.

Bottom-Up Tactics = Originated with Local Funds

The CBID will take an assertive role in supporting the destinations with a marketing tool kit that they can use to save marketing dollars, avoid duplication, and build brand marketing consistency.

- Support each region to build their own local multi-day itineraries with sample templates and links
- Supply video/photo/editorial content supporting each thematic itinerary
- Promote the local itineraries, tours, specials & packaging throughout all WCC channels
- Provide sponsorship and marketing support for local events and programs including co-operative programs local marketing groups establish with State Parks, tour operators and other entities

Top-Down Tactics = CBID originated:

Itineraries are an important part of trip planning for the consumer, and thus WineCoastCountry.com will lead the way in the development of up to 15 itineraries and the tactics to market them. In addition to its own marketing efforts, these tactics will be shared with all of the local funded destinations to build consistency and encourage the local funded destinations to market the Highway 1 Discovery Route as it relates to them. Below represents how these tactics will be carried out and what will be made available to the various destination marketing groups within WineCoastCountry:

- Multiple thematic itineraries along Discovery Route on website and promotions
- Connect itineraries with lodging types, events, activities and destinations
- Promote tour/transportation relationships (Breakaway, Wine Wrangler, Etc.)
- Highway 1 Discovery Route Map – Certified Folder Distribution
- Strong Seasonal Campaigns, Getaway Promotions
- Enhanced Video Assets and Viewership
- Enhanced lodging profiles on all WCC.com powered sites
- Integrated branded content (PR, Social, Guest Blogging, Native Ads)
- Co-op programs within WineCoastCountry, Visit California and Visit SLO County

Measurement tools:

- Web analytics showing itineraries viewed and lodging referrals by category
- Tour partner bookings
- Promotional packages reported by members
- Event participation stats (already mandated by SLOC)

- **Goal: Create marketing efficiencies throughout the 10 destinations with additional marketing assets and channels.**

This goal aims to cement WineCoastCountry as an effective, sustainable regional marketing organization that evolves to the dynamics of the tourism industry, the abilities and interests of tourism stakeholder groups, constituent needs and consumer preferences. Insights obtained from a survey of local fund stakeholders revealed the most important areas for the constituency include:

1. Content, video, photos, branded content to support local tourism and property marketing,
2. Highway 1 Discovery Route integration with local routes and adventures
3. Seasonal themed promotion for niche audiences
4. Stewardship Travel and Co-op Event and Marketing Campaign Programs
5. Journalist FAM trips hosted within each region
6. Specials, Packages, Handouts

Strategy: Create and provide additional high quality marketing assets for multi-destination usage, brand messaging consistency and ongoing collaboration with our 10 destinations and local funds. This strategy will nurture shared services and best-practices (similar to franchisor and franchisee relationship) and other multi-regional organizational models.

Bottom-Up Tactics = Originated with Local Funds

An assessment of local fund marketing plans, goals and tactics will be created by the Collaboration Committee and provided to the Marketing Committee to review with the Core Marketing Team to determine actionable strategies and tactics that may evolve the marketing plan and assignments.

Top-Down Tactics = CBID Originated:

- Create Collaboration Committee to provide guidance on how efficiencies can be gained, and duplication avoided.
- Provide supreme quality video, art and editorial content assets. This process has already begun with refreshed website, mapping tools, specials and packages and multi-regional photo shoot. A phased videography project is included in the budget with quality b-roll, Stewardship Travel and enhanced Highway 1 Discovery Route videos
- Create and distribute a social assets toolkit
- Provide and manage fully-integrated web/mobile/social branded content driving interest in all destinations
- Provide annual Co-op campaign marketing opportunities
- Enhanced property profiles on all sites powered by WCC.com
- Provide ongoing media hosting requests and fulfill 2 hosted journalists per month

Measurement:

- Local fund participation in CBID originated programs
- Constituent satisfaction (survey)
- Co-op campaign results

**Core Marketing Firm
Budget**

<u>Scope of Work Activities</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
Program Strategy and Account Management	\$26,000 5%	\$26,000 5%
Board Meetings, Communications and Reporting Marketing Strategic Planning & Research		
Web/Mobile Management	\$50,000 9%	\$50,000 9%
Monthly SEO management, analytics, reporting Content Updates and Link Building Site Hosting Microsite Management		
Branded Content Marketing	\$158,000 30%	\$158,000 30%
Social Media, Blogs, Video Blogs Public Relations Management Enewsletters & VCB Enews Guest Blogging Program Advertorial/Native Ad Creation, Management		
Advertising Placement Expense	\$190,000 36%	\$190,000 36%
Fall Campaign Placement Spring Campaign Placement Monthly PPC/Retargeting		
Creative Services & Toolkit	\$55,000 10%	\$55,000 10%
Fall Campaign Creative/Project Management Spring Campaign Creative /Project Management Video Series Script and Creative Direction Video Series Videography, Talent, Props, Edit		
Projects, Promotions, Local Fund Programs	\$44,000 8%	\$44,000 8%
15 Itineraries and Tour Content Development Itineraries and Tours Web/Mobile/Social Promotion Lodging Web/Mobile Merchandising Enhancement Local Road Trip Mapping Lodging Getaway Promos (2x \$3000)		
Stewardship Travel Program	\$7,000 1%	\$7,000 1%
Campaign Development, Project Management		
Agency Contracted Amount	\$530,000 100%	\$530,000 100%
Contingency Items	\$123,000	\$123,000
Journalist Hosting Hard Costs Journalist Hosting Management Coastal Discovery & Stewardship Month Coop Programs Certified Folder and Map Printing SAVOR Central Coast Creative		