



CBID Marketing Plan

24-month

Introduction

San Luis Obispo County is one of the most attractive and affordable destinations in the state, and with several metropolitan travel hubs within easy drive times, it offers easy access to the nation and the world. Marketing the accessibility, affordability of our region, and the many enriching experiences one will find here, puts WineCoastCountry in a powerful position to capture new visitors to its unique areas.

After creating WineCoastCountry.com, the San Luis Obispo County BID (CBID) is in a position to fully market all the assets of its ten regions by delivering compelling reasons and benefits for visitors to make this their vacation getaway choice. The WineCoastCountry Marketing Plan has been developed to fulfill the mission statement and meet the Strategic Goals of the CBID – within the resources available by the assessment.

The marketing effort within this plan involves a turnkey, multi-layered approach that will not only drive response and bookings, but will also cement the WineCoastCountry brand for its ability to capture the imagination of visitors, stimulate incremental visitation, and add value to the economic and environmental well-being of San Luis Obispo County.

Competition

The competition for WineCoastCountry resides outside San Luis Obispo County where the tourism emphasis is focused on attracting the target markets above. The strategies deployed will be largely measured by the ability to compete with:

- Santa Barbara County
- Monterey County
- Southern California Coastal Resort Areas
- Napa and Sonoma County
- Northern California Coastal areas

Our Mission

The mission of the San Luis Obispo County Tourism Business Improvement District (CBID) is to promote the economic well being of our constituents (motels, hotels, Bed & Breakfast properties and vacations rentals) within the regions.



Strategic Goals

Economic

Effectively promote tourism in a way that optimizes recreation, agriculture and history; and contributes to increased occupancy, overall economic prosperity, and increased employment and for the unincorporated area of the county, while supporting the rural small-town attributes.

Consumer

To attract visitors through the development of an unincorporated area of San Luis Obispo County brand and education by specifically developing an appreciation of the scenic qualities, geography, history, recreation, attractions and ambiance, i.e., the key benefits and attributes the unincorporated areas of the county and regions offer.

Environment and Natural Resources

To protect and preserve the aesthetic, historical, agricultural and cultural foundations of San Luis Obispo County.

Additional Goals

To support the CBID mission and update the five year strategic plan, the Core Marketing Firm (CMF) recognizes goals that help shape financial, operational, branding and marketing decision-making of the organization and its partners:

1. Establish reliable evaluation criteria to understand the lodging inventory available, inventory sold, revenue collected and estimated resources needed to accomplish the strategic goals. This information is used to estimate, test and refine marketing activities over time.
2. Prioritize all marketing and promotions intended to result in incremental overnight stays.
3. Ensure CBID remains an indispensable marketing partner for the local funds, constituents and area stakeholders.

Target Market

The CMF will prioritize branding and marketing to gain maximum value from engaging the audiences most predisposed to visiting WineCoastCountry.

- **Travelers originating within 3-6 hour drive markets** - Los Angeles, Orange County, Inland Empire, San Diego, San Jose/Bay Area, Fresno, Bakersfield, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Monterey, Carmel, Salinas. Secondary markets of the nearby western states with emphasis on Arizona.



- **Empty nesters** - travelling mid-week and in the shoulder season
- Young working couples and singles - travelling in the shoulder season
- **Families searching for value** - travelling in the shoulder season
- **Upscale wine, food and event attendees** - visiting the county for multiple nights
- **Leisure traveler groups profiled for specific interests** – seeking outdoor adventures and activities including active outdoor, equestrian, cultural, educational, environmental interpretive and participatory stewardship travel.

Research conducted by National Geographic and *VisitCalifornia.com* influence the marketing strategy for WineCoastCountry. The actionable trends guiding the brand marketing include:

California is seen as having attractive rural experiences because of its diverse geography, and there is significant interest in visiting these areas.

Not only do travelers feel that California's varied geography offers a spectrum of rural-associated experiences, but these experiences are often expected to be truly unique or world-class. Many of these experiences are perceived to be accessible from one another.

Travelers are seeking profound emotional benefits from rural travel

Spending time in nature, surrounded by unique scenic beauty, is a key benefit. Peace, rejuvenation and learning are also important benefits.

An outdoor, thematic approach to travel planning is especially appealing.

Travelers understand "outdoor experiences" to include a wide range of activities, from picnicking in a bucolic field to golf adventures to kayaking to hiking trail preservation.

Caring for the destination is increasingly important.

61% Americans believe their experience is better when their destination preserves its natural, historic, and cultural sites. 54 million Americans are inclined to select travel companies that strive to protect and preserve the local environment of the destination. One-third of all travelers are influenced by a travel company's actions to preserve the environment and/or history and culture of destinations.

Rural destinations must be marketed well immediately, or interest will dissipate.

Travelers actively search for information on rural California experiences and expect thorough information to shape their plans. In addition to strong imagery, travelers want: what is unique to the area that they can't experience elsewhere, how they can access the destination, and what scenic beauty is offered.

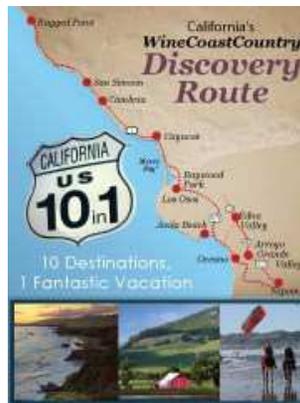
Marketing Strategy

The focus of the marketing effort is to generate incremental awareness and response using cost-effective content that helps targeted audiences value *WineCoastCountry.com* and use for their shoulder season vacation planning.



The primary strategies deployed are to:

- Position WineCoastCountry as a valuable resource for embracing our 10 rich wine, agricultural and aqua-cultural regions. Promote branded tour itineraries and packages that directly support the diverse lodging entities in *WineCoastCountry.com*.
- Distinguish WineCoastCountry as a unifying provider of 10 diverse regions. This is accomplished through a 101-mile **WineCoastCountry Discovery Route** that travelers will recognize, value and use. This route provides a convenient platform for incorporating shorter localized travelers' journeys.



- Develop and launch a comprehensive branded Stewardship Traveler Program that will inspire visitors to: deepen their SLO county experiences, learn more, and to help care for the region's natural and cultural heritage.
- Enhance the online and mobile experience to efficiently connect lodging offerings with local events, tours, signature attractions, outdoor excursions and niche offerings that all invite mid-week and shoulder season visitation.
- Deliver frequent and enriching branded content to inspire past and future visitors to stay longer, visit more frequently and share their experiences with others.
- Leverage the low cost and influence of public relations to efficiently market the region's unique natural beauty and pastoral settings plus the abundance of events, outdoor activities, attractions and itineraries that the diverse regions offer.
- Establish reliable evaluation criteria to refine marketing priorities and activities over time.

The brand messaging, creative and multi-layered marketing approach will each contain strategies and tactics to address this focus.



Brand Marketing

A brand is a promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from that of your competitors. It is all about what makes you more unique than the competition as it relates to what the consumer is looking for. The visual representation of the brand begins with the WineCoastCountry logo and the standards displayed on *WineCoastCountry.com*.

Prospective audiences do not understand WineCoastCountry as a valuable consumer travel planning resource for our region. Many who visit *WineCoastCountry.com* are confused by the geography and purpose. The travel media also do not have strong key messaging to identify WineCoastCountry as an important reference source to the regions.

As consumers are taking an experiential approach to travel planning—rather than a literal geographical one—WineCoastCountry brand messaging is updated to clarify what is truly unique about the unifying organization, and answer: “*what I can’t see, do or get anywhere else.*”

Primary Unique Selling Points

- 10 Diverse Regions – accessible in one
- Plentiful Adventures - attributed to wine, coast, and country
- Natural Beauty/Open Spaces – preserved

Tagline and Icon

The tagline and Highway 1 icon cements WineCoastCountry and its 10 region:



10 Destinations, 1 Fantastic Vacation

Key Messaging

Overall Description

WineCoastCountry features 10 distinct destinations in 100 miles of California splendor

WineCoastCountry Highway 1 Discovery Route



Boasting 101 miles of stunning California coastline, vast wildlife, artisan villages and vineyards, The WineCoastCountry Highway 1 Discovery Route is a journey of 10 diverse regions spanning from the beach town of Oceano in the south to iconic Hearst Castle in the north. The Route is where visitors Discover...

Nature history lifestyle stewardship and play along the way...

Adventure In Every Sense – The WineCoastCountry Highway 1 Discovery Route takes visitors on a California adventure through historic towns, pristine coastline, sandy beaches and an iconic castle. Along the 101 mile journey, there are countless ways to learn and become involved in the regions.

Diversity of Area:

Wine – WineCoastCountry is home to a burgeoning and sophisticated wine region yet more approachable, friendly and relaxed than other destinations

Coast - WineCoastCountry boasts 100 miles of stunning vistas, coastline cliffs, and relaxing sandy beaches just waiting to be discovered

Country - With 101 miles of prime Pacific coastline, WineCoastCountry is a vast outdoor playground where nature provides unlimited entertainment year round including hiking trails, surfing, state parks, elephant seals, and even an abalone farm

Towns - WineCoastCountry encompasses a gold mine of diverse artisan towns and seaside villages rich in character and history

Nostalgia – *What once was, still is.* Visitors to WineCoastCountry will feel as if they've stepped back to a time where they can truly unwind while creating new memories.

Supporting Creative Campaigns

Brand messaging, including advertising, promotions, public relations and customer communications all provide creative platforms for selling the brand. Below are examples of messaging executions supporting the brand tagline.



Connect to Something Fantastic

The Highway 1 Discovery Route is all about connecting 10 distinctive towns into one fantastic vacation. Connect recreation with relaxation, wining with dining, adventure with nature, and shopping with sightseeing. It's about connecting 101 miles of California coastline to 101 different ways of experiencing it. All while connecting you to the people you want to experience it with.

WineCoastCountry.com
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
© Destination Something Fantastic, 2014
Visit WineCoastCountry.com to plan your Discovery Route adventures

Advertising Plan - A condensed version of the ad strategy is outlined below. The plan details can be found on WineCoastCountry.com/members.

Internet and Print Advertising

Advertising on targeted travel media websites, and on regional print and broadcast media sites will be the cornerstone of the paid advertising efforts for WineCoastCountry. In some cases, these will be negotiated as value-added from our print placement efforts. Pay-per-click, geographical and behavioral targeting through Google, Yahoo, travel ad networks, and search marketing will be included in our advertising budget as appropriate.

The Los Angeles Times.com, San Jose Mercury News.com, and Sunset Magazine will focus on online and limited print to cover the target markets of Northern & Southern California with emphasis on Los Angeles, San Jose and Orange County. The remaining paid advertising budget will be utilizing on-line advertising tactics with Google Ad Words, YouTube and Facebook.

Promotions and Events

Well-planned events can help increase room occupancy. The County already has a strong list of quality events and promotion of these events will be a part of the overall marketing efforts.

Public Relations

The public relations team will focus on generating feature coverage of the Highway 1 Discovery Route and the Stewardship Traveler Program.



Social Media

The Social Media efforts will support our mission to increase overnight stays and includes a Stewardship activity blog, a weekly Travel Blog, daily posts and give away promotions on Face Book, videos on You Tube, posts on Twitter, photos on Pinterest and Flickr.

e-Marketing

WineCoastCountry will continue with our monthly e-newsletter, being sent to over 15,000 travelers.

Member/Constituent Communication

WineCoastCountry sends a quarterly Constituent newsletter and provides a monthly update in each local fund board meeting, which includes educational information on best practices and CBID programs that lodging properties can utilize within the properties direct marketing efforts.

Local Fund Co-op Programs

As part of our overall marketing strategy, the CBID and our CMT will provide marketing guidance for all local fund regions by providing tools and ideas that can be supported by each individual region or as a whole.

The WineCoastCountry Stewardship Traveler Program

A Successful, Newsworthy, and Sustainable Marketing Strategy

WineCoastCountry *Stewardship Traveler* Program was successfully launched in 2013. With over 73 activities and 36 community partners (28 local non-profits, 8 businesses) the program is a key differentiating strategy that aims to attract and retain visitors, and serves to benefit our natural surroundings, historic assets, economy, and local communities. The program inspire visitors and residents alike to; deepen their SLO county experiences, learn more about their surroundings, and to help care for the region's natural and cultural heritage. For WineCoastCountry, the *Stewardship Traveler* program offers a unique platform to enhance brand awareness while providing tourism leadership in sustainability, and travel trends provide additional support for the pursuit of this marketing strategy:

- A National Geographic study reports that out of 190 million U.S. travelers a year, 61% believe their experience is better when their destination preserves its natural, historic, and cultural sites. In addition, 41 percent of travelers say their vacation experience is better when they can see and do something authentic.
- "Tourist choices are increasingly influenced by sustainability considerations," states the World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) 2012 Tourism in the Green Economy Report. Ecotourism,



nature, heritage, cultural and “soft adventure” tourism are predicted to grow rapidly over the next two decades, and global spending on ecotourism is expected to increase at a higher rate than the tourism industry as a whole.

- In 2012, 35% of adults said they would like to try a holiday involving a volun-tourism component, and 6% said they had already done so. From: “What is the Size of the Volunteer Market?” 2013.

Program Benefits

Attracts and engages an emerging, high profile visitor who will help care for the region alongside locals.

- Differentiates WineCoastCountry and SLO County from other travel destination choices
- Delivers cost-effective media attention and high value content for all social media and online tactics
- Builds off-season and extended stay opportunities throughout the 10 regions
- Effectively provides one path towards long term countywide economic and resource sustainability

Examples of High Value Stewardship Traveler Activities

The activities ensure opportunities for learning, authentic connection, and public participation in clean-ups and restoration activities such as: beach, stream, lake, trail, meadow, campground, parks, and provides the visitor information on how and where to financially contribute to “make a difference” in the area that the visitor just enjoyed and connected with.

Some sample activities include:

- Montaña de Oro State Park Trail Restoration Days: drew over 150 enthusiastic participants
- Plant a Tree Days at Fiscalini Ranch Preserve
- Coastal Discovery Center Hands on Citizen Science Outing in San Simeon Cove
- Audubon Sweet Springs Preserve Monthly Stewards Day
- Avila Beach Stewardship Clean-up Kit and Appreciation Tote: 1,000 tote bags distributed to local lodging properties for distribution

Stewardship Traveler Strategic Results

The Program has more than exceeded its goals laid out in its 18 page 2-year plan of development and implementation. It has inspired fresh ideas and unprecedented positive countywide tourism collaboration and innovation.

For more detail information and overview visit the developing landing page at <http://winecoastcountry.com/slo/the-winecoastcountry-stewardship-traveler/>



Coastal Discovery and Stewardship Month

Our goal was to attract more visitors in January and February, and thus we launched www.CoastalDiscoveryRoute.com in January 2014. This effort took 9-months to develop, and in early 2014 the Board of Supervisors deemed February as Coastal Discovery and Stewardship Month, which launched this marketing strategy to increase visitation to our WCC regions during a slower lodging time period. Following are the measureable results from this effort.

Hotel Packages

The CBID had 14 lodging properties/management companies participate in February. Only 1 property responded to our request to provide results, and the Shoreline Inn on the Beach sold 25 packages specifically tied to this month-long promotion.

Promotions

Hearst Castle Theater Video on 3 monitors; lobby displays (pop up banners, DR map brochures, US Airways 24-page reprint)

CoastalDiscoveryRoute.com microsite (stats reflect January and February)

Total Visitors: 10,317

Total Page Views: 17,089

Total Referrals to WCC.com: 750

Stewardship Travel Landing Page Visitors: 676

Social Media: Impressions: 635,000 and Clicks: 6,977

Public relations: reached over 5.4 million on-line unique visitors in publications like Reuters, Bloomberg Business, and AOL News.

E-newsletter outreach: over 100,000 out-of-area vacationers

Constituent/Partner outreach: 5,000 free film flyers, plus weekly emails to all properties

Activities: 23 Stewardship activities took place throughout February, including 3 events that were specifically created for this month-long promotion:

“The Living Sea” free film at the Hearst Castle Theater (funded by CBID) = 537 attendees

Stolo Family Winery and Abalone Tasting (3/8 and 3/22) = 70 attendees



Central Coast Aquarium Sharks After Dark Talk and Wine/Food Reception = 18 attendee

TOT/Bed Tax

There are several factors that have contributed to a strong TOT performance in months that typically see a slow visitor count. Great weather and the onset of "frugal fatigue," as Americans tire from the economic downturn and begin to spend again. For January and February 2014 we enjoyed a 29.5% year over year increase in TOT, totaling almost \$700,000 in these two shoulder season months.

Partnership Feedback

"The events went great. It was a sell-out with more people from out of area. One guest from Bakersfield told me they heard about the Stewardship program through a magazine ad." - Maria Bennetti, Stolo Family Vineyard

"We felt it was a very successful event...The far majority had never been to the aquarium before and heard about it through the WCC e-blasts....5 of the 18 (30%) were from out of area." - CC Aquarium

"The best part of the month was the visitorship at the Hearst Theater movie night, which allowed for exposure of the National Marine Sanctuary system." - Carolyn Skinder, MBNMS and Coastal Discovery Center.



Marketing Budget

FY 2013/2014

Account Management/Supervision	\$18,000
Creative Services	\$21,000
Public Relations	\$64,000
Promotions and Events	\$32,000
Social Media	\$39,000
Email Distribution	\$20,000
Advertising/Media Placement	\$152,000
Website Maintenance & SEO	\$50,000
Total Estimated Budget	\$396,000



Stat Summary Brief

Website, Social Media and Current Assets

Our goal was to increase the percentage of non-paid visitors to our website, by refocusing web development monies away from Pay Per Click to Search Engine Optimization. The stats below reflect 20-month period through February 2014:

Total visits:	237,964 – grew 2.6%
Non-Paid Visitors:	230,206 – grew by 34.7%
Paid Visitors:	Decreased by 23%
STAY Page views:	20.5% of total Page views going to lodging pages – up to 7.43%
% of New Visits:	77.9%
Traffic Sources:	14.3% of our web traffic came from our partner sites including Hearst Castle, The Tribune, SLO County VCB, Sunset Magazine and the local fund board content feeds

CBID Assets include:

Content	over 2,500 pages with 643 PLAY, 492 EAT and 690 EVENT profiles
e-Newsletter	14,491 subscribers
Face Book	22,467 fans with 136,639 weekly impressions – doubled in 2013
Blog	20 unique Stewardship posts throughout 2013
Landing Pages	Stewardship Travel
Micro Sites	www.CoastalDiscoveryRoute.com
APP	www.Highway1DiscoveryRoute.com

Advertising

Our advertising continued with the same strategy platform as the prior year ~ on line advertising utilizing Facebook and Google with a focused effort to improve our SEO (ranking in Google and others) through improvements in natural search (use of key words on our site, meta-tags on page



titles, reciprocal linking, etc). Our strategy focused improving non-paid organic traffic by driving unique visitors to our website using SEO versus the pay-per-click model.

Total page views were close to ½ million. And of total visits, paid dropped from 16% down to 4%, with non-paid visitors representing almost all of our web traffic.

Public Relations

The WCC Public relations efforts focused on three messaging platforms with notable results: Highway 1 Discovery Route, Stewardship Travel and Coastal Discovery and Stewardship Month.

- Editorial Placements: 107
- Press Releases: 16
- Ongoing Media Visits: 33
- Earned Media Impressions: 706.83 Million
- Total Ad Equivalency: \$924,093 Million
- Total Publicity Value: \$2.77 Million

WCC.com was found in well-known media like Parade.com, Conde Naste Traveler, SF Gate, Boston.com, The Huffington Post, to name a few. Please go to www.WineCoastCountry.com/media to obtain the article/coverage.

Earned media refers to publicity gained through promotional efforts other than advertising, as opposed to paid media (publicity gained through advertising). Earned media often refers specifically to publicity gained through editorial influence. A Nielsen study in 2013 found that earned media (also described in the report as word-of-mouth) is the most trusted source of information in all countries it surveyed worldwide. It also found that earned media is the channel most likely to stimulate the consumer to action.

Partnerships

SLO County VCB/Visit SLO County continues to be a strong partner for the CBID, presenting almost half of their overall membership and participating as a Platinum Sponsor at Sunset SAVOR the Central Coast, hosting the Opening Night at Hearst Castle, 6 of the 11 Adventure Tours and managing the largest footprint of community representation in the SAVOR Central Coast Pavilion (10 regions in 700 square feet).



Campaign Summary: January-June 2014

Objective: Increase awareness and engagement of 10 destinations through packages, stewardship and four itinerary getaways along the Hwy 1 Discovery Route.

Overall Performance:

Six month period delivered more than 14 million paid impressions, 450 million earned impressions and drew +240,000 clicks and engagements to WineCoastCountry.com, CoastalDiscoveryRoute.com and media contest pages.

Paid Media Coverage				
Media/Site	Placement	Delivered Impressions	Clicks Engngts	CTR
Bay Area New Gr	Travel Banners	533,0000	10,200	0.19%
Visit Wine Coast Country	Facebook Contest	114,3000	50,275	4.40%
Sunset/Visit CA	Banners, Email	1,099,000	3,521	0.32%
Facebook	Geo BT Ads	141,7815	47,209	3.33%
Google	Geo BT Adword	79,6354	2,589	0.33%
YouTube	Video Display	35,3000	8,500	2.41%
LA Times	Views	1,700,000	2,450	0.14%
Hot Spot Travel	Banners	2,587,900	40000	1.55%
	Enews			
	Transmission			
Total		14,427,069	164,744	1.14%

Social				
Media/Site	Placement	Impressions	Followers	
WCC Facebook	Postings	10,550,581	35,605	
Twitter	Postings	25,000	1,541	
Pinterest	Postings	2,362	225	



Sample Earned Media - Public Relations			
Media/Site	Placement	Impressions	Links
Westways Magazine	Avila Feature	4,000,000	na
Conde Nast Traveler	Cn.com features	3,700,000	na
Huffington Post	Environmental Feature	40,000,000	na
Dog Channel	Vacation Feature	3,125,000	na
American Cowboy Magazine	Travel Feature	92,014	na
Topanga Messenger	Travel Feature	11,000	na
Fido Friendly Magazine	Destination Feature	50,000	na
CA Meetings & Events	Destination Feature	35,000	na
La Travel Mom	Site Feature	1,000	na
Decisive Latino	Site Feature	400,000	na
Visit California	Trade Feature	80,600	na
Visit California	Trade Feature	85,600	na
Examiner.com	Travel Feature	37,000,000	na
Parade Magazine	parade.com feature	29,000,000	na
Orange County Register	Feature	4,104,000	na
Writing Horseback	Online feature	2,300	na
PRNewswire/eRelease	Coastal Discovery Month	58,225,877	311
PRNewswire/eRelease	Hearst Castle Screening	77,346,745	323
PRNewswire/eRelease	Top 10 STP	69,895,877	266
PRNewswire/eRelease	Spring Fever	55,978,156	319
PRNewswire/eRelease	Summer Roads Trips	55,200,971	246
Totals		448,912,083	

URL	Website Traffic		
	Visitors	Page Views	Lodging Views
winecoastcountry.com	74,525	236,469	45,403
coastaldiscoveryroute.com	10,317	17,089	