



POPPY AWARDS 2020

Dates: Jan 1 2018 – Oct 1 , 2019

Budget: \$783,353.57

Program Description:

In 2017, Visit Mendocino County took a hard look at its branding, marketing efforts and collateral and, following interviews with a number of likely candidates, selected TheorySF as the marketing agency to take the organization to the next level.

TheorySF undertook in-county and out-of-county research that revealed awareness of Mendocino County was practically indiscernible. The organization's goal, then, was clearly defined: raise awareness of Mendocino County as a tourist destination among target audiences in defined geographical marketing areas. We developed an all-inclusive rebranding campaign from the bottom up:

- branding: tagline and logo
- website
- video assets
- outdoor advertising
- HTML5 banners , page takeovers and landing pages for festival events
- festival-specific rebranding
- production of the Happyland Players Guide
- a rework of the visitor guide
- and the beginning of the next phase of the marketing campaign

Objectives:

Our main goal was to rethink how Mendocino County appears to potential visitors and, with a combined campaign, raise awareness of Mendocino County as a tourist destination and increase positive perception to encourage visitation. Awareness lift was measured by a Nielsen Brand Effect Study.

We also wanted to drive qualified traffic and site engagements to the VisitMendocino.com website; provide more outbound website referrals to stakeholder sites; raise engagement on social media platforms; combine marketing efforts with public relations campaigns to highlight areas such as culinary, distilled spirits, outdoor adventures, selfie stops, and more. Traffic quality was measured by web analytics as a key indicator of success.

Tactics:

- Rebranding research for the tagline that had most appeal to potential visitors showed “FIND YOUR HAPPY” as the top choice.
- Taking a cue from the nostalgia movement among Millennials, Gen-Xers, Gen-Y, we developed a hotel key fob logo that is carried across all marketing collateral and swag.
- A Wordpress site that transformed VMC’s “calling card” from a static repository of lists. The website presents with above-the-fold ambient video with a call to action,. Below the fold, blog posts were converted to MendoMoments. A tabbed map provides instant access to essential visitor information and an events calendar highlights things to do. A Juicer social media feed has dynamic real-time IG postings.
- Outdoor Advertising:
 - In San Francisco, we placed bus wraps on three bus routes. We put taxi toppers on vehicles that traverse the city and beyond and bus “kings” on the sides of Muni buses.
 - We placed digital billboards in strategic locations from Vallejo to San Jose, on the Bay Bridge approach and on Highway 80.
 - In Sacramento, we put light rail train car wraps on two lines.
- Videos
 - Comedian/actor Sue Alfieri gave the Find Your Happy campaign a human face. We shot nine videos at iconic locations around the county for Facebook.
 - We shot website ambient video.
- In December 2018 we began work with digital media buyer, Media Matters WorldWide, to purchase programmatic and social media advertising space with an emphasis on brand awareness and Mendocino County festival messaging.
- We undertook a Nielsen study to measure lift.
- We developed the Happyland Players Guide, a light-hearted look at iconic things to do and see in the county. This concept will be moved forward into a larger format “visitor guide” and we will develop a series of animations using the cartoon characters who love Happyland.
- Festival rebranding carries the rebrand concept to countywide festivals.
- Next Steps: We are poised to move our Find Your Happy campaign to its next iteration: Find Yourself Happy.

Results/Evaluation:

Setup: Focus on raising awareness of the county as a tourist destination while driving SF Bay Area and Sacramento traffic to VisitMendocino.com.

Overall Results & Key Findings:

- The launch of the new site and brand collateral succeeded in driving traffic with initial results showing 130% increase and by Q4 2019, partner business listing views were up 902%.
- Increase in organic search lift from advertising as well as direct traffic indicates the brand is becoming more well known.

- The 2018 MMWW campaign enticed 2X more awareness, 2X more visit intent, and 149% more site traffic than goals YOY.
- High impact media lifted visit intent: audiences responded favorably to images and videos.
- Social presence is **key** with 42% of site traffic originating from paid Facebook/Instagram ads.
- Brand studies helped piece together impact on visits to the county: both the Nielsen and Facebook studies showed an increase in visit intent indicating that digital media is influencing people to visit and thus raise tourism revenue. These studies are essential where lack of data (ADR/occupancy/RevPar) is unavailable to VMC.

Performance:

- Site visits doubled each month YOY
- Per the brand study, the campaign improved Mendocino County awareness and visit intent
- Programmatic helped the campaign scale across various digital properties and drove an almost 2x CPCV since the campaign inception (Dec 2018–July 2019).
- Facebook/Instagram drove the most efficient CPCV.
- Spotify gave the videos different context to break through the clutter.

The Future:

Lessons learned to apply to current (and future) digital marketing.

- **Destination and Event:** Focus on destination and event content over activities.
- **High Impact:** Leverage high impact content to catch the attention of users and inspire action
- **Credibility:** Use influencers to drive credibility
- **Align Copy to Imagery:** Tailor copy to align with images; use hashtags and emojis
- **Video Length:** Develop short, impactful videos to drive completion rates

Collateral to upload:

Two Sue videos:

Tree Hugger: <https://vimeo.com/277209992>

Giraffe: <https://vimeo.com/277209749>

30-second video: <https://vimeo.com/370221476>

15 second videos:

Canoe Big River: <https://vimeo.com/354023409>

Starry Starry Night: <https://vimeo.com/354022042>

Logos:

Brand: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qy3z6q40eo369qf/AACuZi6XwPSL1HpuRzWivBLoa?dl=0>

Festival: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/iwrlt0wl02di22q/AACu4OVu73wi-wdMgW0gD08Ka?dl=0>

HTML5 banners; site skins: <http://www.wonderlabco.com/theorysf/mendocino/>

Happyland Players Guide:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/aqq03vs3s8o9tjj/121177_VMC_Happyland_0724_LR.pdf?dl=0

TheorySF_VMC_Outline:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/3mtl19x89rv6rjf/TSF_Clutch_0717_1a.pdf?dl=0

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