



## PUBLIC RELATIONS WORKPLAN/MARKETING PLAN

2019/2020

### OVERVIEW

Fiscal 2019/2020 continued to show progress on all public relations fronts, despite a handful of unforeseeable setbacks. The PR Campaign netted nearly 800 third-party editorial placements with an ad equivalency nearing \$280 million. Working with KOLI Communications, the VMC team also showed breadth in the international marketplace with editorial coverage focused on food, travel and lifestyle publications in Mexico, New Zealand, France, Germany, India, Canada and the U.K.

As we reboot and shore up our assets following the COVID-19 pandemic, public relations will play an even more important role in messaging and converting heads in beds. Tourism trends point to key market segmentation which Visit Mendocino County is perfectly poised: solo travel, offbeat/eco getaways, multi- and skip- generational vacations, welltality and the much-needed family escape. The 2020/2021 PR Workplan filters in these trends as well as other destination assets we can leverage utilizing key industry partners and a back pocket of A list media predisposed to Mendocino County.

### Objectives

Drive overnight visitation throughout Mendocino County via the following objectives:

- Assist VMC in promoting a sustainable, clarified image/brand as a premier California destination
- Stimulate demand/increase tourism revenue during critical shoulder seasons
- Initiate awareness among key market niches and lifestyle/passion segments to buoy off-season revenue
- Cultivate collaborative industry relationships to ensure successful, cost-effective and equitable coverage of Mendocino County stakeholders and stretch VMC's budget

### Strategies

- Influence the influencers/drive media coverage via multiple venues/channels (traditional/emerging)
- Ignite media interest via proactive campaigns focused on print, television, social media/key influencers
- Leverage and create "news" value as an economic driver for visitation
- Convert customers predisposed to California getaways by differentiating Mendocino County via focusing on distinct benefits/unique assets

- Strengthen industry partnerships with Visit California, North Coast Tourism Council, San Francisco Travel, BrandUSA, etc., via cooperative programming

## **Targets**

### **Demographic**

- Primary: Millennial, Gen-Z, Gen-X
- Secondary: Baby Boomers/Time Affluent Market
- HHI: \$100k+

### **Geographic**

- Primary: State of California (nearly 80% of U.S. market)
- Secondary: U.S., key fly/drive markets: Colorado, Oregon, Arizona, Nevada, Washington; Eastern Seaboard
- Tertiary: International/Western Canada

## **CORE PROGRAM**

### **Media Relations Campaign**

Leverage ongoing trends and news value to drive awareness of Visit Mendocino County via a series of timely, hard-hitting media-appropriate materials targeted to key industry niches. A Communications Platform will be created tied to an annual timeline. Activities include:

- Development of 2020/20201 Communications Platform
- Proactive media relations campaign tied to timely themes, events, debuts, seasons
- Bi-annual visual library update/as needed

### **Media Missions/In-Market Editorial Appointments**

Maximize external communications via editorial missions in key media-rich markets. Where possible, tie in with Visit California to offset costs. Suggested markets include:

- Denver
- Seattle
- Vancouver/Canada

### **Media Familiarization/Social Influencer Program**

Pitch/secure in-market media visits to generate editorial coverage, further brand messaging/positioning within key lifestyle/passion segments. Activities include:

- Conduct individual media outreach based on agreed-upon communication pillars
- Vet and manage all media and social influencer/blogger requests
- Work with VMC to create media itineraries
- Research/secure online influencer teams, negotiate photography buy

### **Content Creation**

- Drive compelling endorsement of Mendocino County in the digital space with ongoing content creation; research/development of blog posts, listicles, website editorial and cross-merchandising key online chats
- Handled in-house

## **Trade Shows**

Attend targeted media trade shows to boost visibility and secure future editorial visits. Coordinate participation with VMC staff.

- Visit California/Los Angeles (TBD)
- Society of American Travel Writers Conference (Oct.)
- Visit California/San Francisco (Sept.)
- Visit California Media Bootcamp (TBD)
- IPW/Chicago (Apr.)

## **Community/Stakeholder Relations**

Maintain VMC's credibility in the local media landscape; augment internal program to assist in positioning as the leader in tourism marketing.

- Assist VMC in maintaining visibility; broaden stakeholder support
- Continue to partner in development of stakeholder relations and promotional programs
- Draft/distribute stakeholder updates and monthly public relations highlights
- Attend/present at stakeholder meetings, as needed

## **Promotions**

Dovetail VMC strategic promotions and/or in-market events tied to VMC's overall branding to boost revenue during critical off seasons.

- Support/amplify VMC promotion and secure in-market media coverage

## **Digital Footprint/Social Media**

Augment in-house social media campaign to extend VMC'S digital footprint.

- Dovetail social media marketing promotions with publicity support; coordinate efforts with in-house staff
- Expand and enhance social media/key influencer database and outreach

## **Crisis Communications**

Work with VMC to coordinate outreach efforts to consumer-facing and stakeholder targets as needed. Proposed tight, easy-to-implement crisis program under separate budget.

## **PR Toolkit**

- Retain vendors/subscriptions on behalf of VMC:
  - Vocus Cision Media Database (KOLI contract)
  - Burrelles Media Tracking Service (VMC contract)
  - Constant Contact Distribution Service (KOLI contract)
  - Society of American Travel Writers' Membership (KOLI membership)

## **Programming**

- Provide ongoing counsel/insight on market developments and opportunities
- Execute annual Public Relations Workplan and Timeline
- Draft/distribute Bi-Monthly Public Relations Reports

- Draft/distribute Bi-Monthly Media Impact Reports
- Conduct monthly VM CPR conference calls
- Attend client, VMC Board and marketing committee meetings as needed
- Participate in quarterly site checks surrounding new hotel properties/attractions
- Draft/distribute Fiscal Report, draft/distribute PR Workplan

**Communications Platforms**

Motivators for campaign outreach, editorial content, pitching and market visitation.

- Please see attached addendum