



MENDOCINO COUNTY TOURISM COMMISSION, INC.
MARKETING COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday May 25, 2016

TIME: 3:00PM

PLACE: Visit Mendocino County, 390 W. Standley St., Ukiah CA 95482

Visit Mendocino County, 345 N. Franklin St., Fort Bragg CA 95437

Mendocino Community Network, Internet Service Provider, e10700 Ford St,
Mendocino, CA 95460

CALL-IN: 1-605-475-5950 **ACCESS CODE:** 694806

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 3:03PM

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Susie Plocher, Cally Dym, Alison de Grassi

Phone: Bernadette Byrne, Jan Rodriguez (3:23PM)

III. PUBLIC COMMENT - *Brown Act Requirements: Pursuant to the Brown Act, the Committee cannot discuss issues or take action on any requests during the comment period*

Laura Partridge of CC Media requested her email of May 24, 2016 be considered public comment regarding MCTC's advertising program for FY 2016/17. The email is attached.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 19, 2016 MEETING

Bernadette motions to approve the minutes; Susie seconds. Unanimous.

V. PROPOSAL TO REPLACE MARKETING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Alison expressed concern over her role with MCTC as an independent contractor and as the Chair of the Marketing Committee; potential conflict of interest.

Susie nominates Cally Dym as the Marketing Committee Chair, effective immediately, until the new Executive Director is in place and is established; Bernadette seconds. Unanimous.

VI. ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROPOSAL

Extensive discussion of the two PR proposals on the table: Koli Communications and DCI working together on a joint PR action plan. The Committee requested Alison continue discussion with each party to hone the work plan and gain a price reduction.

VII. **MARKETING PLAN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS**

Discussion of Pandora proposal. Rejected due to cost.

Discussion of Mering/Carson proposal. Tabled until any surplus funds are verified.

VIII. **MARKETING PLAN COMMENTS**

No comments at this time.

IX. **COMMITTEE MEMBER RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

The Chair will contact Robert Pinoli (Skunk Train) and Jim Roberts (The Madrones) about willingness to join the Committee.

NEXT MEETING DATE

To be set by Doodle poll during the week of June 6.

ADJOURN

4:10PM

From: Laura Partridge laura@cc.media 

Subject: Visit Mendocino Advertising

Date: May 24, 2016 at 3:21 PM

To: Scott Schneider scott@visitmendocino.com, Joe Webb Joe@visitmendocino.com, Alison de Grassi alison@visitmendocino.com, Cally Dym callyd@littleriverinn.com, Gracia Brown gracia@visitmendocino.com
Cc: Ally Hutson ally@cc.media, Lindsay Downing lindsay@cc.media

LP

Good afternoon,

I am reaching out to you to be part of the marketing committee conversation, please let me know if I should include other people in this email. After reading the meeting notes, packets and agendas as well as a few conversations with staff and contractors, I am putting pieces of a puzzle together. I would like to give the committee some insights and information based on what I currently understand, and overall I am happy to get into the weeds of the plan and provide information for further understanding if given the opportunity. As your media partner we are available to provide you media overviews, point of views and more. Please utilize us as such. It takes a collective effort and open communication from all directions to implement effective media plans. We understand the last few months / year has been full of massive transition for the organization, its staff and its members. We would like to continue to work with you through these tribulations and in the end see increased tourism to the region through positive efforts and results of a dynamic and effective media plan.

VMC, now MCTC, engaged the services of CCMedia in order to execute the paid media portion of the comprehensive strategic marketing plan that VMC developed with the Strategic Marketing Group, SMG. CCMedia has over twenty-five years developing and implementing tourism advertising in northern California. Most of our clients have had similar success much like Mendocino's incredible success of the past two years. Understanding the pros and cons of each media, what is available in the market place, how to reach target demographics, psychographics, and contextual targeting is something we do every day. We also optimize plans for the greatest return every day. As a team of six media strategist and buyers plus support staff, intimately involved in buying all types of available advertising space in your target region of northern California every day, our depth and knowledge are incomparable. We utilize the latest research, the best software, and we track digital media placements with our ad server.

The strategic marketing plan clearly defines objectives, as does the current marketing plan – drive visitors to the region. The target markets for the paid media were also well defined, and once a budget was determined, the paid media markets that Mendocino could afford to have a layered multi-media approach, reaching ALL target demographic groups, with the greatest impact was clear, the Bay Area. And over time and increased budgets, expand out into the neighboring regions. Of course this was layered on top of all of the other marketing efforts put forth by MCTC.

Like every tourism destination, Mendocino County is subject to a variety of market influences. CCMedia's goal is to understand the changing environment in which MCTC has to operate, and to build a proprietary plan that increases visits to their website and to the region, all the while staying within a strict budget. In addition to limited traditional outlets, utilizing digital advertising CCMedia targets visitors using search, search retargeting, banner ads, travel listings, travel ad networks, audio spots, content advertising, advertorials, travel ebasts and social media. The Results? In 2014, Visit Mendocino had its biggest year for tourism on record. The tourism industry in Mendocino County supported 6,000 jobs, an increase of 4.2%, and direct earnings of \$157 million, an increase of nearly 6%. Total tax receipts were also up 3.2% with an all time high of room sales at an increase of 7%. This was a direct impact of CCMedia's advertising efforts. An additional 2014 spring objective of Visit Mendocino was to increase the Facebook page likes for the destination. CCMedia ran a Facebook page likes campaign for a total of 22 non-consecutive days. The campaign generated 10,170 new page likes, reached 211,607 people and cost per like was \$0.48! This was for half the allocated budget.

Our success for VMC/MCTC has to do with an extremely targeted media mix. We are experienced experts and will not accept a 'one size fits all' approach for any client. Remembering you are targeting adults 55+ as well as Millennials is important when determining the media mix. There is not one ad network or one site or one publisher that will work wonders; it takes a calculated blend of unique publishers, relationships and added value.

The VMC/MCTC media plan has evolved dramatically from two years ago to now. We have continuously optimized the campaigns. And as you have provided more creative assets, the website became functional, having video available, our plan has been able to evolve even more. A great example is the video assets that were available to us just two short months ago in February. As soon as we knew you had video assets, we immediately recommended utilization through Instagram and YouTube, and our video ad programs are doing exponentially great. We manage and optimize these campaigns, almost daily, in order for them to be successful.

In advertising a business, in this case a tourism destination, marketing professionals would typically recommend building a plan based on previous successes, optimizing and tweaking until satisfactory brand saturation has been accomplished. Advertising is not a set it and forget it part of your overall marketing strategy, and people will need constant reminders on why they should choose Mendocino as their travel destination. With only almost four seasonal campaigns in the Bay Area completed, after years of 100% print advertising, Mendocino is not at a saturation point. The campaigns have had huge measurable successes but still have a ways to go in this competitive marketplace.

It doesn't take a media expert such as myself to figure out that a digital media buy has many different components. If you read the headlines, we all know that search should be leading your digital advertising - be present when people are looking for you or activities / things you represent. CCMedia is a Certified Google Adwords Partner (not an easy feat, nor are there many media agencies that have this certification). Then social media and travel related sites, like Tripadvisor where people are searching for your information. And most importantly, you need to track your ad delivery (confirming impressions actually run), as well as your conversions by advertisement. You cannot rely on the digital vendors providing you accurate information, nor is it consistent across all digital platforms. Do you have someone on your marketing committee who is Google certified for adwords, has an ad server and is educated on how to utilize it to optimize your campaigns and report the data?

I understand the committee is recommending Pulse Point. It is an ad network that CCMedia has utilized in the past, and typically purchased as a component of a larger digital mix, if it meets the objective of an ad campaign. It is similar to some of the ad networks we have utilized and optimized for MCTC, based on our different targeting and objectives. It would be part of an overall digital plan, *not THE digital plan*. As with any network, short-term results should be analyzed before determining a long-term commitment. Measurements of results should be based on objective of the ad placements within the network, what you are trying to achieve, and conversion tracking on your site. There are hundreds of ad networks available, each with a specific niche they say they can deliver. Not all are equal and learning what networks work for what type of message is key in implementing a digital advertising plan.

I think it is important to share that MCTC receives placements on Frommer's as part of our travel advertising buy, as well as on Fodor's, Travel, About Travel, Nat Geo, Huffpost travel, Travel Channel, Elite Travel, Wiki Travel, to name a few. Your ad is being delivered to people while they are in the travel mindset. We would be happy to give you more information on this as I can see we have not explained in detail to the new group of people what the ad plan really entails and includes.

Pandora is another outlet we have implemented for you. In looking at your proposed buy it is more expensive, has spread the reach and is not utilizing the assets we would recommend. You use a media agency to buy, track and implement these buys so you buy the right things at the right price targeting the right people, and utilize all aspects of a media outlet, often not found on a rate card. We do this for you.

In your marketing study it emphasizes you need brand awareness in the bay area. Without enough budgets to purchase television effectively, we've optimized for radio and outdoor advertisements, which combined have a great reach and frequency to your target audience. Things like buses, Bart boards, etc. that are noted in the meeting notes have not been included because the cost for placement when including production costs are quite high and your media budget does not allow for these high production costs for short flights and limited locations/reach. Hence we recommended digital billboards in key target areas to reach the most people within your targeted demographics. Digital billboards do not have production costs associated with them. They are flexible and can be easily changed for different creative based on weather, events, etc. Saving budget on production costs and utilizing those dollars to reach your target tourist is at the forefront of the media plan.

Although a diminishing breed, radio still has its place and we have utilized it to its fullest with the DJ endorsements which also cover social media platforms to once again engage your audience with content and personal stories across all types of traditional and social medias. Content is very important and this strategy delivers all types of media reach. Utilizing different stations and different talent exposed the Mendocino message to a different audience each time.

Based on the meeting notes, I assume that we have not explained how much content advertising is included in your current plan nor have we provided detail on the proposed plan of what is what type of advertisement. We are hesitant to get into the weeds of any plan unless requested. Content should be part of a digital strategy, both paid and earned. As noted in your notes, our recommendation of Weekend Sherpa has done very well in addition to the SFGate story studios delivering your story and your content to the affluent and plentiful readers of SFGate. Building on the effectiveness and success of placements, we have suggested extending this content and story into the Bay Area Newsgroup digital assets.

At this point, we have only given a 100,000-foot level overview of the 2016-2017 media plan, waiting for budgets and further discussion to develop the plan. Numerous conversations have been had about needing input to develop the plan and none of those conversations have included any information about what has been going on behind the scenes, or the direction the marketing committee is discussing, or if we could participate in the committee discussions. Shame on us for not knowing the changing platform for the organization, as I am sure our depth of knowledge and experience could be beneficial for the success of the MCTC. We would welcome the opportunity if it exists.

Based on my discussions with MCTC, it is unclear as to why the MCTC wants to buy media directly, without a layered, tracked plan. I hear that MCTC has been happy with the services CCMedia has provided, if there is an issue we would welcome input as to what you would like to see or hear from us. We can plan and implement your advertising by month, season, bi-annual or annually- however the new Board or committee determines best fits their needs. We can listen and respond to ideas or opportunities, and involve the committee or Board in discussions if appropriate. We can recommend economies of scale, or longer duration flights for efficiencies. All the while ensuring your advertising dollars go as far as possible to reaching your target audience at the right time and impacting your bottom line - more tourist to the region.

I have attached the media funnel for MCTC's current media plan. I have also attached the digital report from April so you can see the results of the digital advertising. These monthly reports are shared with staff.

I am planning on being on the Marketing Committee call on Wednesday. I welcome any feedback, insights or suggestions.

Laura

Laura Partridge, President
CCMedia
775.327.4200 x206
530.582.4100 x206

laura@cc.media | www.cc.media

PLEASE NOTE: Our Reno office has moved to 448 Ridge Street, Reno, NV 89501.

We buy advertising. Better.