



mendocino county tourism commission

2016/17 marketing plan



table of contents

2016–17 marketing plan.....	2
mission & values	4
situation analysis	5
product experience.....	15
goals & objectives	16
core strategy.....	16
Step 1: Create awareness for Mendocino County.....	17
Step 2: Drive consumers to VisitMendocino.com.....	17
Step 3: Influence consumers to visit Mendocino County.....	17
target markets	19
action plans	22
budget	33
staffing.....	35
organization chart.....	37

2016–17 marketing plan



This Marketing Plan is our collective, community vision of tourism promotion for Mendocino County. We are the Inspiration Highway. We encourage visitors to go farther... around the corner and off the grid to discover our authentic destination.

Welcome to the Mendocino County Tourism Commission!

On behalf of the Board of Directors, current staff and contractors, I am excited and honored to present the 2016/2017 marketing plan. While only a year has passed since the introduction of the last plan, much has transpired to get us to where we are today.

Through the tireless work of so many volunteers including past Visit Mendocino County board members, staff and committee members, as well as business owners, the County Board of Supervisors and others, we are able to present this plan as a new organization — created and organized from your feedback and support.

We are a new organization – here to work for you!

While we are still working through many transitional facets of our organization, committees, contractors and staff have continued to focus on the primary task at hand – marketing Mendocino County. And, it's working. Tourism numbers are at their highest levels ever on record.

It is vital for Mendocino County to continue to be a “top of mind” destination in today's highly competitive marketing environment. With so many beautiful, unique destinations for visitors to choose from, we must stand out with all we have to offer the traveler.

In the next fiscal year, we continue to highlight our “wines, waves and wilderness” targeting Northern California with online, radio, outdoor and print advertising. Also included is a one-time spend of close to \$200,000 piggybacking on Visit California and their \$100,000,000 budget. The programs initiated from this “extra money” will enhance our marketing efforts and results not just this year, but for years to come.

Our robust public relations campaign will continue to reach markets across the U.S. Sales, visitor services, and partnerships will round out our robust and comprehensive programming and efforts. We will continue to enhance our website and social media efforts including new video production and even an online interactive gaming experience.

Our sales efforts, mostly through the North Coast Tourism Council, will continue to focus on both the domestic and international markets. Similarly, we will, once again, produce our Mushroom & Crab festivals in November and January (hopefully with crab this year!).

Staffing will continue to transition as we get closer to hiring MCTC's first Executive Director. We look forward to the many opportunities as we reshape the future of tourism in Mendocino County..

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you in promoting our communities. Our door is always open and your thoughts, feedback, and ideas are always welcome. Let's work together to make 2016/2017 the best year yet with continued increase in visitation and the resulting tax dollars helping our county's economy and culture thrive!

Kind Regards,
John Kuhry, Chair of the Board
Mendocino County Tourism Commission

mission & values

Establish Mendocino County as a premier destination featuring quaint and charming villages, towering redwood forests and intimate and unique wineries resulting in high return on investment and increased room nights.

Innovation: Seek out and implement new strategies and tactics to further advance the Mendocino County brand.

Teamwork: Respect diverse opinions and work together to find strategic, quantifiable solutions to achieve shared goals.

Enthusiasm: Apply the passion we have for our region's fierce beauty, independent spirit, and natural lifestyles to each project we undertake.

Accountability: Strategically plan our program of work, track our progress, and make necessary adjustments to programs in order to realize the best value possible from our tourism marketing investment.

Communication: Share information about processes, programs, and progress within our organization and the greater Mendocino County community.

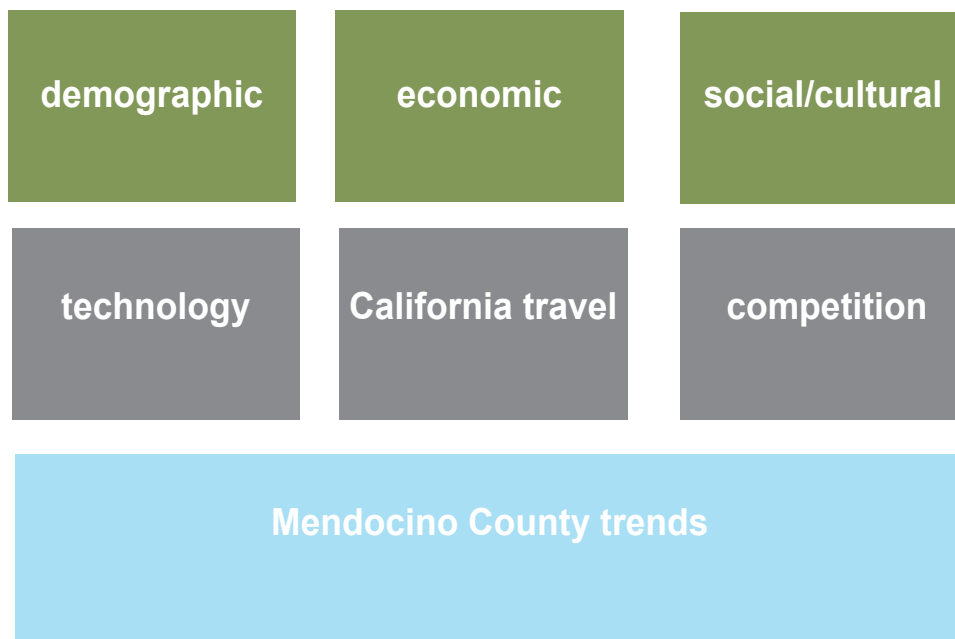


situation analysis

part 1: key trends impacting mendocino county tourism

There can be no doubt that Mendocino County, like every tourism destination, does not operate in a vacuum, but rather, is subject to a variety of market influences, including economic, travel, social, cultural, and demographic trends. As such, it is important to understand the changing environment in which the organization is operating.

Significant changes are occurring in the California marketplace that impact tourism destinations like Mendocino County. These shifts are primarily the result of a dramatically changed economic environment, though there are also changes in demographics, travel, socio-cultural, and consumer value trends of which tourism decision-makers should be aware. For the purposes of background and context, the following is a summary of the key tourism, economic, and demographic trends that will help provide a comprehensive context for the development of the Mendocino County strategic marketing direction.



level 1 trends

A. Economic Trends

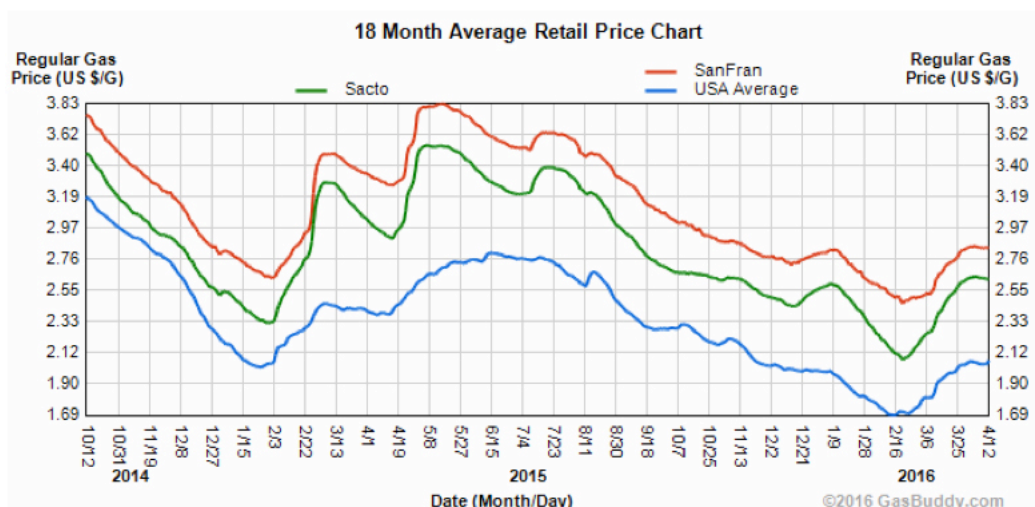
The U.S. and California economies really serve as the backdrop for understanding the direction of tourism; and both continue to be strong performers. As you can see in the table below both the U.S. and California economies have improved significantly, which has created the environment for an increase in consumer spending that includes leisure and hospitality.

Key U.S. and California Economic Indicators % Change						
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
U.S. Gross Domestic Product	2.2%	2.3%	2.8%	3.0%	3.4%	2.7%
Unemployment CA	10.2%	8.8%	7.5%	6.5%	6.0%	5.8%
Unemployment U.S.	8.1%	7.4%	6.2%	5.9%	5.2%	5.2%
Personal Income Growth CA	5.2%	2.2%	5.7%	5.3%	5.4%	5.1%
Personal Income Growth U.S.	5.2%	2.0%	4.0%	3.9%	4.5%	5.3%
Consumer Price Index CA	2.2%	1.9%	2.0%	2.1%	1.9%	
Consumer Price Index U.A.	2.1%	1.5%	1.6%	0.0%	2.2%	2.1%

Source: State of California, Department of Finance

Given that Mendocino County is in close proximity to its core Northern California market, low gas prices are also a positive indicator for travel. As can be seen in the chart below, the price of gas continues to be favorable for regional drive travel, providing consumers with more available funding to spend while in the destination.

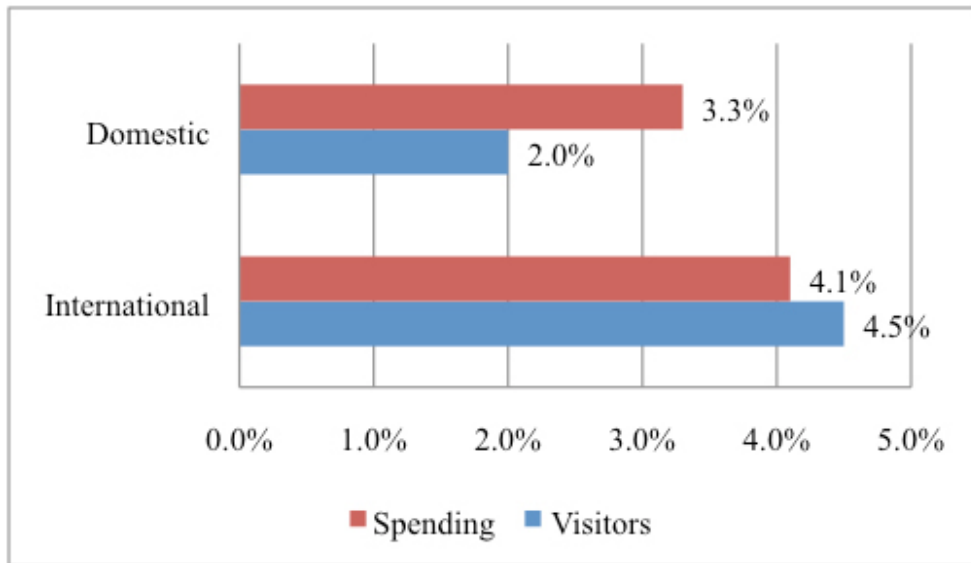
Figure 2: Gas Price Trend 2014-2016 (Source: Gas Buddy.com)



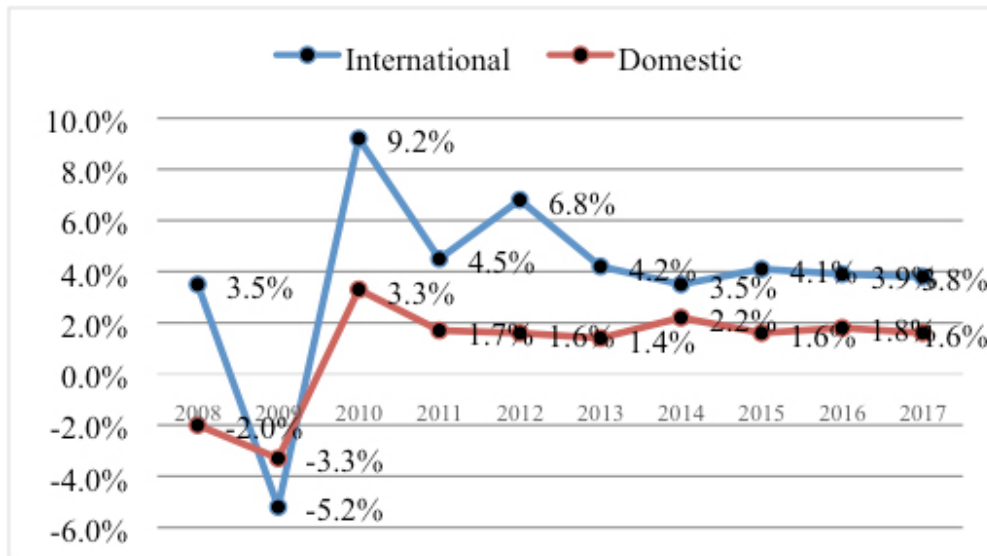
B. International Travel

International travel will continue its strong growth, especially from China. Overseas arrivals or inbound travel is projected to increase 5.7% in 2016 over 2015 levels. Travel spending by all international visitors is projected to increase by 4.5% to \$37.9 billion.

Total Domestic and International Travel 2016 Projections | % Change



International Visitors vs. Domestic Person Trips 2008-2017 | % Change



Following the sharp decline in total visitations during 2008-2009, international travel spiked in 2010. According to the U.S. Travel Association, international visitations will continue to outpace domestic visitations pending global

economics. This steady growth can be attributed to the formation of Brand USA in 2010, which has aggressively promoted travel to the United States with the Discover America campaign.

C. California Demographic Trends – The Face of California Continues to Change

The California population continues to change in two key areas:

1. A shift in age demographics by 2018

This shift falls along three key demographic areas: (1) An increase of 2.5 million in the 55+ market, (2) The Millennial market (20-34) will see an increase of just under 1 million, and (3) children (ages 0-14) will see an increase of just over 1 million.

2. A continuing shift in ethnicity

California now boasts the largest minority population in the United States. Non-Hispanic whites declined by half, from about 78% of the state's population in 1970 to 39.7% of the population in 2011. While ethnic minorities account for approximately one-third of the total U.S. population, 20% of the total minority population resides in California¹. Latino and Asian populations, which already represent a significant percentage of the California population, will continue to grow. Latinos will become the single largest ethnic group within the next decade, and by 2040 will comprise the majority of the population. Currently Latinos represent the single largest ethnic group among the under-35-year-old category in the state.²

Both of these shifts will continue to impact California tourism and potentially create opportunities for Mendocino County in the years to come.

D. Social + Cultural Trends = Lots of Change

The following consumer lifestyle trends are important to increase awareness and demand for the destination.

Consumer Lifestyle Trends

- **People are seeking a deeper connection to travel brands and destinations**
Travelers today are looking to align with brands and destinations that have similar values and beliefs.

¹ Wikipedia, "Demographics of California", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_California

² Johnson, Hans, "California's Future", Public Policy Institute of California, February 2015

- **Technology is going real time**
As one-to-one marketing continues, new apps are being developed to make relevant suggestions to visitors no matter where they are in a destination, e.g., dining, shopping, and other suggestions wherever a visitor is located.
- **Alternative travel – the shared economy**
The shared economy has gone mainstream. Transactions are easier, discovering shared economy suppliers is faster, and feedback is transparent. This continuing trend will especially impact the property rental market.
- **“Welltality” is the new hospitality**
Destinations and hotels are adding wellness features to accommodate changing consumer tastes.
- **Luxury travel**
Consumers today are more willing to open their wallets and invest in unique and memorable experiences.
- **Multi-generational aspirational travel**
Families today are looking for vacations that are transformative for the entire family.
- **A shorter travel planning timeframe**
Mobile technology is shifting the traveler’s timeframe, allowing them to be more open to same day/ next day last-minute offers. There is an opportunity for destinations and local attractions to leverage this segment.
- **Book anywhere**
Thanks to flexible mobile technology, booking transactions for travel can now be made just about anywhere.

Destination Trends

- **Hipster holidays are hip**
A new breed of traveler is looking to not just find a great destination but also find places within a destination that are cool and hip before everyone else does.
- **Choosing a destination for culture**
According to Trip Advisor 47% of travelers say they have visited a destination because of local culture and the people of a specific country. The same can be true for a destination.

- **Rise of the boutique destination**
Visitors are looking for emphasis on local unique experiences. Destinations need to focus on what truly differentiates them, and not what they think consumers want them to be.
- **Local experiences will make memories**
As destinations become more and more similar (“Something for everyone!”) the smart ones will look to connect visitors with local experiences. The more authentic you are, the less you have to spend marketing dollars to differentiate your destination. It’s the local experiences like the cool place to eat, or the best place to walk the beach or best place to see a sunset that make the difference for many visitors.
- **Destination celebrations**
As Boomers age and think about life celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries), more and more of those are taking place in-destination.
- **Increasing focus on millennial travel**
With the aging of the Boomer generation, more focus is on Gen Xers and Millennials. Many destinations are making that transition with messaging, themes, and communication channels.

Marketing and Communications Trends

- **Virtual reality is coming**
Remember the days when you produced a brochure for your destination or hotel or attraction? Those days are fading as virtual reality enters the fray. As video games have become more sophisticated, with lifelike and real animation, and as technology becomes better and cheaper, it makes virtual reality a reality. Destinations need to be ready to embrace this as a potentially powerful marketing tool.
- **Visual imagery continues to be important in tourism marketing**
As social media has become augmented with visual apps like Instagram and Snapchat, destinations are looking to more fully integrate this visual format into their marketing efforts. Visit California now has over 100 videos potential visitors can access in finding out about California. Likewise, visitors are using this format more and more to share their vacation experiences.
- **Traveler flexibility and control – research everything**
With the continued growth of online and mobile resources, consumers looking for flexibility and control of their vacation decisions have the ability to research everything and often do it not only in pre-trip planning but once a trip is underway.

- **Greater degree of personalization**

Facilitated by increased data mining capabilities, marketing efforts will lead to customization for each consumer. DMOs will focus more and more on customized targeting and the speed of using that data will continue to increase.

level 2 trends

A. California Travel Trends – California Travel Spending Breaks a New Record

One of the most significant tourism impacts will be the growth of Visit California’s tourism promotion budget, which will exceed \$100 million, making it one of the biggest state tourism budgets in the country. Below are domestic travel trends that impact Mendocino County.

Domestic

Each year, California residents and visitors travel within the state to experience its variety of attractions, scenic beauty and local culture. According to the most recently released data by Visit California³, **the state generated \$121 billion in direct travel spending in 2015, a 3% increase over the preceding year.**

The table below illustrates the share of travel spending among Mendocino County and its key competitors. As can be seen, travel spending share has increased for Tehama and Siskiyou County and remain constant for other counties.

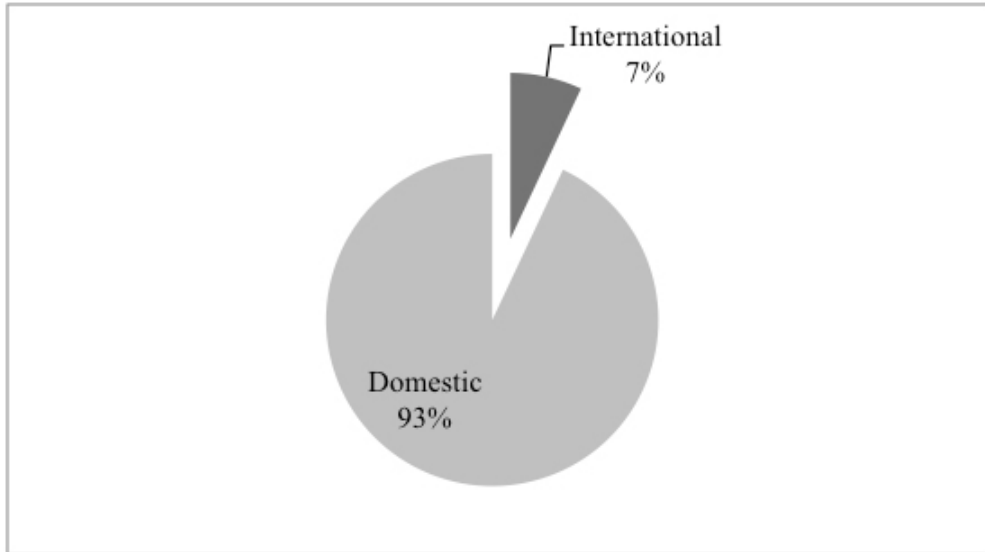
California Travel Spending 2010-2015 (\$ Billions)				
County	2004		2014	
	Spending (\$ millions)	%	Spending (\$ millions)	%
Humboldt	\$290.0	23.35	\$378.0	25.1
Mendocino	\$310.0	24.96	\$354.0	23.5
Shasta	\$340.0	27.38	\$410.0	27.2
Siskiyou	\$160.0	12.88	\$185.0	12.3
Tehama	\$94.0	7.57	\$128.0	8.5
Trinity	\$48.0	3.86	\$50.5	3.4
Total	\$1,242.0	100%	\$1,505.5	100%

Source: Visit California

Approximately 7% of visitors to California are international, however, overall visitation and travel spending continues to increase.

³ Dean Runyan & Associates, “Visit California Economic Impact of Travel 2015”, <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/Find-Research/California-Statistics-Trends/>

2013 Total California Travel Visitors

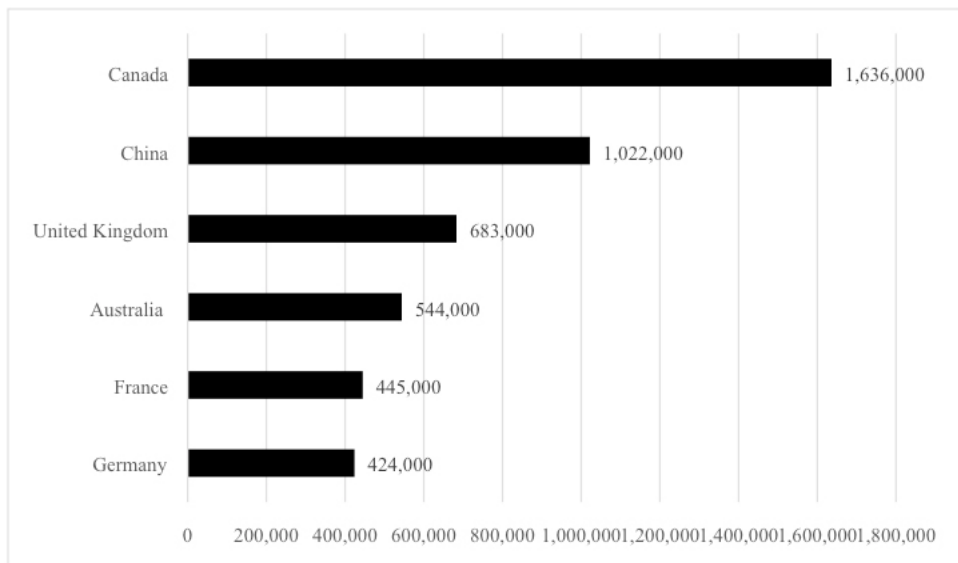


Source: California Travel Outlook 2014

International

Primary international visitation data by markets of importance to Mendocino County can be found below.

Selected International Market Visitors to California Annually



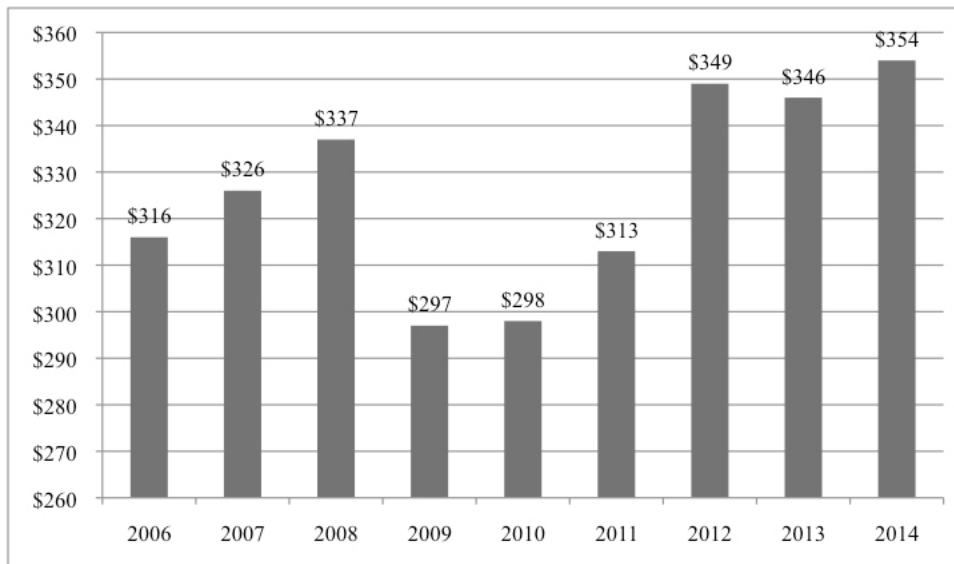
Source: Visit California 2014 Forecast

part 2: the Mendocino County market

A. Size and Scope of the Mendocino County Market in Perspective

Within the State of California, Mendocino County as a whole generates approximately \$361 million in travel spending⁴. The 2006 through 2014 trend is found below.

Mendocino County Visitor Spending 2006-2014 (\$ Millions)



Source: California Travel Impacts by County, March 2015

In terms of overall tourism spending, as compared to neighboring counties, Mendocino and Humboldt counties are ranked closely but behind Shasta County.

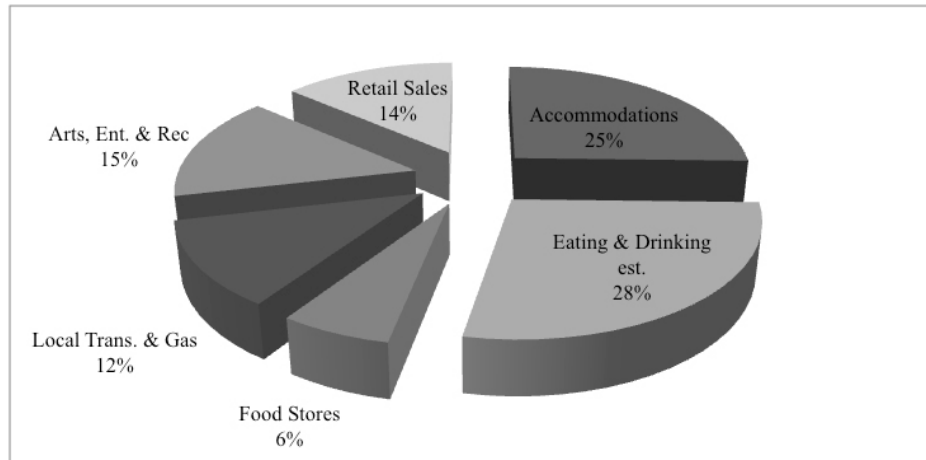
Travel Spending By Selected County (\$ Millions) (Source: California Travel Impacts by County, 2015)



⁴ California Travel Impacts by County 2016

With regard to how those travel dollars are spent, the figure below identifies travel spending by type of business service.

Mendocino County Travel Spending by Type of Business Service (\$ Millions)

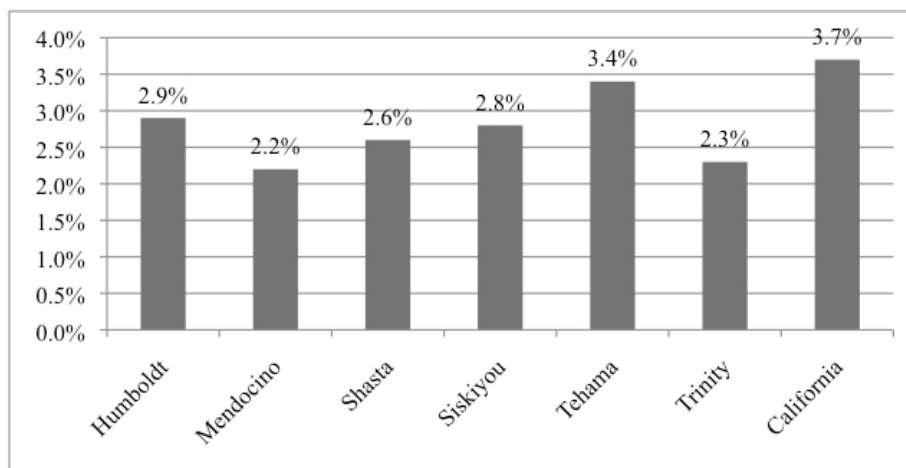


Source: California Travel Impacts by County, 2013

B. Travel Spending Growth Rates

Over the long-term growth during 1992-2014, travel spending in Mendocino County averaged 2.0% annually. This average annual growth rate was below other regional counties as well as below the state average of 3.8%.

1992-2014 Average Annual Travel Spending Growth Rate by Mendocino County, Competitors & State of California⁵



Source: California Travel Impacts by County, March 2012

In terms of employment Mendocino County has seen tourism industry employment is at its highest levels with over 6,100 jobs generated by travel spending.

⁵ California Travel Impacts by County 1992-2014

product experience

Spectacular scenery, a sense of isolation, an aesthetic sensibility, and a strong sense of community are the standout highlights of a trip to Mendocino County, an area that is well within a drive of the Bay Area and Sacramento.

No matter where visitors come from, their first impression of Mendocino County is one of outstanding natural beauty: redwood forests and rivers from the north, rolling hills and the promise of the ocean from the east, the blue and gold of distant mountains from the south. This is what we offer... a promise of awe at the foot of a redwood tree, a gasp at the sight of a breaching whale, a sigh of pleasure from a sip of wine hand-crafted from century-old vines... and our welcome.



The county's large geographical area is broadly divided into two separate, yet contiguous, parts: coastal and inland. And those areas are themselves subject to their own geo-partitions: north and south coast; north county, Anderson Valley, and the inland corridor. Each of the two major areas has their distinct attractions for the traveler, yet there are commonalities to be found in fine wining and dining, outdoor recreation, and experiences.



There are a myriad reasons why travelers go where they do, and these are almost impossible to quantify. However, what we can offer here is a broad spectrum of what brings visitors to the two major areas of Mendocino County.

Wild and scenic is an understated description of Mendocino County's pristine coastline. From the placid mouth of the Garcia River to the working harbor in Fort Bragg, from the towering mountains of the Lost Coast to the quaint Village of Mendocino, the coastal region invites visitors to become part of the landscape and its history.

The majesty of the redwoods and vistas of lush vineyards are just two of the defining characteristics of inland Mendocino County that attract visitors. With two routes into the heart of the county, travelers can opt to wind along Highway 128 through the Yorkville Highlands to the Anderson Valley, or stay on Highway 101, passing through Hopland to the county's cultural center of Ukiah on to Willits and the forests and wilderness that await at the northern part of the county.

goals & objectives

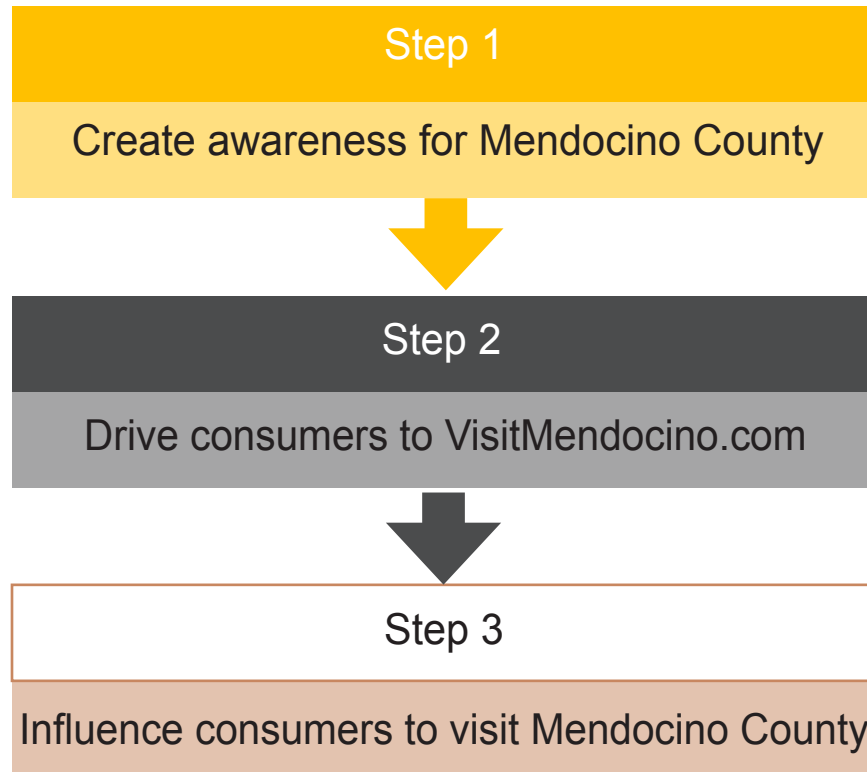
Increase overall demand for overnight visitation during key times of the year in an effort to increase revenues, employment and taxes in Mendocino County.

- Continue to effectively position Mendocino County as one of California's premier coastal destinations.
- Educate consumers on the different coastal and inland experiences that can be found within the county.
- Maintain marketing focus to key lifestyle and passion segments including outdoor/recreation, wine, food, and romance.
- Maintain the role of technology and digital marketing efforts in order to broaden the reach and increase effectiveness.
- Continue implementation of a marketing dashboard that tracks the destination and MCTC, and distribute that information in an effort to educate and support the tourism industry.
- Continue implementation of research that tracks the effectiveness of the MCTC website and the influence it has on persuading visitors to visit Mendocino County.
- Develop and implement board education and training as policymakers and advocates of the county's travel industry.

core strategy

Given the prominent role that the internet plays in travel planning, MCTC marketing efforts should continue to drive potential visitors to its website. Based on a six-month analysis of unique website visitors (Oct '15-April '16), MCTC's goal is to more than double unique visitors to 20,000 per month, 240,000 per year. At the core of the strategy are two basic principles:

- The best organization to create awareness and brand positioning and influencing visitors to choose Mendocino County is MCTC.
- The best organization to book a room or make a sale is a lodging property or an online travel agency (OTA).



How the strategy works

Marketing efforts (digital advertising, public relations, etc.) are used to create awareness and attract target market segments to visit www.visitmendocino.com and increase the existing database for future tourism marketing efforts. Once the target segment is attracted, they either show interest (go to the website) or not.

- Once they go to the website, it is important for the site to effectively influence consumers to visit the destination. At some point they may click on a lodging property or attraction. They may book directly or they may book through an online travel agency or some other channel. This sequence of events may happen all at once or over a period of time.
- Based upon their experience, new visitors either become repeat visitors going back to the lodging property/attraction directly, or back to MCTC's website to choose another lodging property or attraction.

Performance

MCTC has developed a baseline measurement to track the influence its marketing efforts have in generating lodging revenue and total visitor spending. In terms of understanding what percent of the market increase can be attributed to MCTC vs. a rising economy, the following outlines the impact of integrated MCTC marketing efforts.

MCTC Lodging Rooms Generated	
	Base Year 2014/15 Actual
Unique Website Visitors	145,755
Lodging Revenue Generated	
Conversion Rate	12.00%
Estimated Bookings	17,491
Length of Stay	2.8
Rooms Generated	48,974
ADR	\$252
Total County Lodging Revenue	\$84,000,000
MCTC as % of Total	14.7%
Total Visitor Spending	
Per Party Daily Expenses	
Lodging	\$252
Food and Beverage	\$193
Entertainment	\$35
Retail Shopping	\$100
Daily Transportation	\$23
Recreation	\$15
Other	\$123
Total	\$741
Trip Length	2.8
MCTC Generated Visitor Spending	\$36,289,496.88

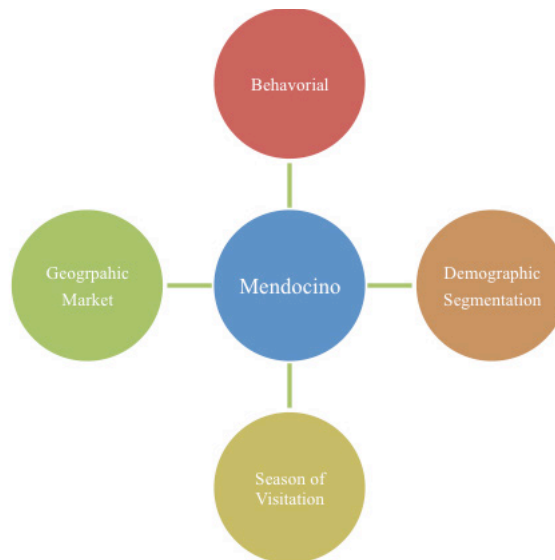
Source: SMG VMC Influence Conversion Study; MCTC Google Analytics; Visit California, California Travel Impacts 2015

In terms of how MCTC has performed the table above illustrates the following;

- In the base year of 2014/15 it is estimated that total lodging revenue generated in the market was \$74 million. Of that MCTC generated \$12 million in lodging revenue through its marketing efforts (as measured by conversion of consumers using the VisitMendocino.com website). This was equivalent to 14% of total lodging revenue generated.

target markets

MCTC's target markets follow the segmentation matrix set out below, which includes behavioral, demographic, geographic markets, seasonal and activity participation segmentations. The matrix is based on visitor profile data and input from the lodging industry.



From a psychographic perspective, Mendocino County appeals to the individual who appreciates its natural beauty and wants to participate in outdoor and cultural activities while at the same time enjoying the food and wine the area has to offer.

Lifestyle Segmentation

FIT (individual traveler) Target Segments	Group Target Segments
Art & Culture	Tour & Travel
Outdoor Recreation	
Wine & Food	
Family	
Romance	
Weddings	

Geographic Segmentation – primary target markets include:

Regional/Drive Markets	International Markets
<i>Northern California</i>	<i>Short – Mid Term</i>
Bay Area	United Kingdom
Central Valley	Australia
Southern Oregon	Canada
Other Northern CA rural	
Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase overnight visitation and trip frequency • Increase length of stay • Develop incentives to attract short planning window visitors 	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through regional and state tourism partners • Emerging market – increase overnight/longer stay/midweek visitation

Seasonality Segmentation

Priority seasons to focus marketing efforts on are the following, in order of priority:

- Quarter 1 – Fall
- Quarter 2 – Spring
- Quarter 3 – Winter

Primary Activity Segmentation

- Hiking
- Road biking
- Mountain biking
- Water sports
- Special events
- Wine tasting
- Dining
- Art & Culture
- Motorcycle touring
- Photography

action plans

For the 2016/17 fiscal year, it's both prudent and necessary that Mendocino County Tourism Commission analyze and review current marketing and public relations trends. With the advent of mobile and wearable technology, MCTC must be poised to respond to opportunities with agility.

public relations & content

Mendocino County Tourism Commission has contracted with traditional public relations agencies to spread the word about the county. In brief, these types of PR agencies use tools such as press releases, hot sheets, and media pitches to garner media interest for stories and visitation. For the past three years, the organization has worked with the PR firm collaboration of Koli Communications and Cinch PR & Branding. The team has been very successful in not only reaching but exceeding the goals set out in prior years' action plans.

So why change now?

It's time to change up the public relations efforts in response to the constantly shifting public relations landscape.

It is time for Mendocino County to be a part of the California Collective. Development Counsellors International (DCI) will bring our PR efforts to new heights. They are the PR firm of record for Visit California and many other highly successful destination marketing organizations (DMOs). The "California Collective" is a program developed exclusively for California-based DMOs. Led by DCI, this program provides California DMOs with a proactive scope of work that helps them increase their profile among target consumers.

scope of work

Media Perception Study

- Research is key to revealing the opportunities and challenges facing Mendocino County. DCI will provide a Media Perception Study that will allow Mendocino County Tourism Commission to assess what editorial decision makers and content creators feel and know about the destination. It will provide unique, powerful and actionable insights into key messaging and pitch themes.

Content Creation

- Content is key for driving organic traffic to visitmendocino.com and providing a compelling endorsement of the destination in the digital space. DCI will assist with research and development of content that

helps to position the destination alongside its key messaging. DCI will assist Mendocino County Tourism Commission with content creation, including development of blog posts, newsletters, listicles, press releases, website editorial.

News Bureau

- DCI will develop or reassess strategic messaging, including key messages and a create a customized 'Most Wanted Media' list for Mendocino County Tourism Commission as well as provide strategic insights and recommendations on media leads.

Proactive Pitching

- Mendocino County Tourism Commission will have the power to own its message with the delivery of proactive pitches created and triggered during the course of the program and DCI's publicists will help to craft the story pitch which includes key messages. This program will also include one proactive broadcast pitch that tells the Mendocino County story.

Production House Tours

- DCI will secure and escort 6-8 meetings with top television producers during a "Production House Tour" in Los Angeles and New York, or Toronto, Canada.

Visiting Journalist/Influencer Program

- DCI will secure 12 individual media/digital influencer visits throughout the 12-month contract for Mendocino County Tourism Commission concentrating on the September to May timeframe.

Media Missions

- One media mission in Mendocino County Tourism Commission's target market of choice. This may include New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, or other markets.

Website Audit

- Mendocino County Tourism Commission will receive a thorough Website Audit analysis and report that ranks and scores visitmendocino.com on a variety of digital best practices, content requirements and user experience.

Advice, Counsel & Reporting

- Mendocino County Tourism Commission will have access to key insights developed by DCI, including POV requests, media insights, media metrics and advice and counsel as it relates to the core work program.

Measured Outcome

Fulfill the scope of work as presented by DCI and introduce Mendocino County's key messaging to an untapped source of media opportunities.

Total PR & content investment: \$200,000

advertising & marketing

For the past two years, Mendocino County Tourism Commission has engaged a media buying company to purchase advertising including print, billboards, online banner ads, radio promotions, and more. Much can happen in two years and the marketing landscape has changed immensely. Millennials neither rely on newspapers to read the news nor on digital banners to find the information they seek about products, including destinations. This "brave new world" moves rapidly and Mendocino County Tourism Commission must be poised to react with lightning speed to observed market trends.

What is content marketing and why is it so important?

It is the practice of creating useful and interesting content that aligns with the interests and values of a target audience and it's a way for brands to make more meaningful connections with consumers. Research shows that 90% of consumers find custom content useful and that 70% of consumers prefer getting to know a brand via articles versus traditional advertising.

Pulsepoint is a leading content marketing company that currently does business with many of our Northern California neighbours who are seeing success with content marketing. Pulsepoint uses relevant content proactively to engage an audience by delivering content across different media channels: social media, mobile and via Comscore's top 1,000 websites. Content created by Mendocino County Tourism Commission will appear as suggested stories on the web's largest publishers next to relevant content with which consumers are already engaged.

Advertising

- Mendocino County Tourism Commission proposes key messaging to its target audience of outdoor-oriented, independent traveling Millennials by placing engaging stories on a quarterly basis with Weekend Sherpa, the "How Do You Adventure" website.
- Research shows that Millennials like to travel on the spur of the moment. The Weekend Sherpa platform allows Mendocino County Tourism Commission to reach an affluent, independent travel section that is inspired by the great outdoors and is looking for new places to visit beyond the immediate Bay Area.

- Produce ten high-quality, inspirational videos to be used throughout MCTC's online channels and website.
- Past success with Weekend Sherpa inspires us to continue an in-depth look at some of the county's differentiating factors.... *wine, waves & wilderness*.
- In concert with an agile public relations campaign, the strategy for advertising opportunities will also include:
 - A targeted appeal to Millennials via interactive media that includes YouTube. MCTC will create a campaign that will directly target our audience at the times and with content they are engaged with.
 - Outdoor advertising that has proven to be a highly effective way of reaching eyes and marketing a destination. MCTC will work with outdoor advertising providers in the Bay Area, our gateway market, to create an effective campaign using transit providers, for example, SF Muni, BART, SmartTrain, and billboards to reach consumers as they travel. Bus media grabs the attention of transit riders, pedestrians, and motorists providing consistent daily views on city streets with high visibility.
 - In order to leverage the marketing power of Visit California, MCTC will continue to place an advertisement in the annual official guide produced by Visit California.
 - Building and maintaining an image library with up-to-date content is key to many of MCTC's marketing strategies. Today's editors for online content are looking for variety in the styles of images as well as breadth in content: from sunset shots to whitewater ocean kayaking and from bucolic landscapes to action video. It's essential that MCTC continue to develop additional video and photographic content for website, social media, and promotional use.
 - MCTC will take advantage of a one-time commitment of funds that will use up to \$200,000 to leverage our connection with Visit California to create a one-time campaign that will resonate for years to come. MCTC is exploring two options:
 1. The development of a high quality, high impact commercial to run in target segments, that features iconic Mendocino County destinations, Millennials enjoying outdoor, recreational activities, multi-generational families, and couples.
 2. A three-month campaign developed in conjunction with Time Inc. and Visit California to feature Mendocino County in publications and associated social media outlets such as Travel + Leisure or Food & Wine. This particular campaign would gain over 9 million impressions and make use of custom branded content, sponsored posts on social media such as Facebook and Instagram, cross-platform targeted display media, features in the weekly Visit California newsletter.

- MCTC will be on the cutting edge by developing a advergaming that will feature iconic Mendocino County destinations and scenes. *What is an advergaming?*
 - Advergaming are designed to immerse the user within a brand's core values. They have traditionally been the purview of Fortune 500 companies but coding developments now make this marketing opportunity within MCTC's reach.
 - A Hidden Object game is an exciting opportunity for Mendocino County Tourism Commission to enter the world of advergaming while showcasing the unique beauty of the region, expanding reach among a new demographic, and creating a framework to promote signature events and new cornerstones of the brand.
 - Research tells us that 81% of Hidden Object players spend at least 4 hours in game; 74% of Hidden Object players *Share* their progress with their friends; a whopping 86% of Millennials play mobile games, making it one of the easiest ways to reach this market, and 58% of Americans play some form of mobile game making it an excellent way to reach all markets.
 - The game will be offered as a free download on the visitmendocino.com website and will be available on the iOS and Android app stores.
 - In addition, we believe that MCTC will be the first destination to have such a game in their marketing collateral — a media event in and of itself!
- Building on previous tourism research studies is essential to inform MCTC's future marketing efforts. In 2016/17, MCTC will invest in such a study.

Measured Outcome

Minimum guaranteed brand engagements from content marketing: 214,285

Minimum guaranteed game app downloads: 55,000

Addition of a minimum of two engaging videos to be used across all platforms and a minimum of 200 high-impact images

Outreach to consumers via sound bites, outdoor and print advertising

Targeted campaign: 9+ million

Total advertising & marketing investment: \$455,000

website & social media

VisitMendocino.com is MCTC's primary source of disbursing information about Mendocino County online and is the heartbeat of all of MCTC's efforts. In 2015, the website transitioned to an editorially rich, emotionally resonant portal to the Mendocino County experience. Our new site is built on contemporary technology, seamlessly integrating mobile- and tablet-based browsing, and offering a full suite of social sharing options. In fiscal year 2016/17, MCTC will:

- Conduct a strong and effective SEO campaign to raise awareness of the site among consumers and target audience.
- Use substantial editorial hooks and content marketing to increase time on the consumer-facing site and average pages visited for each user.
- Provide topical material and an easy-to-use interface to find relevant information with minimal friction.
- Continue to create rich editorial content with engaging imagery and video.
- Conduct SEM campaigns to boost site visitation.

Social continues to grow in importance as a motivator for travel, spanning all demographics. People look to their friends and family for recommendations on travel destinations — increasingly more often than traditional media and advertising. Our social presence seeks not only to directly engage new potential visitors and remind previous visitors of the destination, but to excite our core visitor to share and spread the word about Mendocino County. To that end we will engage with key content producers via Instagram to generate dynamic, sticky visual content, with the aim of increasing overall reach.

- Coordinate three 'Instagram visits'; liaising with influencers that each have a unique vision and eye, to generate new visual material for future promotion;
- Continue to grow and engage our Facebook presence, achieving much higher total reach via Sharing and story-creation by our Fans;
- Utilize targeted Facebook advertising to support partner events and regional attractors;

Measured Outcomes

Total Facebook Fan Base: 55,000

Total Reach: 1,500,000

Total Unique Website Visitors: 240,000

Total website & interactive media investment: \$85,000

sales

Sales is yet another spoke in the MCTC promotion wheel, whose object is to create a coordinated approach to put Mendocino County in the minds of travelers, incentivize them to visit, and show them what they can do once here.

MCTC's research-based sales efforts rely heavily on Visit California's extensive research and programs. Our group and international sales are conducted as part of our partnership with, and administration of, the North Coast Tourism Council. The San Francisco Bay area, including Oakland and San Jose, is MCTC's number one target market, with Sacramento and the Central Valley in the number two spot. Significant business also comes from the Los Angeles area, Portland, Seattle, and Reno. On the international front, Canada is easily number one with Germany, the U.K., Mexico, Japan, France, and Australia in the top tier.

For FY 2016/17 the integrated sales approach will include:

1. Consumer Trade Shows

The best way to contact thousands of potential visitors is to meet them personally at trade shows. We promote the county by handing out logoed green bags and promotional literature. We partner with local businesses by giving them an opportunity to participate directly by attending or indirectly, by offering giveaways. The typical show yields about 2,000 new names for our database, people who will receive newsletters reminding them to keep Mendocino County in their vacation plans. Though the locations vary, as we try to cover as much geographic territory as possible with limited resources, we always attend the Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show in Santa Clara and Sunset Celebration Weekend, now in Sonoma. In Southern California we alternate travel shows annually between San Diego and Los Angeles. We do a consumer event in Portland. We will participate in the Fillmore St. Jazz Festival in San Francisco. We also do niche marketing by attending pet, bridal and outdoor events. Every year we try to add something new to the mix to broaden our reach.

2. Regional partnerships

We partner and coordinate with other DMOs in the northern California area. We have developed a regional beer trail for example. Partners include San Francisco Travel, Sacramento Visitors and Convention Bureau, Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association, Southern OR Travel, and the DMOs in San Mateo, Oakland, Marin, Sonoma, Humboldt, Lake, and Del Norte Counties.

3. FAM (familiarization) trips

In addition to connecting with individual travelers, we also try to influence those who, in turn, influence travelers: travel agents, receptives and tour operators and, to some extent, Online Travel Agencies.

FAM participants are either domestic or international. They create packages and promotions that include Mendocino County as a result of staying in lodging properties overnight.

4. North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC)

MCTC benefits from its administration and chairmanship of NCTC, one of the eight rural regions designated by Visit California. The NCTC budget is for international sales efforts and is totally funded by Visit California with various matches.

- Group Sales

The sales team attends events such as the American Bus Association and the National Tour Association in an attempt to obtain group business. We also work closely with tour operators to encourage groups to overnight in the county.

5. Hotel contracts

The desired end result of the group sales and our international efforts are hotel contracts. One of the main ways to obtain sales continuity and volume is to be the matchmaker between tour operators and local hotels. If the two enter into a contract, there is a likelihood of steady business. There are at least 30 such contracts in place.

For FY 2016/17, MCTC's sales goals are to:

- Increase names in Consumer Database by 1,500 per consumer show for a total of 9,000.
- Participate in at least six consumer events.
- Facilitate at least eight FAMs.
- Facilitate at least 12 new contracts between hotels and travel professionals. This includes increasing the number of new county businesses and lodging properties participating in contracts with tour operators by 100%

Total sales investment: \$40,000

visitor services

Getting visitors to come to the county is only part of the equation. The other part of the effort is to have them return for multiple nights. One way to encourage that is to ensure their Mendocino County experience is the best one possible. In support of this, MCTC will:

- Support numerous visitor centers throughout the county supplying them with collateral, and in the case of the Redwood Coast Chamber, providing matching funds to ensure continuous operation of a visitor center on the South Coast.
- Continue to develop gateway signs in Gualala and on Highway 128 complementing the two existing signs on Hwys 101 and 20.
- Continue distribution of the pet guide - essential for those traveling with their four-legged friends.
- Investigate installation of restrooms in the Boonville area.

For FY 2016/17, Visitor Services goals are to assist in driving website visitation and increasing unique visitors to annual goals.

Total visitor services investment: \$60,000

festivals & events

With so many great destinations throughout California, unique and interesting festivals and events are a key component for the potential traveler choosing Mendocino County over other destinations. The number of events and participants in the festivals have been on a downward trend. The main focus for festivals and events this year is to turn this trend around and ultimately exceed prior years in terms of participation of businesses and visitors.

Goals for FY 2016/17 include:

- Evaluate current festivals to reverse downward trend; Increase attendance by visitors and participation by partners at existing festivals and events:
 - For each of the main festivals increase participation by 10% over the highest participant year:
Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival increase to 210 participants
Crab, Wine & Beer Festival increase to 230 participants

- Work to develop new signature event for the Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival.
- Encourage lodging owners to offer specials discounts on extended stays, package deals that include tickets to festival events, or discounts on local restaurants and spa packages.
- Work with local non-profits and wine regions to encourage larger tourist attracting events such as Pinot Fest and Winesong.
- Develop new ideas for festivals and events and pitch to partners.

Total festivals/events investment: \$25,000

partner relations

MCTC works to advocate among lodging partners, organizations, businesses and government as to the benefits of the tourism industry/economy.

By developing relationships with partners, touring their properties and getting to know more about their business, we find many have unique stories that help to promote Mendocino County as a destination with character, history and charm that sets us apart from our neighboring counties.

It is important for MCTC to be on the pulse of new developments in the area that may pique the interest of visitors such as new hotels, restaurants, attractions, wineries, breweries, as well as additions and expansions on existing properties. Recent tourist attracting developments include the new Fort Bragg Coastal Trail and the Shady Dell Trail on the Lost Coast.

Goals for 2016/17 include:

- Assist in the development and implementation of the Annual Community Communications Plan
- Conduct 10 site visits to lodging owners per week and supply tear-off maps, Visitor Guides, and other collateral to share with lodging guests.
- Complete design on partner brochure to help business owners and community members better understand the mission of MCTC.
- Attend at least two in-county meetings and events per month to gain and share ideas, and show community support.

- Hold quarterly meet-and-greets to which partners and other businesses are invited.
- Work closely with Chambers of Commerce throughout the County as well as city promotional groups (Visit Ukiah and the Fort Bragg Promotions Committee).
- Work with new and existing partners to develop/enhance their business listings on www.visitmendocino.com.
- Communicate the work of MCTC, how trends in travel affect Mendocino County, significant events, and other items of interest to the community via a monthly article to partners and stakeholders and a column running in the Ukiah Daily Journal.
- Explore and research the future promotion of recreational marijuana use throughout the County and region by being a leading entity to capitalize on this new market should it become legalized.

operations

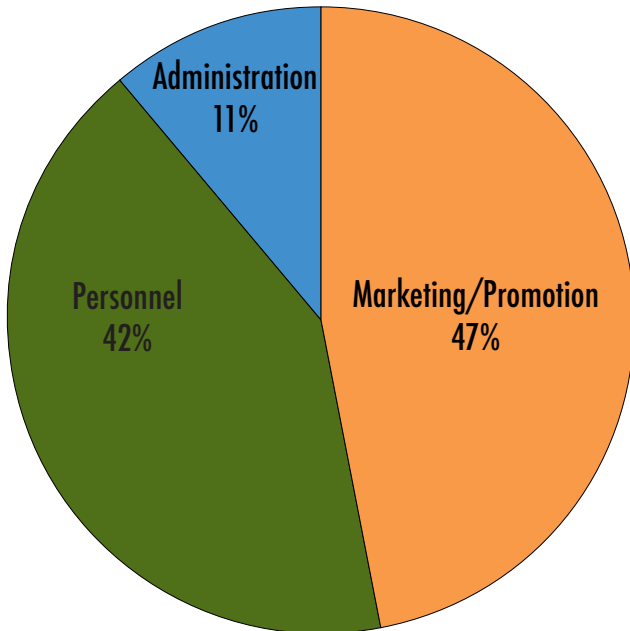
TO COME

budget

dmo industry average

DMO Industry Average

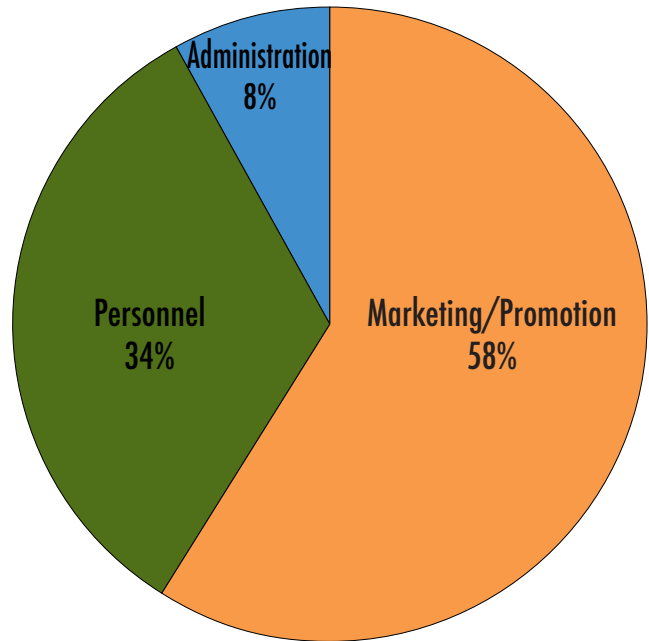
Represented by a sample of DMOs that participated in DMAI 2015 DMO Organizational & Financial Profile Study



Categories defined as follows:

- Administration: office supplies, computer expenses, rent/utilities, interest, etc.
- Personnel: salaries & wages, payroll taxes, and employee benefits
- Marketing/Promotion: all non-admin and non-personnel expenses

Visit Mendocino County, Inc. 2014-2015 Budget Breakdown



Administration: \$79,258
Personnel: \$333,137
Marketing/Program Expenses: \$587,251
Total expenses: \$999,646

mctc projected budget

INCOME		
	MCLA BID Assessment	\$800,000
	County of Mendocino Matching Funds	400,000
	Other Income (Visitor Guide and calendar advertising	30,000
	Funds Transferred from MCLA	333,270
TOTAL INCOME		\$1,563,270
EXPENSES		
	Advertising/Media	\$305,000
	Website & Electronic Marketing	85,000
	Cooperative Marketing with Visit California	150,000
	Public Relations	200,000
	Updated Market Research/Board Development	40,000
	Visitor Guide Distribution, Signage, Visitor Services	60,000
	Festivals & Events	25,000
	Consumer & Group Sales	40,000
	Arts Council Sponsorship	14,400
	Partnership Investments	20,000
	Searchwide ED Search	40,000
	Operations	79,526
	Personnel	350,000
	Reserve/Contingency Account	130,344
	County Administrative Fee	24,000
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$1,563,270

staffing

As a leadership organization in the Mendocino County community of businesses, Mendocino County Tourism Commission itself has become a stand-out asset. MCTC is served by a dedicated professional staff, which continues to innovate, seeks learning opportunities, and provides marketing and educational opportunities to its internal partners.

With the development of MCTC and its new director, the current staff structure, job descriptions, location of office(s), and other operational related activities will undergo a full review and analysis with the goal of developing a structure and team whose sole purpose and focus is the core strategy and goals as outlined in this plan, ultimately increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of promoting Mendocino County

Create an environment that inspires the best support, programs and ideas that continue to push the MCTC mission forward

- Attend key travel industry conferences to provide access to industry trends and successful examples of best practices, furthering internal knowledge and benefiting the MCTC program of work.
- Maintain accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program, offered by Destination Marketing Association International
- Maintain an environment that encourages an engaged, productive staff with the tools and knowledge to assist in creating success for as well as partner organizations and businesses.

staff

Executive Director An executive search is underway

Director of Tourism Richard Strom

Office Manager Jodi Smith

Event & Partner Relations Manager Gracia Brown

Travel Sales Associate Donna Hannaford

contractors

Marketing & Communications Coordinator Alison de Grassi

Public Relations Destination Counsellors International

Interactive Media Coordinator Brendan McGuigan

Website Maintenance Brandhound

MCTC board of directors

Chair: John Kuhry, 1 Year Term – At Large Member

Vice Chair: Debra De Graw, 1 Year Term – Food/Beverage Business Member

Secretary: Sharon Davis, 3 Year Term – Mendocino Coast Chamber of Commerce/Coastal Regional Promotional Organization Member

Treasurer: Marcus Magdaleno, 2 Year Term – Inland Chamber of Commerce/Inland Regional Promotional Organization Member

Jo Bradley, 2 Year Term – Medium Lodging Operator Member

Bernadette Byrne, 3 Year Term – Winery/Winegrower Member

Jennifer Seward, 2 Year Term – Arts Organization/Attractions Member

Jitu Ishwar, 3 Year Term – Large Lodging Operator Member

Deborah Kettner, 3 Year Term – Small Lodging Operator Member

Susie Plocher, 1 Year Term – Coastal Large Lodging Operator Member

Jan Rodriguez, 2 Year Term – Inland Large Lodging Operator Member

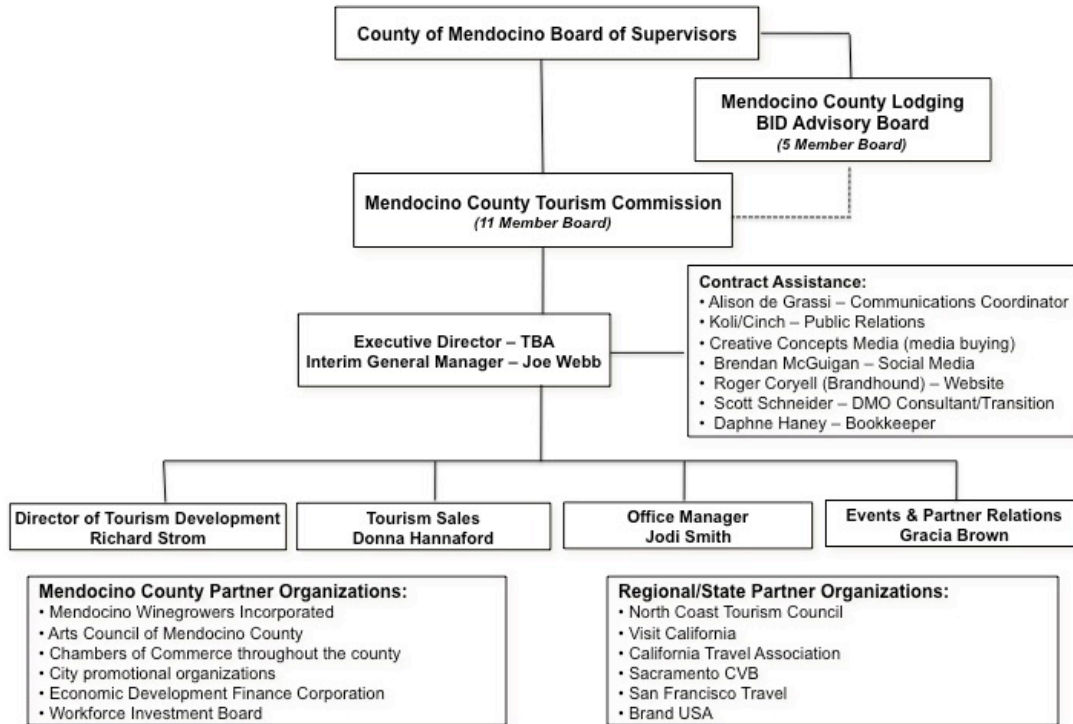
MCTC offices

345 North Franklin Street
 Fort Bragg, CA 95437
 707.964.9010 888.GO.MENDO
 8:30AM - 5:00PM, Monday through Saturday

390 West Standley Street
 Ukiah, CA 95482
 707.734.0177
 8:30AM - 5:00PM, Monday through Friday

organization chart

Mendocino County Destination Marketing Organizational Chart



Current as of: April 2016