

19 January 2016

**To:** Visit Mendocino County Board of Directors

**Fr:** Carl Ribaudo, SMG Consulting

**CC: Joe Webb,** Visit Mendocino County

Scott Schneider, Visit Mendocino County

**RE: Visit Mendocino Project(s) Overview**

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All,

The following memo is designed to provide an overview for the Visit Mendocino County Board of Directors of the major projects that have been undertaken by Visit Mendocino County. Several years ago SMG was approached to submit a proposal for a number of important project those project included the implementation of a comprehensive marketing research project. The development of a strategic Marketing plan designed to provide direction for the organization from 20132-2016 and the development of an indictors dashboard. The following is an overview of each project component.

**Strategic Directions Report**

The Strategic Directions Report was a high-level view of the strategic issues, challenges and opportunities available to Visit Mendocino County. The report was designed to capture the organization’s strategic insight and future direction. The document included key tourism industry trends, an overview of the Mendocino marketplace, destination strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, organizational goals and objectives and program implementation strategies and steps designed to achieve the organizations best outcomes.

**Marketing Research**

SMG completed a number of different project elements for Visit Mendocino County including the following:

**Situation Analysis Outline**

SMG reviewed both macro and micro issues that impact the tourism marketplace in general and the destination and organization specifically. SMG implemented the following:

* SMG reviewed the Visit Mendocino County situation analysis that was in its marketing plan at the time.
* SMG developed a proposed outline for Mendocino County and solicited input on the most useable elements for a situation analysis.
* SMG developed a situation analysis for Visit Mendocino County that was implemented into its next marketing plan.

**Marketing Dashboard Outline**

SMG developed a “marketing information dashboard” outline of various topline data sets with a goal toward making the information easy for users to review and absorb. SMG implemented the following steps:

* SMG met with Visit Mendocino County to understand what the information needs and to determine if such information is available.
* SMG recommend data sets that were pertinent to the users and should be included into the dashboard.
* SMG also recommend communication approaches for the dashboard, including interactive elements and video, as well as the use of social media tools if applicable.
* SMG developed a brand name and logo to help position the dashboard as an “information product” generated by the GMC for use among stakeholders, which will also be recognized by the press and public.

This project element had challenges especially in collected county-wide lodging data. At the time there was no county wide data to understand trends and inform decision making. SMG provided a number of recommendations to help in developing a system for reporting individual property data that could be aggregated but was unsuccessful.

**Marketing Research**

SMG completed three different studies including the following:

Northern California/Southern Oregon Out of Market Email Panel Survey – This study was conducted among *Travelers in Northern California and Southern Oregon*. This study was designed to survey the broad consumer market in Mendocino’s key consumer markets. The study also assessed visitor market share in each of the geographic markets. The study collected a variety of data including previous visit, competitor visits, length of stay, key attributes in the decision process, activity participation and more.

Mendocino Email Database Survey – At the time Visit Mendocino County had an email data base of approximately 25,000. This study unlocked information on these consumers. This segment is one that has some level of affinity for the destination, as they had provided their email address to Visit Mendocino County. This study also sought to understand the perceptions and attitudes, motivations and demographics of those that had expressed an interest in visiting Mendocino County but have not, as well as those that have actually visited.

Website Conversion Study – This study was important in understanding the effectiveness of VMC in driving potential visitors to the website and the influence the site has on their decision to visit the area. Of all the studies proposed here, this one can best measure the performance of VMC in its primary objective to increase awareness and to influence potential visitors to visit Mendocino County. The data generated from this analysis will be used to develop a Return on Investment (ROI) model for Visit Mendocino County to review.

Each of these studies was designed to show a different portion of VMC market. The Northern California/Southern Oregon panel survey is designed to survey the broad consumer market in Mendocino’s key consumer markets. The other studies are designed to assess visitor market share in each of the geographic markets.