



MARKETING OUTREACH & CONTENT CALENDAR

2026 Media Relations & Editorial Strategy

August 2026

August – November 2026

Four seasonal storytelling pillars anchor the fall content calendar, each with a coordinated push across web, email, and social.

1

AUGUST

7 Rivers for Summer Play

Waterways & warm-weather adventure

2

SEPTEMBER

Beaches

Coastal getaways as summer winds down

3

OCTOBER

Trails

Hiking, fall color, and outdoor exploration

4

NOVEMBER

Mushrooms

Foraging season & culinary tourism

Production Deadlines by Theme

Theme	Press Pitch	Web Page Live	Newsletter	Social Ads	Influencers/Press
Aug – 7 Rivers for Summer Play	Jul 31	Jul 31	Aug 4	Aug 7	August
Sept – Beaches Simple Sand Recipes, Ingredients for a Slower Moment	Aug 7	Aug 14	Aug 28	Aug 28	September
Oct – Trails Finding Your Path to Happiness	Aug 14	Aug 21	Sep 18	Oct 2	October
Nov – Mendocino Mushroom Month	Aug 21	Aug 28	Oct 16	Oct 16	November

Eventually press pitches lead each cycle by roughly eight weeks, giving writers lead time ahead of web and social go-live.

August – November Details

Working Trello board for topics and deliverables, including the Visit California calendar and topics.

Content Calendar 2026-27

MH RJ BM JP JM +2

Press Topics1

Monthly Email Marketing

Press Releases

Press topic ideas for 26/27

2

+ Add a card

July 264

VC Monthly Themes

Monthly Email Marketing

July 2026

7 Rivers for Summer Play

40/5 • Jul 24

Social Buzz: Summer Campaign

Jul 8

VCA PR

More than a Museum

Jul 6123/3

+ Add a card

August 264

VC Monthly Themes

VCA PR

Social

Summer is For Sunsets

Jun 2512

1/2 • Jun 22

Events List Only

Paul Bunyan Days - Fort Bragg

Influencers

Press Release

Kelp Fest & Urchin Eradication

1

+ Add a card

September 265

VC Monthly Themes

All

Beaches

0/7 • Aug 7

VCA PR

All

Halloween to the Max

Aug 191

Harvest Mendocino

Events List Only

Mendocino County Fair & Apple Show

+ Add a card

October 267

VC Monthly Themes

All

Trails

0/7 • Aug 14

All

Friendsgiving

VCA PR

All

Meet Under the Stars

Sep 231

Point Arena Seafood Fest

Press Release

Mendocino The Place to Meet in 2027

+ Add a card

November 264

VC Monthly Themes

Mushroom Month (Nov)

0/7 • Aug 21

VCA PR

DISCUSS: Slow Down with Family or Luxury that Motivates

Nov 181

Mushroom Month - Trains, Foraging, hiking, educating, dining

+ Add a card

2027 Tent Pole Content Themes

JANUARY

Crab

MARCH

Whales

APRIL

**Roads Built
for Adventure**

MAY

**Dark Skies &
Deep Waters**

Partner Relations - Monthly Outreach / Toolkit

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
North Coast Westport - Albion	South Coast Elk - Gualala	Ukiah / Willits	Anderson Valley/Hopland	-

Purpose: Create stronger relationships through in-person chats, complete needs assessments for each property, make updates to their business listings as needed, share ways to partner with VMC, etc.

Partner Relations - Toolkit

Stakeholders will receive Quarterly emails that contain the following information:

- ❖ Editorial Calendar (Tentpole Topics) for PR with deadline and distribution dates
- ❖ Messaging Templates - Examples on how to partner for PR topics
- ❖ Hashtags to use for social media posts
- ❖ Geo Tagging
- ❖ Links to VM web pages (listicles)
- ❖ Image Library to share based on PR topics
- ❖ Content Inventory - Past reports, emails, etc

Harvest Mendocino

November 1st through November 23rd: This event lasts over three weekends, drawing visitors to Mendocino County and to your place of business. ***The deadline to submit specials is August 15th.***

We are making a special effort to return to a more focused event and will be co-branding it as **Mendocino Mushroom Month**. Thus far, events include:

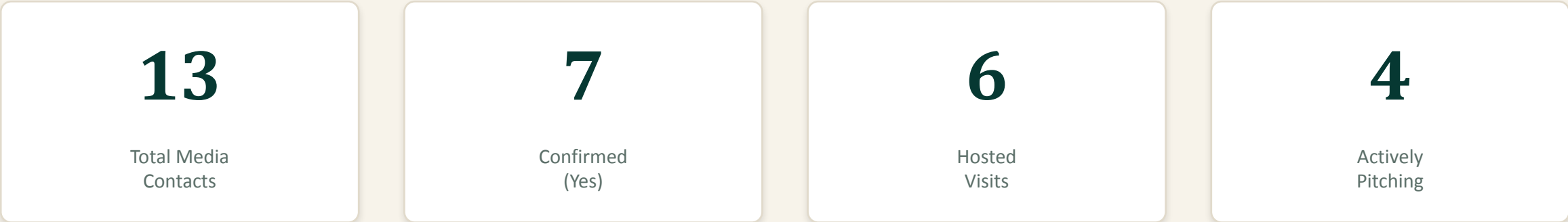
- First Friday in Fort Bragg and Ukiah is November 6th
- The Musical Mushroom Train departs Fort Bragg on Saturday Nov 7th
- There is a Mushroom Festival event in Caspar November 13th – 15th (includes a dinner in Fort Bragg, classes, speakers, exhibits and vendors.)

Second Saturdays in Mendocino and Hopland can also be mushroom themed.

Your own participation can be mushroom focused, a special offer, an event, meal, tasting, art exhibition, concert, farm or vineyard tour...there really are no

Current Pipeline Snapshot

Thirteen active journalist, publication, and creator engagements are moving through the pipeline.



STATUS BREAKDOWN



Engagement types include hosted press trips, media-rate stays, and paid influencer collaborations — spanning outlets like 7x7, Diablo, Dine, and Sonoma Magazine, plus a VCA Japan and Italy media fam.

Confirmed & Hosted Coverage

Journalist / Group	Outlet	Visit Window	Type	Focus
Sharael Kolberg	—	Call for Content	—	2027 What's New on Hwy 1
Jennifer Graue	Sonoma Mag	July	Media Rate	Research for 2027 story
James Murren	Editable SD	July	Media Rate	Road trip pitch
Amber Turpin	7x7	July	Hosted	Full Itinerary
Samantha Durbin	Diablo Mag	July	Media Rate	Story: Analog Mendocino
Adam Waxman	Dine Mag	August	Hosted	Full Itinerary
VCA Japan Fam	3 Journalists	August	Hosted	Full Itinerary
Italian Fam	1 Journalist	August	Hosted	Full Itinerary / Traveling with family

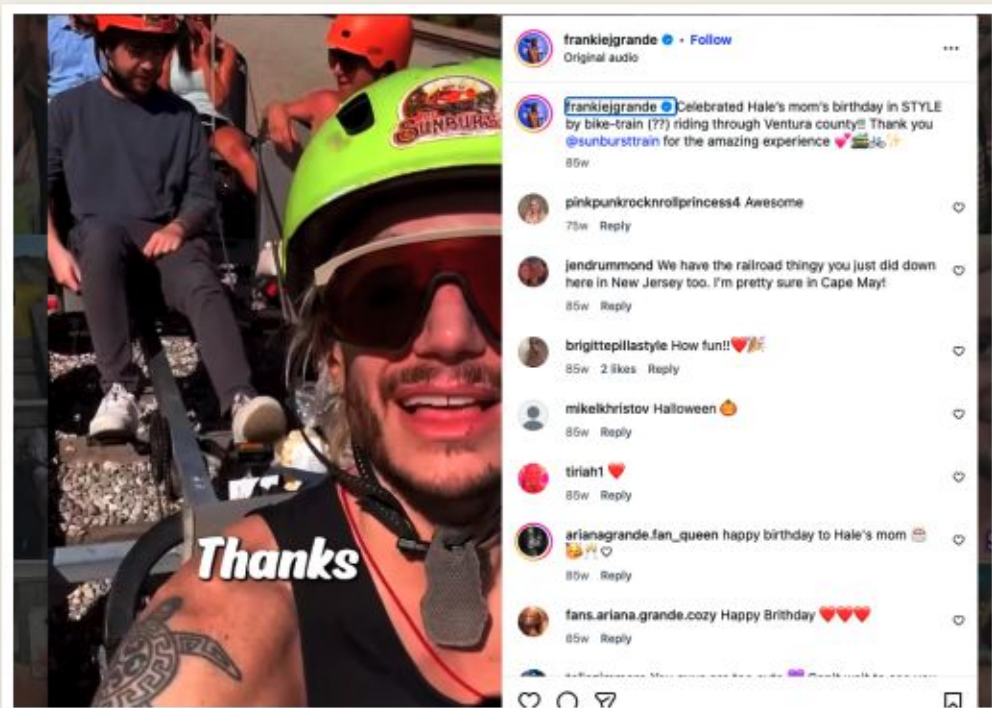
Pitching & Tentative Engagements

Journalist / Creator	Outlet	Visit Window	Status	Notes
Mimi Slwoff	Reedy Press	Aug 29-30	*	Declined
Georgeanne Brennan	Creators Syndicate	September	Pitching	Full itinerary + wine
Jasmine Huynh	Influencer — Tier 1	September	Pitching	Hosted/paid; wants weekend
Jacya Miller	Influencer — Tier 2	Oct or April	Pitching	NY based; rental car credit
Haley Burks	Influencer — Tier 2	Oct or April	Pitching	FL based; good travel, not primary geo

Tier 1 / Tier 2 influencer classifications guide hosting priority and compensation structure.

Big-name reach ≠ travel conversion.

Frankie Grande — Broadway actor, Big Brother alum, older half-brother of Ariana Grande — rode the Skunk Train and posted about it to 2.2M followers. The post landed; the conversion did not.



FOLLOWERS

2.2M

LIKES ON THE POST

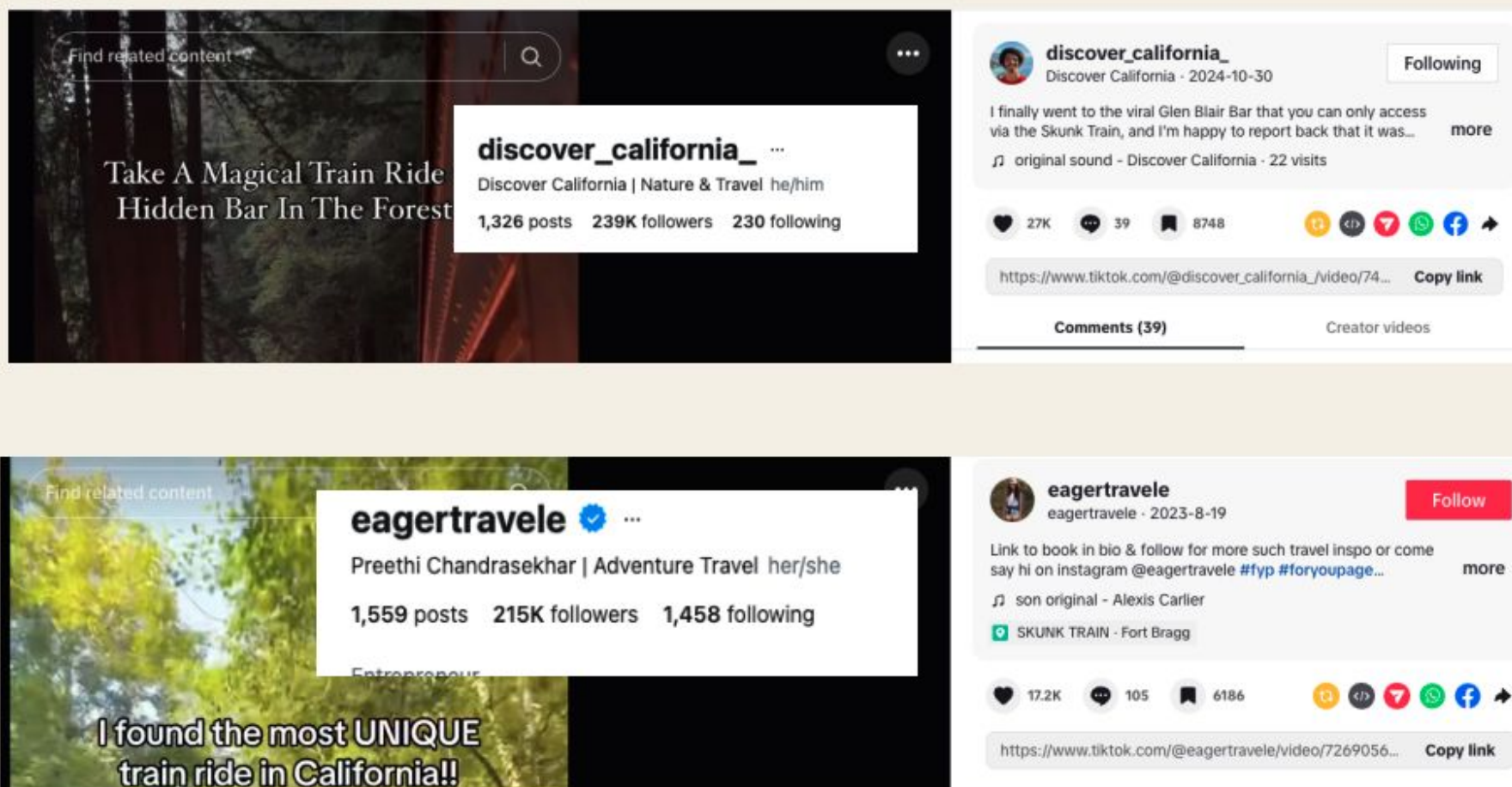
1,228

COMMENTS

26 *beauty & fashion
don't sell travel.*

Mid-sized, regional creators travel further.

Travel and food creators in the 100K–300K range, located inside your feeder markets, outperform celebrities. They're trusted, on-topic, and far cheaper.



Quality over Quantity

Engagement rate over follower count. A nano-influencer (5K followers) with 6% engagement and an audience of Mendo-curious SF professionals is far more valuable than a macro with 500K followers and 0.4% engagement from a globally diffuse audience. The thresholds in the funnel reflect this — the smaller the account, the higher the expected rate.

Audience geography is a hidden gem. Knowing that 40% of someone's followers are in the Bay Area or LA is worth more than raw reach. **Ask influencers for a screenshot of their audience insights before confirming a Tier 1 offer.**

Location pinning and hashtags are non-negotiable behaviors. Share simple "tag guide" — a one-pager or PDF with preferred hashtags, request to link to pinnable locations, and a gentle reminder about FTC disclosure. This helps turns organic visitors into searchable content.

Universal disqualifiers — applies to all tiers

- Purchased followers or engagement (verified via audit tool)
- Content that conflicts with destination brand (divisive, harmful, or off-brand messaging)
- No disclosure of paid partnerships (FTC compliance risk)
- History of posting and deleting sponsored content after campaign ends

Dimension	Mendocino County
Niche alignment	Wider niche range works: outdoor recreation, coastal travel, wellness, and slower-paced “getaway” content are equally valuable, alongside wine.
Audience geography	Weighted toward regional drive markets — Bay Area, Sacramento, Pacific Northwest — since Mendocino's visitor base skews more regional than international.
Content tone	Authentic and exploratory tone reads better; over-polished or overly staged content can feel mismatched to the brand.
Hashtags	#VisitMendocino, #MendocinoCounty, #MendocinoCoast, plus property tag. Sub-region tags (#AndersonValleyWine, #LostCoast, #FortBraggCA) carry more relative weight given the county's geographic spread.
Tier 1 engagement bar	Authentic engagement is weighted slightly higher relative to follower count, since Mendocino has less built-in name recognition and relies more on word-of-mouth credibility.

Quality over Quantity

TIER 1 — Premier Partner

Fully or partially hosted stay · Priority outreach · Co-created content

All criteria below must be met or exceeded

Niche alignment	Travel, wine, coastal living, outdoor recreation, or nature-focused lifestyle content.
Engagement rate	≥ 3% for nano/micro accounts; ≥ 1.5% for macro accounts (100K+ followers).
Audience quality	Low bot score and authentic, conversational comments — not generic spam.
Content quality	Professional-grade photo or video with a consistent, distinctive visual style.
Post frequency	3+ posts per week with consistent, active stories and reels.
Past brand work	Clean history of relevant, well-aligned brand collaborations.

Location & hashtag behavior

Location tagging	Must pin specific locations — not just “Mendocino County” — reviewed across past posts for accuracy and specificity.
Hashtag discipline	Uses destination-specific tags (#VisitMendocino, #MendocinoCounty) rather than generic ones (#travel, #vacation).
Story reach	Stories generate meaningful views relative to follower count; check swipe-up or link-tap rate where available.
Audience geography	Significant share of audience in target feeder markets — Bay Area, Sacramento, Pacific Northwest.

Required hashtag usage:

#VisitMendocino #MendocinoCounty #MendocinoCoast + property tag + location pin

Benefit package

Comped accommodations, curated itinerary, media credentials, hosted experiences, possible paid post fee. Require a content brief and right of repost.

Quality over Quantity

TIER 2 — Supported Visitor

Partial comps or trade · Facilitated access · Preferred itinerary

Meets most Tier 1 criteria, with some flexibility

Niche alignment	Travel-adjacent: family travel, wellness, food, or wine content.
Engagement rate	≥ 2% for nano/micro accounts; ≥ 0.8% for macro accounts.
Audience quality	Acceptable bot score with a genuine, responsive audience.
Content quality	Consistent and visually appealing, even if not full production-grade.
Location behavior	Tags locations in the majority of travel posts.

Benefit package

Complimentary tastings, hosted meals, press passes, preferred booking access. Partial accommodation trade or discounted rate. Content brief provided; repost rights requested but not required.

Location & hashtag behavior

Engagement quality	Comments show genuine conversation rather than generic “great post!” spam; saves and shares matter more than likes.
Content longevity	Posts remain visible and searchable; avoids mass-archiving content after campaigns end.
Platform mix	Active on 2+ platforms (e.g., Instagram + TikTok, or Instagram + a blog), extending reach beyond one channel.
Shareability	Content is frequently reshared by followers or reputable accounts, showing organic reach beyond their own audience.

Expected hashtag + pin usage:

#MendocinoCounty #VisitMendocino + location pin + venue tag

Quality over Quantity

TIER 3 — Informed Visitor

No direct facilitation · Promo codes · Curated guides and insider information

Shows organic destination interest; niche may be broad

Niche alignment	General lifestyle content with occasional travel posts.
Engagement rate	Any positive engagement rate, provided the audience appears genuine.
Audience quality	Minimal bot activity detected.
Organic interest	Has mentioned or tagged Mendocino County before, without being prompted.

Benefit package

Insider guide PDF, promo codes for local partners, press/media contact list, itinerary suggestions. No direct comps or scheduling facilitation. Monitor content and flag for potential Tier 2 elevation.

Watch-list signals

Authentic interest	Has visited or expressed clear intent to visit; organic mentions carry more weight than outreach targets.
Growth trajectory	Smaller accounts with rapid, authentic growth may be worth nurturing now for future Tier 2 elevation.
Community role	Trusted voice within a niche community (e.g., a local hiking group or wine club), even if overall following is small.
Location tagging habit	Encouraged through promo materials; provide clear instructions and a branded hashtag list in their welcome kit.

Suggested tags (provided in welcome kit):

#MendocinoCounty #MendocinoCoast #NorthernCalifornia + location pin

TIER THRESHOLDS						
Tier 1 - Premier Partner	40-48 pts	Fully hosted visit · Comped accommodation · Possible paid post fee · Co-created itinerary				
Tier 2 - Supported Visitor	30-39 pts	Partial support · Comped tastings/meals · Discounted lodging · Content brief provided				
Tier 3 - Informed Visitor	20-29 pts	No direct facilitation · Insider guide + promo codes · Hashtag cheat sheet · Watch list				
Below Threshold	< 20 pts	Not recommended for DMO support at this time · Revisit if account significantly improves				

Example: Scoring Rubric

Mendocino County DMO — Influencer Scoring Rubric

Score each criterion 0-3 | Total: 48 pts | Tier 1: >=40 | Tier 2: >=30 | Tier 3: >=20

Criterion	Scoring Guidance	0 - None	1 - Low	2 - Good	3 - Excellent	Score (0-3)
SECTION 1 - Niche & Content Alignment						Max: 12 pts
Primary niche focus	How closely does the creator's core niche match travel and tourism?	Unrelated niche (fashion, gaming, finance)	General lifestyle - travel is incidental	Travel-adjacent: wellness, food, outdoor recreation	Primary niche is travel, wine, coastal living, or nature	
Mendocino County relevance	Has the creator shown organic interest in Mendocino or the North Coast?	No mention of CA coast or wine country	Posts general California content only	Has tagged Wine Country or Sonoma/Napa area	Has posted content from Mendocino County specifically	
Content quality & production value	Overall aesthetic, photography/video quality, and storytelling consistency.	Low effort, inconsistent, or poor quality	Inconsistent - some good posts, some poor	Polished and visually consistent throughout	Professional-grade; distinctive voice and original perspective	
Posting frequency & consistency	How regularly does the creator publish across feed and stories?	Sporadic - multiple weeks with no posts	~1x per week, minimal stories	2-3x per week, active in stories/reels	3+ posts/week with active stories, reels, or short-form video	

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Criterion	Scoring Guidance	0 - None	1 - Low	2 - Good	3 - Excellent	Score (0-3)
SECTION 2 - Engagement & Audience Quality						Max: 12 pts
Engagement rate	Likes + comments + saves divided by followers. Nano/micro need higher rates than macro.	< 0.5% - very low, likely inflated followers	0.5-1% - below average	1-3% - healthy for most account sizes	> 3% (or > 1.5% if 100K+ followers)	
Comment quality & authenticity	Are comments genuine conversations, or generic/bot-pattern responses?	All bot-pattern or spam	Mostly generic, few genuine responses	Mix of genuine and generic comments	Real conversations, questions, saves; community feel	
Audience geography - feeder markets	What % of their audience is in key Mendocino feeder markets: Bay Area, LA, Sacramento, Pacific NW?	Unknown, or globally scattered	California-based audience < 20%	CA-based 20-40%, or notable SF/LA presence	40%+ in identified feeder markets (requires insights screenshot)	
Stories / Reels reach ratio	Short-form and ephemeral content reach relative to follower count.	Stories reach < 5% of followers	5-10% story/reel reach	10-20% reach, some viral potential	> 20% reach, or strong Reels/TikTok performance	

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SECTION 3 - Location & Hashtag Behavior						Max: 9 pts
Location pinning habit	Do they pin specific venue/place locations on travel posts, or just city-level tags?	Never tags a location	Tags city only (e.g. 'Mendocino, CA')	Tags venues/businesses on most travel posts	Consistently pins specific places - restaurants, lodges, viewpoints	
Destination hashtag usage	Review recent travel posts. Do they use searchable destination-specific tags?	Generic only: #travel #vacation #wanderlust	Regional: #California #NorCal	Area-specific: #WineCountry #NorthernCalifornia	Uses #VisitMendocino #MendocinoCounty #MendocinoCoast or equivalent	
Business & partner venue tagging	Do they @tag hotels, restaurants, wineries, and experience providers in posts?	Never tags businesses or partners	Occasionally tags brands if they send products	Tags hotels/restaurants on most travel posts	Consistently @tags all relevant partners - creates discoverability	

Example: Scoring Rubric

Mendocino County DMO — Influencer Scoring Rubric

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Criterion	Scoring Guidance	0 - None	1 - Low	2 - Good	3 - Excellent	Score (0-3)
SECTION 4 - Brand Safety & Professionalism						Max: 9 pts
FTC / disclosure compliance	Paid partnerships must be disclosed. Review past sponsored content for clear labeling.	No disclosures found on any apparent paid posts	Inconsistent - disclosed on some, not others	Mostly compliant; occasional gap	Always uses #ad, #sponsored, or IG 'Paid partnership' label clearly	
Past brand collaboration quality	Do their existing sponsorships align with the Mendocino County brand?	No history, or spammy/irrelevant brands	Low-relevance brands (fast food, gaming, etc.)	Relevant lifestyle or travel brands	Premium or DMO-aligned: boutique hotels, wine, outdoor, wellness	
Content longevity - no post-campaign deletion	Do older posts remain visible and searchable after campaigns end?	Mass deletions observed post-campaign	Some deletions noticed on past sponsored content	Mostly retains content; minor gaps	Full archive visible and searchable - long-tail discoverability	
SECTION 5 - Growth & Potential						Max: 6 pts
Account growth trajectory	Is follower and engagement growth trending up, flat, or declining? Use Social Blade or similar.	Declining or stagnant - losing followers	Slow, flat growth	Steady upward growth trend	Rapid authentic growth, or recent viral content showing momentum	
Multi-platform presence	A creator active on multiple platforms multiplies content reach and audience touchpoints.	Single platform only	Secondary platform exists but is inactive	2 active platforms (e.g. IG + TikTok)	3+ active: IG + TikTok + blog/YouTube/Pinterest	