



VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY

STRATEGIC & MARKETING PLAN 2014/15



***WE ARE . . .* THE INSPIRATION HIGHWAY**



This Marketing and Strategic Plan is our collective, community vision of tourism promotion for Mendocino County. In the first three quarters of FY 2013/14, Visit Mendocino County created over 287 million consumer impressions, generated over 12,277 advertising leads, created new contracts for group business, and grew the Facebook fanbase by an amazing 50%. We are the Inspiration Highway. We encourage local businesses to provide exits off the highway, giving visitors reason to stop, stay, and play!

These are especially exciting times for the promotion of Mendocino County. Travel to the county is at pre-recession levels and Visit Mendocino County is busy ensuring we perform the most effective marketing possible. We are completing two big countywide research studies to increase our effectiveness and efficiencies even more! This marketing plan clearly reflects the recommendations from the marketing study, which we are confident will bring many more visitors to our County! However, we can only be successful with your participation and partnership in our programs and initiatives. We encourage you to participate with us in bringing more and more travelers here to experience all we have to offer. It is our mission to work with you, our partners, to continually increase the economic impact of our travel industry year over year. In the following pages, you will get a glimpse of the many activities VMC will undertake to put “heads in beds.” Our doors are always open for you to share your thoughts and ideas. There are so many ways you can get involved in what we do to inspire visitors to come to our destination: from attending trade shows to informing us of specials, events, packages, and promotions to sharing the latest news from your business—your participation, the experience you offer, is what makes Mendocino County such a special place to visit. Should you have questions, suggestions, or feedback for any on our team, please let us know. We look forward to being your “Inspiration Highway” for years to come and are so grateful for the opportunity.

With much gratitude and warmest regards,

Scott Schneider President & CEO

Visit Mendocino County, Inc.

MISSION

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.

VALUES

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.



WHY COME TO MENDOCINO COUNTY?

Mendocino County is not so much a place as it is a state of mind... and that's what visitors to the county are seeking when they wend their way to the northern reaches of California. 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 within easy driving distance of the Bay Area and Sacramento.

The reward at the start of a weekend is to pack a bag (and the optional dog), fuel up and head to a destination where you leave the workplace behind. 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... 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 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. Sometimes shrouded by a fine layer of ocean fog and at other times crystal clear, the coast offers a panoply of B&Bs and hotels that appeal to couples in search of a quiet getaway, while families feel at home at a vacation rental or kid-friendly hotel/motel. With beaches galore all the way up the coast, there's plenty of relaxing, paddling, whale and seal watching, and hiking to do for all ages.

Visitors come to the coast to:

- See the sights – coastline, Victorian architecture, redwoods, coastal mountains, harbors, wildlife, botanical gardens
- Have fun on the beach with swimming, sunbathing, surfing, diving, fishing

- Shop at boutique stores and galleries
- Ride motorcycles on the windy coastal roads
- Hike the headlands and ranch trails
- Exercise on mountain and road bikes
- Try out a kayak, canoe, or paddle board on the ocean and rivers
- Eat locally sourced foods at fine restaurants or attend a specialty cooking class
- Attend special events such as the Mendocino Music Festival, Crab, Wine & Beer Festival, Gualala Jazz Festival, Mendocino Film Festival, etc.
- Ride the Skunk Train and visit other coastal attractions
- Visit art galleries and artist open studios, and take art classes
- Stop along the way to the coast to taste fine wines
- Play rounds of golf at the Little River Inn
- Experience live theater and music

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 side-by-side with the Russian River, passing through Hopland to the county's cultural epicenter of Ukiah and the forests and wilderness that await at the northern part of the county. Warm summer days with cool nights provide the ideal destination for family camping and rural getaways, while couples seeking a romantic weekend snuggle up in cozy rooms in chic hotels and guest quarters. Fine wine connoisseurs and foodies find their particular slice of heaven throughout inland Mendocino County where handcrafted wines abound and locavore is the only way to eat. Outdoor activities, a train ride through the redwoods, and a multitude of hop stops are just some of the many reasons visitors choose inland Mendocino County as their preferred destination — it's the place they can:

- Sample wines at the dozens of tasting rooms that line the valleys from Hopland in the south, to Redwood Valley in the north, throughout the length of the Anderson Valley and into the north county

- Visit the county's 10 AVAs including the smallest in the U.S.
- Play bocce with the kids, walk Fido, and have a picnic in the grounds and gardens of the many friendly wineries
- Belly up to the bar for a brew at one of the many hop stops in the county
- Camp with the family at Lake Mendocino where visitors can pitch a tent or park an RV; stay in a comfortable rural retreat where canines and kids can run free
- Attend special events such as the Redwood Empire Fair, County Apple Fair, the quirky Kinetic Carnivale, Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival, Hopland Passport, etc.
- Eat at restaurants that pride themselves on serving seasonal, local, organic foods
- Climb aboard the Skunk Train and take the ride of a lifetime through the redwoods to the coast
- Canoe, kayak, swim, and fish on the lakes and and many rivers
- Get off road with a motorcycle or ATV on the many trails on BLM lands that stretch all the way from Cow Mountain to the Yolla Bolly wilderness
- See the sights... hike among the redwoods; go on wildflower walks and hike back-country trails; enter the Dharma Realm at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas; get immersed in the county's history and culture at its museums
- Shop for antiques, apparel, fine housewares and art
- Stay at a hot springs resort or soak up the champagne baths
- Attend music and theatrical events
- Road race along the challenging terrain or get away from it all with a mountain bike
- Rev up the motorcycle for rides through the coastal and inland mountain ranges

Mendocino County has a wealth of opportunity for every type of visitor — they **can even ski** at the right time of year!

WHO'S THE COMPETITION?

Overall, Mendocino County's competitive set can be defined by those destinations that are leisure travel destinations, which attract visitation from the Northern California primary market. Those destinations that VMC has determined are leisure travel competitor destinations can be categorized as follows:

- **Coastal Competitors** – Central Coast (Monterey and Santa Cruz)
- **Wine Destination Competitors** – Includes Napa, Sonoma, Sierra Foothills
- **Recreation Competitors** – Includes Lake Tahoe and Yosemite

Leisure Travel Competitive Destinations

DESTINATION	POSITIONING	ATTRACTIONS	COMMENTS
COASTAL COMPETITORS			
Santa Cruz County	"Let's Cruz"	Boardwalk, redwoods, downtown, surfing, beach	Major coastal destination
Monterey County	"Grab Life by the Moments"	Aquarium, Cannery Row, wharf, 17 Mile Drive, wine, special events, "Monterey Moments"	Major coastal destination
WINE DESTINATION COMPETITORS			
Sonoma County	"Do You Speak Sonoma?"	Wine, rugged coast, downtown areas	Top market for wine
Napa County	"Legendary"	Wine, wine events, and food and culture	Top market for California wine
RECREATION COMPETITORS			
South Lake Tahoe	"Welcome to the Wild Side"	Winter and summer outdoor recreation, gaming, skiing, and special events	Major California destination
North Lake Tahoe	"Go Tahoe North"	Winter and summer outdoor recreation, gaming, skiing, and special events	Major California destination
Yosemite National Park		Major recreation and sightseeing destination	International destination

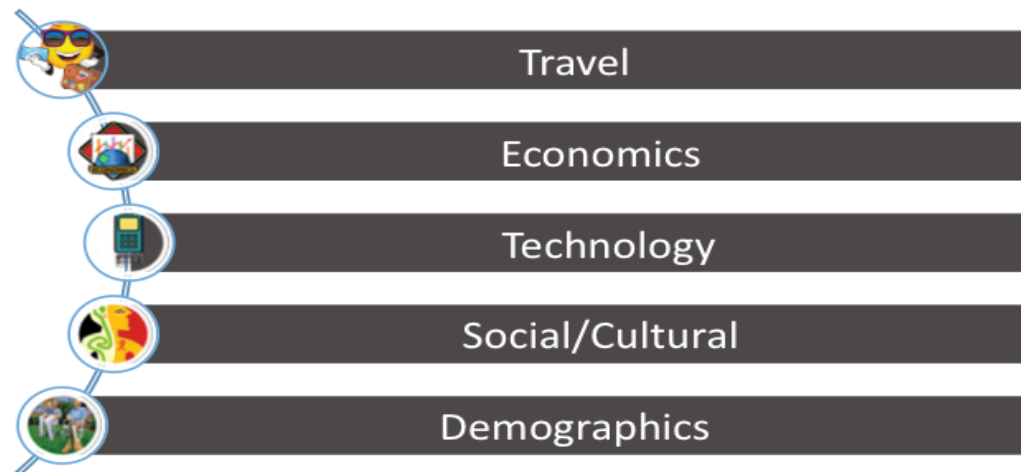
MENDOCINO COUNTY SITUATION ANALYSIS

Part 1: Key Trends

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 operates.

Significant changes are occurring in the California marketplace that impact tourism destinations like Mendocino County, which VMC has responded to with new programs and strategies. 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 that tourism decision makers should be aware of. For the purposes of background and context, the following is a summary of the key tourism, economic, and demographic trends that will help to provide a comprehensive context for the development of the Mendocino County strategic marketing direction.

Key Macro Trends Impacting Mendocino County



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

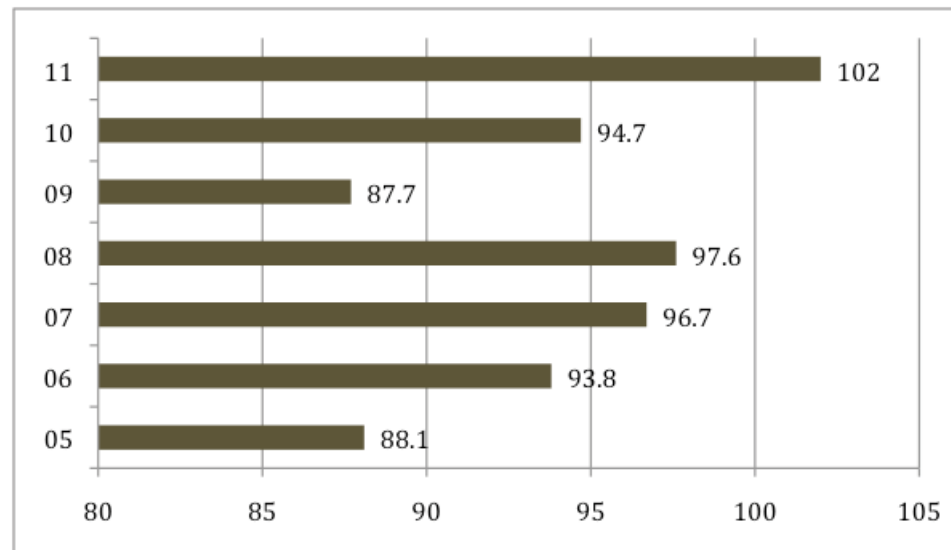
DOMESTIC

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 California¹, the state generated over \$100 billion in direct travel spending in 2011, a first, translating into a 5.5% increase over the preceding year.

For perspective, Mendocino County generated approximately \$328 million in travel spending during 2012.

In terms of visitor volumes, Californians represent the lion's share of the state's travel and tourism industry. In 2010 (the most recent year's data available), 75% of visits and 60% of spending were from California residents.²

Figure 1: California Travel Spending 2005-2011 (\$ Billions)

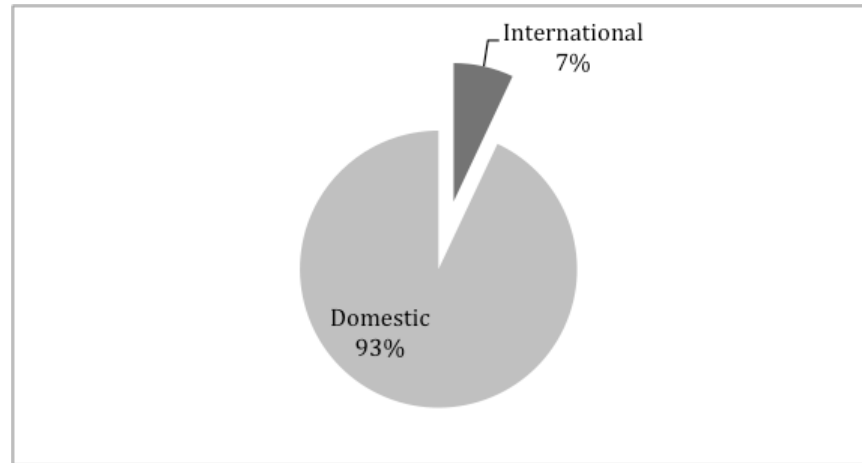


Source: Visit California

¹ Visit California Economic Impact of Travel 2013

² Visit California Presentation, November 2011

Figure 2: 2011 Total California Visitors



Source: Visit California Presentation, November 2011

INTERNATIONAL

Attracting international markets is a primary strategy of Visit California, and this offers Mendocino County an opportunity. Summary trend data for international markets and the percent of those markets entering through Southern California can be found below.

Table 1: Key International Market Visitors to California

Year	Australia	UK Visitors	Canada Visitors	Italy	Germany	France	Scandinavia
2005	313,000	778,000	1,008,000	106,000	309,000	261,000	118,000
2006	286,000	752,000	1,037,000	104,000	241,000	186,000	129,000
2007	333,000	765,000	1,148,000	124,000	322,000	237,000	164,000
2008	341,000	816,000	1,257,000	151,000	393,000	302,000	157,000
2009	377,000	662,000	1,233,000	128,000	355,000	276,000	146,000
2010	502,000	682,000	1,451,000	163,000	388,888	383,000	181,000
2011	563,000	702,000	1,476,000	178,000	423,000	443,000	204,000
Annual % Change	13.3%	-1.6%	7.7%	11.3%	6.1%	11.6%	12.1%
% Visiting S.F	47%	41%	N/A	61%	66%	59%	52%

Source: Visit California

- Australia has seen the highest annual growth rate since 2005, followed by Scandinavia, Italy, and France.
- The U.K. is California's largest overseas market with visitors spending approximately \$731 million. Though its annual average growth has slowed since it peaked in 2008, visitation has increased.
- Australia is California's third largest overseas market with visitors spending approximately \$589 million.
- Visitors from Canada spent approximately \$1.1 billion in California in 2010.

Given Mendocino County's unique assets and proximity to San Francisco, **efforts should focus on attracting a share of international visitors, which should continue to grow over time.**

B. Economic Trends – Improving

As can be seen in Table 2 below, both the U.S. and California economic pictures have changed significantly over time. Slowly, recession is giving way to an improved economic picture. Table 2 shows that economic indicators for **both the national and state economy are showing signs of improvement.**

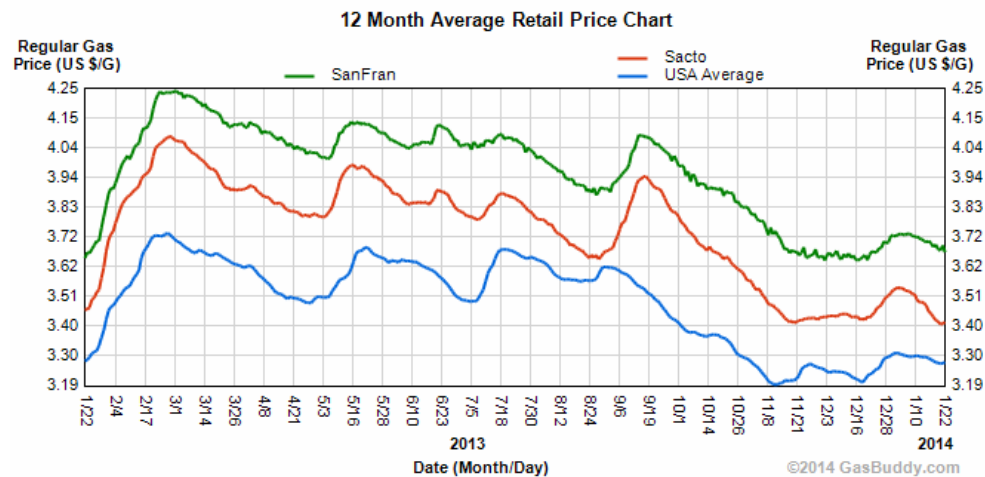
Table 2: Key California Economic Indicators

	2011	2012	2013	2014
U.S Gross Domestic Product	1.7	2.2	2.4	3.4
Unemployment CA	11.8%	10.9%	10.4%	9.5%
Unemployment U.S.	9.0	8.2	7.9	7.3
Personal Income Growth CA	6.0	4.9	3.4	5.4
Personal Income Growth U.S.	5.1	3.7	4.2	5.0
Consumer Price Index CA	2.6	2.0	2.0	2.2
Consumer Price Index US	3.2	2.1	2.0	2.1

Source: State of California, Department of Commerce

One important economic issue that has been an ongoing concern is the price of fuel, **which can impact the travel decisions of price sensitive consumers.** The price of gas in the primary Northern California feeder markets is significantly higher than the U.S. average. It is not known at this time if this issue will be of short term concern or if the issue presents a longer term threat to destination travel.

Figure 3: Gas Prices



C. Social and Cultural Trends – Consumers Keep Changing

In addition to the changing economic and demographic situation, several social trends are also impacting travel and tourism throughout the country, as identified by the Travel Industry Association. Below are the primary trends having the most significant strategic impact on tourism to Mendocino County.

CHANGING CONSUMER TASTES

- **Consumers as destination brand ambassadors**

Social media + mobile technology = empowered visitors. Visitors are now brand ambassadors for destinations. Constant updates about the experience (both good and bad), along with posted photographs can make the consumer an ever more important promoter and potential influencer of a destination.





- **Outdoor recreation**

According to the recently published Outdoor Recreation Economy Report, **outdoor recreation spending is approximately \$646 billion per year in the United States and generates 6.1 million American jobs**. Of that \$646 billion, fully \$524 billion was spent on trips and travel related spending.³

- **Health and wellness**

Consumers are increasingly integrating health and wellness into their lifestyles and in so doing look for destinations that enhance those opportunities through wellness vacations and wellness travel. A **wellness vacation** is about being proactive in discovering new ways to promote a healthier, less stressful lifestyle. **Wellness travel** is the pause that reenergizes and rejuvenates each traveler. The **wellness vacation** is considered an occasional break for the body, mind, and soul.

- **Purpose driven travel**

As consumers continually see vacation time reduced, there is a heightened need for purpose driven travel, e.g., a specific special event, hiking a specific trail, surfing a specific location, etc. These trips are also driven by consumers who self-identify with a particular event or activity. For example, certain consumers may see themselves as foodies, wine aficionados, or are avid cyclists or golfers. **As such, the ability to reach and communicate with niches based on activities is increasingly important for a destination.**

- **Culinary tourism**

Many consumers today are looking for expanded culinary experiences while on vacation. In interacting with the local food economy, Mendocino County visitors are dipping into the area's agricultural history. Given that culinary tourism has

³ The Outdoor Recreation Economy Report, Outdoor Industry Association, http://www.outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf

become a staple in many competitor destinations there is potential opportunity to benefit from this trend by **developing innovative programs that further differentiate Mendocino County.**

- **Environmental issues remain a priority**

Environmental issues continue to play an important role in the selection of a destination as well as the selection of activities while on vacation. **Those destinations like Mendocino County that place a strong emphasis on the environment will have a competitive advantage over those that do not.**

- **Despite increases in travel – value still prevails**

There can be no doubt about the shift in the marketplace towards value, and this trend continues throughout all aspects of the industry. As such it is critical for Mendocino County **to effectively communicate the value it offers.**

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- **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.

- **Social media more important as travelers resist more formal marketing**

As consumers continue to resist traditional marketing efforts they are **relying more and more on social media to research destinations and activities.** As such Mendocino County needs to ensure it provides updated content and information to meet those needs.

- **Greater degree of personalization**

Facilitated by increased data mining capabilities, marketing efforts will lead to much more customization for each consumer. Traditional demographic segmentation and targeting will no longer be enough as cutting edge DMOs will focus more and more on **customized targeting and offers.**

CHANGING PLANNING/BOOKING TRENDS

- **Shorter booking windows with lots of shopping**

Another continuing trend that can present a challenge to the lodging industry is the consumers' ever shorter term booking window. As lodging

properties have experienced, the booking window has decreased significantly. This trend has broad implications for the tourism industry. **A shorter booking window makes it more difficult to gauge future demand and plan accordingly.**⁴ Potential may exist in converting day visitors to overnight visitors with appropriate incentives.

Additionally, research by the Cornell School of Hotel Administration reveals that consumers do extensive shopping, with over half looking at an average of 15 different sites before booking.⁵

- **Time poverty/hectic lives = shorter trips**

Time continues to be the new currency due to the hectic nature of consumers' lives, and the impact is seen on vacation and travel. As has been written many times, vacation trips have become significantly shorter in duration. Additionally, consumers are looking for hassle-free vacations, placing greater importance on methods of booking and travel to and from destinations.

D. California Demographic Trends

Since the late 1990s, the population in the state of California has steadily increased. During the period between 2008 and 2018, California population and personal income levels are projected to change significantly. During the 2003-2018 time period, the **California population is projected to grow from 34 million to 40 million**, a 13% increase. Additionally, personal income levels are projected to increase by 4.3% and average household incomes by 2.5% annually. Most important to Mendocino County are the major demographic shifts and changes in ethnicity as programs are developed.

Change will occur in several noteworthy areas including those listed below.

1. POPULATION SHIFTS

California population growth between 2008 and 2018 is projected to be concentrated in three major groups:

- College age and young adults (20-34) will see an increase of just under 1 million.
- Baby boomers (age 55-74) will account for an increase of 2.5 million.
- Children (ages 0-14) will see an increase of just over 1 million.

⁴ Vizergy Blog, "Google's Latest Research", <http://ht.ly/auAwq>
⁵ Skift.com, Nov 15, 2012, "Who looks at 150 sites before booking a hotel? About 5 percent of travelers, study says"
<http://skift.com/2012/11/15/five-percent-of-travelers-will-search-over-150-sites-before-booking-a-hotel-says-study/>

Of these three segments, **clearly the shift in the baby boomer and the college age and young adult segments will have the most impact.** The growth of the children's segment suggests that there will be an overall increase in the family segment.

2. CHANGES IN ETHNICITY

Another dynamic that is also changing the demographic picture is the growth of California's various race/ethnic groups. Specifically, rapid growth is occurring within the Hispanic and Asian segments. **The Hispanic segment is the single largest ethnic segment in California (2013).**

E. Technology Trends

Technology has had a significant impact on the travel industry both from a travel planning and reservation booking perspective. Table 3 below and on the following page summarizes key technology trends and their implications.

Table 3: Technology Trends

1. Fragmentation – Digital users are everywhere, but hard to pin down exactly where

- Consumers are accessing the web through a variety of devices (mobile, tablet, desktop) and operating systems (iOS, Android, etc.)⁶
- Along with mobile app and mobile web, this makes it more challenging to identify target audience behavior.
- Multi-screen multitasking (think using a smart phone while watching TV) is no longer unusual consumer behavior.

Implication – Identifying where a target audience spends time is not as simple as it once was. Destinations need to recognize consumers as individuals...or “micro-audiences.”

2. It's all about mobile

- Time spent on the mobile web is growing at 14 times the rate of desktop internet usage.⁷
- Mobile internet now trumps 'regular' internet.

⁶ eMarketer, Key Digital Trends for 2013, <http://www.emarketer.com/Webinar.aspx?R=4000061>

⁷ Harris Interactive 2010

Implication – A mobile marketing strategy is no longer optional for destinations.

3. Content marketing is king

- Marketers are now publishers, using content to drive a variety of interactions throughout (and beyond) the AIDA (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action) funnel.⁸ Content includes paid, earned and owned content, as well as images, video and words.

Implication – It is absolutely critical to have a content marketing strategy to effectively reach passion based target segments.

4. Social-driven engagement drives preferences

- User reviews are a key influence in consumer decision making (71% of people say reviews from family members or friends influence purchase decisions).⁹ Look for continued increase and applications in use from many social marketing sources.
- Social influences consumer decisions, as users are exposed to the thoughts, opinions and recommendations of friends, families and influencers – a group of people that is growing wider through social media.¹⁰
- 47% of social media users engaged in customer service via these channels.¹¹

Implication – Online reputation management and social media monitoring are long-term critical elements for tourism.

5. Big Data isn't just jargon

- Huge amounts of data are now generated with every interaction on every digital platform. This presents a real opportunity for destinations—if harnessed effectively.

Implication – Destinations should seek to improve how they collect and use customer information to provide a better experience for potential visitors before, during and after their visit.

⁸ Nielsen Social Media Report 2012 <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/social/2012/>

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ California Travel Impacts by County 2013

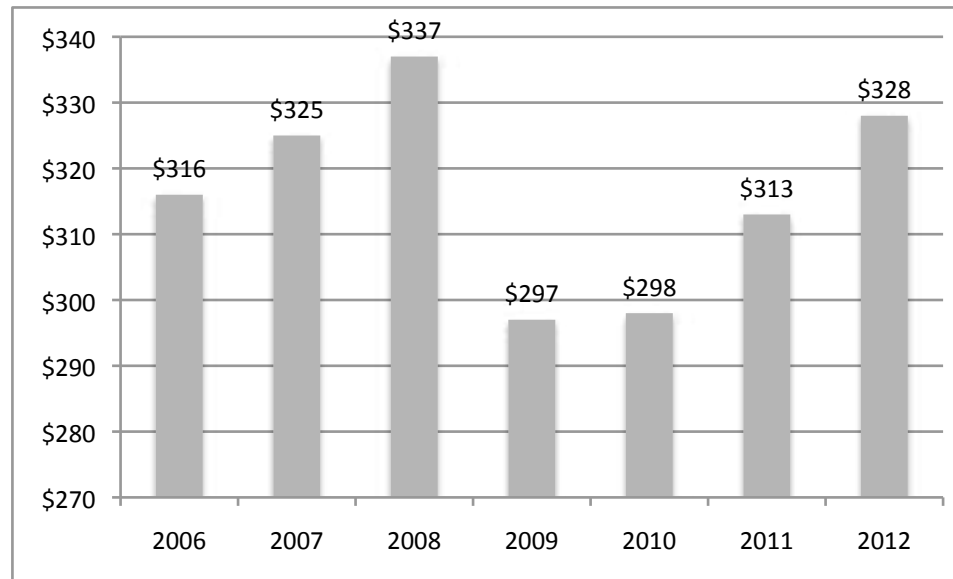
¹¹ Ibid

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 \$328 million in travel spending.**¹² The 2006 through 2012 trend is found below in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Mendocino County Visitor Spending 2006-2012 (\$ Millions)

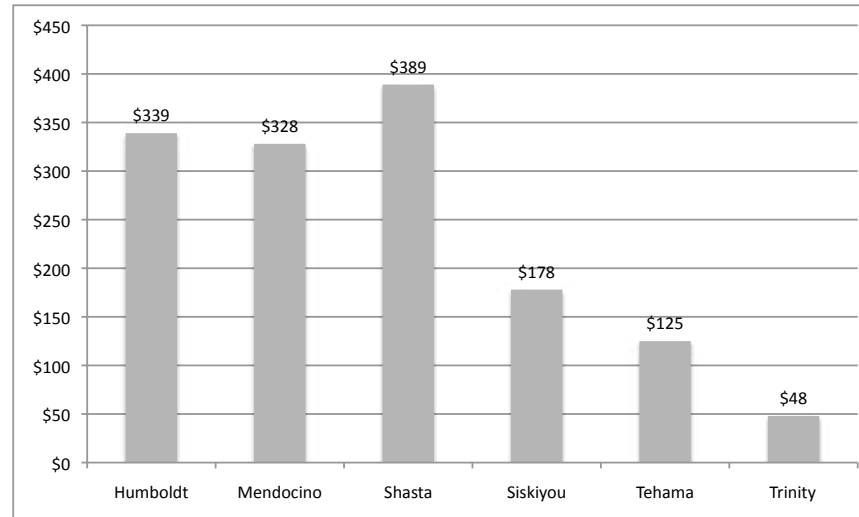


Source: California Travel Impacts by County, March 2014

In terms of overall tourism spending, as compared to neighboring counties, Mendocino County and Humboldt County are ranked closely but are both behind Shasta County, as illustrated on the next page.

¹² California Travel Impacts by County 2014

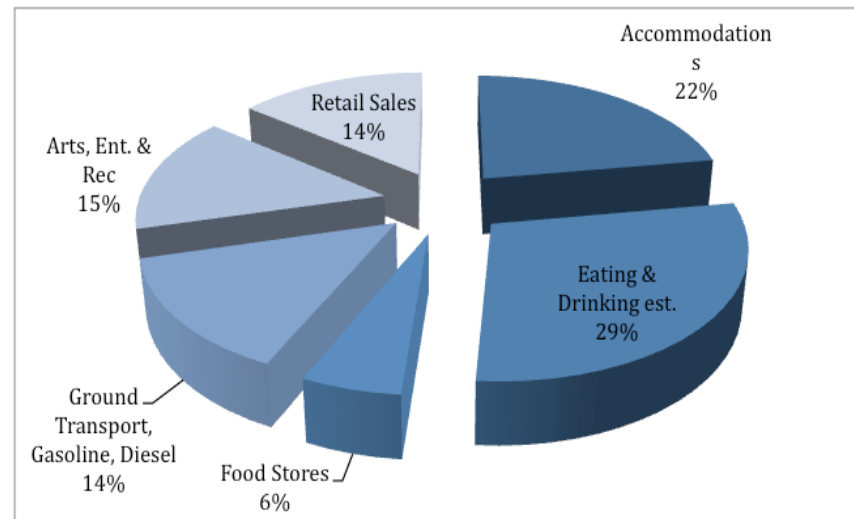
Figure 5: Travel Spending By Selected County (\$ Millions)



Source: California Travel Impacts by County, 2014

With regard to how those travel dollars are spent, Figure 6 below identifies travel spending by type of business service.

Figure 6: Mendocino County Travel Spending by Type of Business Service (\$ Millions)



Source: California Travel Impacts by County, 2013

Table 4 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. Given its challenging location Mendocino has been consistent.

Table 4: 1992 vs. 2012 Regional County Travel Spending

County	1992	%	2012	%
	Spending (\$ Millions)		Spending (\$ Millions)	
Humboldt	\$198.0	24.48%	\$339.0	24.09%
Mendocino	\$197.6	24.43%	\$328.0	23.31%
Shasta	\$222.2	27.47%	\$389.0	27.65%
Siskiyou	\$96.5	11.93%	\$178.0	12.65%
Tehama	\$63.8	7.89%	\$125.0	8.88%
Trinity	\$30.7	3.80%	\$48.0	3.41%
Total	\$808.8	100.00%	\$1,407.0	100.00%

Source: California Travel Impacts by County, March 2014



Part 3: Visit Mendocino County

A. Visit Mendocino County Marketing Activities: July 1, 2013–March 31, 2014

Visit Mendocino County provides a full range of marketing activities and programs designed to create awareness and generate interest in visiting the area. The highlights below are our achievements for the **first three quarters of FY 2013/14**.

Sales – VMC attends a variety of tradeshow and provides sales support.

Activities:

- Facilitated numerous contracts between county hotels and tour operators to bring future groups and individual travelers to the county.
- In partnership with North Coast Tourism Council (“NCTC”) and Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association attended IPW and GoWest; attended National Tour Association meeting for NCTC with international and domestic tour operators.
- In partnership with Visit California, participated in European FAMs as well as attending European sales mission; participated in sales missions to Canada and Los Angeles partnering with San Francisco Travel.
- Had booths at the Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show, Sunset Celebration Weekend, Los Angeles Adventure Expo and other niche consumer shows serving close to 10,000 potential visitors.

Results:

- Successful in booking over 1,000 room nights by groups and individuals at county hotels.

Advertising – Visit Mendocino County provides leadership in creating awareness for the region.

Activities:

- Promoted the Visit Mendocino County brand and events through ads in Sunset magazine, Visit California’s Visitors Guide, San Francisco Travel’s Visitors Guide, and radio (KGO and KCBS), online banners, and Facebook campaigns. A number of these ads were opened up to partners as co-operative opportunities.

Results

- Nearly 45 million (11% over goal) advertising impressions from placements in print, radio, outdoor and online vehicles.
- Reached 12,277 leads, 20% above goal.

Social Media & Website Marketing Activities – Visit Mendocino County provides comprehensive media and website marketing programs.

Activities

- Launch of new website, with focus on editorial-based content, social-sharing, broad SEO, increasing time-on-site, and mobile responsiveness

Results

- Reached 30,000 fans on Facebook, with a focus on ever-growing engagement and sharing
- Open and click rates for consumer-facing mailing list continue to grow

Public Relations – Visit Mendocino County implemented a comprehensive public relations program including text, video and photo content.

Activities

- Hosted a photo-FAM tour resulting in the free and clear use of 30 iconic Mendocino County images.
- Placed more than 220 Mendocino County stories in print, broadcast and online
- Directly recruited 35 members of the media (editors, producers, bloggers and freelancers) to visit Mendocino County and distributed 11 press releases on various topics to local, regional, and national press resulting in hundreds of media placements.

Results

- PR efforts for the first three quarters of the FY have resulted in over \$10 million dollars in comparable advertising value (177% of goal), and 287 million consumer impressions (215% of goal).

Visitor Services – VMC provides a supporting role in providing visitor information in an effort to extend visitor stays and increase visitor spending.

Activities

- Provided funding to assist in keeping South Coast visitor center open.
- Distributed over 100,000 county materials including tear-off maps, wine maps, event calendars, pet-friendly guides, and meeting guides.
- Informational kiosks established at Noyo Harbor, Fort Bragg and Solar Living Institute (Real Goods), Hopland.
- Set up informational kiosk at County offices in Ukiah. Hosted inland and coastal Excellence in Service workshops.

Results

- Installed second gateway sign on Highway 20 and visitor kiosk operating in Boonville.
- Ninety attendees representing over forty businesses and organizations representing wineries, lodging, retail, finance, government, and transportation attended the Excellence in Customer Service workshops.

Special Event Support – Special events are a key marketing tool to increase visitation to the region. Visit Mendocino County provides significant support to regional special events.

Activities

- Collaborated with businesses and organizations, including the Mendocino Film Festival to conceptualize events (e.g. introducing the Film Festival to the Ukiah area) and promote countywide.
- Worked with Mendocino County Museum on their second annual Willits Kinetic Carnivale.
- Worked with Fort Bragg non-profit (Parents & Friends) to produce Bison, Beer & Bluegrass Festival in October 2013.
- Continued collaboration with the Mendocino County Museum on their sponsorship of the Mushroom, Wine & Beer Train.

Results

- Increased attendance and passport participation at both the Crab, Wine & Beer Festival and Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival by double digit percentages.
- Based on research, changed the name of the Earth Day Festival to the Mendocino County Party for the Planet and worked with organizations and businesses to conceptualize events.

B. Mendocino Website Analytics Review

SMG reviewed Mendocino's website analytics for the period of Jan 1, 2013 – Nov 30, 2013 as compared to the same dates in 2012.

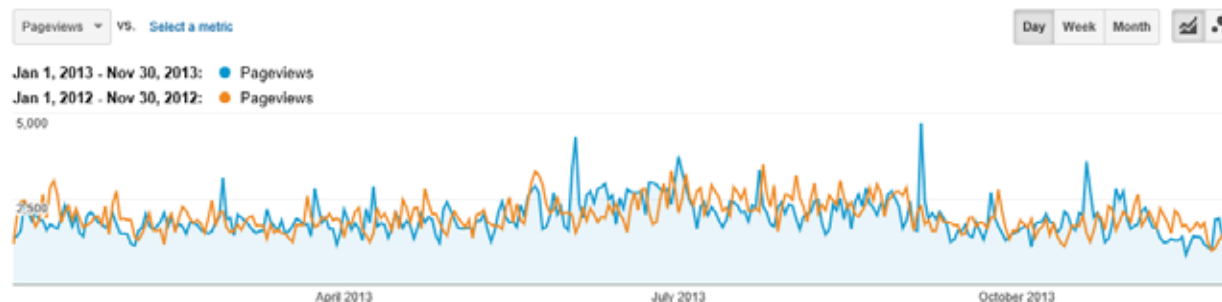
Observations

- YOY there was an increase in visitors (14%) and unique visits (15%).
- That said, engagement is down, including pageviews (-15%), visit duration (-12%), and pages per visit (-3%).
- Bounce rate is also up by 13%, though it's still below 50% overall.

Content

While overall page views are down slightly when compared to 2012, there have been some spikes during certain times of the year, as indicated in the below chart. Dates of interest in 2013 include February 27; April 18; June 3; September 3, and October 20. It should also be noted that page views did drop off noticeably in November, with a slight surge later in the month. Prior to that, however, they did track fairly similarly.

Figure 9: Visit Mendocino Website Visitor Overview 2013 compared to 2012



Source: Google Analytics

In terms of specific content, VisitMendocino.com saw large shifts in visitation to specific pages. For instance, visits to the home page are down 23%, along with events (-17%), specials (-37%), itineraries (-17%) and visitor guide (-12%). It is a bit concerning that these pages, which should serve as a type of call to action for potential visitors, have seen such a decline. The table on the following page illustrates the top pages visited in 2012 and 2013.



Table 5: Mendocino top pages 2013 compared to 2012

Page	Date Range	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Entrances	Bounce Rate	% Exit
/	Jan 1, 2013 -	84,332	67,218	63,955	36.99%	36.47%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	109,240	86,621	83,628	34.83%	34.60%
		-22.80%				
/festivals-events	Jan 1, 2013 -	30,262	22,642	4,841	29.89%	16.62%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	36,323	26,842	5,248	32.58%	16.44%
		-16.69%				
/business/glass-beach	Jan 1, 2013 -	14,803	13,849	12,741	67.50%	79.14%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	1,747	1,571	379	53.56%	26.56%
		747.34%				
/lodging?r=All&t=All&p=All	Jan 1, 2013 -	14,351	9,577	499	23.45%	11.85%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	8,583	5,502	216	22.69%	11.08%
		67.20%				
/about-mendocino/travel-too	Jan 1, 2013 -	13,329	10,115	764	37.57%	30.86%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	15,085	10,964	1,253	39.82%	26.15%
		-11.64%				
/about-mendocino/itineraries	Jan 1, 2013 -	11,017	7,698	505	44.95%	17.21%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	13,254	9,141	454	42.73%	15.84%
		-16.88%				
/31daysofgiveaways/index.ht	Jan 1, 2013 -	10,777	7,915	7,754	68.29%	65.96%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	0	0	-	0.00%	0.00%
		NA				
/business/orr-hot-springs-res	Jan 1, 2013 -	8,982	7,462	6,995	55.63%	70.43%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	2,519	2,090	1,721	53.63%	65.22%
		256.57%				
/specials-packages	Jan 1, 2013 -	8,934	6,993	990	42.42%	19.94%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	14,199	10,839	1,649	38.75%	18.11%
		-37.08%				
/mushroomfestival	Jan 1, 2013 -	6,826	3,912	2,940	42.24%	32.22%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	0	0	-	0.00%	0.00%
		NA				
/lodging/north-coast	Jan 1, 2013 -	6,785	4,182	1,359	24.87%	13.57%
	Jan 1, 2012 -	5,439	3,178	284	26.06%	8.83%
		24.75%				

Source: Google Analytics

MENDOCINO TOP CITIES

California drives the most visits to the Visit Mendocino County website by far. The top 10 California cities are listed below and most of them (with the exception of San Francisco and Sacramento) show increases in 2013. It should be noted that while the numbers are up, engagement (pages/visit) is down slightly across the board. In the same vein, bounce rates are up as well – something to continue to watch.

Table 6: Mendocino Top Cities 2013 compared to 2012

City	Date Range	Visits	% New Visits	New Visits	Bounce Rate	Pages / Visit
San Francisco	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	14373	75.59%	10864	44.06%	3.65
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	14586	71.82%	10476	39.97%	4.33
		-1.46%				
San Jose	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	6951	71.28%	4955	43.85%	3.99
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	5172	73.69%	3811	37.82%	4.52
		34.40%				
Fort Bragg	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	4794	52.65%	2524	47.68%	3.58
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	4415	45.98%	2030	50.87%	3.22
		8.58%				
Ukiah	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	4316	53.24%	2298	47.57%	3.84
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	3422	53.80%	1841	44.33%	4.04
		26.13%				
Los Angeles	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	4310	78.91%	3401	53.78%	3.32
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	2543	80.61%	2050	41.64%	4.20
		69.48%				
Sacramento	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	4166	76.98%	3207	40.16%	4.37
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	4449	78.49%	3492	32.57%	5.19
		-6.36%				
Oakland	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	3727	74.40%	2773	42.85%	3.88
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	2858	73.97%	2114	34.04%	5.05
		30.41%				
Santa Rosa	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	2892	71.20%	2059	44.99%	3.78
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	2026	71.17%	1442	41.76%	4.01
		42.74%				
Berkeley	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	2081	74.34%	1547	42.82%	3.89
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	1982	73.51%	1457	38.14%	4.48
		4.99%				
San Diego	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	1608	69.90%	1124	48.32%	3.27
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	1302	78.88%	1027	41.86%	4.30
		23.50%				
Sunnyvale	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	1445	75.64%	1093	41.73%	4.09
	Jan 1, 2012 - Nov 30, 2012	1293	77.88%	1007	36.04%	4.72
		11.75%				
San Rafael	Jan 1, 2013 - Nov 30, 2013	1358	72.16%	980	42.42%	4.22

Source: Google Analytics

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goal

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

Objectives

1. Continue to effectively position Mendocino County as one of California's premier coastal destinations.
2. Educate consumers on the different coastal and inland experiences that can be found within the county.
3. Increase marketing focus to key lifestyle and passion segments including outdoor/recreation, wine, food and romance.
4. Increase the role of technology and digital marketing efforts in order to broaden the reach and increase effectiveness.
5. Develop and implement a marketing dashboard that tracks key indicators for the destination and VMC, and distribute that information in an effort to educate and support the tourism industry.
6. Implement research that tracks the effectiveness of the VMC website and the influence it has on persuading visitors to visit Mendocino County.



VMC MARKETING STRATEGY

Given the prominent role the internet plays in travel planning, VMC marketing efforts should continue to drive potential visitors to its website. 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 VMC.
- The best organization to book a room or make a sale is a lodging property or an online travel agency (OTA).



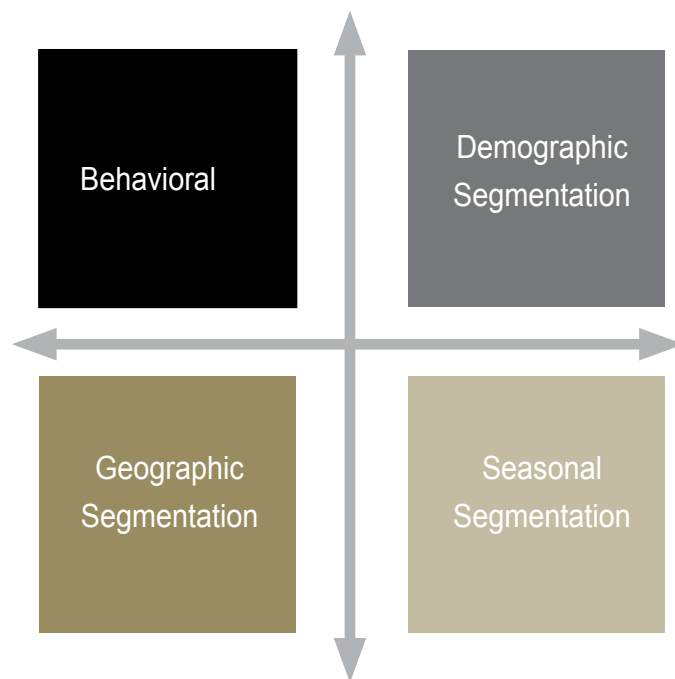
How the strategy works

Marketing efforts (digital advertising, public relations, etc.) are used to create awareness and attract target market segments to www.Visitmendocino.com and to 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 VMC's website to choose another lodging property or attraction.

MENDOCINO COUNTY TARGET MARKETS

Visit Mendocino County's target markets follow the below segmentation matrix, which includes behavioral, demographic, geographic markets and seasonal segmentations, along with seasonal, demographic and activity participation segmentation. The following segmentation is based on visitor profile data and input from the lodging industry.



Lifestyle Segmentation

FIT

Lifestyle Segments

Arts & Culture

Outdoor/
Recreation

Wine & Food

Lifestyle Segments

Family

Romance

GROUP

Tour and Travel

Demographic Segmentation

In terms of target demographic segments, interviews, staff, and research have identified the following core segments:

1. Domestic

- Age:

Primary market: 50+ (core target market)

Secondary market: 40-49 (emerging loyalty development market)

Secondary market: 75+ (growing senior market/intergenerational travel)

- HHI: \$100,000
- Families
- Couples

2. International

- Age: 45-65
- HHI: \$150,000
- Traveling for leisure
- Primary access through San Francisco partnering with the North Coast Tourism Council, San Francisco Travel, and Visit California

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">Increasing overnight visitation and trip frequencyDevelop incentives to attract short planning window visitors	Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Work through regional and state tourism partnersEmerging market — increase overnight/longer stay/mid-week 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 – Summer

PERFORMANCE

VMC has developed a baseline measurement to track the influence its marketing efforts have in generating lodging revenue and total visitor spending.

VMC Lodging Rooms Generated

Source: SMG VMC Influence Conversion Study; VMC Google Analytics; Mendocino County TBID Collections

Base Year 2013/14 Actual	
Unique Website Visitors	160,060
Lodging Revenue Generated	
Conversion rate	10.0%
Estimated bookings	16,006
Length of stay	2.8
Rooms generated	44,817
ADR	\$223
Lodging Revenue Generated	\$9,994,146.40
Total County Lodging Revenue	\$60,723,531
VMC as % of Total	16.5%
Total Visitor Spending - Per Party Daily Expenses:	
Lodging	\$223
Food and beverage	\$193
Entertainment	\$35
Retail shopping	\$100
Daily transportation	\$23
Recreation	\$15
Other	\$123
Total	\$712
Trip Length	3
VMC GENERATED VISITOR SPENDING	\$31,909,561.60

In terms of understanding of what percent of the market increase can be attributed to VMC vs. a rising economy the following below outlines the impact of integrated VMC marketing efforts.

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

- In the base year of 2012/13 it is estimated that total lodging revenue generated in the market was \$60 million. Of that VMC generated \$9.9 million in lodging revenue through its marketing efforts (as measured by conversion of consumers using the VisitMendocino.com website). This was equivalent to 16.5% of total lodging revenue generated.

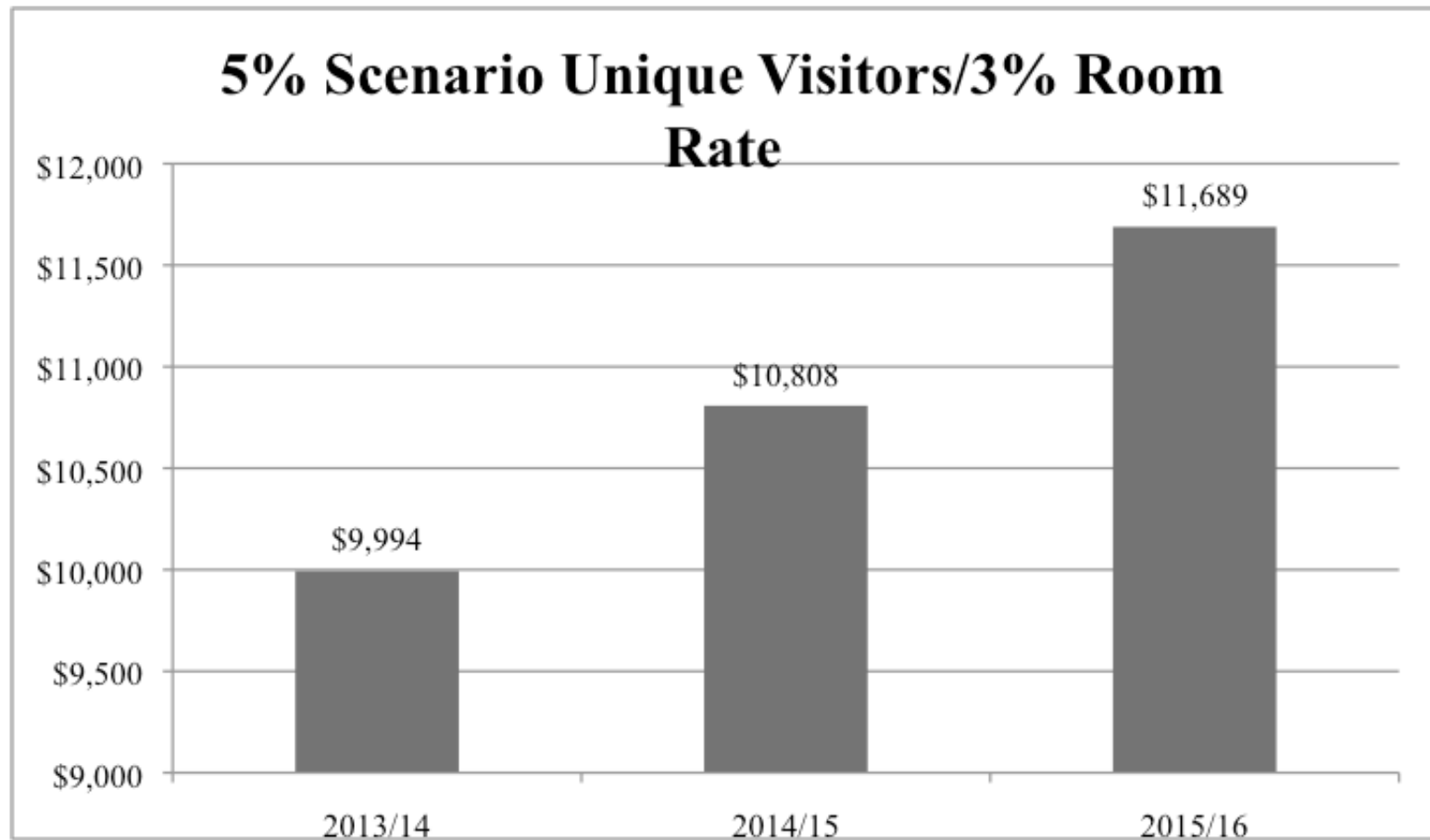


PROJECTIONS

The model below includes projections through 2015/16. As can be seen by increasing unique visitors to VisitMendocino.com by 10% annually lodging revenue is projected to increase to \$11.6M.

Incremental VMC Generated Revenue Projections

Source: SMG VMC Influence Conversion Study; VMC Google Analytics; Mendocino County TBID Collections



Visit Mendocino County Projections

Source: SMG VMC Influence Conversion Study; VMC Google Analytics; Mendocino County TBID Collections

	Base Year 2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Projection	2015/16 Projection
Unique Website Visitors	160,060	168,063	176,466
Lodging Revenue Generated	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Conversion Rate	16,006	16,806	17,647
Length of Stay	2.8	2.8	2.8
Rooms Generated	44,817	47,058	49,411
ADR	\$223	\$230	\$237
Lodging Revenue Generated	\$9,994,146	\$10,808,669	\$11,689,576



ADVERTISING/MEDIA

The following is the proposed schedule for media buys during the 2104/15 FY. The approach outlined below represents not only a new direction for advertising outreach but a higher level of energy that directly targets favored segments.

Goals

- Drive traffic to new website through targeted paid online advertising, SEO, and viral sharing of editorial pieces.

Flight dates: Annual, flighted heavier during summer and fall months

Target audience:

- Women primarily, HHI > \$100k, no kids or empty nesters, white, ages 45-64
- Geos: Northern California, greater Bay Area, Sacramento, Reno, Southern Oregon
- Interests: wine tasting, outdoor recreation, romantic getaways, road trips, Highway 101, redwoods, the arts, Point Arena

Print:

Proposed print budget: \$30,000

Strategy: Run ads in specific content driven issues that are relevant to Mendocino – Example: wine tasting, weddings, road trips, etc.

- Sunset
- Via – Northern California, Nevada, Utah & Pacific Northwest markets
- California Visitors Guide
- San Francisco's Visitors Guide
- Sacramento Visitors Guide

Cable TV:

Proposed cable budget: \$50,000

Markets: San Francisco

Strategy: Run 30-second commercials in San Francisco and host a promotional contest to give away a Mendocino getaway. We would suggest alternating markets each year between Sacramento and San Francisco.

- Spot length: 30-second commercials
- Channels: Travel, History, Weather, TNT, Food, etc.
- Promotion Getaway ideas: Whale watching, wine tasting & dinner, honeymoon getaway

Online:

Proposed online budget: \$100k gross per year

Strategy: We will run online and mobile campaigns pushing consumers to the Mendocino website. Portions of the buy will include some retargeting, behavioral and contextual targeting of the demographics in the targeted DMA.

- TripAdvisor.com – Mendocino, Napa, Sonoma, SF, Bay Area targeting
- Saveur.com – Wine section
- Sunset.com, FoodandWine.com, CoastalLiving.com – Outdoor adventure, best romantic getaways sections
- Sojern.com – Travel ad network
- Google search campaign – Increase Google search exposure and ranking
- Pandora – Target Northern CA, Bay Area, Sacramento, ages 45-64
- Bay Area News Group – Bay Area News ad network with dedicated eblasts

Proposed costs \$239,520 (23% of total budget): direct costs/\$199,400; staff costs: \$40,020 (12% of total personnel budget)

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Given its wealth of authentic experiences, fierce beauty, bursting wine scene, diverse mix of lodging and direct access to one of the state's top feeder markets – San Francisco Bay Area - Visit Mendocino County (VMC) is in a prime position to catapult the destination's brand with the right marketing communications program. While Public Relations plays a major role in generating awareness and shifting perception among key audiences, the ROI remains equally dependent upon external (economic) and internal (stakeholders) influences.

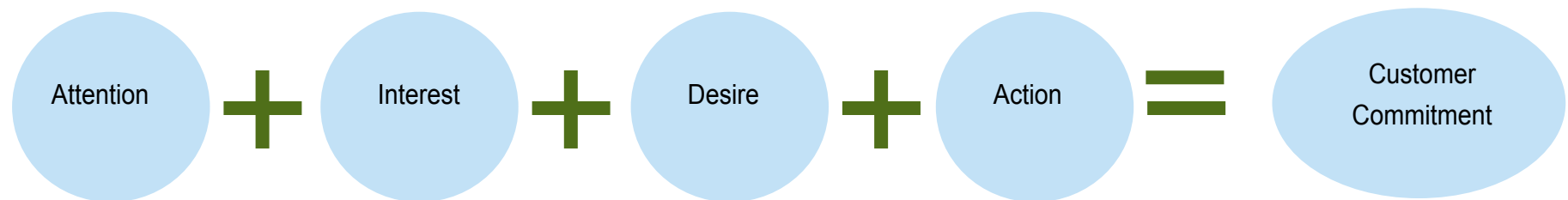
Recent events -- including the designation of a new national monument and expansion of assets in Anderson Valley -- along with a hard-hitting media relations program executed by team Koli/Cinch, have significantly raised the tourism barometer. To ensure this positive wave drills down to long-term visitor ship and bottom-line revenue, VMC needs the support and continued buy-in from tourism industry affiliates, government, residents and

tourism stakeholders. The 2014-2015 campaign will set out to galvanize constituents, stimulate demand and further clarify Visit Mendocino County's brand image among diverse target audiences. The keys to the castle rely in maintaining and growing market share in what is projected to be a robust economy.

OBJECTIVES:

- Drive overnight visitation throughout Mendocino County
- Assist VMC in promoting a sustainable, clarified image/brand
- Stimulate demand/increase tourism revenue during critical shoulder seasons
- Initiate awareness among key market niches and travel opinion leaders to buoy off-season revenue
- Galvanize community and stakeholder support for VMC initiatives
- Cultivate collaborative industry relationships to stretch VMC's budget

Key to the objectives is generating awareness of Mendocino County's rich line-up of assets – natural and human-made – to promote interest, desire and finally action in the form of market visitation. If VMC delivers on the promise at hand, a long-term commitment is the final payoff. From Millennials to Baby Boomers, LGBT and pet-friendly, the 2014/15 PR campaign promises to leave no market unturned and no potential media outlet un-awed.



Strategies:

- Influence the influencers/drive media coverage via creative packaging/promotions/events
- Ignite media interest via proactive print/electronic and social media campaigns
- Leverage and create “news” value as an economic driver for visitation
- Cultivate VMC Ambassador Team to collaborate on media and promotional programs, market missions/tours

- Convert customers predisposed to California getaways by differentiating Mendocino County
- Assist VMC in promoting internal communication efforts and educating stakeholders
- Strengthen industry partnerships with Visit California, North Coast Tourism Council, San Francisco Travel, BrandUSA, etc., via cooperative programming

KPI (Key Performance Indicators):

- Generate \$5.5 million in measured advertising equivalency*
- Reach an estimated audience of 134 million
- Achieve 200 media placements in key outlets
- Pitch/Secure 32 media to annually visit the destination on an individual basis
- Support VMC marketing & promotional objectives

*Without utilizing an industry qualifier of x4

CORE PROGRAM

Media Relations

Launch a hard-hitting, aggressive campaign spotlighting key regions for news, growth or repositioning. Zones include Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands, the Lost Coast, Anderson Valley and re-positioning of the Redwood Corridor (interior).

Promotions/Event Support

Underscore VMC events with PR support and media savvy; ensure key market initiatives are showcased in a variety of media sources. Propose/promote one annual event in San Francisco Bay Area to drive consumer awareness. Preliminary partners include San Francisco International Gay Film Festival (June 19-29), Cork & Fork Friday Nights at the de Young Museum (June/July), Tesla SUV Launch and dedicated push spotlighting a month-long salute to either a product or activity -- Ojai's Pixie Season and Santa Barbara's Epicure SB! are two successful examples.

Trade Shows

Secure participation at industry trade shows with proven media potential; streamline support where VMC's ROI is limited. Consider participation/underwriting events at new venues including Travel Blogger's Exchange (TBEX), Travel Classics, etc.

Media Missions

Enhance VMC's presence in untapped markets to ensure future growth; focus efforts on direct Bay Area fly markets with a propensity for the VMC product (Phoenix, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles, Vancouver, etc.). Address San Francisco and New York markets in alternate years.

Familiarization Program

Continue to drive media interest with individualized angles and itineraries diced to meet specific target markets and editorial needs. Shelf group visits in favor of on-site remotes to support seasonal events (mushroom/crab); work to buoy social media and blogger coverage, despite lack of grid in certain regions.

Digital Footprint

Support in-house social media campaign efforts via more immediate cross-marketing; work with key industry bloggers, influencers deeply embedded media to strengthen the VMC message.

PR Toolkit

Ensure all media materials – evergreen and otherwise – are updated, linked and easily sourced for media, including an annual visual library review and shoot as needed.

Key Communications Platforms

Focus on the following niche motivators/pillars to foster editorial interest and drive coverage.

- **Nature at its Naked Best:** New hiking tours/travel options around Point Arena-Stornetta Lands National Monument; lodging renovations, food and beverage update
- **Finding the Lost Coast:** New guided outback treks, heli-tours spotlighting the county's most pristine coast
- **Girth & Steel:** From Roots of Motive Power to the Skunk Train and industrial brew tours, all things big and brawn
- **Hopland Rises:** Mendocino's gateway explodes with new tasting venues, annual sparkling wine event
- **Redwood Corridor:** Adventures skirting Highway 101
- **Renegade Travel:** Extreme sports options for on and off-road enthusiasts
- **Liquid Assets:** Sea cave kayaking, white-water rafting, sea glass scouting and drifting on a moonlight flotilla
- **The Art of Escape:** From top-tier music festivals to world-class museums and galleries, savor the artistic flavors of this Bohemian region

- **Age of Tribal Travel:** Multi-generational getaways
- **Top 10 Sybaritic Stays:** Authentic Inns focused on spa, slow food & Mendocino county's unique slice of life
- **Cider Trail Rules:** Tapping into unique brews and hard cider in wine country
- **Inn-Venture:** Similar to the European hut-to-hut hikes, DIY hike for avid enthusiast linking inn to inn; Albion to Boonville with a river raft return (example); tracks to kayaks or camping the Noyo
- **Sip & Savor:** 12 AVAs, 90+ wineries and enough juice to keep the country of Bhutan buzzed, local vintners set the standard for organic/sustainable farming, delivering a rare cache of Alsatian varietals, Italian gems and world-class Pinot Noirs
- **Back to Bohemia:** Family Travel with a Natural Bent
- **Rustic Romance:** Shoreline Horseback Rides, Cozy Cottages, Sultry Sunsets and the Soothing Call of the Pacific...
- **Migrate over Matter:** Top 10 Adventures for the Nature Enthusiast/fall migration
- **Horseshoes & Corkscrews:** Farm Ranch Stays and Romantic Romps and Outback Oenophile Adventures...
- **Power to the Pooch:** Annual Tips for Traveling Fidos; best hikes/drives, Culinary Canine Menu Round Up
- **Editorial Hot Sheets:** Spring/Fall News Angles
- **Top Line Events:** Mushroom, Crab and Spring Events Line up
- **Right Brain Retreats:** Getaways for Small Meeting/Group/Incentive focused on Boosting Creativity
- **Digital Detox:** From DIY to clocking into Camp Grounded or Shambhala programs
- **Seed to Deed:** Inside look at cannabis industry, tours & treks from propagation to culinary (pending law)

Proposed costs \$216,000 (21% of total budget): direct costs/\$182,500; staff costs/\$33,500 (10% of total personnel budget)

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

VisitMendocino.com is VMC's primary source of disbursing information about Mendocino County online and is the heart of all of VMC's efforts. In 2014 the website has transitioned to becoming 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. This is an exciting step forward in how we communicate our brand message.

Goals

- Increase time on site and average pages visited for each user through substantial editorial hooks and interconnectedness on new website.
- Reduce bounce rate across site, providing topical material immediately and an easy-to-use interface to find relevant information with minimal friction.
- Make use of both broad and specific targeted search terms through Google AdWords to drive discovery traffic to new website.
- Continue to grow and engage with VMC social media and database of consumers, inspiring more visits to the region.
- Make use of targeted Facebook advertising to support partner events and promotions.

Measured Outcomes

Time on Site: >4:15

Avg. Pages/Visit: >4.00

Average Bounce Rate: <43%

% New Visitors: >80.00

Total Consumer Email Database: 30,000

Average Consumer Email Engagement: 3%

Total Facebook Fan Base: 40,000

Average Facebook Reach: 1:1.6

Proposed costs \$86,675 (9% of total budget): direct costs/\$70,000; staff costs \$16,675 (5% of total personnel budget)

SALES

The Visit Mendocino County sales efforts are multi-faceted and can be divided into domestic and international and within each, there is a group and FIT (individual traveler) component.

The process of building a VMC sales program is really an educational endeavor, informing perspective visitors and tourism decision makers about the Mendocino County brand and assets. Education occurs in a variety of venues and events, from consumer travel shows involving thousands of interested prospects, to one on one sales visits to travel trade decision makers, and everything in between. It is a multi-year multiple contact undertaking. Payoffs are notoriously hard to measure as they occur through relationship and inspiration building about the destination and there are confidential and competitive hurdles in determining accurate statistics. Active and constant follow up is essential and is a major facet of the program. Destination branding is also a major beneficiary of the sales efforts. While individual sales results may be hard to quantify, the overall increase in occupancy and Transient Occupancy Tax receipts are prime indicia of positive results. Branding initiatives benefit the entire economy of the county as more hotel stays translate into increased restaurant, tasting room and retail visits. Branding is a continuous effort and includes participation at major consumer travel shows such as the Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show, Sunset Celebration Weekend and niche events such as LGBT, pet and wedding shows.

VMC benefits greatly from its administration of the North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC), one of the eight rural tourism areas designated by Visit California. Most of the VMC international sales efforts are in partnership with the NCTC as the entire region has many marketing similarities and leveraging enables Mendocino County to spread its message further than it could on its own. VMC also participates in sales and marketing efforts in partnership with San Francisco Travel, Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association and Visit California, further expanding its reach with the smallest possible expenditure.

Goals

Create opportunities for partner businesses to realize room night sales.

- Attend the Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show and Sunset Celebration Weekend.
- Provide support collateral to potential clients, helping to tell the Mendocino County story: sample itineraries, photos, media angles, maps and visitor guides.
- Coordinate efforts with partner organizations including: Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association, Visit California, San Francisco Travel, Sacramento Visitors & Convention Bureau, Southern Oregon Travel, and DMOs in Sonoma, Del Norte, Humboldt and Marin counties.
- Track room night sales sold through all available means.
- Target domestic and international FIT (Free Independent Traveler) and group business.

Measured Outcomes

Acquire 7,000 consumer leads.

Sell 1,000 room nights as a result of VMC sales efforts.

Proposed costs \$107,535 (11% of total budget): direct costs/\$37,500; staff costs/\$70,035 (20% of total personnel budget)

VISITOR SERVICES

Visitor Services represents the extra-special effort that VMC devotes to ensuring that visitors have top-notch experiences with the Mendocino County brand. Visitor Services programs include: event coordination, collateral creation and distribution, information request fulfillment, and maintenance of visitor information centers. Countywide events and festivals are a motivation for visitors to make the County their destination, increase the length of their stay, and provide a service to partners and visitors alike. The Mushroom, Wine & Beer Festival in November, the Crab, Wine & Beer Festival in January, and the Mendocino County Party for the Planet in April are focal events for the shoulder seasons.

Goal: Increase and lengthen overnight stays, and increase opportunities for editorial placement about Mendocino County.

- Work with businesses to develop new events that both highlight the unique aspects of the County and utilize value partnerships.
- Engage other visitor serving organizations to create cross-promotional alliances.
- Increase partner participation and visitor attendance for focal events through direct outreach and public relations efforts.
- Produce and distribute a countywide event calendar in both its printed and online form, as well as focal event collateral.
- Continue to build on the established foundation for the Party for the Planet festival.

Measured Outcomes

- For both major festivals (Mushroom, Wine & Beer and Crab, Wine & Beer), maintain events at the current level or above; maintain or increase passport participation.
- Increase Party for the Planet events by 10%

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

Market research encourages VMC to assist visitors by providing improved signage and wayfinding materials. In response, VMC created a series of tear-off maps, an award-winning Visitor Guide and installed gateway signs on Highway 101 and Highway 20, the first two of five planned.

Goal: Increased visitor satisfaction with improved wayfinding signage.

- Research sponsorship and/or partnership opportunities in continued printing and distribution of tear-off maps for North Coast, South Coast and Willits. Complete development of Ukiah tear-off maps. Create farm trails guide and maps. Develop and print a revised pet friendly guide.
- Produce and distribute 50,000 comprehensive Visitor Guides, and research opportunity to create a smaller Visitor Guide “light” that serves as a driver to the website and mobile applications.
- Produce annual wall calendar, shared with media and VIPs.
- Maintain support of Redwood Coast Chamber Visitor Center.
- Install visitor information center at the Hopland Real Goods retail store in partnership with Solar Living Institute, install visitor information center in Noyo Harbor, and conceptualize plans for Confusion Hill visitor-serving facility; finalize operations for Anderson Valley kiosk; produce and install second gateway sign on Hwy 20; add a third gateway sign on Hwy 1 in Gualala.

Measured Outcome

Receive improved scores in the updated visitor survey, and conduct in-market surveys of visitors to determine their level of satisfaction.

MARKETPLACE

The VMC Marketplace located within the main business office in downtown Fort Bragg, CA continues to be a success. Now open for close to 2 years, the space has brought in over 4,500 individuals who are locals and visitors looking for maps, activities and dining opportunities. They are also drawn to our selection of local products and artwork.

Goal: Increase number of visitors served.

- Promote visitation to the Marketplace and visitor information center through VMC and partner businesses’ marketing assets.
- Begin collecting more detailed data on visitors through an incentivized survey.
- Add new local products to the retail store, including local wine and beer.
- Promote monthly First Friday events featuring countywide artists, wineries and events through social marketing and local media outreach.

Measured Outcome

- Attract 3,500 Marketplace visitors.
- Track annual sales of \$10,000 in local products.

PARTNERSHIPS

Vital to what we do, partnerships allow for expanded networking opportunities and economies of scale. Partner relationships provide the ability to leverage other organizations' budgets in pursuit of a common goal. It is within these ideal win-win circumstances that partners are able to stretch together toward opportunities previously out of reach when attempted individually.

Goal: Extend the VMC marketing budget through leveraged partnerships.

- Implement a VMC sponsorship program leveraging brand promise and increasing overnight visits to the County.
- Continue to lead NCTC enabling Mendocino County to maintain an international and group sales effort.
- Explore brand alliances with regional and national brands.
- Attend key travel industry conferences to provide access to industry trends and successful example of best practices, furthering internal knowledge and benefiting the VMC program of work.
- Partner with Visit California and San Francisco Travel in order to capitalize on their large marketing budgets (\$50M and \$30M, respectively).
- Continue to partner with organizations such as Visit Ukiah, Mendocino Winegrowers Inc., Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association, Destination Hopland, Fort Bragg Promotions Committee, Chambers of Commerce: Mendocino Coast, Redwood Coast, Greater Ukiah, Anderson Valley, and Willits.

Measured Outcome

Increase the VMC budget by 15% through leveraged partnership opportunities.

Proposed costs \$237,150 (23% of total budget): direct costs/\$137,100; staff costs/\$100,050 (30% of total personnel budget)

OPERATIONS

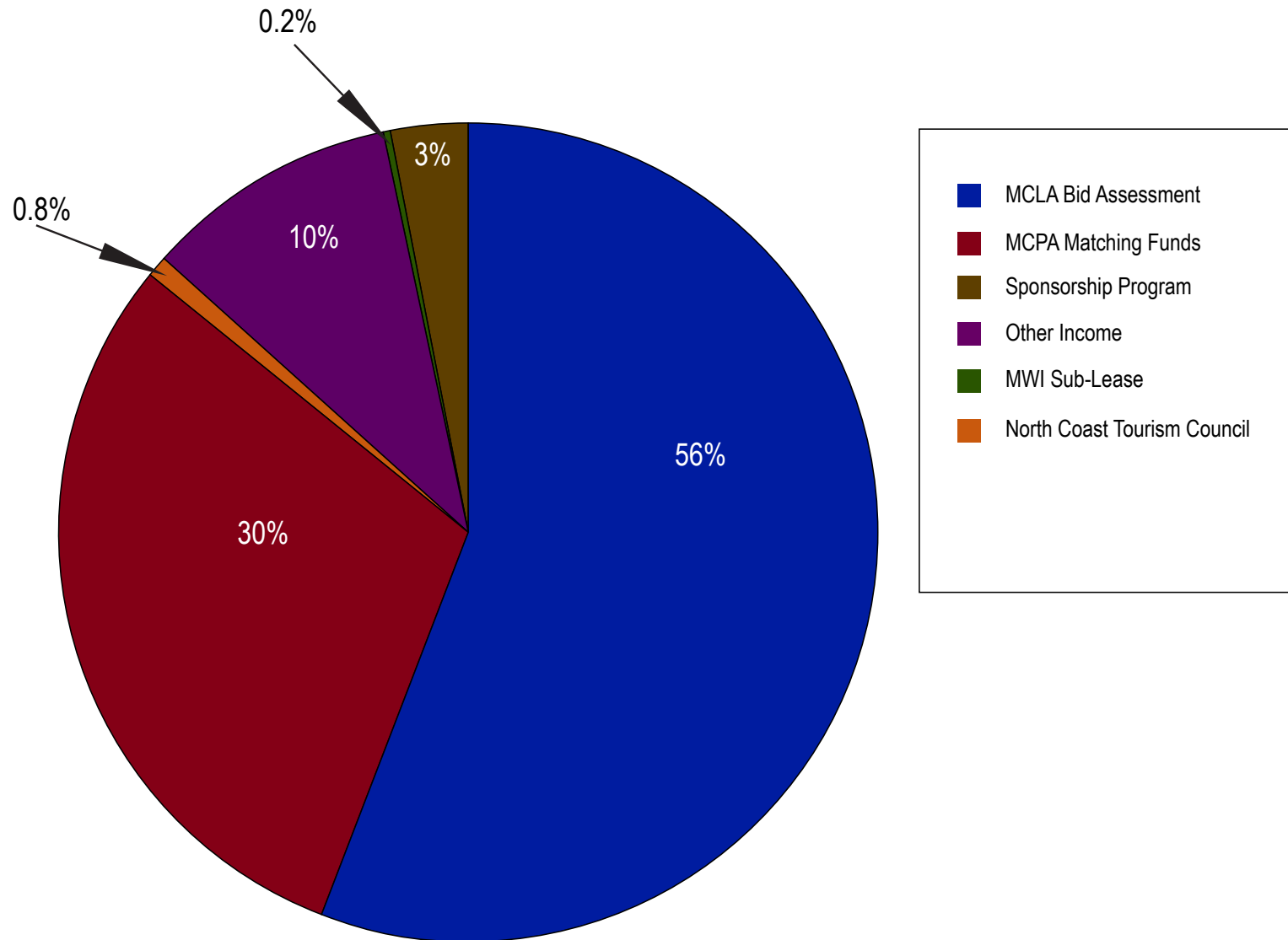
Operations is the engine that keeps VMC and its sister organizations running. This category covers the day-to-day expenses of maintaining MCLA, MCPA, and VMC as well as the costs of mailings, office space, telephones, newsletters, etc.

Proposed costs \$154,370 (15% of total budget): direct costs/\$81,000; staff costs/\$73,370 (22% of total personnel budget)

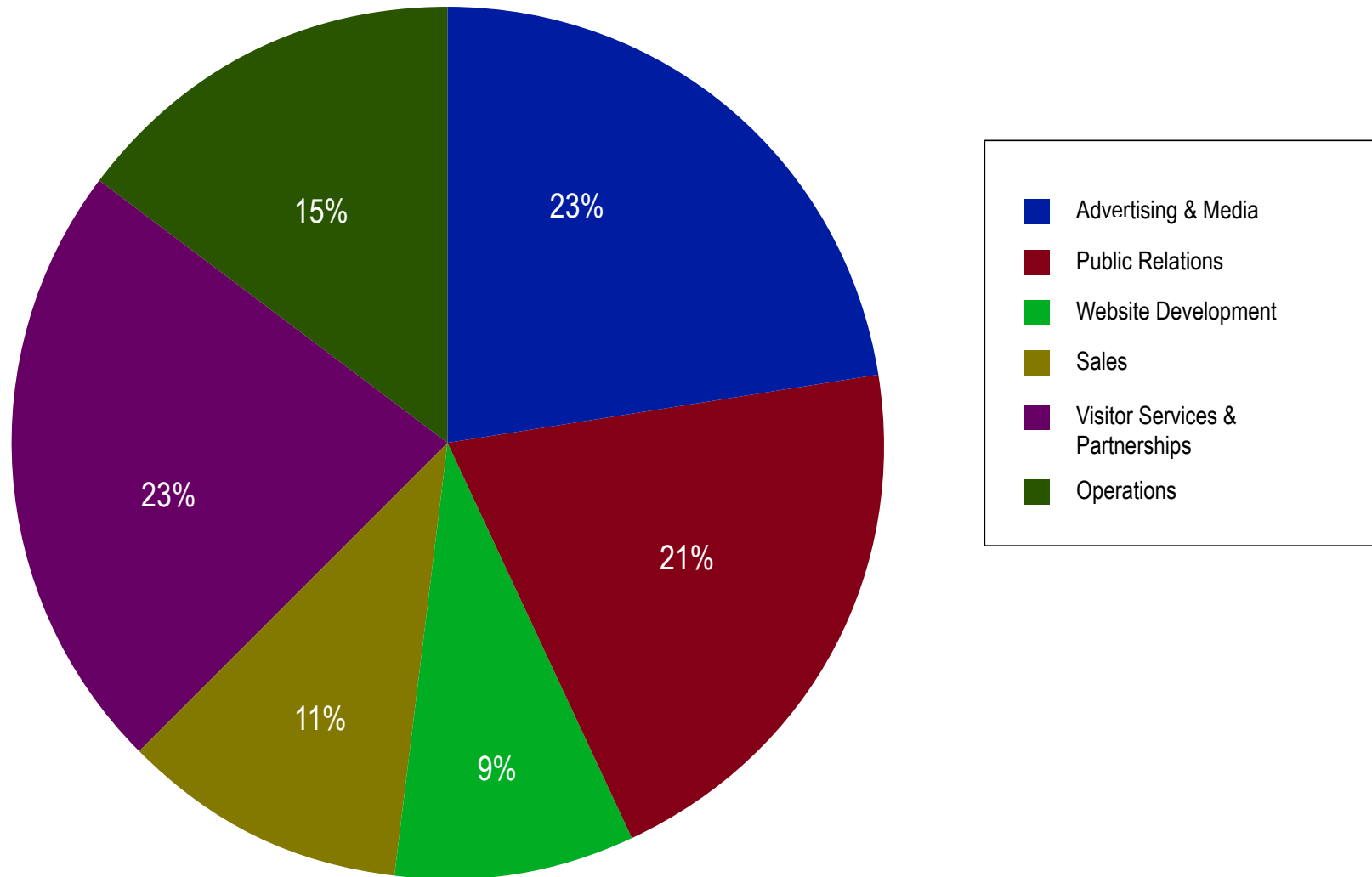
BUDGET

2014 / 2015 INCOME: \$1,041,130

IMPLEMENTATION



2014 / 2015 PROJECTED EXPENSES: \$1,041,250



STAFFING

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

Goal: Create an environment that inspires the best support, programs and ideas that continue to push the VMC 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 VMC program of work.
- Achieve accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program, offered by Destination Marketing Association International. Continue Certified Destination Marketing Executive training for President/CEO.
- 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.

Measured Outcomes

- Destination and executive Destination Marketing Accreditation status.
- Maintain a qualified, engaged and enthusiastic team of staff and contractors to carry out the programs and initiatives of VMC.
- Continue to successfully administer the Mendocino County Lodging Association, Mendocino County Promotional Foundation, Mendocino County Promotional Alliance and the North Coast Tourism Council

VMC STAFF & CONTRACTORS

President & CEO Scott Schneider

Director of Tourism Richard Strom

Operations Manager Erin Placido

Event & Partner Relations Manager Gracia Brown

Sales Associate Evan Qualtrough

Administrative Assistant Susan Peakall

Director of Interactive Media Brendan McGuigan

Communications Coordinator Alison de Grassi

Public Relations Koli/Cinch

VMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Hal Wagenet (Mendocino County Promotional Alliance/Arts Council of Mendocino County)

Vice Chair Pauline Zamboni (Mendocino County Lodging Association)

Secretary Jan Rodriguez (Mendocino County Lodging Association)

Treasurer John Kuhry (Mendocino County Promotional Alliance/Anderson Valley Chamber of Commerce)

Jason Hurst (Mendocino County Lodging Association)

Cally Dym (Mendocino County Lodging Association)

Glenna Blake (Mendocino County Promotional Alliance – Chair/ Ukiah Chamber of Commerce)

Jeff Stanford (Mendocino County Promotional Alliance – At Large)

Kevin Gallagher (Mendocino County Lodging Association)

Janis MacDonald (Mendocino County Promotional Alliance/Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association)