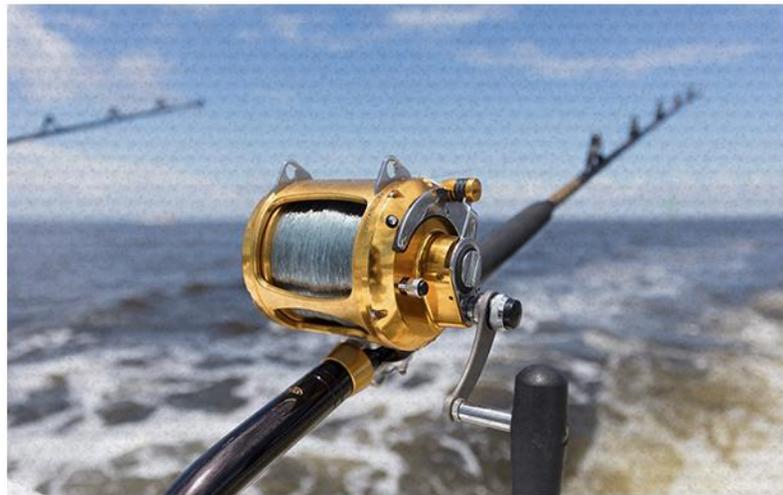




Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast

FY' 2019 Marketing Plan



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GULF COAST



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Overview



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Overview

Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast and its agency-of-record promotes the Mississippi Gulf Coast using data-driven insights, letting research and analytics forge marketing decisions. It is the responsibility of the Marketing Department to oversee the Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast ad campaign and the brand and to collaborate with all departments to ensure a seamless and consistent voice. Our media relations and social media strategies will be working in unison toward our overall goal.

A critical component of the department's role is to create a strategic network involving partnerships outside of the organization. Collaborating externally gives us opportunity to innovate quickly and achieve long-term success. This network includes Peter Mayer Agency, Resonance, Sparkloft, Customer Advisory Board, Arrivalist, Simpleview, aRes, DTN, Longwoods, STR



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Marketing Goals & Objectives

Overall Goal:

Create a new brand and elevate awareness of the Mississippi Gulf Coast within the Southeastern region as a top vacation destination, premier region to host events and a place to meet and do business.

Key Objectives:

- Increase visitation of Experiential Travelers seeking adventure, excitement and authenticity by building visitation to the Mississippi Gulf Coast from targets that live within a 3-5 hour driving radius or have a direct flight.
- Increase the demand for – and usage of – the Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center as well as other meeting and event venues for groups and special events thus increasing overnight stays.



Marketing Goals & Objectives

These key objectives will be accomplished by:

- Collaborating with agency, industry stakeholders and city officials to establish and launch a new brand for the destination.
- Successfully completing a redesigned social media strategy to include partnering with a new agency specializing in social media.
- Implement a “whole of business” framework that identifies opportunities to use data analytics to drive strategic decision making regarding key audiences.
- Creating and implementing destination marketing strategies that encourage our industry stakeholders to participate in those strategies and support our new brand in their own advertising and marketing efforts.
- Build a network of local experts, aligning with the content segments established to enhance the stimulating and unique appeal of the region’s offerings. Creating a value-rich experience for the visitor.

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Research Analysis & Development

Managing, analyzing and applying data intelligence and research to assist our organization in making strategic marketing decisions will enable us to gain a competitive advantage and reach our goals.

Smart Data = Better Results

Partnering with Arrivalist – technology that provides a comprehensive measurement platform for understanding the influence of our media (owned, paid and earned) on arrivals to the region

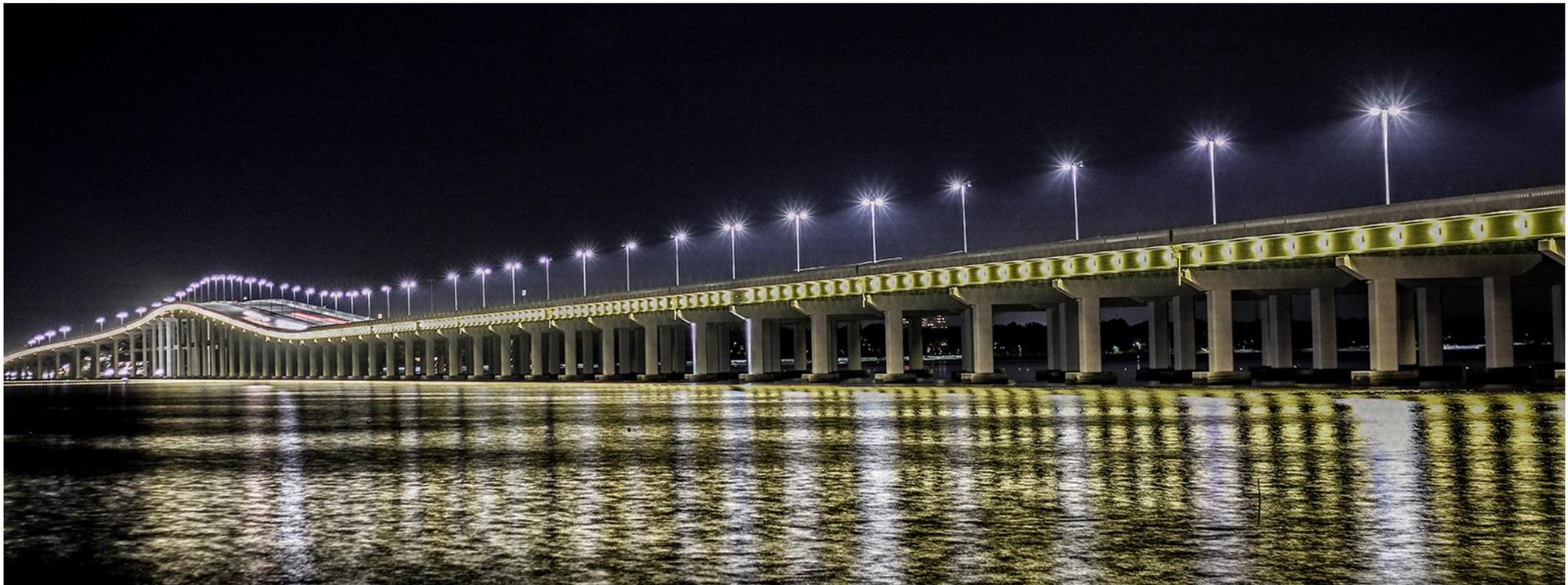
Longwoods International conducted a Visitor Study for the 2017 travel year that provided estimates of domestic overnight and day visitor volumes, a profile of Mississippi Gulf Coast's performance within its overnight travel market, domestic visitor expenditures, profiles of day travel market, and relevant trends in each of these areas

Smith Travel Research (STR) provides up-to-date insights on the hotel industry such as ADR, RevPAR, supply, demand and revenue. These data points allow us to take a deeper look into travel patterns and demonstrate areas of opportunity.

OTA travel data will provide insights to inform campaign planning, optimization, and future campaign strategies allowing us to understand booking and searching trends, as well as identify competitor markets and market share opportunities.

Ongoing gathering of existing data “desk research” through Destinations International, Skift and USTA.

Traveler & Traveler Trends 2018



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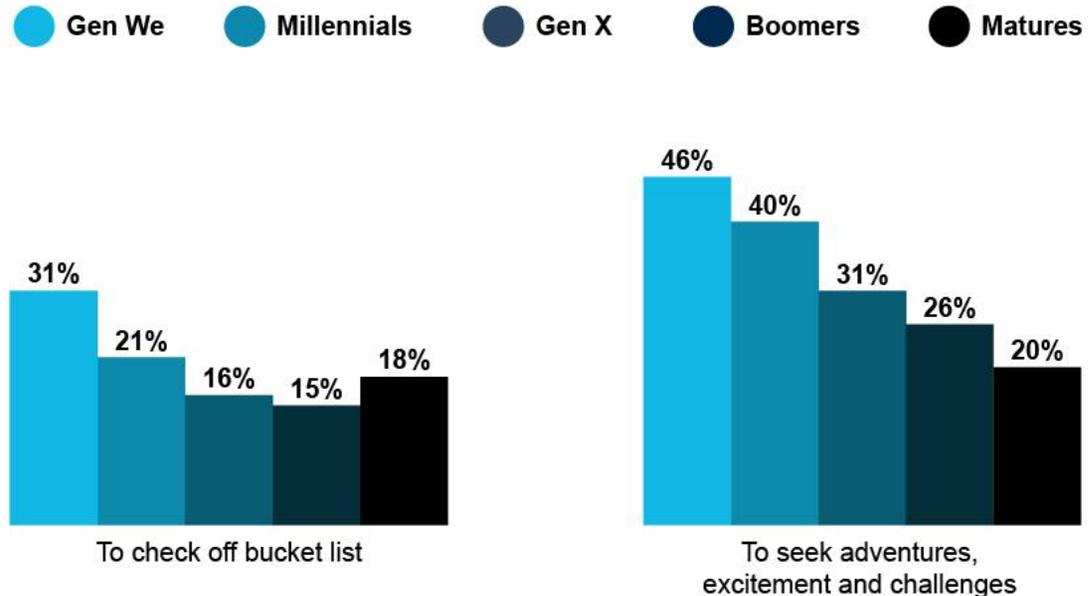
The Expansion of Experiential Travel

Experiential travel is no longer about a defined “bucket list,” but seeking out open-ended adventures.

84% of travelers agree or strongly agree that they value learning something new when they travel

72% of Millennials would rather spend money on experiences vs. material items (Iconoculture) and Millennial parents name education and enrichment as their #1 reason for traveling with kids

Percentage of consumers who chose the following as motivations for when to go on leisure trips

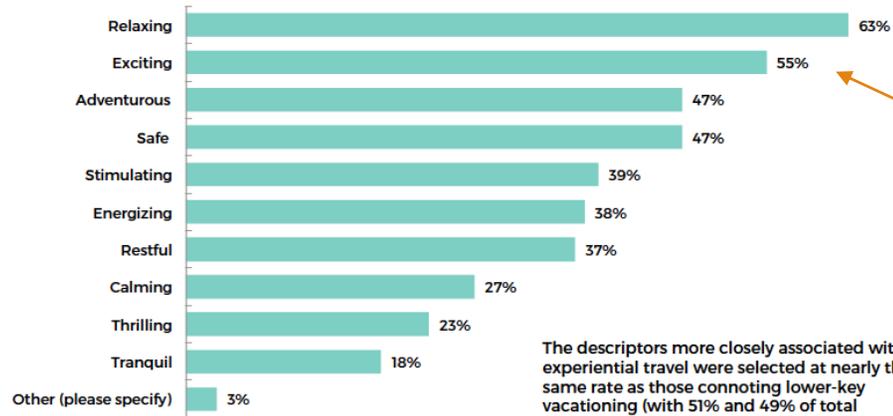


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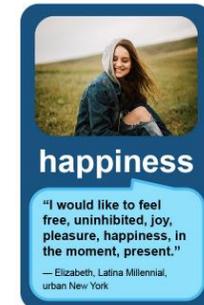
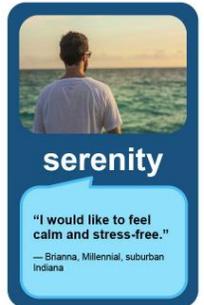
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The Pursuit of Both Excitement and Relaxation

Survey question: Which of the following words best describe your ideal travel experience? Please select up to five words.



The descriptors more closely associated with experiential travel were selected at nearly the same rate as those connoting lower-key vacationing (with 51% and 49% of total selections, respectively), indicating a desire for different types of travel at different times.



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The Family Connection

Travel with family is on the rise:

- 50% of Millennial parents take three or more leisure trips with their children per year
- 36% of travelers say a multigenerational trip is in their annual plans

Returning to a favorite family vacation spot is a growing trend

“There’s just something about coming back to a place you know you love. These return trips often turn into multigenerational vacations, as grandparents enjoy seeing the destination again through their grandchildren’s eyes.”

Nancy Schretter
Editor of Family Travel Network

34%

of travelers will consider a vacation they experienced as a child in 2018

44%

of Millennials want to return to a favorite family destination

”

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Bleisure Travel Is on the Rise

“Bleisure travel” is the act of blending a business trip with leisure time.

- In 2017, **37%** of all business trips were extended for leisure
- **83%** of respondents use time on business trips to explore the city they’re visiting
- **30%** add two vacation days to business trips
- **46%** add personal travel days to business travel “every trip” or to “most trips”
- **96%** of respondents believe they gain cultural experience/knowledge through bleisure trips

“72% of American business travelers said that they extended executive trips that have a leisure component. And 43% had a significant other accompany them on a business trip.”

—Orbitz



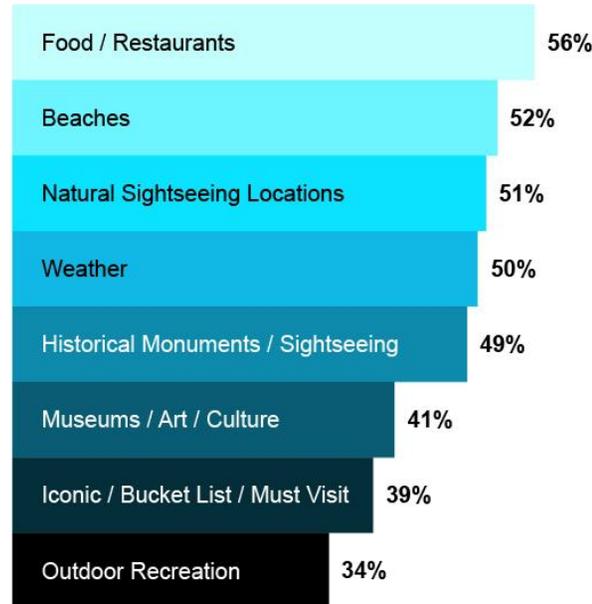
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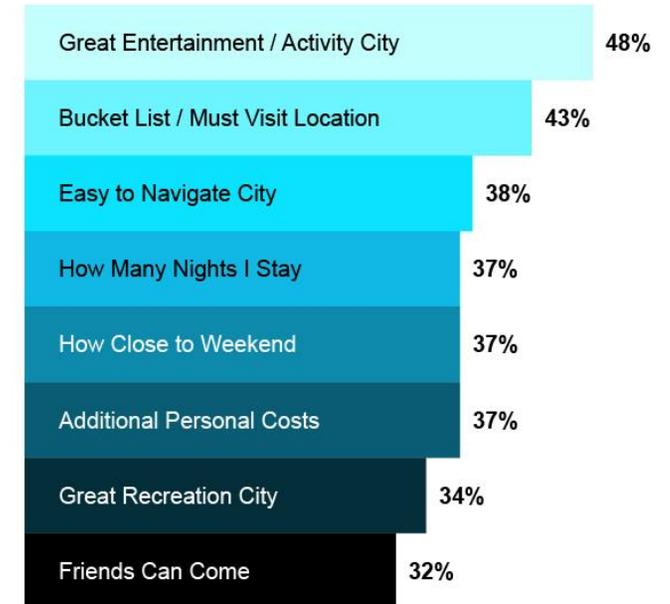
Bleisure Travel Is on the Rise

Mississippi Gulf Coast Has Ideal Ingredients for Bleisure Audience

What types of locations are more likely to make you consider making a business trip into a bleisure trip?



What are the biggest factors that influence your decision to turn a business trip into a bleisure trip?



Longwoods Visitor Study – Key Findings



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Visitor Study

Longwoods International Research conducted a Visitor Study for those who traveled in 2017. The research provided estimates of domestic overnight and day visitor volumes, a performance profile on the overnight travel market, domestic visitor expenditures, profiles of the day travel market, and relevant trends in each of these areas. The complete study is available on gulfcoast.org. The study presented findings in the following areas:

- Main Purpose of the Trip
- State & DMA Origin of Trip
- Seasonality of Trip
- Satisfaction of Trip
- Past Visitation
- Length of Trip Planning
- Method of Booking
- Total Nights
- Travel Party Size
- Transportation Used
- Accommodations Used
- Activities & Experiences
- Social Media Use
- Demographic Profile
- Visitor Volume
- Visitor Expenditures

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Longwoods Key Findings

In 2017, Mississippi Gulf Coast welcomed 13.5 million visitors, a 6.3% increase from 2015.

Overnight trips generated \$1.17 billion in spending, a 9.2% increase from 2015

- 28% were visiting friends and relatives
- 62% were on marketable trips
- 38% said visiting a casino was the main purpose of the trip

However, the average number of nights spent in Mississippi Gulf Coast dropped from 3.3 in 2015 to 2.5 in 2017.



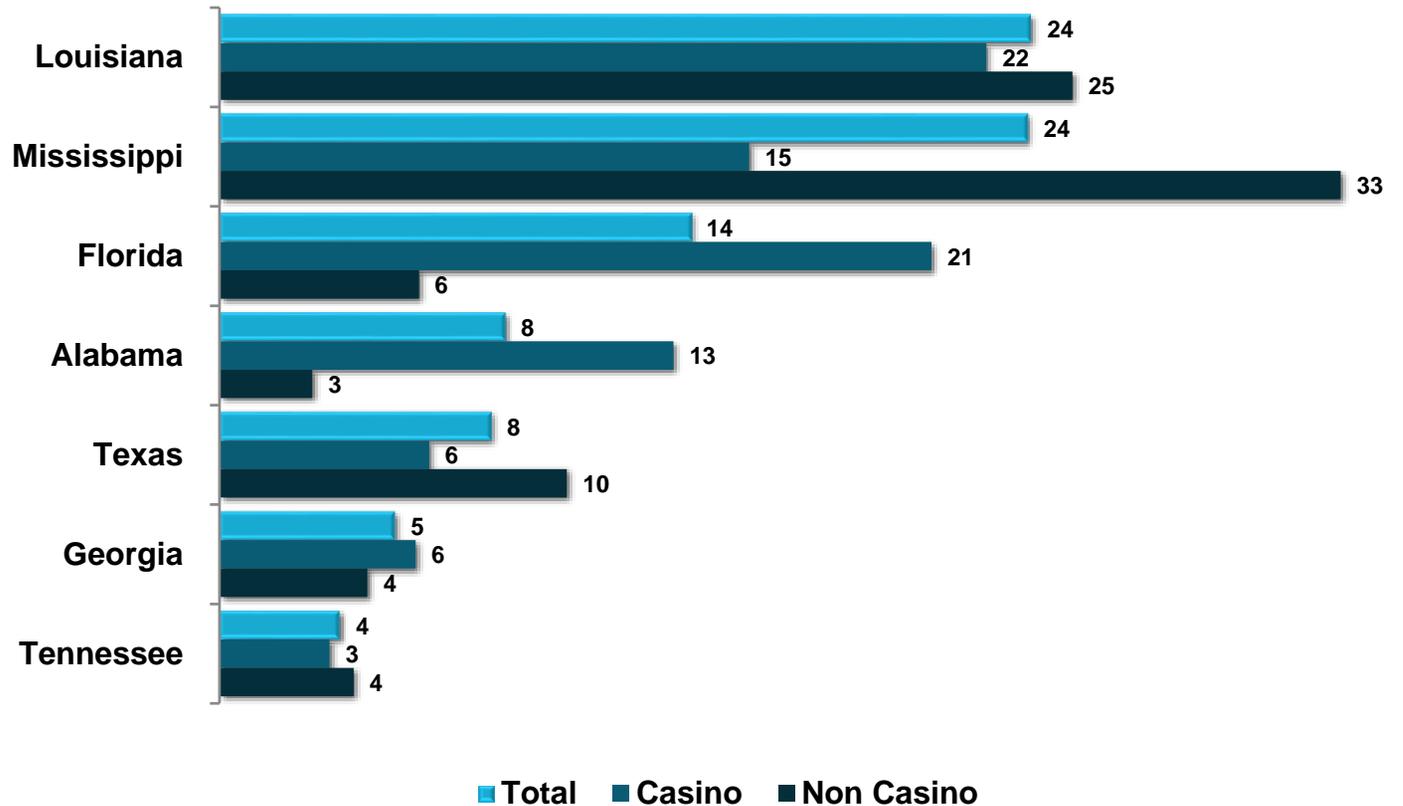
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Longwoods Key Findings

Casinos in the Mississippi Gulf Coast drive significant overnight stays – in some cases equal or exceeding stays of non-casino visits.

Base: Overnight Person-Trips



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Longwoods Key Findings

- Of the overnight visitors, 86% were repeat visitors, and 71% had last visited within the past year.
- The average travel party size was 2.7 persons
- Over two-thirds (68%) of Mississippi Gulf Coast overnight visitors made the trip with a partner or spouse, and 30% traveled with children
- 56% of overnight trips were planned 2 months or less in advance, and 22% weren't planned in advance
- Planning sources include hotel or resorts, online travel agencies, and advice from friends/family

79%

of overnight visitors left very satisfied with their overall trip experience

75%

satisfied with the friendliness of locals

74%

agreed the food was high quality

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Longwoods Key Findings

Overnight trips originate predominantly in drive markets:

- Top 3 states: Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida
- Top 3 DMAs: New Orleans, Mobile, and Jackson

The top five activities and experiences during an overnight trip to Mississippi Gulf Coast:

- Casino
- Shopping
- Going to the beach or waterfront
- Swimming
- Fine dining

79%

of overnight
travelers arrive via their
personal vehicle

Consumer Strategy Overview





2018 Marketing Objectives

Our Goals

- Increase awareness of the destination and offerings
- Increase overnight visitation

We need to achieve our goals in a way that drives the top destination hot buttons for potential visitors, and stays true to the authentic personality we have built

Top 10 Hot Buttons that Drive Interest in a Destination of Choice	Top Adjectives Stakeholders Chose to Describe the MS Gulf Coast
A fun place	Welcoming
A place where I would feel comfortable	Affordable
A place I would feel welcome	Scenic/beautiful
Lots of things to see and do	Family-friendly
Good for couples	Relaxing
An exciting place	Easygoing
Good for an adult vacation	Genuine
Good place for families to visit	Surprising
Must-see destination	Adult playground
Interesting communities	Quaint

“an exciting, fun, must-see place that provides some sense of real adventure”

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Current Markets & FY18 Market Strategy

The FY18 approach was to penetrate large markets. The majority of media dollars (\$1.1M) were spent in outer markets – with \$237K in inner markets

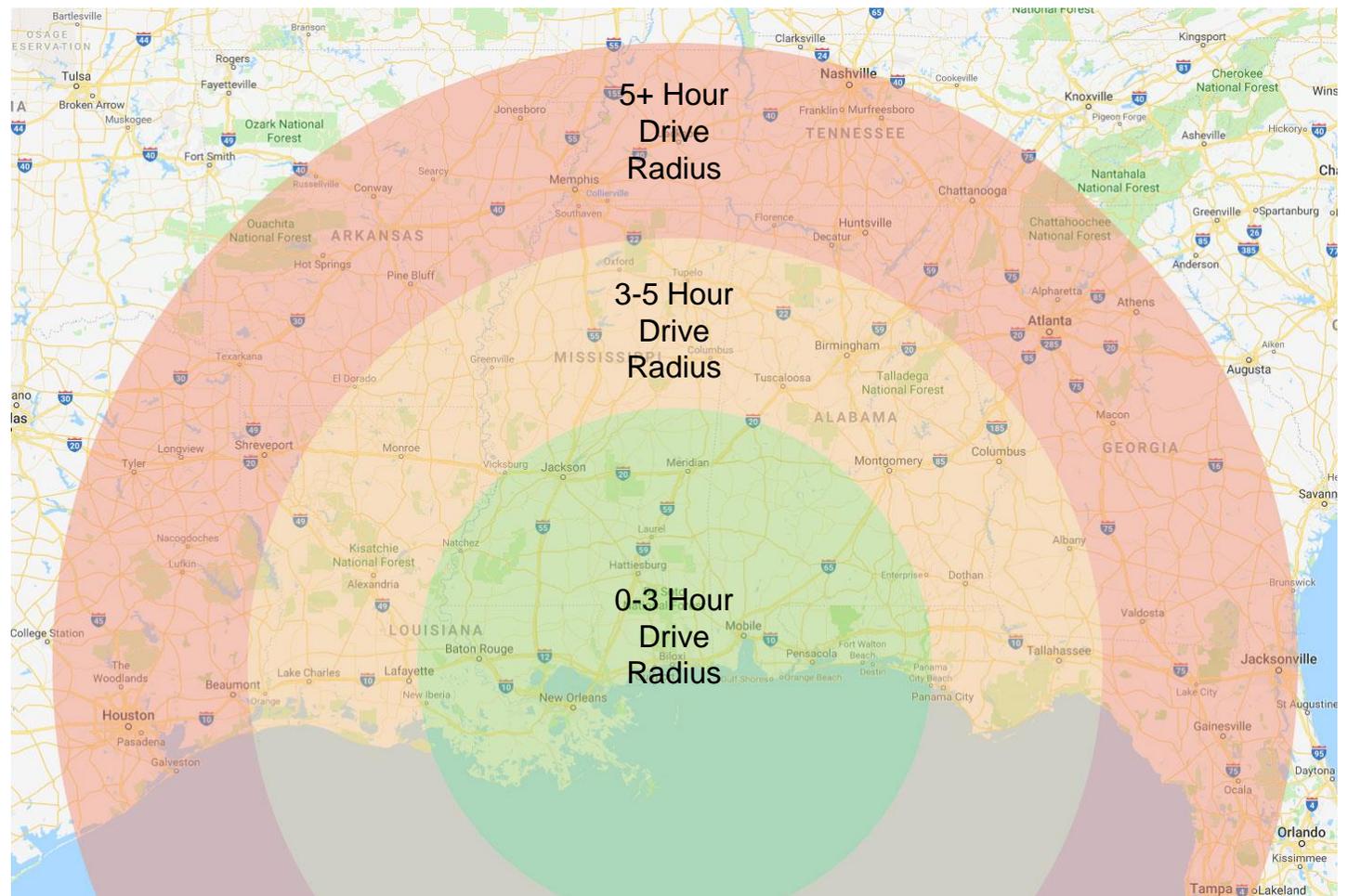
Inner Markets	Outer Markets	Midwest Markets
Alexandria (LA)	Atlanta	Chicago
Baton Rouge	Birmingham	Cincinnati
Columbus (GA)	Charlotte	Cleveland-Akron
Columbus-Tupelo	Dallas	Detroit
Dothan	Houston	Grand Rapids
Greenwood-Greenville	Little Rock	Indianapolis
Hattiesburg-Laurel	Memphis	Kalamazoo Battle Creek
Jackson	Nashville	Kansas City
Lafayette	Orlando	Milwaukee
Lake Charles	Tampa-St. Pete	Minneapolis
Meridian	Washington	St. Louis
Mobile-Pensacola		
Monroe-El Dorado		
Montgomery-Salem		
New Orleans		
Panama City		
Tallahassee		

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Proposed Approach: Streamline Focus to Inner Markets

42% of travelers plan their Mississippi Gulf Coast vacation less than 4 weeks before traveling, and another 22% do not plan anything in advance. (Longwoods 2017).



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Growing Visitation

Our Marketing Plan needs to serve:

Current Visitors. We need to convince day visitors to stay overnight, and overnight visitors to stay longer. Right now, our current visitors are:

- **Vacation Veterans:** 86% of overnights have visited at least once before. We want them to start elongating their stay and explore more of the coast.
- **Eventual Overnights:** Today, casino visits drive 38% of overnight visitors. With casinos right now serving as the top reason to stay overnight, the day-trip casino visitor is actively being upsold by the properties to stay the night. We can supplement these efforts by showing these visitors how much more there is to see and do on the coast.
- **Transient Travelers:** Visitors who stop along our coast on the way to other destinations. We want them to understand we are an undiscovered gem that merits exploring.

Target Markets. There are a variety of visitors who will discover us through our marketing efforts. They constitute our opportunity to increase the number of parties we welcome.

- Today, we market to the Geotourist.
- In the future, we will be expanding our reach to encompass Experiential Travelers.

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Snapshot: Current Visitors

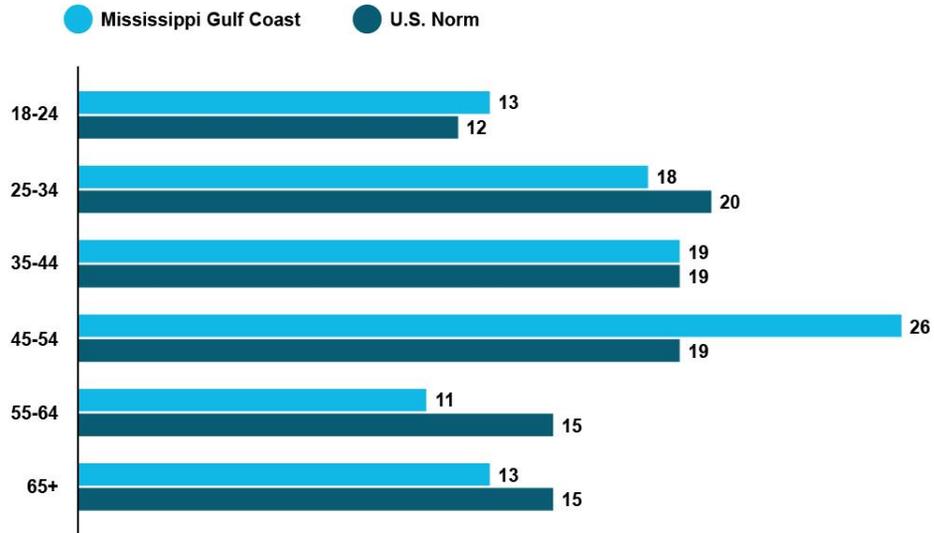
- Today, the Mississippi Gulf Coast attracts visitors looking for an affordable, family-friendly, and easily accessible destination
- Adults 45-54 make up the largest percentage of current visitors
- Likely going to the casino or seeing friends/family
- While 30% travel with their children, the majority (68%) are visiting with their spouse or partner
- Traveling from Louisiana, Mississippi and Florida, and nearly all choose to drive to the destination
- Looking for local food and friendliness to make their trip a success
- They've likely been to the coast before, and their visit back was decided spur of the moment or with little advanced planning

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Snapshot: Current Visitors

Age of Travelers



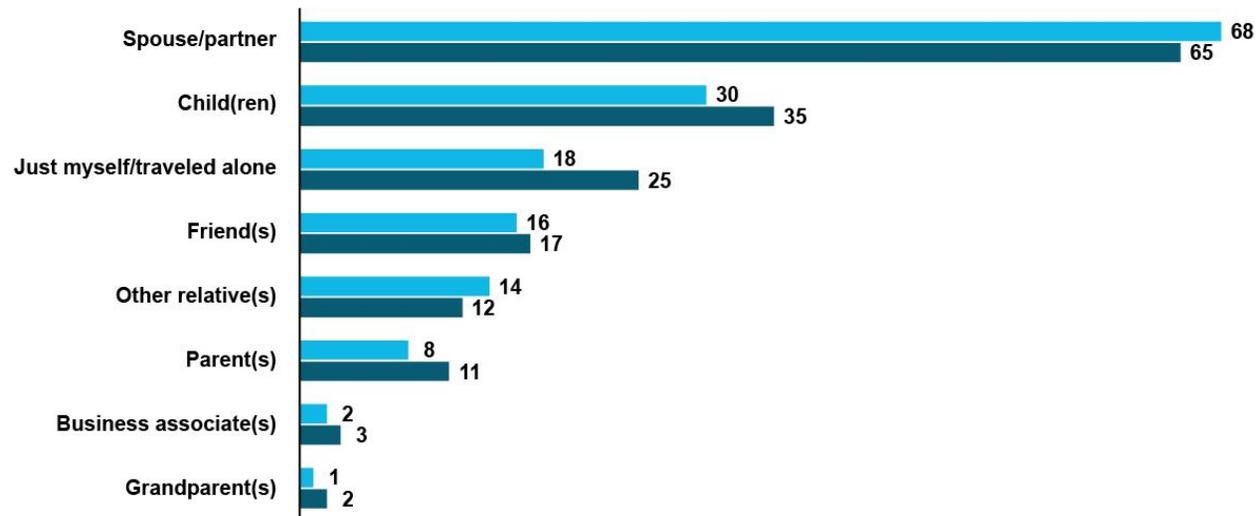
48.4

Average Mississippi Gulf Coast

45.0

Average U.S. Norm

Composition of Immediate Travel Party (Base: Overnight Person-Trips)



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Current Marketing Audience: Geotourists

Targeting our current demographics:

Young Adults without Children – 25-34 (Millennials)

Mature Adults – 45-64

HHI \$50K+

Geotourists

- Focus on the experience of a destination learning about its culture and history
- Seek the authenticity of people and place; strong preference for the social aspects of travel
- Desire to customize their experience and create personal connections while traveling
- Have multifaceted interests and will take in a number of attractions while traveling
- Apt to get off the beaten path and discover something new
- Like to “go local” and patronize locally owned businesses and attractions
- Spend more and stay longer than average tourists

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Snapshot: Geotourists

GEOTOURISTS

JAMES & TRACY | THE ALLENS



AGE	OCCUPATION	FINANCES (\$)
47	TEACHER + PROJECT MANAGER	65.6K HOUSEHOLD INCOME
CORE VALUES		
CULTURE-SEEKING COUPLES  Sociable and energetic, craving opportunities to learn about culture and history	AUTHENTICITY	LEARNING
ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES	WORKING HARD	
Visiting museums Attending live theater Entertaining friends/family Outdoor activities Painting & drawing, cooking for fun	COMMITMENT TO RELATIONSHIPS	
MOST TRUSTED MEDIA		SHOPPING BRANDS
	   	  

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Geotourists: Demographics

52% female, 48% male

75% Caucasian

13% African American

Most likely to be between the ages of 45-54

Married, college grad

Median income \$66K, although 1/3 make over \$100K

Presence of children under 17 in the household mirrors national average, 39%

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Geotourists: Segment Differences



YOUNGER GEOTOURISTS

57% are married and majority have kids at home

Affluent: \$82K median HHI.
40% make over \$100K

Multicultural: 15% Hispanic

Watching ESPN, Food Network and HBO



OLDER GEOTOURISTS

65% are married

Affluent: \$84K median HHI.
40% make over \$100K

Empty nesters

31% are retired

Watching Fox News, CNN, History Channel and Weather Channel

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Geotourists: Values



Geotourists:

- ...value hard work, knowledge and learning*
- ...seek authenticity of people and places*
- ...very interested in history and the arts*
- ...like to lead others, often recommending favorite products and vacation destinations*



Geotourists: Travel Attitudes & Behaviors

- Geotourists believe that travel is a time to be captivated by the vibrancy of a new destination:
- Enjoy learning about a place's authentic culture & history
- Relish the social aspect of travel and making personal connections
- Look for activities related to local food, culture and arts
- Would rather take a few weekend vacations than one long vacation

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Expanding the Geotourist to Experiential Traveler

Expanding the Geotourist audience allows us to:

- Connect the destination with new trends in experiential travel
- Appeal to a broader and larger traveler group

Shifts in the targeting definition:

Authenticity: Being true to myself

I must admit that my interests are somewhat narrow and limited (DISAGREE)

I frequently choose active vacations with lots to do

I like doing things that are new and different

I like to learn about art, culture and history

I consider myself to be very sociable



Authenticity: Being true to myself

I must admit that my interests are somewhat narrow and limited (DISAGREE)

I frequently choose active vacations with lots to do

I like doing things that are new and different

~~I like to learn about art, culture and history~~

~~I consider myself to be very sociable~~

On my vacations, I prefer traveling to places I've never been.

Curiosity: Wanting to explore and learn new things

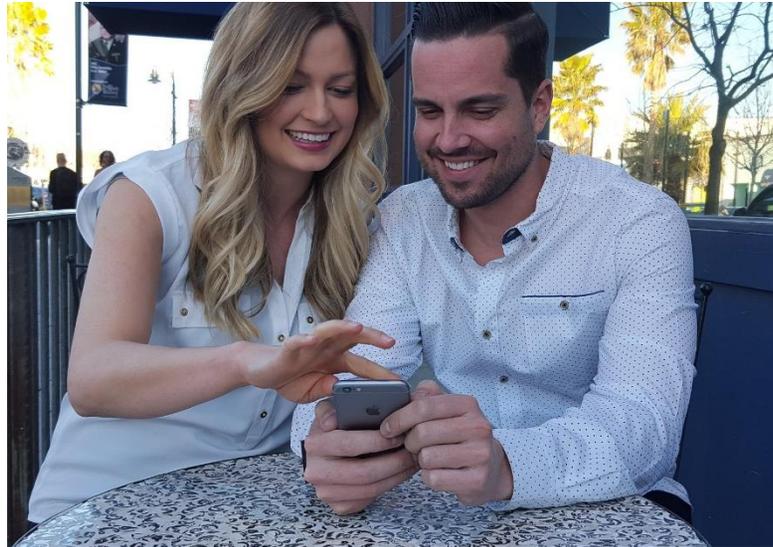
Excitement: Having stimulating experiences

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Snapshot: Experiential Travelers

EXPERIENTIAL TRAVELERS ADAM & CHRISTINA | THE CLARKS



AGE	OCCUPATION	FINANCES (\$)
32	HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT + SALES	80K HOUSEHOLD INCOME
CORE VALUES		
ACTIVE ENTHUSIASTS  Driven by excitement, always on the lookout for stimulating and unique experiences to share together	CURIOSITY ADVENTURE + EXCITEMENT AUTHENTICITY + FREEDOM ENJOYING LIFE	
ACTIVITIES/HOBBIES	SHOPPING BRANDS	
Going to the beach Baking & BBQing Entertaining friends & family Indulging their foodie side Reading books	amazon  T.J. maxx  TARGET 	
MOST TRUSTED MEDIA	TV CHANNELS	
	HBO  CNN  HGTV 	

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Experiential Travelers: Demographics

Skews female: 58%

Most likely to be between the ages of 25-34

White, married, and a college grad

Median income is \$78K, although nearly 40% make over \$100K

A modern millennial, she may have kids - but she's just as likely to be fulfilling her motherhood role as a pet parent!



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Experiential Travelers: Segment Differences



YOUNGER EXPERIENTIAL TRAVELERS

57% are married and majority have kids at home

Affluent: \$77K median HHI. 35% make over \$100K

Majority have kids at home

Multicultural: 15% Hispanic

Watching ESPN, Food Network and HBO



OLDER EXPERIENTIAL TRAVELERS

65% are married

Very affluent: \$87K median HHI. 44% make over \$100K

26% are retired

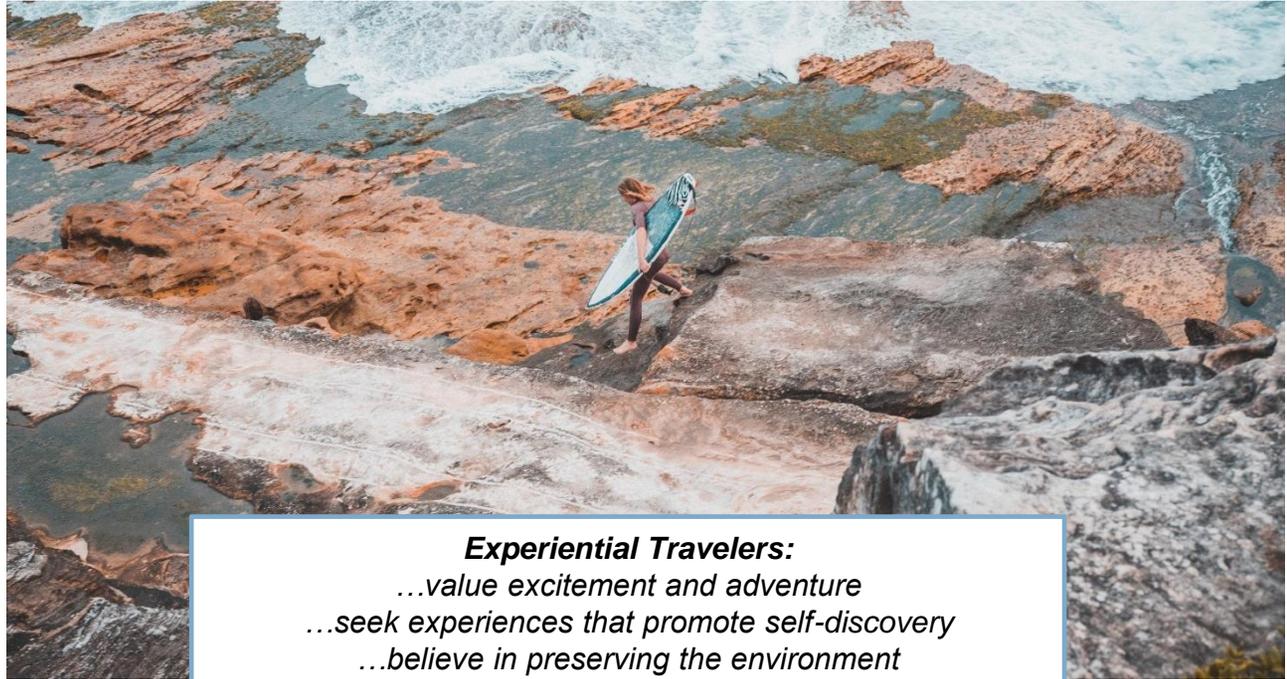
Empty nesters

Watching Fox News, CNN, History Channel and HGTV

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Experiential Travelers: Values



Experiential Travelers:
...value excitement and adventure
...seek experiences that promote self-discovery
...believe in preserving the environment
...enjoy learning and experiencing new cultures as a way
to better themselves

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Experiential Travelers: Travel Attitudes & Behaviors

- They believe travel is a time to connect back to themselves
- They are active adventurers – wanting to sightsee and get some physical activity while on vacation
- They enjoy fine dining as a way to experience food in a more sensorial way
- Love doing research before vacations, and when they learn about a great vacation, they recommend it to others
- Frequent travelers driven by wanderlust: 3 trips per year

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Significant Overlap in Audiences

This overlap indicates that the Experiential Traveler targeting will build on the base of Geotourists previously invested-in.



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Distinct, Yet Similar



Seek authenticity

Desire to travel like a local

Have multifaceted interests

Choose active vacations
with lots of options



GEOTOURISTS

Travel to learn about a place's authentic culture & history

Relish the social aspect of travel and connecting with local people

Look for activities related to local food, culture and arts

EXPERIENTIAL TRAVELERS

Driven by exciting, stimulating experiences

Travel for emotional reasons

Want to explore many regions and many experiences in one "home base"

Active adventurers who sightsee and get physical activity

The Brand



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Brand Positioning

Mississippi Gulf Coast is a destination of charming and welcoming small towns scattered like pearls along a 60-mile shoreline of white sand, live oaks and breezy freedom. It offers the exciting and the laid back in equal measure: entertainment and celebrations of every sort that let you gather with locals and feel like family; ways to experience and learn from a uniquely fertile natural landscape and our unusually artistic imagination; and an invitation to taste the fresh-caught happiness of our generous gulf. Young families, friends and couples of all ages love it here because every town, every experience, every sunset and celebration on our shore reveals the vivid, unforgettable character of coastal life, reviving and relaxing them like nowhere else.

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Brand Pillars

Tangible

A generous coast

The beach is only the edge of our rich, giving gulf; it's a fertile marvel, a delicious gumbo of nesting grounds and nutrients that produce the most flavorful seafood in the country, feeding the appetites of the nation's diners from the Coast to New Orleans to New York. The source of some of the best eating anywhere, and the backdrop for its brilliant sunsets, the gulf inspires chefs who serve it up for casual diners and connoisseurs alike.

An adventurous edge

The Coast is a landscape of exploration and discovery. Its gulf is an ecosystem and a world, both on and beneath its surface—boating, sailing, deep-sea fishing, diving, eco-touring, hiking and more promise unexpected adrenaline and the thrill of connection with the natural world. The Coast meets visitors where they are, whether as paddleboarders, waders, fishermen or eco-adventurers. It rewards explorers and invites admirers. Whatever you want it to be, the Coast says, “Yes.”

An entertaining destination

The Coast punches above its weight in good times; it offers live entertainment, concerts and shows worthy of much larger places. The casinos attract big name performers that wouldn't otherwise make it here, and give potential visitors yet another reason to come. Even when we're not hosting big-ticket entertainers, we do things up big. Celebrations? Those are everyday offerings. We're famous for fun, and proud of it.

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Brand Pillars

Intangible

A vivid imagination

There's a powerful streak of creativity and quirk on the Coast. It started with pioneering artists like our own mad potter, George E. Ohr, and includes African American sculptor Richmond Barthé along with painter Dusti Bongé. Our hero is Walter Anderson, who lives on and has come to define the iconoclastic artist's life on the Coast. But we are colorful in many ways here: Our music is original, our food is increasingly imaginative, our events are eclectic and high-spirited. We're inspired and inspiring in every way.

A small town celebration

Our small towns are a collection of coastal pearls spread out across our 60 miles of shoreline. Individual, proud and particular, each offers a new taste of the coastal life—the freedom and fun of casual main streets with a host of celebrations, the opportunity to stumble upon an unusual restaurant, a surprising store, a perfect café, a reason to stay out late dancing. All charming, each different, and all worthy of exploration, the towns of the coast are each an intriguing character with a new story to tell.

A genuine welcome

The Coast welcomes you with open arms, and it doesn't take long to feel like family here. There's something genuine and heartfelt about the way people reach out and offer advice, brag about the most recent festival, make room for you at the bar, and send you on your way with a story. A region of diversity, hospitality and acceptance, the Coast makes you feel like you've made new friends every time you visit.

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Creative Anthem

You're overscheduled, overworked and overstressed. Even when you're off the clock, it feels like you always have to be on. Always ready, always connected.

It's time to draw a line in the sand. It's time you took a trip to a place where life is a breeze instead of a rush. Relax. There's no pressure here. No need to schedule every second of your itinerary. Come as you are – and stay as long as you want.

Let the other beaches do their thing. We're happy the way we are – and it shows. Being nice is in our nature. Let us show you around our 62 miles of sparkling Gulf Coast – at your own pace, of course.

Coast from town to town, if you will. Go with the flow and do it all – or nothing at all.

Take a weekend, take a week. Take as long as you need. And don't forget to bring your appetite for fresh seafood and freewheeling nights. Just remember – we do have a dress code: strictly casual.

Love,

The Gulf Coast of Mississippi.

Content Drivers & Initiatives



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VISIT MISSISSIPPI
GULF COAST

Content Segments

Content segments have been established to ensure advertising, public relations and social media communicate the attractions and activities of the Mississippi Gulf Coast to potential visitors. There is some overlap in categories, but as a whole, they are inclusive of all stakeholders in the region.

The Gulf

The gulf is our soft white edge, our pine, palmetto and oak-lined shoreline, and the frame for our beloved sunsets. It's a 60-mile fringe with dark water to the horizon, infinite blue above, and a wealth of life—big fish, oysters, shrimp and crab—just beneath its sparkling surface. And beyond, just out of sight, lie the out islands and blue waters, another world to explore. The Coast is a constant companion and inspiration to road-trippers. On coast-hugging highway 90, there are few condos or towers to block the access and the view; there's nothing but sunshine in the windshield and small-town spirit ahead.

- 62 miles of coastline
- Outdoor scenery
- Beach & water activities
- Boating Tours
- Birding
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Golfing

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GULF COAST



Content Segments

Small Towns

Every town on the Coast, from Bay St. Louis to Pass Christian, Gulfport to Biloxi and Ocean Springs is a new chapter in a visitor's story, each an opportunity to savor a different coastal character, a new flavor, another chord, an event to take in, a street to stroll. Together, the towns of the Gulf Coast are an invitation to a unique discovery.

- History
- A “passport” of experiences
- Making your own discoveries

Variety

The Coast is a place of high excitement and simple pleasures, relaxation and stimulation. It's the entertainment of a big-name act and the serenity of sunset. It's an eventful, eclectic and varied destination that's not defined only by the shoreline nor by the casinos. Yes, we'll wander along the waterfront, but we'll also experience the islands beyond, the rivers as well as the salt water. We'll eat at Shaggy's and the Blind Tiger, and also at Vestige and the White House. We'll go gaming and go fishing and go on an airboat tour. We'll wander into the museums and out to the street festivals. The Coast is pure freedom and endless choice.

- Art
- Culinary
- Shopping

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Content Segments

Gaming

The casinos are such a ubiquitous presence, both physically and virtually, that we take them for granted, yet our concentration of casinos brings many to experience the region and fall under our charms for the first time. And like gaming places everywhere, they're evolving: new forms of entertainment, live acts and sports gambling will open new, younger markets for the casinos and provide new opportunities for everyone on the Coast.

- Casinos
- Resorts
- Nightlife
- Entertainment

Food

The delicious life of the Coast ebbs and flows with the season; it's as fresh, as local, as sea-to-table as it gets anywhere in the country. The generous gulf offers up shrimp, oysters and endless fish. We grill, we shuck, we batter, we fry, we butter, we spice, and eat it raw—often with a gulf view and a roll of paper towels in hand. Food here is nothing less than fresh-caught happiness.

- Seafood
- Freshness
- Diversity of food experiences

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GULF COAST

Content Segments

Festivals and Events

Getting together and sharing is what we do best on the Coast, all year round. We cruise it and scrape it, celebrate every species of seafood, engage with our artists and craftspeople, learn from and love our singers and songwriters. We take in the big acts, and we make our own music nightly in local bars. We entertain ourselves and all corners. This is the multi-place, multi-party, multi-cultured coast.

- Tournaments
- Events & Festivals Calendar



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Strategic Areas of Focus

Armed with research, industry trends, the competitive landscape as well as insights from our industry partners, the following drivers have been identified that will support our growth objectives:

Engaging Visitor Communications

- Reach potential visitors with meaningful messages in locations where they are likely to interact with our messages, in ways that make it simple for them to connect with us.

Visitor Experience

- Engage the community in creating brand consistent, positive customer experiences for visitors with ongoing hospitality training and communication as well as provide visitors with tools to navigate the coast with ease, making it a worry-free experience

Content Marketing-Sponsored & Native

- Create and distribute valuable, relevant and consistent content without selling, to attract and retain a clearly defined audience.

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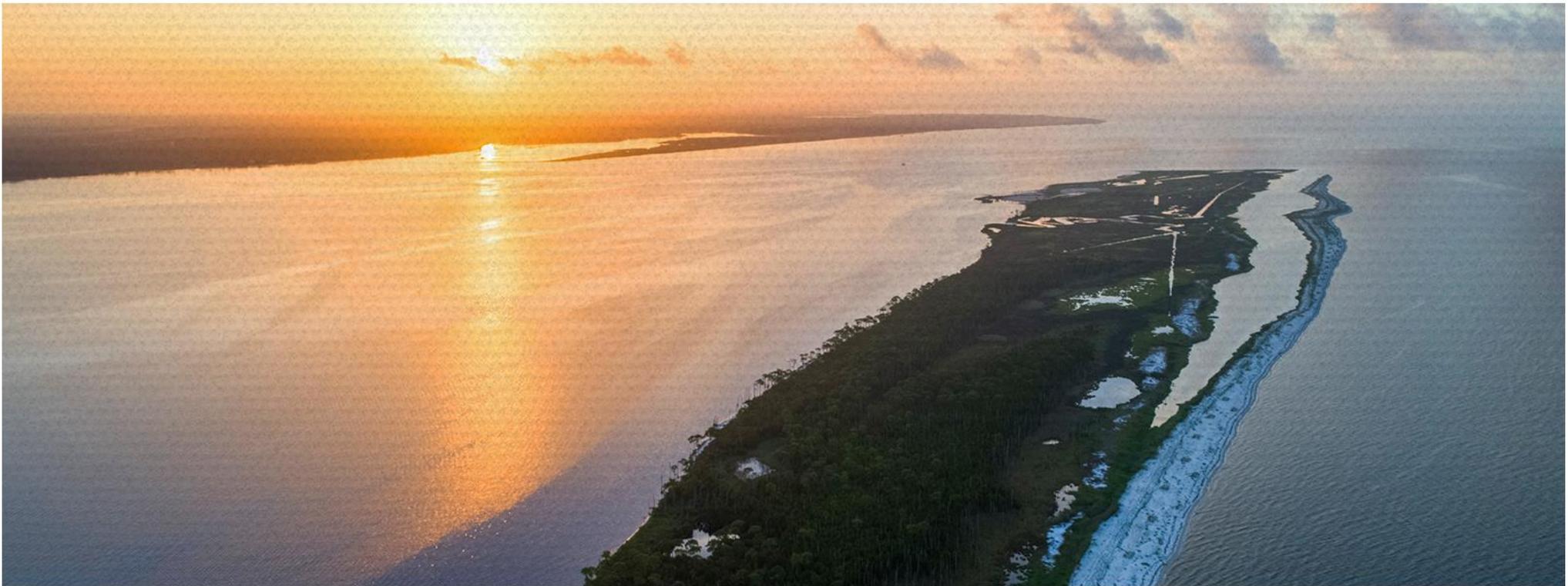


Cooperative Initiatives

Objective:

- Strengthen cooperative advertising and partnerships to maximize advertising dollars and broaden reach of brand awareness.
- Create co-op marketing efforts to optimize our collective efforts
- Develop cohesive brand messaging to objectively market what makes the Mississippi Gulf Coast unique and desirable
- Events play a significant role in the marketing of our destination. They drive incremental visitors to the destination and help brand the Coast as a unique and authentic place. We will continue working closely together with the event community and to identify opportunities to enhance the brand, generate significant economic impact, drive incremental room nights and garner millions of dollars in earned media

Media Strategy & Spend





Q1 Bridge Media Strategy

Q1 Campaign

- Markets: Drive & Fly markets with some spill-over into regional
- Target Audiences: Younger (25-34) and Older (45-64) Experiential Travelers

Strategy

- Continue market momentum into Q1 (October – December) with a campaign that leverages the best performing media channels and advertising creative
 - Continue broadcast market placements from Q4 into Q1
 - Digital focus on TripAdvisor, Google, Facebook, etc.
- Test additional travel partners that are known to drive high ROI for other DMO's
- Fine tune market selection to markets which can generate quick trips in Q1
- Focus on visitation metrics, while saving budgets for the brand launch in early 2019

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FY '19 Media Strategy

Reevaluate market selection to build visitation from targets that live within a 3-5 hour driving radius or have direct flights. Together with the enhanced brand messaging introduced in 2019, this strategy will help redefine the Mississippi Gulf Coast and allow for thoughtful expansion as awareness and visitation metrics soar.

Main Goals

- Increase awareness of the destination and offerings
- Increase overnight visitation

Markets

- Drive Markets
 - New Orleans, Mobile-Pensacola, Jackson, Baton Rouge, Hattiesburg-Laurel, Lafayette, Columbus-Tupelo, Biloxi-Gulfport* – Currently account for 50.2% of visitation
- Fly Markets
 - Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Orlando, Charlotte – 10.6%+ of visitation

** Media limited to in-market tactics aimed at in-market travelers and/or possible community engagement placements with a goal of promoting the app, but also to sell would-be day trippers on overnight stays with Things to Do and/or hotel discount messaging.*

Market Data / Selection: Casino Overnight Visitors

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Market	18+ Pop***	% of US Population	% of Casino Overnight Person-Trips	Visitor Index	Rank
Drive Markets					
Hattiesburg-Laurel	223,000	0.09%	4.3%	4,707	1
Biloxi-Gulfport *	272,000	0.11%	1.0%	897	8
Jackson	690,000	0.28%	5.9%	2,087	4
New Orleans	1,339,000	0.55%	13.4%	2,443	3
Mobile-Pensacola	1,116,000	0.46%	14.8%	3,237	2
Columbus-Tupelo-West Point	364,000	0.15%	1.5%	1,006	7
Lafayette	474,000	0.19%	2.8%	1,442	5
Baton Rouge	700,000	0.29%	3.9%	1,360	6
Drive Market Totals	5,178,000	2.12%	47.6%		Top 8
Fly Markets					
Atlanta	5,092,000	2.09%	3.8%	182	11
Charlotte**	2,397,000	1.00%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dallas-Ft. Worth	5,642,000	2.31%	2.9%	125	13
Houston	5,063,000	2.07%	1.0%	48	14
Orlando**	3,184,000	1.30%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fly Market Totals	21,378,000	8.76%	7.7%		11-15
Additional Outer Markets					
Tampa-St Petersburg	3,686,000	1.51%	5.0%	331	10
Birmingham	1,456,000	0.60%	3.7%	620	9
Memphis	1,351,000	0.55%	1.0%	181	12
Listed Markets	33,049,000	13.54%	9.7%		1-15
Non Listed Markets	211,037,000	86.46%			
Total US	244,086,000	100%			

Source:

MRI

MRI

Longwoods

Peter Mayer

Peter Mayer

*Media limited to in-market tactics aimed at in-market travelers and/or possible community engagement placements with a goal of promoting the app, but also to sell would-be day trippers on overnight stays with Things to Do and/or hotel discount messaging.

** Market data not available in Longwoods Study in order to calculate % of Overnight Person Trips, Visitor Index, Rank, # of Overnight Visitors and Total Party Spend

*** A21+ would be the preferred base audience population given age minimums for casino entry; however, MRI does not report on this age grouping
Note: Markets may shift slightly based on client feedback, additional research and final media cost.

Market Data / Selection: Non-Casino Overnight Visitors

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GULF COAST

Market	18+ Pop***	% of US Population	% of Non Casino Overnight Person-Trips	Visitor Index	Rank
Drive Markets					
Hattiesburg-Laurel	223,000	0.09%	4.3%	4,707	2
Biloxi-Gulfport *	272,000	0.11%	8.1%	7,269	1
Jackson	690,000	0.28%	11.2%	3,962	3
New Orleans	1,339,000	0.55%	14.0%	2,552	4
Mobile-Pensacola	1,116,000	0.46%	3.5%	766	9
Columbus-Tupelo-West Point	364,000	0.15%	3.5%	2,347	5
Lafayette	474,000	0.19%	3.5%	1,802	7
Baton Rouge	700,000	0.29%	5.8%	2,022	6
Drive Market Totals	5,178,000	2.12%	53.9%		1-9
Fly Markets					
Atlanta	5,092,000	2.09%	3.5%	168	11
Charlotte**	2,397,000	1.00%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dallas-Ft. Worth	5,642,000	2.31%	3.5%	151	12
Houston	5,063,000	2.07%	4.7%	227	10
Orlando**	3,184,000	1.30%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fly Market Totals	21,378,000	8.76%	11.7%		10-15
Additional Outer Markets					
Tampa-St Petersburg	3,686,000	1.51%	0.0%	-	14
Birmingham	1,456,000	0.60%	0.4%	67	13
Memphis	1,351,000	0.55%	4.3%	777	8
Listed Markets	33,049,000	13.54%	4.7%		1-15
Non Listed Markets	211,037,000	86.46%			
Total US	244,086,000	100%			

Source: MRI MRI Longwoods Peter Mayer Peter Mayer

*Media limited to in-market tactics aimed at in-market travelers and/or possible community engagement placements with a goal of promoting the app, but also to sell would-be day trippers on overnight stays with Things to Do and/or hotel discount messaging.

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*** A21+ would be the preferred base audience population given age minimums for casino entry; however, MRI does not report on this age grouping
Note: Markets may shift slightly based on client feedback, additional research and final media cost.

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FY '19 Media Strategy

Drive Markets

Markets

- New Orleans, Mobile-Pensacola, Jackson, Baton Rouge, Hattiesburg-Laurel, Lafayette, Columbus-Tupelo, Biloxi-Gulfport*

Target Audiences

- Younger (25-44) and (45-65) Older Experiential Travelers, Travel Intenders, Past Visitors

Strategy

- Start the year strong with two major plus up periods aimed at relaunching the brand and driving visitation
- Drive Markets will receive the bulk of spending and will have multiple media tactics
- Seven top markets to receive two flights of TV and streaming video to relaunch the brand in 2019
 - Relaunch in Feb/March with a heavy 150 GRP 6-week schedule to take advantage of vacation planning cycles
 - Have a smaller, 4-week 100 GRP wave in June to reach last-minute summer travelers
 - Use online video to reach younger (25-44) segments and increase efficiencies across all audiences
- In select Drive Markets, coordinate OOH during broadcast periods to raise market awareness
- Differentiate and target Experiential Traveler based on age or interest to hone in on their travel motivators

** Media limited to in-market tactics aimed at in-market travelers and/or possible community engagement placements with a goal of promoting the app, but also to sell would-be day trippers on overnight stays with Things to Do and/or hotel discount messaging.*

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FY '19 Media Strategy

Drive Market Strategy (cont'd)

Heavy up on digital tactics to move consumers from consideration to booking

- Travel Partners: OTAs, TripAdvisor, TravelZoo, Travel Networks
- Programmatic Targeting: Leverage 1st Party data to reach past visitors and offer new reasons to revisit
- Native & Paid Social: Engage with consumers while demonstrating different reasons to visit the Coast
 - Coordinate with social agency to ensure campaign themes, activities and events are prominently featured on social channels and with paid social
- Search: Connect with consumers looking for activities the Coast has to offer

Promote digital and social content to reach key segments (e.g., Classic Car, Motorcycle & History Enthusiast, etc.) and to highlight key events (Festivals, Sporting Events, Concerts, etc.)

Allocate a small budget for in-market activations aimed at promoting the wayfinding app, creating iconic sharable moment or promoting the use of branded filters on Instagram & Snapchat

Maintain a year-round baseline of coverage for high converting, lower funnel tactics

- Digital travel intender targeting, retargeting, site lookalike targeting, TripAdvisor, paid search
- Note: Some of these tactics will spill over into regional, fly or even national audience

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FY '19 Media Strategy

Fly Markets

Markets:

- Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Orlando, Charlotte

Target Audiences

- Younger (25-44) and (45-65) Older Experiential Travelers, Frequent Travelers, Travel Intenders, Past Visitors

Strategy

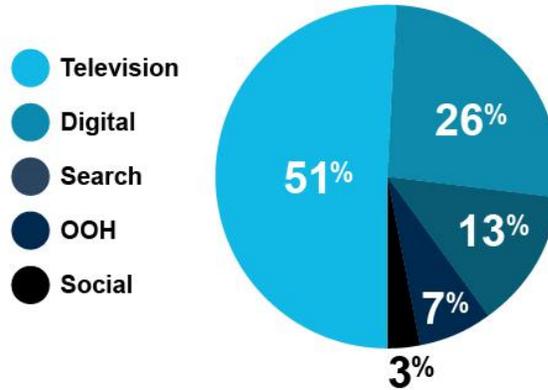
- In fly markets, drive awareness of destination and direct flight access
 - Consider partnering with key airlines to cross promote flight routes and package opportunities (example: Allegiant)
 - Use OOH and airport advertising to drive awareness of frequent flyers
 - Layer in search, social and digital tactics to reach key travelers
 - First party targeting via programmatic and paid social
 - Utilize direct response tactics such as TravelZoo that require payment on a pay-per-click or CPA-based model to minimize waste

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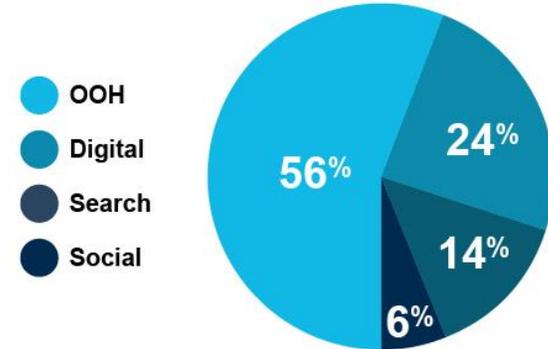
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Media Mix

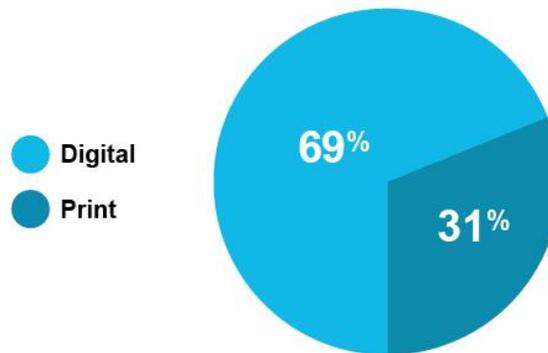
Drive Markets
\$1,088,690



Fly Markets
\$182,370



Groups
\$81,142



Print - \$28,643

App Promotion - \$23,940

Native - \$15,215

Total Budget: \$1,420,000

Social Media & Digital Marketing Strategies





Social Media

Insight

With an upcoming rebranding, we have a great opportunity to create a bold statement about what makes the Mississippi Gulf Coast a standout coastal destination. This will be accomplished by leveraging the passion of local advocates and immersive storytelling to amplify our message, all while keeping the audience's behaviors and motivations at the core.

Strategic Approach

Consumer insights drive the creative and shape the distribution plan. We will facilitate authentic storytelling by leaning into the passion of our local advocates, which will allow us to elevate the most compelling elements of the region.

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Social Media

Goals

- Increase the familiarity and understanding of the offerings and experiences awaiting by showcasing local advocates
- To further grow credibility with audiences already coming and loving the Coast, highlight icons and experiences
- Create and implement an influencer program to increase the visibility of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, engagement and following to a wider, yet tailored audience
- Consistently posting blogs and promotion of those through social media will help followers gain a better understanding of the region
- Drive conversions by encouraging e-newsletter sign-ups, use of our booking engine and promotion of attractions pass

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Social Media

Tactics

- Create compelling video to capture and share events across social media channels
- Continue to partner with local photographers to share aspirational visuals
- Engage vetted influencers as brand ambassadors to strategically place destination messages within their niche audiences; create immersive destination experiences that will provide inspiration for their channels
- Prioritize Facebook and Instagram to increase awareness and visitor engagement; extending reach with shareable assets, specific promotions and giveaways to engage and drive traffic to gulfcoast.org
- Primary focus of Twitter will be for industry, press relationships, and events
- Ongoing efforts using LinkedIn to engage with meeting and event planners
- Boost the reach of social content through engagement with industry partners and local advocates, encouraging them to share on their platforms
- Continue to use and promote the #MSCoastlife; create campaign-specific and event hashtags to extend reach
- Use insights and measurement tools to track effectiveness and continuously refine where needed

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Digital Marketing

Website

- As all marketing efforts drive traffic to gulfcoast.org, it is imperative that the site capture the spirit of our destination and faithfully builds on our new brand; therefore, a refresh of the site will be completed
- Primary focus will be on the quality of the user experience
- Develop content that meets the consumer expectations upon click-through with the goal of increasing time-on-site
- Integrate user-generated content to keep site relevant to today's travelers by displaying dynamic visual galleries that make a great first impression and keep visitors on the site
- Continue to develop and maintain custom landing pages in support of marketing campaigns and sales promotions
- Develop new content that will assist meeting planners
- Drive awareness and encourage booking on the site through our booking engine provider, aRes
- Consistently analyze SEO reports and Google Analytics to optimize the online experience for visitors

E-Newsletter

- Create a new e-newsletter to align with our new brand
- Assess consumers' behavior interacting with past e-newsletters and develop strategies to grow audience and increase engagement

PR/Media Relations



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GULF COAST



PR/Media Relations

Consumer - Strategies & Tactics

Securing print, digital and video earned media coverage in top-tier lifestyle, travel, culinary and adventure publications in key markets

- Proactive pitching and reactive opportunities, showcasing unique and authentic experiences and attractions on the MS Gulf Coast
- Individual + group FAM trips
- Actively pitching stories related to the region based on trends, upcoming events, new offerings in the region

Continue to foster relationships with notable media representatives

- Hosting individual and group FAM trips
- Attending media showcases
- Maintaining relationships by sending relevant updates, press releases + connecting on social media

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GULF COAST



PR/Media Relations

Consumer - Strategies & Tactics

Foster relationships with local experts to enhance the region's unique offerings and experiences to facilitate cultural learning (“not just for the aficionados”) and boost the Experiential Traveler's curiosity

- Identify key experts
- Collaborative marketing assets: guest blogs, videos, how-tos, recipes, social media posts/takeovers, “try something new” campaign/series, build “bucket-list” itineraries, human interest pieces
- Include interviews and meetings with local experts in press trip itineraries

Maintain relationship and relevance with local media, to continue to inform and update the community and increase awareness of the importance of the tourism industry to the region

- Press releases
- Regular meetings with editorial staff
- Regular appearances on TV (e.g., Doug & Dave, Pascagoula Show)

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PR/Media Relations

Consumer - Strategies & Tactics

Build relationships with local influencers, bloggers, photographers

- Storytelling from local ambassadors
- Increase digital assets
- Community engagement

Grow and promote signature events across the region to continue to secure repeat visitors, encourage eventual overnights, attract first-time visitors

- Marine Week
- Mappin' the Coast
- Established signature events

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PR/Media Relations

Meetings & Events - Strategies & Tactics

Securing print, digital and video earned media coverage in top-tier meetings & conventions publications

- Proactive pitching and reactive opportunities, showcasing the array of venue options, special services provided by VMGC, unique and authentic group experiences
- Create and share digital assets (e.g., virtual tour of MCCC, time lapse videos of conference setup, etc.)

Continue to build relationships with notable Meetings & Conventions media representatives

- Maintaining relationships by sending relevant updates, press releases + connecting on social media
- Pitch specific events to use as case studies

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PR/Media Relations

Meetings & Events - Strategies & Tactics

Foster relationships with local experts to enhance industry conferences (e.g., Oil & Gas Industry, Marine Biology, Shipbuilding, NASA)

- Identify key experts
- Collaborate with experts to market to specific meetings industries
- Invite experts to present at conference

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PR/Media Relations

Agency's Recommended PR Approach

Q1 – Develop content of 2019 PR Plan (Oct. – Dec. 2018)

- Conduct PR audit
- Create targeted media lists
 - Align with regional drive/direct flight markets
 - Build national travel & consumer list
 - Trade media
- Design quarterly initiatives
- Prepare for new brand launch

Q2 – Launch new brand to key regional/national audiences (Jan. – Mar. 2019)

- Consumer
- Trade
- Execute digital influencer campaign
- Promote potential offer

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PR/Media Relations

Agency's Recommended PR Approach

Q3 – Build on brand launch momentum through proactive PR

- Host travel FAM trip
 - Target bloggers
 - Potential themes: family travel, gaming, culinary, music/festivals, culture & arts, ecotourism or recreation or fishing
- Publicize major events to targeted media

Q4 – Continue proactive media relations

- Mississippi Aquarium grand opening (tentative)
 - Major national media opportunity
- Host late summer/early fall FAM (could be in conjunction with Aquarium opening)
- Publicize major events to targeted media

Meetings & Conventions/Sales



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Overview

The Mississippi Gulf Coast, known for its great “southern hospitality,” is the perfect destination for conventions and meetings, offering state-of-the-art meeting facilities at the Mississippi Coast Convention Center with a significant inventory of first-class hotel facilities to accommodate a variety of groups within a short drive distance to the Convention Center. The Mississippi Gulf Coast is easily accessible from a variety of destinations through direct air service at the Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport. Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast offers one-stop shopping convenience for meeting planners, assisting them in finding a hotel/convention center facility for their convention or meeting and additional complimentary service while meeting on the Mississippi Gulf Coast to include everything from lead generation to housing program, computer generated name badges, and on-site registration assistance.



Mississippi Gulf Coast Group Sales Assets

- Climate and natural beauty
- Southern hospitality
- Vast number of gaming and entertainment options
- Variety of sleeping accommodations to meet any budget
- Restaurants to meet any budget
- Gulf seafood and cultural influences
- Great golf courses (19)
- History and culture of the area dating back to 1699
- Gulf of Mexico and other nature-based attractions, resources and amenities
- Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center
- Shopping venues from boutiques to outlet shopping
- Year-round festivals and events
- Convenient location for drive-in markets
- Vast number of sports complexes located in close proximity to lodging, shopping, dining and attractions.
- Variety of sports complexes available (softball, baseball, soccer) along the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast

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Market Segments / Lead Sources

Our Lead sources primarily come from Cvent, Tradeshows, Sales Missions, Backyard Marketing & Third Party Meeting Planners. Our Market segments are assigned as follows:

Convention Sales

- MS, LA, TX, AL and states west of the MS River but focusing mainly on the states within our Hub cities and drive markets.
- TN, GA, NC, FL and states East of the MS River focusing mainly on the states within our Hub cities and drive markets
- DC and NY actively worked for government and corporate markets

Sports & Events

- Focused on all US sports-related organizations, with a focus on eSports. Developing events that will draw visitors from outside the area, i.e., food & music festivals.

Leisure Group Sales

- Working and establishing relationships with Group Tour Operators to continuously increase the number of Group Tours on the Coast.

Leisure Sales

- Working to develop strategic partnerships with OTA's, Receptives and International Market to strengthen opportunities and increase visitor numbers to the MS Gulf Coast.

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Sales Strategic Development Map

- Our sales strategy will be divided into Territories, focusing on specific market segments in and around hub cities that have direct flights in and out of Gulfport.
- By implementing this strategy, we feel that business will close at a faster rate given that corporate meetings follow a 6-12 month booking window, larger association business follows an 18-36 month booking window and government falls into a 6 month or less booking window.
- Regional Manager #1- will cover MS, AL and states west of the MS River, TX- Dallas; Houston as well as LA – New Orleans, Baton Rouge
- Regional Manager #2- will cover states east of the MS River, specifically, Atlanta, Charlotte/Raleigh. Our efforts will be concentrated on developing the corporate, association and government market segments.

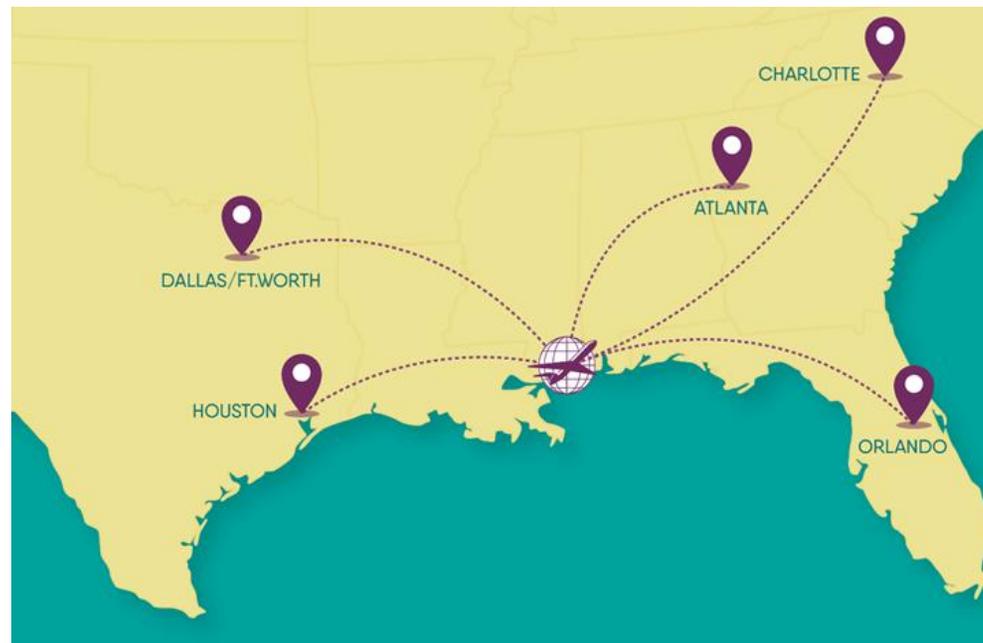


Image credit: Biloxi-Gulfport International Airport

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Tradeshows / Sales Mission

Sales Missions

- Louisiana
- Jackson, MS
- Alabama – Birmingham, Montgomery
- Texas – Houston, Dallas
- Atlanta
- Washington, D.C.
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, Illinois

Trade Associations

MS Society of Association Executives
Destinations Showcase DC
Connect Associations/Sports/Corporate
TEAMS & eSports Travel Summit
Alabama Council of Association Executives
Rendezvous South
PCMA
Travel South Domestic Showcase
Tennessee Motor Coach
Georgia Motor Coach
National Association of Sports Commissions
Louisiana Society Association of Executives
American Bus Association
Travel Alliance Partners

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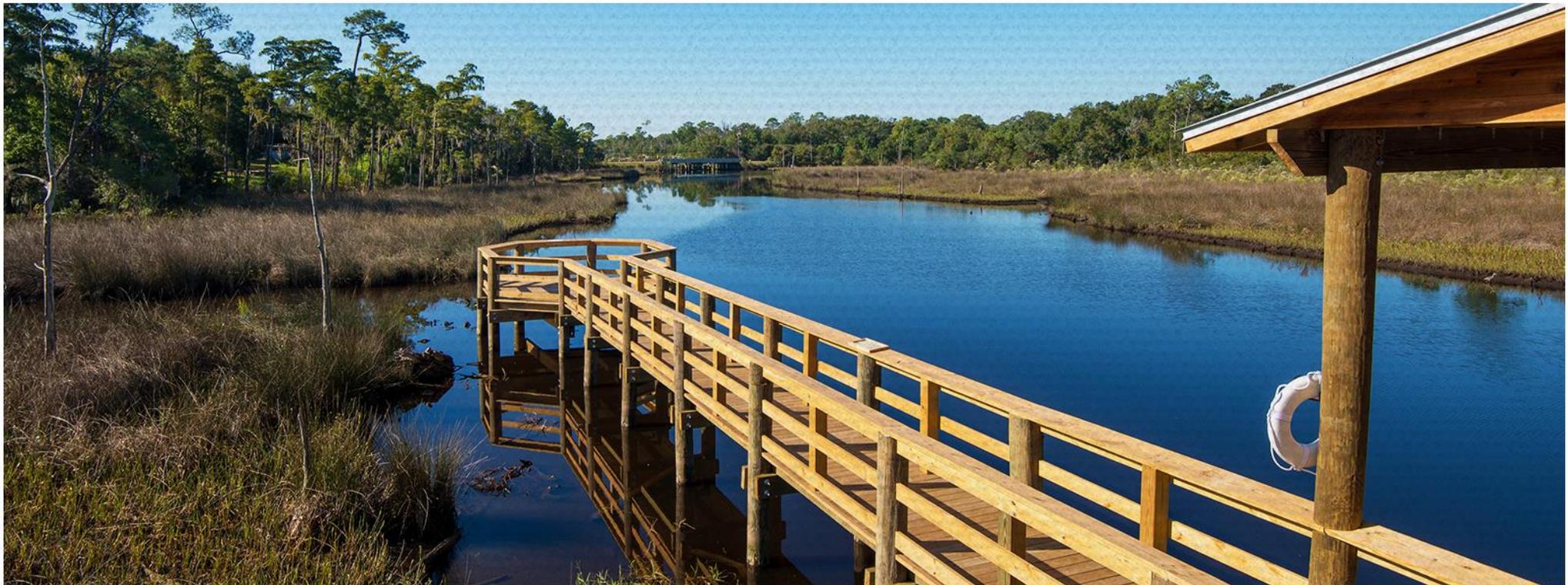


Overcoming Gaps

Gaps

- Number of committable hotel rooms (under one roof/competitive meetings package)
- Lack of headquarter hotel near our state-of-the-art convention center
- Limited air service
- Walkable districts close to convention center, i.e., nightlife, restaurants
- Transportation needed between hotels and convention center
- Limited destination marketing funding
- Elevation of awareness as a meetings destination

Sales Validation: Tradeshows, Meetings & Conventions



Regional Conferences



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Regional Conferences – Mississippi West

Alabama Council of Association Executives

Goal: Regional business development

ACAIE represents 108 Alabama-based associations. The Alabama market allows us the opportunity to support regional marketing efforts. Many ACAIE members have met on the Coast. Participation in ACAIE includes attendance at the annual convention in October, several luncheons per year, and sales call trips to Montgomery and Birmingham.

Room nights from last year: 300+ (this does not include business that booked directly with the hotel)

Louisiana Society of Association Executives

Goal: Regional business development

LSAE represents over 104 Louisiana-based associations. The Louisiana market allows us the opportunity to support regional marketing efforts. Many LSAE members have met on the Coast or have considered the Coast for a meeting. Participation in LSAE includes attendance at the annual convention in October, several luncheons per year and sales call trips to Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Some of these include: Louisiana Realtors Association, Louisiana Farm Bureau Association, Louisiana Credit Union Association, Louisiana Manufactured Housing Association, Louisiana Engineering Society, The Energy Council, Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association, and many others.

Room nights from last year: 1,000+ (this does not include business that booked directly with the hotels)

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Regional Conferences – Mississippi West

Mississippi Society of Association Executives

Goal: Regional business development

MSAE represents almost 100 Mississippi-based associations. Attendance at this show is mandatory to ensure that we retain and increase state association (MSAE) business on the Coast. Participation in MSAE includes attendance at the annual convention in October, several luncheons per year, and sales call trips to Jackson.

Room nights from last year: 6,000+ (this does not include room nights booked directly with the hotel)

Houston Sales Mission

Goal: Regional/National business development

The Houston Sales Mission was attended by three of our marketing partners, IP Casino, Beau Rivage, and Golden Nugget. It was an opportunity to meet with associations and corporations that haven't been to the Mississippi Gulf Coast to try to get them to bring their business to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Tentative room nights to date: 150 (have some great prospects in the works)

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Regional Conferences – Mississippi East

Rendezvous South

Goal: Regional/National business development

Rendezvous South is a limited attendance, boutique-style tradeshow that offers one-on-one 15-minute meetings with planners. Convention South Magazine leads this effort. Last year, in Daytona Beach, FL, we met with 15 meeting planners and generated 2 leads totaling 800+ room nights. 510 room nights have been turned definite for July 2019. I would recommend attending this show in 2019.

Room nights from last year: 800+ (510 room nights have been turned definite)

Connect Marketplace – Association

Goal: National/Regional Business Growth

Connect Marketplace connects planners of association and specialty association meetings and events with destinations and other service providers that fit their requirements. It's a reverse tradeshow and has pre-set appointments (25). Connect specifically reaches meeting planners of the following types of meetings: Social, national/regional and specialty associations, educational, fraternal, and sports.

Tentative rooms nights from the last year: 3,400+

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Regional Conferences – Mississippi East

Destination Showcase

Goal: Regional business development with government/corporate stakeholders

This one-day event offers the opportunity to connect with the nation's top planners on locations. Destination Showcase is designed to maximize opportunities to network with planners and highlights how CVBs can drive more successful meetings.

Definite room nights to date: 1,500

Leads: 10

Connect Corporate

Goal: Regional/National Business Development

Connect Marketplace connects planners of association and specialty association meetings and events with destinations and other service providers that fit their requirements. It's a reverse tradeshow and has pre-set appointments (25). Connect specifically reaches meeting planners of the following types of meetings: Social, national/regional and specialty associations, educational, fraternal, and sports.

Definite room nights to date: Still cultivating relationships

Leads: 7

Strategic Partnerships





Strategic Partnerships

PCMA

Goal: Regional business development with planner and key stakeholders

PCMA is the leading organization for meetings, conventions and tradeshow and is the definitive authority in education, business networking and community engagement for leaders in the global meetings, conventions, and business events industry. Utilize this organization to develop strategic partnerships and raise our level of visibility through participation on committees and ultimately gaining a seat on the board within the Gulf State Chapter.

Helms Briscoe Annual Business Conference

Goal: Regional/National Business Development

Helms Briscoe is the leading third-party meetings management organization in the industry. We will participate in their Destination Partner Program to develop strategic partnerships with planners, therefore, opening more doors to opportunities to book group business.

Sports Conferences



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Sports Conferences

National Association of Sports Commissions Symposium

The NASC Sports Event Symposium is the annual meeting of the National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC), the only non-profit 501(c)3 association for the sports events and tourism industry in the United States since 1992. Hundreds of sports events and tourism professionals and industry partners gather to exchange time, resources, strategies, solutions, and more. The Symposium features dozens of authentic education sessions, countless networking opportunities, and business development appointments in the NASC Sports Marketplace, all to help our members produce measurable ROI for their organization, elevate their sports events, and improve the quality of life in their destinations.

Room Nights: 3,417

Leads: 10

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Sports Conferences

Teams Conference & Expo

TEAMS: TRAVEL, EVENTS AND MANAGEMENT IN SPORTS

The world's leading conference and expo for the sports-event industry. Launched in 1998, TEAMS attracts more than one thousand attendees including CEOs, executive directors and event managers from sports organizations as well as representatives from sports commissions and convention bureaus, corporate sponsors, event suppliers and other hospitality industry opinion leaders. Now in its 19th year, TEAMS has helped define the sports-event and appointment-based trade show industries.

Room Nights: 10,250 Leads: 9

Connect Sports Conference

Connect Sports is the only fully hosted buyer program designed for the sports events and tourism industry. Enhance skills, learn about trending topics, network, and drive more business at this event that brings together the sports tourism industry's top event organizers, NGBs, suppliers and industry experts.

Room Nights: 4,065 Leads: 8

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Sports Conferences

Esports Travel Summit

The *EsportsTravel Summit* was launched in conjunction with the TEAMS Conference & Expo in Orlando in 2017. The Summit was an immediate success because it helped fill an information vacuum that exists for both organizers of esports events and those in the travel and tourism industry who want to understand and profit from the esports phenomenon. Globally, the number of esports enthusiasts is estimated at 191 million people—and growing.

While video games have been around for more than 40 years, a transformation is occurring in the video-gaming space that will elevate the players above the games. Live events are becoming the ultimate forum for skill and achievement for players. And spectators are flocking to the live events because of their interest in the games and the rising prominence of the players. It is this transformation that is creating many new opportunities, including record levels of investment in esports teams and the development of esports-specific venues.

National Association of Sports Commissions 4S Summit

The 4S's of sports events and tourism: Strategies, services, sales, and sponsorships will be covered during general sessions, small group discussions, and off-site excursions. Take away key tools, resources, and best practices from your peers as well as experts in the sports events and tourism industry.

Participants will earn 2 credit hours toward CSEE certification or recertification.

Leisure Group Sales



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Leisure Group Sales

TravelSouth USA

Goal: Business growth and retention

This year we met with 44 tour operators. I am currently working with 9 tour operators on itinerary product for the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This show is specifically designed to bring together tour companies that want to sell tours to the southeastern region of the United States.

Room Nights: 435

Leads: 12

SCMA-AMA-GMOA Regional Meeting

Goal: Increase motor coach traffic within our drivable market

The motor coach operators that attend this conference are typically from Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. These are easy to access from the Mississippi Gulf Coast and is very cost efficient for the tour operator to plan a tour to our area. We also hope to be selected as the host city for SCMA-AMA-GMOA Regional Meeting in July 2020. This will showcase our destination to tons of buyers and suppliers that may not have given our destination a fair shot at a tour before.

New Show for us to attend; looking to sponsor 2020 Convention on the Mississippi Gulf Coast

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Leisure Group Sales

American Bus Association (ABA) Conference and Tradeshow

Goal: Business growth and retention

Last year we had 40 scheduled appointments. Through other meeting opportunities during this tradeshow, we were able to connect with 40 operators and distribute profile sheets. Many of our past clients are re-offering the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2018-2019. 13 of the operators are currently offering itineraries on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

We feel that this is one of the most productive tradeshow we attend for the group travel market and that it's important to continue to attend this show as a platform to bring more attention to the coast. With all the new developments of new and future attractions, we feel that we should consider investing in sponsorship opportunities which would include an Information Booth as an added opportunity to bring attention to our area.

Room Nights: 850

Leads: 32

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Leisure Group Sales

Travel Alliance Partnership (TAP) TAP Dance

Goal: Business growth and retention

The concept for TAP Dance is to create small groups of suppliers (4-5 person pods) to present itinerary ideas that could be used by TAP member operators for new tour ideas. One member operator takes financial responsibility for a tour and the other 31 operators sell the tours to their clients. This process produces a more consistent success rate of tour departures. Operators come from all parts of the United States and Canada. At TAP Dance, we partnered with Hawaii, St. Augustine, and Holland America Cruise Line and created a surprisingly cohesive team. We met with all 28 tour operator members.

As the only Mississippi delegate at this tradeshow, I feel it is very important to continue attending for at least the next two years to promote all the Mississippi Gulf Coast has to offer in the way of leisure group activities. TAP members have renewed their commitment to promote the destinations of their supplier partners and especially their Guild members, of which we are one. Fancy Free Holidays, All American Tours, Wade Tours, AdVance Tour & Travel, and DeNure Tours will be promoting the Mississippi Gulf Coast in new itinerary product for 2018-2019.

Travel Alliance Partners, LLC® (TAP) is an organization of 28 North American tour operators who have joined forces to create a very distinct organization whose main purpose is to create tour product that is entertaining, exclusive, and fairly priced for consumers. Through buying power, created by volume purchasing, the promotion of each company's tours through the network of Partner-owners, and its diverse menu of tours and exclusive components, each TAP member enhances profitability and supplier reliability. TAP members' list of tours and options include the opportunity to offer a large array of Guaranteed Departures.

Room Nights: 452

Leads: 11

Leisure Sales



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Leisure Sales

Travel South International Showcase

Goal: Destination awareness and overnights on fly/drive and FIT itineraries

This show used to be called Rhythms of the South and was resurrected by Travel South a few years ago. The major benefit of this show is that the buyers that attend are already interested in the Southern product and want to include it in their itineraries. Last year we met with 30 buyers and already have overnights in Biloxi on 30 itineraries for 2017. We are currently in contract with 4 of these buyers. Destinations for the showcase are always in the South and we hope to persuade them to look at our area to host a future conference. These operators use various receptive companies for their rooms. The receptive operators are who we meet with at NAJ shows and they are who books the actual room nights.

Room Nights – 1240

North American Journeys (NAJ) Summit

Goal: Contract development and business growth- 14 appts. in 2015

These companies are all receptive operators for inbound and they work more with group, FIT, and incentive travel. Most of the operators are very interested in adding our destination into their itineraries, along with New Orleans or Memphis and down through the state. We have been keeping in touch with them with new itinerary ideas, updated information and airline schedules. We researched, and the registered buyers for NAJ East include: Allied T-Pro, Amadeo Travel, Amnet USA, AmericanTours International, Five A Incentive Planners, GTA, JTB Travel Network, New World Travel, Tourico Holidays, Visit America.

Room nights - 1898

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Leisure Sales

IPW

Goal: Destination awareness and overnights on fly/drive and FIT itineraries and contract development

At the 2015 show we had 41 appointments in the state booth and worked closely with the LA and TN booths to be able to sell the region to be included in these companies' itineraries for the 2016 seasons.

Attendees for USTA IPW include international operators, receptive operators, and Visit USA representatives. The majority of the clients that we met with are from the UK, Canada, Germany, and France. The following companies are most interested in our destination for 1-2 nights during their fly/drive itineraries. The beaches, water sports, culinary and climate is the main draw for them. Many of the people that we met with use several different receptive companies in NY and Florida.

Additional Strategies





Additional Strategies

- Complete redesign of the Meeting Planner Guide
- Ongoing support of sales team's need for printed materials to distribute at trade shows, sponsored events and presentations
- Ensure content about the destination is up to date and fresh on sites such as CVENT
- Build a library specifically for group images and video assets

Meetings & Conventions/Sales Media Strategy



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Meetings & Conventions/Sales Media Strategy

Markets

- Mostly Drive and Fly Markets

Target Audience

- Event Planners, Group Tour Operators, Sports & Religious and Group Affiliation, Association Leaders, etc.

Strategy

- Build up regional business as product development and airlift increase and allows Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast to expand its regional presence
- Use paid media, partnerships and content to increase group sales in drive/hub markets and fly markets
- Support Group and Conventions team with placements in Cvent, Trade Shows/Publications and paid LinkedIn content tailored to each audience
- Consider possible partnerships with organizations such as the PCMA or the ASAE that introduce and elevate the Coast at events, online and in their trade publications