



VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY  
2020/2021 Marketing Plan

Submitted to Mendocino County Tourism Commission, Inc. & County of Mendocino  
September 1, 2020

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## Executive Summary

Mendocino County Tourism Commission is entering its fifth year as the Destination Marketing Organization for Mendocino County. The organization chose to end its partnership with Media Matters World Wide after two years. The decision to end our contract(s) came from necessity to change directions in our marketing plan. Shortly after that decision was made, the COVID-19 pandemic closed Mendocino County for tourism business. Following the closure of tourism activities in Mendocino County, MCTC directed its efforts on this marketing plan for 2020/2021. With financial restrictions placed on the organization for the 2020/2021 FY, MCTC made the difficult decision to not renew its contract with marketing agency TheorySF and, instead, the organization chose to bring its creative work in-house. Public relations efforts continue to hit new heights with coverage in the “big books”, glossies, national and international press, and a steady flow of A-list media prepared to cover the county at the time tourism activities are allowed.

We will continue to host informational meetings bi-annually to engage our stakeholders in our projects and programs. Our annual FEAST festivals, Mushroom and Crab, are currently on a hiatus for FY 2020/2021. The Festival and Marketing committees will work within “social responsibility” to continue a version of these events post COVID-19 with a focus on continuing brand recognition. We will continue to create an invitation to make the trek, stay a while, ‘Find Your Happy’ with ‘Room to Roam’.

## Strategic Plan

This Marketing Plan adheres to the initiatives set forth in the three-year Strategic Plan that was put into action in 2017. The purpose of the plan was to realign the core strategies of the organization. The MCTC Board of Directors has voted to continue under this well-thought-out plan through fiscal year 2020/2021 (The Strategic Plan is attached to this Marketing Plan as Appendix 1.) With the Strategic Plan goals in mind, each future initiative undertaken by VMC—in public relations, advertising, marketing, social media — will relate to and be accountable to the plan’s imperatives. Text references to the Strategic Plan Initiatives are highlighted in blue in this document.

### Vision:

Enriching experiences for our guests, enhanced lifestyle for our residents, and stability and diversity for our economy

### Mission:

Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County experience.

### Values:

- Transparency: We foster trust through openness and integrity.
- Accountability: We are outcome-oriented and professional.
- Partnership: We create alignment through inclusive and meaningful relationships.

- Community: We contribute to the fabric of Mendocino County.
- Innovation: Our creativity reflects the uniqueness of our cultures and landscapes.

In order to support our stakeholders, generate economic activity for county residents through tourism, and inspire our visitors, Visit Mendocino County:

- Consistently markets the entire county and its assets.
- Creates, develops, and manages brand awareness for the county.
- Connects people and organizations to opportunities.
- Provides information to in-county partners and tourism resources to the industry.
- Delivers a robust and sustainable return on investment.

## Action Plans

### Marketing & Advertising

- Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan.
- Foster collaboration and county-wide alignment by creating and developing the “go to” website for all tourism stakeholders.
- Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception.
- Develop a data-sharing process that offers context and insights for partners.

The Visit Mendocino County Executive Director will work hand-in-hand with its Marketing & Sales Coordinator and Website Development and Social Media contractor, Agency Xi, to build on the robust and engaging Awareness and Advertising campaigns launched in FY 2018/19. In addition to the scope of work outlined below, the Marketing team will produce a new Visitor Guide for distribution to festivals, events, visitor-facing organizations and to consumers upon request.

#### Brand Management:

For the 2019/20 fiscal year, VMC staff will:

- Manage the Visit Mendocino County brand
- Explore new brand opportunities and partnerships
- Guide other VMC partners in the use of the brand style guide

- Manage awareness studies as requested by MCTC’s Board of Directors (BoD)

#### **Research:**

VMC staff will manage research & trend forecasting and partner with VMC committees and BoD to determine research needs through:

- Primary: focus groups and intercepts
- Secondary: Secure cost effective secondary market research
- Online
- Creative testing

#### **Develop Creative:**

VMC staff will develop creative collateral that reflects the brand for:

- Website
- Online and offline advertising
- Retargeting campaigns
- Social media campaigns
- Print opportunities

The VMC staff and Marketing Committee will work on new creative to replace the countywide festivals (2020/2021 only) that reflect the brand and provide accompanying website landing pages. VMC will work on promotions that will assist in raising awareness for Mendocino County.

#### **Build Awareness:**

VMC will build awareness by:

- Exploring new ways to find and connect with potential visitors
- Creating more shareable assets (videos, apps, photos, other to be determined)
- Developing and helping to manage promotions (e.g., The Great Key Hunt)
- Managing all media planning, buying, and reporting
- Managing online demand generation marketing efforts (total contribution to revenue)

#### **Calibrate Website:**

- Review website analytics monthly
- Conversion rate optimization (CRO): Recommend tests and tactics to increase interactivity, sharing and conversion
- Update website creative for “freshness”

- Create and launch retargeting campaign

### **Website Maintenance & Upgrades:**

Agency Xi and VMC staff will maintain the perfect working order of the VisitMendocino.com website

- Ongoing support as needed, typically resolved within 24-48 hours of request except for weekends and holidays
- Explore the cost and availability to include a lodging booking engine
- Build a content submission form for events page
- Build an event management system that automatically downloads events into email format for biweekly events calendar distribution
- Periodic software updates and backup, upgrade, security consulting as needed
- Agency Xi will offer training for all VMC staff on how to add business listings, events, etc.

**Marketing Goal: Raise awareness of Mendocino County as a tourist destination**

**Total marketing investment: \$216,300**

## **Public Relations**

- **Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan.**
- **Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders.**
- **Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation and “buy in” from all of our partners.**

The PR team works diligently to expand our branding and media messaging using key “passion points” to identify and secure coverage. Fiscal 2019/2020 again showed milestones for VMC’s PR team, achieving nearly 600 third-party editorial placements with an ad equivalency nearing \$2.5 billion.

As the clock turns, current economic indicators point to a grim tourism forecast for 2020/2021, while rebuilding the tourism industry following the COVID-19 pandemic. With air travel confidence low going into the 2020/2021, plan we have to keep the Mendocino County voice amplified with all of California competing for the drive market. This is where our knowledgeable well-connected PR team work hand-in-hand with our Marketing team; taking our message to the glossies. Our goal is to convert our web & print presence to “heads in beds.” For the 2020/2021 fiscal year, the PR team will work on and deliver the items outlined below.

### **Program Objectives**

Drive overnight visitation throughout Mendocino County via the following top tier objectives:

- Assist VMC in promoting a sustainable, clarified image/brand as a premier California destination

- Stimulate demand/increase tourism revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic recovery
- Initiate awareness among key market niches and lifestyle/passion segments to buoy revenue
- Cultivate collaborative industry relationships to ensure successful, cost-effective and equitable coverage of Mendocino County stakeholders and stretch VMC's budget

### **Strategies**

- Influence the influencers and drive media coverage via multiple venues/channels (traditional/emerging)
- Ignite media interest via proactive campaigns focused on print, television, social media/key influencers
- Leverage and create “news” value as an economic driver for visitation
- Convert customers predisposed to the California drive market by differentiating Mendocino County by focusing on distinct benefits/unique assets and the ability to roam with room
- Strengthen industry partnerships with Visit California, North Coast Tourism Council, San Francisco Travel, BrandUSA, etc., via cooperative programming

### **Targets**

#### **Demographic**

- Primary: Millennial Market, Gen-Z, Gen-X
- Secondary: Baby Boomers/Time Affluent Market
- HHI: \$100k+

#### **Geographic**

- Primary: State of California (nearly 80% of U.S. market)
- Secondary: U.S., key fly/drive markets: Oregon, Arizona, Nevada, Washington, Eastern Seaboard
- Tertiary: International/TBD

### **CORE PROGRAM**

#### **Media Relations Campaign**

Drive awareness/brand messaging with focus on need seasons via creation and distribution of timely/newsworthy materials targeted to key niches. Materials include two annual Hot Sheets (editorial sheets for angle generation, long lead media) and a host of focused materials directed to passion/lifestyle segments: eco-getaways, romance, food and wine, off-grid, sports, family and trend niches.

Activities include:

- Annual update of media kit

- Proactive media relations campaign tied to timely themes, openings, and seasons
- Bi-annual visual library update/as needed
- Goal: 11 releases/annually

### **Media Missions/In-Market Editorial Appointments**

Maximize external communications via editorial missions in key media-rich markets. Where possible, tie in with Visit California to offset costs. Suggested markets include:

- Phoenix/Scottsdale
- Denver
- Seattle
- Portland
- Goal: 1/annually

### **Media Familiarization/Social Influencer Program**

Pitch/secure in-market media visits to generate editorial coverage, further brand messaging/positioning within key lifestyle/passion segments. Activities include:

- Conduct individual media outreach based on agreed-upon communication pillars
- Vet and manage media and social influencer/blogger requests
- Work with VMC to create media itineraries
- Research/secure online influencer teams
- Goal: 20 annually

### **Content Creation**

- Drive compelling endorsement of Mendocino County in the digital space with ongoing content creation; research/development of blog posts, listicles, website editorial and cross-merchandising key online chats

### **Trade Shows**

Attend targeted media trade shows to boost VMC media visibility and secure future familiarization visitation. Coordinate participation with VMC staff. Suggested venues:

- Visit California/Los Angeles (Sept)
- Society of American Travel Writers Conference (October)
- Media Bootcamp TBD (November)
- IPW/Las Vegas (April)



- Goal: 2/annually

### **Community/Stakeholder Relations**

- Assist VMC in maintaining visibility; broaden stakeholder support
- Continue to partner in development of stakeholder relations and promotional programs
- Draft/distribute stakeholder updates and public relations highlights
- Attend/present at stakeholder meetings, as needed

### **Promotions**

- Dovetail VMC strategic promotions and/or in-market events tied to VMC's overall branding to boost revenue during critical off seasons.
- Support/amplify VMC promotion and secure in-market media coverage
- Goal: TBD

### **Digital Footprint/Social Media**

- Augment in-house social media campaign to extend VMC's digital footprint.
- Dovetail social media marketing promotions with publicity support; coordinate efforts with in-house staff
- Expand and enhance social media/key influencer database and outreach

### **Crisis Communications**

- Tsunami, earthquake, fire, tourism deaths and pandemics ... the depth and variety of crises affecting a tourism destination are daunting. A tight, easy-to-implement crisis program is critical to the survival of any tourism destination and are in the beginning stages of creation.

### **PR Toolkit**

- Retain vendors/subscriptions to the following on behalf of VMC:
  - o Vocus Cision Media Database (KOLI contract)
  - o Burrelles Media Tracking Service (VMC contract)
  - o Constant Contact Distribution Service (KOLI contract)
  - o Society of American Travel Writers' Membership (KOLI membership)

### **Programming**

- Provide ongoing counsel/insight on market developments and opportunities
- Execute annual Public Relations Workplan and Timeline
- Draft/distribute Monthly Public Relations Reports

- Draft/distribute Monthly Media Impact Reports
- Conduct monthly MCTC PR conference calls
- Attend client, MCTC Board of Directors and Marketing Committee meetings as needed
- Participate in quarterly site checks surrounding new hotel properties/attractions
- Draft/distribute Fiscal Report

### Key Performance Indicators

- Realize \$10 million in advertising equivalency -- a 52% increase
- Secure 500 qualified media placements -- a 67% increase
- Reach an estimated 150 million potential visitors/circulation -- a 67% increase
- Secure 20 individual media visits for the calendar year
- Draft/distribute 11 releases annually
- Attend 2 industry trade shows
- Conduct 1 media mission

**Total PR investment: \$134,033**

## Website & Social Media

- Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception.
- Foster collaboration and county-wide alignment by creating and developing the “go to” website for all tourism stakeholders.
- Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders.
- Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation and “buy in” from all of our partners.

The VisitMendocino.com website is our calling card and is continually calibrated for best effect. Ambient home page videos are switched out seasonally while a changing array of “MendoMoments” invites website visitors to stay a while and explore the county.

VMC will continue to roll-out digital campaigns that build on the successes of earlier campaigns. We have been successful in engaging audiences and more than doubled website visitation in the 2018/2019 FY and realized a steady increase of visitation in 2019/2020 . Our goal is to build on these achievements and drive even more traffic to the VMC website and also increase outbound referrals to stakeholder and partner websites. This year

VMC is exploring the implementation of a lodging booking engine placed on visitmendocino.com. This upgrade to the site would not only allow guests to make lodging reservations directly on visitmendocino.com but, will provide VMC a direct source of ROI reporting and BtoB conversion.

On Instagram, VMC will continue to curate content to land on the “Let’s Get Social” portion of the VMC website.

The website will continue to auto-generate a monthly report to all stakeholders and partners, for whom VMC has an email address, that shows the total number of VMC website visitors and the number of click-throughs to their particular website. These reports further help VMC in producing metrics on BtoB conversions.

The VMC team will report on a regular basis to the Board of Directors.

Social media continues to grow in importance as a motivator for travel, spanning all demographics. People look to their friends and family for recommendations on travel destinations—increasingly more often than traditional media and advertising. Our social presence seeks not only to directly engage new potential visitors and remind previous visitors of the destination but also to excite our core visitor to share and spread the word about Mendocino County. To that end we will engage with key content producers via Instagram to generate dynamic, sticky visual content, with the aim of increasing overall reach. Social media engagement is the measure of the public shares, likes and comments for VMC’s social media efforts. Engagement has historically been a common metric for evaluating social media performance and it is measured on Facebook by shares, likes and followers, and on Instagram by likes, followers, and Hashtags/ Mentions.

Agency Xi and VMC staff will continue creation of a series of 15- and 30-second videos to run on social media platforms that will highlight iconic experiences and attractions in Mendocino County. Metrics have shown that audiences engage with experiential video at a far higher rate than with passive video shoots. Videos will be created with and without voice-overs so viewers can leave the sound off and still enjoy the same experience.

**Social Media Goals:**

- Continue to increase engagement on all social media channels YOY



### Website Goals:

- Continue to monitor, measure, and analyze website traffic in order to drive visitation.

**Total website and social media investment: \$66,000**

## Sales

- Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan.
- Strengthen regional tourism relationships to leverage broader marketing opportunities.
- Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception.
- Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events.

Sales is an important piece of the VMC promotional efforts puzzle. Much of sales is inspirational, reminding potential visitors how close geographically we are to our main markets of the SF Bay area and the Sacramento/Central Valley; informing them how easily they can get here; and getting them excited about what they can do once here. This messaging will be key in tourism recovery post COVID-19. Our key sales activities annually are based on the research generated by Visit California, it also adds economic feasibility to participate in VCA's already arranged sales efforts.

We are in a competitive region. Our neighbors in Napa and Sonoma outspend us in marketing dollars by at least 6 to 1. We need to differentiate ourselves by showcasing our assets and variety of cost options. This is a continuous process since many tourists focus on the last thing they saw or heard and we have to be in the travel decision narrative. Going into the 2020/2021 marketing year, our geography we believe will greatly bolster our efforts as travelers are looking for personal distance and "room to roam".

We continue to rely on research from Visit CA and Visa Vue to define and refine our sales efforts. We also use anecdotal evidence from our hotel partners, regional partners and various tour operators to adjust our sales activities to match the ever-changing market.

For FY 2019/2020 the integrated sales approach will focus on the following:

- **Consumer trade shows (all efforts are based on trade show availability)**  
The most effective way to interact with thousands of potential visitors is to personally meet them at consumer trade shows. We promote the entire County by handing out logoed orange bags and promotional literature such as the Players Guide and the Experience Guide. We also answer questions and provide recommendations. We encourage partnerships with local stakeholders by inviting them to help staff the Mendocino County booth as well as donating giveaways. The giveaways are advertised on posters prominently placed at the booth. We follow up with surveys to those who have provided email addresses. Survey results show that approximately 60% of survey respondents (+/- 15% of total surveys sent) indicate a possible visit to the county in the following year. For next fiscal year, VMC will attend the Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show in Santa Clara; Bark in the Park a pet friendly event in San Jose.

- **Continue development of regional partnerships**  
Anecdotally, visitors come to the county as part of a regional trip. VMC, therefore, partners and coordinates with convention and visitors bureaus such as San Francisco Travel, Oakland, Sacramento and DMOs in Lake, Humboldt, Del Norte, Sonoma, San Mateo, Marin, and Napa counties. We also have positive working relationships with Tahoe, Shasta and Monterey county, all who directly compete with us as tourist destinations from our target markets. We work together on promoting the entire northern CA region and multi-jurisdiction trips and itineraries.
- **Provide FAM (familiarization) tours for tour operators/receptives**  
We make a concerted effort to influence travel professionals by bringing them to Mendocino County in the belief that a visit will prompt them to recommend a county visit to clients. FAM participants can be either domestic or international, and many are recruited and vetted by Visit California. FAM participants can create packages and promotions that include the county.
- **Manage the North Coast Tourism Council (NCTC)**  
Mendocino County benefits from its administration and marketing efforts for the NCTC, one of eight rural regions designated by Visit CA to influence CA travel beyond the gateways. The NCTC budget is funded by participating counties with a dollar for dollar Visit CA match. The ED is the Administrator for this regional group, thus increasing Mendocino County impact and visibility. Mendocino County is thus able to have a presence at important venues and domestic trade events without impacting the VMC budget. Events include IPW, Go West, RTO (receptive trade organization) and the Visit CA Outlook Forum. The NCTC also funds sales participation on various international trade missions. Regional itineraries are created, with, for example, Tahoe and Shasta counties. NCTC also has a vibrant web and social media presence that includes Mendocino County.
- **Attend industry events which focus on group sales**  
Mendocino County is a challenging group market due to the absence of large group hotels and CalTrans coach length restrictions on highways to the coast. Nevertheless, through the NCTC, we participate in both the National Tour Association and the American Bus Association trade conventions in an attempt to get our share of this lucrative market, particularly for inland Mendocino County.
- **Contracts between tour operators and hotels**  
The desired end result of both domestic and international sales efforts is signed contracts between tour operators and local hotels. We assist by obtaining appropriate leads and assisting with negotiations. Leads are defined as opportunities for hotels to obtain group and FIT (foreign international travel) business. Once a contract is established the likelihood for steady and increased business increases. There are 40 such contracts currently in place with 12 local hotels. The exact number of room nights obtained through contracts is hard to obtain due to the proprietary nature of business on both sides.

#### Sales Goals:

- Consumer Shows - Attend 2 consumer trade shows at various geographic locations and obtain 4,000

new names for consumer database

- FAMS - Participate in 2 domestic FAMS
- Group Sales – Attend at least one event and obtain 5 new groups to County
- Hotel Contracts – Facilitate the signing of 5 new contracts
- Sales missions – Attend one domestic sales missions in partnership with Visit CA
- Leads – Provide local stakeholders with 100 leads for group and individual business

**Total sales investment: \$27,590**

## Visitor Services

- Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders.
- Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events.

While VMC's primary goal is to increase county visitation, a secondary task is to support visitors once they are here. Increased visitor satisfaction will result in repeat visits and encouragement to extend their stays.

We support the various Chambers and visitor centers in the county by making sure they have collateral such as wine maps, mini guides, visitor guides, event guides and tear off maps. We also match funds provided by Sonoma County to the Redwood Coast Visitor Center.

Goals for the 2020/2021 fiscal year are:

- Work with Visit Mendocino Team to distribute a newly created visitor guide
- Continue distribution of tear off maps for North Coast, South Coast, Willits and Ukiah
- Circulate the newly designed Redwood Highway Map created and funded by the NCTC
- Increase the reach of new branding by the distribution of new logoed orange giveaway bags
- Identify locations and obtain quotes for new gateway signs
- Report on quarterly basis to Board of Directors.

**Total visitor services investment: \$41,632**

## Festivals & Events

- Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events.

Unique and interesting festivals and events are a key component for the traveler's potential choice of

Mendocino County over other destinations. While tourism to the county is robust during certain times of year, there are months it is not. To remedy this, VMC currently sponsors two umbrella festivals per year: the newly dubbed Crab FEAST Mendocino in January and Mushroom FEAST Mendocino in November. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic these two festivals are on hold until it is responsible to promote and market such events.

For FY 2020/2021, VMC proposes to launch Spring Feast/Beer Trail Mendocino in late April 2021. The idea is to morph the concept of the former VMC Earth Day celebration (Party for the Planet) into a wider offering. The festival would launch with a spring winemaker dinner and include Earth Day-centered activities such as wildflower/nature activities, Earth Day dog hikes, winery walks and talks, collaborations with organizations like the Noyo Food Forest, Mendocino County farmers markets, Noyo Center for Marine Science, Hopland Research and Extension Center, Mendocino Area Parks Association and others. The festival would also serve to incorporate existing events such as the Anderson Valley Wildflower Show, Boonville Beer Fest, and, possibly, Taste Mendocino.

Building on events already taking place, rather than creating an entirely new concept, will be an avenue to increased stakeholder/partner participation.

Fiscal year 2020/2021 goals are to:

- Work with signature event holders to maintain name recognition and brand continuity with 2020/2021 being a year of virtual events, looking to bring back increased attendance the following FY
- Work with event holders of previous years to develop new concepts for “socially responsible” ways to bring visitors to the county focusing on “personal distancing” and “room to roam”
- Record partner & stakeholder participation in internal database; update and add contacts /businesses
- Recruit new virtual events and live participants
- Encourage event holders to work with “Visit” organizations, Chambers, Destination Hopland, and winery organizations to revamp existing events and create new ones that will attract overnight visitation
- Continue to revise stakeholder surveys to extract relevant information such as room nights; spending increase/decrease; etc.
- Research festivals in other counties/cities/states for ideas about how to improve VMC’s festivals for the 2021/2022 FY
- Report on monthly basis to Board of Directors

**Festival and event expenses are part of the Visitor Services budget.**

## Partnerships

- **Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation and “buy in” from all of our partners.**



- **Develop a data-sharing process that offers context and insights for partners.**
- **Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders.**
- **Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events.**

The Strategic Plan references ways that VMC can work with its partners and businesses throughout the county as to the benefits of the tourism industry and its effects on the local economy.

VMC will continue to take the pulse of new tourism-related businesses in the county by email and phone outreach, surveying partner websites, and individual visits, etc.

Goals for 2020/2021 include:

- Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation and “buy in” from all of our partners
- Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders
- Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events
- Continue Hotel Adoption Program visits to properties and updates to internal database; the database

records can be used for group sales and small meeting opportunities

**BUDGET AMENDMENT and ADOPTED as of 7/8/2020**

**PROPOSED FY 2020-2021 ANNUAL BUDGET INCLUDING BID ASSESSMENTS,  
MENDOCINO COUNTY MATCHING FUNDS AND MISCELLANEOUS INCOME**

<b>INCOME</b>		
MCTC BID Assessment		565,199.00
County of Mendocino Matching Funds		275,508.00
County Administrative Fee		[16,530.00]
Event Brochure Ads		0
Interest		0.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>824,177.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Advertising/Media		216,300.00
Marketing/Public Relations		134,033.00
Website Maintenance & Development		66,000.00
Leisure & Group Sales		27,590.00
Visitor Services		41,632.04
Partnerships		29,900.00
Administrative Expenses		100,924.88
Personnel		207,797.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>824,177.00</b>
Portion of Unrestricted Reserve		0
<b>BOTTOM LINE</b>		<b>.00</b>
Reserve/Contingency Fund		100,000.00

- Continue to promote the Opportunities page on MendocinoTourism.org and the VMC Partners At Work Facebook page
- Continue the development of a VMC Hospitality Certification Course
- Continue distribution of partner brochure to help business owners and community members better understand the mission of VMC
- Attend Chambers of Commerce meetings, city promotional meetings, and events to gain and share ideas, and show community support
- Partner with other business sectors in Mendocino County to investigate how VMC can play an active role in development of our communities in their entirety.

**Total partnerships investment: \$29,900**

## **Personnel, Operations & Admin**

- Ongoing staff training on website usage and best practices for stakeholder and consumer communications; database usage; office procedures
- Ongoing Team and Board Development
- Review new and up to date technologies specifically targeted at destination marketing
- Due to budget restrictions VMC's usual attendance at 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, will be on hold until the 2021/2022 FY
- Maintain accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program, offered by Destination Marketing Association International
- Create and distribute quarterly reports
- Create annual Marketing Plan
- Create Annual Report
- Executive Director to work with BID Advisory Board on annual BID report
- Keep the MendocinoTourism.org website updated with Board and committee agendas, packets, minutes
- Attend Board and BID Advisory Board meetings
- Attend County Board of Supervisors' meetings as warranted

Total personnel, operations and admin investment: \$308,721

## Budget - Replace with NEW

### Visit Mendocino County: Strategic Direction 2017/18-2019/20

<b>CLARITY</b>	<b>Vision</b> Enriching experiences for our guests, enhanced lifestyle for our residents, and stability and diversity for our economy	<b>Mission</b> Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County experience.	<b>Values</b> <b>Transparency</b> We foster trust through openness and integrity. <b>Accountability</b> We are outcome-oriented and professional. <b>Partnership</b> We create alignment through inclusive and meaningful relationships. <b>Community</b> We contribute to the fabric of Mendocino County. <b>Innovation</b> Our creativity reflects the uniqueness of our cultures and landscapes.	<b>Reputation Leader</b> We motivate and facilitate the tourism community. <b>Accessible</b> We welcome—and are responsive to—input from community members and stakeholders. <b>Collaborative</b> We actively seek engagement and collaboration with our stakeholders and partners. <b>Bold</b> We deliver on smart, effective, and forward-thinking ideas.	<b>Position</b> In order to support our stakeholders, generate economic activity for county residents through tourism, and inspire our visitors, Visit Mendocino County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently markets the entire county and its assets.</li> <li>Creates, develops, and manages brand awareness for the county.</li> <li>Connects people and organizations to opportunities.</li> <li>Provides information to in-county partners and tourism resources to the industry.</li> <li>Delivers a robust and sustainable return on investment.</li> </ul>
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<b>FOCUS</b>	<b>Imperatives</b> <b>Demonstrate and strengthen VMC's contribution to county economic and community vitality</b>	<b>Objectives</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bid assessment growth at 5% over average of top 3 competitors</li> <li>Year-over-year increase of sales tax receipts in Mendocino County</li> <li>Year-over-year increase in stakeholder survey response rate</li> </ul>	<b>INITIATIVES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan.</li> <li>Improve data-driven decision making through increased participation and "buy in" from all of our partners.</li> <li>Develop a data-sharing process that offers context and insights for partners.</li> <li>Foster collaboration and county-wide alignment by creating and developing the "go to" website for all tourism stakeholders.</li> <li>Strengthen regional tourism relationships to leverage broader marketing opportunities.</li> <li>Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders.</li> <li>Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception.</li> <li>Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events.</li> <li>Explore our options to influence and shape potential cannabis tourism.</li> </ul>
	<b>Cultivate VMC's relationships and collaborations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year-over-year increase in number of events launched and reaching self-sufficiency</li> <li>Year-over-year increase in "opportunities" page visitation on VMC website</li> <li>Year-over-year increase in new applicants for BID and MCTC Board positions and committee membership</li> </ul>	
	<b>Raise awareness of the Mendocino County experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Year-over-year increase Mendocino County awareness score</li> <li>Year-over-year increases in impressions and ad equivalency</li> <li>Year-over-year increase in experience perception score on in-market visitor survey</li> </ul>	

## Glossary

This glossary is included to explain terms used in this plan and in other reports and documents issued by Visit Mendocino County. While staff and contractors are familiar with the terminology, some of the terms need a brief explanation.

## Staffing

**Executive Director** Travis Scott

**Marketing & Sales Coordinator** Ramon Jimenez

**Partner Relations Manager** Open Position

**Public Relations** KOLI Communications

**Social Media** Agency Xi

**Accounting** WiPFLI

## Board of Directors

**Chair:** Cally Dym; Large Lodging Operator | Coastal

**Vice Chair:** Jennifer Seward; At-Large

**Treasurer:** Scott Connolly; Medium Lodging Operator | Coastal

**Secretary:** Bernadette Byrne; Winery/Winegrower

### **Directors**

Sharon Davis; Regional Promotional | Coastal

Jitu Ishwar; Large Lodging Operator | Inland

Jan Rodriguez; Large Lodging Operator | Inland

Brett Schlesinger; Food & Beverage Member

Open Seat; Small Lodging Operator | Coastal

Kasie Gray; Regional Promotional | Inland

Jamie Peters-Connolly; Arts/Entertainment

# Appendices

## Strategic Plan

<b>Advertising equivalency</b>	This dollar figure represents the amount of money it would take to purchase the equivalent in advertising space in a print publication or digital equivalent. The VMC PR team uses a 1:1 ratio unlike many PR firms who use a multiplier to boost numbers.
<b>Impressions</b>	The number of views a print or digital article is estimated to reach based on circulation and subscription data.
<b>Media Placement</b>	A story (print or digital) about an aspect of Mendocino County that arises from PR efforts.
<b>Media Mission</b>	A trip by the PR team to a particular market, e.g., Vancouver BC, to meet local journalists and writers and inspire visitation to and coverage of Mendocino County.
<b>Releases</b>	This can either refer to a press release or a “hot sheet,” which is distributed to the press and highlights new and upcoming businesses and openings in the county.
<b>FAM</b>	Familiarization tour or trip. Media FAMs involve members of the media who are vetted by the PR team prior to a visit. Sales FAMs apply to tour group operators who are visiting the county with the aim of including Mendocino in tour packages.
<b>Millennials</b>	The segment of the population born between the early and the mid-1990s to early 2000s. Also known as Generation Y, they are the children of baby boomers and older Gen Xers.
<b>Gen-Xers</b>	The population segment born between the early-to-mid 1960s and ending birth years ranging from the late 1970s to early 1980s. Children of the Baby Boomers.
<b>Baby Boomers</b>	Those born between the early-to-mid 1940s up to about 1964.
<b>Content marketing</b>	Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience — and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action.
<b>Google Analytics</b>	A reporting tool provided by Google that can be used to analyze traffic, ad words, digital marketing campaigns, demographics, etc. for VisitMendocino.com.
<b>Facebook Insights</b>	A reporting tool for analyzing traffic, advertising campaigns, and other activities on Facebook.
<b>Activity Provider</b>	A person located in a tourist destination who provides a unique, local activity for a visitor to do while on vacation. Examples of such activities include kayaking, bike riding or arts and crafts, among others.
<b>Free Independent Traveler (FIT)</b>	A person or a couple that is not traveling with a group; usually references foreign travelers out on their own (Foreign Independent Traveler).
<b>Inbound Tour Operator</b>	Someone specializing in providing tours to overseas travelers to a destination, either operating the tour themselves or working through established partnerships with local suppliers.
<b>Receptives</b>	In effect, “middle men” between tour operators and hotel/lodging owners, chiefly in overseas markets. Receptives obtain contracts with hotels for booking arrangements and offer these to tour operators looking to satisfy tourist demand.