



VISIT MENDOCINO COUNTY

2019/20 Marketing Plan

Submitted to Mendocino County Tourism Commission, Inc. & County of Mendocino
May 14, 2019



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Executive Summary

Mendocino County Tourism Commission is entering its fourth year as the Destination Marketing Organization for Mendocino County. With a strong Board of Directors and sound strategic plan, in late 2018, we added Media Matters Worldwine, a media strategy, planning, and buying partner, to our fold of outstanding and qualified contractors. This partnership cements the work that VMC has been doing over the past two years—from initial research to rebranding, from website concept to launch, and from brand launch to raising brand awareness—by providing us with concrete metrics. It also allows us to target audiences on a granular level. 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 to cover the county.

The addition of our Partner Relations Manager has enabled us to gain greater buy-in and participation from our stakeholders and partners. We will continue to host informational meetings several times annually to engage our stakeholders in our projects and programs. Our annual FEAST festivals, Mushroom and Crab, are seeing an increase in both partner buy-in with regard to events offered and an increase in visitor attendance. We will continue to create an invitation to make the trek, stay a while, and ‘Find Your Happy’.

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 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, sales—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 Director of Marketing & Media will work hand-in-hand with TheorySF (TSF), VMC’s marketing agency and with Media Matters WorldWide, VMC’s media buyer, to build on the robust and engaging awareness and advertising campaigns launched in FY 2018/19. In addition to the scope of work outlines below, the Marketing team will produce a new Visitor Guide for distribution at festivals, events, visitor-facing organizations, etc.

Brand Management:

For the 2019/20 fiscal year, TheorySF will:

- Manage the Visit Mendocino County brand
- Be available to VMC for meetings and conference calls
- Explore new brand opportunities and partnerships
- Guide other VMC partners in the use of the brand style guide
- Manage awareness studies

Research:

TheorySF will manage research and trend forecasting and partner with VMC to determine research needs

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

Develop Creative:

TheorySF will develop creative collateral that reflects the brand for:

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

TheorySF will also work with the VMC Marketing Committee on new creative for the countywide festivals that reflects the new brand and provides a website portal. TSF will work on promotions that will assist with raising awareness for Mendocino County.

Build Awareness:

TheorySF will build awareness for VMC by:

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

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:

TheorySF 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
- Periodic software updates and backup, upgrade, security consulting with internal staff as needed
- Email and phone support
- 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: \$433,721

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 2018/2019 was a breakout year for VMC’s PR team, achieving nearly 800 third-party editorial placements with an ad equivalency nearing \$2 billion. Although no international PR plan is currently in play, we also successfully achieved top coverage in key food, wine and lifestyle outlets abroad, especially in Mexico and the U.K., two vital markets to our growth strategy.

As the clock turns, current economic indicators point to a stable tourism market with limited growth. 2019/2020 also marks the rise of competitive California destinations allocating new budgets to public relations and, thus, a stronger tide to swim against. In Mendocino County, moving the tourism barometer continues to be a challenge as many potential visitors are still in the information/education phase, seeking proper knowledge of transport, location, and destination assets. Our goal is to add heat and harmony, converting web browsers into heads in beds – thus ensuring success for all county stakeholders.

For the fiscal 2019/2020 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 critical shoulder seasons

- Initiate awareness among key market niches and lifestyle/passion segments to buoy off-season 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/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 California getaways by differentiating Mendocino County via focusing on distinct benefits/unique assets
- 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 key trending niches.

Activities include:

- Annual update of media kit
- Proactive media relations campaign tied to timely themes, events, 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
- San Diego
- 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 (2)
- 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 (handled in-house)

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/Bootcamp (Fall)
- Society of American Travel Writers Conference (October)
- Visit California/Los Angeles (Sept)
- Media Bootcamp TBD (November)
- IPW/Las Vegas (May)
- 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, tourism deaths ... 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 can be crafted upon request. Under separate budget.

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 Bi-Monthly Public Relations Reports
- Draft/distribute Bi-Monthly Media Impact Reports

- Conduct monthly MCTC PR conference calls
- Attend client, MCTC Board and marketing committee meetings as needed
- Participate in quarterly site checks surrounding new hotel properties/attractions
- Draft/distribute Fiscal Report

Key Performance Indicators

- Realize \$6.6 million in advertising equivalency
- Secure 300 qualified media placements
- Reach an estimated 150 million potential visitors/circulation
- 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: \$239,500 (includes marketing agency, PR agency)

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 collaborate with TSF and MMWW to roll-out digital campaigns that build on the successes of the 2018/19 fiscal year. We have been successful in engaging audiences and have more than doubled website visitation. 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 for 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 enable VMC to produce solid metrics on BtoB conversions.

The Director of Marketing & Media 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.

In conjunction with TSF, VMC will create a new 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: \$72,500

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 part of County promotional efforts. 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 Valley; informing them how easily they can get here; and getting them excited about what they can do once here.

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.

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**
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 green bags (soon to be orange) and promotional literature. 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 (based on those undertaken in September 2018) show that approximately 60% of survey respondents (+/- 15% of total surveys sent) indicate a possible visit to the county in the following year. Another survey will be conducted in the first quarter of FY 2019/2020. The DTD will also reach out to survey respondents to ascertain whether the “possibility” of a visit has turned into an “actual” visit, i.e., a measurement of conversion rate. For next fiscal year, VMC will attend the Bay Area Travel and Adventure Show in Santa Clara; the Los Angeles Travel and Adventure Show; The Sacramento Sportsmen Show; a pet event in San Jose; a consumer event in Vancouver BC; and one or more bridal shows.
- **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, 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**

Mendocino County benefits from its chairmanship and sales efforts for the NCTC, one of eight rural regions designated by Visit CA to influence CA travel beyond the gateways. The NCTC budget is solely funded by Visit CA with various matches. The DTD is the sole sales person for the region, 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. 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. Our efforts have borne fruit as groups from Australia and other locations have reserved room blocks for FY 2019/2020.

- **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 8 consumer trade shows at various geographic locations and obtain 4,000 new names for consumer database
- FAMS - Participate in 8 FAMS, domestic and international
- NCTC – Attract 3 new associate members
- Group Sales – Attend at least one event and obtain 5 new groups to County
- Hotel Contracts – Facilitate the signing of 10 new contracts
- Sales missions – Attend 3 international sales missions under auspices of NCTC

- International Visitation – Increase international spend by at least 5%
- Leads – Provide local stakeholders with 200 leads for group and individual business

Total sales investment: \$53,500

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 2019/2020 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
- Report on quarterly basis to Board of Directors.

Total visitor services investment: \$114,400

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.

For FY 2019/2020, VMC proposes to launch Spring Feast Mendocino in late April 2020. 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, 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. In addition, 2020 will be the 50th anniversary of the “back to the land” movement, which could provide another opportunity for promotion and marketing.

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

Fiscal year 2019/2020 goals are to:

- Work with signature event holders to continue to build attendance and out-of-county attendance at festivals and events
- Work with event holders that track festival and event attendees so VMC can use the data to target potential audiences using the demographics and geographic information
- Develop relationships with specific festivals in the county to have a VMC presence at events, for example, Kate Wolf Festival, Mendocino Music Festival, Winesong
- Record festivals and participation in internal database; update and add contacts /businesses
- Recruit new events and 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
- 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 2019/2020 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
- Reinstate monthly Executive Director report for partners and post on the internal MendocinoTourism.org website
- Continue to promote the Opportunities page on MendocinoTourism.org and the VMC Partners At Work Facebook page
- Begin the development of a VMC Hospitality Certification Course
- Complete design on 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
- Hold a series of “summits” along with partners such as West Business Development Center to keep stakeholders informed of economic development opportunities; website development; industry trends; VMC updates

Total partnerships investment: \$37,000

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

- Attend key travel industry conferences to provide access to industry trends and successful examples of best practices, furthering internal knowledge and benefiting the VMC program of work
- 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
- Assign staff 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: \$608,243

DRAFT

Budget

INCOME		
MCTC BID Assessment		\$989,622
County of Mendocino Matching Funds		\$494,811
County Administrative Fee		[\$29,689]
Event Brochure Ads		\$4,000
Interest		\$120
		\$1,458,864
EXPENSES		
Advertising/Media		\$433,721
Marketing/Public Relations		\$239,500
Website Maintenance & Development		\$72,500
Leisure & Group Sales		\$53,500
Visitor Services		\$114,400
Partnerships		\$37,000
Administrative Expenses		\$131,500
Personnel		\$476,743
		\$1,558,864
Portion of Unrestricted Reserve		\$100,000
BOTTOM LINE		\$0.00
Reserve/Contingency Fund		\$155,886

Staffing

Executive Director Travis Scott

Director of Marketing & Media Alison de Grassi

Director of Tourism Development Richard Strom

Administrative Services Manager Emily Saengarun

Partner Relations Manager Katrina Kessen

Public Relations KOLI Communications

Marketing TheorySF

Social Media Brendan McGuigan

Bookkeeping Daphne Haney

Board of Directors

Chair: John Kuhry; At Large Member

Vice Chair: Cally Dym; Large Lodging Operator | Coastal

Treasurer: Jennifer Seward; Arts/Attractions

Secretary: Bernadette Byrne; Winery/Winegrower

Directors

Sharon Davis; Regional Promotional | Coastal

Jitu Ishwar; Large Lodging Operator | Inland

Jan Rodriguez; Large Lodging Operator | Inland

Maegen Loring; Food & Beverage Member

Martha Barra; Small Lodging Operator | Coastal

Jay Epstein; Regional Promotional | Inland

Scott Connolly; Medium Lodging Operator | Coastal

Appendices

Strategic Plan

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

CLARITY	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.	Reputation Leader We motivate and facilitate the tourism community. Accessible We welcome—and are responsive to—input from community members and stakeholders. Collaborative We actively seek engagement and collaboration with our stakeholders and partners. Bold We deliver on smart, effective, and forward-thinking ideas.	Position 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"> 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.
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FOCUS	Imperatives Demonstrate and strengthen VMC's contribution to county economic and community vitality	Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bid assessment growth at 5% over average of top 3 competitors Year-over-year increase of sales tax receipts in Mendocino County Year-over-year increase in stakeholder survey response rate 	INITIATIVES	Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing, public relations, and sales plan. 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.
	Cultivate VMC's relationships and collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year-over-year increase in number of events launched and reaching self-sufficiency Year-over-year increase in "opportunities" page visitation on VMC website Year-over-year increase in new applicants for BID and MCTC Board positions and committee membership 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster collaboration and county-wide alignment by creating and developing the "go to" website for all tourism stakeholders. Strengthen regional tourism relationships to leverage broader marketing opportunities. Proactively educate and communicate with all tourism stakeholders.
	Raise awareness of the Mendocino County experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year-over-year increase Mendocino County awareness score Year-over-year increases in impressions and ad equivalency Year-over-year increase in experience perception score on in-market visitor survey 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Mendocino County brand awareness and positive perception. Work with partners to develop, promote and grow strong and beneficial tourism activities and events. Explore our options to influence and shape potential cannabis tourism.

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.

Advertising equivalency	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.
Impressions	The number of views a print or digital article is estimated to reach based on circulation and subscription data.
Media Placement	A story (print or digital) about an aspect of Mendocino County that arises from PR efforts.
Media Mission	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.
Releases	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.
FAM	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.
Millennials	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.
Gen-Xers	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.
Baby Boomers	Those born between the early-to-mid 1940s up to about 1964.
Content marketing	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.
Google Analytics	A reporting tool provided by Google that can be used to analyze traffic, ad words, digital marketing campaigns, demographics, etc. for VisitMendocino.com.
Facebook Insights	A reporting tool for analyzing traffic, advertising campaigns, and other activities on Facebook.
Activity Provider	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.
Free Independent Traveler (FIT)	A person or a couple that is not traveling with a group; usually references foreign travelers out on their own (Foreign Independent Traveler).
Inbound Tour Operator	Someone specializing in providing tours to overseas travelers to a destination, either operating the tour themselves or working through established partnerships with local suppliers.

Receptives	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.
Search Engine Marketing	A marketing tactic using paid advertising services so that interested clients and customers can reach a business quicker and easier while searching online.
Block	A number of rooms, seats, or spaces reserved in advance, usually by wholesalers, tour operators, or receptive operators who intend to sell them as components of tour packages.
Conversion	Getting “heads in beds” or otherwise closing the sale. Differs from “hospitality.” Hospitality is being warm, friendly and helpful. Conversion is active selling.
Demand generators	Strategies and programs developed by DMOs and suppliers to generate destination demand. Examples include festivals, events, cultural tours, and consumer promotion.
Engagement	On Facebook (and other social media platforms), engagement is when people perform actions on your Page. They may like a post, click on a link, or comment on an image for example. With Facebook Insights, engagement is measured as the number of times a post is clicked, liked, shared, or commented on.
Reach	A measure of the range of influence of any content; it is the measurement of how content is spread across various social media channels. Think of it as the number of eyeballs a piece of content is getting. On Facebook, for example, “total reach” is the number of people that have seen a particular post.
Selected Key Industry Associations	
DMA West	Destination Marketing Associations West, a membership organization of visitor bureaus throughout the western United States.
Visit California	The tourism marketing agency for the state.
California Travel Association	Membership organization offering education and advocacy for state tourism operators.
U.S. Travel Association	National, non-profit organization representing and advocating for all components of the travel industry.
Destination International	Global association of travel industry agencies and groups, offering education and advocacy for members. Visit Mendocino holds a certification from the globally recognized Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP); this serves as a visible industry distinction that defines quality and performance standards in destination marketing and management.
Brand USA	Agency chiefly responsible for marketing the USA as a destination to the rest of the world.
North Coast Tourism Council	One of eight rural regions designated by Visit CA to encourage international tourism beyond the gateways. Mendocino County is one of the four counties in the Council.