



**Visit Mendocino County
Marketing Plan:
July 2021 – June 2022**

SUBMITTED TO MENDOCINO COUNTY TOURISM COMMISSION & COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

JUNE 10, 2021



visitmendocino.com

VMC Marketing Plan: January – March 2020

Executive Summary

Mendocino County Tourism Commission is entering its sixth year as the Destination Marketing Agency of record for the County of Mendocino. The COVID-19 Pandemic and its restrictions have begun to lift and we are seeing record numbers of visitors to our destination. The team has worked diligently over the last year to reorganize operations, procedures and develop creative assets that resonate with our target segments. Our website and social media channels continue to see the largest number of virtual visitors in VMC's history and our partners are realizing increased reservations via our website booking engine. The team will continue to enhance and calibrate our website "calling card" to optimize ROI.

The 2021/2022 fiscal year will bring the team out of the office, again, making in-person visits to our partners and stakeholders. The organization will take an in-depth look at its portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources and augment as necessary to provide the maximum support to tourism facing businesses in Mendocino County. With an updated Strategic Plan adopted, the team will focus on working hand-in-hand with partners, stakeholders and the County of Mendocino to address the need for investment in and development of sustainable tourism infrastructure and pro-tourism business regulation to enhance the offerings and assets of our beautiful destination.

Our annual FEAST festivals, Mushroom and Crab, are coming out of hiatus with a fresh array of events and programs. The Festival & Marketing Committees are in the development stages of a new "Made in Mendo" Harvest FEAST and breathing new life into the Spring Beer Trail that was scheduled to make its debut in April of 2020 but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent Shelter in Place orders.

We will continue to create an invitation to make the trek, stay a while, and 'Find Your Happy' with 'Room to Roam'.

Respectfully,



Travis Scott

Strategic Plan

This Marketing Plan adheres to the initiatives set forth in the three-year strategic plan that has been adopted at the organizations May 2021 Board of Directors (BoD) meeting and will be put into action at the start of the 2021-2022 fiscal year (FY). The purpose of the plan is to align the core strategies of the organization. (The Strategic Plan is attached to this Marketing Plan as Appendix 1.)

VISION:

A diversified and thriving economy supported by our community, offering enriching experiences for our guests.

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

- Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses
- Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners
- Enhance VMC's portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources
- Refresh our brand identity to align with target segments and gain a competitive advantage

The Visit Mendocino County team will work hand-in-hand with its Web Development and Social Media contractor, Agency Xi, to build on the robust and engaging Awareness and Advertising campaigns launched in FY 2018/2019. Focus will remain on brand awareness first, followed by festivals and shoulder season activities to drive tourism during those times.

BRAND MANAGEMENT:

For the 2021/2022 Fiscal year, VMC staff will:

- Manage the Visit Mendocino County brand
 - ↳ Arrange an RFP for a refresh of its brand identity
- Explore new brand opportunities and partnerships
- Guide other VMC partners in the use of the brand style guide
- Manage awareness studies as requested by the Marketing Committee and 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
- Creative testing

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

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 Marketing Committee and staff will continue to build out new creative assets for the new countywide festivals that will reflect the brand and provide accompanying website landing pages. VMC will keep its main focus on developing creative campaigns that continue to raise awareness for Mendocino County as a world class tourism destination.

BUILD AWARENESS:

VMC will raise awareness by:

- Exploring new ways to find and connect with potential visitors
- Creating more shareable assets (videos, photos, podcasts, commercials, others to be determined)
- Developing and helping to manage new promotions (e.g., The Great Key Hunt, Travel Passports and give-a-ways.)
- Managing all media planning, buying, and reporting
- Managing online demand generations
- Launching new and updated 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
- Maintain the working order of the Bookdirect.net booking link on the VMC.com website and continue to integrate new partners to the booking link
- Look into new additions for the WordPress platform
- Periodic software updates and backup and security consulting as needed
- Agency Xi will continue to offer VMC staff training on website best practices and operations

Marketing Goal: Raise visitor awareness of Mendocino County and strengthen tourism's contribution to County vitality

Total marketing investment: \$275,515

Public Relations:

- Increase tourism revenue through the development and implementation of the annual integrated marketing and public relations plan.
- Increase website traffic
- Increase shoulder season visitation rate
- Boost community support of the tourism industry

The PR team works to expand our branding and media messaging using key “passion points” to identify and secure media coverage of Mendocino County. Fiscal year 2020/2021 showed milestones for VMC’s PR team, achieving nearly 700 third-party placements with an ad equivalency of \$555 million dollars by working with past media visitors and giving them inspiration to create new stories to share with readers during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As the COVID-19 Pandemic recovery continues in the tourism industry, Mendocino County by nature is a prime destination for road trip visitors. Confidence in air travel continues to be low going into the 2021/2022 FY, so the team will continue to keep the Mendocino County voice amplified in key markets to keep our destination top-of-mind for the road-trip traveler. The team(s) will continue to work hand-in-hand to keep our message in front of the Media. For the 2021/2022 FY, 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 and increase tourism revenue during the shoulder seasons and continued COVID-19 pandemic recovery
- Initiate awareness among key market niches and lifestyle 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 both traditional and emerging
- Ignite media interest via proactive, timely campaigns focused on print, television and social media influencers
- Leverage and create “news” value as an economic driver for visitation
- Convert consumers 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, SF Travel, BrandUSA and others via cooperative programming

TARGETS:

Demographics:

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

Geographic:

- Primary: State of California Drive Market
- Secondary: Fly/Drive Markets: Oregon, Arizona, Nevada, Washington
- Tertiary: NO INTERNATIONAL in 2021/2022 FY

CORE PROGRAM:

Drive awareness and brand messaging with a focus on shoulder/need seasons via creation and distribution of timely, newsworthy materials targeted to key niches. Materials include two annual Hot Sheets (editorial sheets for angle generations and long lead media) and a host of focused materials directed to passion and lifestyle segments: micro-trips, eco-getaways, food & drink, family travel and emerging trend niches.

Activities will include:

- Annual update of media kit
- Proactive media relations campaign(s) tied to timely themes, openings and seasons
- Bi-annual visual library update, as needed
- Goal of 11 releases for the FY

MEDIA MISSIONS/IN-MARKET EDITORIAL APPOINTMENTS:

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

- Denver
- Phoenix
- Seattle
- Vancouver
- Goal of 1 Media Mission

MEDIA FAMILIARIZATION AND SOCIAL INFLUENCER PROGRAM

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

- Conduct individual media outreach based on agreed upon communication pillars
- Vet and manage all media, social influencer and blogger requests
- Create media itineraries
- Research and secure online influencer teams, negotiate photography buys
- Goal of 20 visits

TRADE SHOWS:

Attend targeted media trade shows to boost Mendocino County's visibility and secure future editorial visits.

- Visit California/Los Angeles
- Society of American Travel Writers Conference
- IMM
- Visit California/San Francisco
- IPW
- Goal of 2 trade shows

PROMOTIONS:

Dovetail VMC strategic promotions and/or in-market events tied to VMC's overall branding to boost revenue during critical off seasons.

- Support and amplify VMC promotion and secure in-market media coverage
- Goal: TBD

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS:

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

PR TOOLKIT:

Retain vendors and subscriptions to the following on behalf of VMC:

- Vocus Cission Media Database (KOLI contract)
- Burrelles Media Tracking Service (VMC Contract)
- Constant Contact Distribution Service (KOLI Contract)
- Society of American Travel Writers' Membership (KOLI membership)

PROGRAMMING:

- Provide ongoing counsel and insight on market developments and opportunities
- Execute annual PR Workplan and Timeline
- Draft and distribute monthly PR report
- Draft and distribute monthly Media Impact Report
- Conduct monthly MCTC PR call
- Attend MCTC BoD and/or Marketing Committee meetings as requested
- Participate in quarterly site checks surrounding new hotels/attractions
- Draft and distribute annual fiscal report

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Realize \$10 million in advertising equivalency
- Secure 500 qualified media placements
- Reach an estimated 250 million potential visitors/circulation

Total PR Investment: \$147,700

Website & Social Media:

- Increase website traffic
- Increase VMC communication and engagement rate
- Refresh VMC's brand identity to align with target segments

The VisitMendocino.com website continues to be our calling card and is continually calibrated for best appeal. Ambient home page videos are switched out monthly along with an ever-changing array of "MendoMoments" inviting website visitors to stay awhile and explore the county.

The team will continue to develop and deploy digital campaigns that build on the successes of past campaigns. The organization has been successful in engaging audiences and more than doubled website visitation in the 2020/2021 FY and realized a better than predicted increase in actual 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. The implementation of a new lodging booking link on the website allows the organization to report direct ROI and B to B conversion.

On Instagram, VMC will continue to curate content to land on the "Let's Get Social" portion of the VMC website. A new contract with CrowdRiff will allow VMC access to user generated photo content to include in this section of the website and access to assets for development of creative.

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 website visitors and the number of click-throughs to their particular website. Under the new contract with bookdirect.net and the newly implemented booking link, VMC will be able to send bi-annual reports to stakeholders and partners with exactly the number of website visitors converted to reservations.

Social media continues to grow as a motivator for travel, spanning all demographics. People look to their friends and family for recommendation on travel destination - 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 excite our core visitors to share and spread the word about Mendocino County. To that end we will engage with key content producers via Instagram to generate dynamic 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 in Instagram by likes, followers, and hashtags/mentions.

Agency Xi and the VMC team will continue creation of a series of 15 and 30 second videos to run on social media platforms that will highlight iconic Mendocino County experiences. Metrics have shown that audiences engage with experiential video at a higher rate than with passive video shoots.

SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS:

- Use visual marketing software to increase organic traffic to our social media portfolio
- Integrate a call to action in social media posts
- Continue to increase engagement on all social media channels YOY

WEBSITE GOALS:

- Develop and implement a portal for partner and stakeholder asset submission
- Continue to monitor, measure, and analyze website traffic in order to drive visitation

Total Website Development Investment: \$67,200

Sales:

- Increase website traffic
- Increase VMC communication and engagement rate
- Refresh VMC's brand identity to align with target segments

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 Chico and 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, which 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, we believe our geography 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 2021/2022 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 Explorers Guide. We also answer questions and provide recommendations. We encourage partnerships with local stakeholders by inviting them to help staff the Visit 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 and 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 visitor 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 counties, 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 \$15,000 Visit CA stipend. The ED is the Administrator and treasurer for this regional group, thus increasing Mendocino County impact and visibility. Mendocino County is consequently 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, Eldorado 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.

SALES GOALS:

- Consumer Shows - Attend 2 consumer trade shows at various geographic locations and obtain 1,000 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 (when appropriate)
- Hotel Contracts – Facilitate the signing of 5 new contracts
- Sales missions – Attend one domestic sales mission in partnership with Visit CA
- Leads – Provide local stakeholders with 100 leads for group and individual business

Total sales investment: \$33,990

Visitor Services:

- **Increase Mendocino County Sales Tax Receipts Over 3 Years**
- **Increase County Investment in Tourism Products and Infrastructure**
- **Boost Community’s Support of the Tourism Industry**

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 2021/2022 fiscal year are:

- The VMC team will distribute the new “Explorer’s 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 VMC’s branding by distributing orange bags with logo
- Identify locations and obtain quotes for new gateway signs

Total visitor services investment: \$ 46,512

Visitor Services:

- **Increase Shoulder Season Visitation Rates**
- **Increase Participation Rate in VMC Programs**

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: Crab FEAST Mendocino in January and Mushroom FEAST Mendocino in November. The organization continues forward with plans for a Spring “Beer Trail” FEAST for the 2021/2022 FY. The Festival & Marketing committees are currently envisioning a potential refresh of the November Mushroom FEAST to capture broader participation from partners & stakeholders. Building on events already taking place, rather than creating an entirely new concept, will be an avenue to increase partner/stakeholder participation.

FY 2021/2022 goals are:

- Launch a successful recreation of Mushroom FEAST Mendocino with a broader theme such as “Harvest” or “Made in Mendocino”
- Work with event holders of previous FEASTS to develop new festival and event offerings to attract visitors to Mendocino County in the shoulder season
- Record partner & stakeholder participation in our internal database; update and add contacts/businesses
- Encourage event holders to work with other “visit” organizations, Chambers, Destination Hopland and winery/vineyard promotional 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, consumer spending and relevancy of FEAST(s) events.

Festival and events expenses are part of the Visitor Services budget.

Partnerships:

- **Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses**
- **Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners**
- **Enhance VMC’s portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources**
- **Create process and framework for the evaluation and investment in event promotion with an emphasis on shoulder seasons**

The Strategic Plan references ways that VMC can work with its partners in businesses throughout the county as to the benefits of the tourism industry and its effects on the local economy. With a larger focus placed on partnerships and partner communication and offerings under the newly adopted Strategic Plan, the VMC team will continue to keep its finger on the pulse of new tourism-related businesses in the county by personal visits, phone calls and emails and surveying partner websites, etc. We will also work on the development of new partner resources and expand our array of offerings available.

Goals for 2021/2022 are:

- Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses
- Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners
- Work with partners to develop, promote and strengthen beneficial tourism activities and events
- Continue Hotel Adoption Program visits to properties and updates to internal database. These records are used for group sales and small meeting opportunities
- Promote the VMC Partners at Work Facebook page
- Creation of partner brochure and Tourism Matters Card to further education on the value and 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 the development of our communities in their entirety
- Advocate for the development of pro-business county regulations
- Advocate for County investment and development of sustainable tourism infrastructure

Total partnership investment: \$46,512

Personnel, Operations & Administration:

- 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 designed for destination marketing
- Attendance at key travel industry conferences to provide access to industry trends and successful examples of best practices, furthering internal knowledge benefiting the VMC program of work
- Maintain accreditation from the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program, offered by Destination Marketing Association International
- Create and distribute quarterly and annual reports
- Create and distribute VMC’s annual Marketing Plan
- Executive Director to work with BID Advisory Board on annual BID report for the County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors’ approval
- Keep the MendocinoTourism.org website updated with Board and Committee agendas, packets and minutes
- Attend Board and BID Advisory meetings
- Attend County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors’ meetings as warranted

Total personnel, operations and administrative investment: \$414,360

**Proposed Budget for FY 2021-2022 Annual Budget Including BID assessments,
Mendocino County Matching Funds and Miscellaneous Income**

INCOME	
MCTC BID Assessment	809,136.35
County of Mendocino Matching Funds	404,568.24
County Administrative Fee	-24,274.06
Event Brochure Ads	0
Interest	240
Total	1,189,670.53
EXPENSES	
Advertising/Media	27,255.71
Marketing/Public Relations	147,700.16
Website Maintenance & Development	67,200.00
Leisure & Group Sales	33,990.00
Visitor Services	60,499.48
Partnerships	46,512.50
Administrative Expenses	108,834.88
Personnel	305,526.51
Total	1,045,779.24
Portion TO Unrestricted Reserve	143651.3
BOTTOM LINE	0
Reserve/Contingency Fund	296,377.98

STAFFING:

- Executive Director: Travis Scott
- Marketing & Sales: Ramon Jimenez
- Partner Relations & Communication: Jamie Peters-Connolly
- Administrative Support: Kathy Janes
- Public Relations: Koleen Hamblin, KOLI Communications
- Social Media & Website: Brendan McGuigan, Agency Xi
- Accounting: Teresa Crudo, 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, At-Large
- Raakesh Patel; Large Lodging Operator, Inland
- Brett Schlesinger; Food & Beverage Member
- Kasie Gray; Regional Promotional, Inland
- Elaine Wing-Hillesland; Small Lodging Operator, Coastal
- Open Seat; Arts & Attractions

APPENDICES:

Visit Mendocino County

2021–2023 Strategic Plan



Vision	Mission	Position	Values	Reputation
<p>A diversified and thriving economy supported by our community, offering enriching experiences for our guests.</p>	<p>Visit Mendocino County stewards and amplifies the total Mendocino County experience</p>	<p>In order to support our stakeholders, generate economic activity for county residents through tourism, and inspire our visitors, Visit Mendocino County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets the Mendocino County experience to key regional and domestic markets Creates, develops, and manages brand awareness for the county. Connects people and organizations to opportunities. Provides tourism resources and information to in-county partners. Optimizes return on investment through responsible fiscal management 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Imperatives		Objectives	Initiatives	
<p>Optimize and demonstrate our impact through relationships and collaborations</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Participation Rate in VMC Programs Increase VMC Communication Engagement Rate Boost Community's Support of the Tourism Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a campaign to promote the value of VMC in driving positive results to local businesses Perform a needs assessment of our stakeholders and partners Enhance VMC's portfolio of stakeholder offerings and resources 	
<p>Raise visitor awareness of Mendocino County and strengthen tourism's contribution to County vitality</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Website Traffic Grow the BID Fund 5% Over 3 Years Increase Shoulder Season Visitation Rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and diversify visitor target market segments and competitive set Refresh our brand identity to align with target segments and competitive advantage Create process and framework for the evaluation and investment in event promotion with an emphasis on shoulder seasons 	
<p>Steward and Advocate for the Mendocino County Experience</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase County Investment in Tourism Products and Infrastructure Increase Mendocino County Sales Tax Receipts Over 3 Years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the development of pro-business county regulations Advocate for County investment and development of sustainable tourism infrastructure Align destination development activities to Visit California's Stewardship Objectives 	

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 <u>between</u> 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.
<u>Receptives</u>	In effect, " <u>middle men</u> " between tour operators and hotel/lodging owners, chiefly in overseas markets. <u>Receptives</u> 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.