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2011-12 Business Plan

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TRAVEL SALEM'S DNA

Mission

Travel Salem markets and promotes the greater Salem area as a premier, year-round destination for conventions, events and leisure travelers. Serve as the official destination marketing organization and a vital tourism economic development generator for the region.

Vision

Through bold innovation and integrated partnerships, Travel Salem's programs and services heighten the visitor experience and drive economic impact, which supports local businesses, job creation and an enhanced quality of life.

Values

Travel Salem is committed to service, integrity and excellence that provide tangible results and strengthen the businesses and communities served.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Create partnerships & resources to influence community dialogue and decision-making that impacts tourism, quality of life and the Salem area's viability as a travel destination. Support local businesses by providing opportunities and solutions to open doors, address challenges and harness best practices. Create broader understanding of tourism as an economic development generator with the community at large.

- a) Develop a Travel Salem Community Action Committee to serve as industry advocates on boards, task forces and committees
 - Engage Travel Salem Board members as well as industry professionals to leverage connections & influence
 - Supply advocates with materials needed to build awareness of the industry (e.g. pocket facts, reports, statistics)
- b) Redefine who sits at the region's tourism "table," creating broad engagement to help shape industry dialogue and outcomes
 - Ensure diversity of interests & perspectives are included in conversations that impact direction & vision of the region's tourism industry (e.g. commodities, agriculture, health, education, manufacturing, high-tech)
- c) Develop the "tourism canon" of key defining principles that are embraced by stakeholders and used to help establish a unified industry platform; incorporate into communication strategies
 - Engage key stakeholders in dialogue about how to define the tourism industry so that tourism outcomes & initiatives are widely understood & embraced
- d) Develop a data dashboard that tells the tourism story in accessible and meaningful terms; incorporate into communication strategies
 - Engage key stakeholders in dialogue about the facts & information necessary to reveal the impact & strength of the industry as an economic development generator
- e) Engage with key stakeholders, and work synergistically with other industries (e.g. commodities, manufacturing, healthcare, education), on issues that impact the Salem area's appeal as a premier destination
 - Develop creative solutions with local businesses that operate on a global basis to help promote the region as a vibrant destination (e.g. Kettle Foods, Garmin, Yamasa, Sanyo, Willamette Valley Fruit Company)
- f) Enhance partnerships to leverage influence and resources
 - Utilize key partners to open doors for the tourism industry & enhance access to new opportunities

CAPACITY BUILDING

Develop long-term stable funding, strategic staffing levels, and the technology and tools necessary for organizational growth.

Various strategies will be employed to drive results in the following areas, however, detail is not provided to protect trade secrets.

- a) Maximize available resources and seek new funding streams through partnerships, innovation and product development initiatives
- b) Create a supportive environment for growth & development of Cultivating Communities, Travel Salem's nonprofit foundation
- c) Increase Membership participation to represent the diverse business community in Marion & Polk counties
- d) Build an effective "team" to support scope of services using a strategic staffing methodology
- e) Implement technology and streamline processes to enhance program efficiency
- f) Seek ways to promote sustainable practices to positively impact the bottom line

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Position the region as a desirable travel destination for convention & leisure travelers utilizing vertically integrated marketing & communication strategies. Leverage the regional travel experience by connecting visitors to the unique people, products, and stories that will lengthen the visitor's stay. Drive Travel Salem's key performance measurements.

- a) Develop and incorporate a comprehensive brand promise in all communication strategies; evangelize the Salem area brand "Absolutely Oregon"
 - Develop a succinct & meaningful brand promise (in 30-second elevator speech style) & incorporate into all communications
 - Build awareness & engagement with businesses & organizations to jump on the "brand wagon" and leverage an "Absolutely" tag in their marketing efforts

- b) Emphasize Travel Salem's central pillars (culinary, recreation and cultural/heritage) to position the Salem area as a premier leisure & convention destination
 - Position pillars in all strategies & platforms to build on consistent messaging
 - Package other categories & niches in with pillars (e.g. culinary & family, recreation & shopping) to enhance destination appeal
 - Develop compelling visual components to represent the pillars & leverage in advertising, public relations, consumer engagement & sales efforts
 - Recruit & engage partners that represent the pillars

- c) Leverage key partnerships and strategies to explore points of intersection that expand Travel Salem's reach and effectiveness (e.g. Travel Oregon, Willamette Valley Visitors Association, Travel Portland, SEDCOR, Chambers of Commerce, and groups representing Travel Salem's central pillars)
 - Serve on the Willamette Valley Visitors Association's board of directors ensuring the Salem region is represented in all initiatives
 - Engage with Travel Oregon's programs at the highest level
 - Partner with SEDCOR, regional Chambers of Commerce, ArtSmart, EID administrator, business & neighborhood associations, etc.
 - Develop a speakers bureau to ensure awareness & engagement with the region's tourism industry

- d) Maintain & enhance a strong and dynamic Travel Café & Visitor Information Network focusing on personal and customized assistance; provide platform for innovative connections between local businesses and the consumer
 - Seek new Travel Café partnerships to enhance the visitor experience
 - Research technology to enhance the visitor experience
 - Recruit new AbsolutelyTix partners
 - Expand the Visitor Information Network as appropriate to leverage high-traffic, strategic locations

- e) Utilize a centralized and coordinated content management approach, to maximize content across all marketing & communication platforms
 - Utilize & leverage MOC1 (Manifesto of Content) as an efficient content management tool
 - Maximize MOC1 content & themes to drive consistent messaging

- f) Leverage online strategies to promote the Salem area as a preferred destination
 - Maximize search engine optimization strategies to maintain TravelSalem.com in top three search results
 - Maintain & innovate social media & consumer engagement opportunities
 - Broaden & expand content & points of interest on Interactive Online Map
 - Leverage OregonWineCountry.org, TravelOregon.com and others to drive traffic to TravelSalem.com
 - Expand online referrals to TravelSalem.com through an integrated network of member & partner sites

- g) Execute a vigorous public relations and communications strategy to increase exposure, build credibility with target markets and the community, and drive consumers to action
 - Implement creative content ideas that engage & motivate consumers to action
 - Mine the Cision database to harvest the most advantageous pitches
 - Create a speakers bureau that targets civic groups, neighborhood associations and others to build awareness of the Salem region as a destination
 - Create “pocket facts” to serve as talking points about the tourism industry & keep key messages top-of-mind
 - Leverage Travel Oregon & Willamette Valley Visitors Association’s PR efforts

- h) Update the Salem area visitor profile to leverage travel trends, preferences and brand opportunities

- i) Leverage “green” messaging to enhance the region’s marketability and overall appeal with consumers
 - Target “green” themed communication’s channels to expand reach promoting the region as a premier destination for green travelers & meetings

- j) Provide recruitment & relocation support to area businesses
 - Serve as the primary resource for visitors interested in relocating to the Salem area
 - Update the relocation packet annually

- k) Develop standardized visitor services that are employed throughout the region (e.g. Q Cares certification, a statewide customer service program)
 - *To be executed in year two of the 11-14 Strategic Plan*

CONVENTIONS & EVENTS

Contribute to the overall economic health of the region by booking conventions and events through direct sales efforts, cooperative promotional efforts and innovative marketing strategies. Drive Travel Salem's key performance measurements.

- a) Focus on high-yield citywide business opportunities, and develop reciprocal partnerships to support & drive regional benefit
 - Work in tandem with large venues such as Oregon State Fair, Salem Conference Center, Wallace Marine Park and other meeting/event facilities to identify opportunities and leverage existing marketing efforts and resources
 - Meet annually with key partners to review coordinated strategies for securing citywide opportunities

- b) Utilize a wide variety of sports venues and opportunities to capture events and tournaments
 - Partner with the City of Salem to secure annual national softball tournaments
 - Partner with local sports associations & organizations (e.g. Cascade Futbol Club, Kroc Center) to identify and secure new opportunities
 - Work with collegiate partners (e.g. Corban University, Willamette University, Western Oregon University, Chemeketa) to identify and secure new opportunities
 - Engage with the Oregon Sports Commission and Oregon State Athletic Association as well as other related groups to identify and secure new opportunities
 - Work with regional Chambers of Commerce to identify regional sporting venues

- c) Utilize online strategies to engage meeting planners
 - Actively push convention, event and meeting information through Travel Salem's social media channels
 - Develop pay per click/key word advertising initiatives
 - Develop a membership & community referral promotion to leverage local champions with connections to associations & groups

- d) Research creative niches (e.g. chess tournaments, robotics, tattoo, dance/cheer competitions) as well as primary feeder markets
 - Work with venues & local leaders to determine feeder markets & developing trends
 - Leverage community & business connections to identify niche opportunities
 - Partner with high schools to leverage club connections & competitive circuits

- e) Leverage cooperative marketing opportunities (e.g. tradeshow, familiarization tours, advertising, sales missions)
 - Work with MarCom to create a convention/event PR plan to market Salem to meeting, event and group tour publications
 - Engage with the economic development initiatives of key partners (e.g. cities, counties, chambers, SEDCOR)
 - Secure partners for co-op tradeshow & advertising opportunities

- f) Lead efforts to develop reciprocal regional partnerships to keep business in the mid-Willamette Valley
- *To be executed in year two of the 11-14 Strategic Plan*
- g) Market & promote sustainable practices of the region’s hospitality industry as a way to capture group business interested in green destinations
- Utilize MarCom initiatives to deliver key messages to meetings industry
 - Engage with Green Meetings Industry Council, continue to partner with Marion County EarthWise program and others as identified
 - Leverage venue achievements & enhancements in communication strategy (e.g. Salem Conference Center LEED certification)
 - Develop “green” icons to identify green businesses in print & online promotions
- h) Continue to engage with the Salem Area Lodging Association, Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association and other industry partners
- Ensure two-way dialogue through active engagement with industry partners to strengthen the region’s ability to compete & capture new business
- i) Develop and pitch pre-packaged itineraries to groups
- *To be executed in year two of the 11-14 Strategic Plan*

SERVICES

Provide the information, resources and support necessary to enhance the travel experience of the convention & group delegate and bolster repeat visitation.

- a) Secure first-time & repeat business utilizing proactive communication and outreach strategies and by providing superior customer service
 - Build attendance & delegate awareness through pre-conference promotion
 - Provide value-added services & support to venue & lodging partners for groups already booked

- b) Continue to develop partnerships with local businesses and marketing entities in an effort to recruit new opportunities, enhance client experiences and streamline efforts
 - Partner with venues to include Travel Salem services information in sales packets
 - Partner with organizations & businesses that enhance Salem events (e.g. EID administrator, regional Chambers of Commerce)
 - Network with fraternal & civic organizations

- c) Utilize industry partners as “champions” to increase awareness of services offered, and recruitment of new opportunities
 - Engage residents & businesses through public relations outreach & speakers bureau
 - Network with fraternal & civic organizations

- d) Develop a “service” brand: a strategic and thoughtful approach to high-level customer service which will enhance recruitment & retention of group business
 - Conduct post-event follow through & leverage meeting planner feedback to provide testimonials
 - Provide customized services to add value & enhance the group’s experience
 - Encourage partners to participate in the Q Cares customer service program to ensure that the service exceeds customer expectations

TRAVEL SALEM BOARD & STAFF

STAFF

Angie Morris
President & CEO

Marketing & Communications

Irene Bernards
Executive Vice President,
Director of Marketing & PR

Kathie Reeves
Marketing Manager

Jenie Skoy
Public Relations Manager

Barb Cowan
Guest Services & Volunteer Coordinator

Conventions & Groups

Debbie McCune
Vice President, Director of Sales

Jessica Arce
Administrative & Services Assistant

Tara Preston
Program Assistant

Community Development

Sue Nichols
Community Development Director

Janine Moothart
Community Development Manager

11-12 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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