



January 14, 2021

2020-2021 Marketing Plan Mid-Year Update:

Brand Management: For the 2020-2021 fiscal year, VMC staff will:

- Manage the Visit Mendocino County brand
- Explore new brand opportunities and partnerships
- Guide other VMC partners in the use of the brand style guide
- Manage awareness studies as requested by MCTC's Board of Directors (BoD)

The above listed tasks are continually ongoing. Since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic and shelter-in-place the VMC team has partnered with more local organizations than ever before. One of those partnerships was with Mendocino Area Parks (MAPA). This partnership focused on a campaign to remind visitors to pack out their trash. VMC worked with MAPA and Braggadoodon to produce a series of signs, posters and banners keeping in line with VMC's brand guide. To date this FY, there has been no requests for awareness studies.

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

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

These initiatives have not been appropriate this fiscal year. It has only been responsible for VMC to embark on a total of 6 weeks of "marketing" this fiscal year. Once we can begin fully marketing Mendocino County for tourism, VMC will undertake our secondary, online and creative testing. Look for updates in the 21-22 FY.

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

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

The VMC staff and Marketing Committee has worked on new creative to replace the countywide festivals that reflect the brand and provide accompanying website landing pages or MendoMoments. VMC has worked on promotions that will assist in raising awareness for Mendocino County. Our first/reopening “Room to Roam” never deployed as the need for marketing following the reopening of lodging to leisure travel was not necessary. The second campaign “Our View of Fall” began on October 5 and ran through November 30. At that time the team was prepared to release our third campaign, which was a repurpose of our first, “Room to Roam” with a focus on itinerary driven micro-trips, was halted due to an updated shelter-in-place order from the State. This campaign is ready to release once the State opens all regions for leisure travel, again.

Build Awareness: VMC will build awareness by:

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

Brand awareness is at the center of each project VMC undertakes, this year the team focused heavily on Social Media to keep Mendocino top-of-mind for potential future travelers. PR focused efforts on “armchair” travel media, those writers who have been here – love the area and were willing to write about us again. Working in partnership with North of Ordinary (NCTC) we have new video and photo assets.

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

The team continually maintains the website as VMC’s “calling card” – it is our largest asset and is in constant need of calibration and updating. We work continually on these initiatives.

Website Maintenance & Upgrades: Agency Xi and VMC staff maintain the perfect working order of the VisitMendocino.com website.

- Ongoing support as needed, typically resolved within 24-48 hours of request except for weekends and holidays
- Explore the cost and availability to include a lodging booking engine
- Build a content submission form for events page

- Build an event management system that automatically downloads events into email format for biweekly events calendar distribution
- Periodic software updates and backup, upgrade, security consulting as needed
- Agency Xi will offer training for all VMC staff on how to add business listings, events, etc.

With the organization experiencing “downtime” in with marketing Mendocino County as a tourism destination, the team took on backend projects that previously have been overlooked. In November VMC entered into a contract with Simpleview to host a hotel booking link on the www.visitmendocino.com website, this is at no charge to our partners and will provide VMC and our partners direct data as to the effectiveness of our marketing campaigns. This project should be complete and the booking link live in February or March of this year. We also upgraded the website to allow our MendoMoments blog section to have more capability allowing us to create more visually appealing landing pages. Our content submission form for events has been active since October, this upgrade directly saves staff time and will prove to be more useful in the future as we begin to host more events on our website. Under the direction of the BoD and marketing committee the team began building out a cannabis section on the website, this includes logo, business listing section and the connectivity to the mapping portion of the website. We expect to have the actual assets transferred to us in the coming weeks and this classification of businesses will go live shortly following the receipt of those assets.