

**ACVB Meetings & Conventions
Charrette® Planning Outcome
January 2011**

In August 2010, the meetings & conventions division of the Albuquerque Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) began the Charrette® Planning process with McKee Wallwork Cleveland. The goal of this process was to develop a clear and focused plan that would, first and foremost, benefit the destination of Albuquerque as well as hotels, the Albuquerque Convention Center and other meeting venues. The research-driven marketing process was designed to determine a primary objective, clearly define the target audience, describe Albuquerque's brand identity in terms of meetings, and ultimately create an integrated sales and marketing plan (both long- and short-term).

Objectives

After several months of research and strategic planning, the comprehensive plan was revealed on January 18, 2011. The plan outlined the following objectives:

- Increase qualified leads (in the short-term, FY11-12)
- Improve closings and drive attendance (in the long-term, FY12-14)
- Continue to maintain a high-level of satisfaction and service to meeting planners and delegates (ongoing)

Research Results

Marketing research constituted the majority of the work in this plan development. Five primary research tactics were employed:

1. Focus groups with ACVB Senior Staff
2. In-person interviews with staff and key stakeholders
3. Online surveys with staff, key stakeholders, and meeting planners
4. Review of industry articles and studies
5. Recall of internal data

This research provided valuable insights and information, which culminated in these key findings:

- Albuquerque has a sweet spot today in terms of a meeting's size
- CVBs are valued and provide valuable information
- The Albuquerque Convention Center isn't a barrier for meeting planners
- The Downtown area and lack of things to do are concerns
- There is hope for the destination, with room for improvement and obvious opportunities to be had
- We have a solid brand foundation on which to build

Target Audience

The core of our target is a meeting planner that plans meetings with 150 to 700 rooms on peak. She is likely female, age 45+ with a college degree. She either works for one organization/association, multiple clients, or a third-party firm. She is likely located in the Washington DC area, Chicago, Dallas, or another similar city. She plans meetings for groups that are a good fit for Albuquerque based on our brand strengths and destination attributes. For example: science and engineering, health/medical, SMERF, government, and education.

Over the past few years, her job has gotten more difficult and she looks to CVBs to make her job easier, not harder. She's at the mercy of others (board, delegates, clients, etc.) and is a skilled negotiator. She responds to cost incentives and has to do more with less now. She probably hasn't booked a meeting in Albuquerque and may or may not use convention centers. She takes advice from her peers, is starting to use social media for professional purposes, but doesn't often text or use mobile apps for work (yet). She prefers to be contacted by email and phone (once you've established a relationship). She's busy and time-starved, needy, web-savvy, organized, a great multi-tasker, and particular.

She has an appreciation of the Southwest culture/lifestyle, but doesn't know much about Albuquerque and has probably never been here. She's heard of Santa Fe and the Balloon Fiesta but may think Albuquerque is hot like Phoenix. However, she's open-minded and likes to go to new places for meetings. The program is the most

important part of the meeting for her, but wants to select a place that has attractions and activities that will appeal to her delegates and their spouses.

She hates dealing with multiple contracts and having to gather information from multiple sources. She appreciates good follow-up and quick responses. She relies on CVBs because they are her local “foot on the ground”. She expects great service and appreciates transparency and honesty. Having a meeting under one roof is important to her. She wants transportation to be easy (to and around a destination). She has to stay on budget and meet her deadlines. She doesn't like the unexpected.

Brand Identity

The way we appeal to our meeting planner is by leveraging our solid brand positioning. For leisure travelers (aka, meeting delegates), we position Albuquerque as the place where you can escape and *experience a whole different reality*. Everything about this place is different – even the airport.

For the meeting planner, we will position Albuquerque as the destination where she can *plan her meeting and experience a whole different reality*. Everything about the *meeting planning process* in Albuquerque is different:

- The value
- The courtesy
- The thoroughness
- The follow up
- My group's importance
- The airport
- The shuttling
- The activities
- The hospitality
- The facilities
- The service
- The treatment
- More...

Albuquerque is authentic, hospitable and friendly, unexpected and captivating.

Integrated Plan

So how do we bring this to life for her? With a fully-integrated sales and marketing plan that utilizes tactics across multiple categories:

- Infrastructure
- Prospecting
- Events/Tradeshows
- FAMs/BETs
- Place-based
- Promotions/Offer
- Paid Placements
- Collateral
- Publicity
- Direct Marketing
- Online Marketing
- Social Media
- Local Campaign
- Mobile/Location Platforms

ACVB has already implemented several of tactics and is moving quickly to launch more. This is a process that will see results as the destination stakeholders work together. We will keep the lines of communication open and continue to monitor results to make adaptations and adjustments as necessary.