

Unite Virginia's "Cheat Sheet" for Businesses Seeking to Engage the LGBTQ Market Sector

LGBTQ Marketing

- The LGBTQ community boasts:
 - \$917 billion purchasing power
 - \$100-\$200 billion tourism industry
 - \$2.5 billion wedding industry
- The average LGBTQ median household income is \$83,000 (vs. the national average of \$52,000)
- LGBTQ consumers spend ~\$2,300/year on leisure and travel; non-LGBTQ consumers spend ~\$1,500/year
- 97% of the LGBTQ community took vacations in the past 12 months; national average = 64%
- *85% of LGBTQ consumers are more likely to purchase a product or service from a company that directly advertises to their community*
- 71% of LGBTQ consumers remain loyal to brands that are LGBTQ-inclusive
- 23% of LGBTQ consumers have switched brands because a competitor supported the LGBTQ community, even though that brand was more expensive or less convenient
- Significantly, to show their growing support of the LGBTQ community, *heterosexual allies are increasingly adopting the purchasing behaviors of the LGBTQ community* (purchasing from brands that directly market to the LGBTQ community, remaining loyal to brands that are LGBTQ-inclusive, etc.)
- LGBTQ media is the most effective way to reach LGBTQ consumers and travelers (builds trust, creates loyalty and nurtures brand ambassadors)
- LGBTQ *print* circulation is up 13% and rising
- Unlike other niche markets, the LGBTQ community can best be targeted through *print* advertising
- Readership of regional LGBTQ mags is up 47%; readership of national LGBTQ mags is down 37%
- Don't ignore digital advertising; rather, incorporate it into your broader LGBTQ marketing strategy that takes advantage of LGBTQ print media
- Influencer marketing (e.g. – YouTube personalities)
- Native content is extremely effective advertising that is authentic and can be applied through a variety of mediums (print, website, social media, e-blasts, blogs)
- Cause marketing: Cause + Commerce = Success!!

LGBTQ Weddings

- LGBTQ weddings are becoming BIG business
- Wedding industry will increase by \$73m+ next year in VA alone and will grow over time
- 80% of LGBTQ consumers are still single... marriage equality is still VERY new
- LGBTQ couples are reinventing traditions
- 86% of LGBTQ couples say that safety is a primary concern when choosing vendors
- Only 25% of wedding vendors currently advertise in LGBTQ media – a huge missed opportunity
- Wedding vendors' ad campaigns MUST represent the diversity of their clients
- Gay couples don't want to feel like they're planning a *gay* wedding – they want to feel like they're planning a wedding
- 87% of LGBTQ couples want vendors to be inclusive of ALL couples
- Include same-sex couples alongside straight couples (imagery)
- Include language that readily demonstrates your business is inclusive

- Participate in LGBTQ weddings shows to attract new clients and demonstrate that you truly support and celebrate marriage equality (cause + commerce)
- Whereas straight couples looking to get married are typically in their 20s and 30s, LGBTQ couples looking to get married represent ALL ages
- Review the 10 Myths About Same-Sex Weddings

Visitor Experience

- LGBTQ travelers have a high concern for cultural and safety issues
- The LGBTQ community travels more, stays longer and spends more money than non-LGBTQ travelers
- A destination's reputation for being LGBTQ-friendly is LGBTQ travelers' primary motivator for going there
- *Articles in LGBTQ media (both in print and online) are the single biggest influencer for LGBTQ travelers when they're making destination selections*
- LGBTQ consumers want experiential travel
- Gay and bisexual men describe themselves as urban core travelers
- Lesbian and bisexual women favor outdoor/nature travel
- LGBTQ parents with kids want family-friendly + LGBTQ-friendly (but they're parents first)
- LGBTQ travelers are looking for great restaurants, quality hotels, fun museums, popular local tourist activities, city tours, live shows & nightlife/bars
- LGBTQ travelers *love* hotel loyalty programs
- Best practice for digital marketing – Have *both* a LGBTQ tourism "micro-site" *and* include inclusive LGBTQ imagery/language throughout your website
- Best practice for print marketing – Rather than sex and rainbows, LGBTQ travelers want to see *themselves* represented in your marketing materials and ads
 - Show different genders, ages, races and families
 - Your destination, hotel or business has a lot to offer! Use different LGBTQ models to show off all that you have to offer!
- Shared Voices – In both digital and print ads and marketing materials, let real people tell the story of your destination to create *authentic* engagement and build trust

Additional Information

If you'd like additional information, would like to schedule a consultation or have a question, contact Unite Virginia, LLC anytime:



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