

Visit **BATON ROUGE**

AN AUTHENTIC LOUISIANA EXPERIENCE



2019 MARKETING PLAN



MISSION



The Visit Baton Rouge mission is to increase visitation to and awareness of the Greater Baton Rouge Area thereby enhancing economic impact.





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A YEAR OF AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES

To better define the voice of our city, Visit Baton Rouge began 2018 by taking a look within. A **rebrand** resulted in a new logo, tagline and overall brand definition—outlining the values, personality and essence of the brand, how those will be communicated and how each component ultimately works to uplift our community.

Building upon the momentum of our refreshed brand, the year's communication efforts focused on positioning Baton Rouge as **"An Authentic Louisiana Experience,"** while also fostering a rebirth of local passion and enthusiasm. In addition to a year-long media plan, the revenue generated from the Hotel Occupancy Tax allowed Visit Baton Rouge to increase its presence through media like Pandora radio and digital, and implement highly refined targeting both in and out of state. Examples include football specific targeting in and around LSU's opponent cities or native content and outdoor boards in opportunity markets such as Houston.

Some additional highlights of 2018's marketing efforts included a social campaign that showcased vibrant images from across the city, from shopping in Mid City to exploring the Bluebonnet Swamp, taken by local photographer Jordan Hefler. Each post—frequently picturing Baton Rouge natives—as well as a variety of illustrated digital ads, pushed users to new blog content to give readers more incentive to explore the food, music, culture and experiences that await in Baton Rouge.

Also in 2018 Baton Rouge **hosted major events and conventions** such as the Marucci World Championships, a growing annual event that will return in 2019, and the USTA Cajun Classic Wheelchair Tennis Championships, which brought in competitors from 26 countries. Rounding out the year, Visit Baton Rouge embarked on a co-op partnership with the Louisiana Marathon to bring visitors into the city by promoting not only the race, but the festivities that make our race weekend unlike anything else.

With **strengthened partnerships** throughout the city, the return of Bayou Country Superfest and other events such as the US Youth Regional Soccer Championships, the National Federation of Press Women and Travel South Domestic, 2019 boasts promising opportunity for Baton Rouge. Moving into the new year, the efforts of every department within Visit Baton Rouge will be guided by one very important fact—when we bring visitors into our city, and our city into the national spotlight, we're building a better Baton Rouge for all of us: creating jobs, attracting industries and entertainment and creating an exponential cycle of economic growth.

The strategies and tactics outlined in the following marketing plan will showcase an emphasis on **arts and culture** in Baton Rouge, as well as an increased effort to leverage our partnerships and growing reputation as a hub for **sports and athletics**.



[FOR VISIT BATON ROUGE]

STRENGTHS:

- Visit Baton Rouge launched a revitalized presence in Q1 of 2018 through an organization rebrand, creating a stronger brand presence both locally and nationally/internationally
- Consistent paid media efforts continue to raise brand awareness and familiarity for the Visit Baton Rouge Brand
- Concerted efforts to increase digital media efforts through video, social campaigns, and digital placements are showing an increase in awareness and engagement
- Tailored strategic initiatives throughout the year (SEC markets, opportunity markets, in-state, etc.) have expanded Visit Baton Rouge’s presence beyond annual national media plan
- Increased efforts with local partners have helped spread awareness of the Visit Baton Rouge mission and what the organization does for the city

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Recent renewal of Bayou Country Super Fest in Baton Rouge poses opportunity to leverage event to bring visitors into the city and extend their trip beyond the event
- Business-Leisure blended audience poses opportunities for new ways to reach meeting planners
- Pre-travel and in-destination behavior continues to become more integrated into the digital landscape, making it easier to target and retarget consumers and track behaviors once here
- Emerging millennial meetings demographic poses opportunity to leverage digital media in new and valuable ways
- Unique services offered by servicing department pose opportunities to showcase the uniqueness of the city to enhance both leisure and meetings travel
- Ample sports facilities throughout the area to host more travel sports-related events/ tournaments like the 2018 Marucci series



WEAKNESSES:

- A variety of unique geographic regions to represent with a single unified voice and image

THREATS:

- Lack of local understanding of both tourism’s impact and the variety of experiences Baton Rouge has to offer
- Lack of understanding of what Visit Baton Rouge actually does among locals



[FOR THE CITY OF BATON ROUGE]

STRENGTHS:

- Cleaner, more family-friendly perception than New Orleans, our top in-state competitor
- Authentic local culture hasn't been convoluted or overpowered by "kitschy" tourism pushes
- Role as Louisiana's Capital City inherently helps promote Baton Rouge's historical importance as well as our growing business sector
- Central proximity to our top consumer markets including Dallas, Houston, Pensacola, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Current travel trends focus more on "micro-moments" and experiencing authentic local culture
- Many visitors come to the area specifically to visit friends and family, who can then act as tour guides and advocates of the Greater Baton Rouge Area
- Increase in millennial travel, particularly weekend trips
- Proximity to major cities like Lafayette and New Orleans offers opportunities for cross-promotion
- Addition of Via Airlines offering direct flights from Baton Rouge to Orlando and Austin



WEAKNESSES:

- Proximity to New Orleans, our top in-state competitor
- City is sometimes late on adapting to new trends in comparison to other major destination cities

THREATS:

- Concern over safety and crime rates in the Baton Rouge area
- Large percentage of Baton Rouge visitors come to the area to visit friends and family, therefore are less likely to stay in hotels
- Perception that Baton Rouge does not have a lot to offer in terms of activities, entertainment, cultural experiences, etc.
- Perception that Baton Rouge is a "college town"



LEISURE TRAVELERS

PRIMARY

- In-State
 - Neighboring Louisiana Parishes
- 6-Hour Drive Markets
 - Dallas
 - Houston
 - Pensacola
 - Mississippi
 - Alabama

• Direct flights

- Orlando
- Austin

SECONDARY

- Secondary Designated Market Areas (DMAs)
 - Chicago
 - Atlanta
 - Memphis
 - Nashville

TERTIARY

- Community Stakeholders (East Baton Rouge Parish Locals)
- International travelers

Google has seen 6x growth in mobile searches for “things to do near me”

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS & TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

In-the-Moment Millennial

- Age: 25 - 34
- HHI: \$30K+
- Travel Behavior:
 - Look for lesser-known destinations with authentic cultures that can provide enriching experiences, i.e., unique hotel experiences, eating local foods, etc.
 - Look to peers and social media for travel inspiration
 - Share traveling experience on social media during and after trip
 - Embrace spontaneity and impromptu weekend trips

Gen X Couple

- Age: 35 - 54
- HHI: \$50K+
- Travel Behavior:
 - Look for safe, family-friendly destinations and often make plans around school schedules (most popular travel seasons are spring and summer)
 - Majority of families check five different online resources before booking
 - Majority are married, full-time workers
 - Interested in fine dining, shopping, gaming, historical sightseeing and family-friendly activities

Experiential marketing continues to remain a top trend for our primary demographic as we move into 2019

In a survey of millennials, experiencing a new culture (86%) and eating local foods (69%) were listed as determining factors in travel planning

76% of millennials said friends' recommendations were a main factor in decision-making



SALES / MEETINGS TRAVELERS

PRIMARY

- Meeting & Convention Planners
- Third-Party Meeting Planners
- Group Travel Planners
 - Sporting Events
 - Associations
 - Religious

SECONDARY

- Meetings attendees

AUDIENCE TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

- Looking for:
 - Convenience and accessibility of location
 - Quality and capabilities of venue
 - Affordability
 - Participant and guest experience
 - City experience/offerings outside of the meeting/event



GOALS

LEISURE MARKETING

- Increase overall visitation for new and returning visitors
- Increase brand awareness for Visit Baton Rouge
- Increase buy-in amongst community stakeholders and instill reinvigorated pride within Baton Rouge natives
- Increase hotel occupancy through leisure travel
- Strengthen lead generation funnel by maximizing use of digital platforms
- Strengthen partnerships with local businesses and organizations in the tourism and hospitality sector

MEETINGS/CONVENTIONS MARKETING

- Increase leads and bookings for new and returning meetings and conventions

SALES DEPARTMENT

- Increase hotel occupancy through hotel stays garnered by meetings and conventions
- Increase group lead generation

SERVICES DEPARTMENT

- Increase overall experience for new visitors in order to incentivize return visits and positive word-of-mouth

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Increase bookings for large-scale projects, signature events and films

In the following pages, we outline the strategies and tactics recommended to meet these goals. A comprehensive enactment of these strategies and tactics will yield the results necessary to reach the goals set forth in this marketing plan.

LEISURE MARKETING



LEISURE MARKETING

The Leisure Marketing team pursues new opportunities and communication channels to draw in-state and out-of-state visitors to Baton Rouge – enticing new visitors and converting day-trippers into overnight stays – in addition to implementing consistent initiatives that aim to raise awareness for the area and the Visit Baton Rouge organization.

GOAL 1:

Increase overall visitation for new and returning visitors

STRATEGIES

- Position Baton Rouge as a unique travel destination with authentic local flare and an exciting variety of offerings (special focus on art and culture in 2019)
- Support the promotion of local events, venues and activities, particularly new and existing specialty events that are most likely to bring in travelers from our drive markets and top DMAs
- Leverage strategic partnerships with local organizations to maximize promotion and marketing efforts

TACTICS

- **Leverage earned media** to optimize and increase the frequency of organic brand touchpoints (local/regional focus)
 - Identify and pursue recurring features with relevant publications
 - Engage press with regular interviews, pitches and interesting story angles that positively position Baton Rouge, e.g., venue renovations, up-and-coming local talent, etc.
 - Maintain media lists to create and distribute press releases
 - Invite social media influencers from top DMAs—travel bloggers, photographers, journalists, etc.—to experience Baton Rouge and document and share their stays
- Develop a new multi-platform campaign that embraces the uniqueness of Baton Rouge and continues to seed Baton Rouge as an authentic Louisiana experience
 - **Print**
 - Include call-to-action that drives traffic to the Visit Baton Rouge website to download a free Welcome Guide or itinerary (in select publications)
 - Optimize spend by focusing on select publications (see consumer media flow chart for reference)
 - **Outdoor**
 - Utilize existing outdoor board owned by Visit Baton Rouge to leverage consistent messaging and overall brand awareness
 - **Digital**
 - Use e-blasts, both those managed directly by Visit Baton Rouge as well as dedicated e-blasts through media partners, to drive people to the website through engaging content and event information



LEISURE MARKETING

- Tie into content calendar outlined through social media strategy for more impactful and cohesive messaging
- Convert awareness and engagement into purchase decisions by including hotel deals, event packages, etc. in e-mails and digital ad displays
- **Video**
 - Use video to share full-sensory stories, highlight local establishments and show viewers what it’s like to experience Baton Rouge food, music, etc. (consider culture and art as a focal point)
 - Use full webisodes on YouTube, social media and e-marketing, as well as shorter edits to be placed as pre-roll
- **Radio**
 - Position the city as a destination through the development of a radio spot that ties into the overall campaign thematic and highlights the unique culture and authentic experiences the city has to offer visitors
- Carry-out a **comprehensive social media strategy** aimed at driving web traffic, qualifying leads and ultimately bringing in overnight visitors while also creating a consistent brand for Visit Baton Rouge
 - Use ads and posts centered around seasonality and events to raise awareness and pinpoint interested viewers based on their engagement. Posts should be centered around providing engaging content (i.e. listicals and itineraries) to position VBR as the authority on what to do in Baton Rouge
 - Use geo-targeting to serve similar content to visitors once they’ve arrived to encourage further exploration of the city and ensure the best possible experience
- Promote hashtag (#ExploreBatonRouge) and utilize other hashtags with equity to further brand consistency and better track relevant conversations
- Integrate **content marketing strategy** across multiple platforms—website, social media, e-marketing, paid media—in order to maximize native communication and ultimately draw travelers into the travel consideration process
 - **Align content categories with activity seasonality and event calendar** to ensure information is relevant to viewers
 - Content may include **listicals, itineraries or general information/news** that coincides with overall seasonality and promotion efforts (see 2019 editorial calendar for more details)
 - Create seasonal landing pages on the Visit Baton Rouge website that coincide with the overall content calendar
- Pursue **experiential advertising** opportunities in order to raise awareness and generate buzz about Baton Rouge, particularly within our top DMAs
 - Examples include a “flash-performance” or a scavenger hunt in the Houston Galleria or staged street crews in nearby locations like New Orleans and Lafayette

Emails that include video show a 200-300% increase in click-through rates, and social video posts show 135% greater organic reach than still images

85% of leisure travelers decide on their itinerary only after having arrived at the destination



LEISURE MARKETING

- **Distribute Baton Rouge-branded promotional items** at large events as well as at individual venues during peak travel times, i.e., low-cost take-away mementos such as coasters, stickers, match boxes, t-shirts, etc., to strengthen and prolong positive sentiment toward Baton Rouge
 - Disperse Baton Rouge coasters at local bars that have live music during Blues Festival
 - Provide hotels with Baton Rouge branded promo items during large conventions like the USBC Women's Championships
- Continue to develop **program for cross-promotion and marketing support** of partner organization events or initiatives that align with Visit Baton Rouge's mission (Event Marketing Partnerships)
 - Consider customizing plans based on partnership investment and potential ROI
 - Plans may include supporting supplemental media buys, promoting through Visit Baton Rouge's marketing channels, and marketing training or recommendations
- Work with local restaurants, hotels and attractions to develop a **coupon book** to help drive visitor traffic to partner establishments
- Implement efforts to garner **user generated content (UGC)** to gain access to content and experiences that showcase the city in an authentic manner that resonates with VBR's primary audiences

GOAL 2:

Increase and measure brand awareness for Visit Baton Rouge

STRATEGIES

- Position Visit Baton Rouge as a key driver of tourism and economic development in the region, as well as a valuable resource for locals and visitors alike (local/regional focus)
- Engage in **partnerships with both local organizations/events** (like Louisiana Marathon and Arts Council) and statewide, regional and national/international entities (like LOT and Brand USA) to better spread the mission of Visit Baton Rouge

TACTICS

- Utilize **earned media** to publish information about what Visit Baton Rouge is doing for the city by identifying opportunities for positive coverage, announcing new accomplishments, pitching interesting story angles, etc.
- Seek out partnerships that allow Visit Baton Rouge to create a presence in markets where it otherwise wouldn't be prevalent (i.e., 2018 LOT chef takeover in Nashville)

Google continues to maintain a stronghold on ownership of content across the Web, requiring owners of digital content to work with the platform in order for content to be seen. Google's news carousel shows on the first page when users search for a destination. Keeping Visit Baton Rouge's website and articles up-to-date and compliant with Google's webmaster guidelines will help establish Visit Baton Rouge as a validated resource and ensure positive messaging is being presented as often as possible.



LEISURE MARKETING

- Develop mutually beneficial relationships and a process for content creation with organizations, establishments and events to ease the burden currently placed on Visit Baton Rouge to raise awareness and promote local activities and events
- Designate a number of articles and content pieces to highlight lesser-known areas of Baton Rouge that may feel underrepresented to help foster stronger, more beneficial relationships
- Utilize **traditional and digital media** on the local level to continue seeding the Visit Baton Rouge brand within the city and state to encourage local buy-in. This includes advertising from the consumer media flow chart as well as placement managed directly by Visit Baton Rouge
- Continue the use of **consistent branding** across all marketing, media and public relations efforts
- Develop annual calendar to identify specified partner meetings to discuss how Visit Baton Rouge can work with local organizations/partners to amplify their current marketing efforts from a tourism perspective
- Continue developing **new web content** according to the editorial calendar and employ SEO best-practices and work with Google's featured snippets to ensure that Visit Baton Rouge is associated with generating content for users online (both travelers and locals alike) looking for information about Baton Rouge

GOAL 3:

Increase buy-in amongst community stakeholders and instill reinvigorated pride in Baton Rouge natives

STRATEGIES

- Increase awareness of events, venues, activities and offerings to ensure representation for the Baton Rouge Area
- Leverage opportunities to show a united community and encourage community-wide participation at local events and initiatives

TACTICS

- Explore opportunities for **experiential advertising** within the city to generate buzz about Visit Baton Rouge and communicate the positive impact the bureau has on the community
 - Stay abreast of potential partnership and project opportunities with local group and organizations like the Arts Council, Mid-City Merchants and BRAC
 - Instill pride in the new VBR brand through grass-root deliverables such as stickers, hats, shirts, etc.



LEISURE MARKETING

- Continue to **enhance and leverage relationships with local organizations** to increase current and prospective resident buy-in and cross-promote the area as a whole
 - Schedule quarterly emails or meetings with local organizations and chambers to stay updated on upcoming events and initiatives in different areas – ensuring fair representation for all and placing more accountability on individual areas to stay involved
 - Open some meetings/partnerships to ALL local organizations – give them a chance to “apply,” e.g., BRAC, Forum 35, LED, LOT, Arts Council
- Leverage a team of **brand ambassadors** for Visit Baton Rouge
 - Identify a number of influential individuals within the community, as well as leaders within Visit Baton Rouge, to act as advocates for the city and all that it has to offer
 - Select ambassadors that can speak to a variety of thematics and connect to a diverse age range through their presence in the community, on social media, etc.
 - Local influencer Krystal Faircloth
 - Chef Aimee Tortorich
 - Photographer and entrepreneur Jordan Hefler
 - BRAC President Adam Knapp
- Consider paid digital media campaign that leverages assets produced for the national consumer campaign as well as additional creative tailored to locals to create excitement around what Baton Rouge has to offer and ultimately instill pride in residents
- Incorporate content centered around promoting new attractions and restaurants into the overall editorial/content calendar as the city continues to grow
- **Incentivize college students to stay in Baton Rouge** by showcasing all of what the city has to offer outside of campus through content generated on digital platforms as well as paid digital media
 - Geotarget messaging specific to LSU and Southern’s campuses

GOAL 4:

Increase hotel occupancy through leisure travel

STRATEGIES

- Explore new ways to bring bring in 6-hour drive market and national travelers by pursuing new specialty events, honing targeting efforts, etc.
- Leverage and amplify existing events to increase traffic to Baton Rouge and overnight stays
- Position Baton Rouge as a tourism destination for overnight stays
- Seize all opportunities to promote the up-and-coming hotel scene in media messaging – showcasing the uniqueness of Baton Rouge hotels and how they can enhance visitors’ Baton Rouge experience



TACTICS

- Flight overall media strategy in a way that allows Visit Baton Rouge to specifically promote overnight stays during relevant times/events (Football season, Memorial Day Weekend, Labor Day Weekend, Bayou Country Super Fest).
- **Focus messaging**, both paid and earned, on upcoming events, travel packages, etc. to convert visits into weekend stays
 - E.g., new hotels, retailers and restaurants, upgraded amenities and venues, etc.
- **Encourage hotel involvement** through partnerships, sponsorships and promotional packages
 - Partner with hosts/organizers of local events and hotel, restaurant and retail managers to create packaged stays that incentivize extended leisure travel, e.g., Weekend Shopping Getaway that includes discounts on overnight stays in hotels, deals at Perkins Rowe retailers and promotions at nearby restaurants
 - Encourage hotels to sponsor as many signature events as possible—from concerts to festivals—through discounted rooms, complimentary benefits, etc.
- **Identify and highlight new hotels**, like the Watermark and the Marriott (while also featuring existing hotels), in both paid and earned media to incentivize and convert trips into overnight stays
- **Participate in relevant Association Meetings**, like Lodging and Restaurant Associations, to observe trends, share insights and strengthen partnerships

GOAL 5:

Strengthen lead generation funnel by maximizing usage of digital platforms

STRATEGIES

- Develop a more established method of data collection, measurement and retargeting across platforms

TACTICS

- Develop and implement **strategic landing pages** that coincide with creative to increase online engagement and better understand conversion metrics for paid digital/social efforts
- **Integrate social and digital platforms** through implementation of Facebook Pixel on the Visit Baton Rouge website
- **Hold quarterly reviews** of digital ads, email click-through rates, Facebook Pixel analytics, etc. to more accurately assess performance and address areas of improvement
- **Strategically use CTAs** to connect with consumers on multiple platforms and drive progression through the lead generation funnel
- See evaluation section for further recommendations

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS MARKETING



MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS MARKETING

The Meetings and Conventions Marketing team works to competitively market the city of Baton Rouge as a host city for meetings and conventions within a variety of industries. These types of business events bring in overnight guests, many of which rely on hotels to accommodate their lodging and/or the events themselves, in addition to supporting other local industries as attendees explore the city in their free time.

GOAL 1:

Increase leads and bookings for new and returning meetings and conventions

STRATEGIES

- Position Baton Rouge as a vibrant, emerging city with new and exciting offerings for a variety of groups and industries
- Maintain Visit Baton Rouge's role as the official tourism-marketing arm of Baton Rouge and position it as the most supportive and authoritative resource for planning and booking meetings and events
- Better showcase features/amenities the city has to offer as it relates particularly to meetings and conventions (include sports facilities as an integral segment to promote)

TACTICS

- **Leverage earned media** to promote Baton Rouge's meetings, conventions and sporting events offerings by distributing press releases for the following:
 - Venue or facility improvements
 - Any new venue or facility sponsorships
 - Things to do while in town for a meeting or event
- **Develop a multi-platform campaign** designed to sell the city to meeting planners and **utilize paid media** to put ads in front of our target audiences (see media flow chart for specific placement information)
- **Equip the sales and marketing team** with the necessary items to persuasively promote the city as an ideal meeting and conference destination
 - Expand upon the success and impact of the current Sales Video with additional one-sheets and sales collateral to accompany presentation and enhance presence at trade shows and events
 - Develop a **digital facilities guide** for sales team to utilize in attracting tournaments and sports-related events
 - Create a **marketing toolkit** for the sales team to offer meetings planners as they promote their event to help encourage attendees



MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS MARKETING

- Create a more clutter-busting presence at **relevant conferences and trade shows**
 - Enrich Visit Baton Rouge's presence at trade shows by updating booth and visual presentations to be more attention-grabbing and cutting-edge, providing a full-sensory sneak peak into Baton Rouge, e.g., sales video (mentioned above) playing on iPads, VR headsets or Google Glass used to engage attendees and show-off Baton Rouge, etc.
- **Help facilitate familiarization (FAM) trips** with the sales team to familiarize meeting planners with the Visit Baton Rouge staff and Baton Rouge experience
- Continue **cooperative marketing opportunities** with LOT, LTPA, Brand USA, Creative Capital of the South and Southeast Louisiana Gumbo

DESTINATION SALES



DESTINATION SALES

The Destination Sales team works closely with meeting planners and association heads to plan and coordinate events, meetings and conferences in Baton Rouge. Through the team's effective sales of the city and its various unique offerings, Destination Sales increases tourism and hotel occupancy.

GOAL 1:

Increase hotel occupancy through hotel stays garnered by meetings and conventions

STRATEGIES

- Focus on key decision-making factors in order to position Baton Rouge as an ideal business destination
- Increase awareness of Baton Rouge as a business-oriented destination through partnerships, memberships and associations
- Position Baton Rouge as a preferred destination for sports tournaments by highlighting facilities and amenities

For event organizers, the environment where the conference takes place is just as important as the content

TACTICS

- Participate in a number of the following *industry trade shows* to reach targeted meeting professionals for *Meetings and Conventions*
 - **Associations**
 - EMERGE (RCMA)
 - Association of College of Honor Societies
 - American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)
 - IMEX
 - Professional Conference Managers Association (PCMA)
 - **Sports**
 - AAU Sports
 - US Sports Congress
 - National Association of Sports Commissions
 - **Specialty Markets**
 - Black Caucus - Multicultural Network
 - Professional Fraternity Association (university-based)



DESTINATION SALES

- Participate in a number of the following **industry trade shows** to reach targeted meeting professionals for **Group and International Travel**
 - American Bus Association (ABA)
 - Travel South Domestic
 - International Pow Wow (IPW)
 - Spotlight on the Southeast
 - Travel South International
- **Utilize data-driven sales video** provided by marketing staff to better sell Baton Rouge and obtain engagement while at various conferences and tradeshow
 - In addition to hard-facts, feature relevant content such as amenities, accommodations, meeting spaces, surrounding venues, testimonials, etc.
- **Develop case studies** on past events, conferences, meetings, etc. as a more engaging and genuine way to sell the Baton Rouge experience to prospective targets
 - In addition to highlighting general conventions/meetings for associations, consider prioritizing sports, fraternities and religious associations to yield material to better equip the sales team in selling
- **Participate in sales missions** – both domestic and international
 - SELA Gumbo in Austin
- Continue to **pursue unique partnership opportunities** with industry, state and DMO partners to better promote the city for incoming events, meetings and conferences
 - Partner with hotels and restaurants to provide packaged incentives for meeting planners/ meeting attendees
 - Work with other Louisiana DMO’s to provide packaged vacation opportunities to extend meeting attendees’ stays
- **Host familiarization (FAM) tours** for meeting planners and relevant clients to incentivize them to bring their events to Baton Rouge
 - Military FAM

Packaging case studies digitally will allow for modifications as new renovations and updates are made to venues and include a variety of content such as testimonials, images, videos, interactive content, social media screen captures, etc.



GOAL 2:

Increase group lead generation

STRATEGIES

- Identify and prequalify appropriate target groups for the Greater Baton Rouge Area
- Build relationships with meetings professionals and tourism partners

TACTICS

- Develop/improve a systemized ***process for meetings and conventions lead generation***, rather than traditional business card exchange, while at various conferences and events
 - Use iPads with interactive video or photo content to prompt email and contact submissions
 - Develop unique incentives to submit forms/information such as trip packages, discounted group tours, etc.
- ***Qualify leads*** and develop a tiered system that categorizes leads for following up
- ***Design/create branded email follow-ups*** for meeting planners once initial contact has been made – customize for each planner/organization
- Utilize a unique ***landing page for sales and meetings*** to utilize on all meetings/conventions-centric collateral
- Leverage and update collateral, such as the ***profile sheet***, to give operators and planners the full picture of what Baton Rouge has to offer and why their clients should come here. Consider updating pieces in foreign languages for international cities that pose the greatest opportunity (France, Germany, Brazil, China)
- Continue to partner with LOT and the Lieutenant Governor on ***relevant sales missions*** to continue spreading awareness of Baton Rouge and ultimately generate leads
- Schedule meetings with local hotels and attractions to ensure that Visit Baton Rouge staff has an accurate ***pulse on the group tours*** that come into the city
- Host an ***event for IPW*** to continue putting Baton Rouge on the map internationally and generate leads for follow-up
- Consider ***partnering with other CVB's*** (like New Orleans Northshore) to build and leverage leads and incorporate Baton Rouge as an integral tour stop for group travel

DESTINATION SERVICES



DESTINATION SERVICES

The Services Department ensures that all Baton Rouge area travelers and convention delegates have a positive and enriched visitor experience. These efforts are crucial to spreading positive word-of-mouth, generating influential social media conversations and converting first-time visitors into advocates of Baton Rouge.

GOAL 1:

Increase overall experience for new visitors in order to incentivize return visits and positive word-of-mouth

STRATEGIES

- Leverage visitor touch points to highlight key Baton Rouge offerings, enhance visitors' experiences and convey Baton Rouge's hospitable environment in organic and unexpected ways
- Collaborate with industry partners to maximize their value to both leisure travelers and meetings/conventions delegates
- Position the visitor center and registration staff as experts on all that Baton Rouge has to offer and empower them with the resources and training to best inform visitors

TACTICS

- Ensure that all services **staff members are briefed** on any and every new and up-and-coming features/businesses/events in the city
 - Develop a systemized process for briefing staff on these items, e.g., monthly meetings, e-mail updates, etc.
- Continue to participate in **professional conferences** that foster learning and growth and allow for key takeaways that enlighten the team and offer new ideas on how to better sell the city for return visits
- Identify **points of entry into the Baton Rouge area**, like the Baton Rouge Metropolitan Airport or popular travel-stops from our top DMAs, to enhance travelers' first and last experiences with the city
- **Create/design collateral for the visitor center** that better speaks to what the city has to offer, e.g., updated informational brochures, maps, Baton Rouge Must-See push cards, etc.
- Distribute promotional **Baton Rouge branded materials/swag** to visitors, e.g., t-shirts, tumblers, stickers, etc., to fortify positive sentiment that lasts beyond the duration of their stay
- Develop **marketing templates** that showcase the city as a destination and can be utilized to help meeting planners promote and encourage registration/attendance



DESTINATION SERVICES

- Continue to optimize the experience for *Riverboat visitors* docking in Baton Rouge by offering *Infeaux on the Geaux*, Visit Baton Rouge’s mobile welcome center, to encourage them to explore the city while in town and incentivize them to want to come back
 - Update relevant collateral for Infeaux on the Geaux to be timely and in line with current branding efforts for Visit Baton Rouge and the city
 - Use docking as an opportunity to distribute Baton Rouge “swag” to provide touchpoints that incentivize Riverboat visitors to come back to Baton Rouge on their own time
 - Develop system of tracking Riverboat visitors’ habits (e.g., what restaurants they are visiting and where they are shopping in the city) to better determine the economic impact of Riverboats on the community and better tailor city-wide recommendations for them

SPECIAL PROJECTS AND EVENTS



SPECIAL PROJECTS AND EVENTS

The Special Projects and Events Team pursues and confirms new opportunities for special projects and large scale events that ultimately increase hotel occupancy throughout the year. These types of large-scale events are often the reason first-time visitors come to Baton Rouge and can act as a great gateway to promoting further exploration of the city.

GOAL 1:

Increase bookings for large-scale projects and signature events

STRATEGIES

- Develop a more impactful, ROI-centric approach to better communicate the benefits of choosing Baton Rouge as a host city
- Continue to pursue and strengthen partnerships with local organizations particularly apt to host, sponsor or promote events

TACTICS

- **Create event case studies** that utilize a consistent method of measuring and communicating success, in order to validate Baton Rouge's position as a premier host city
 - Select events that fall within most promising categories, e.g., highlights from the Bowling Championships can be used to pursue other sport-related events, highlights of the River Center's success can be used to pursue other musical events, etc.
 - Compile in a shareable, digital format that can be easily-tailored for specific events and used at tradeshows, networking events or in direct sales communications
 - In addition to "bottom-line" results and statistics, the case studies should prioritize:
 - The convenience and accessibility of our location
 - Our ability to draw in and satisfy a particular audience demographic
 - The quality, affordability and capabilities of our venues
 - Visit Baton Rouge's commitment to the event's success (show how Visit Baton Rouge will help promote the event, e.g., social posts, signage throughout the city, etc.)
- **Leverage paid and earned media to** help build hype, curate conversations and promote user-generated content before, during and after events
 - Inclusion in The Advocate and Business Report Welcome Guides
 - Social posts promoting large events or festivals
 - Pursue relationship with Lamar and other local publications that could yield in-kind placement on digital billboards for select events



SPECIAL PROJECTS AND EVENTS

- ***Develop and steward relationships with event production companies***, like Festival Productions, Inc. and Louisiana Marathon, to reach top-of-mind awareness when they consider locations for new events
 - Send event case studies that include exciting updates on accommodations, renovations and amenities using engaging media, e.g., photo, video, interactive tours of venues, etc.
- ***Attend appropriate conferences and trade shows*** to form new relationships and increase visibility for Baton Rouge
- ***Refine corporate sponsorship and promotion incentives*** to increase involvement and support from local businesses and organizations, further showing Baton Rouge's commitment to successfully hosting and stewarding events
 - Create tiered system/program for various sponsor levels and what they entail
- Work with local businesses in proximity to secured events to help them ***understand the ROI*** brought to the city from these events and help them maximize the event (i.e, event attendee discounts to encourage patronage at specified businesses)

RECOMMENDED EVALUATION



EVALUATION

LEISURE

- Measure lead generation and provide year-over-year comparison to observe upward or downward trends. Consider the following:
 - Website leads
 - E-newsletter subscriptions
 - RSS feed subscriptions
- Analyze social insights through year-over-year comparison. Consider the following:
 - Overall page audience
 - Mobile usage
 - Shares by users
 - Engagement
 - Click-thru rates
 - Web traffic to the Visit Baton Rouge website
- Measure social conversions and efficiency and compare year-over-year. Consider the following:
 - Cost-per-click
 - Cost-per-engagement
 - Cost-per-like
 - Cost-per-lead
 - Cost-per-thousand
- Measure user conversions from Facebook and YouTube to other social/digital platforms. Consider the following:
 - YouTube > Blog
 - Facebook > Email
 - YouTube > Website
- Track social hashtags (#ExploreBatonRouge, #GoBR, #VisitBatonRouge, #BatonRouge, etc.) for qualitative analysis of conversations surrounding Visit Baton Rouge and/or Baton Rouge in the social sphere.



RECOMMENDED EVALUATION

MEETINGS, SALES, SERVICES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Send qualitative surveys to meetings and events attendees (via meeting planners) to gauge these types of visitors' overall Baton Rouge and Visit Baton Rouge experience.
- Measure lead generation for meetings and special projects and provide year-over-year comparison to observe upward or downward trends. This includes analysis of the following:
 - Website RFP forms on the Visit Baton Rouge site
 - Leads captured at tradeshow/events
 - Direct inquiries

OVERALL

- Quantify earned media impressions and compare year-over-year
- Review year-over-year hotel occupancy to analyze upward or downward trends*
- Track qualitative data from partner meetings to reference year-over-year to account for changes that have been implemented and how those relationships evolve

*NOTE THAT BECAUSE 2016 WAS ABNORMAL DUE TO EXTERNAL FACTORS AND BECAUSE 2017 DOES NOT INCLUDE BAYOU COUNTRY SUPER FEST, MESH WILL WORK WITH VISIT BATON ROUGE TO DETERMINE HOW TO ANALYZE OCCUPANCY TRENDS BY LOOKING AT PREVIOUS YEARS.

EVENT CALENDAR



CALENDAR

* Note: the following calendar is a rough idea of upcoming events. It is based on what/when events occurred in 2018, Visit Baton Rouge's 2019 event calendar and the River Center's 2019 event calendar.

JANUARY

- Louisiana Marathon
- Street Food Festival

FEBRUARY

- Mardi Gras Parades
 - Spanish Town Parade
 - Krewe of Southdowns Parade
 - Krewe of Artemis Parade
 - Mystic Krewe of Mutts Mardi Gras Parade
 - Krewe of Orion
 - Krewe of Mystique
 - Mid City Gras Parade
- Mardi Gras Mambo (run)

MARCH

- Wearing of the Green (St. Patrick's Day) Parade / Red Hot Chili Pipers
- LSU Baseball

APRIL

- Craw Fête
- Third Street Songwriters Festival
- Zapp's International Beer Festival
- Annual Kite Fest Louisiane
- BR Ballet Theatre Presents "Cinderella"
- Baton Rouge Zoo's Zippity Zoo Fest
- LSU Baseball
- Baton Rouge Blues Festival
- Arts Council Ebb and Flow
- Angola Prison Spring Rodeo

- Monster Jam
- Katt Williams

MAY

- Hot Art, Cool Nights
- Jambalaya Festival (Gonzales)
- Celtic Woman Disney On Ice
- Bayou Country Superfest
- Memorial Day Weekend (staycation)

JUNE

- All summer: Dixie Landin' Summer Concert Series / Blue Bayou
- All year: Southern Craft Brewing Co. and Tin Roof Brewery Tours & Caneland Distilling
- Red, White, and Zoo

JULY

- Restaurant Week
- Art Melt
- Baton Rouge Bridal Show
- July 4th at USS Kid
- The Italian Heritage Festa

AUGUST

- Fête Rouge
- Taste of Tiger Tailgaiting
- Baton Rouge Irish Film Festival
- LSU Tiger Fan Day
- Fall Fashion Fest



EVENT CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- Ascension Hot Air Balloon Festival (Gonzales)
- Lamar Dixon music festival (dates TBD)
- Baker Buffalo Festival
- Code Red Chili Cook-Off (Zachary)

OCTOBER

- Southern Football homecoming
- Art Crawl (Zachary)
- LSU Rural Life Museum fall events
- Sugar Fest
- Boo at the Zoo
- Greater Baton Rouge State Fair
- Angola Prison Rodeo
- Zombie Bash 5k
- Baton Rouge Halloween Parade
- The 13th Gate
- LSU vs. Auburn

NOVEMBER

- Capital City Beer Fest
- White Light Night
- Turkey Trot March of Dimes 5k
- LSU games (Arkansas, Alabama, A&M)

DECEMBER

- LSU Museum of Rural Life (Christmas events)
- Downtown Christmas Parade (Kiwanis)
- Zachary Christmas Parade
- Central Christmas Parade
- Baker Christmas Parade
- Festival of Lights
- BR Zoo ZooLights
- 19th Century Christmas Decorations at Rosedown
- Annual Holiday Shop Hop
- Iberville Bonfire Christmas Festival at Nottoway Plantation
- Kiwanis' 5th Annual Santa Fun Run

- BREC's Creole Christmas & Holiday Fair (Magnolia Mound Plantation)
- Ice Skating (River Center)
- Red Stick Revelry

SLOW MONTHS

- Plantation homes
- BREC parks, outdoor activities, water parks and swamp tours
- In-state "staycation"
- History - focus on capitol

ONGOING SUMMER EVENTS

- BREC
 - Liberty Lagoon
 - Greenwood Park - canoeing, golf, fishing
 - Bluebonnet park swamp tours
 - Frenchtown Conservation Area
- Blue Bayou/Dixie Landin
- Snowball stands

SEASONAL ONGOING MUSIC EVENTS

- Rock N Rowe
- Live After Five
- Sunday in the Park

FAMILY-CENTRIC ACTIVITIES

- Knock Knock Museum
- Baton Rouge Zoo
- Quarters/All Star lanes
- Area 51

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Yoga on the Lakes
- Yoga on Tap
- BREC Parks
- Swamp Tours
- LSU Football
- LSU Baseball
- Golf Courses
- Dog Parks



EVENT CALENDAR

HISTORY/EDUCATION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

- USS Kidd
- Plantation Tours
- Art+Science Museum
- Louisiana State Capitol
- Old State Capitol
- Rural Life Museum
- Highland Road Observatory

SHOPPING OPPORTUNITIES

- Bass Pro Shop
- Mall of Louisiana
- Perkins Rowe
- Farmers Market
- Quirky Shops
 - Atomic Pop Shop
 - Government Antiques
 - Time Warp

OLDER CROWD

- Third Street
- Night Life
- Casinos
 - Belle of Baton Rouge
 - Paragon
 - L'auberge
 - Hollywood
- Breweries/Brewery Tours
 - Tin Roof
 - Cane Land Distillery
 - Southern Craft
 - Baton Rouge Distilling
- 13th Gate Escape Rooms
- Coffee Shops
 - French Truck Coffee
 - Magpie Cafe
 - Highland Coffees

ENTERTAINMENT

- Live Music
 - Dyson House Listening Room
 - Henry Turner's Listening Room
 - Phil Brady's
 - Teddy's Juke Joint
- River Center
- Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra
- Baton Rouge Ballet Theatre
- Theatre Baton Rouge
- Manship Theatre
- Varsity Theatre
- LSU Union Theatre
- Seasonal Music Events
 - Live After 5
 - Rock N Rowe
 - Sunday in the Park
- Movie Theatres
 - Cinemark Perkins Rowe
 - AMC Mall of Louisiana
 - Movie Tavern
- Comedy Clubs
 - Spanish Moon
 - Happys
 - The Guru

COMING SOON

- Electric Depot
- Top Golf
- Cypress Coast Brewing
- Rally Cap Brewing
- Main Event (at Mall of Louisiana)
- Red Stick Social
- Mid-City Beer Garden
- 3Tails Wine and Cheese

