



## 2021 Strategic Marketing & Communications Plan

### Strategic Considerations:

- COVID-19 has posed extreme challenges for the travel and tourism industry and for DMO's as a whole.
- The sentiment around **safe travel** is critical to infuse in messaging
- Industry partners (such as hotels, restaurants and attractions) have experienced extreme impacts to their businesses due to stay-at-home orders, workplace closures and limitations on the size of gatherings – the uncertainty of what 2021 will look like poses unique challenges and calls for creative and technologically savvy ways for businesses to adapt
- Successful campaigns will have to adapt to meet the wants and needs of our new traveling audience and technologies.
- Because of the uncertainty around events and gatherings, local (in-state) and day-trip travel will be important to drive visitors into the city
- There is an opportunity to leverage and highlight the benefits of Baton Rouge being a drive market (safety)
- Remote working (WFH) allows travelers to more freely spend time in cities outside of their home – opportunity to leverage this in drive markets for those visiting family, looking for family friendly cities, or in-state travelers looking for a quick getaway

### Audience Insights (brief overview):

- With vaccine rollout, 29.8% of travelers reported they were planning to travel – (of those 38.8% were Millennials or younger, 28.8% Gen X, and 22.1% Boomer or older)
  - *Younger generations are slated to lead the way in resuming travel (Gen Z and Millennial)*
- Anticipated increase in travel adviser support
- Increased family travel (over 31% looking to take family vacations once safe)
- Anticipated continued increase in road trips and RV travel
- While 10-14% of travelers each month are willing to travel during Jan-Apr 2021, the majority (31%) of travelers feel more comfortable traveling later in 2021
- 37.4% of travelers looking to visit small towns or rural destinations

### Target Audience:

- Leisure Travelers
- Sports Travelers
- Group Travel Planners
- Meeting and Convention Planners\*

### Top Geo Location:

- In-state (Louisiana) & neighboring parishes
- 6-hour drive market (Dallas, Houston, Pensacola, Mississippi, Alabama)

### Seasonality:

- Focus on smaller events/holidays throughout the year to drive traffic into city

### Primary BR Travel Leisure Activities:

- 1.) shopping 2.) bars/night clubs 3.) casinos and 4.) landmarks/historical sites

### Objective 1: VISITATION

Increase overall visitation for new and returning visitors

### Objective 2: ECONOMIC IMPACT

Facilitate economic growth throughout Baton Rouge through leisure, sports and meetings\* driven tourism

### Objective 3: LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

Increase local involvement and overall city-wide citizen engagement throughout the Baton Rouge Area

#### Strategy A:

Position Baton Rouge as a unique and **safe** destination for leisure travel in light of current global climate.

**Tactic 1:** Develop a new multi-platform campaign on both the local and national/international level that positions the city as a safe travel destination and continues to seed Baton Rouge as an authentic Louisiana experience.

**Tactic 2:** Leverage content marketing to better share sentiment around safety and things to do across multiple platforms—website, social media, e-marketing, paid media—to encourage travel into the city.

**Tactic 3:** Continue to encourage use of #ExploreBatonRouge to encourage user generated content (UGC) to share the city with prospective travelers in real-time and inspire destination travel to Baton Rouge.

**Tactic 4:** Explore experiential outdoor opportunities within the city (like the Heart Walk) to generate buzz about Baton Rouge as a destination.

**Tactic 5:** Continue cooperative marketing opportunities with other DMOs, LOT, LTA, Brand USA, Creative Capital of the South, Travel South, and Southeast Louisiana Gumbo to further Baton Rouge's visibility as a destination.

#### Strategy B:

Support existing partners and identify strategic opportunities and partnerships to drive traffic throughout the city.

**Tactic 1:** Identify and build out packages hosted through visitbatonrouge.com to help drive traffic visitor (and local) traffic to partner establishments, including local restaurants, hotels and attractions.

**Tactic 2:** 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.

**Tactic 3:** Continue to develop program for cross-promotion and marketing support of partner organization events or initiatives that align with Visit Baton Rouge's mission (co-op ad placements)

**Tactic 4:** Proactively share partner content on visitbatonrouge.com (via blog and events) and on social channels (through curated content as well as direct page shares)

**Tactic 5:** Build digital marketing templates to support tourism packages that respective partners can utilize to cross-promote.

#### Strategy C:

Leverage smaller holidays/events to incentivize local and drive market audiences to explore the city and support VBR's partners.

**Tactic 1:** 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.

**Tactic 2:** Develop social media calendar and strategy that aligns with these events to develop content to promote these events and partners digitally.

**Tactic 3:** Build strategic packages that feature these smaller events and holidays.

**Tactic 4:** Develop supporting specific ad creative targeted toward in-state and drive markets (in support of paid media efforts) to feature above packages and the various smaller events/holidays.

**Tactic 5:** Continue to explore out-of-home creative implementations that enhance visitors' and locals' experiences (i.e. murals, public art, etc.).

#### Strategy D:

Showcase the amenities that the city has to offer for meetings/events (with emphasis on sports).  
*Highlight safe participation and viewership*

**Tactic 1:** Identify virtual events where Visit Baton Rouge should maintain a presence for consideration as planners reschedule and plan for later 2021 and upcoming years (aligning with planning lead times).

**Tactic 2:** Update videos and specific creative deliverables to emphasize Baton Rouge as a safe meeting destination in light of current events (with emphasis on sports amenities).

**Tactic 3:** Update marketing templates in light of current events to position the city as a safe destination and can be utilized to help meeting planners promote and encourage registration/attendance.

**Tactic 4:** Participate and maintain presence in relevant associations/groups to represent Baton Rouge and ensure the city is top-of-mind in the consideration process

**Tactic 5:** Empower a team of brand ambassadors for Visit Baton Rouge and/or influencer marketing to help spread positive sentiment about the city and what it has to offer while appealing to key decision-making factors.