

# Catalina Island Strategic Marketing Planning Session

2016 Annual Marketing Conference  
November 11, 2016





# 2017 Marketing Goal

Increase Catalina Island's visibility by positioning it as a California island getaway with a unique visitor experience that can't be found anywhere else.

# 2017 Marketing Objectives

*In order to set measurable objectives, a “business needs assessment” should be conducted to quantify periods of seasonality and capacity for increasing:*

- Overnight visitation
- Day visitation
  - Daily boat trips
  - Private boaters
  - Cruise Ships
- Groups business
- Shoulder season business



# 2017 Communications Objectives

*Identify what the marketing and advertising must achieve:*

- Generate greater CI awareness by creating a unique “visitor experience” that can’t be found anywhere else
- Promote Catalina’s signature products, core competencies, attractions and events
- Drive website visitation and vacation planning
- Generate new and repeat bookings



# Today's Situation

What are Catalina Island's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats?

Understanding this creates the foundation of our marketing strategy.



# CI has Many Strengths Visitors Love

- Historic ambiance and local traditions
- Avalon is a walkable small town (no car needed)
- Friendly residents and businesses
- Clean and safe
- Limited vehicle congestion and noise
- Variety of outdoor products, activities and attractions
- Sunny beaches
- Natural island scenery and amazing ocean views
- Diversity of dining and bar options
- Day visits are family affordable
- Fast and reliable accessibility from LA and Orange counties. The ocean journey is part of the experience.



# Weaknesses to Consider

- Winter weather affects visitor counts (wind, choppy oceans, cool temperatures)
- Overcrowding during peak summer months may affect the visitor experience
- Being asked to conserve water at every turn can impact or inhibit a relaxing vacation
- Limited marketing budget affects reach and frequency of messaging



# Opportunities for Growth

- After business and capacity needs are assessed, there is potential to increase shoulder season occupancy and cruise ship arrivals
- Groups business (corporate, retreats, reunions, girlfriend weekends, outdoor enthusiasts, etc.)
- Hispanic/Latino visitation (nearly 50% of LA County, 35% of Orange County residents)
- Private boating and wharfage business
- LA County has millions of international visitors each year. Work with state/county to leverage marketing efforts
- Repeat visitation (only about 25-30% of visitors have been to Catalina in the past three years)





# Potential Threats

- Drought, water disputes and local anxiety related to lack of water affects CI visitor growth and economic resurgence (national publicity is exposing the public to this problem)
- High costs of operating desalination plants, water storage and drilling wells may be passed on to locals and visitors in higher costs
- Economic uncertainty may affect travel planning
- As they age, multi-generational Boomer grandparents will be planning fewer extended family vacations
- Overnight lodging rates continue to increase during peak seasons
- Avalon's limited physical area, combined with Coastal Commission restrictions and water shortages may inhibit future growth of infrastructure
- Terrorism continues to be a threat to all tourism



# Catalina Island Positioning

*What do we stand for in the minds of consumers?*

Perhaps it's something like....

“I relish the idea of getting away from busy urban living. After an easy trip to Catalina, I can truly relax in a quaint island lifestyle that offers a variety of activities I enjoy.”



# What is Our Target Market?

- Research shows approximately 75% of Catalina's visitors are from Southern California, with the number one market being Los Angeles County.
- Marketing efforts should continue to focus the largest media and PR expenditures on Los Angeles DMA, with secondary focus in San Diego DMA.

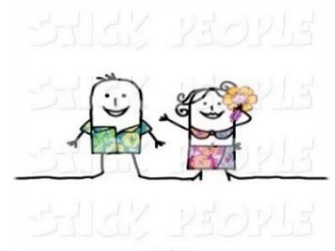


# Who are Our Target Audiences?

While the Catalina Island story appeals to mass audiences, for budget efficiency and marketing effectiveness it makes sense to identify and target specific audiences who would find our messages most appealing.

Those audiences, identified as “Personas” include....

# Persona #1: Couples



Nearly half of CI's visitors are married/partnered couples from the Los Angeles area. They travel on ferries, and for the majority, this is the first time they've visited Catalina Island (in past three years). Most used Google, ferry and CI Visitor Bureau websites to plan their trip. Typically, they have a median income of \$75,000-80,000 per year. They often come with other couples for a chance to escape the city and have some island/beach fun. They enjoy dining, shopping, sightseeing, lounging on the beach, touring in golf carts, and socializing together. About half of these visiting couples are Caucasians, half are other ethnicities (primarily Hispanic and Asian). They are busy people, so only about half of these couples will be overnight visitors. If they do stay over, they will average two nights. Everyone will spend money on the island, with overnights spending more. In general, they are pleased with their Catalina experience and indicate they are likely to revisit soon.

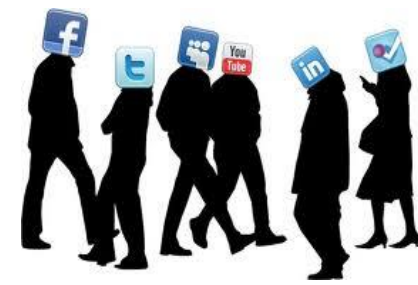
## Persona #2: Families

modernfamily



In the summer months, about 40% of Catalina's visitors are families with children. They can also be multi-generational families seeking a family-bonding experience. They reside in Southern California, yet only a third have visited previously (past three years). Their median annual household income is between \$50,000-100,000. They use a variety of Internet sources to plan their CI vacation and activities. They visit Catalina primarily for pleasure and to vacation, but may have celebrations such as a birthday or anniversary. While in Catalina, they spend time on the beach, are engaged in water activities and exploring the island. Younger families have a lower incidence of shopping and dining in restaurants, which could be the result of budgets, fussy children, and time taken away from other activities. Overall, they are pleased with their CI vacation and plan to return.

# Persona #3: Millennials



While they visit Catalina for pleasure, millennial travelers (age 18-34) are more adventurous and have an endless thirst for knowledge. They use technology to plan their visit and expect it wherever they go. They are less likely to dine and shop on Catalina; they will spend more time on beach, outdoor activities/adventures and historic sites. They are spontaneous, experiential, budget-conscious, swayed by peer review, and loyal to programs and destinations that offer rewards. Things to consider for marketing:

- Host well-executed mobile sites (it's how they look and book)
- Offer rewards: Discounts, VIP experiences, exclusivity, freebies
- Embrace spontaneity: Hot deals, limited-time discounts, last minute deals
- Be authentic: Speak to their interests of interacting with nature, experiencing cultures and enjoying the “real thing” (not staged)
- Encourage engagement: Host hashtags and social media offerings

# Persona #4: Outdoor Enthusiasts



Many freeway-weary Californians are seeking backcountry adventures where they can hike, fish, walk, bike, surf, scuba dive, backpack, camp and explore. Catalina Island offers all of that and more. Depending on their age, health and interests, they may want customized adventures, leisurely adventures, group activities, on-their-own journeys, or high energy adventures. All have the same goal: to connect with nature. While on Catalina Island, they are looking for spectacular seascapes, scenic views, remoteness, fresh air, wild animals/birds, and escape from their daily routines. Marketing should include imagery and messaging that appeals to this ever-growing audience.



# Persona #5: Groups



With Catalina's variety of meeting facilities and abundance of activities to entertain and please any type of group, the island is prime to grow this lucrative market. Marketing to groups fills mid-week occupancy and shoulder seasons. After identifying niche targets, off-season and mid-week group messages should include:

- Lower rates
- Group activities and entertainment
- Smaller crowds
- Variety of meeting/group facilities
- Dining and shopping
- Flexibility to meet any group's needs
- Quality of service/relations with hotels and facilities
- Easy/quick accessibility from LA and Orange counties



# Marketing Strategy

*How do we combine our marketing objectives into a comprehensive plan to get the maximum impact from our limited marketing budget and time?*



# 1. Build Overnight Business

- **Partnerships:** Co-op with lodging community to identify business/seasonality needs and the most relevant lodging messages and media placement
- **Offers/Promotions:** Join with the community to develop enticing overnight offers
- **Advertising:** Create memorable ads that persuade pre-arrival visitors to stay over
- **Digital Media:** Use search, behavioral, retargeting, pre-roll video, etc. to drive commitment
- **Social Media:** Engage/demonstrate CI “fun”
- **Public Relations:** Generate publicity for vacationing on Catalina. Promote “experience.”



## 2. Grow Shoulder Season and Mid-Week Business

Create relevant messaging and seasonal media placement that appeal to individuals and groups seeking:

- Quieter atmosphere
- Smaller crowds
- Lower overnight rates
- Relaxation and unwinding
- Nature exploration (camping, hiking, etc)
- Better availability of places to lodge, meet, dine, socialize, and party

### 3. Increase Day Visitation

- **Partnerships:** Co-op with community to promote experiential activities for couples, families, Millennials, adventurers, cruise ship visitors, etc.
- **Offers/Promotions:** Join with the community to develop offers that appeal to various day visitors
- **Advertising:** Create experiential print and digital ads that promote beach, outdoor activities, dining, affordability, etc.
- **Digital Media:** Target Personas through search, behavioral, retargeting, pre-roll video, travel sites, etc.
- **Social Media:** Promote engagement with day visitors
- **Public Relations:** Generate experiential stories
- **Guerilla Marketing:** Create programs that invite visitor participation and generate news coverage



## 4. Grow the Groups Business

Create messaging, media placement and publicity that reaches and appeals to groups, such as:

- Corporate meetings
- Conferences
- Associations and civic meetings
- Church groups
- Retreats
- Family reunions
- School groups
- Girlfriends weekends
- Outdoor enthusiasts

## 5. Build Repeat Visitation

Research shows high satisfaction and intent to return, but repeat visitation is low. Develop strategies to re-energize and build commitment for return visitation:

- Database segmentation marketing
- Bounceback offers; limited time and last-minute deals
- Loyalty offers
- Messages about “What’s New” in Catalina
- Contests
- Social media engagement
- Direct mail



# Tactics

Break into smaller groups to brainstorm tactical ideas for each strategy:

1. Overnight
2. Shoulder Season and Mid-Week
3. Day
4. Groups
5. Repeat





# Tactical Ideas

- Fam tours
- Blogger and podcast outreach
- Press tours, news releases, key market tours
- Bounceback promotions
- Database marketing ideas
- Website and mobile promos, contests, incentives, offers
- Partnerships (on and off island)
- Road shows
- TV and radio broadcasts, remotes, promos
- Direct sales
- Guerrilla marketing
- Video
- Vertical media placements