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@chris_vignes

@onlyinmississippi

Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast
FY 2018
Marketing Plan

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@hunterjames013

@brlracincwgrl

@wildprairiechild8

@kat_styz

@lindamcspics

@eatmscoast

@dapper_dan45

@northstarsailingcharters

CONTENTS

2

Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast Overview

Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast serves as the official tourism entity for the Mississippi Gulf Coast, comprised of three coastal counties including Hancock, Harrison and Jackson. The purpose of our organization is to have a positive impact on the quality of life for residents of the Coast through advancement of the tourism industry.

STAY AWHILE. YOU'LL GET IT.

VISIT MISSISSIPPI GULF COAST

Core Purpose
To have a positive impact on the quality of life for residents of the Mississippi Gulf Coast through the advancement of the tourism industry.

Envisioned Future
The Mississippi Gulf Coast is one of the top vacation destinations, places to meet and do business, and places to live in the Southeast region of the United States. The economy is booming. It is visually attractive, easy to navigate with a variety of quality amenities, services, facilities and products and of a high value for both residents and visitors to enjoy.

Vision Statement
The vision of Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast is to establish the Mississippi Gulf Coast as a premier travel destination.

Mission Statement
The mission of Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast is to positively impact the economy of the three county area by taking a dynamic leadership and visionary role to successfully market and assist in the development of the Mississippi Gulf Coast as a premier travel destination, competing effectively for leisure and group business through the development and execution of integrated marketing, communications, sales and research.

The Numbers

Occupancy Tax Receipts

| 2017 | $4,040,213 (PROJECTED) |

| 2016 | $3,948,773 |
- *Jackson County included*

| 2015 | $2,942,862 |

| 2014 | $2,792,011 |

TOURISM
leads to
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.2 MILLION visitors in 2016

In 2016 visitors spent **1.99 BILLION**

For every **$1** spent on advertising, **$2** in taxes were gained, **SAVING** Mississippi Gulf Coast residents **$561 IN TAXES** annually.

For every **$1** spent on advertising, **$43** is spent by visitors on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

30,300 leisure hospitality employees = **23%** of Mississippi's leisure hospitality jobs

The hospitality industry is the **LARGEST PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYER** on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

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GULF COAST

Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast
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Results~Projections

|	FY2016	FY2017 Projections	FY2017	FY2018 Projections
Occupancy Tax Receipts	$3,948,773	$4,388,066		$4,225,000
Occupancy Rate Non-Casino	54.6%	55.0%	56.7%	56.7%
Occupancy Rate Casino	88.15%	89.0%	89.26%	89.26%
Occupancy Rate ALL	70.05%	70.0%	71.43%	71.43%
Average Daily Rate Non-Casino	$88.02	$87.00	$89.79	$90.87
Average Daily Rate Casino	$73.29	$73.00	$73.85	$74.73
Average Daily Rate ALL	$79.45	$81.00	$80.72	$81.69
Gaming Revenue	$1,178,854,768	$1,178,000,000	$1,183,850,847	$1,188,800,000

*Sources – MDA, MS Bureau of Revenue, STR Inc., MS Gaming Commission

Marketing Results~Goals

	FY2016	FY2017 Goals	FY2017	FY2018 Goals
Gulfcoast.org Unique Visits	1,204,907	1,265,000	1,451,070	1,600,000
Number of Articles	4,102	3,250	2,933	3,000
*Media Value	$1,274,233	$689,814	$5,039,253	$5,039,253
Impressions	765,386,637		752,038,175	769,184,645
Total Social Media	448,248	473,500	143,659	160,959
Facebook	101,903	108,000	115,272	126,799
Twitter	8,684	13,000	13,932	17,415
Pinterest	783	1,500	894	939
You Tube	333,099	345,000	7,636	8,400
Instagram	3,779	6,000	5,925	7,406

"But while so much is happening, with more on the way, the main attraction of the Gulf Coast remains unchanged: It is one of those rare destinations that truly offers something for almost every traveler, from the beach lover to birdwatcher, golfer to gambler, foodie to fishing fan, and does so very affordably."

- Larry Olmsted, USA TODAY
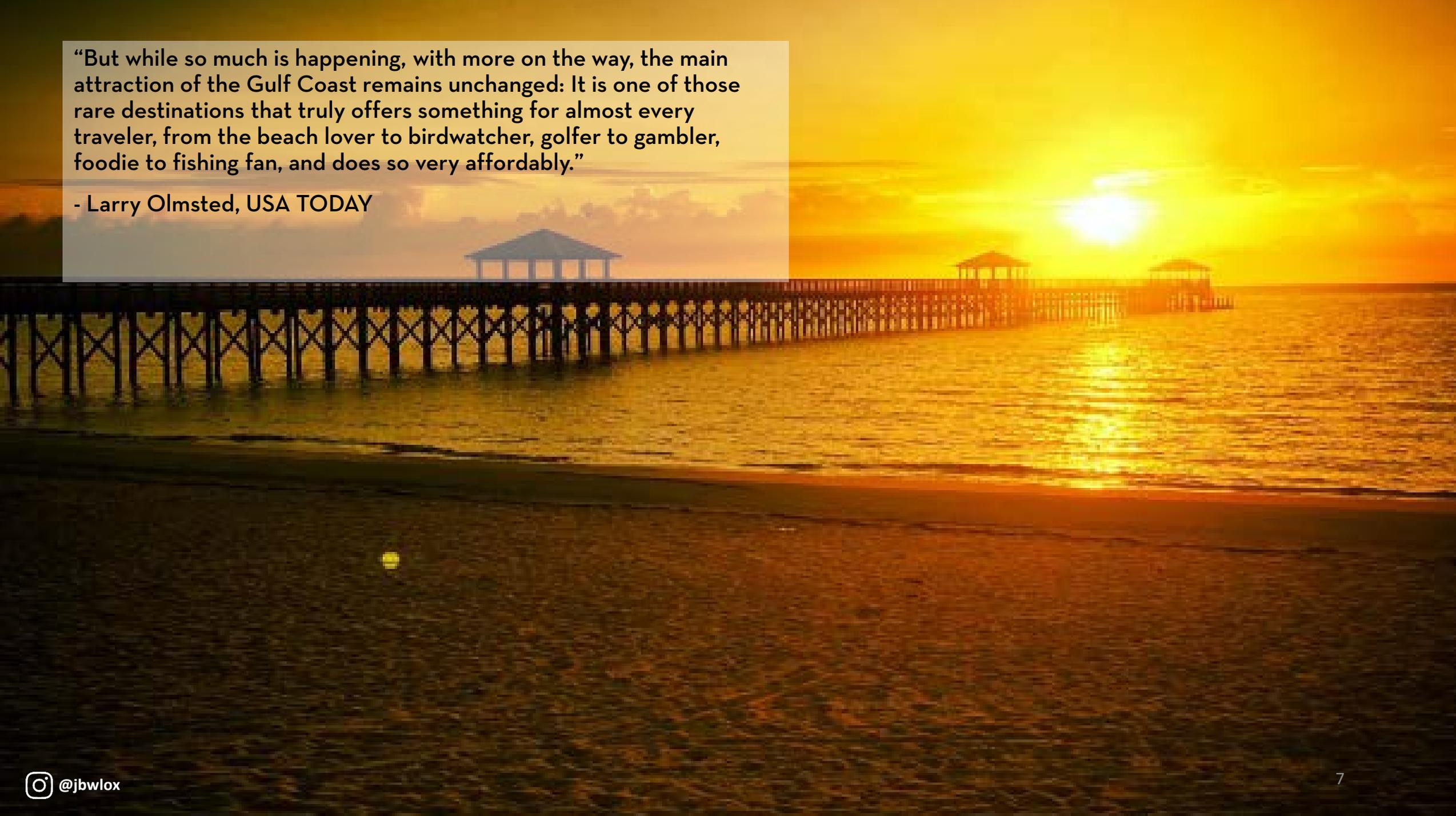
Travel Industry Trends & Insights

Travel Influencing Trends:

- EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL – According to Trekk Soft, travelers are seeking out more adventurous and experiential travel in order to escape from run-of-the-mill and homogenized experiences. Larry Olmsted with Forbes says this travel trend includes:
  - Culinary experiences
  - Tours – historic, nature, etc.
  - Classes – cooking, pottery, etc.

- ADVENTURE TOURISM - According to Virtuoso, the #2 trend in travel is active and adventure travel. Travelers are seeking out destinations where they can partake in an array of outdoor activities.

- NICHE EXPERIENCES – According to Skift, "Travel is a lifestyle industry and we're moving from mass industries to niche industries." By tapping into travelers' specific interests, such as birding, fishing, culinary, etc., DMO's can create engaging content (i.e. interest-focused itineraries) and deliver high-quality experiences.

Research, Analysis and Development

❑ Longwoods International conducted a Visitor Study in 2016 that provided estimates of domestic overnight and day visitor volumes, a profile of Mississippi Gulf Coast's performance within its overnight travel market, domestic visitor expenditures, profiles of day travel market, and relevant trends in each of these areas

❑ Ongoing research efforts with Mississippi Development Authority, Smith Travel Research (STR) and other sources to clearly gauge the effects of all sales and marketing efforts

❑ Continuing partnerships with Destinations International, U.S. Travel Association and Phocuswright to stay privy of industry trends and standards

❑ Continually update the Key Performance indicators as set forth to update the staff, board and communities of the effects of tourism marketing across the Coast

❑ Partnership with Backyard Marketing for lead development

❑ Acquired software for Meeting Max Housing Reservation System to be offered as a service for clients seeking multiple hotels as a way of accurately tracking total room nights utilized

❑ Conduct a Awareness, Image and ROI study in FY 2018

Visitor Study

Longwoods International Research conducted a Visitor Study in 2016. The research provided estimates of domestic overnight and day visitor volumes, a performance profile on the overnight travel market, domestic visitor expenditures, profiles of the day travel market, and relevant trends in each of these areas. The complete study is available on gulfcoast.org. The study presented findings in the following areas:

- ❑ Main Purpose of the Trip
- ❑ State & DMA Origin of Trip
- ❑ Seasonality of Trip
- ❑ Satisfaction of Trip
- ❑ Past Visitation
- ❑ Length of Trip Planning
- ❑ Method of Booking
- ❑ Total Nights
- ❑ Travel Party Size
- ❑ Transportation Used
- ❑ Accommodations Used
- ❑ Activities & Experiences
- ❑ Social Media Use
- ❑ Demographic Profile
- ❑ Visitor Volume
- ❑ Visitor Expenditures

@feed_me_seymour
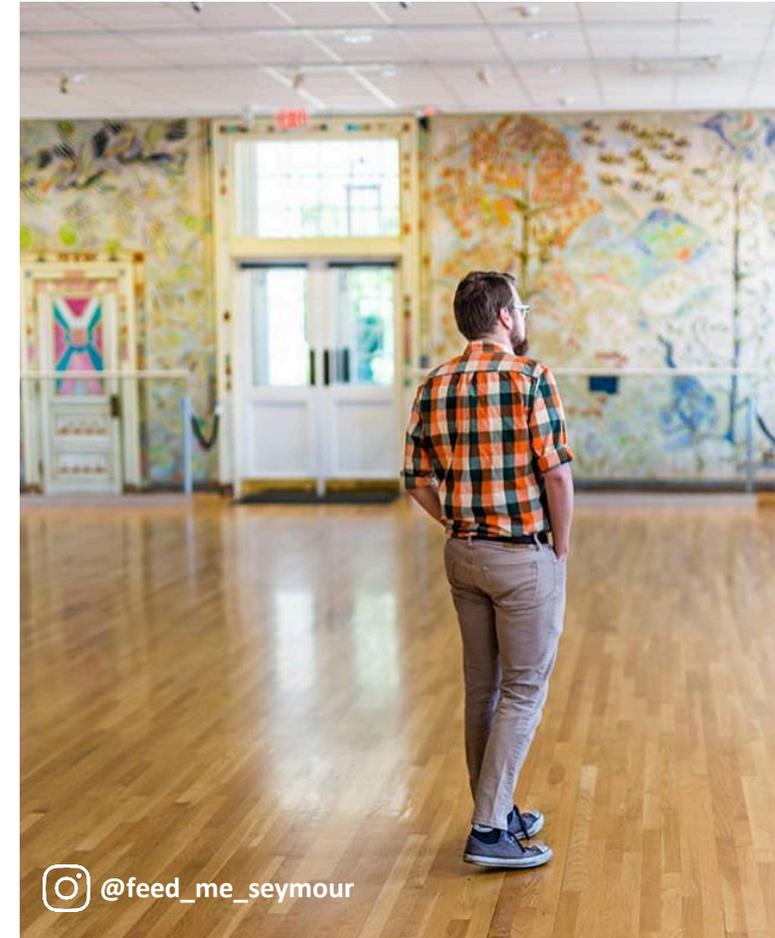
Longwoods Key Findings

- ❑ In 2015, Mississippi Gulf Coast had 12.7 million person trips. Of these trips, 43% were overnight trips.
- ❑ The overnight trips generated $1.07 billion in spending.
- ❑ "Casino" (at 35%) was the most frequent purpose for an overnight trip to Mississippi Gulf Coast. Marketable trips (those influenced by marketing efforts) were 66% of the total overnight trips.
- ❑ For overnight trips, the top state markets for Mississippi Gulf Coast visitors were Louisiana, Florida, and Mississippi. Among DMAs, the top three visitor sources were New Orleans, Mobile, and Atlanta.

@feeny_houdini
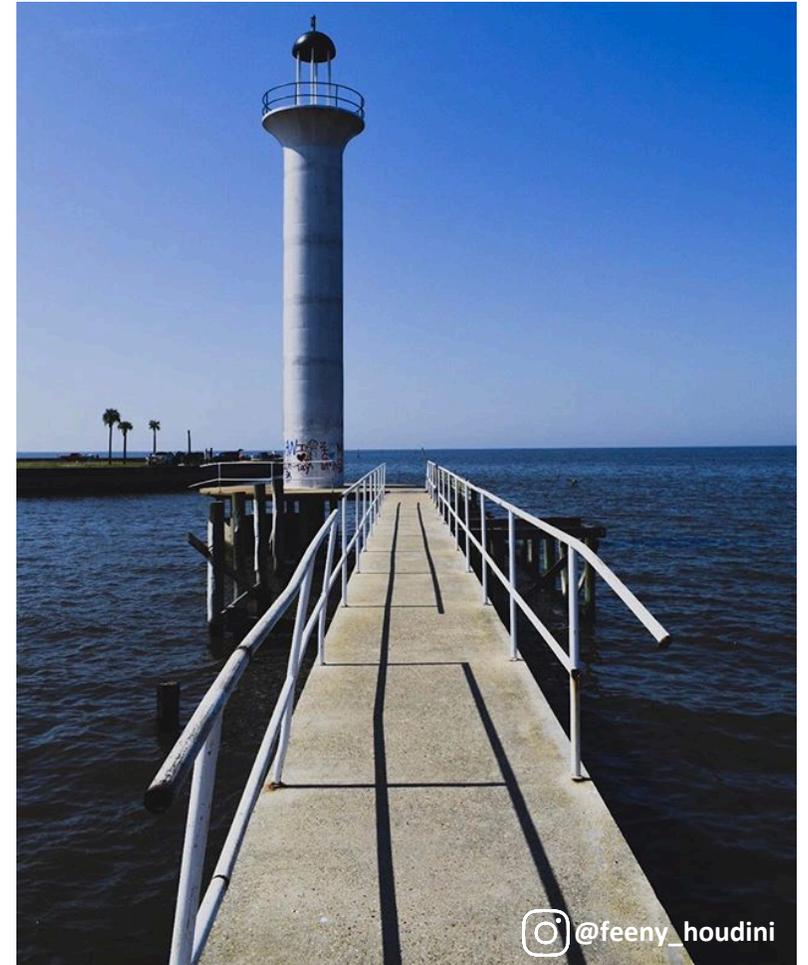
Longwoods Key Findings – (Cont'd)

- ❑ Over two-thirds (71%) of Mississippi Gulf Coast visitors, were very satisfied with the overall trip experience. Most satisfaction elements were similar to the national average.
- ❑ Of the overnight respondents, 85% have visited at least once. Seventy-four (74%) percent had visited in the past year.
- ❑ Higher than the national average, over half (58%) of the overnight trips were planned 2 months or less before the trip. Similar to the national average, thirteen (13%) percent did not plan anything in advance.
- ❑ "Hotel or resort" was the most common planning source and booking source.

Longwoods Key Findings – (Cont'd)

- ❏ The average number of nights spent in Mississippi Gulf Coast for 2015 was 3.3 nights. An increase of 0.75 over previous year research findings. The average travel party size was 3.0 persons.
- ❏ The top five overnight trip activities and experiences were "Casino," "Shopping," "Beach/Waterfront," "Fine Dining," and "Swimming."
- ❏ The highest social media activities on an overnight trip to Mississippi Gulf Coast were "posting photos online," "reading travel reviews," and "looking at photos online."

Consumer Strategy Overview

Many of our current markets are large markets where we still have significant opportunity. We will continue to maintain and refine our current strategy further penetrating those large markets as well as continue to inform all target markets. In addition, research and analysis indicates Dallas as a potential viable market. Therefore this market will be added.

- **Main Goals**
  - ❑ Increase awareness of the destination and offerings
  - ❑ Increase overnight visitation
- **Markets**
  - ❑ OUTER (Atlanta, Birmingham, Little Rock, Memphis, Houston, Dallas, Washington, Tampa-St. Petersburg, Orlando, Nashville, Charlotte)
  - ❑ INNER (New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Jackson, Mobile-Pensacola, Tallahassee, Montgomery-Selma, Lafayette, Columbus GA, Columbus-Tupelo, Monroe-El Dorado, Panama City, Hattiesburg-Laurel, Dothan, Lake Charles, Alexandria LA, Meridian, Greenwood-Greenville)
  - ❑ MIDWEST (Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis, Cleveland-Akron, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo-Battle Creek, St. Louis)
- **Demographics**
  - ❑ Young Adults without Children – 25-34
  - ❑ Mature Adults - 45-64
  - ❑ HHI $50K +
  - ❑ "Geotourists"
    - ▪ Focus on the experience of a destination-learning about its culture and history
    - ▪ Seek the authenticity of people and place; strong preference for the social aspects of travel
    - ▪ Desire to customize their experience and create personal connections while traveling
    - ▪ Have multi-faceted interests and will take in a number of attractions while traveling
    - ▪ Apt to get off the beaten path and discover something new
    - ▪ Like to "go local" and patronize locally-owned businesses and attractions
    - ▪ Spend more and stay longer than average tourists

Consumer Strategy Overview (Cont'd)

❑ The current advertising strategy focuses first on finding demographic and geographic groups likely to be seeking what the Coast can offer as a getaway / vacation destination. Once audiences are pinpointed, we then serve authentic brand messaging to entice them to seek more information.

❑ Based on available research, the strategy is working, as awareness in our key markets is good and relevant KPIs are trending upward. Based on this knowledge, we should maintain the current strategy to further penetrate the markets listed below.

❑ In addition, two refinements to the plan include:
- Adding Dallas, TX into Digital, Search and Social media efforts
- Combining 'Outer' and 'Fly-In' Search and Social media efforts

❑ This will not only allow the opportunity to test a new, potentially lucrative market, but will allow our digital marketing efforts to be optimized to serve messaging to the best performing markets.

The Brand

◎ **Promise**

- ❑ An authentic, spirited, year-round coastal destination that will leave you feeling connected to the Coast – its setting, its offerings, its people and its way of life.

◎ **Pillars**

- ❑ <u>AUTHENTICITY</u>– The Mississippi Gulf Coast is not homogenized or commercialized; from its art and architecture to its customs and cuisine, the places and the people are genuine and sincere.
- ❑ <u>APPROACHABILITY</u>– The Mississippi Gulf Coast is an unpretentious place that always makes you feel welcome, comfortable and at ease; where you can be yourself, let loose and have fun.
- ❑ <u>CELEBRATORY</u>– From parades and gatherings to festivals and events, the Mississippi Gulf Coast is a place that commemorates and celebrates no matter how big or small the reason, or what the time of year.
- ❑ <u>VARIETY</u>–<u>There</u> really is a place for every taste – whether that place is on the water, the beach, the river, the greens, the felt or anywhere in between. Variety is the spice of life on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

STAY AWHILE. YOU'LL GET IT.

VISIT MISSISSIPPI
GULF COAST ◎

The Brand

🎯 **Creative Anthem**

❑ You could say that life flows a little differently on the Mississippi Gulf Coast – and we'd say you're exactly right. From the biggest challenges to the wildest adventures, we take on everything the same way – with a smile. We're impulsive, carefree. And the only thing we appreciate more than the moment is the next one. *So why are we like this? Stay awhile. You'll get it.*

❑ We're not afraid to get our hands dirty – especially if we're eating boiled shrimp. We have no idea what it means to laugh too loud. And we don't use maps - we rely on our sense of adventure. *Why are we like this? Stay awhile. You'll get it.*

❑ We're about living. And doing. We're always in pursuit of that next great experience. Epic battles with speckled trout. Eating our weight in crawfish, twice, by noon. Trading stories at our favorite carnival ball. All while sipping our favorite drink. *Why are we like this? Stay awhile. You'll get it.*

❑ Here, it's about full bellies. And birdies. And jackpots. And parties. And keepers. And, well... *Stay awhile, you'll get it.*

❑ It's about being down here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Where you can spend time with your family and the hundreds of new friends you meet along the way. And where pretty much the only rule we follow is that if it's fun, do it. Repeatedly. This is the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and once you're here, you're never going to want to leave. *Still not convinced? Don't worry. Stay awhile. You'll get it.*

Content Segments

Content segments have been established to ensure advertising, public relations and social media communicate the attractions and activities of the Mississippi Gulf Coast to potential visitors. There is some overlap in categories, but as a whole, they are inclusive of all stakeholders in the region.

Outdoors & nature-based tourism
- ❑ Nature Tours, Birding, Kayaking, Hiking, Etc.

Fishing & boating
- ❑ Charter Boats, Boat Tours, Gulf Fishing, Pier Fishing, Etc.

Beaches & coastal
- ❑ Beach Activities, Water Activities, Seafood, Etc.

Culture & history
- ❑ Culinary, Art, History, Shopping, Festivals & Events, Etc.

Casinos/Nightlife
- ❑ Gaming, Resorts, Entertainment, Etc.

Golf
- ❑ Golfing, Tournaments, Packages, Etc.

@cavaretta
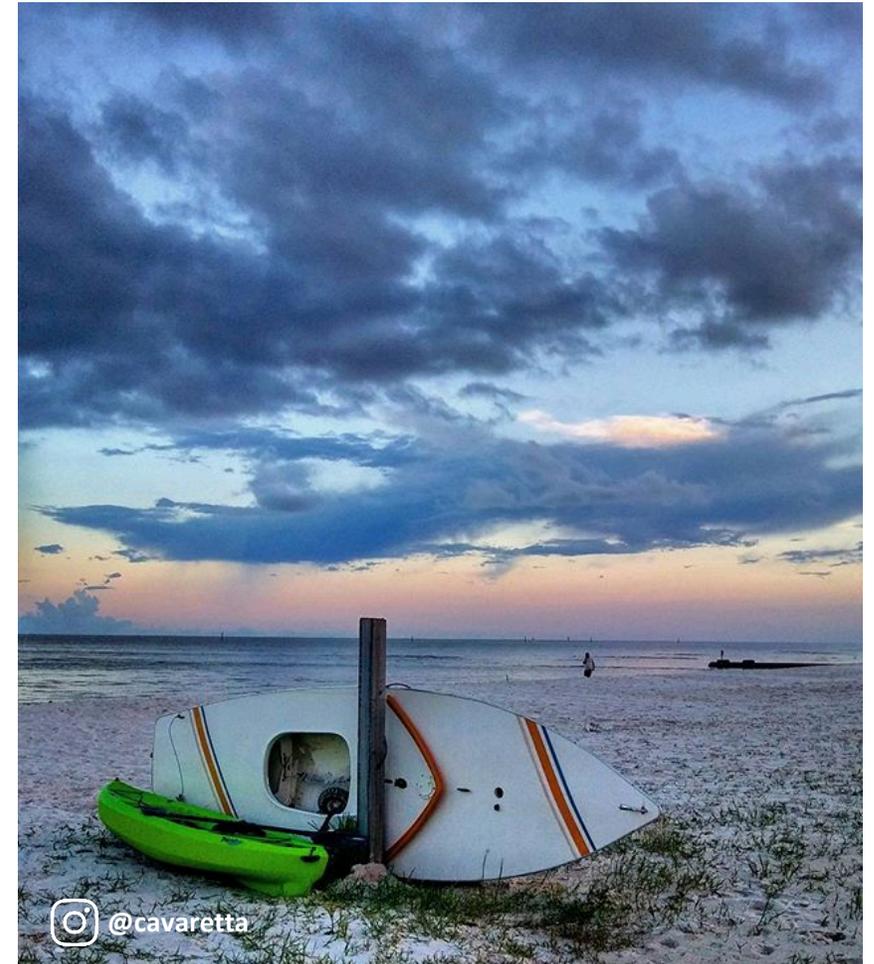
Strategic Areas of Focus

Armed with research, industry trends, the competitive landscape as well as insights from our industry partners, the following drivers have been identified that will support our growth objectives:

❑ **Engaging Visitor Communications**

- Reach potential visitors with meaningful messages, in locations where they are likely to interact with our messages, in ways that make it simple for them to connect with us.

❑ **Visitor Experience**

- Engage the community in creating brand consistent, positive customer experiences for visitors with ongoing hospitality training and communication. As well as, providing the visitors tools to navigate the coast with ease, making it a worry free experience.

❑ **Content Marketing-Sponsored & Native**

- Create and distribute valuable, relevant, and consistent content without selling, to attract and retain a clearly-defined audience.

@mjeffharrison

Content Drivers & Initiatives

My Gulf Coast App officially launched May 2017 and has had more than 1800 downloads. To continue this momentum, we will continue with the following:

Goals:
- ❑ Create app awareness
- ❑ Drive app downloads in-market

Message Focus:
- ❑ Education/enticement to download
- ❑ Link directly to app download or include app name for easy search

Reporting– Google Analytics
- ❑ Number of downloads, downloads by device, top pages viewed

Through a "Geo-Fenced" Digital Network, we will continue to target those in-market using a Hyper-Targeted Mobile (Facebook) strategy to drive app downloads. Internally, we will carry on the non-media campaign to promote the app through social, email, in-market signage, and Coast Champions.
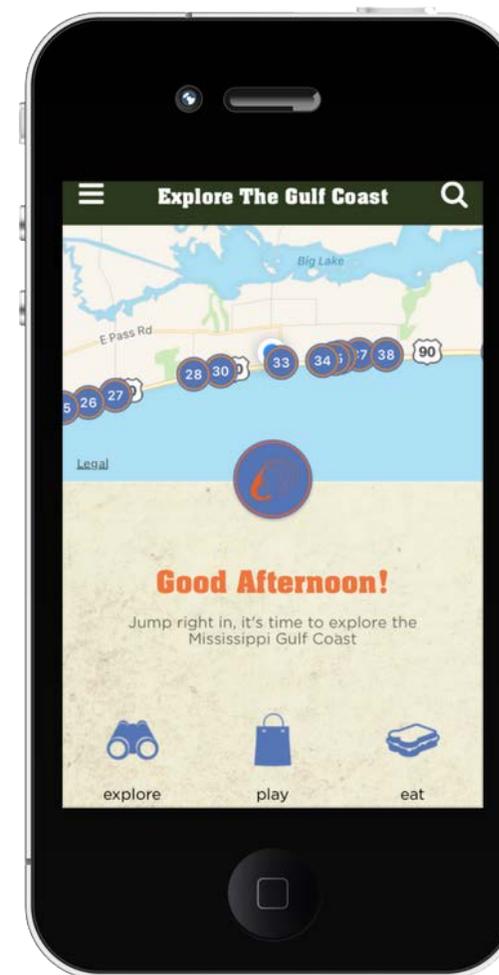
Co-operative Initiatives

Overview
With over 400 held annually, festivals and events epitomize our fun-loving Coast culture, one of the unique attributes essential to our destination brand.   And as such, they are an integral component of our marketing efforts. In addition, downtown areas of the cities that make up the MS Gulf Coast are becoming more widely known for their individual personalities incorporating the arts, culture and entertainment in their own unique ways. Events continue to be a top performer throughout all media platforms.

Strategies
- ❑ Work with event planners to stay up to date on event details in order to market effectively and well in advance
- ❑ Develop Annual Events calendar
- ❑ Create and send an event specific e-newsletter on a quarterly basis to those located in the Outer Markets of our consumer email database
- ❑ Develop and promote visitor experiences utilizing existing and new events such as Mardi Gras, Blessing of the Fleet and Christmas Celebrations (Christmas on the Water, Gulfport Harbor Winter Lights Festival, Christmas at Beauvoir, etc.) and Restaurant Month, that celebrate and showcase our unique lifestyle and history and complement our marketing brand
- ❑ Work with cities and other Coast-wide tourism organizations to integrate their existing visitor experiences
- ❑ Co-Branding Opportunities – There are some events on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, that due to their unique affinity to our location, attributes or culture and long-term sustainability, represent some of the Coast's unique assets and have become strong destination brands in and of themselves. These events implement their own marketing campaigns drawing attendees from a wide-reaching geographic area that match the demographics of our target markets, those that we feel would be most likely to enjoy what the Coast has to offer as a destination and will generate the desired economic impact. We will work with these signature events to co-brand the event and destination and therefore maximize marketing results for both. Cruisin' The Coast, Mississippi Gulf Resort Classic, Mississippi Gulf Coast Billfish Classic and Scrapin' The Coast are currently included in our 2017-2018 plan.

Content Drivers & Initiatives

"Especially as a tourist destination, the Mississippi Gulf Coast is still unknown to many. But the region is slowly becoming a hotbed for art, music, and style. The Hamptons this is not—and that suits visitors just fine. The small towns are perfectly arranged along the coastline, making it easy to visit each in one day—though a long weekend is ideal." - **Anne Roderique Jones, Vogue**

@chandler_borries

EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL

"Arguably the most significant, systemic trend in worldwide tourism today is the demand for 'experiential travel,' typically meant to convey the idea of more immersive, local, authentic, adventurous and/or active travel." – Skift Report

Goals

- ❑ Highlight the unique experiences that travelers can enjoy on the Coast.
- ❑ Craft valuable content promoting the local food scene, various tours, and classes that travelers can partake in.
- ❑ Create and distribute segmented consumer newsletters.

Content Drivers & Initiatives

⊙ **Nature Tourism**

Nature tourism is defined as, responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of its residents. It is tourism that relies on the experiences of the natural attractions of an area. Examples include: birdwatching, photography, star gazing, camping, hiking, fishing, etc. Nature-based tourism remains one of the most popular tourism sectors internationally and with its diverse natural attractions, the Mississippi Gulf Coast is well placed to capitalize on this.

⊙ **Goals**

- ❑ Partner with local/regional key environmental and conservation groups to stimulate and grow Nature-based tourism
- ❑ Craft valuable nature-themed content promoting nature-based attractions, experiential offerings, and activities
- ❑ Create a Nature-based consumer newsletter

"*With just 44 miles of coastline, it's fair to say that Gulf-bound anglers often overlook Mississippi in favor of states like Florida, Louisiana, and Texas. That's a huge mistake, because not only does Mississippi offer fishermen an incredible variety of species to chase without long boat rides, opportunities abound here almost year-round with less pressure than other Gulf destinations. Big bull reds make large showings in fall and spring, though they're available (as we learned) even in the heat of summer. During the hot months, several inshore shark species will scream a rod faster than you can blink, and for fly and light-tackle junkies, the summer run of trophy jack crevalle can be downright intense. Speckled trout? You bet. Tripletail? On almost every crab pot. As long as the conditions are in your favor during a visit, you'll be hooked up.*"
- *Joe Cermele, Field & Stream*

Media Plan

The media goal is to create/maintain awareness of the Mississippi Gulf Coast by:

❑ Inspiring during the Dream phase
❑ Provide content during Research phase
❑ Drive to gulfcoast.org for Booking phase

As a result increasing hotel occupancy, attraction and event attendance, as well as dining and other travel related experiences.

The full plan is available upon request.

FY 2018 Plan Draft

Media Spend Overview

OUTER MARKETS
$1,095,651

■ TV ■ Digital ■ Search ■ Ad Serve Fee ■ Social

- 40%
- 26%
- 13%
- 1%
- 20%
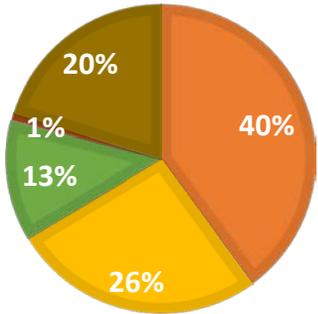
INNER MARKETS
$237,061.57

■ Digital ■ Search ■ Social ■ Ad Serve Fee

- 54%
- 18%
- 26%
- 2%
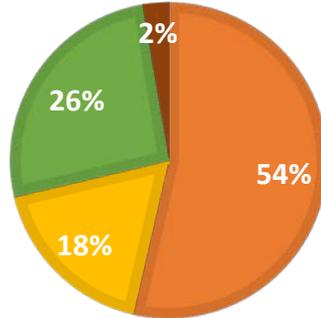
MIDWEST MARKETS
$93,500

■ Search ■ Social

- 41%
- 59%
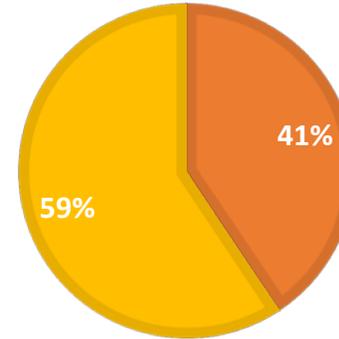
MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS
$92,673.42

■ Digital ■ Print

- 45%
- 55%
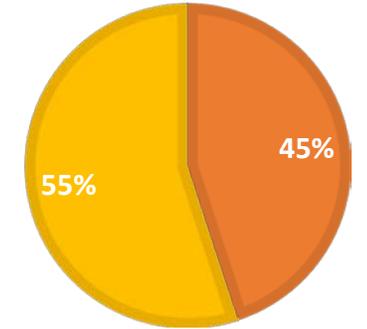
PRINT
$32,730

- 100%
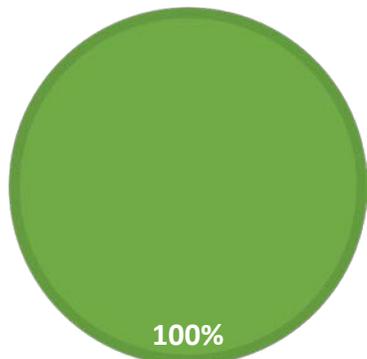
NATIVE/CONTENT MARKETING
$115,119.44

- 100%
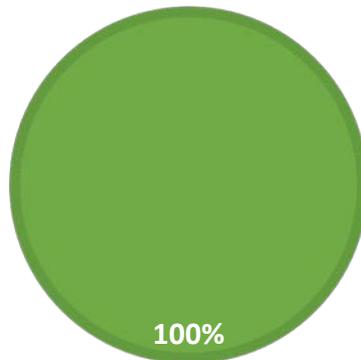
APP PROMOTION
$14,118.00

- 100%

TOTAL → **$1,680,853**

25
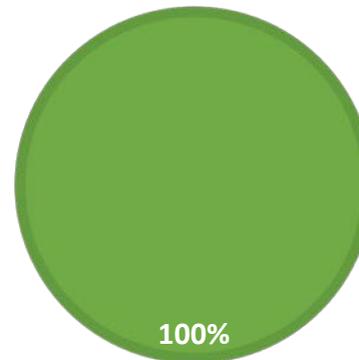
Social MediaOverview

Goals

- ❑ Increase interest and engagement by providing an active online community where locals and visitors can interact with the brand and other advocates
- ❑ Help followers gain a better understanding of the region and its offerings by consistently posting on social media and to the Coastal Conversations Blog on gulfcoast.org
- ❑ Establish sizeable online databases of self-identified brand advocates who can authentically showcase the Mississippi Gulf Coast
- ❑ Establish relationships with social media influencers to increase Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast's visibility, engagement and following
- ❑ Incorporate user-generated content into digital marketing efforts to provide a unique and authentic perspective of the Mississippi Gulf Coast
- ❑ Use data and analytics to drive content creation for social media and blogging efforts
- ❑ Expand the reach of brand messages by capitalizing on trends and the viral nature of social media
- ❑ Drive traffic to gulfcoast.org by including valuable links in social media and email marketing content
- ❑ Collect information, such as email and home addresses, for e-newsletter and other marketing opportunities and demographic research

Social Media Strategies

Facebook
- Live video
  - Cover live events and exclusive opportunities
  - Cross-promote live videos in advance across other channels to increase visibility and live viewership.
- Post frequently
  - Consistently post to ensure that we stay top-of-mind in our followers' feed.
- Visually appealing content
  - Continue to partner with local photographers to share eye-catching content to engage our audience.
- Paid social media
  - Using paid social media, including boosted posts, will increase engagement, following, visibility and traffic.
- Answer questions through commenting and messaging to encourage engagement and open communication with audience.
- Facebook exclusive offers
  - Offering Facebook only contests/giveaways will drive traffic.
  - Cross-promoting the contests across other channels will increase participation.

@trevreiddesign

Social Media Strategies

Twitter

- ❑ Tweet, retweet frequently
    - We will tweets multiple times per day & retweet relevant content.
- ❑ Listen & respond to all relevant posts, including those that use the #MSCoastLife hashtag.
- ❑ Utilize trending topics and hashtags
    - We will listen for and use trending and popular hashtags to engage in conversations with large audiences.
- ❑ Visually appealing content
    - We will continue to partner with local photographers to share eye-catching content.
- ❑ Share different aspects of website on Twitter, including blogs, itineraries and events.
- ❑ Paid social media
    - Continue using paid social media to increase engagement, following, visibility and traffic to our Twitter and website.
- ❑ Twitter exclusive offers
    - Offering Twitter only contests/giveaways will drive traffic to our page.
    - Cross-promoting the contests across other channels will increase engagement.

Social Media Strategies

Instagram
- ❑ Consistent aesthetics and a curated brand look
  - Striking, high-quality photos attract potential followers and garner the most engagement.
- ❑ Stories & video
  - Use Instagram stories and video to provide a more authentic and personable look at the Coast.
- ❑ Locations
  - Tag locations to allow users to easily find photos when searching a particular area, increasing visibility & engagement.
- ❑ Hashtags
  - Use specific and relevant hashtags to gain visibility by potential followers and increase engagement.
- ❑ User-generated content
  - Post images taken by others to build relationships, showcase the Coast authentically, and increase followers' trust.
  - A system, such as Crowdriff, can be used to collect appropriate and high-quality UGC.
- ❑ Work with influencers
  - Social/travel influencers will inform their audiences of the Coast & encourage them to follow us for more information.
- ❑ Paid social posts
  - Test using paid social media to increase engagement, following, visibility and traffic to our website.
- ❑ Instagram exclusive offers
  - Offering Instagram only contests/giveaways will drive traffic to our page.
  - Cross-promoting the contests across other channels will increase engagement.

Social Media Strategies

⊙ **Pinterest**

- ❑ Cross-promote content
  - Pinterest is a great way to promote our website, blogs and itineraries, as well as media coverage and articles.
- ❑ Use as a showcase of offerings
  - Use a variety of boards to showcase Mississippi Gulf Coast offerings, increasing visibility and destination recognition.
- ❑ Promoted pins
  - Test using paid social media to increase engagement, following, visibility and traffic to our website.

⊙ **LinkedIn**

- ❑ Potential leads
  - LinkedIn is a great way to engage with potential meeting & convention planners.
- ❑ Post meeting-focused blogs to start the conversation of hosting meeting & conventions on the Coast.
- ❑ Post updates of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast news
  - LinkedIn is a great outlet for sharing news about recent developments within the organization and on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.
- ❑ Paid social posts
  - Continue using paid social media to increase engagement, following, visibility and traffic to our website.

Social Media Strategies

@jensees12

- ⊙ **Snapchat**
  - ❑ Create Geofilters for events
    - • Inexpensive way to gain exposure and reach for events.
  - ❑ After doing extensive research, we found that Snapchat was not a platform that is used widely by our target demos. We have chosen to focus efforts on Instagram stories, rather than Snapchat stories in FY18. Will continue to monitor platform for new developments and audience demographics.
- ⊙ **YouTube**
  - ❑ Post authentic videos
    - • Video can be used to showcase our destination.
  - ❑ Cross-feature video content
    - ▪ YouTube videos are easily shared across other social media platforms, and Facebook Live videos can be exported and uploaded to YouTube.

Social Media Strategies

◎ **#MSCoastLife– a central location to organizing conversation about the Mississippi Gulf Coast and to tap into existing conversations; approximately 12,000 posts to date on Instagram.**
- ❑ We will continue to distribute #MSCoastLife stickers locally to increase visibility in destination.
- ❑ We will continue to use the hashtag across all social media platforms.
- ❑ We will engage with users through the hashtag, including sharing user-generated content that uses the hashtag.
- ❑ We will pull photos from this hashtag to feature on our website header galleries.
- ❑ We will continue to host giveaways, encouraging people to use the hashtag to enter the contest.

◎ Influencers
- ❑ **Local brand advocates**– locals who talk favorably about the Mississippi Gulf Coast and pass on positive messages about the region to other people.
  - • Having locals contribute to our blog and/or social media sites will build an authentic relationship to showcase our destination from a unique point of view.
- ❑ **Travel influencers**– individuals with vast reach and power to inspire others in their network.
  - • Travel influencers contributing to our blog and/or social media sites have potential to greatly spread the word about the Mississippi Gulf Coast to their audience.
- ❑ Industry experts
  - • Having industry experts write a blog or contribute to our social sites will increase visibility and credibility in niche markets. (i.e.—chefs, musicians, etc.)

Social Media Strategies

Coastal Conversations

- ❏ Create bit.ly links and share to social media channels to increase blog visibility and engagement
  - • Bit.ly links allows us to see how many people are clicking the links once posted to a social media platform
- ❏ Create blog content based off website analytics
  - • Use analytics to determine what people coming to our website are most interested in
- ❏ Stay aware of article trends to keep blogs eye-catching and engaging (e.g. itinerary-style, listicles, etc.).
- ❏ Continue using descriptive titles and tags in blog posts to help with SEO
- ❏ Guest Bloggers
  - • Guest bloggers will widen the audience of our readers.
  - • Guest bloggers will give a unique, personal perspective of the Coast.

PR/Media Relations Overview

Public and media relations efforts will focus on promoting the destination as an authentic, hidden gem, to complement current branding, with the aid of a robust creative campaign and through proactive and reactive media opportunities. Pitching efforts will also focus on lifestyle, general travel and a variety of other stories crafted for the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

According to findings from the Longwoods International, Inc. perception study, the most important factors that drive interest in a destination choice in the Mississippi Gulf Coast's advertised markets are:
- Exciting – an exciting, fun, and must see place that provides real adventure
- Being a great destination for adults
- Somewhat lower priorities are seen as a destination that is luxurious, elegant, sophisticated restaurants and provides a family atmosphere and is worry-free – feeling comfortable and welcomed

Both public and media relations strategies will continue to focus on content segments (Outdoors & Nature based tourism, Fishing & Boating, Beaches & Coastal, Culture & History, Casinos/Nightlife, Golf), while endorsing the area with the following attributes: exciting, fun, must-see, great destination for adults and worry-free.

PR/Media Relations

Media Trips
- ❑ 2017 Fiscal Year to date, the organization has hosted more than 15 media trips, a blend on individual and group.
- ❑ Notable media include:
  - Anne Roderique-Jones, USA TODAY and Vogue
  - Andrew Cox, Marlin Magazine
  - Various, Taste of the South and Paula Deen Magazine

Trends

The Mississippi Gulf Coast is able to insert itself into current travel trends, as the destination doesn't have the notoriety of larger markets. The Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast Marketing Department continuously analyzes industry trends and develops pitches based on white space, i.e. where the Mississippi Gulf Coast own some of the conversation.

- ❑ Finding a "hidden gem" destination is trending in the travel space
- ❑ Writers are seeking out authentic experiences to share with readers
- ❑ Localizing experiences is critical when traveling – finding out where locals eat, drink, hang out is a top priority for travel writers

PR/Media Relations

Meetings and Events Pitching Efforts

Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast will continue to proactively pitch stories related to the Meetings and Events/Conventions space to relevant trade and association outlets, including: Smart Meetings, Successful Meetings, EmpowerMINT, ConventionSouth, MeetingsNet, Corporate & Incentive Travel, Association Meetings, TravelPulse, BizBash and more.

Sports Sales Pitching

Craft pitches to showcase the impact of sports events on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Stories will be shared with relevant local, regional and national media to highlight the impact of this market on the region and how residents benefit.

PR/Media Relations Goals & Strategies

Goals

- ❑ Securing earned coverage in top-tier lifestyle, travel, culinary and active lifestyle publications in key markets through proactive pitching and reactive opportunities
- ❑ Continuing to foster relationships with notable media representatives
- ❑ Hosting 10 individual press (or fam) trips for the fiscal year
- ❑ Identifying ambassadors throughout the region that will create itineraries for bloggers and reporters visiting the area
  - Builds relationships with influencers in the area while offering an exclusive opportunity to develop a trip for a notable guest

Strategies

- ❑ Proactively invite travel and lifestyle media to engage in press trips throughout the year
- ❑ Actively pitch stories related to the region based on trends in the travel/lifestyle space
- ❑ Research thought leaders in area that would be able and willing to provide insights when building out itineraries and opportunities for reporters
- ❑ Continue to research appropriate writers and reporters before proactively pitching and vigorously vetting reactive opportunities

PR/Media Audience & Outlets

Target Audiences

- ❑ Primary Audience (maintain and grow): :
  - o "Geotourists" in the following markets
    - ▪ Inner Markets (New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Jackson, Mobile, Pensacola, Tallahassee, Montgomery, Selma, Lafayette, Columbus GA, Columbus OH, Tupelo, Monroe, El Dorado, Panama City, Hattiesburg, Laurel, Dothan, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Meridian, Greenwood, Greenville)
    - ▪ Outer Markets (Atlanta, Birmingham, Little Rock, Memphis Houston, Dallas, Washington, Tampa-St.Petersburg, Orlando, Nashville, Charlotte)
- ❑ Secondary Audience (inform):
  - o "Geotourists" in the following markets
    - ▪ Midwest Markets (Chicago, Detroit, Minneapolis, Cleveland-Akron, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek)

@natalie_blanton

Meetings & Conventions Overview

@j.r.reed.photography

The Mississippi Gulf Coast, known for its great southern hospitality is the perfect destination for conventions and meetings. As a coastal destination, the sales department of Visit Mississippi Gulf Coast continues to target meetings and conventions that are favorable to meet within our mid-week pattern and off-peak seasons to balance the need periods of our hotel community. Targeted markets within our interests are National, Regional and State associations, Sports, Leisure and International Tour Groups. The Mississippi Gulf Coast offers state-of-the-art meeting facilities at an affordable price via The Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center. Key initiatives include pursuing groups that will utilize the convention center and have interests in golfing, gaming, outdoor recreation as well as culinary, history and culture. Implement scheduled quarterly meetings with Convention Center Sales Staff to discuss city-wide group prospects. Continue quarterly DOS meetings with hotel partners and Convention Center Sales Staff.

OGSM's (Objectives-Goals-Strategies and Measures) have been implemented for each Sales Manager and will act as an on-going assessment of their specific markets. All tradeshows set forth in the budget for FY 2018 have been vetted and will continue to be evaluated for positive ROI.

Meetings & Conventions Marketing Message Strategy & Campaign Goals

Target
- ❑ Meeting planners, skewing female and younger
- ❑ They have options for destinations, all of which supply adequate space and technology to support their meeting needs
- ❑ They feel successful when their attendees feel positive about where they will be meeting
- ❑ Based on our main consumer media reach (Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Jackson, Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, Orlando), with the exceptions of Washington, DC and Minneapolis, we're reaching planners who are working in the Southern region
- ❑ Viewing the ads in industry publications; likely to have seen other brand advertising

Main Takeaway
- ❑ My attendees would LOVE to go to a meeting there!

Campaign Goals
- ❑ Give Meeting planners a feel for the region and its features
- ❑ Cause them to reach out for more information

Team building has a **SCENIC ROUTE.**
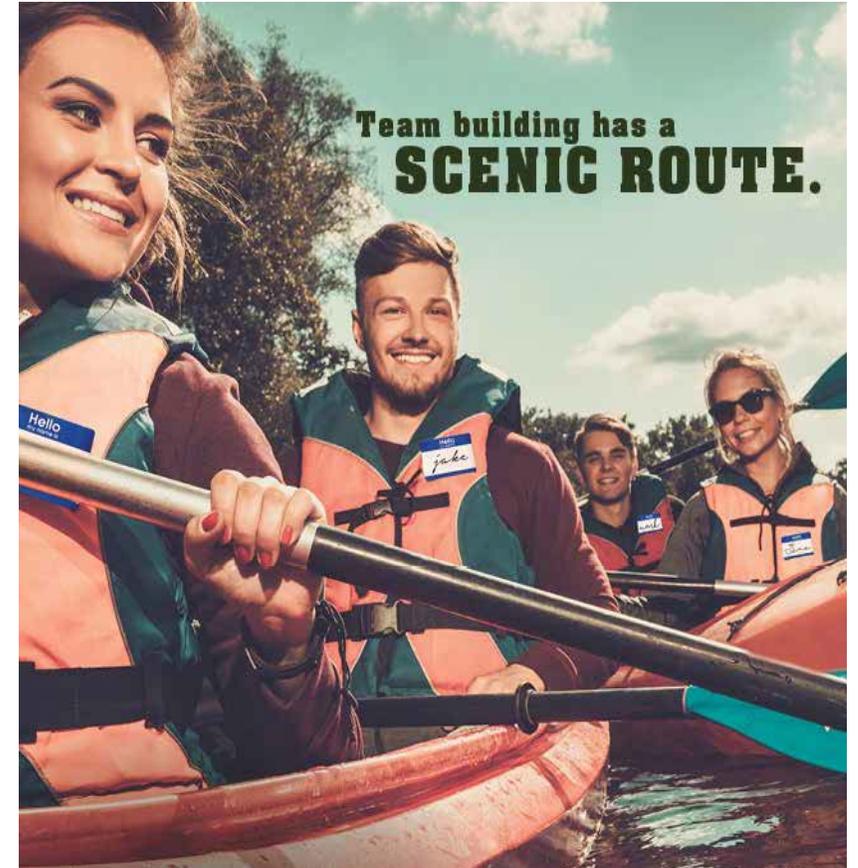
National Sales

Strategies

- ❑ Continuous sales calls to association and corporate meeting planners on the national level
- ❑ Monies budgeted for specialized site visits for convention center prospects and/or high room utilization clients
- ❑ Host client event in Washington, DC
- ❑ Host client event in Dallas, TX
- ❑ Sales Missions with Partners to New York targeting Corporate and Business Trade
- ❑ Host FAM trip targeting clients from National Associations, Corporate Markets that utilize the Convention Center
- ❑ Work with Convention Center to promote their discounted space fees based on food and beverage sales

Texas Sales Calls	2 per year April 2018 September 2018	Austin, Dallas, Houston	Market: National - Regional Association / Corporate
Association Meeting Professionals	December 2017	Washington, DC	Market: National - Regional Association / Corporate
Destinations Showcase DC	February/ Mar 2018	Washington, DC	Market: National Association
Connect Marketplace	August 2018	Salt Lake City, UT	Market: National/Regional Assoc
Connect DC	December 13, 2017	Washington, DC	Market: National Association

Tradeshow/Conference/Sales Calls

National Sales

Meetings Quest	November 13-15, 2017	Plano, TX	National/Regional Association/Corporate
IAEE (Expo Expo)	November 27-30, 2017	San Antonio, TX	Convention Center Tradeshows
BizBash (Corporate Planners)	May 2018	Florida	National/Regional Corporate
Pharmaceutical Meeting Professional Summit	March, 2018	Philadelphia, PA	Corporate/Pharmaceutical
Destination SouthEast	September, 2018	TBD	Business Trade
New York Sales Calls with Partners	May, 2018	New York, NY	Corporate/ Business Trade

Tradeshow/Conference/Sales Calls

State/Regional Sales

Strategies

- ❑ Continuous sales calls to state association meeting planners and corporate planners with specific targeted message to MS State associations regarding the benefits and impact of keeping meetings in State
- ❑ Host client appreciation event in Jackson, MS
- ❑ Host client event in Baton Rouge, LA
- ❑ Host client event in Montgomery, AL
- ❑ Attendance at MSAE monthly luncheons
- ❑ Bi-monthly sales calls to targeted leads in Jackson, MS; Birmingham, AL; Baton Rouge, LA; Atlanta, GA

Alabama Council of Association Executives *Annual Conference *Sales Calls	October 4-6, 2017 2 per year TBD:	Mobile, AL Birmingham, AL Montgomery, AL	Market: Regional Association / Corporate
Louisiana Society of Association Executives *Annual Conference *Sales Calls	2 per year TBD	New Orleans, LA Baton Rouge, LA	Market: Regional Association / Corporate
Mississippi Society of Association Executives *Annual Conference *Sales Calls	Sept 2017 TBD: Several per year	Hattiesburg, MS Jackson, MS	Market: State Association

Tradeshow/Conference/Sales Calls

Leisure Group Sales – Domestic & International

Strategies

Domestic & International

Promotion of the Mississippi Gulf Coast to domestic tour operators, wholesale tour operators and inbound receptive operators. Emphasis will be placed on groups attendees with sales efforts that deliver business opportunities in the short-term window of groups arriving within 24 months that build a solid base of bookings into the future. Future booking sales efforts will be strongly influenced by expanded itineraries and hotel contracting.

The Leisure Group Sales is responsible for all areas related to the leisure travel markets. The two primary categories of concentration in the group travel arena are:

❑ Domestic Tour/Motorcoach Operator Market

❑ International Travelers / Inbound Receptive Market

- Phone/Email/Mail and face-to-face sales efforts quarterly to contacts derived from tradeshow attendance and membership directories

Georgia Motor Coach Association (Domestic)	July, 2018	TBD
Travel South Showcase – Domestic	March 18-21, 2018	Mississippi Gulf Coast
Travel Alliance Partnership – TAP Dance	June 2018	TBD
Tennessee Motor Coach Association	February 18-21, 2018	Memphis, TN
American Bus Association	January 26-30, 2018	Charlotte, NC
Travel South Showcase – International	November 28-30, 2017	Charleston, SC

Tradeshow/Conference/Sales Calls

Sports Sales

Strategies

- Direct Sales
  - Phone/email and in person sales efforts will continue throughout the year to contacts derived from tradeshow attendance and membership directories
- Host FAM trip around the Mississippi Gulf Resort Classic
- Host a pre or post FAM trip in conjunction with Conference USA
- Host quarterly meetings with Parks & Recreation Directors

TEAMS	October 30 – November 2, 2017	Orlando, FL
US Sports Congress	December 4-6,2017	Mesa, AZ
National Assoc. Sports Commissions	April 23-16, 2018	Minneapolis, MN
Connect Sports	August 2018	TBD
International Assoc. of Golf Tour Operators	June 24-27, 2018	Sunriver Resort, Oregon
International Network of Golf	May 20-24, 2018	Mississippi Gulf Coast

Tradeshow/Conference/Sales Calls