

BORN TO CELEBRATE

2017-2018 BUSINESS PLAN







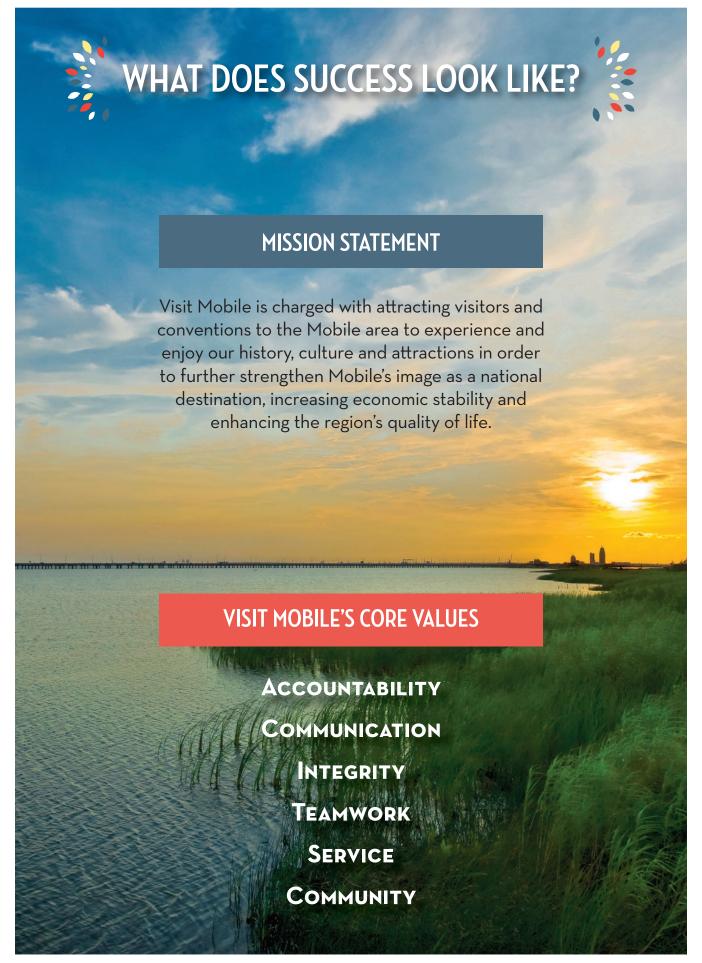


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WHAT WERE THE MAJOR WINS IN 2017?



- Filled vacant President/CEO position.
- Filled the vacant Vice President of Convention Sales position and realigned convention sales managers market segments, room night and lead goals to increase room night production.
 - Value aligned organizational structure to create a Leisure Sales & Events Department, with a Director of Leisure Sales and Events and a Leisure Sales and Events Manager to focus on cruise planners, travel agents, sports, domestic group tour, international group tour market segments. Alignment also created a Digital Marketing Manager position, to manage and maximize our mobile, digital, web and social presence to increase stakeholder value.
- Formed the 'Values of Visit Mobile'.
- Continued to collaborate with the effort to have a Tourism Improvement District Plan implemented with area hoteliers.
- Developed a marketing plan for the Mobile Tourism Improvement District.
- Lead Destination Mobile collaboration to position Mobile as a major destination with leading ideas of waterfront activation.
- Identified Ecotourism as an iconic experience our area has to offer and launched plans to align ourselves with the appropriate stakeholders, industry organizations, travel trade and media.
- Launched a strategic cruise passenger outreach program that encourages passengers to spend time in Mobile pre- and post-cruise.
- Hosted over 400 travel agents during quarterly cruise ship inspections followed by city tours.
- Assumed management of AL Cruise Terminal's Facebook page while continuing to manage the Cruising From Mobile Facebook page and other communications to stakeholders and passengers about cruising from Mobile.
- Continued to host and manage the I Am Mobile! Tourism Ambassador

 Program, with five classes graduated by the end of 2017 and over 100 Ambassadors.



- Participated in Mardi Gras in Times Square activation in New York City with State Department of Tourism.
- Delivered nearly 5.5 million social media impressions across multiple platforms that we manage.
- Generated well over 100 articles through hosted press trips, media outreach, including a USA Today travel story about the cruise line renewing its contract equaling over \$400,000 in ad equivalency.
- Produced a drone video for meeting planners to visually present
- our walkable downtown convention package, including Convention Center and area hotels.
- Surpassed definite room night goals by 3,000 room nights to achieve 78,000, a record for the past decade.

VISIT MOBILE

- Assisted with the roll out and promotion of the first ever area attractions discount pass called the Alabama Pass.
- Created first ever Annual Stakeholder Survey.
- Revised sales bonus program.
- Improved and enhanced the monthly Performance
 Report to include charts, graphs and better visuals designed to convey the data, results and statistics included in the report.



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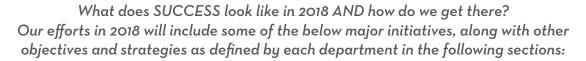
SENIOR LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVES



- Continue to meet with the key leadership of the Mobile Area Lodging Association completing the Tourism Improvement District (TID). This model is a public/private partnership to create a dedicated funding stream for tourism initiatives.
- Continue to work closely with City's cruise taskforce/team to align with the future of the cruise industry.
- Find new business in the corporate and association conventions and meetings space.
 Everyone sells.
- City/County projects that could have impact on current and future tourism efforts, i.e. Civic Center repurposing, waterfront activation, Bay Bridge and land use, collaborating with stake holders accordingly.
- Continue to partner with the Mobile Regional Airport team in identifying and attracting a low cost airline carrier to our market.
- Continue to identify community/civic organizations where Visit Mobile can present the value of what we bring to this community, then tell our story and make them storytellers.
- Continue meeting with City, County, State, Chamber and other business community leaders
 to update these organizations on our initiatives and other success stories; continue storytelling to all stakeholders.
- Continue to work with City/County leadership to identify and fund Welcome Signage on key interstate highway entry points and develop new way finding signage in the downtown district. Water Street exit is key...must be inviting!
- Continue to lead Destination Mobile initiative, including various sub-committees.
- Competative set analysis of lodging tax percentage and assessments.



FY 2017 BUSINESS PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



- Accountability of goals
- Approval and implementation of Mobile Tourism Improvement District Plan
- A balanced approach to tourism (convention and leisure)
- BP/Deepwater Horizon \$150K
 Advertising Grant
- Implementing media monitoring and outreach platform, Cision

- Implementing user-generated content platform, Crowdriff
- Complete redesign of www.mobile.org
- International partnerships with UK, China and Germany
- Ongoing cruise outreach and strategies
- Shifting of sales market segments

- Increase in room night/lead goals for sales to 100,000 definite convention room nights
- Aggressive prospecting by achieving a 30 point prospecting goal program
- Maintain Destinations International accreditation

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Conduct a clean independent public audit to obtain an unqualified opinion on the reporting of our financial statements.

- Automate several internal processes, particularly the payroll time keeping and recording processes to improve efficiency, accuracy and reporting.
- Update and enhance the team member manual and develop perpetual training program.
- Maintain an effective team member performance enhancement and evaluation program with specific accountabilities or goal achievement.
- Investigate, identify and consider acquisition of new software for all financial and budget processing and reporting.

CONVENTION SALES

- In our new fiscal year we will have TWO additional people selling in the association and corporation market, including the VP of Sales and a new sales manager focusing on mid-market pieces of business.
- Market deployment for corporate and association sales has changed to a regional territory vs. a vertical market.
- More focus on corporate and association roomnight production.
- The sales team has a new tool, Knowland, to assist and increase in prospecting.
- The sales team has a weekly goal on prospecting new opportunities which includes 30 touch points a week. These touch points include site visits, prospecting, networking and tradeshow events and appointments.
- Year to date, we have a 35% capture rate for leads.
 We will need to uncover 99,000 room nights in leads in order to make our 100,000 room night goal.
- Crossover has not been tracked in the past, so we are unaware of how many tentative leads are on the books vs. the same time last year.
- Use CRM platform, Simpleview, more for documentation, tracking, follow up, trace and prospecting.

LEISURE SALES & EVENTS

- Increase the number of overnight motorcoach visitors to Mobile as well as day trippers for area attractions.
- Maintain consistent outreach strategy to regional travel agents to promote pre/post cruises.
- Increase the number of guests taking advantage
 of the Carnival Fantasy Park & Cruise overnight
 packages and Mobile's awareness within the cruise
 industry for future opportunities.
- Continue to improve Carnival business relationships and communications.
- Increase the number of Foreign Individual Traveler (FIT) contracts being sold along with hotels offering FIT contracts.
- Increase the number of military reunion room nights leads and room nights booked in Mobile.
- Increase the number of sports event and conferences booked and leads generated in Mobile.



MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS & VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Build and maintain continued awareness of Mobile by developing and implementing a marketing campaign(s) targeting leisure visitors with a call to action to visit website through a multi-platform, integrated media plan.
- Market the TID effectively, working closely with Mobile Area Lodging Corporation.
- Manage ongoing marketing efforts to target cruise passengers for pre/post cruise stays.
- Develop strategic ecotourism plan and align ourselves with appropriate industry organizations and stakeholders.
- Improve and strengthen engagement and activity of "Visit Mobile, Born To Celebrate" across all social platforms through strategic content development, collaboration and analytics.
- Include user-generated content in current website using Crowdriff aggregation platform.
- Redesign mobile.org and position to be the official source for all things to see and do in Mobile to both tourists and locals alike.
- Increase Mobile's position as a top meetings destination through editorial and targeted support advertising
- Plan and host press/influencer trips, coordinate individual site visits, make editorial pitch trips, attend travel media trade shows and set goal for number of pitches and touchpoints per week while tracking results with new media monitoring service, Cision.
- Continue managing I am Mobile Tourism
 Ambassador Program which educates citizens,
 front-line hospitality employees and others about
 Mobile, enhance volunteer program and determine
 recertification parameters.
- Manage Visit Mobile Welcome Center, develop volunteer training program, enhance visitor experience.

MOBILE CELEBRATES TOURISM

By The Numbers

NUMBER OF VISITORS

2010 - 3,287,399

2011 - 2,874,349

2012 - 2,829,714

2013 - 2,874,808

2014 - 2,958,008

2015 - 3,050,633

2016 - 3,227,689

Alabama Tourism Department, Economic Impact of Travel

CITY LODGING TAX REVENUE

(operating fund, fiscal year)

2011 - \$3,511,603

2012 - \$3,337,743

2013 - \$3,470,037

2014 - \$3,592,747

2015 - \$3,769,236

2016 - \$3,944,424

2017 - \$4.584.644

City of Mobile Monthly Financial Reports

AVERAGE DAILY HOTEL RATE

2011 - \$71.49

2012 - \$71.89

2013 - \$73.11

2014 - \$74.76

2015 - \$76.28

2016 - \$76.50

2017 - \$78.13

Smith Travel Research

2011	56.7%	HOTEL
2012	56.8%	OCCUPANCY
2013	57.9%	RATE (annual)
2014	59.3%	(annuar)
2015	60.9%	
2016	62.6%	
2017	64.8%	Smith Travel Research

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FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION



The department of Finance and Administration is responsible for preserving the company's assets and for implementing and maintaining the policies, procedures and tools that are necessary to ensure the long-term financial stability and sustainability of the mission of Visit Mobile. It includes four primary functional areas; Finance, Administration, Human Resources and Technology and incorporates the core values of Accountability, Integrity, Communication, Teamwork, Service and Community.

The primary responsibilities of the functional areas are to insure that all financial obligations are being timely met and the financial position of the organization is being accurately and timely reported, the development and control of the budget, the operations are transparent and the results are being accurately and timely published, the staff is motivated, rewarded and competitively compensated and that the staff is equipped and properly trained with the necessary tools and technology to perform their tasks most efficiently.

To meet these responsibilities effectively during the next fiscal year, we propose the following Goals:

- Conduct a clean independent public audit to obtain an unqualified opinion on the reporting of our financial statements.
- Automate several internal processes, particularly the payroll time keeping and recording processes to improve efficiency, accuracy and reporting.
- Update and enhance the team member manual and develop perpetual training program.
- Maintain an effective team member performance enhancement and evaluation program.
- Investigate, identify and consider acquisition of new software for all financial and budget processing and reporting.

OBJECTIVE

Pursue new alternate revenue funding streams.

STRATEGY

- Continue supporting the Mobile Area Lodging Association (MALA) in any way possible to secure the Tourism Improvement District (TID)
- Maintain relationship with Mobile County Commission through Marketing Fund and MALA.

- The TID lodging petition number and fair market value has been achieved.
- The Marketing fund level of funding is now 17%.

Maintain the financial integrity of the organization.

STRATEGY

- Obtain an annual independent audit with no material adjustments and an unqualified opinion.
- Begin communicating internal deadlines for all financial data and commitments to the staff 45 days prior to the end of the fiscal year.
- Complete accurate work papers for external auditors within 45 days after the end of the fiscal year.
- Schedule and complete external auditor field work within 60 days after the end of the fiscal year and assist in all aspects of the audit.

METRICS

Audit review and approval.

STRATEGY

- Ensure policies and procedures established for the protection of assets and the control of the financial operation are understood and adhered too.
- Provide annual review of key company policies and any changes to the financial policies and procedures manual.
- Provide communications through regular department/staff meetings.
- Provide timely and accurate interim financial reports.
- Close monthly financial accounting system within 15 days of the end of the month.

METRICS

- Financial and Administrative information is submitted in a timely manner.
- A completed audit report to present for acceptance by the Board of Directors at the January 2018 Board meeting.

STRATEGY

- Develop and control annual financial budget.
- Work closely with budget managers to develop an accurate and realistic budget.
- Provide timely and accurate information to budget managers throughout the year to ensure that spending is managed and budget deficits are avoided if at all possible.

METRICS

Budget status reports are provided to managers monthly.

STRATEGY

- Modify current accounting and budgeting software.
- Develop specifications tailored to the unique needs of this organization.
- Select a programmer to make the desired modifications and enhancements.

- Current budget tracking system is modified.
- Increased efficiency in the accounting processes.



Cultivate a highly motivated team.

STRATEGY

- Maintain effective performance enhancement program.
- Review and modify if necessary job descriptions for every position on staff at least once a year.
- Insure all team member evaluations are conducted timely.
- Update and modify the personnel manual as often as necessary and review and possibly update at least once a year.

METRICS

- Updated job descriptions and team member manual.
- Completed evaluations/team member goals.
- Annual Lumpkin Disc Survey review with each team member.

STRATEGY

- Provide formal training and professional development for regular staff.
- Budget enough funding to allow attendance at various state and national industry seminars.
- Implement assessment program to identify which areas of training are needed most and determine the most efficient way to address the greatest need.
- Provide and encourage local training opportunities including in-house lunch & learn or other staff sharing opportunities.
- Implement regular harassment training.
- Designate one afternoon a month for various cross training.

METRICS

- Number of staff attending various training events.
- Establishment of Assessment of training needs policy and procedure.

STRATEGY

- Insure team members understand appropriate avenues to report prohibited activities and that they understand the policy prohibiting retaliation against those who file complaints or who participate in any investigation of such complaint.
- Provide annual review of key company policies and any changes to the team member manual
- Provide communications through regular department/staff meetings.

METRICS

- Document or prepare minutes of meetings when various policies are reviewed.
- Document number of changes made to team member manual annually.
- Maintain a team member suggestion file.

STRATEGY

- Conduct and participate in periodic compensation studies to determine the competitiveness of salaries through Destinations International, local comp set, etc.
- Subscribe to and participate in the industries local, state and national surveys for CVB's specifically and for other similar non-profits in general.

METRICS

Description of process used to determine the competitiveness of salaries.

OBJECTIVE

Insure appropriate technology availability and usage.

STRATEGY

- Ensure the staff is adequately equipped and trained to be competitive in this industry.
- Survey various CVB's and other similar non-profit entities to learn what hardware and software they are using.
- Survey staff members who travel to learn what our competitors are using.
- Provide adequate training opportunities on existing equipment.
- Insure funding is available for system upgrades and maintenance.
- Replace obsolete work stations.

- Evolving technology plan
- Content and well trained staff
- New work stations





CONVENTIONS, TRADESHOWS AND MEETINGS



The sales department has made some significant changes for the new fiscal year. Prior, the sales team had vertical markets versus geographical territories. Therefore, you could have two people making sales calls in the same city because they had different markets. Even the Association segment was diced depending on what type of association. Now, we have geographical territories west (Amy Angermeier) and east (Jerry Boussard) of the Mississippi (with the exception of a few states).

When we hire a new sales manager, that person will be responsible for association and corporate groups under 250 room nights on peak; therefore, granting our senior sales managers time to uncover larger pieces of business. Additionally, we have the Vice President of Sales and the CEO, for the first time ever, actively prospecting weekly. The Vice President of Sales is accountable for room night goals.

We have also introduced a new prospecting and lead generation platform called Knowland. This allows us to set up comp sets anywhere in the country which providing past meeting history and meeting planner information.

We will go from a record year of 78, 000 room nights to 100,000 room nights, but how do we do that?

Listed below are our new sales team market segments and territories. Overall, we will be more aligned with our hotels' sales teams while allowing Visit Mobile to increase our sales appointment opportunities. Once the new sales manager is hired, it will be determined what he/she's peak number will be. In the meantime, the sales teams will be handling all leads within their market segments, regardless of their peak.

MEASURABLE GOALS

- Site Visits 47 site visits, a 25% increase year over year
- Touch Points over 2,000 prospecting touch points in 2018
- Newsletters bi-annual newsletters to our third party associates
- Room Nights An increase in room nights by 28%
- Leads An increase in leads generated by 25%

AMY ANGERMEIER - Vice President of Sales - 250 +Peak: Corporate, Association, Hobby - All states West of the Mississippi, IL, WI, IN and Alabama Corporate.

PATTY KIEFFER - Director of Leisure Sales & Events - Cruise, Group Tour, Military, Sports.

JERRY BOUSARD - Senior National Sales Manager - 250 + Peak: Corporate, Association, Government East of the Mississippi, (with the exceptions of MS, IL WI, IN) as well as Alabama Association.

LOUVENIA TOLBERT - Senior National Sales Manager - Ethnic/Multicultural, Fraternal Religious - All Sates and Government West of the Mississippi.

EDRA FINLEY- Leisure Sales & Events Sales Manager - Cruise, Group, Tour, Military, Sports.

Mobile's competitive set is defined as

Memphis Baton Rouge
Nashville Gulfport/Biloxi
Chattanooga Huntsville
Birmingham Montgomery
Jacksonville New Orleans
Savannah Charleston

Primary target audiences are

Company meeting professionals Independent meeting planners Convention delegates Third-party planners

SALES GOAL

To increase bookings of conventions, meetings, sports events/meetings, and group travel as proposed below:

To increase definite room nights over the same 3-yr period

FY 2017 78,000 FY 2018 100,000 FY 2019 115,000

OBJECTIVE

Attend convention industry events and trade shows.

STRATEGY

Carefully select, participate and sponsor trade show/industry conferences that will yield the highest and most qualified number of leads for our destination, such as:

•	PCMA	1/18
•	RCMA	1/18
•	CESSE	2/18
•	Diversity Summit	4/18
•	Connect Faith	10/18
•	Helms Briscoe	5/18
•	ASAE	8/18
•	ACAE Annual Fall Conference	10/18
•	CSAE Holiday Showcase	12/17
•	NCBMP Fall Conference	12/18
•	Connect DC	11/18
•	Connect - Association/Corporate	8/18

- Annual convention sales
- Leads
- Annual definite room nights
- Tentative room nights

Focus direct sales activities on target markets, partnerships and opportunities that best fit our destination demographic.

STRATEGY

- Continue to foster third party planning company relationships, including Conference Direct and Helms Briscoe, by maintaining preferred partner status on Helms Briscoe and CVENT web sites.
- Consistently pursue repeat contracts from long-time customers.
- Engage local corporations, higher education, college athletic conferences, business and multi-cultural leaders to meet in Mobile.
- Participate in trade shows sponsored by the meeting planner organizations of Helms Briscoe and Conference Direct to create and enhance relationships.
- Send multiple sales managers to key trade sales events to take advantage of the pre-scheduled appointment opportunity.
- Meet with third-party meeting planners, pre/post trade shows in the appropriate markets to promote Mobile 's convention package.

METRICS

- Total number of rooms booked
- Number of leads generated
- New business generation

OBJECTIVE

Continue to build state meeting planner recognition and loyalty to Mobile as a preferred convention destination.

STRATEGY

- Develop multiple opportunities to showcase Mobile and its meetings package to Montgomery planners.
- Continue to host an annual client reception to showcase Mobile's hotels and venues.
- Invite partners to help plan, attend and staff booths to welcome guests and highlight their property or service.
- Participate in the annual ACAE Golf outing event by sponsoring a golf hole and include partners to assist in planning event and promoting Mobile.
- Regularly attend the monthly ACAE Lunch & Learn gatherings to reinforce Mobile's commitment to meeting planners in the area. Conduct sales calls pre and post-luncheon and invite partners to participate in the luncheon and appointments.

- Number of sales leads generated
- Total number of rooms booked
- Number of meeting planners met/appointments made

Create programs to incentivize planners to select the special need months.

STRATEGY

- Work closely with hotel/attractions partners to provide added value/discount offers during these periods for posting on CVENT website to create awareness among third party meeting planners.
- Promote packages and incentives for need months in industry magazines, website and additional digital advertising channels.
- Send customized target market messaging to individual market segments i.e. religious, association, fraternal.
- Produce collateral that outlines benefits of booking during need months and distribute at all appropriate trade events.

METRICS

- Total number of leads produced
- Total number of packages sold

OBJECTIVE

Continue to seek new leads by investigating Lost Business Accounts to determine potential for reintroducing organizations to Mobile as a meeting destination.

STRATEGY

- Focus on the period 2010-2016 for Lost Business lead opportunities.
- Use Simpleview and Knowland database to search and identify prospective accounts.
- Place special interest as to why the business was lost.
- Contact qualified accounts through direct contact to determine level of interest in reconsidering Mobile for a meeting.
- Add target accounts to prospect mailing list to consistently provide touch points and build awareness.
- Review status quarterly for results and reevaluation of efforts.
- Sales team meetings every Monday.
- Review tentative meetings every other Monday.

- Number of accounts contacted
- Number of leads generated

Increase destination site visits from 38 in 2017 to 47 by 2018.

STRATEGY

- Build market awareness of Mobile County as an attractive year-round meetings and convention destination.
- Utilize Simpleview and Knowland database to generate contacts made through sales calls and attended industry events for follow-up and qualification.
- Offer site visit incentive package to include free airfare/lodging to qualified planners.
- Coordinate site visit invitations with national sales offices, trade show contacts, third party meeting planners and account decision-makers.
- Refer to and execute the agreed upon site visit guidelines coordinated by Visit Mobile for individual and multiple hotel site visits.

METRICS

- Total number of site visits
- Number of events attended

OBJECTIVE

Focus on creating a higher percentage of corporate/national association business in our room night market mix.

STRATEGY

- Develop a hot list of contacts in the local, regional and national market that meet in the South and have the potential to deliver a higher ADR for their meeting.
- Continue conducting local sales calls to companies located within Mobile such as Regions, Austal, Airbus, University of South AL, Mobile Infirmary and shipbuilding/ stevedoring businesses that host corporate meetings.
- Focus on corporate/association segments when conducting sales events in high yield markets like Atlanta, Washington DC, Chicago, Birmingham and Montgomery.
- Produce advertising campaign that delivers a high-end message to key target markets.
- Place ads in related industry publications and on appropriate news/websites.

- Number of sales calls made
- Number of leads produced
- Number of conferences booked
- STR Report (success in the future is to achieve 70+% occupancy for area lodging partners









LEISURE SALES AND EVENTS



The newly formed Leisure Sales & Events Department will focus on increasing the number of leisure hotel rooms booked in Mobile. The markets will include the cruise industry, domestic group tours, international group tours, military reunions, and sporting conferences and events. This department will be the face of Mobile staying in the forefront to support our local partners through various communications and meetings with the Leisure and Events Planners.

The overall goal of this department will include creating 100 leads and 35,000 room nights booked in the various markets (up from 21,000 room nights last fiscal year).

OBJECTIVE

Increase the number of tour groups visiting and staying overnight in Mobile.

STRATEGY

- Meet with local partners to create new & innovative itineraries
- Attend monthly local attractions meetings and quarterly state tourism meetings.
- Attend national tradeshows; Travel South, American Bus Association, National Tour Association, Alabama Motorcoach Association, Student Youth Travel Association, and Regional Military Consumer Shows.
- Co-Sponsor Group Tour Operators reception at the American Bus Association Tradeshow.
- Perform Post-FAM after Travel South in Biloxi.
- Create quarterly newsletter for Group Tour Operators

- Number of trade shows attended
- Number of group room nights booked



Increase the number of guests taking advantage of the Carnival Fantasy park & cruise overnight packages and Mobile's awareness within the Cruise Industry for future opportunities.

STRATEGY

- Enhance memberships with Florida Caribbean Cruise Lines and Cruise Line Industry Association.
- Attend FCCA Conference and Seatrade with local cruise terminal staff.
- Coordinate with City of Mobile on local cruise initiatives.
- Conduct quarterly travel agent sales calls in several SE Cities.
- Coordinate travel agent FAMs.
- Attend Alabama Travel Agents Association's meetings quarterly.
- Attend Cruiseworld, Cruise 360 and Seatrade.
- Enhance travel agent database.
- Create and send quarterly travel agent newsletters.
- Perform quarterly ship inspection presentations followed by city tours.
- Perform travel agent site inspections.
- Coordinate quarterly local cruise task force meetings.
- Continue to foster Carnival relationships and communicate proactively with appropriate departments.
- Continue daily prospecting.

OBJECTIVE

Increase the number of Foreign Individual Traveler (FIT) contracts being sold along with hotels offering FIT contracts.

STRATEGY

- Continue to work with Brand USA and Alabama Department of Tourism on several state FAMS.
- Attend International Tradeshows to promote Mobile such as International Pow Wow, Travel South International, and IBT.
- Increase awareness of Mobile through a new German Partnership at a co-op cost of \$16,000 with the State Department of Tourism.
- Continue to work closely with the other International Representatives from the United Kingdom, and China.
- Conduct Mobile familiarization with German, UK and Chinese International Reps.

Increase the number of military reunion room nights leads and room nights booked in Mobile.

STRATEGY

- Prospect through various resources, and work closely with local partners to create new opportunities.
- Host various site inspections.
- Conduct a Military familiarization tour.
- Attend The Reunion Network Tradeshow.
- Attend several regional military consumer shows.
- Continue to update military database and contacts.
- Continue daily prospecting.

OBJECTIVE

Increase the number of sports event and conferences booked and leads generated in Mobile.

STRATEGY

- Prospect through various resources like Knowland, MINT
- Host various site inspections.
- Conduct a sports familiarization tour.
- Make sales calls in relevant cities.
- Attend sports tradeshows: TEAMS, National Association Sport Commissions, Connect Sports.
- Create pre-and post tradeshow outreach programs.
- Support and collaborate with the Mobile Tennis Center, Mobile Sports Authority, and SMG.
- Hire, schedule, and manage 12 part-time staff members to provide assistance at sporting events.
- Continue to update sport database and contacts.
- Continue daily prospecting and document activity.





MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS





The role of the Marketing and Communications Department is to increase the demand in the Mobile area by both leisure and meetings/group visitors for conventions and meetings, hotel rooms, attractions visits, group tours, restaurant receipts, retail sales, local transportation and other events and activities. By delivering a strong, consistent message throughout various selling seasons, we can increase visitor volume, length of stay and visitor spend.

How do we get there? By setting the below goals to work toward, we will reach our target audiences through various platforms and efforts, delivering a positive Mobile message and telling stories that will encourage visitors to consider Mobile as a leisure or convention destination:

MEASURABLE GOALS

Travel Media:

- 120 articles
- 5 new media pitches a week

Website:

- Launch of new site by August 1
- Maintain current site and increase visits to 345,000 from 330,000
- Increase time on site from 1.5 minutes to 2 minutes
- Decrease bounce rate by 10/12%

Digital Advertising:

- Increase click through rate from .30% to .34%
- Increase number of impressions delivered from 6.2 million to 7.2 million

E-Newsletters:

- Custom e-newsletters for all market segments (consumer, partner, travel agent, group tour, convention sales)
- Increase consumer database from 22,000 to 26,000

SUPPORTING INITIATIVES

- Redesign and launch of mobile.org 2.0.
- Deliver brand story "Born To Celebrate" impacting our target audiences in ways that our competitors have not.
- Reach our audience at various stages of travel planning with authentic, memorable messaging and content, and ensure that the Mobile story is being delivered at critical decision-making points while visitors are researching and making decisions about future travel.
- Optimize our digital presence across multiple platforms, integrate the latest owned and user-generated content like Crowdriff for maximum exposure, reach and influence and engage our audience in a two-way conversation.
- Gain national and international media exposure for Mobile's diverse attractions, unique features, lifestyle, history, fresh gulf seafood and natural environment that will ultimately drive people to our website and social media profiles.
- Provide Performance Report with monthly analytics, key performance indicators and other data.



In establishing the criteria for selected target markets for Visit Mobile, a number of specific methods are used:

Geo-Targeting: When addressing the leisure traveler, we target markets that are within driving distance of Mobile. We appeal to those along the I-65 corridor as well as those to the east and west of Mobile traveling along I-10. Ads are delivered to the markets such as Nashville, Huntsville, Birmingham, Mobile, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, Destin, Ft. Walton Beach, Pensacola, Baton Rouge, Hattiesburg, and Jackson. These visitors to our city can reach Mobile within a day's drive and will normally stay for short visits, returning for even longer stays.

Demo-targeting by age: Those targeted are primarily between the ages of 25 to 54. Adults 60+ are the secondary market in this category.

Demo-Targeting by Income Level: Income level varies, but is primarily moderate with the secondary target market as high.

DMA: With the designated market area projected, we then build a media plan around that DMA which will provide the best results for impact.

Premium News Network: Premium News Network is used to extend the market reach to travelers in Visit Mobile's designated market area through an ad network that consists of 2,500 premium news sites. This is based on the earlier demographics and the interest of the user as a traveler to our area. This includes local television and print publications' websites in addition to national news sites. Number of impressions and click thru rate are key performance indicators.

Behavioral Targeting: Behavioral targeting for those exhibiting an interest in travel in our area has been shown to be highly effective. This form of marketing must ramp up over a period of time. When travelers are actively engaged on their computer in planning a trip to our area, then the Visit Mobile ads are delivered to them.

Re-Targeting: Re-targeting is also in place and is based on behavior as it allows Visit Mobile to reengage previous visitors to mobile.org by targeting users who have already shown interest in travel to our DMA.

Search (SEM): Search encompasses Google, Yahoo and Bing for Visit Mobile. Some top key word performers have been the following:

- fun things to do in Mobile AL
- things to do Mobile AL
- tourist attractions Mobile AL
- show Mobile AL
- Spring Hill College Mobile AL
- activities Mobile AL
- restaurants Mobile AL
- vacation Mobile AL
- Bellingrath Gardens and Home Mobile AL
- museum Mobile AL

- hotels Mobile AL
- shopping Mobile AL
- USS Alabama Battleship tour
- Battleship Memorial Park Mobile AL
- local restaurants Mobile AL

Pre-Roll Video: Pre-roll video is used in a variety of ways, including mobile and display. Commercials are targeted to people who like to travel and are planning to travel. It also is broadcast on local and national news sites to gain awareness of what Mobile has to offer.

Facebook Advertising: Facebook advertising is targeted to the same Demos we are currently reaching. This aspect helps get brand recognition for the Visit Mobile brand as well as increases Likes on the Visit Mobile page.



We have numerous sites that we target, based on specific criteria. Examples of some of the sites are:

Fox News MSN.com Forbes Drudge Report Google.com AL.com CNN.com Local News Sites Local Newspapers

PRIMARY AUDIENCES

LEISURE VISITORS

Families Couples

Cruise passengers Social groups

(girls getaway, guys golf/fishing outing)

Sports & Recreation
Eco/Outdoor Tourism
Arts/Culture/Entertainment
History Buffs

Multi-Cultural, African American Heritage Travelers
Retirees, Winter Visitors to Beach
Military Personnel
State University Fans

Incoming University Students/Parents
Young, Hip Travelers - Millennials
LGBTQ Community

Homeschoolers

International travelers to the Gulf Coast region

BUSINESS VISITORS

Meeting Professionals
(corporate, staff, executives)
Third-Party Meeting Planners
Convention Attendees
Trade/Industry Media
Group Tour Operators/Receptive Guides
(domestic and international)
Travel Agents

MEDIA

Staff writers of key publications
Freelance journalists
Bloggers, social influencers

SECONDARY AUDIENCES

Visit Mobile Board of Directors
Dues-paying partners
Mayor's executive team
City/County elected officials
Mobile-area residents
Business, civic and faith-based leaders
Local news media

Redesign mobile.org, Visit Mobile's primary marketing tool and travel planning resource.

STRATEGY

- Continue ad sales to generate revenue to reinvest back into advertising program.
- Working with SimpleView, use most current technology to enhance site performance, navigation and dynamic content.
- Continue use of CrowdRiff user-generated content platform.
- Manage calendar of events.
- Monitor on-line booking platform
- Optimize content to increase organic search results.
- Manage image library.

METRICS

- Total website traffic (number of visitors, time on site, page views, referrals)
- SEO rankings
- Bounce rates
- Number of hotel rooms booked
- Number of attraction tickets purchased/referrals made
- Number of restaurant reservations/referrals made
- Amount of ad revenue generated from DTN sales

OBJECTIVE

Grow consumer database/email subscriptions.

STRATEGY

- Send monthly, seasonal and event-specific email campaigns.
- Develop general interest emails that cover a wide variety of topics.
- Create specific email blasts with one message (event, announcement, special package).
- Customize email content based on specific interests, lifestyles, activities and Behavior.

- New subscribers
- Open rates
- Bounce rates
- Unsubscribes



Use the unexpected funds (\$150,000) from a residual BP/Deepwater Horizon grant to launch several targeted test campaigns to gauge interest and activity.

STRATEGY

- Winter in Chicago Direct Flight Campaign
- I-10 West to East Campaign
- Outdoor Billboards
- Meetings and Convention digital campaign
- Pre/Post cruise outreach on social
- Special Event (i.e. 1065) advertising support





OBJECTIVE

Build and maintain continued awareness of Mobile by developing and implementing a campaign(s) targeting leisure visitors with a call to action to visit website through a multiplatform, integrated media plan.

STRATEGY

- Manage an integrated digital campaign across various platforms digital ad networks, mobile and social - including pre-roll video, geo-targeting, demo-targeting, behavioral targeting and re-targeting efforts.
- Place advertising in Southern-centric publications, also consider special interest publications like food, outdoors and history.
- Target city publications in drive markets such as Birmingham Magazine, Memphis Magazine, 225 (Baton Rouge), Nashville Lifestyles, the Huntsville Times, Atlanta Magazine with quick getaway/road trip ideas.
- Oversee search engine marketing efforts.
- Deploy pre-roll video via mobile and display.
- Offer cooperative advertising opportunities to Visit Mobile partners interested in reaching same potential customers.
- Prominent placement in visitor publications such as the Alabama Tourism Vacation Guide, Alabama Golf.

- Number of impressions delivered
- Number of inquiries generated
- Number of click-thrus

Support the convention sales efforts with advertising in trade publications, via on-line meetings outlets and meetings and conventions-focused news generation.

STRATEGY

- Place ads in publications and digital resources that meeting planners read.
- Align ad placements with appropriate tradeshow representation/attendance.
- Keep digital content fresh and engaging.
- Direct and on-going brand messaging with third-party planners.
- Assist with design/format/updates of sales presentations.

METRICS

- Number of impressions delivered
- Number of inquiries generated
- Number of click-thrus

OBJECTIVE

Support convention sales effort with new video showing convention center and hotel properties in our 'Walkable Downtown Convention Package'.

STRATEGY

- Sales team use in presentations.
- Include on newly designed website.
- Email to prospects to demonstrate downtown's walkability.

METRICS

- Number of views on website
- Audience numbers and individual sales appointment views

OBJECTIVE

Manage on-going marketing efforts to target cruise passengers for pre/post cruise stays.

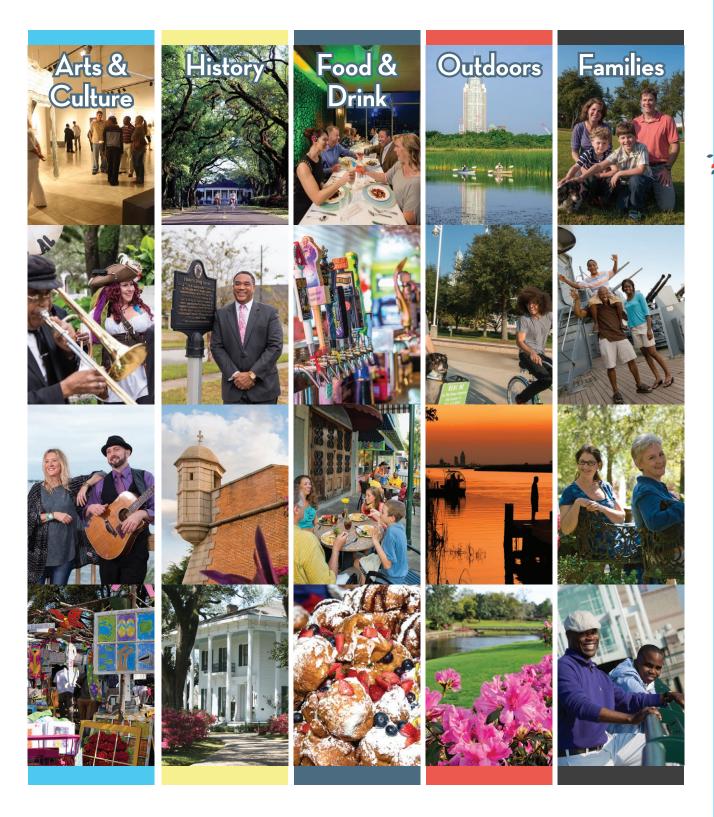
STRATEGY

- Cruise Task Force, quarterly meetings with key stakeholders and hospitality partners.
- Manage 'Cruisin' From Mobile' Facebook page to promote pre/post cruise visits.
- Promote pre/post cruise activities via Visit Mobile's social media channels.
- Hotel cruise packages and other cruise-related info to mobile.org.
- Station volunteers at Cruise Terminal, distributing visitor information.
- Distribute cruise brochure/map of activities.
- Enhance Cruise section in Mobile Destination Guide in 2018 issue
- Manage Alabama Cruise Terminal Facebook page
- Create an 'arrival video' to show incoming passengers how best to get to terminal.

- Number of click-thrus
- Number of new followers
- Number of travel agent leads
- Open rates

When it comes to non-news related information, Visit Mobile has the largest social media fan base in the Mobile area. We create content for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and Snapchat that our followers have come to depend on for the best insights, suggestions and best ways to experience Mobile.

We focus on five pillars to tell our story:



OWNED MEDIA

The personality profile of 'Visit Mobile' across all social media platforms is fun, spirited and much like one of your well-liked friends. Every photo, video, contest or story that is posted is well thought-out and a part of a strategy to tell Mobile's story through the experiences of visitors and locals alike.

OBJECTIVE

Improve and strengthen "Visit Mobile" across all social platforms.

STRATEGY

- Publish content that is timely and relevant.
- Develop content from Visit Mobile fans using #borntocelebrate, #visitmobile and #somobile to convey Mobile's story.
- Curate video content to be shared across all platforms.
- Develop new content that enhances existing initiatives and campaigns.
- Create and maintain editorial calendar that ties all platforms together.

METRICS

- Total engagement
- Total reach
- Total content curated

OBJECTIVE

Establish 'Visit Mobile' and mobile.org as the official source for all things to see and do in Mobile to both tourists and locals alike.

STRATEGY

- Maintain an updated Calendar of Events on mobile.org.
- Curate fresh timely content.
- Enhance existing photo database so that photos all remain current.
- Coordinate with advertising team to develop specific campaigns targeting Facebook users in top-tier markets.

- Total visitors to mobile.org (from social media platforms)
- Total visitors to Visit Mobile blog
- Number of new fans/followers



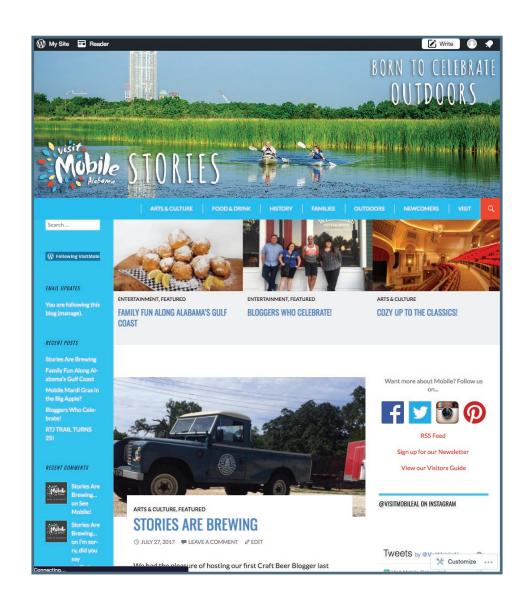


Leverage Visit Mobile blog now called VISIT MOBILE|Stories as an outlet to push relevant, timely content.

STRATEGY

- Enhance content for Visit Mobile Blog and build upon 2017/2018 successes.
- Include in redesigned www.mobile.org.
- Coordinate with social media team on content for cross-platform promotions.
- Maintain role as landing space for more-detailed content.
- Feature guest expert bloggers periodically on niche subjects.

- Blog posts posted and curated
- Blog visitors from social media platforms





EARNED MEDIA

Like Mobile, our goal is to always be hospitable and charming. By maintaining the carefully cultivated and positive relationships with travel media we have made over the years, we plan to deliver the strategic messaging that Mobile continues to be an exciting, vibrant and diverse destination for all of the traveling public.

TARGETED SEGMENTS

- Daily newspaper travel/features/lifestyle/sports/entertainment/outdoor sections in all appropriate markets.
- National consumer travel, senior, art, women's, city and regional magazines, outdoor recreation, lifestyle and shelter, food, auto travel and AAA publications.
- In-flight publications for all of the airlines serving the Mobile, Gulfport and Pensacola airports.
- Meeting trade, travel trade, incentive and professional specialty publications.
- Cruise (consumer and B2B publications, websites, blogs).
- Travel agent portals, publications and blogs.
- African American and multi-cultural specialty publications.
- LGBTQ and other alternative publications with a travel component.
- Military consumer and reunion publications.
- Sporting events and sport business publications, portals and blogs.
- Appropriate television programs, radio shows, podcasts.
- High impact internet sites and blogs that feature travel.

OBJECTIVE

Enhance and increase Mobile's visibility in top leisure markets such as Memphis/Nashville/Chattanooga, central and north Alabama, south Louisiana, Florida panhandle and Mississippi Gulf Coast.

STRATEGY

- Nurture existing relationships with media contacts and identify new relationships that are needed through Cision.
- Collaborate with advertising team to create digital campaigns around major events such as SouthSounds, 1065, Mardi Gras, New Year's Eve MoonPie drop
- Curate and implement holiday-centered pitch sheets to distribute quarterly to local and national lifestyle talk shows and publications.

- Events promoted
- Number of pitch sheets distributed



Increase Mobile's position as a top meetings destination editorially.

STRATEGY

- Maintain a close relationship with convention and group tour sales team to stay up-todate in their efforts.
- Curate media list and pitch sheet to send to meetings & conventions and group tour media through Cision.

METRICS

- Number of pitches made
- New media contacts

OBJECTIVE

Plan and host two press trips (general and themed) and coordinate individual site visits.

STRATEGY

- Identify target markets, publications, journalists where Mobile's story would fit.
- Contract with national specialized travel/destination PR firm to invite journalists in top tier markets/publications to Mobile by hosting two to four press trips.
- Respond to inquiries and requests for visits.
- Identify appropriate markets/publications.
- Create two pitch sheets (one every 6 months) for general distribution.
- Maintain a running document of pitch ideas, stories to share, products etc.

METRICS

- Number of stories, ad value and circulation
- Number of pitches made
- New media contacts made

OBJECTIVE

Conduct media blitzes and editorial desksides two times a year in appropriate markets.

STRATEGY

- Identify top markets from which Mobile is an easy drive and call on major publications.
- Identify top markets with direct flights to Mobile and call on major publications.

- Number of stories, ad value and circulation
- Number of pitches made
- New media contacts made
- Site visit participation (invitations accepted to Visit Mobile)

Develop an aggressive travel media strategy to reach top travel influencers.

STRATEGY

- Attend top annual travel blogger conferences, TBEX.
- Identify and cultivate relationships with travel bloggers, content creators and influencers in our top drive/fly markets.
- Host group and individual site visits for bloggers, blogger events.
- Identify top Alabama/Mobile area bloggers with strong followings to outwardly promote niche experiences (homeschoolers, food, makers, etc.).
- Rejoin Society of American Travel Writers and attend annual conference, join the North American Travel Writers Association etc. and attend annual meet-ups/trade shows.
- Participate in other regional travel media meet-ups.
- Contact media database twice a year with general Mobile message.

METRICS

- Relationships formed
- Site visits
- Articles, blogs published
- Ad equivalency, circulation and reach

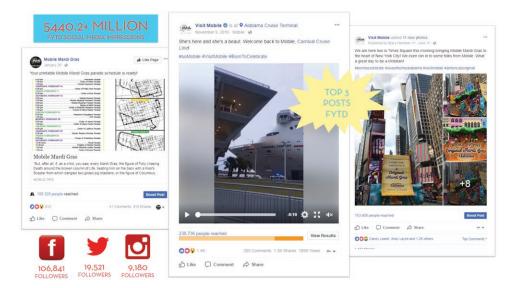
OBJECTIVE

Conduct annual or bi-annual public relations workshops for our stakeholders

STRATEGIES

- Provide updates, tips, how-to's for our members for reaching travel media.
- Demonstrate best pitching practices.
- Press kit and press release development.

- Our individual stakeholders enhance their media outreach efforts
- More collaboration on articles and stories







PARTNER AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE



The newly formed Partner and Visitor Experience department is designed to liaise with our dues paying members, ensuring that they are using all member benefits to their fullest advantage while at the same time delivering on the promise we make through our partner marketing that a visitor will have an ideal experience when they arrive in Mobile. By building a strong community foundation through actively encouraging new and existing partners to invest in and support Visit Mobile's marketing efforts, we can provide tangible benefits, education and marketing opportunities that will impact Mobile's overall hospitality industry's bottom line. A slight dues increase (first in 20 years) will be implemented in 2018 (\$175 to \$195).

Our visitor service and support efforts manage the visitor experience as they plan their visit to or through Mobile and when they actually arrive. We provide in-depth visitor collateral, digital content, social media updates and one-on-one planning services to visitors who find us through our website, sales, advertising and communication efforts.

OBJECTIVE

Distribute Annual Stakeholder Survey to dues paying members and others throughout the industry to rate, maintain and manage their expectations of what they want Visit Mobile to provide.

STRATEGY

- Annual survey developed and distributed, with year over year comparisons.
- Results tallied and verified by third party.
- Results released before Annual Business Meeting.

OBJECTIVE

Manage visitor expectations and experience by providing clear and concise visitor collateral and information.

STRATEGY

- Respond to and track inquiries generated from advertising programs.
- Respond to and track inquiries generated through website and phone calls.
- Keep welcome centers stocked with our visitor collateral.
- Distribute and collect visitor survey cards at Welcome Center for visitor profile information.
- Coordinate and man visitor information booths or roaming ambassadors at key events throughout the city.
- Produce and distribute visitor collateral regionally.
 - Mobile Visitors Guide: 275,000 quantity
 - Mobile Lodging Guide: 15,000 quantity
 - Mobile Dining Guide: 50,000 quantity
 - Mobile City maps: 85,000 quantity
 - Mobile Golf Guide: 10,000 quantity
- Special Interests Brochures (Historic Homes, Museums of Mobile and Mardi Gras):
- 10,000 quantity each
- Historic Mobile Driving Tour Brochure (sponsor)

METRICS

- Number of inquiries responded to
- Amount of collateral distributed
- Number of visitors' email addresses acquired

OBJECTIVE

Set up Born To Celebrate visitor information tent at public events that attract visitors and locals.

STRATEGY

- Distribute visitor collateral and partner brochures.
- Conduct contests, giveaways and promotions.
- Welcome and answer questions from visitors.

METRICS

- Number of events attended
- Calculate attendance at said events
- Number of visitors to tent
- Amount of collateral distributed
- Number of visitor's email addresses acquired
- Social media engagement

OBJECTIVE

Manage a certified I am Mobile! Tourism Ambassador Program which educates citizens about Mobile. Sixth class will begin in March 2018.

STRATEGY

- Promote locally via television, radio and on-line.
- Develop curriculum, agenda and study materials.
- Identify instructors.
- Create website and registration site.
- Identify a corporate partner(s) to sponsor.
- Determine participation opportunities (conventions, special events, tours).

- Number of participants per class
- Number of events serviced
- Number of media mentions





Develop on-going communication strategies and internships with University of South Alabama, Spring Hill College and University of Mobile to provide destination information during the student recruitment and alumni outreach.

STRATEGY

- Provide visitor collateral to incoming students as needed.
- Work closely with Department of Hospitality, Tourism Management program.
- Have presence at parents' days, alumni events.
- Work with USA university faculty to bring educational conferences to Mobile.
- Participate in appropriate cooperative advertising/promotion opportunities as presented by universities.
- On-going Intern Program.
- Work with Athletic Department on various fan and ticket holder-based contests, promotions.

METRICS

- Number of visitor guides provided
- Events attended
- Inquiries generated

OBJECTIVE

Identify, recruit and solicit possible new partners.

STRATEGY

- Stay up to date on new businesses opening that could benefit from tourists.
- Participate in community events to reach potential members.
- Manage referrals from other partners.

- Number of new members
- Number of renewed members
- Number of dropped members
- Membership dues revenue collected





Maintain and regularly publish five year Convention Calendar.

STRATEGY

- Send monthly updates.
- Provide digital version as requested.
- Provide printed version as requested.
- Post updates to Partner Extranet.

METRICS

- Number of times distributed
- Number of opens/clicks through on extranet
- Number of calendars provided

OBJECTIVE

Maintain member website listings, online content, visitor guide listings, membership dues, invoices and partner extranet updates through our Simpleview CRM system.

STRATEGY

- Regular training through Simpleview on new CRM products, programs.
- Attend annual summit for training, updates.
- On a regular basis, review and approve member updates and change notices in CRM database.
- Stay up to date on all CRM trends, updates to better manage our lists and member data.
- Follow up phone calls on a regular basis to members who do not respond to requests for updates.

- Number of updates
- Number of member communications requesting new information
- Number of follow up emails and phone calls to attain new information

Provide training, educational and networking opportunities to our members.

STRATEGY

- Host quarterly 'Get to Know Visit Mobile' partner orientations and refreshers.
- Host annual hospitality training programs.
- Host Partner Mixers.
- Host National Travel & Tourism Week activities and annual Travel Rally.
- Host Annual Business Meeting.

METRICS

- Number of attendees
- Number of media mentions
- Number of social media shares about event

OBJECTIVE

Communicate regularly with our members to deliver news, announcements and opportunities for participation.

STRATEGY

- Post regular and timely updates to Visit Mobile's business Facebook and Twitter profiles.
- Maintain and make regular and timely updates in Partner Extranet.
- Distribute Weekly Incoming Convention & Cruise Alerts emails.
- Special delivery of notices of incoming business to downtown members.

- Number of email communications
- Number of updates posted
- Number of inquiries fielded



VISIT MOBILE WELCOME CENTER







The Visit Mobile Welcome Center serves as the beginning point for many visitors coming into town. Staffed by a full time Visit Mobile team member and a group of long-time volunteers, the Welcome Center offers brochures, maps, coupons and other literature designed to help a visitor plan his visit to Mobile. The opportunities for increased visitor engagement through digital is a strong option to continue to help a visitor learn the most they can about Mobile. Our goal is to increase the number of visitors who stop by the Welcome Center and we propose to do that in various ways:

OBJECTIVE

Increase visibility of Welcome Center so that travelers can easily find it when entering town.

STRATEGY

- Increase wayfinding signage throughout downtown and main Interstates.
- Outdoor billboards placed at strategic interstate exits.
- Build a stronger social presence and own social accounts to encourage checkins.
- Make sure Google maps and other maps have appropriate location.
- Promote through visitor collateral.
- Create its own rack card to be distributed throughout town.
- Maintain relationships with area hotels, attractions and restaurants.

OBJECTIVE

Enhance visitor experience once in the Welcome Center.

STRATEGY

- Optimize furniture and shelf placement for best flow.
- Offer charging stations in a sitting area.
- Install digital billboard to replace paper posters taped on furniture and walls.
- Add Mobile/Alabama music to play quietly in the background.
- Install attraction ticket booking platform called OnceThere.

OBJECTIVE

Conduct ongoing volunteer training and consistent communications strategy.

STRATEGY

- Monthly meetings with volunteers.
- Email volunteers event and news updates.
- Institute volunteer training program or require Ambassador certification.