



**Visit SLO CAL Marketing Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**8:30 am – 10:30 am**  
**Visit SLO CAL Office – 81 Higuera Street, Suite 220, San Luis Obispo, CA**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**PRESENT:** Jim Allen, John Sorgenfrei, Linda Parker-Sanpei, Jill Tweedie, Molly Cano, Lindsey Roberts, Joel Peterson, Micheal Wambolt, Stacie Jacob, Cheryl Cuming, Gordon Jackson, Sheridan Bohlken, Terrie Banish

**STAFF PRESENT:** Cathy Cartier, Tony Turretto, Trevor Lynch, Kristen Buhring, Melissa Murray, Matt Halvorson, Rachelle Ramirez, Lauren Miller, Alyssa Manno, Theresa Nagai, Mayla Lohnes, Kaitlyn Carroll, and Chloe Boal

**OTHER PRESENT:** Lacie Johns (Travel Paso), Brooke Burnham (Sourjern) , Maureen Thielen (The Shipyard), Beth Shani (The Shipyard)

**Call to order at 8:31am**

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)**

Public Comment – None.

Committee Comment – None.

**CONSENT AGENDA – *motion required***

**3. Approval of Last Marketing Committee Minutes**

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – None.

**ACTION:** Moved by Sorgenfrei/Parker-Sanpei to approve the **March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023** Marketing Committee Minutes. Cuming /Banish abstain.

**Motion approved: 10: 2: 0**

**CMO REPORT**

**4. Visit SLO CAL CMO Report (15 minutes)**

Cartier introduced new Marketing Committee Member, Sheridan Bohlken.

Cartier shared staff updates. Marketing Operations Specialist, Associate Director of PR, and Sales Director have left Visit SLO CAL. Cartier introduced new VSC staff member, Tony Turretto, VP of Community Engagement & Advocacy. Cartier shared that Kristen Buhring was promoted to Associate Director of Sales.

Cartier reminded Committee of Brand Awareness Study with Heart & Mind that will begin July 12th and end August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Cartier shared an Air Service Update for Alaska Airlines increasing service from SLO to Vegas. The launch for the air service will begin December 14<sup>th</sup>, with daily non-stop flights and 76 seats.

Cartier also shared United Airlines projected to up-gauge Denver flight in October.

Cartier updated the Committee on the Mid-State Fair sponsorship including the SLO CAL Crafted booth and concert series activation.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Jacob asked if Alaska still offers Wine Flies Free. Cartier responded yes. Jacob suggested when the flight launches VSC should refresh our wine flies free marketing efforts.

## BUSINESS ITEMS

### 5. FY 24 Media (20 minutes)

Shani of Shipyard shared the Media Objectives and Media Strategies planned for the FY 24.

Cartier asked Committee to review FY 24 Marketing & Business Plan for the media flowchart.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – In regards to the Co-op media strategy, Jacob asked if The Shipyard is willing to have a 1:1 conversation regarding how to collaborate with the Co-Op opportunities and the work that the destinations are doing themselves. Thielen responded yes they are very open to working together to align goals. Thielen shared an example opportunities to work together to align content. Cartier shared that they are trying to work through how VSC co-op programs can create direct links to individual destination websites. Cartier also shared that along with the owned campaigns, VSC will also focus on earned Co-Ops in FY 24.

In regards to the SLO CAL Crafted Media Strategy, Jacob shared that during the holidays would be a great opportunity to secure earned media for SLO CAL Crafted. Cartier responded to say that VSC will continue to work to build owned and earned for SLO CAL Crafted.

In regards to the Sustainably SLO CAL media strategy, Jacob asked what content regarding sustainability VSC has. Cartier responded to say that VSC owns the content created for the World Travel & Tourism Council which was all focused on sustainability and the new content being created by Pensara. Cuming asked if the focus for sustainable content was on programs that are sustainable or individual businesses. Cartier responded to say that the focus for sustainability is to share the sustainable things visitors can do or experience while in the region. Jacob asked if VSC sees Sustainably SLO CAL ever having a resident focus. Cartier responded to say yes. Cano shared the City of SLO's Key for Trees program and how it connects to their storytelling initiatives, and

that Visit SLO CAL will need to figure out how to draw the line between sustainable efforts and tourism benefits. Jacob shared that many residents may not know a lot of sustainable efforts happening in the community, and targeting some marketing towards residents may help increase the sentiment towards tourism. Cartier shared that VSC will continue to create owned content around sustainability, and utilize earned media to share the organic sustainability initiatives being accomplished in the region. Sorgenfrei shared that some destinations have education programs and asked if these programs will be apart of the marketing efforts. Cartier stated there is an opportunity to share that content on our website landing page. Sorgenfrei responded to say that bringing influencers that can do education of stewardship and wildlife preservation content could be beneficial as well. Cartier responded to say that no idea is off the table and asked Committee to please send ideas to her. Jackson stated that Pismo Beach tries to incorporate sustainability into every event that is hosted in order to extend the stewardship program for the residents.

## **6. FY 24 Integrated Co-Op Strategy** (20 minutes)

Cartier introduced the integrated marketing objectives for FY 24. Cartier also shared with the Committee that if they would like to join the Pinterest Co-Op the Co-Op is still open.

Shani shared a brief overview of the Conde-Naste Co-Op and Thielen followed up to say that as the Conde Naste Co-Op details get worked out Shipyard is open to working together to make it customizable.

Thielen shared with the committee the strategy for Sustainably SLO CAL by incorporating the content that they've been creating that leans into the organic sustainability of the region.

Cartier shared the un-pairing custom content series.

Cartier reminded the Committee of the Key Market Activation planned for FY 24.

Cartier shared the 2023 Spartan Race media plan and activation.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – In regards to the Key Market Activation planned for Fy 24, Jacob asked where the Key Market Activation would be planned for. Cartier responded that market selection has not been finalized yet. Jackson asked if VSC would do a market activation for when the new air service to Vegas begins. Cartier responded that VSC will not do the same activation as the Key Market Activation, but VSC will do one. Jacob stated that Travel Paso and PRWCA will be doing a market activation. Cano stated that Travel & Adventure does a consumer series in Denver that Visit SLO participated in previously which could be a potential for partnership on the consumer side in addition to the media.

In regards to Paid Media Co-Ops, Cano asked if there is any paid media partnerships that the destinations could Co-Op. Cartier responded yes, specially stating Sojourn. Cartier also shared that in the next few weeks she will be sending more information about upcoming media co-ops.

## **7. SLO CAL Nomenclature** (15 minutes)

Cartier shared the SLO CAL Nomenclature strategy to make SLO CAL a recognized name for the region of SLO County.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Peterson asked if VSC has taken the Nomenclature Strategy to any of the service organizations. Cartier responded not yet.

#### **8. Sustainably SLO CAL Co-Op Opportunities** (15 minutes)

Cartier shared the rough cuts of the new Sustainably SLO CAL spots. Cartier shared that these spots were created with previously owned content.

Cartier shared that voiceover talent sounds more natural when using locals to tell the story.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – None.

#### **9. Resident Sentiment Survey** (20 minutes)

Cartier shared the results of the Resident Sentiment Survey.

Cartier stated that there is a separate Short Term Rental Survey that will be released soon as well.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Parker-Sanpei stated that she is surprised to see the Paso Robles sentiment towards tourism is negative. Cano stated that Avila is a smaller group of residents and asked how that would be comparable with bigger cities surveyed without skewing data. Cartier shared that people were surveyed based on population size to make sure results would be statistically even. Jacob asked what the next steps are for the report. Cartier shared that the study will be used by the Community Engagement & Advocacy department. Sorgenfrei recommended having a Board of Supervisors presentation scheduled. Parker-Sanpei also recommended having the information broadcasted on local stations. Cano stated that there is an opportunity to layer together the sustainability content and the results from the resident sentiment survey to target the sentiment of the residents regarding the benefit of tourism. Cartier responded to say that the VSC Public Relations team already works to secure earned media that highlights locally the benefits of tourism. Cartier also stated that from the Marketing Department at Visit SLO CAL, it's our goal to tell the positive benefits of tourism in our region through earned media. Sorgenfrei stated that the study helps to show that while there is a negative sentiment towards tourism, most of this negative sentiment is coming from the minority of residents.

#### **10. Marketing ESC 2050 & Travel Trade Update** (15 minutes)

Lohnes updated the Committee on Earned Media for 2023 including recent FAM trips and Oceano Dune Stewardship Study release. Lohnes also shared the details of the new PR Agency, Hills Balfour, immersion in SLO CAL. Lohnes also recapped the Visit California Destination Mixer in June. Lohnes lastly shared the forthcoming earned media.

Halvorson shared with the Owned Media plan for the next quarter with the Marketing Committee. Halvorson updated the Committee on the current phase of the Website UX Study. Halvorson shared the editorial content performance. Halvorson also shared the top performing social media posts for May and June.

Lynch updated the Committee on the Paid Media campaigns.

Murray shared an updated on the Events & Festival Strategy and the strategic objectives created by the working group. Murray also shared a review of the FY 23 success of the SLO CAL Welcome program.

Buhring recapped the 2023 IPW conference.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – In regards to the Website UX study, Jacob asked if the Website UX study will look at if the current platform used for the VSC website is the best platform for user experience overall. Halvorson responded that the priority would be evaluating the user journey independent of the platform. Exploring the right platform would be a separate evaluation that would take place approximately Q2 – Q3. Cartier shared that VSC is in the last year of the contract with Simpleview and VSC is looking into best options for website platforms and the transition process before making a decision. Sorgenfrei shared that he would like more information on our findings regarding the website platform.

### **Next Meeting September 12th, 2023**

#### **ADJOURN: 10:30 AM.**

Brown Act Notice: Each speaker is limited to 2 minutes of public comment for items not on the agenda. Public comment for each agenda item will be called for separately and is also limited to 2 minutes per speaker. State law does not allow the Marketing Committee to discuss or take action on issues not on the agenda, except that members of the Committee may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by the person giving public comment. Staff may be directed by the Committee to follow-up on such items and/or place them on the next Committee agenda. The order of agenda items is listed for reference and items may be taken in any order deemed appropriate by the Marketing Committee.

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