



**Visit SLO CAL Marketing Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 12<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:** Ashlee Akers, Terrie Banish, Sheridan Bohlken, Molly Cano, Cheryl Cuming, Gordon Jackson, Stacie Jacob, Kathleen Naughton, Joel Peterson, Lindsey Roberts, Lynette Sonne, John Sorgenfrei, Michael Wambolt

**STAFF PRESENT:** Cathy Cartier, Lisa Belsanti, Trevor Lynch, Matt Halvorson, Alyssa Manno, Rachelle Ramirez, Lauren Miller, Brooke Weisbecker, Theresa Nagai, Mayla Lohnes, Megan Leininger

**OTHER PRESENT:** Lacie Johns (Travel Paso), Maureen Thielen (The Shipyard), Darren Bishop (Heart & Mind Strategies)

**Call to order at 8:33am**

**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 – Peterson informed staff his name is spelled incorrectly.

**ACTION:** Moved by Cuming/Jackson to approve the **July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023** Marketing Committee Minutes.

**Motion Carried: 12: 0-0**  
(Jacob arrived after the motion to approve)

**CMO REPORT**

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

Cartier introduced new staff members, Lisa Belsanti, Director of PR and Communications, and Megan Leininger, Marketing Operations Specialist. Cartier also gave an update on vacant positions.

Cartier shared information on two completed VCA partnerships. Cartier played short and long form assets from VCA Sustainable Wines Weekend Road Trip and will keep the MC updated when assets from Beautiful Destinations roll out.

Cartier directed all MC members to sign the conflict-of-interest form provided.

Cartier recapped the Mid-State Fair Concert Series Activation and SLO CAL Crafted Pop-Up.

Cartier spoke about the SLO CAL Crafted Farmer's Market Pop-Up Booth and shared that staff is looking into potential other locations to host SCC pop-ups.

Cartier gave an Air Service Update. United Airlines is increasing service to Denver, and Alaska's Portland flight is pausing for the winter, due to a local pilot shortage, and hopefully coming back in Spring.

Cartier explained that the SLO CAL Nomenclature video shoot/the brand manifesto/brandifesto was shot last week. Filming took place at 13 different locations across 3 days and included talking with 14 community leaders. The video will be launching at SLO CAL Summit. The finished video will primary be shown locally. And VSC will make the asset available to MC Members.

Cartier gave an update on the Annual Report, which will be distributed in mid-October.

Cartier went over the IPW California Plaza Activation. This is a co-op with VCA in LA. VSC is a platinum sponsor (1 of 5). The VCA theme is 'ultimate playground.' Staff is still getting an understanding of what the space looks like, and a creative brief will follow. Staff is also working through if there will be a co-op opportunity. Ideas are welcome.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Naughton asked if the conflict-of-interest form was for their personal or business interest. Cartier clarified that it is in relation to their job/position.

Peterson asked who pushes out the content that VCA created and if VSC has any input in what they cover. Cartier answered that VCA pushes it out and VSC can guide, but VCA has already chosen what they want to cover.

Sonne confirmed that Mid-State Fair attendees are there for an experience not the sale. Jacob asked what the entire cost of the Mid-State Fair sponsorship and activations cost. Cartier answered that the total spend was 80-85k.

Cuming questioned if the Vegas flight is still happening. Cartier confirmed that it is. That flight will start in December. Peterson asked if that is a daily flight and Jacob asked if the times have been shared yet. Cartier responded that arrival/departure will be around 9 am/pm daily.

Bohlken asked about politicians being used in the Nomenclature shoot. Cartier confirmed that VSC tried to stay away from politicians, board members and elected officials for this shoot. Jacob followed with asking

where this asset be used/placed? Cartier answered that The Shipyard is working through local media play. And the video will be leveraged at local community events, such as Chamber of Commerce events.

Jacob brought up that SLO CAL is a wine/spirit destination, so VSC will want to ask VCA about those expectations. Cartier informed the MC that staff has already asked and alcohol will be allowed. Staff also asked what other destinations are doing so that VSC can differentiate its offerings.

## BUSINESS ITEMS

### 5. Brand Awareness Study (30 minutes)

Bishop from Heart & Mind Strategies shared this year's Brand Awareness Study. This is the second time running the study. Bishop share YOY findings and shared that overall, the results are positive. Unaided recall was 9% last year and up to 12% this year. There was a slight decrease in aided recall 11% this year (from 13% last year). This decrease was driven by Phoenix & Denver. The study found universal ad favorability, ads encouraged longer stay and increase trip spend by 10% and those aware of the ads visited more locations (cross-visitation). Those who didn't visit multiple locations, didn't have enough time to do so. Overall, the study found a 2:1 ROI ratio on VSC band campaign.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Jacob shared that she finds it very useful how Bishop calculates ROI. Jacob asked for clarification on how the top performing and opportunity markets are ranked. Bishop shared that they calculate ROI based on just the individual DMAs.

Peterson asked how large the survey size was. Bishop replied that the total was 3,500 for all DMAs combined (300-500 in each individual DMA). Cartier confirmed the study will be done next year too. Jacob asked for a reminder on how much the study cost. Cartier it's about 60k investment. Sorgenfrei added that based on the cross-visitation results, the use of distance in time (over miles) is good positioning.

### 6. FY 24 Marketing Co-Op Opportunities (10 minutes)

Cartier gave an overview of the co-op deck that was sent to each DMO. These co-ops included the Conde Nast targeted e-blast, Sojourn matching funds, Pinterest pin buy, brand campaign retargeting and the key market activation in Denver. Cartier requested that everyone let her know by Friday (9/15) who is interested in the co-ops. Cartier noted that all the click throughs on the co-ops will go directly to the Destination Partner Website, so VSC requests that the logo lock-up is prominent on that landing page.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Akers asked when creative is due. Thielen responded that these opportunities are throughout the year so there is lots of flexibility. Sorgenfrei asked what the target markets are. Cartier replied that the partner can pick their markets. Thielen added that the VSC markets are already applied, but within those partners can target/narrow down even further. Cartier will work with each co-op partners who ops in directly.

Cano wondered how much time the destination representative will need to be in Denver. Cartier replied that they should plan on two days (one night).

**7. SLO CAL Destination Summit** (10 minutes)

Cartier encouraged the MC to get their tickets. The theme will be The Power and Prosperity of a Tourism Brand. And the keynote speakers are Chuck Davidson (on the State of SLO CAL) and Michael Dominguez (on the Value of a Strong Destination Brand). There will also be two panel discussions: What Sets Us Apart and Issues Facing Our Community and a SLO CAL Crafted Pop-Up reception will follow the programming. Early bird pricing goes through Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Sonne asked if the SCC Pop-Up is open to any SCC Partner. Cartier replied yes, and to reach out to Manno. Cano asked what the program time schedule was.

**8. Short-Term Vacation Rentals & Workforce Housing Nexus Study** (20 minutes)

Cartier shared the results of the countywide Short-Term Vacation Rentals & Workforce Housing Nexus Study. This study was performed by Beacon Economics and found no qualifiable data to indicate that short-term vacation rentals are responsible for driving up rental and housing costs.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Peterson respectfully disagreed with this study and believes that the data is off. Committee discussion that followed covered different problems across different communities, registered vs. unregistered VRs, municipality's role in building workforce housing and how the data was found.

Cano asked what media coverage came from this study. Cartier answered that public radio, KSBY, and The Tribune covered the study, and VSC is not expecting more coverage. Cartier will send the study to all committee members.

**9. Marketing ESC 2050 & Travel Trade Update** (20 minutes)

Lohnes updated the Committee on Earned Media. Lohnes spoke specifically about three recent individual FAMs and a holiday dedicated pitch of SLO CAL Crafted Gift Guides.

Halvorson gave the Committee an update on Owned Media. The UX Study's goal is to have finding to present at the next MC Meeting. Halvorson continued to speak of optimization updates such as event submission guidelines and flow, mailing list cleanup, asset management improvements, auditing the editorial strategy or looking at web platform options for the future. Halvorson also shared the Consumer Newsletter performance for July & August and Social Media trends.

Lynch continued with owned media updates, sharing an update on SLO CAL Crafted 2.0. This iteration focuses on experiences that you can only do in SLO CAL. Lynch also informed the Committee that the Visitor Magazine is changing from a 1 to a 2-year cycle.

In Paid Media, Lynch spoke about what is coming in September and spoke about the new Hulu Pause Ad Unit.

Travel Trade update was delivered by Cartier. She shared that Carlson (Associate Director of Sales) is attending four trade shows in the coming months.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Cartier clarified that VSC has not made a decision about Simpleview, but the UX Study will help the organization make an informed decision. Sorgenfrei shared that Pismo Beach is going through the same thing and is considering a move to WordPress. Sorgenfrei is happy to share that progress with VSC.

Cuming wondered if the Pensara footage is available for use. Cartier offered that staff will share what is. Sonne recommended that some of the Pensara reels play in hotel lobbies. This led to a discussion about digital signage at the SLO airport. Cartier shared this is possible and something that has been discussed but is not in the current budget.

Sonne asked if the SLO CAL Crafted videos are available to partners at the same time as VSC is releasing them. Halvorson responded they yes, they are, to cross-promote. Akers requested that the DMOs be in the loop too. Cartier says going forward that it makes sense to add in other partners in addition to sharing with the featured businesses.

### **Next Meeting November 14th, 2023**

#### **ADJOURN: 10:32 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.

ADA Notice: Meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you require special assistance to participate in the meeting, notify Jessie Borchin at (805) 541-8000 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.