



2022 SALES AND MARKETING PLAN

Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier Tourism and Sports is the official destination marketing organization for Tacoma and Pierce County. Our mission is to build tourism in Pierce County through sales and marketing efforts in four key areas: conventions, events, amateur sports and leisure marketing. We also work with our community and stakeholders to strengthen the destination through events, infrastructure and tourism asset development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This marketing plan outlines Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier's strategy for marketing Pierce County as a destination, in order to maximize the region's competitiveness in the national and regional sports, meetings and leisure markets.

In everything we do, Travel Tacoma uses overnight stays as its primary metric of success. In 2022, we project to deliver approximately 58,500 room nights in Pierce County.

To that end, Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier Tourism and Sports has deep roots in the Pierce County hospitality community, and we work closely with lodging partners throughout the county in several capacities, including sales, marketing, and consulting. Pre-pandemic, our work in meeting sales and destination marketing result in approximately 70,000 room-nights annually.

NOTE ABOUT SCOPE OF WORK FOR 2022

Please note, we are drafting this plan at a time in which we have seen the direct impacts of the pandemic, then a phased reopening, then a full reopening, and now the reinstitution of mask requirements. All indications are that aftereffects of the pandemic will continue unpredictably in 2022.

Meeting Sales

As an organization that writes contracts to host meetings, conventions, and special events at the Greater Tacoma Convention Center, and sporting events throughout Pierce County, Travel Tacoma regularly sends qualified leads from meeting planners to hotels throughout Pierce County. These leads result in tens of thousands of room-nights annually at local hotels. When responding to RFPs from meeting planners and sporting event organizers, Travel Tacoma partners with hotels to ensure we have the right rooms at the right price-points to secure that business. For larger hotels with meeting space that serve as their own venues, Travel Tacoma often refers business to them when there is a good fit for space needs and scheduling.

Leisure Marketing

From a leisure marketing perspective, Travel Tacoma offers co-op advertising opportunities, exposure through our social media platforms, and inclusion in advertising programs targeting leisure travelers. Utilizing the latest geo-targeting technology, we offer our partners both unparalleled visitor data, but also the marketing opportunities to reach those visitors. We also work with local hotels to host qualified travel journalists, bloggers, and influencers, with the goal of generating media and social media

coverage for the host property. Travel Tacoma's website receives more than a million visits annually, with most traffic arriving at business/hotel listings, and events both of which we offer direct access to our hotel partners.

In addition, Travel Tacoma develops and distributes two annual publications: a visitor guide aimed at attracting leisure travelers to Pierce County, and a meeting planner guide geared toward helping meeting planners assess Pierce County's fitness and capacity to host their events. Lodging plays strongly into decisions by both leisure travelers, and meeting planners, so we feature hotel properties prominently in both these publications.

Consulting Services

For hotel brands and developers considering entering or expanding within the Pierce County market, we offer consulting services to gauge potential demand from meetings and leisure business. We receive weekly and monthly reports on hotel performance in Pierce County and select competing markets from STR, our data vendor. We are able to share that information with local lodging partners.

CORE FUNCTIONS

Convention Center Sales

Proactively sell the Greater Tacoma Convention Center as a venue for meetings, conventions and tradeshow to generate revenue for the venue itself, as well as room-nights and increased economic impact throughout the community. We will achieve these goals by engaging meeting planners through advertising and marketing in trade publications, prospecting, tradeshow and conference participation, industry memberships, networking, site visits, hosted client events, community relationships, and sponsorships. We will partner with other destination marketing organizations where collaborations make sense and will increase return on investment.

Leisure and Event Marketing

Promote the region and generate interest and awareness for Pierce County as a destination through branded messages to targeted audiences. This includes using research to strategically develop and execute direct marketing campaigns promoting Pierce County events that have been identified as having a direct impact on tourism.

Sports

Market Tacoma and Pierce County as a destination for tourism-generating amateur and professional sporting events and lead the development of athletic programs and venues throughout the region.

We recruit annual (and sustainable) events that will generate valuable hotel room night stays and increase the local economic impact.

Destination Development

Use research, decades of tourism expertise, and on-the-ground experience to help develop events, attractions, hotels, and unified brand positioning throughout the destination. Given the increasing importance of the tourism and hospitality sectors to the local economy, we will keep the community informed and engaged about the destination's tourism and hospitality industries' health and competitive position.

Familiarization Tours

Generate destination awareness and consideration among key decision makers, media, and influencers. While overnights are the metric by which tourism health is often gauged, each overnight begins with awareness of the destination. The best way to make top influencers and awareness gatekeepers connect with our destination on a deeper level is to have them experience it first-hand. That's why we bring travel media, social-media influencers, event producers, meeting planners and tour operators to Tacoma and Pierce County to touch, see, taste and experience all this destination has to offer.

Visitor Services

The job of a destination marketing organization doesn't stop once the visitor is in-market. We influence visitor spending, regional visitor distribution and lengthen stays by providing visitors with recommendations, visitor guides, brochures, and maps of the region to help make the trip exciting and memorable for them, and lucrative to local businesses, organizations, and partners. We do this through our online portals, social channels, visitor services phone number, and in-person visitor service center (when available).

PART OF TOURISM ON LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL LEVELS

Tremendous benefit to Travel Tacoma – Mt Rainier Tourism and Sports and the staff comes from being actively involved members in national, regional, state and local tourism industry organizations. These partnerships help Travel Tacoma leverage valuable community resources and bring like-interests together for collaboration.

Destinations International

Provides an annual international tourism convention for a global perspective on the industry, ongoing access to resources and research, tailored conferences that focus on specific aspects of DMO departments, and the only accreditation program that sets industry specific standards for DMO governance and operations.

DMA West

Provides annual conventions and industry guidelines and research for marketing organizations that represent the western half of the United States.

Washington Tourism Alliance (WTA)

Established by industry stakeholders with the mission to advocate, promote, develop and sustain the economic well-being of the Washington tourism industry.

Support of events and programs that encourage tourism and help visitors get the most out of their Pierce County experience. WTA provides several products to serve members and the state's tourism industry, including the official travel and tourism website for the state of Washington, www.experiencewa.com, and the Official Washington State Visitors' Guide in partnership with the Washington Lodging Association.

Washington State Destination Marketing Organizations Association (WSDMO)

An independent, non-profit trade association advocating tourism investment and promotion as economic development. The mission of the WSDMO is to enhance the awareness and influence of the tourism industry and to serve as the single unifying voice for all of Washington State's destination marketing organizations and tourism industry.

Pierce County Lodging Association (PCLA)

An organization that represents Pierce County as the third largest hotel room community in the State of Washington. PCLA provides hoteliers and other industry members a forum to meet and discuss issues that affect the individual cities as well as the unincorporated areas of Pierce County.

BUILDING THE STORY OF PIERCE COUNTY: MOUNTAIN CITY SEA

Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier Tourism and Sports uses community insights to grow the story of Pierce County through the

MOUNTAIN CITY SEA story. A destination of experiences based on our unique geography, our main attractions are comprised of the interaction between our geographic platform (Mount Rainier and the Salish Sea) and the manufactured, human layer (the cities and communities throughout Pierce County). We tell the story of our main attractions through our most compelling assets: Mount Rainier, our great cities and our saltwater shoreline.

GOALS

38,000 Room Nights from Sports Events

- Estimated 46 Events throughout Pierce County
- Room nights are tracked by reporting on the number of room-nights generated by registered attendees who live 50 miles outside of the county or more.

19,000 Room Nights from Meetings and Conventions

- Combined from Greater Tacoma Convention Center and other countywide meeting space assets.
- Room nights are measured by contracted room blocks with hotels.

6,500 Room Nights from Marketing; Travel, Leisure and Events (non-sport/non-meetings)

- Targeted, flexible, itinerary-based campaigns that focus on the tourism assets of various areas within Pierce County.
- A new, most-advanced-of-its-kind service Travel Tacoma onboarded in 2020 and fully rolled out in 2021 allows us to geo-fence areas of high tourism value, and track who enters those areas, determine where they are from (local or visitor, down to a zip code level), how long the visitors stay, and where they stay. This provides invaluable, indisputable data to support the efficacy of our marketing and event activities.

TARGET AUDIENCES

We reach these visitors directly, through our marketing and visitor services, and indirectly, through professionals in the event planning, tour operations, and travel writing fields.

Convention and Meetings Target Audience

- Education Professional – Priorities: Affordability, Convenience and Safety.
- Government Professional – Priorities: Per Diem Parameters, Affordability and Negotiable Terms & Conditions
- Association Professional - Priorities: Focused on overall experience, Robust pre- and post- activities, Affordability, Flexibility and ample meeting space
- Social Planner - Personally invested; Seeking high-value and convenience with unique experience; Easy transportation and parking; Expects very personalized service; Retained through word of mouth and social media

Sports Audience

Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier’s goal is to recruit state, regional and national level event products into the Tacoma and Pierce County area. The target customers are national and regional governing bodies that seek a host city that is near a first-tier city or is itself a second- or third-tier city. Before bidding on an event, Travel Tacoma must consider the number of hotel room nights the event will produce. All event products our organization seeks to win are based on generating hotel room nights in Pierce County.

Leisure Audience

In 2022, Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier will focus leisure marketing efforts on drive markets such as Portland, Seattle, Yakima, Tri-Cities and Spokane, as regional drive-travel is forecast to continue to dominate the travel landscape in 2022. These have also historically been shown to be the most likely to convert to an overnight stay through marketing efforts.

In addition to geographic markets, Travel Tacoma has access to a new, most-advanced-of-its-kind service we onboarded in 2020 that allows us deep insight into visitation of areas of high tourism value, and see who enters those areas, determine where they are from (local or visitor, down to a zip code level), how long the visitors stay, and where they stay. This data can also be used to target the actual people who have visited various areas of Pierce County, and specifically market to them and lookalike audiences.

CONVENTION AND MEETING SALES

These sales marketing activities are focused on recruiting events that are the best fit for Pierce County cities. Primary meeting/convention targets are the association, corporate and SMERF (social, military, education, religion and fraternal) markets.

Additionally, we are working collaboratively with local south sound tourism assets to identify opportunities to promote venues throughout Pierce County to the local and regional market more effectively and efficiently. This collaboration is aimed at collective and cohesive marketing strategies to attract more one-day and multi-day events to Pierce County from the surrounding Washington and Pacific Northwest region. Opportunities with South Sound partnerships, NW Events Show and South Sound Magazine are being explored to see what may flesh out as potential opportunities to showcase the destination and convert and recruit new business.

Key Sales Strategies

- Commit to the Destination International mandatory standards for destination sales services and organization reaccreditation.
- Leverage destination and convention center awareness through the leading global event venue directory (Cvent) and web planning. The destination will brand itself through regional and state banner ads and the convention center will brand itself through Seattle/Tacoma preferred placement to drive opportunity from third party, independent and organization planners.
- Partnerships to increase destination awareness to leading trade associations, societies and volunteer organizations through five elements: connections, tradeshow, advertising & marketing, sponsorship and membership opportunities.
- Promote destination and convention center at industry events (in-person or virtual, as conditions allow), tradeshows and conferences to generate leads, and build contacts to increase opportunities to book business.
- Increase customer “touches” with local and destination sales calls, hosted client events, site inspections, familiarization tours, promotions, social media and interactive engagements to keep the destination and convention center at front of mind with planners.
- Engage in industry memberships to build rapport, develop strong relationships with planners, industry partners for referral opportunities and build destination and convention center awareness.
- Participate on outbound industry sponsorships to increase awareness of destination and convention center, sales team and dedication to meetings and events.

Corporate Partnerships + Industry Memberships + Sponsorship Events

Commitment to the tourism community, industry and members creates a business network designed to increase sales effectiveness. Industry memberships increase knowledge of industry issues, best practices, relationships, prospecting, referrals, etc.

Marketing for Meetings + Events

Marketing efforts to attract meetings and events to a destination combine activities that pay off immediately and in the long term. With that in mind, the marketing budget is used to showcase our meetings-first assets and venues to meeting planners and decision makers to increase sales and profitability.

Advertising campaigns (online and print) will continue to be informed by research. These campaigns are created to enhance ongoing lead generation and sales at industry associations, familiarization tours, client events, sales calls, tradeshows, conferences, site visits, etc. These investments directly support our scope of work and benchmarks.

Primary Sales Activities

Cvent Online Destination and Event Venue Directories

- Cvent – Tacoma + Convention Center tiered marketing strategy
- Digital video retargeting to promote 30-second destination meetings video
- Cvent Connect – tradeshow + planner scheduled appointments

Connect – Corporate Partnership

- Connect – 4 individual meeting planner conferences with prescheduled planner appointments

- Digital and print marketing strategy
- Industry sponsorships + destination promotional opportunities

Recruitment Sponsorships

- event incentives to recruit new conventions to Pierce County
- event incentives to recruit meetings related industry events to Pierce County

Industry/Community Memberships

- industry meeting planner & executive associations
- regional and local chambers of commerce and business groups

Customer Engagement

- Outbound hosted client events and sales missions
- FAMs and site visits

Regional and National Marketing and Promotion

- Digital and print market to targeted markets
- Leveraging previously created meetings-focused video spot to reach decision makers in target market.
- Monthly sales newsletter
- Annual meeting planner guides

LEISURE MARKETING

Primary Leisure Marketing Activities

In 2022 Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier will use a mix of marketing tactics, including digital advertising, social media marketing and public relations and media relations outreach to draw overnight visitors. The marketing channels will be almost exclusively digital, which combines the greatest flexibility to adjust to pandemic-related travel restrictions, changes in public health guidance, and other unforeseeable conditions, as well as the greatest trackability of results.

Travel Tacoma's marketing team works to attract new and repeat visitors to Pierce County, and encourage repeat visits through data analytics, targeted advertising, public relations, social media marketing and visitor services.

Using the most advanced geolocation data available to observe the movement of people, Travel Tacoma has the capability to see – in varying levels of detail – where people visit and how long they stay once they are in Pierce County. This rich data not only gives us the ability to show definitively who is visiting, from where, and for how long, it also eliminates estimates and guesses, which allows us to target and track our marketing activities in terms of actual people who we reached, and were then inspired to visit and stay overnight in Pierce County. Additionally, it is invaluable in future planning for marketing, event and venue development, and even for city planning.

We will conduct targeted, itinerary-based leisure marketing and PR campaigns that include activities, attractions, events, restaurants, and overnight stays in communities throughout Pierce County. Itinerary-based campaigns allow the flexibility to gauge the market's appetite for travel, and adjust the itineraries based on the current market and government restrictions. For example, as regional, drive-market travel is forecast to dominate travel throughout the country continuing into 2022, drive-based itineraries can be developed and promoted through advertising and public relations campaigns that focus on regional audiences. Data from the above-mentioned system allows us to see not only who viewed those ads, but which of those people then made a trip to Pierce County, how long they stayed, and what they did while they were here. This is a level of marketing data that eliminates estimates and has never been achievable until now.

Please be aware that if unforeseen circumstances occur and campaigns cannot go forward due to government policies or restrictions, unused funds will be returned to Pierce County LTAC, and other funding partners.

The tourism and sports organization also promotes the county through leisure events, destination awareness marketing and visitor services. Travel Tacoma's Pierce County tourism website receives 1 million pageviews a year and provides 90,000 hotel referrals, while visitor guides (both digital and printed) and planning tools help visitors extend their stays by discovering lesser-known attractions.

Destination Awareness: Travel Writers and Influencers

Destination/brand awareness efforts lean heavily on Pierce County's unique geographic platform to pitch and host travel writers on a two-to-three-day MOUNTAIN CITY SEA itinerary, which includes both the natural assets, and the communities that thrive here.

We will continue to seek marketing partnerships with outdoors- and culinary-focused regional blogs and influencers. Prioritize those that are open to using trackable channels for overnights, such as discount codes or trackable URLs that will allow us to report on room-nights delivered.

We will continue to pitch stories on Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier's major 2022 itinerary campaigns to travel and lifestyle media, and distribute press releases related to those itineraries.

Visitor Services

Business and hotel referrals – Travel Tacoma uses its digital (website, social channels, etc.) and physical (self-serve visitor center and walk-in visitor information center) to reach visitors and entice those visitors through the doors of Pierce County businesses that make the most sense for them and their visit. We will continue to increase the number of these referrals by optimizing our content and website structure. As of 2021, there are more than 100,000 local business listing views on traveltacoma.com.

Newsletters

Travel Tacoma continues to use proper GDPR appropriate methods to grow its opt-in database of future visitors and meeting planners to inspire and motivate overnight stays. We have nearly 8,000 recipients who have self-identified as having a travel interest in Pierce County, and have opted into our various email newsletters.

Social Media

Travel Tacoma will continue to grow social followings through content development and advertising. The focus is on Facebook and Instagram, and by working with local tourism-facing businesses and organizations (hotels, museums, restaurants, tour operators, etc.) who are already creating outstanding, compelling visual content on their own, we are able to surface that content in our channels to target it toward potential visitors from outside the region.

We also use our social media channels to promote Pierce County special events, offerings, and new and updated attractions, exhibitions, and any other news that could potentially impact visitation.

In addition, Travel Tacoma is working to create more searchable content on important platforms like Pinterest and YouTube. Travel Tacoma also maintains a presence on Twitter and LinkedIn for a business audience.

Visitor Guides

While the 2020 Travel Tacoma – Mt. Rainier Visitor Guide was suspended due to COVID-related restrictions on travel (and therefore travel promotion), we have been using 2021 to pioneer a new format, which we expect will go to print in 2022.

SPORTS

Key Strategies:

Event Development

Researches and develops bids for events that attract tourism and overnight hotel stays.

Develops relationships with NGBs that result in more events hosted in the region that impact Pierce County hotels and hospitality-related businesses.

Club Development

Increases host potential of sports clubs and organizations by working directly with club management to assist them in the development and/or expansion of their membership and programing.

Venue Development

Advocates, supports, and assists any municipality, district, enterprise fund, or private investors in the development of sports venues that increase the host potential of the region.

We are currently in steering/ advisory roles for venue enhancement and new development for:

- Tacoma
- University Place (Chambers Bay/ Pierce County Parks)
- Puyallup
- Sumner
- DuPont
- Gig Harbor

Community Development

Implement strategic partnerships to enhance the host potential of our community.

Engage elected officials and government entities, and the media to leverage resources and educate on the value of sports tourism.

Event Services

Serves on Local Organizing Committees to fulfill all commitments made during the bidding process.

Enhance the visitor experience for competitors, attendees, fans, families, etc. with the end result being benefits to the tourism industry and the tax collections of the county.

STRUCTURE TO SUPPORT OUR TOP PRIORITIES

EXECUTIVE + ADMINISTRATIVE

President + CEO

Office Administrator

Strategic Partners:

Contract: HR Services

Contract: Finance and Billing

Contract: IT Services

Priorities

Financial and organizational stability; Board relations; community relations; partnership development; collaboration; alternative revenue generation

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS + VISITOR SERVICES

Senior Communications Manager

Strategic Partners

Contract: Media Relations Support

Contract: Website development, hosting, and maintenance

Contract: Visitor Guide and Meeting Planner Guide Production

Priorities

Marketing to individual leisure travelers and events. This team serves as the production house for advertising and collateral for all markets.

SPORTS

Director of Sports Development

Priorities

Recruitment, development and servicing of amateur sporting events

SALES + SERVICING

Vice President

Senior Convention Center Sales Manager

Convention Center Sales Manager

Priorities

Generate economic impact through sales activities that provide a consistent return on investment for funders by delivering room-nights and increased spending throughout the Pierce County community.