



HILTON HEAD ISLAND  
VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

2014-2015

## Destination Sales & Marketing Plan

### Mission

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Mutually lead our membership and travel and tourism industry by marketing and guiding the Hilton Head Island destination brand experience to generate sustainable economic vitality.

### Brand Commitment

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Hilton Head Island renews and enriches a visitor's body and spirit through a sophisticated, relaxing, aesthetically beautiful and lush South Carolina seaside resort environment. The community offers a fun and restorative beach culture, world-class golf and tennis, vibrant arts, history and culture, and refreshing outdoor recreation in an ecologically sensitive setting.

### Guiding Principles

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- Serve as a voice and advocate for the business community
- Maintain the highest ethical standards in all we do
- Work to preserve and enhance the prudent growth, quality of life and character of our region
- Develop collaborative partnerships only in areas where the partnership can accomplish that which our organization cannot do alone
- Develop and implement programs and services that benefit the economic well-being and common interests of our members
- Initiate programs for which there is funding and staffing resources
- Make decisions based on long-term perspective

# Hilton Head Island Marketing Council

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The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau's destination marketing programs have been clearly focused on the following short term and long term goals, as set by our Hilton Head Island Marketing Council, under the leadership of VCB Vice Chairman Jay Wiendl, General Manager of the Sonesta Resort Hilton Head Island.

## Short Term Focus (Now through Calendar 2015)

### Top 5

1. Make group sales and marketing a major focus, to drive shoulder and off-season occupancy and compression. Special attention to corporate segment.
2. Expand our Social Media Strategy & Allocate Resources (Staff and Outsourcing) to fully optimize our brand voice, particularly to next gen travelers, and evaluate ROI metrics.
3. Continue to enhance *our Get Louder! Campaign* to better communicate the story of our destination, the Renaissance effect, and our organization's marketing programs and successes locally and regionally. Expand public relations efforts.
4. Emphasis on marketing the shoulder and off-seasons across all destination market segments.
5. Invest in sustaining and strengthening of digital SEO and keyword search.

## Long Term Focus (Up to 10 Years)

### Top 4

1. Funding – Grow destination marketing funds; explore opportunities to develop new funding sources.
2. Target the affluent traveler with household income of \$150K+.
3. Support the retention and growth of new JetBlue service as well as legacy carrier service, and back the expansion of additional service at both HH Airport and Savannah-Hilton Head International airport. Evaluate and work to improve destination ground transportation services.
4. Tourism Product Development and Packaging – destination engagement in working with attractions to bundle and package experiences that differentiate and sell the destination to group as well as leisure segments, both domestically and internationally.

## NEXT GEN IS HERE

The major shift in generational travel is now well underway; it defines changes in consumer thinking and behavior that will last well into the next decade and beyond.

Peter Yesawich, head of The MMGY Travel Group, first called this change *The New Normal*.

**90 million** US Millennial generation travelers will begin to surpass the 72 million US Baby Boomers in their collective buying power and influence as each year passes. Both generations, as well as the smaller Gen Xers “in between” these two generational groups, have significant commonality within the burgeoning NEXT GEN travel segment, for both group and leisure travel:

**Next Gen Travelers** are not defined by age, gender, income or status in life. Rather, they are defined by their attitudes toward technology as an enabler of travel experiences, facilitator of transactions and a social vehicle to share provocative insights, opinions and commentary on travel destinations, experiences and travel service suppliers.

The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau is engaged in long range strategic planning for the destination from a New Normal perspective, and focused on growing our appeal to today’s most influential and experiential travelers – Next Gen affluent travelers – a move that will benefit the destination now and through the next generation.

Our steps:

**Proactive engagement** with local stakeholders, influencers and industry thought leaders.

**Elimination** of single industry sector committees that silo our tourism community.

**Direction from the Hilton Head Island Marketing Council** with cross industry representation and voice.

**Research Investment** in understanding the motivations, decision making cycles, preferences and habits of today’s – and tomorrow’s - diverse and changing affluent travelers.

**The job of embracing, understanding and serving today’s travel consumers** is a **circle** that our organization has started, one that is dynamic & collaborative in nature and continuously moving forward as we work with the business community to lead along new pathways.

# Renaissance Hilton Head Island

FY 2013/14 brought the literal dawn of a new day on the Island and in the region in terms of tourism product development and redevelopment. A recap of the current status:

- \$30 million complete restoration (flagship change spring 2012) of the Sonesta Resort Hilton Head Island, which re-opened in spring 2013.
- \$30 million renovation of The Westin Hilton Head Resort & Spa, completed spring 2013.
- Over \$40 million resort redesign and rebuilding including The Sea Pines Resort's Plantation Club into The Sea Pines Plantation Golf Club, with a Grand Opening on April of 2014, new oceanfront Sea Pines Beach Club, scheduled to open this summer, and Harbour Town Clubhouse scheduled to break ground immediately after the RBC Heritage this April.
- Omni Hilton Head Oceanfront Resort's \$17 million renovation, with phase I completed and phase II scheduled for this fall/winter.
- Announced major renovation of the Hilton Head Marriott Resort & Spa, scheduled for this winter.
- Completion of a \$5 million renovation of the Beach House Hilton Head Island, completed spring 2012, and additional enhancements to be completed by mid 2014.
- \$74 million complete redevelopment of The Mall at Shelter Cove, renamed Shelter Cove Towne Centre, and the town's new Linear Park linking Shelter Cove to the Chaplin Beach Park. First phase opened this past winter, with additional phases to be completed over next two years.
- Plans to redevelop Coligny and the surrounding South End retail shopping and dining hub, including Pope Avenue, Coligny Circle, and public beach/ visitor parking.
- Town's acquisition of additional land and joint venture with USCB to develop a new Hilton Head Island campus of the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) off Pope Avenue on the Island's South End. The campus will house the university's expanded Travel, Tourism and Hospitality School, including a potential professional tennis program.
- A number of our Select Service properties have completed, or announced future renovations to include the following properties:
  - Red Roof Inn
  - Hampton Inn Hilton Head
  - Hilton Head Quality Inn & Suites
  - Comfort Inn South Forest Beach
- Longer term planning underway to develop a new historic and cultural site of national and international significance at the Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park by the Mitchelville Preservation Project on land leased from the Town of Hilton Head Island. Mitchelville was the first self-governed freedmen's village in the United States, and is featured on the VCB's new Gullah microsite: [www.HiltonHeadGullah.com](http://www.HiltonHeadGullah.com)
- Extension of the runway of Hilton Head Airport to 5,000 feet, and other Airport improvements by Beaufort County with the FAA and Town.

- Construction planned for a new flyover on the main Hilton Head Island bridge to improve traffic flow and safety for vehicles traveling between the Island and the mainland, and addition of bicycling lanes.
- Commitment by the Town of Hilton Head Island to a community-wide sustainability benchmark assessment, key to putting our destination on the modern path to being a true sustainable 21<sup>st</sup> Century destination.
- Launch by USCB of a new Island Ambassador certified visitor services training program for front line and hospitality industry employees as well as public employees that interface with visitors, paid for through the Town of Hilton Head Island hospitality taxes.
- Continued investment by the Town in bicycling and walking pathways to enhance our potential move toward “complete streets,” which a growing number of locals advocate. Launch of a volunteer led Bicycling Ambassador program to assist visitors on pathways by the Bicycling Advisory Committee of the Chamber and Town.
- Opportunities continue to exist to create/improve:
  - WiFi access and Fiber Optic Network, on Island and countywide
  - Interconnected Digital Wayfinder System
  - Vacation Home & Villa product – encouraging owners and regimes to renovate product that is “tired” and outdated in some areas/ regimes
  - Ground transportation - cost and service improvements needed to improve competitiveness with other destinations
  - Historic, cultural, arts and parks experiences for visitors

## 9 Key Marketing Strategies

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Strategically, the Visitor & Convention Bureau’s marketing, sales and visitor services staff will execute the day-to-day tactical implementation and management of the destination marketing program driven by these key strategies:

1. Sustain and grow Hilton Head Island’s travel and tourism market share.
2. Continue to change/evolve our destination travel planning, marketing promotions, sales and visitor services to meet the needs and expectations of the affluent travel marketplace and consumers in 2014-15 and beyond into the coming decade.
3. Let consumer research, benchmarking and metrics drive our marketing program.
4. Utilize the Hilton Head Island Marketing Council to actively and collaboratively engage our partners in working with us to help define changes needed in the local tourism

marketplace and give them the communications information and tools they need to become vocal advocates for the destination and organization.

5. Utilize the Hilton Head Island Marketing Council as well as the greater chamber membership to foster cross industry networking, co-operation, cross-marketing, packaging and sales, and opportunities for innovation in pursuing new market segments.
6. Create destination promotions with the business community that cooperatively market one of our destination's most compelling differentiators: Hilton Head Island, Bluffton and the Lowcountry's wide range of quality visitor experiences through attractions, both natural and man-made. As a destination differentiator, we can work together locally to make it easier and simpler for both group and leisure travelers to see, understand and buy packaged travel experiences.

7. Move the needle

: by doing our homework (research) to understand the changing consumer and the most powerful value proposition(s) we offer to meet their needs.

: by advocating for innovative and contemporary product redevelopment and packaging on Hilton Head Island with our members/ partners that own and sell the product.

: by advancing marketing promotions that target high value visitors with compelling, brand consistent messages.

: by championing authenticity and truth in advertising about Hilton Head Island as a travel destination and reflecting the community's and our organization's principles and core values in all we do.

: by beeline focusing our team on meeting the VCB's specific sales prospecting, lead and conversion goals, especially shoulder/off-season groups and corporate meetings.

: by energizing our partners to actively support and participate in co-op marketing and sales programs planned and executed by the DMO.

: by expanding ways to measure the collective sales performance and success by the destination and our partners.

: by empowering our partners to network with each other to cross market the destination on their own, particularly in ways that support the overall destination brand.

: by continuing to enhance a strong working relationship with the directorate at the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, and leveraging state promotional opportunities and resources for our region.

: by developing a viable, long-term plan to grow public and private investment in destination marketing.

: by focusing on seasonal growth: In group & leisure markets, focus destination marketing and sales programs on driving *new fall and spring shoulder season business*, and supporting winter season business growth as funding and resources allow. Service peak season visitors. Monitor summer fill needs through the V-Trip pace reports and make adjustments to marketing campaign deployment if required.

: by supporting sustainability and growth in travel and tourism jobs, economy and tax base, and quality of life benefits garnered by a strong and healthy Island tourism industry.

8. Utilize the Hilton Head Island Marketing Council to serve as ambassadors for the local travel and tourism industry and Chamber's VCB, and advocate for its success. Continue to invest time and resources in educational forums, workshops, research investment, spreading awareness of our [www.thinkhiltonheadisland.com](http://www.thinkhiltonheadisland.com) economic metrics portal, online dashboard metrics and ROI reporting, enhance local communications program and advocacy that gives a cohesive voice to common concerns.
9. Champion development of a strong, collaborative plan for the future of tourism on Hilton Head Island.

# Research-Based Destination Marketing & Planning

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The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau invests staff management time and resources, as well as significant budget investment with qualified research partners with these goals:

- Understand current and long term trends that drive consumer behavior.
- Develop strategic plans that weigh both local stakeholder input and the consumer's voice through quantitative and qualitative research.
- Follow the Destination Marketing Association International's DMO Best Practices in research, planning and reporting.
- Develop tools that both the VCB staff and the local tourism industry can use to improve marketing, sales and visitor services.
- Provide timely results metrics and tourism industry information, particularly through our economic and business metrics portal: [www.ThinkHiltonHeadIsland.org](http://www.ThinkHiltonHeadIsland.org)
- Provide transparent accountability metrics and travel industry data that local and state government and related agencies can use to make better public policy and program decisions.

## Budgeted programs for FY 2013-14 include:

1. Smith Travel: Monthly & Weekly Hotel Lodging Report and Monthly Competitive Set Report.
2. V-Trip: Monthly Home and Villa Lodging Report and Monthly Combined Home & Villa + Hotel Two-Source Report, including 6 month "on the books" booking pace report. Includes access to national travel and consumer trend reports for our "*ThinkHiltonHeadIsland*" web portal.
3. Raven / Google Analytics Web & Social Media: Year-long tracking tools.
4. Group Business Study – With the focus on building group business set by the Marketing Council, we will invest in a "deep dive" analysis of the Competitive Market Position and Economic Impact/ Potential Market Share Growth of the Island's Group Business Sector compared to other resort destinations without a convention center, including recommendations for new sales and marketing strategies by the Visitor & Convention Bureau and destination partners. RFP to be developed by VCB with input from Marketing Council Task Force in mid-2014.
5. 2013 Leisure Visitor Profile & Conversion Study - Completed by USCB in early 2014. VCB staff will work with USCB to expand mining of this rich source of new consumer data by visitors and target profile non-visitors, including 6-8 new niche market sub-sets of analysis. A comprehensive study of the economic impact of the tourism industry in our region will be completed in the fiscal year ahead, based on data from this study.



6. DMAI Group and Event Impact Calculator: Online tool to calculate economic impact of local meetings, groups and events, purchased through DMAI.
7. Festival and Event Co-Ops: Co-op cost sharing with local festivals and events of USCB conducted on-site, online events survey. Current partners include: HHI Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance, Hilton Head Island Wine & Food Festival and Island Rec Center events.
8. 2014 Bicycling Study: An analysis of the economic impact of bicycling in the Hilton Head Island region and the profile of bicycling visitors, followed by a Bicycling Summit in 2015.
9. 2014 VISA International Travel Study: Partnership with the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to study spending patterns of international visitors through VSA transactions.
10. Chamber Business Barometer: online survey of outlook, confidence levels and concerns of local business community, conducted by the chamber with USCB.
11. [www.ThinkHiltonHeadIsland.com](http://www.ThinkHiltonHeadIsland.com): Operate and staff ½ FTE to provide constantly updated Business Metrics web portal for members and public to assess local, regional and national/international research, including special monthly VCB Destination Dashboard.
12. Pop Polls: New series of short polls of our Insider database on current and future travel trends and media preferences.

Budget: \$92,000

Facilitated by: VCB Marketing Staff managing projects with USCB Travel & Tourism Institute, Smith Travel, V-Trip, US Travel, DMAI and SCPRT, and other potential research resources, TBD.

# Meetings/Group Sales & Marketing

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With the clear priority of group business development, particularly within the corporate meetings sector, set by the Hilton Head Island Marketing Council in FY 2014/15, here is a look at American Express' 2014 Global Meetings Forecast, followed by our local destination situation and plan:

## **American Express Meetings & Events 2014 Global Meetings Forecast:**

Looking to 2014, our survey respondents and contributors indicate that the rising use of social media and mobile applications are certainly the largest anticipated trends in meetings across every region. Additionally, we see meeting planners once again pointing to budget challenges in 2014 and a continued shift to more local meetings and across every region.

Across all regions surveyed, respondents indicate that the approval process for meetings is becoming more rigorous. Given that meetings is often one of the least managed spend categories within many companies, this shift is natural as procurement turns their attention to the category in an effort to create more efficiencies for organizations.

Across all regions, group hotel rates for meetings and events are expected to rise in 2014. Meetings demand for mid-tier properties is also predicted to continue rising in 2014 as it has for the last two years suggesting that mid-tier properties have become the primary choice among meeting planners globally.

Mobile applications and social media are two technologies frequently used by attendees in their personal lives. As the use of meeting-specific apps and social media within meetings continues to rise, meeting planners are expected to face greater pressure to incorporate these technologies into their events as well. Expectations regarding interactivity with other attendees, the ability to share opinions and "review" a meeting in progress, as well as access to deeper information about presenters and content are growing among meeting attendees. The available tools and ease of use are also growing; however, incorporating these elements does not yet appear to be a consistent component of the planning process.

Another element receiving increasing attention is the incorporation of group air into the meeting planning process, a trend which appears to have plenty of room for growth. Group air rates are expected to remain relatively flat or see some very modest increases over the next two years. As planners become more aware of the cost advantages and flexibility associated with group fares, they are likely to focus more on this area. Many planners looking to find increased savings in a world where budgets are remaining stable but meeting needs are growing, are likely to turn to group air to help alleviate a bit of pressure. As a supplement to this forecast, we have included in-depth reports that offer perspective on three key issues facing the meetings industry today.

- Last year, we featured a report on virtual / hybrid meeting solutions. The continued interest in these solutions and growing conversation inspired us to feature this topic once again. Building on the foundation established last year, this report reveals updated statistics regarding actual and projected virtual/hybrid meeting solutions adoption rates, interest and more, including a region-by-region view. The authors also offer insight into the most effective use of virtual and hybrid solutions, and advice on building a business case for their use.
- Another topic that drew tremendous interest and was further researched for this year's forecast is meetings payment and expense management. Our expert discusses the latest policy and payment solution implementation data, as well as best practices and thoughts on closing the risk gaps associated with meetings payments.
- Our final in-depth report takes a look at the growing impact of social media on meetings from both the planner and attendee perspective. One of newest and fastest-growing influences on meetings, social media is already changing how attendees interact in many meeting settings. You'll learn about the trends and risks associated with the use of social media within the meetings environment and what planners and meeting owners should consider when looking to harness the power of social media for their own meetings program.

After years of upheaval and uncertainty, it seems there is a sense of stability returning to the meetings industry. However, we also see continued global expansion, and the importance of understanding the country-by-country dynamics given vast variances both within regions, as well as in emerging countries. Influencing this stability and expansion is a rise in meetings-related policies and programs designed to ensure meetings are executed in a way that complies with policy and delivers against strategic objectives.

As meeting owners and planners look to manage through the increasing complexity and execute on their meetings and events strategies, there are many new tools available to assist us today. The digital world in which we live gives us the ability to communicate, track and problem-solve in a real-time and more collaborative manner. By employing the right tools, we can alleviate many of the pressures covered in this forecast including safety and security concerns, globalization, changing attendee expectations and more, today.

Issa Jouaneh

Vice President and General Manager

American Express Meetings & Events

to download the full report , visit <https://businesstravel.americanexpress.com/meetingsforecast2014>

**Local Situational Overview:** With major investments of over \$100 million made by Hilton Head Island's major conference hotels and resorts in redevelopment, and more than an additional \$100 million in new retail and attractions investment, and an additional \$100 million plus by attractions and retailers, the Island is in a stronger product position than at any point in the last decade. We plan to leverage this newly refreshed product into new excitement about the HHI brand and interest in booking group business.

In addition, the variety and quality of experiences for group visitors that the Island offers has never been more diverse, including attractions both natural and man-made:

- Fresh new shopping and retail at The Shelter Cove Towne Centre
- Culinary offerings that are winning regional and national acclaim for its locally sourced and farm or fish to table appeal
- One of only two Ziplines in the state
- Six public marina villages, each with its own charm, unique environment and ambiance
- Internationally recognized and significant place in Civil War to Civil Rights history, particularly through the Mitchelville Freedom Park, the first self-governed Freedmen's Village in the US
- World class golf and tennis – for every player at every level of competition
- Silver level Bicycling Friendly Community – the highest rated in the state
- One of the top Farmer's Markets in the US in neighboring Bluffton and its charming Old Town
- One of the top Jazz Club's in America
- Eco-tours, Bird watching, Kayaking, Paddleboarding and Dolphin Watch Cruises – a thousand ways to explore our lush, subtropical environment
- Challenging and fun team building outings, health and wellness programs, historic and cultural tours and explorations
- Turn-key CSR Program, The Hilton Head Island Difference, offered by the VCB
- Broadway theatre, the symphony, dance and music comparable to an urban setting, but all set on a beautiful and intimate resort Island
- Quality enhancements to signature destination events, particularly the RBC Heritage PGA Tournament , HHI Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance and Music to Your Mouth Festival.

#### Sales Team Goals

The VCB Sales Team's purpose is to generate leads for group business from throughout the spectrum of market segments, with these overarching goals:

1. Corporate meetings in the shoulder & off-season is the top focus.
2. Market Hilton Head Island's unique point of difference as a meetings & group destination, with a focus on development of marketing and sales promotions of our destination's memorable and authentic Group Experiences.
3. Develop long-term goals based on perspectives gained from a competitive analysis of the Island's position as a group destination compared to other resort destinations (particularly those without a convention center), and the HHI VCB's group strategies compared with comparable CVB destinations.
4. Promote the Renaissance of the Island with over \$250 million dollars of private sector reinvestment in product development.
5. New initiatives to drive shoulder and off-season business (Flights for Sites, Cash Incentives for First Time Groups and creating a Group Closing Fund – see details to follow).
6. Targeted focus on affinity groups for shoulder & off-season business.
7. Assist our destination partners in their efforts to generate more meetings.

## Planner Relationships and Service

The bureau's position is to represent the entire destination, identify lead possibilities in all meetings and group market segments, predispose our contacts to strongly consider Hilton Head Island for their meeting or group event and prepare our lodging partners, first and foremost, to make the sale. Referrals to other local businesses that service groups are also a focus of the VCB sales staff.

One of the many strengths of the Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau Meetings and Group Sales team has been its strong and loyal business relationships with clients and partners. Those relationships have been built on trust over the years and they have kept the bureau as a key and critical component in the business of business matchmaking. Those relationships are especially important in an era when it's predicted that planners and suppliers will rely on existing relationships to work through challenges. (16 straight years of receiving the Pinnacle Award of Excellence for service to the Meetings Industry by the Visitor & Convention Bureau staff.)

Planners have also said that they "focus on destinations that are easy to work with and then we negotiate flexible attrition clauses and F & B costs." It all starts with service. And although technology is important, some planners indicate that service and a personal touch will still trump technology. One planner surveyed in Future Watch said "suppliers who want to get ahead need to focus on personal relationships instead of technology."

The VCB connects Hilton Head Island resources to site planners' facilities needs for retreats, educational seminars, state, regional and national meetings and conferences of all kinds.

### Goals: Contact or Maintain Connections with Meeting Planners

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Goal</b>
Phone	3,091	3,127	2,737	2,837	3,000	3,150
Email	6,141	5,977	4,582	5,349	25,500	25,600
Letter/Fax	246	225	231	229	229	230
SDR *	2,724	1,818***	2,700	3,080	3,275	3,350
DayBreak Promos	n/a	n/a	4,000,000	n/a	4,000,000	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,202</b>	<b>11,147</b>	<b>4,010,250</b>	<b>11,619</b>	<b>4,032,004</b>	<b>32,330</b>

DayBreak responses

400

425

Social Media Posts

12 times

12 times

\*Includes calls for FAMS & Blitzes

\*\*Partial year due to funding reductions

\*\*\*Partial year due to funding reductions

## Group Sales Goals

### Goal: #1:

Increase the number of qualified leads by 32% in 2014

<b>SALES</b>	<b>2010</b> Actual	<b>2011</b> Actual	<b>2012</b> Actual	<b>2013</b> Actual	<b>2014</b> Goal	<b>2015</b> Goal
# of Leads	121	111	89	64	85	105
Potential Room	36,181	27,113	25,484	27,725	36,000	42,000
# of Definites	23	32	22	17	27	33
Definites (room nights)	3,467	3,285	3,387	3,153	5,550	6,780
Conversion	19%	29%	25%	27%	32%	31.5%

### Tactics

1. Increase customer “touches” – calls, visits, FAMs, e-promos, invitations, social media, and interactive encouragement to keep Hilton Head Island top of mind with our planner clients.
2. The Hilton Head Island Sales Team is committed to respond to all group inquiries the same day they are received. The goal is to be the first responder to the client and deliver a clear service message that Hilton Head Island values their business and appreciates their consideration.
3. Commitment to continue to follow DMAI “best practices” for sales and marketing services.
4. Continue to attend AENC, GSAE and SCSAE state and regional association events and for the corporate market MPI-Carolinas, when budgets allow, bolstering marketing and direct sales efforts.
5. Work tradeshow that have the greatest amount of potential for generating leads and new contacts with particular emphasis on appointment-driven shows, including, Going on Faith Conference (GOF) & Rejuvenate Marketplace for the faith based segment, ABA for the group tour market, HSMAI’s MEET, IMEX, DMAI Destination Showcase & AIBTM for the corporate & association market
6. Telemarketing/ lead generation/market and prospect research: Work with telemarketing vendor for continued data-cleansing and target acquisition, prospect qualification and lead generation.
7. Explore online marketing presence opportunities: Create enhanced destination profiles and actionable marketing offers in key planner search and source sites enabling destination searches of potential properties and direct RFP opportunities for new and existing customers.

## Goal # 2:

Build on Hilton Head Island's identity as a meetings destination and develop spheres of influence within networks of decision makers

### Tactics

1. Use past and upcoming booked business to identify affinity groups that would be inclined to consider Hilton Head Island based on testimonials from planner peers, as well as research by SDR to identify and prospect new potential corporate and affinity groups for the Island.
2. Feature promotions to planners of investments by our local partners in hotel, resort and attraction redevelopment and upgrades.
3. Network on a local, state and regional basis to keep the Hilton Head Island message in front of our target markets. Association groups include SCSAE, AENC and GSAE, corporate would be MPI-Carolinas and the New Carolina Council on Competitiveness which is a non-profit working to increase South Carolina's economic competitiveness through a cluster development strategy.
4. Produce electronic Meeting Planner Newsletters to update and engage our database of planners on new developments on Hilton Head Island in order to provide reasons to reconsider Hilton Head Island.
5. Work with VERB to develop the use of social media, specifically LinkedIn, as a portal to extend the Hilton Head Island message to targeted prospects.
6. Promote the consistent message "Inspiration as nature intended" in all marketing and communications -- a call to action that is uniquely Hilton Head Island.
7. Measure visitation to [hiltonheadmeetings.org](http://hiltonheadmeetings.org) & evaluate meeting planner usage of our site through a monthly review of microsite analytics.

## Goal #3:

Leverage communications for planners and partners

### Tactics

1. Provide partnership opportunities to our members for tradeshow, FAMS and other industry events.  
Upcoming co-op FAMS & joint promotions: (funded through public-private co-op)
  - a. **March 2014** – HHI to host a Meeting Planner Event in Boston (JetBlue Service)
  - b. **September 2014** – HHI to attend the SMU-SE event
  - c. **1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2015** – TBD (potentially targeting 3<sup>rd</sup> party planners)
2. Develop a plan with VERB to enhance search engine marketing, blogs, optimized press releases, video, social media integration and RSS feeds on our meetings microsite.
3. Update meetings microsite content regularly to ensure information is always current and accurate.

## Goal #4:

### New Initiatives

Tactics: VCB Sales Staff will develop and manage the application and award process for all of these new incentive programs in cooperation with local partners:

- **Flights for Sites**
  - Too many times the availability of a meeting planner being able to attend a pre-arranged FAM trip are difficult at best – so we want to offer them a “flight for a site” at their convenience – not ours
  - Goal is to support efforts of Hilton Head Island and Bluffton hotels & resorts targeting meetings and groups and to have 15 individual meeting planner sites during the fiscal year (*once the \$5,000 is depleted, the program is complete for the fiscal year*)
  - Would offer up to \$500 to pay for or subsidize a pre-qualified planner’s airfare for a site visit
  - Meeting planner must have a minimum of 100 room nights or more from their RFP and history
  - The site cannot be for a meeting or event that is held in peak season months.
  - The destination Hilton Head Island must be on the “short list” for consideration of this program
  - Meeting planner will be considered for this program regardless if they contacted the VCB initially or direct contact with resorts & hotels. A maximum of 1/3 of the flight for site dollars can be used for any one particular property and/or company
    - 15 meeting planners
    - 10 bookings
    - 1,500 room nights
- **Cash Incentive of up to \$4,000 when a meeting planner or group book their first meeting in the Hilton Head Island/Bluffton area**
  - \$1,000 for 50–100 actualized room nights
  - \$2,000 for 101-200 actualized room nights
  - \$3,000 for 201-300 actualized room nights
  - \$4,000 for 301+ actualized room nights
    - Eligibility is based upon new proposals, originated by the Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau and distributed to multiple properties, which booked for one or more nights Sunday through Thursday during the months of November – March. Cash incentives are paid to the master account within 10 days of the group’s arrival. Groups must actualize prior to January 1, 2016. The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau reserves the right to end the incentive program at any time. Up to:
      - 5 bookings
      - 750 room nights



- **Create a Group Closing Fund (GCF)**

- This would help offset some “disadvantage” when meeting planners compare the time and cost of ground transportation to/from the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport. In order to offset this disadvantage and secure more room nights, properties could request funds on behalf of the group to help offset their ground transportation costs.
- The **GCF** will be \$10,000 in VCB destination specific match funds used in the fiscal year of July 2014 – December 2015, matched with up to \$20,000 in private funds. Requires match from pass thru funds from the properties.
- Group must have a minimum of 200 total room nights to qualify as documented by the host property.
- Groups will only be considered for the **GCF** for shoulder and off-season dates, and priority will be given to first time groups.
- Funds will be allocated on an annual basis and payments are limited by the availability of funds remaining in the **GCF**.
- Should more than one property in the HHI/Bluffton area be competing for the same program, all of those properties will receive the same incentive to include in their proposals. Up to:
  - 8 bookings
  - 1,200 room nights

## Engineering Group Experiences

The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau’s Marketing Council, in concert with the VCB staff, will work to engage partners in the development of a group experience packaging program. This program is designed to package our unique Island experiences in an engaging way so that meeting planners and attendees are immersed in the Island’s culture leaving their meetings with “bragging rights” to share with family and friends.

By packaging our experiences, we will make the process of planning group activities easier for meeting planners and attendees to book so they can choose the experiences that match their interests.

Action Steps to Include:

1. As a follow-up to Joe Venito’s, “The Opportunity Guy”, Packaging Workshop in May 2013, VCB staff will attend the “Experience Lab” in Minneapolis, MN to train and evaluate how *Meet Minneapolis* executed their signature experiences program and assess how we can apply their group experiences packaging model to Hilton Head Island. Staff will then lead a workshop with local partners to develop 10 to 12 initial group experiences to feature on the new meetings microsite and in subsequent sales and promotional programs.

Budget:	Experience Lab	\$ 3,500
	Workshop	\$ 1,500

Facilitated by: Experience Lab and VCB Staff

2. Development of content, design and searchable Hospitality & Tourism Management Program (HTMP) programming for interactive section on new meetings microsite for searching and booking Group Experiences: 10 to 12 Group Experience Offerings, bookable online. Potential group experiences:

- Eco Adventures– Ziplining, parasailing, dolphin watch tours, beach walk, beach clean-up, kayaking
- Savor the Lowcountry Culinary and Historic Tours
- Coastal Discovery Eco and Historic Tours
- Gullah Cultural and Folkways Experience
- Marina Villages and Exploring Hilton Head Island by Boat
- Creative spark – art exhibitions, demonstrations and other creative opportunities
- Relax & Rejuvenate – spa package, brunch, wine & cheese sunset reception
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programs

Website Development Budget:	\$ 7,500
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Facilitated by: VCB Staff, local partner attractions and VERB interactive

3. Support Group Experiences Promotions with epromotions to the VCB's Hilton Head Island Group Planner database, plus purchased access to trade media email promotions.

Budget:	Series of 6 E-Promotions:	\$12,000
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Facilitated by: VCB Marketing Staff with local freelance writers (content) and VERB (deployment)

3. Support Package Promotions with Social Media Promotions on LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter and other social media as appropriate.

Budget:	Included in VCB Social Media Budget
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Facilitated by: VERB Interactive and Chamber Communications Staff

4. Support Package Promotions with SEM media and in-market intercept mobile promotions.

Budget: Included in NetConversion's Digital Media Brand Allocation

Facilitated by: NetConversion/VERB and VCB Marketing Staff

5. Support Package Promotions with PR pitches to appropriate specialty and general travel writers/editors and media outlets.

Budget: Covered in general PR fees

Facilitated by: Weber Shandwick Worldwide and Chamber Communications Staff

6. Feature Package Promotions and Results/ ROI in Local Business and Community Communications/PR.

Budget/ Facilitated by: Chamber Communications Staff

Workshops and Website: \$ 12,500

Group Experiences E-Promos \$ 12,000

Social Media Videos/Package Promotion \$ Included in Social Media budget

SEM and Local Mobile Promotions \$ Included in Digital Media budget

**SUB-TOTAL \$24,500**

## Conference Sales Initiatives

1. **Lead Prospecting:** SDR (Strategic Database Research) has been our telemarketer off and on for the last 6 years. Due to funding gaps, we've had to start & stop the process during a few of the years. The services they provide to the HHI VCB are:
  - Lead Generation
  - Database Cleansing
  - Trade Show and Seminar Follow Up
  - Appointment Setting / Sales Blitz / Sales Mission

SDR generated on our behalf:

- 2,109 outgoing phone calls in 2009
- 9,106 outgoing phone calls in 2010
- 5,413 outgoing phone calls in 2011
- 9,657 outgoing phone calls in 2012
- 9,414 outgoing phone calls in 2013

The number of prospects that they have provided to the HHI VCB:

- 2009 - 52 prospects
- 2010 - 204 prospects
- 2011 - 91 prospects
- 2012 - 113 prospects
- 2013 - 197 prospects

The ongoing results of these leads are:

	<u>Total room nights tied to leads</u>	<u>Lost room nights</u>	<u>Booked room nights</u>
<b>2009</b>	3,430	2,492	938
<b>2010</b>	1,425	910	515
<b>2011</b>	3,407	3,347	60
<b>2012</b>	3,324	2,169	1,155
<b>2013</b>	1,348	1,348	161

Cost of this ongoing lead generation/database cleansing/trade show follow up, etc. is \$3,500 per month x 12= \$42,000 per year. **Specific focus for SDR** will be corporate meetings as well as affinity groups for the shoulder and off-season time frames.

- **Appointment Format Trade Shows**: Attend appointment-driven trade shows, which provide one-on-one connections with buyers specifically interested in Hilton Head Island as a meetings destination.
- **Trade Sponsorships**: Judiciously utilize sponsorship and bid fees to secure business opportunities (recognizing budget limitations) to score special groups with high potential impact for the whole destination.
- **Southeast focus** on vertical markets within the overall corporate sector, including incentive, pharmaceutical, healthcare and technology. Association focus geo-targets include South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina along with the regional & national association market.
- **Select Service Co-op**: hotels partner with the VCB to work on various initiatives throughout the year in targeting Religious, Military, Government, and group tour markets.

**Sales Support Budget:**

Lead Prospecting	\$ 42,000
Trade Sponsorships/ Affinity Groups	\$ 30,000
Flights for Sites	\$ 5,000
Cash Incentive for 1 <sup>st</sup> time groups	\$ 10,000
GCF (Group Closing Fund)	\$ 30,000*
Select Service FAM	\$ 5,000
Site Inspections/ Out-of-Pocket:	\$ 3,000
Sales Industry Dues and Subscriptions	\$ 3,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$138,000</b>

\*Destination specific public-private match funding

## Group Sales Marketing

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1. **Group Experiences Initiative:** Workshops, Content and Digital development and digital e-promotions.
2. **Weddings:** Create a special new section on our website for brides and wedding planners. Capture database for future re-targeting for anniversaries, etc.
3. **Social Media:** Develop an editorial plan and allocate resources to train and manage a more robust strategy for LinkedIn with our sales staff toward relationship building.
4. **Sales Promotions Co-op:** The VCB is developing a multiple platform proposal with Successful Meetings Magazine for a co-op public-private sector co-op program using the SCPRT destination specific marketing match program to fund.
5. **Promotional Giveaways:** Hilton Head Island logoed items for giveaways during site inspections, FAMS, trade shows and sales events.

**Budget:**

Group Experiences Initiative:	\$24,500
Weddings Special Site: <i>Included in prior allocation to digital marketing</i>	
Group Social Media/ Linked In Promos:	\$ 5,000
Trade Media Co-op:	\$25,000
Promotional Giveaways:	\$ 6,000
Contingency	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$65,500</b>

## Select Service Hotels

### Religious

VCB staff will attend two religious conferences and then use those one-on-one appointments to qualify planners, who will then be invited to participate in a religious FAM trip in fall of 2014.

The **Going On Faith Conference (GOF)** is an association of 3,000+ religious travel planners, serving the religious travel community. Travel Industry of America (TIA) reports that the religious travel community travels twice as often on a group package tour as the population as a whole and GOF acts as the source between these Travel Planners and the Travel Industry.

GOF offers access to over 20,000 travel planners who organize tours for 4.5 million seniors and Boomers who belong to AARP Chapters, Bank Travel Clubs, church groups, and retirement villages.

The GOF conference is being held in Charlotte, NC in August 2014 and partners will have the option to attend the conference either as an appointment taker (separate from the DMO) or attend as a networking attendee and have access to the conference social events and workshops.

*\$895 –cost for individual hotel properties to attend all social, and workshop events – No appointments Limited to 3 hotel partners at this price.*

**Rejuvenate Marketplace**, a religious based conference and trade show offering in-depth, targeted content for planners of faith-based events. The conference encompasses three days of educational seminars with continuing education units available, panel discussions and roundtables, well-known keynote speakers, networking and top-notch entertainment. It is an exciting gathering where planners, suppliers and experts in many fields have the opportunity to share ideas and best practices, as well as develop valuable relationships. Business gets done on the Marketplace floor as RFPs are placed and dates booked for future meetings, making the event a success for all parties. The Rejuvenate conference is scheduled to be held in Atlanta, GA in October 2014.

### Military

With Parris Island in our own backyard, it is important that we reach out and strengthen our destination's relationship with the many families who come to attend graduations, as well as those soldiers on active leave that are required to get some R&R once they return home. We intend to do this by participating in the annual Travel EXPO Parris Island hosts March 2015. The VCB will be participating in this annual travel show, and select service partners will be able to partner and represent Southern Beaufort County. \$100.00 to exhibit

**The Alliance of Military Reunions** is a membership organization for the military reunion groups, and for DMO's, hotels, attractions, tour operators, and others who provide assistance in hosting reunions. Over 600 reunion groups are military members of the Alliance. They represent all U.S. services and all eras from WWII through Vietnam and the Cold War, to present day active duty groups. Collectively they have

conducted over 10,000 military reunions. About 300 CVBs, accommodations, and attractions are supporting members of the Alliance. Membership includes a member listing on their website as well as in their printed membership directory. Once a member, you are then able to access potential military reunion RFP's or to host a FAM in our destination.

The VCB will become a member of this Alliance, and present this opportunity to the select service properties who wish to become a member as well. Leads generated will be tracked and reported as part of group sales metrics.

## Group Tour

Group Tour remains an important market to maintain current and new relationships. Hilton Head Island and Bluffton continue to be attractive destinations for a hub and spoke opportunity. With Savannah 40 miles away, Beaufort 30 miles, and Charleston 90 miles, the Hilton Head Island- Bluffton region is ideal for groups to stay in one location for up to a week, and focus on day trips from one central area. We intend to draw group tour visitors by:

- Building relationships with operators through ABA.
- Leverage group tour
- Educate our partners on what it means to be a group friendly community
- Offer tiered pricing/packaging attractions with accommodations
- Expand promotion of group experiences on our website and special group ticket pricing

**The American Bus Association (ABA)**, every January, welcomes the travel and tourism community to the first conference of the year – the industry's premier business event – Marketplace. More than 3,500 tour operators, suppliers and exhibitors come together to kick off a new year of business opportunity and growth. Marketplace is truly a market-place – an active, vibrant forum of buyers and sellers where business gets done. With more than 140,000 pre-scheduled appointments and 900 pre-qualified operators, Marketplace offers a year's worth of sales meetings in one week. And with legendary networking and social events, attendees turn conversations from the conference floor into long-term business relationships. Couple this with leading education seminars and the industry's largest exhibit hall, and Marketplace is really unmatched as the best industry event each year.

In January 2015, Visitor Bureau staff will attend the ABA Marketplace, and take advantage of up to 60 pre-scheduled appointments with pre-qualified operators to promote and sell the Hilton Head Island and Bluffton region.

# Trade Shows

Divergent trends surround the meetings trade show business these days. Planners who expressed preferences for face-to-face meetings seem at odds with recent deep declines in trade show attendance by the planners themselves. A relatively new approach – appointment-driven trade shows with transparent agendas and measurable touches has emerged. These are “hosted shows”, with the shows’ producers vetting planners to assure they qualify to attend and then paying their way. The Group Sales team will attend both traditional and appointment-driven shows in 2014–2015. The schedule has been determined through research into shows’ reputations for productivity and by reaching out to determine our partners’ preferences.

## Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau’s 2014-2015 Tradeshow

Tradeshow	Market	Dates	Location	\$
The Going on Faith **	Religious	Aug/2014	Charlotte, NC	3,000
HSMAI’s MEET	Assn & Corp	Sept/2014	Washington, D.C.	9,375
IMEX*	Corporate	Oct/2014	Las Vegas, NV	22,500
Rejuvenate Marketplace	Religious	Oct/2014	Atlanta, GA	3,500
GSAE	Association	Nov/2014	Atlanta, GA	750
AENC	Association	Dec/2014	Raleigh, NC	3,000
SCSAE	Association	Jan/2015	Columbia, SC	2,500
American Bus Association**	Group Tour	Jan/ 2015	St. Louis, MO	4,000
DMAI Destination Showcase	Assn & Corp	Feb/2015	Washington, D.C.	9,375
Parris Island/Military	Military	March/2015	Parris Island, SC	500
Collaborate Marketplace	Corporate	May/2015	Orlando, FL	3,500
<b>SUB-TOTAL:</b>				<b>\$62,000</b>

\* \$22,500 already approved - part of the VCB’s 2014 Town of HHI supplemental grant

\*\* Included in Beaufort County/Bluffton Budget



### Group Sales & Marketing Budget Summary Recap:

Sales Support:	\$123,500
Marketing Promotions:	\$ 65,500
Travel Trade Shows:	\$ 62,000
Meetings Co-ops Public-Private Match:	\$200,000
RBC Heritage Group Co-ops:	<u>\$175,000</u>
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>\$626,000</b>

## Target Audiences

### Leisure Target Brand & Specialty Interest Segments

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#### Leisure Travel

Focus on growing shoulder season fall and spring business when there is greater available inventory of product and occupancy growth potential.

Target Affluent Leisure Travelers – domestically, defined as having a household income of \$150,000+ who take at least one leisure trip requiring overnight accommodations in the past 12 months to Hilton Head Island:

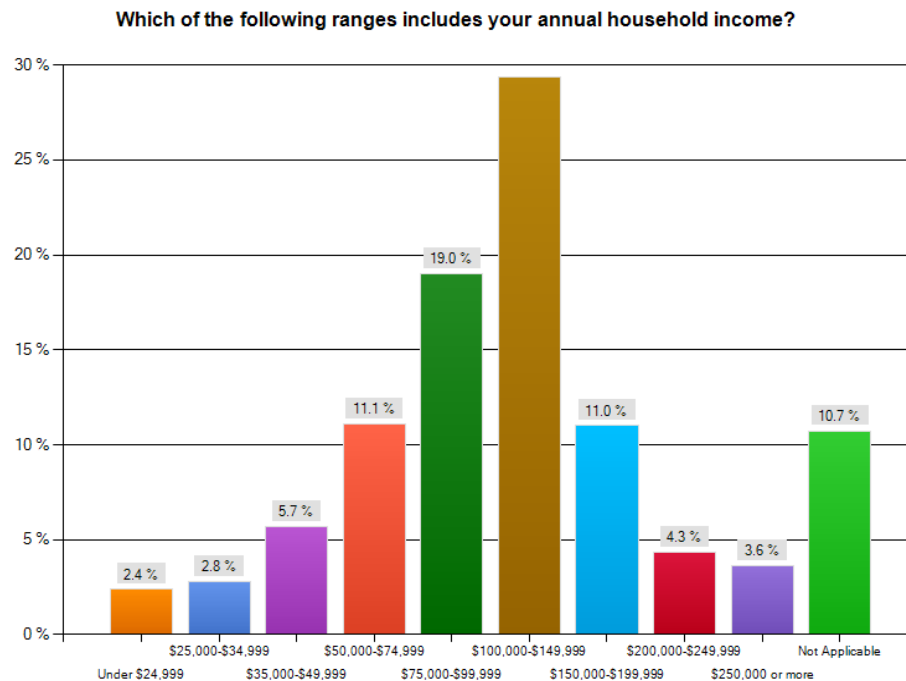
- 88% are married
- 50% are Boomers (born 1946-64)
- 31% are Gen Xers (born 1965-78)
- 3% are Matures (born before 1946)
- 16% are Millennials (born 1980 – 1997)
- Female (53%) – male (46%)
- Predominately white (85%) with 5% African-American, 4% Hispanic, 4% Asian
- Average 2-4 domestic travel trips per year

*Note: Demographic information gained from the 2013 Hilton Head Island Visitor Profile Study conducted in partnership with Dr. John Salazar of the University of South Carolina Beaufort and SurveyMonkey.*

*\*See attached appendix with 2013 Hilton Head Island Visitor Profile Study*

Segmenting the scope of this market further reveals that the majority (5% of U.S. pop) are in the \$150 - \$249K house hold income bracket; 2% in the \$250 - \$499K bracket and only 1% in the \$500K+ bracket.

Overall, this is a narrow segment of the U.S. and global travel market. However, here on Hilton Head Island, we have a greater share of the \$150K+ market segment with 19% of our visitors having a combined household income of \$150K+.



While the local business community, as a whole, wants to target this market, the consensus of the Hilton Head Island Marketing Council and professional DMO staff at the VCB is that the realities of our destination product set combined with the narrow size and scope of the luxury travel market in the U.S. mean that we must be prudent and also focus on marketing and sales to a wider demographic in particular gaining the loyalty of the younger generation in order to be successful in sustaining and driving growth in Island visitation.

Wider market segments (broadly) include:

: Younger travelers (GenX and Millennial's) that spend a higher portion of their discretionary income on travel.

: Mature travelers that spend a higher portion of their discretionary income on travel, and will only grow the multi-gen market as Boomers continue to retire.

: NextGen visitors.

: International visitors in targeted countries

## Specialty Markets

Research points to a key to effectively marketing to specialty travel segments -- in today's New Normal, travelers want choices and options. They do not want to be "siloed" into a uni-dimensional travel experience. This makes the travel marketers job more complex, and the need to dig deeper to find and touch the emotional drivers of travel destination choices all the more critical.

Although any one of these types of vacations may be a travel passion, *the vast majority of travelers are seeking an overall trip and destination that offers a multi-dimensional travel experience* that may touch on any combination of two or more of these segments:

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| : Couples Getaways                    | : Outdoor Sports – active and passive |
| : MultiGen Family Vacations           | : Locavores                           |
| : NextGen Travelers*                  | : Spa and Wellness Travel             |
| : Deliberate Culinary Travelers       | : Festival and Event Attendees        |
| : Avid Golfers                        | : Travel with Pets                    |
| : Avid Tennis Players                 | : Weddings                            |
| : Nature-based Travel and Eco-tourism | : Travel for Learning                 |
| : Arts, History & Cultural Travelers  |                                       |

\*NextGen Travelers are a relatively new category - not defined by age, gender, income or status in life. Rather, they are defined by their attitudes toward technology as an enabler of travel experiences, facilitator of transactions and a social vehicle to share provocative insights, opinions and commentary on travel destinations, experiences and travel service suppliers.

# Embracing the *NextGen* & Their Preferred Communications Channels: Social Media

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## Purpose

A social content strategy, similar to writing an outline for a novel or a movie, allows the writer to know what to write next and to make sure it aligns with the overall story. With a social content strategy, a communicator knows what to post next because he or she knows how the brand would behave, what it is passionate about, and what it seeks to accomplish. This social content strategy is meant to arm the brand, and the people who communicate about it online, with the knowledge, tools, and passion necessary to engage audiences and get them to convert on-site.

## Objective

We want to generate conversions on the Hilton Head Island website by sending qualified traffic and establishing an ongoing relationship with potential customers.

## Process

The process for developing and maintaining a social content strategy consists of:

- Developing an overall story to which all content ties
- Determining audiences and the online channels they use, and in what ways
- Creating a set of content units or categories that are consistent and measurable
- Developing a channel strategy for each major platform on which we will be posting content
- Sparking interest in existing content through online ads, contests, offers, etc.
- Measuring the relative success of each content unit and channel versus one another, and the absolute success of each based on number of qualified conversions versus level of investment
- On-going content creation and making adjustments based on measurement

## Overall Story

The overall story of a social campaign ties an emotional connection to a tangible incentive. This is so that we can effectively write consistent, regular content that will interest our target. Our primary story, then, is “Enjoy a vacation packed with adventure at the best family-friendly destination in the world.” We will encourage people to visit Hilton Head Island to relax in a beautiful seaside resort, enjoy the beaches and golf, and the art and culture, and have fun outdoors.

## Audiences

Our primary outreach target are “Affluent Leisure Travelers”:

- Household income \$150,000+ who take at least one leisure trip requiring overnight accommodations in the last 12 months
- 92% are married
- 51% are Boomers (born 1946-64)
- 29% are GenXers (born 1965-78)
- 11% are Matures (born before 1946)
- 9% are Echo-Boomers (born 1979-97)
- Evenly split, female (51%) to male (49%)

Additionally, we would target:

- Younger travelers (GenX and Echo-Boomers) who spend a higher portion of their discretionary income on travel
- Mature travelers who spend a higher portion of their discretionary income on travel, and will only grow the multi-gen market as Boomers retire
- NextGen visitors
- International visitors' in a targeted- country strategy

Our strategy for accomplishing our objectives will lead us to:

- Nurture existing profiles and grow the number of engaged followers and fans
- Seek out potential customers who have not considered Hilton Head Island yet or who are not aware of the brand
- Engage users and further develop as a trusted source of information about beaches and outdoor activities, family-friendly destinations, and vacations packed with adventure
- Demonstrate that everyone is a potential customer by regularly engaging in a meaningful, heartfelt, warm, and genuine way
- Encourage travelers to seek out adventure in their vacations
- Develop a community management guide that sets parameters for how often profiles should be updated, the tone and manner of updates, and the overall narrative we want to consistently demonstrate

## Content Units

Content units are the major themes or categories of content that can be posted, updated regularly, and measured and monitored for success. These are initial examples, not an exhaustive list, and will be adjusted based on feedback and measurement.

- 1) In-market advertising – Consistency and familiarity
  - a. Messages consistent with ads in market
  - b. Copy lines/images from ads
  - c. Content that expands/delivers on the teases in the ads
- 2) Focus on family vacations – The best family-friendly destination in the world
  - a. Photos, videos, links
  - b. Bike trails and other nature experiences
  - c. Coastal Discovery Museum
  - d. Wildlife to see and photograph
  - e. Mini-golf and other family-friendly activities
  - f. Arts and crafts, museums, horseback riding, etc.
  - g. Tennis, cycling, etc.
- 3) 12 miles of beaches – What makes Hilton Head Island one of the most relaxing spots
  - a. Photos
  - b. Locations and what makes them unique
  - c. Equipment and rental information
  - d. What to see and do when you're heading out for a day at the beach
- 4) Golf packages and courses – Explore over 20 championship Hilton Head golf courses
  - a. Course designers

- b. Facts and tips
  - c. History of the courses
  - d. So many courses, something for everyone
  - e. Itinerary ideas and suggestions
- 5) Deals/Offer/Packages – Book your trip today!
  - a. Golf packages
  - b. Specials and discounts
  - c. Variety of package options
  - d. Meetings and events
- 6) Culture and History – More than just a vacation
  - a. Cuisine, events, entertainment
  - b. Rich arts community
  - c. Gullah history and cultural impact
  - d. Bluegrass, choirs, jazz, quartets, etc.
  - e. Featured in “The 100 Best Small Art Towns in America”
  - f. Opportunities for families to learn and grow together
- 7) Romance
  - a. Weddings, getaways
  - b. Pictures, videos
  - c. Uplifting messages, quotes, etc.
  - d. “Family” vacations don’t necessarily mean vacations with children

## Channel Strategy

Once the content units have been established and there are a stock of compelling, approved content categories and posts, we will need to roll out the content to each channel. These channels have unique requirements and, often, unique audiences. These audiences will need content that resonates with them and leads them to take action. Below are the major channels we may focus on, along with example updates and content.

## Primary Outreach

- Target top-tier travel blogs and websites with information about a specific offer or promotion
- Provide exclusive content, high-res photos and focus on the main theme of “Vacations to Hilton Head Island are packed with adventure”
- Focus on 12 miles of beach, 20 championship golf courses, and the variety of outdoor activities
- Target “mommy blogs,” “daddy blogs,” etc., that post regularly about vacations and travel

## Twitter

- Photos (will establish an Instagram account)
- Interesting links to other sites
- News and events
- Questions, polls
- Monitor and interact with community
- Drive qualified traffic with compelling links
- RT visitors/potential visitors’ tweets, photos, etc.

## Facebook

- Undeniable, irresistible photos
- User-submitted content
- Branded content, using user-submitted photos and comments
- Offers, contests/super shareable content
- On-going stories: one update in each story each day for a week (e.g. example itinerary of a week-long family vacation on Hilton Head Island)
- Interact with people who ask questions, or post comments

## Pinterest

- Continue to nurture existing account
- Regularly add photos and create new Pinboards for the different core areas of Hilton Head Island
- Increasingly focus on family-friendly theme
- Repinning other Hilton Head Island photos, or photos that are relevant to potential Hilton Head Island customers

## YouTube

- Informal video tours and video blogs that have a relaxed, conversational feel
- Highlight different aspects of Hilton Head Island, including its history and culture
- Emails based on content units and specific customer interests
- Community Management Guide Outline

## Tone and Manner

The voice of Hilton Head Island needs to match the voice of its target audience. That is, family-centered and fun loving. It says “we believe vacations should be packed with adventure and fun for everyone in the family.” Every post should be written as if it is coming from someone who loves adventures at Hilton Head Island and knows everything about the area. She is passionate about the experiences, accommodations, and amenities that can be found in Hilton Head Island and absolutely has to share it with everyone. This means if a visitor asks us a question related to Hilton Head Island, our voice needs to truly be knowledgeable about the area, and take the time to ensure our response is accurate. Additionally, we would not post about it being a beautiful day in South Carolina if, in fact, the weather is miserable, or there is another impediment.

Every post, then, should be written and reviewed through this lens. Questions should be posed, such as:

- Is this too serious or stuffy?
- Is this post genuinely interesting?
- Are we telling people things they don’t already know?
- Does this truly demonstrate our knowledge and excitement, or is it merely promotional?

Our Hilton Head Island personality should be the person at the party who’s so excited about what they do, and so knowledgeable about it, that people are interested and want to ask questions. We will develop a calendar of content ideas so that there is never a lack of posts or ideas. At any given moment, there will be a post that is ready to go live on every channel. By doing as much work up front as possible,

we can demonstrate to our audiences that we care about them and want them to visit by keeping in touch often, and showing them things that they will be interested in.

*The calendar will include:*

- Major events, promos, holidays, seasons that necessitate specific content
- Content ideas based on categories and channels
- Specific pre-approved posts that can be posted at any time
- Plans for integrating new or emerging channels
- Ways to align with in-market advertising

### Metrics: How success will be measured?

As always, it's critical that all online marketing that is deployed to drive exposure for Hilton Head Island is based on driving business results for its partners, and exposure for the destination. It's more than just online marketing – it's about results and understanding what is working and what is not. These social content initiatives need to be viewed both on a standalone basis, and holistically as each strategy will ripple up into the overall Hilton Head Island digital marketing plan. We need to watch how one initiative helps to push the needle forward for the website as a whole. Similar to other initiatives, primary website objectives that will be tied to each campaign are focused on conversion metrics, which are reported on each month following the model below:

- Continuously improving campaign performance over time
- Individual posts will be tracked based on channel engagement (Likes, RTs, etc.), traffic driven to the site, and conversions from that traffic. We will look for correlations between these metrics to determine the best way to adjust content and increase conversions.
- Content units or categories will be similarly measured. Determining the aggregate success of a category will help us refine our focus.
- Each month, based on the previous month's data, we will revisit and refine the proposed content.
- We will measure levels of conversations over time, examine spikes and what caused them, and determine how conversation topics and volume relate to conversions on-site.

### Budget:

Social Media Promotions – monthly with VERB Interactive:	\$45,000
Blog Center – Freelance Writers:	\$30,000
Series of 3 short experiential videos/locally produced:	<u>\$ 3,000</u>
Total:	\$78,000

Facilitated by: VCB Communications & Marketing Staff, Weber Shandwick, Local Freelance Writers, Local Videographers, and VERB Interactive.



# Destination Public Relations

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Earned Media is a critical way that the Hilton Head Island VCB's destination marketing program puts brand voice into our overall marketing program. Our ongoing destination public relations program is a well-oiled machine that churns out national and international stories, features, broadcast vignettes and mentions, news coverage on top travel digital sites, blogs, and video, syndicated stories, and non-paid media coverage that annually averages about \$10 million in ad equivalency value over the past 3 years.

In short, with limited media buying resources, we heavily depend on earned media/ PR to sustainably generate brand voice for Hilton Head Island. The \$10 million in ad equivalency is the result of roughly 4% of that investment in total PR firm and communications staff investment.

Several components remain critical to our PR success:

- Media relationships our staff builds and nurtures over time with key editors, journalists and publishers
- Connections and opportunities leveraged daily by our New York based PR firm, Weber Shandwick Worldwide, one of the most influential travel PR firms on the planet
- Our seasoned professional staff and firm that partner together on a daily basis to serve up the right information at the right time to target media
- Weber receives volume discounts through multiple vendors that are passed on to us as clients.
- Access to a variety of experts in specific industries throughout the United States, Canada and more.

We are planning new and ongoing public relations initiatives in the 2014-2015 fiscal year to support the overall destination marketing campaign:

- I. Integrating Social Media and PR: As discussed in the previous social media section, we consider travel social media and PR to be twin sisters – they both are all about telling compelling, relevant and authentic stories that impact target communities of travelers. Therefore, our PR firm will continue to help us develop a strong and effective social media content.
2. Visiting Journalists Program: We will actively continue to pursue pre-qualified media travel journalists to visit Hilton Head Island and the surrounding region for story development. Traditional print and broadcast media outlets, freelance travel journalists and well-qualified travel bloggers, and the like will be pursued. We anticipate hosting at least 10-12 journalists on individual or collective customized visits in the coming year along with additional “one-off” journalists on customized itineraries.

Based upon our marketing council's directional decision to put a laser-like focus on the message of the Hilton Head Island Renaissance of redevelopment, we will be engaging in a “renaissance”

press trip targeting high-end media journalists to deliver the message of Hilton Head Island's redevelopment story.

Other areas of media outreach focus will include targeted Group and Meetings media outlets such as Successful Meetings and others.

3. New York Media Outreach Program Expands Senior staff will visit New York for pre-arranged desk-side media visits in concert with Weber Shandwick, our PR firm. Traditional journalists, bloggers and other social media experts will be considered. Staff will also work with SCPRT on media events they plan for 2014-2015.

This year, we will also be including an editorial outreach visit to Boston to capitalize on the new JetBlue air service to the Lowcountry and further reach that audience to tell the story of the Hilton Head Island Renaissance.

4. Broadcast monitoring:

Cision Broadcast Monitoring Service: In today's media world, the screen is king. Whether on a cell phone, iPad, computer, television or even the media screens found in skyscrapers and the back seats of taxis in major cities worldwide, video imagery is the way to catch the eye of today's heavily distracted consumer. With that in mind, it's not only critical that for our PR Agency Weber Shandwick and our internal communications staff are pitching broadcast but also when coverage results there is a mechanism for tracking ROI and showcasing results to our stakeholders. We will continue with our contracted vendor to monitor for broadcast clips or provide ROI data for clips or provide the actual clip of coverage.

Engaging such a vendor on an ongoing basis allows for economies of scale when ordering coverage clips and would provide for more accurate and consistent ROI tracking (for audience number and advertising equivalencies) rather than having to order these important assets ad hoc. Additionally, the vendor's continual monitoring better alerts our staff to serendipitous coverage that occurs without our direct involvement or knowledge—for example, a character on a television show mentioning Hilton Head Island in the script. Our annual contract is negotiated to include ongoing monitoring, a designated amount of coverage clips, ROI reporting for each clip and an end of year report.

5. Broadcast Media Working with Weber Shandwick, we will actively pitch and respond to broadcast media opportunities for travel related stories on national and regional broadcast outlets.

As part of the marketing council's request to continue to enhance and communicate the message of the Hilton Head Island renaissance, the destination will participate in a national SMT (satellite media tour) to garner additional broadcast coverage through top-tier news cities across the country.

6. Destination Travel Package PR: As covered in the package promotional section, the VCB will be developing a series of destination package promotion in concert with our partners to promote on a quarterly basis. Part of that promotion will be advanced long lead and short lead media pitches.
7. Festivals and Special Events: We will continue to work with local partners who produce area destination events to generate regional and national attention to the events and to support corresponding travel packages. Special Events that are being targeted include:
  - RBC Heritage PGA Tournament
  - Hilton Head Island Wine & Food Festival
  - Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance
  - Historic Mitchelville Freedom Park
8. Daily Communications Staff Management Writing regional and local media releases, monitoring news clips from Burrell's news services, monitoring and responding to HARO requests for story development, hosting and coordinating visiting journalists and itineraries who are sourced from HARO, SCPRT and other sources, developing social media content that supports other destination initiatives (such as Getting Away Together national PBS television show and other national television commercial spots) and operational support.

Budget for Destination Public Relations:

Visiting Journalists, Broadcast Outreach, NY Media & PR Firm:	\$ 160,000
Cision Broadcasting:	\$ 8,000
Satellite Media Tour:	\$ 10,000
Photo and Video Online Library and Out-of-Pocket:	\$ 22,000
TOTAL:	\$ 200,000

## Digital Marketing & Media Campaign

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### Placement Strategies:

Digital will be the primary media channel based on our budget parameters as well as its ability to offer cost-efficient message delivery to focused geography and lifestyle segments. Preference will be given to measurable SEM marketing strategies and sites that skew towards the affluent female audience, as they are the primary decision makers and vacation planners of the household, unless we are targeting a male oriented specialty market such as golf. Recent performance will also be considered in selecting sites and networks for the 2013-14 placements.

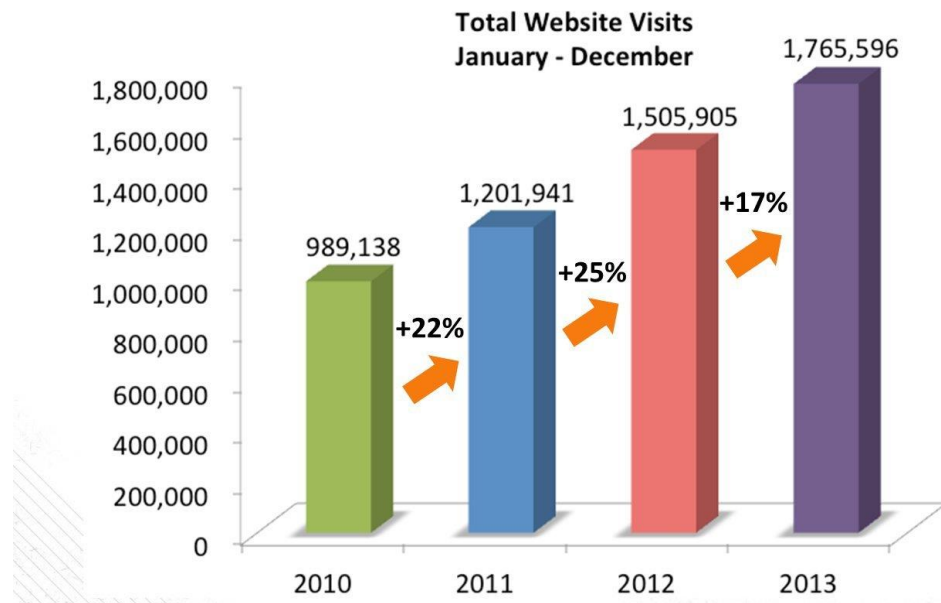
## SEO Keyword Search

The VCB will execute an aggressive program to expand and broaden our organic keyword search engine rankings on Google, Yahoo, Youtube and Bing for a targeted list of key search terms that best correlate with the Hilton Head Island target visitor and visitor experiences.

In partnership with VERB Interactive, our digital marketing firm, the VCB accomplished one of its primary metrics goals in 2013 – increasing unique visitors to [www.HiltonHeadIsland.org](http://www.HiltonHeadIsland.org) to over 1.7 million consumers, or a 17% year-over-year increase (see graph below).

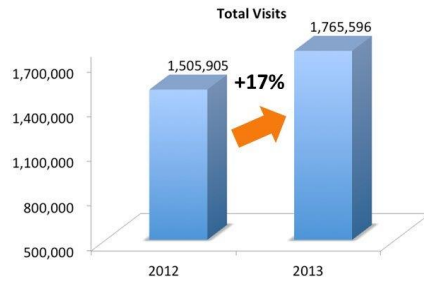
This was on the heels of a 25% users increase in 2012, and a 22% users increase in 2011. In both years we simultaneously extended time on our site, we improved our reach in both quantity and quality. A key focus area was keyword optimization by broadening and expanding our organic search engine marketing efforts.

### Total Website Visitation – HHI.org



## Key Engagement Metrics – HHI.org

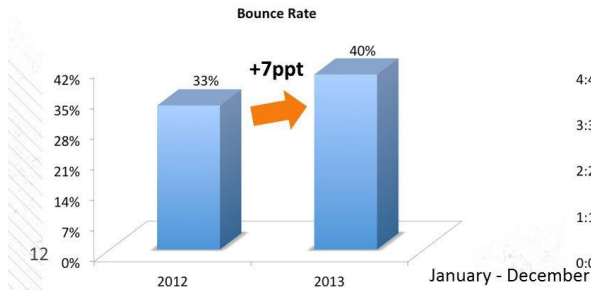
- Visits are up +17% vs. PY



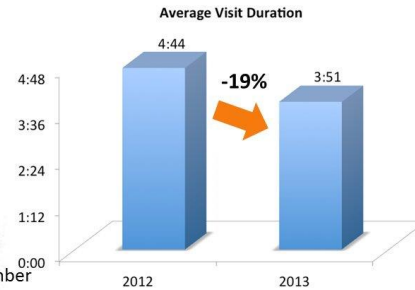
- Pages/ Visit are down -9% vs. PY



- Bounce Rate is up +7ppt vs. the PY

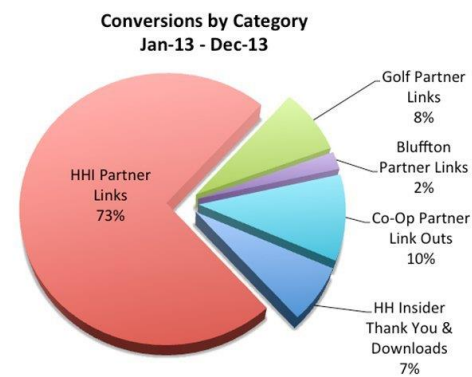
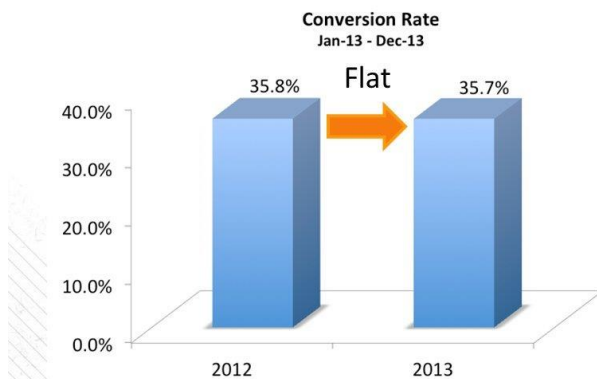


- Average Visit Duration is down -19% vs. PY



## HiltonHeadIsland.org – Conversion Rate Overview

- YTD, HHI.org has had ~1.7m visitors and ~626k conversions
- YTD, The majority of Conversions are Outgoing links to Partners
  - Golf, Bluffton, and Co-op Partner Links account for 20% of conversions



## Website & Monthly Web Content Audits

In addition to keyword content and search strategies, the VCB staff plans the blog, enewsletter, site content and social media strategy to constantly add new content on our website and social media outlets, in order to boost our search engine rankings, drive more qualified traffic, and drive the conversion rate to our members' websites.

In 2014 we are adding a new staff position of Digital Marketing Coordinator. The Digital Marketing Coordinator will be working on developing more website content and creating more access points to turn our website visitors into conversions. This position will also work to increase our Insider database through engaging the subscribers to follow us through our social networking outlets-Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. The staff will continue to work with area tourism businesses and event partners/providers to gather and write content/stories for the monthly web content refresh, as well as building out our video room on the site to pull in our YouTube video library and sharing tools.

### Special Project/ Target Content Overhaul Areas of Site in FY 2013-14:

- Develop and Build New Meetings & Group Microsite: Summer/Fall 2014
- Develop and Build New Tennis Microsite: Fall 2014
- Refresh Culinary Microsite: Spring 2015
- Develop and Build New Weddings Microsite: Winter 2014
- Refresh Bicycling Microsite: Spring 2015

### Hosting/Enhanced Analytics

Through Google Analytics and VERB/Net Conversion we receive enhanced reporting and tracking to understanding our visitor behavior and tracking results. With enhanced reporting and tracking, our campaigns, site navigation patterns, PPC, and SEO patterns are reviewed and reported weekly and in a comprehensive report each month.

### Leisure Database

The VCB's investment in a dynamic new database in 2011 for leisure marketing has paid substantial dividends in our DMO's ability to market the Hilton Head Island business community to visitors. The Tourism Database feeds all of our digital platforms – our website, mobile site– and is used for business listings for the Vacation Planner. It pulls basic partner data from Ungerboeck (Chamber Membership database), allows for non-member's listings to be added, and includes an admin tool to empower town businesses to add dynamic additional information (description, photos, videos, amenities, etc.). For example, the VCB wanted to show which lodging partners allow pets, and we have added that attribute to the lodging listings under "Amenities".

The Leisure Database pushes information to the VCB Website (HiltonHeadIsland.org) to feed the Partner Listings, Interactive Google Maps, Event Calendar, Vacation Packages & Coupons Database; to the

listings on the mobile site. In the future, more interactivity to feed social media channels with member content will be explored.

Our staff will continue to hold our popular workshops to train local partners on how to update and manage their information assets in our database, and change our website and database platform to Word Press to give members easier access to update their listings.

#### WEBSITE CONTENT MANAGEMENT & DATABASE BUDGET

VERB daily site work \$3,300 per month x 12	\$	39,600
Ad Serving/ SEO/ \$2,000 per month X 12:	\$	24,000
SPECIAL PROJECTS/ Target areas	\$	<u>45,000</u>
TOTAL:	\$	108,600

Facilitated by: VCB Marketing Staff and VERB Interactive

## Leisure Media Program

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### Media Objectives

- Continue to build upon the growth in website traffic to HiltonHeadIsland.org that we've seen over the past 2 years by driving qualified inquiries to the site with the goal of increasing conversion rates with link outs to our partner's sites.
- Leverage the story of the Island's Renaissance in our creative to entice the affluent traveler (\$150K+) to discover Hilton Head Island for the first time and to invite repeat visitors to experience our revitalization.
- Generate interest in brand Hilton Head Island as a preferred resort travel destination.
- Utilize the data received from the 2013 Visitor Profile Study conducted by USCB in December 2013 to make educated researched based marketing decisions.
- Expand and improve Hilton Head Island's online presence and performance, as measured by key metrics.

### Media Strategies

The following factors were weighed in selecting the high potential target markets for 2014-15:

- Percentage of market that is considered high income (\$150K+ HHI)
- Number of households meeting target criteria including HHI of \$150K+, lifestyle preferences, etc.
- Select vehicles that index well with the affluent target audience and have performed well in the past; and test new online vehicles to see which prove to be the most responsive for Hilton Head Island

- Evaluate past performance against market trends and new opportunities
- Weigh overall media costs and frequency/reach
- Penetrate highest-potential Eastern U.S. markets with a mix of digital and traditional media.
- Support secondary markets with a digital presence as budget allows
- Time flights to run during key planning times for spring and fall travel; winter travel as budget allows.

## 12-month Comprehensive SEM Campaign

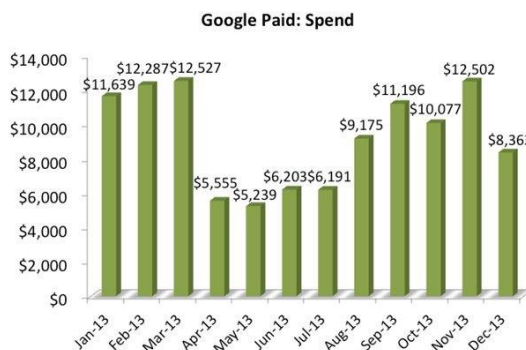
### Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Marketing

A key ingredient in any successful online marketing effort is keyword buys or pay-per-click search engine marketing.

We plan to sustain and expand our successful monthly PPC / contextual ad campaign with NetConversion/VERB, with more concentration during August through November to promote fall and winter travel and December through March to promote spring travel.

### Google Paid Metrics - HHI

▶ YTD, Spend of \$102,592



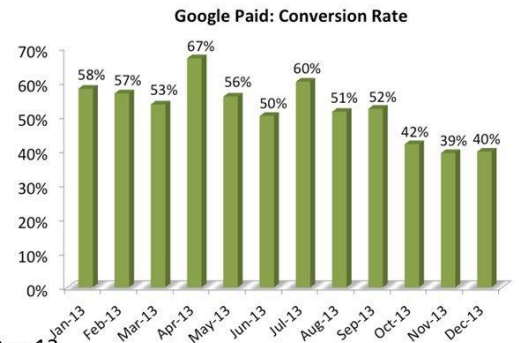
▶ Clicks of 150,000



▶ Average cost-per-click of \$0.68



▶ Conversion Rate of 51%



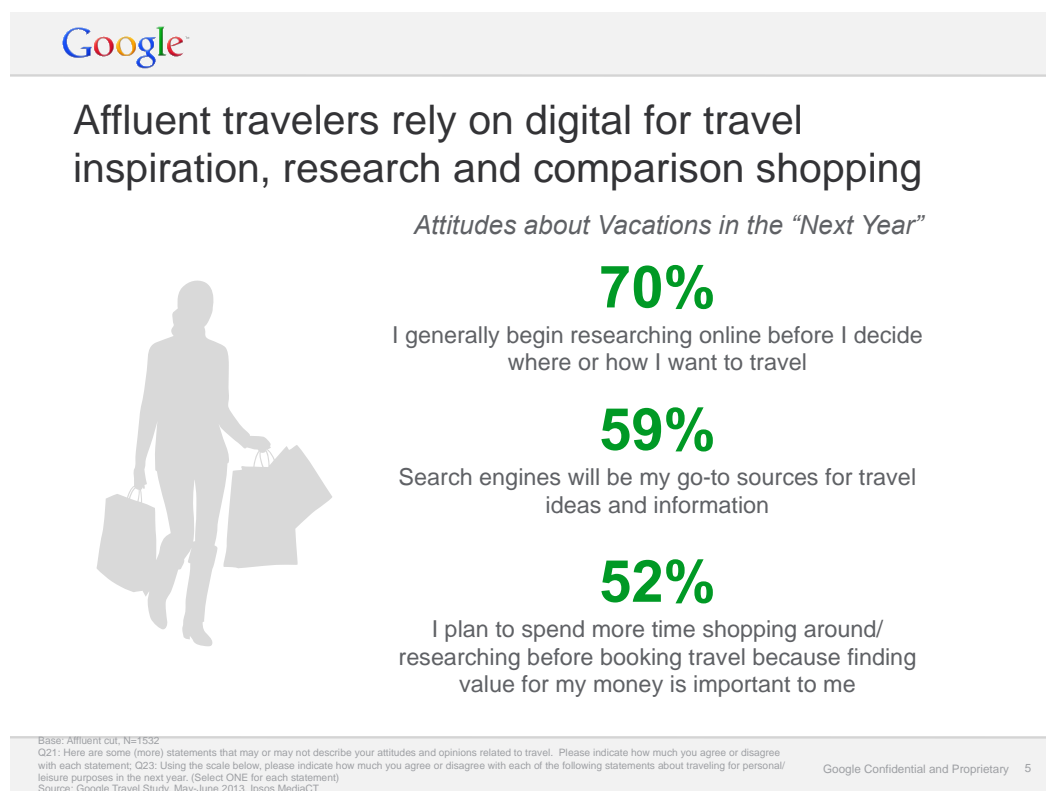
\*Fiscal Jan-13 – Dec-13



We will be driving traffic to the existing website and will recommend what pages or landing pages we will direct the PPC ads to and determine how they will be tracked. Our PPC program will be weighted to promote:

- 50% Hilton Head Island brand promotions to leisure and group
- 10% Festivals and Major Events Promotions
- 10% Culinary promotions
- 10% Gullah Microsite promotions
- 10% Culture, Arts, History and Eco-tourism Promotions
- 10% Outdoor Sports Promotions – emphasis on biking, track & field and boating

Note: Golf and Tennis microsite promotions are separately covered through the special golf and tennis grant program. International promotions will be covered in the international marketing section.



We plan to run PPC/contextual ad campaigns to promote the four marquee destination events that drive overnight stays, including the RBC Heritage, the Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival and Concours

d'Elegance and the Hilton Head Island Wine & Food Festival. Additional Hilton Head Island events to be promoted through PPC include:

- Hilton Head Island Gullah Celebration
- Tennis events
- Hilton Head Island Art Festival at Shelter Cove
- Arts Center of Coastal Carolina performances
- Hilton Head Island Public Art Exhibits
- Heritage Library special events
- Hilton Head Island St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Various food festivals; WingFest, Seafood Festival, Oyster Festival, etc.
- Performing & Visual arts events
- Swim, Run and Bicycling events

Included in our fee to NetConversion/VERB are weekly and monthly reports on the measurable metrics of the SEM programs. We will measure cost per click, resulting time/pages viewed on our website, conversion to the VCB Insider visitor database, fulfillment ordered, and where appropriate, conversion to partner websites. *See Marketing Plan Appendix for 2013 report.*

## Contextual Campaigns on Google Display Network

Google users are actively searching/ready to search content online about travel or planning their next vacation. Hilton Head Island will target consumers utilizing Google's Ad Network with contextual display ads on a CPC basis. Placements on the Google Display Network will be used as a branding campaign, increasing awareness about Hilton Head Island's Insider programs; as well as, targeting niche markets through the use of keywords and themes.

- World's #1 ad network
- Reaches 90% of U.S. internet users, with ability to target consumers with combos of specific interests
- Response-based, efficient, cost-per-click pricing
- New similar users: targets users with similar profiles to current hhi.org visitors
- Placement Strategy for Hilton Head Island:

- Late summer/fall 2014 flight pushing fall and winter travel
- Early 2015 flight to promote spring travel and travel packages
- Target leisure and other niche markets
- Geo-target Hilton Head Island's main feeder markets: Expanded from Top 10 to Top 15 markets in 2014-15

## Remarketing campaigns

This technique enables HHI to remain in front of qualified consumers after they leave the HiltonHeadIsland.org website. Advancements in targeting will allow more refinement of site visitors into multiple audiences. Consumer market origin, website content viewed, HHI video viewers and combinations of targeting elements will be used. The focus will remain on driving conversion.

## Facebook "Like" Campaign

With more than 750 million users worldwide, Facebook is the leading social network. The average Facebook user spends 50 minutes on Facebook a day.

We will continue to use Facebook as an opportunity to efficiently drive "Like" fans that we can then market to via our ongoing social media program.

## Content Creation and Distribution

Great content doesn't build your brand, it is your brand. Through our relationship with Madden Media we plan to implement a content creation and distribution program to increase visitation to our website and microsites. Madden Media will work with VCB staff and VERB to evaluate our current inventory of content, and make recommendations based on findings to build on successful content and fill in existing gaps where needed.

Madden's editorial team will then work with VCB staff and suggested local writers to produce the necessary content and facilitate distribution of these curated articles based on geography and by interest to premier news and lifestyle websites. This ensures that we're receiving qualified visitors to the site. Madden will work with VCB staff to monitor results monthly and optimize as necessary.

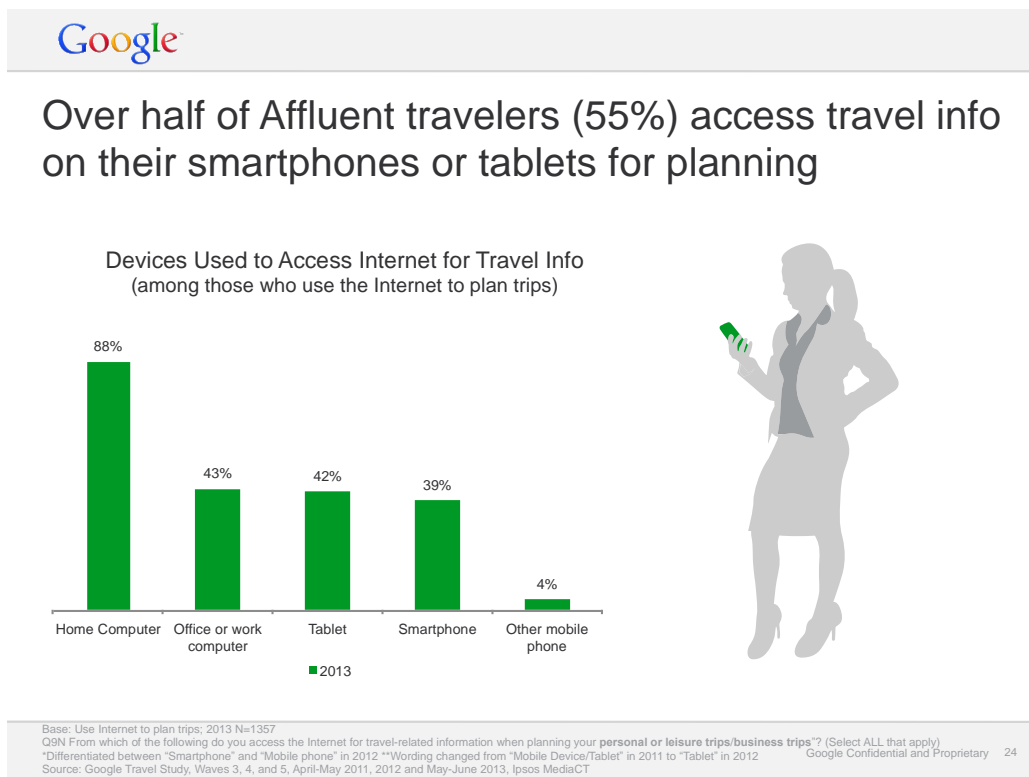
3 month campaign to run in fall 2014

29,842 guaranteed clicks

Cost-per-click .84 cents

## Mobile Campaigns

Mobile devices (including smart phone as well as tablets such as iPads) currently represent approximately 36% of overall website traffic to HiltonHeadIsland.org. Continued robust growth in the use of these devices by traveling consumers is expected in 2014-15. These users are also much more likely to visit our URL while in the destination, which reinforces the need for more in-destination relevant content and tools.



An increase of SEM from \$12,000 to \$30,000 in mobile is planned to take advantage of this important consumer trend and buying audience.



## Affluent travelers turn to online video throughout at all stages of travel

### When Travel Videos are Viewed by Affluents

60% when thinking about taking a trip

64% when choosing a destination

67% when looking for ideas of things to do at a particular destination

62% when deciding on accommodations

22% when deciding which website to book on

Base: Watched/uploaded/commented on travel videos online (2011/2012), Watched/commented on travel-related video (2013)  
Affluent 2013 N=751  
Q5: At what points in your travel planning process do you view videos online? (Select ALL that apply)  
Source: Google Travel Study, May-June 2013, Ipsos MediaCT

Google Confidential and Proprietary 30

Utilizing TrueView Video, NetConversion/VERB was able to deliver a remarkable 17 cents cost per view of our full :30 pre-roll video about Hilton Head Island to targeted consumers. Since the videos are skippable after :05 seconds, we only paid for the completed :30 views.

It represents a cost effective, upper-funnel branding, reach and engagement marketing channel. The spend level is recommended to increase from \$12,000 in the current FY to \$30,000 over the 12 months of FY 2014-15.

## TOTAL DIGITAL MARKETING & MEDIA BUDGET:

VERB Daily Site Work:	\$ 39,600
Special Section Updates:	\$ 45,000
SEO/Ad Serve/Hosting:	\$ 24,000
SEM Marketing:	\$220,000
Madden Media Campaign:	\$ 25,000
SCPRT Co-ops	\$ 25,000
Media contingency	<u>\$ 15,000</u>
Digital Sub-total:	\$393,600

Facilitated by: NetConversion/VERB, VCB Marketing Staff and Madden Media

## Videos

### YouTube Destination Channel

YouTube ranks as one of the top search engines on the internet, along with Google and Facebook. Travelers are using YouTube to search for information about travel, to get a glimpse of their next vacation location, and to share their personal travel stories with their family and friends.

Statistics regarding YouTube: YouTube's demographic is broad, reaching a wide audience of 18-54 year olds. Over four million people are connected to YouTube and are auto-sharing to at least one social network, such as Facebook or Twitter. In addition, on mobile devices, YouTube mobile gets more than 100 million views a day.

Currently, the VCB has its own YouTube Channel, *Visit Hilton Head Island*, with the following URL address: <http://www.youtube.com/user/hiltonheadislandvcb>. On it, there are 49 videos we have produced over the past several years and 51,465 page views.

### Digital Video Engagement Tactics

1. Work with VERB to keep content updated/fresh and optimized.
2. Use local videographer to shoot 3 new experiential video vignettes in 2013-14, plus adding the new video from the destination PGAT TV spot campaign.
3. Work with NetConversion/VERB to optimize integration of our video assets on YouTube within the pre-roll and related digital campaigns.
4. Embed compelling video content into our website, mobile site, mobile app and social media platforms.

### Budget

Production 3 short videos:

\$ Included in social media budget

## Leveraging Partnerships

The VCB will leverage the larger media buying power of the state tourism office, SCPRT, as well by incorporating select co-ops they offer to DMOs within our media plan.

## SCPRT Co-ops

SCPRT has not yet announced their co-op marketing offerings for 2015. Based on their 2014 offerings, we will budget a contingency to take advantage of their programs in our East coast drive markets to run in the spring of 2015. Their negotiated media rates due to their media buying volume and the state “buying down” the cost for co-op participants, make these buys compelling.

Net Media Contingency Budget for SCPRT Co-ops:           \$25,000

## EscapetotheSoutheast.com

We will continue our ongoing annual marketing campaign on the Southeast Tourism Society’s (STS) website, EscapetotheSoutheast.com, in the form of a customized destination section for Hilton Head Island. Our sections feature content about Hilton Head Island history and culture, culinary, accommodations as well as multiple images, downloadable brochure, and website link.

Added value: 3 Banner ads to run spring 2015

NET MEDIA COST:           \$ 3,000

Media Contingency:       \$12,000

Sub-total:                   \$15,000

## Sweet Tea Partnership

The Hilton Head Island VCB has worked with the Charleston CVB, Savannah CVB and Amelia Island CVB on a variety of Southeast regional and national cooperative marketing and sales programs over the past four years. We call our program the Sweet Tea Partnership, as we are all authentically Southern coastal destinations where a refreshing glass of sweet tea is always a welcome visitor experience.

### JetBlue New York City/ Boston Promotion

The recent addition of JetBlue’s nonstop service to the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport and existing service to Charleston provides our Sweet Tea partnership program the opportunity to combine marketing efforts in the NYC and Boston markets in order to leverage the forward momentum gained from the marketing surrounded by the initial launch in February 2013. Through our partnership with our neighboring destinations, we plan to negotiate an integrated media buy heavily weighted in digital marketing along with a combined media event in Boston.

### Sweet Tea Partnership

NYC/Boston promotion           \$30,000

(Hilton Head Island’s share of total \$120,000 program)

Facilitated by: VCB Marketing Staff, Sweet Tea Partners and MMGY.

# Consumer Promotions

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## Broadcast Campaign

- We plan to run a winter 2014-15 broadcast campaign in New York City and Boston to enhance the addition of the nonstop JetBlue service to the Savannah/Hilton Head Island International Airport. Top cable television channels that reach our affluent travelers are clearly defined in the 2013 Visitor Profile Study conducted by USCB and include the following:
  - Fox/Fox News
  - ESPN/ESPN 2
  - HGTV
  - Food Network
  - The Discovery Channel
  - CNN
- We will also use our :30 spot creative as part of our SEM TrueView pre-roll campaign.
- In our separate golf budget, :30 spots will run on The Golf Channel, timed with key PGA TOUR events in targeted drive markets.

### Media Budget for Spot Cable TV Campaign

Winter 2014-15 NYC and Boston: **\$60,000\***

\*\$40,000 from DMO budget and \$20,000 from Destination Specific Air Service Promo budget

## Lead Gen

The print media prospect is typically in the planning stage of travel funnel, and orders a Vacation Planner. They are prospects that may not be ready to book, like those who visit our website, as **they are often on the front end planning cycle of their vacation.**

Destination Marketers do well to leverage the opportunity to promote our destination on the front end of the planning cycle, as well as at the end. Otherwise, we lose the opportunity to build demand.

In order to sustain this balance back in our media mix, we are recommending integrated marketing partnerships with a few key publications that match our affluent leisure traveler profile.



## *Garden & Gun*

300,000 circulation, 59% in the Southeast including FL, GA, SC, NC, AL, TN, VA, WV

### The Garden & Gun Reader

- 92% are 35+
- Average HHI: \$332,000
- Average Net Worth: \$2,255,000
- 43% own 2+ residences
- Take an average of 13 trips per year
  - 73% went to the beach
  - 70% shopped
  - 44% went fishing
  - One in three played golf

*Source(s): 2013 Subscriber Study – IPSOS Mendolsohn Custom Division and Alliance for Audited Media June 2013*

We plan to build upon last year's successful special advertising section by increasing the VCB and co-op partner's exposure in *Garden & Gun* through increased digital and in-book marketing to include promotion of the Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance.

### E-marketing

- Talk of the South e-newsletter - 50,000+ opt-in subscribers

### GardenandGun.com

1.7 million average page views/month

188,500+ unique visitors/month

- Featured listing on "Live the Life" section that includes 4 high res images, video, logo, URL and up to 200 words of copy
- Event listing on gardenandgunpromotions.com for Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance

## Social Media

### Stats

- 102,130+ Facebook fans
- 50,130+ Twitter followers
- 18,000+ Pinterest followers
- 24,000+ Instagram followers

Hilton Head Island Vacation Giveaway social media promotion during fall 2014.

### Print

August/September – co-op ad, including in Destination Specific Match budget

October/November – Style & Entertaining

Interactive ad in at least one *Garden & Gun* digital edition.

MEDIA AND PRODUCTION COST: \$30,000 per page

*\*Note \$30,000 from VCB DMO budget and \$30,000 from destination specific co-op partners and state match funds.*

AD PRODUCTION: VCB staff along with *Garden & Gun*

## *Southern Living*

In the 2013 Hilton Head Island Visitor Profile Study, *Southern Living* showed up as the most read magazine for Hilton Head Island visitors with a household income of \$150K+. We plan to negotiate an agreement with *Southern Living* to run in-book advertising with digital and e-marketing added value opportunities to include the following:

### Added value:

*Southern Living* Travel Planner Exposure – Reaches 16M consumers each month

Travel e-Newsletter – sent to 40K opt-in travel only subscribers

Travel Planner Custom eBlast – sent to 40K opt-in travel only subscribers

MEDIA COST: \$37,000

## Consumer Promos

Broadcast:	\$	40,000
<i>Garden and Gun</i> :	\$	30,000
<i>Southern Living</i> :	\$	37,000
Ad Production/ Misc:	\$	5,000
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>112,000</b>

# Insiders, Collateral & Fulfillment

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## Hilton Head Insider Program: Building on a Strong Foundation

In 2014-15, we will sustain and grow our successful “Hilton Head Island Insider” campaign to drive opt-ins to our database for ongoing Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM). We now have over 136,000 opt-in Hilton Head Island Insiders. Our website visitors are invited to opt-in to become a *Hilton Head Insider* and a subscription to our complimentary monthly enews letter access to travel offers and VIP benefits from our partners when they travel to Hilton Head Island. Our media messaging includes this value proposition with the call to action to *Vacation like an Insider*.

## Hilton Head Island Insider Email Marketing

### Email Marketing Best Practices

We currently have over 136,000 Hilton Head Island Insiders in our opt-in database. It is more difficult than ever before to get quality email results. For our ongoing Hilton Head Island Insider email marketing program to be successful, we are following these industry destination marketing best practices:

### Engagement Tactics

1. Our staff develops an annualized editorial calendar for when messages will be sent, who will write them, how their success will be measured, managed by our Marketing team. *See appendix for the 2014 Digital Marketing Calendar.*
2. Continue to develop a quality opt-in database to receive Hilton Head Island Chamber/VCB messages.
3. Take a segmented marketing approach, but focus on cross marketing experiences to visitor segments in content and packaging.
4. Cultivate messaging that sustains or generates a sense of kinship with the destination brand and relationship with the sender so the messages feel personalized.
5. Create well-written messages that are optimized for click-thrus to the website; exemplify best practices in terms of unsubscribing, a link to a web version, etc., do not include spam trigger words.
6. Test to assure that the emails get through Spam filters and Outlook —Junk email settings.

7. We report actions based on the email including open rates and click-through rates in our dashboard reports.
8. Evaluate plans for improving performance.

### Keep and build subscribers

9. Send an immediate response when people sign up.
10. Ask subscribers to include us in their address book or safe list.
11. We are careful about old lists, purchased lists and lead generation lists. They tend to dramatically underperform.

### Segment lists Broadly

12. For e-newsletters, keep segments broad (family role, planning immediate vacation, golfer vs. shopper, etc.)
13. For destination marketing organizations, over-segmentation is sometimes a problem because top things people like to do includes the broad —sightseeing and women planning for their families need to know about all the activities available to their family.

### Content and other considerations

14. One key that helps our open rate is simple but effective: we use Hilton Head Island in the "from" line, which tells recipients that we sent the email!

*From lines* help people evaluate which emails to open, which to delete and which to complain about. Testing shows that open rates and click-through rates increase when the "from" name, "from" address and subject line are appropriately branded. Exact target testing also shows that these practices reduce Spam complaints.

15. Design a plain text email version for AOL users and other subscribers who can't view HTML emails.
16. Add text to have recipients view your email via a webpage or mobile version of a webpage.
17. Include text stating the offer at the top of the email so that the offer will be visible even if images are turned off or blocked in the recipient's email client.
18. Design emails to be viewed in the preview pane.
19. Place our logo in the top left quadrant of the page.
20. Grab attention with headlines.
21. Make sure the main graphic reinforces the offer.
22. Make sure we have the proper footer so people can unsubscribe.

## Email Marketing Plan:

### Goals for leisure e-newsletters and e-blasts

- : Develop relationships and retain existing repeat visitors to Hilton Head Island
- : Build a following for our content
- : Convert email lists into active leads
- : Position the VCB as an expert
- : Educate or inform about events and activities
- : Drive traffic to our website, mobile site, and social media outlets
- : Promote packages tied to editorial content when appropriate

### Strategies and Tactics

After we have segmented our Insider database early in the new fiscal year, we have the opportunity to build a series of periodic e-news letters around broad themes. We also will continue to send emails/epromos that cross market the whole destination to the entire Insider database.

#### Some of the broader segmented themes may include:

- : Family Vacations
- : Golf, Tennis , Outdoor Adventures & Sports Trips and Events
- : Culinary Travel and Events
- : Cultural Travel
- : Marquee Events & Festivals

### Promote Sharing

Many of our Insiders are already enthusiastic about Hilton Head Island. With a little prodding, we hope to turn these enthusiasts into sharers. Sharers are people who pass content onto others, trust what you write and respond to your advice, offers, recommendations and promotions. In addition to the email marketing, similar information should be provided through Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram.

### Specific Conversion and Open Goals

Our marketing team on staff will develop the editorial plan, write/manage the content and program the e-newsletters. We have been able to cut our email deployment costs in half by moving to a new provider, MailChimp.

#### Email Budget

Content Development	\$ 6,000
MailChimp Email Annual COST:	<u>\$12,000</u>
TOTAL:	\$18,000

Facilitated by: VCB Marketing Staff, VERB and MailChimp

## Event Promotion

### Marquee Events

In 2014-15, we will support our Special Contract Marketing Agreements with (3) event holders, including:

- RBC Heritage PGA TOUR Tournament
- Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance
- Hilton Head Island Wine & Food Festival

These are events that have a research-based, proven track record of generating significant overnight visitation to Hilton Head Island by consumers who came to the Island specifically to attend the event. Our promotion of these events will include:

- Rotational Website Features in current Events main page and on our home page.
- Special feature in our Vacation Planner
- Social media promotion via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Blogs
- Promotion via *Visit Hilton Head Island* mobile website
- Embedded content in website and blog feature stories
- RBC Heritage is promoted within the Golf Channel promotions, co-ops with local resorts to host planners during the event and our new Social Central lounge on #18 at Harbour Town Golf Links during the event.
- HHI Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance is promoted with special motoring media promotions and the Infinity PR promotion to host media during the event as well as themed tie-in with our Atlanta co-op sales mission.
- The HHI Wine & Food Festival is promoted within the culinary promotion and sponsorship co-op.
- Event holders can supply video content for use on VCB website

### Other Island Festivals & Special Events

There are dozens of other wonderful events and festivals on Hilton Head Island, some of which are noted below:

- Chamber Restaurant Week in January
- Hilton Head Island Gullah Celebration in February
- Hilton Head International Young Artist Piano Competition in March
- Arts Center major performances year-round
- Picnic & Pops Concerts and Orchestra Performance Series year-round

- Choral Society Series
- Chamber Bike & Dine Week in May, with Town of HHI and Bicycling Advisory Committee
- Hilton Head Island Art Festival, Memorial Day Weekend
- HarbourFest at Shelter Cove Harbour & Marina
- Hilton Head Island Seafood Festival
- Hilton Head Island Oyster Festival
- Farmers Markets year-round
- Run, Bicycling, Swim and Tri-athlete events year-round
- Coastal Discovery Museum special programs year-round
- Historic Mitchelville Forums and Events year-round
- Heritage Library events year-round
- Taste of the Season in October
- Public Art Events, TBD
- Celebrity Golf Tournament, Labor Day Weekend
- Other opportunities that may develop in the year ahead

These events will be promoted a variety of ways:

- Vacation Planner
- Online Calendar
- Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Blogs
- Rotating features on hiltonheadisland.org
- E-newsletters to Insiders
- Mobile site

#### 2015 Vacation Planner Print and Online

Our new primary print fulfillment piece offers a comprehensive look at planning a vacation to the Hilton Head Island area. 81% of VCB visitor inquiries said the Hilton Head Island information they received was somewhat or very useful in planning their trip. 56% of VCB visitor inquiries tell us that the Vacation Planner and related fulfillment was effective or very effective in persuading them to visit Hilton Head Island. Many online, as well as media and home inquiries, still order our planner, as well as on-site use at state and local welcome centers, at trade shows and promotional events and with media.

In addition to working with a digital and print publisher, our in-house marketing staff provides the business directory, local photography and editorial content management, editorial review and proofing.

Qty: 100,000 printed Vacation Planners and Digital Tablet versions

### Promotions/ Brochure Distribution at Airports

Included in our budget for fulfillment costs is a \$500/per month fee to support brochure distribution for all area tourism businesses at the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport's welcome center. A \$295/per month fee is also included in our budget for a four-sided display board and fulfillment distribution point in the lobby of the Hilton Head Island Airport.

### Vacation Planner & Mail Fulfillment Budget

Creative, Content Development, Production & Printing:	\$	120,000
50,000 Fulfillment Envelopes:	\$	6,000
Mail Operations & Postage (all fulfillment except golf*):	\$	65,000
Toll-free phone number (annual cost)	\$	<u>5,000</u>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>196,000</b>

\*Golf fulfillment is covered in the golf specialty marketing grant

## International Marketing

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### BRAND USA and HILTON HEAD ISLAND

The U.S. Travel Promotion Act, finally passed by the U.S. Congress and signed by President Obama in early 2010, has truly opened the door for a new world of opportunity for the U.S. in promotion of our country to international markets. This landmark act will be up for re-authorization this year, and our DMO calls on all travel and tourism industry partners to become informed about the benefits this would bring to our destination. We need to encourage our South Carolina Congressional delegation to support re-authorization of the U.S. Travel Promotion Act.

Brand USA's mission:

*Brand USA was created for the purpose of encouraging travelers from all over the world to visit the United States of America. In doing so, we aim to bring millions of new international visitors, who spend billions of dollars, to the United States, creating tens of thousands of new American jobs.*

The public-private marketing entity was created to work in close partnership with the travel industry maximizing the social and economic benefit of travel in communities around the country. Brand USA, through its call-to-action "Discover America," encourages and inspires travelers to explore America's boundless possibilities.

The VCB has been working with Brand USA and their agency Miles Media, as well as VERB Interactive to develop a series of microsites for Hilton Head Island as well as on the Brand USA website. Currently we have microsites for the UK, Germany and France with Brazil coming online in April. Each site is fully translated and is tailored to the specific interests of each country.



In 2013, through the Brand USA international co-op, South Carolina was able to reserve an enhanced state page, and with full participation from Hilton Head Island, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach, each partner has received their own enhanced destination pages on DiscoverAmerica.com, and a wide range of promotional content including:

**Hilton Head Island Partner Package Components:**

1. **An Enhanced City (State) page** on DiscoverAmerica.com. This includes a custom selected hero image, 500 word custom description in all languages, links to our city URL, 20 photo image gallery, video player module, email opt-in form, destination guide promo and form.
2. **Five Native Content Packages** customized to our destination. Each content package includes one 2.5 minute video, one feature story and up to 20 photos all customized, written and hosted by a travel writer from HHI's selected target countries.
3. **Five Enhanced Experience Pages** on DiscoverAmerica.com. This expands the Native Content units produced through this program and evolves them into a separate and highly visible component of the BUSA content marketing platform in all languages (with the possible exception of Chinese).
4. **2014 Global Reach Program** (Official Discover America Inspiration Guides and online marketing program). Two page spread. Current distribution includes UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, South Korea, China, India, Australia, and international show distribution. Print circulation is 400,000 and online impressions are guaranteed at 30 million.
5. **In-Country Turnkey Marketing Campaign** within Eastern Canada. This includes a 2-page spread within the print component in both the spring 2013 and winter 2014 editions. This also includes up to 10 million online impressions and up to 800,000 consumers for an email marketing promotion.

**Bonus:**

Brand USA is providing us with free translations for new languages added to DiscoverAmerica.com (excluding China) within the destination and experiences pages and free renewals of all content through the end of 2014. In addition, Brand USA will also offer a customized social media program for South Carolina and will offer a special early bird discount within their Global Reach Program (inspiration guides and online program). For partner agreements exceeding \$250,000 through this packaging, Brand USA will also provide a free homepage tile on DiscoverAmerica.com for two weeks.

The social media support for this program will include:

- Posts to highlight content on Facebook pages (Countries where we have current footprint and content will be available in language.)
- Image and video features within Facebook activity on appropriate DiscoverAmerica Facebook pages (Note: Brand USA is invested heavily in Facebook promotions and paid campaigns in 2013, driving incremental value and engagement, as well as visibility, to all your content that will be created within this program.
- Twitter posts based on the content calendar of our social program (Note: Posts will also benefit from selective promoted posts campaigns running with our in-country social teams in Brazil,

- Canada, UK, Japan and South Korea.)
- Cross talk opportunities based on appropriate fit for content and seasonality.
- Video content placement within the appropriate language and category in our current and future enhanced YouTube channel experience.

#### **Distribution:**

The Enhanced City and Experience Page program will live on DiscoverAmerica.com and present a special inspirational overview of our state, cities and experiences, customized to our individual needs. The Native Content packages are linked to the South Carolina enhanced state page and the enhanced city pages. Plus, there is direct navigation onto the travel journal pages from the homepage highlighting our extensive content. South Carolina will distribute this native content on Travel South USA's international sites and are available for South Carolina's International GSAs to use and to distribute. We are featuring the native language experienced based videos, feature stories and photographic content within our own marketing channels (website, social media channels, etc.). This investment in international content highlights South Carolina experiences and destinations and builds a strong international marketing foundation to best leverage Brand USA's \$100 million in annual marketing funds.

In addition, the VCB will work with Coastal South Carolina, USA, SCPRT and Brand USA :

1. Tour operator FAMS throughout the year, with special emphasis on an international tour operators pre and post FAM in concert with the mid-year IAGTO (International Association of Golf Tour Operators) meeting in Charleston, SC in June 2014, and a FAM during the RBC Heritage PGA TOUR 2015.
2. Coastal SC USA co-op promotions in tour operator and major consumer digital and print media, including:
  - *Golf Breaks*, with a Charleston-based international office of their UK Long Haul operation
  - *Your Golf Travel* in concert with SKY Sports TV campaign in the UK
  - *IMG's Golfing World* – 30 minute South Carolina coast broadcast program with 5-6 minute segment to feature Hilton Head Island, reaching 100 million households worldwide
  - *Golf Digest*, Ireland
  - *Bunkered*, Scotland
  - *Golf Monthly*, UK
  - *Golf International*, UK
  - *GolfHaus* Germany In-store Digital and Window Displays 2014
  - Extra Golf – Support for program to bring 8-10 German/ Austrian PGA Tour professionals for FAM and develop golf group program in 2014/15
  - UK's *Daily Telegraph*: Digital, print and event based promotional campaign
3. Visiting international journalists throughout the year

4. Trade Shows:
  - IAGTO (International Association of Golf Tour Operators) in Charleston, June 2014
  - World Travel Market in London, November 2014
  - ITB (International Travel Berlin), March 2015
5. Annual Sales Mission and training programs for reservation agents.
6. Specialty website for consortium.
7. Receptive operator services for smaller tour operators through Coastal SC USA.

In addition to these programs through the consortium, the VCB also plans to support international marketing through:

8. Hilton Head Island booth and one-on-one operator and media marketplace appointments at Pow Wow International, the largest U.S. Travel international trade show.
9. Special promotion with Ultimate Golf Vacations in Canada, owned by Merit Golf.
10. Co-op support for high producing tour operators with our product, in concert with Coastal partners, SCPRT and/or Brand USA.
11. Participation in Travel South International and WTM Latin America. Support LGCOA booth at Toronto Golf & Travel Consumer Show 2015.

Budget:

Coastal South Carolina USA	\$ 60,000
Brand USA Co-ops	\$ 80,000
ITB Trade Show	\$ 6,500
WTM Latin America	\$ 4,000
Travel South International	\$ 2,500
UK Sales Mission/WTM	\$ 5,000
Pow Wow International	\$ 8,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$166,000</b>

## Destination Specific Grant: Public-Private Sector Match Dollar Co-ops

Based on a strong track record of proven performance, the Visitor & Convention Bureau works with the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism as a partner in the state's Destination Specific Grant program. This program provides much needed funding for a wide variety of destination promotions and includes a fund targeted at public- private sector match dollar promotions.

While programs for the 2014 grant have not yet been finalized (the Destination Specific match grant will be submitted by the VCB in July 2014 for 2015 programs), preliminary plans call for match grants in these focus areas:

- RBC Heritage PGA TOUR Promotions
- NYC and Boston Promotions to support JetBlue Air Service and Packages
- New Group Sales Incentive Programs & Promotions
- Customer Facing Group Sales Events and FAMS
- Group Sales Trade Media Co-op
- Partner Advertising on VCB's new Group & Meetings Website and E-Promos
- 12 Month Digital Co-op Targeting Affluent Next Gen Travelers
- New Air Service Development Promotions, TBD
- Destination Affluent Lead Generation Co-ops in Print and Online
- Cultural and Culinary Travel Promotion in US Airways/ American In-flight, December 2014
- Hilton Head Island Motoring Festival & Concours d'Elegance Sponsorship Promotions
- Hilton Head Island Wine & Food Festival Sponsorship Promotions
- Sweet Tea Co-op with regional DMO's
- Social Media Promotions
- Affinity & Sports Event Promotions
- Co-op Promotions, such as Tennis, Golf, Outdoor, History & Heritage, Bicycling, and Bluffton