



Marketing Committee Meeting Notes April 30, 2020

Members present: Layton Parker, Tracie Trusler, Dee Dee Perkins, Bob Andrews, Lydia Odell

Staff present: Clark Lovelace, Prentiss Brewer, MJ Gordon, Nathan Jordan, Karen Tessier, Alison Fields, Sara Fields Bridges

Organizational Update - Clark

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 am. Clark recapped the last 45 days of marketing; all advertising that could be stopped was stopped. \$110,000 in cuts to the marketing plan were made for the rest of the fiscal year. Any non-essential TCT expenditures were halted, which included: strategic plan dollars, Transylvania Always Leave It Better campaign, and grant program suspension. TCT is operating at a base level, with Market Connections support at a more basic level.

In the last 4 months, \$360,000 was budgeted in revenues, but we are now conservatively projecting \$110,000. In the end, we are going to have to dip into our fund balance, however, we are ending the year in an OK place.

Transylvania Business Support Task Force - We have collabed information, conducted two business surveys, two town halls, and created a fund that has brought over 65,000 dollars for the Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund. Round one ended with over 80 applications. \$10,000 of those dollars were from TCT.

Agenda Review - Karen and Nathan

- A. Digital Marketing - Digital marketing continued with social media, content on the website, digital blogs, virtual tours of state parks and national forests, tactics and SEO. In asking for feedback from the committee, MC emphasized needing to adapt a nimble marketing strategy in order to pivot quickly. MC wants to look at a real phased creative strategy going forward and thinking about how we can step into different tiers of messaging. Nathan opened up to the committee to share perspectives.

- a. Overall consensus was that people are overcrowding the parks and forests with little regard to social distancing.

- B. Creating Guidelines for New Messaging - Pivoting quickly in messaging and informing people about how to be a socially conscious visitor was discussed.
- C. Timeline of Messaging - The type of messaging we're sending now, in 3 months, and in 6 months was discussed. Being tactical and nimble in messaging is valued. Market Connections noted that a landing page on how to responsibly enjoy the outdoors had already been built out.

Big Ticket Item Reviews

- D. Currently, the billboard is 10% of the budget, print is 5%, digital is 25%, and television is 10%. Right now, the billboard is up and they have postponed payment for 3 months. Market Connections emphasized digital advertising as number one because it is easy to track and very responsive. At this point, there will hardly be any print until Christmas.
- E. Repurposing or repackaging our photos and videos, which would save cost, was discussed.
- F. Adventure Guide - The expense will cover two seasons, with billing advertisers sometime in the next fiscal year and then again in March (in full). A suggestion was made that the AG have a two year shelf life.
- G. Field Notes and The Adventurist - Both are being combined. The Adventurist will be monthly, Field Notes will be scheduled quarterly and we can adapt that.
- H. Get Out Guides - On hold for now, and will be revisited down the road. Bob suggested a QR code scan in lieu of the GOG. Layton and Lydia loved the QR code idea, which would also drive traffic to our website.
- I. Co-op and sweepstakes - Right now, partners don't benefit from them. Prentiss suggested finding another way to benefit partners, maybe digital ads on the website.
- J. Ad at the Greenville airport - Layton suggested cancelling if the price doesn't change.

The decision was made to meet once a month to talk about our messaging.
Next meeting will be May 14 at 10 am.

Notes provided by MJ Gordon

~~4/30~~ 4/30 Handout

EXPLORE BREVARD COVID MARKETING MESSAGING MATRIX

Below is a detailed overview of each of our current marketing channels and how they will communicate from a messaging/content standpoint going forward until the crisis eases.

Adventurist: Going forward this will be an informational resource with updates from the area and tips for planning future adventures.

Field Notes: This will serve as a singular deep dive into a series of themes including, virtual escapes, how-tos for planning future adventures, photo and video tours.

Social Media: Our social channels will not go dark, they will evolve to communicate the following -

- local information on businesses and restaurants + tips on how to support them during this time
- future trip planning ideas
- moments of zen/escape
- virtual tours
- photo tours
- live stream features of local attractions (waterfalls, Pisgah Pete, etc)

Digital Marketing: New full digital suite to promote future trip planning in the short term. This includes display, SEM, Pre-roll and Native

Get Out Guide: On hold for now, developing new content feature ideas - could collaborate with Transylvania True on this - shifting to digital in the short term, print distribution is not recommended.

Print Advertising: Cancelled if publishing soon.

Website Content: Will maintain updated COVID messaging.

Digital Blogs on Website: Will continue, COVID relevant temporary posts will go live soon - including promotion on social. Regular blog posts will also be developed these will be launched, but not promoted on social as usual.

Visit NC Co-Op Advertising: Cancelling for short term.



Marketing Committee Meeting May 14, 2020

Members present: Tracie Trusler, Dee Dee Perkins, Layton Parker, Lydia Odell

Members absent: Bob Andrews

Staff present: Nathan Jordan, Karen Tessier, Clark Lovelace, Prentiss Brewer, MJ Gordon

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am.

Review of Strategies & Goals - Karen & Nathan

- A. Strategies - We are shifting everything we can to digital, which will allow us to track and change as we move along. There will be a 6 mo and 13 mo perspective moving forward, which will be flexible, responsive, and nimble. We can see trends in target markets and we can adjust accordingly. We will also adjust marketing contracts to quarterly to have different payment terms. We will keep the holiday sweepstakes. If we end up not doing any sweepstakes, that's OK too.
- B. Key Goals - A lot of people will be coming up for the day, we want to convert them as much as possible. We also want to encourage them to support the local economy. We will be focusing on drive markets within 150 miles, there's likelihood in visitors preferring driving over flying.
- C. FY21 Budget Review - Almost all print has been dropped, with very little left. Subsequently, a lot of print creative costs have dropped. It is unknown whether FAM tours and media missions will continue. There will be a reduced number of Get Out Guides. Atlas Obscura has rolled into the new year, we can pick when we want that to occur.

Percentages

Contingency is already approved and flexible. Clark will lean on the marketing committee and board to act on opportunities outside of the marketing plan.

FY20-21 Marketing Plan Specifics

- Bike Transylvania

- Action/Discussion: Layton pointed out that a lot of people use the publication, and is an advocate of keeping it in the budget. Dee Dee agreed and added that the sustainability of Bike Transylvania relies on TCT as a sponsor.
- Airport billboards
 - Action/Discussion: The carousel at the Greenville airport has been dropped. Asheville airport agreed to run any digital boards between now and August 10 for free in addition to the board we have up there. We are going to let the billboard at the Asheville airport expire. On paying for it in this fiscal year, Layton would like to see how the collection rate goes to see if it's something we can allocate now. Layton is for including it in this current budget and netting out the extra cost. The committee agreed to the digital offer.
- Digital
 - Action/Discussion: Layton noted that he's fully supportive of the flexibility, niche effectiveness and cost value of digital, but that we still need to find importance in tangible pieces such as Bike and travel planners, especially if we plan to convert day trippers to overnight. We have switched SEO to Media One.
 - Visit NC - Custom content and featured content are new VisitNC partner programs. We are creating a new tool to grab visitors on VisitNC's website to traffic them back to our website, which includes e-newsletter promotion and social media promotion. FC is similar, they have created a seasonal plan that focuses on a subject, Spring '21 adventures in state parks, that we bid on and won. The committee gave Karen the OK to move forward with these programs.
- Get Out Guide
 - Action/Discussion: The committee noted that it could be a good vehicle for the Explore Responsibly campaign. Dee Dee added that there is value in being able to hold something in your hand. Karen, Nathan, and Clark to talk about this post meeting.
- E-blasts
 - Action/Discussion: The Adventurist will be monthly and E-blasts will be every other month. Clark suggests doing both every month and cutting into the photo and video line item. The committee recommends cutting \$3,600 out of photo and video to add to E-blasts and Field Notes.
- Explore Responsibly Campaign
 - Action/Discussion: Layton suggested printing 300 posters and asking businesses and organizations to pick them up at the Visitor Center. He also asked if anything else will be produced other than digital. The next Adventurist lead is Explore Responsibly, the committee asked if we need to do one as a one off sooner rather than later. A decision was made to launch the new Explore Responsibly poster today (5/14) in line with DuPont's phased reopening announcement.
- Adventure Guide
 - Action/Discussion: There is no FY21 plan for the Adventure Guide, Market Connections has removed all of the things in the budget that traditionally provide

leads. Most of where those leads were being generated were print based. We still continue to get shelf life out of what we have in inventory. Keep it as is.

- City of Brevard Map
 - Actions/Discussion: The committee agreed to purchase the map for \$2,000 and to put it in this year's budget.

Next Steps

Market Connections will work up the final version of the marketing plan, the committee will review it and then have it approved at the next board meeting.

Notes provided by MJ Gordon

KEY STRATEGIES

5/13/20



KEY GOALS

1. Maintain Brand Awareness
2. Rebuild Occupancy
3. Maximize Day Trips
4. Support Community and the Local Economy

STRATEGIES

- Maintain nimble, flexible approach to marketing
- Regularly communicate most current information with integrity and thoughtfulness
- Focus on drive markets within 150 miles
- Shift marketing to digital as much as possible
- Adjust marketing contracts as much as possible to quarterly or semi-annual
- Maintain television
- Transfer some communications to internal staff with oversight from Market Connections
- Focus on website growth with responsive content, maintain and grow audience
- Utilize virtual tours, blogs and creative assets to communicate brand opportunities
- Postpone Adventure Guide and partner marketing opportunities
- Keep holiday sweepstakes
- Leverage e-newsletters, digital content, social media and blogs more than ever



Destination Infrastructure Committee Meeting June 10, 2020

Members present: Nick Iosue, Mike Hawkins, Josh Hallingse, Dee Dee Perkins
Members absent: Nicole Bentley, Mac Morrow
Staff Present: Clark Lovelace, MJ Gordon

Organizational Update

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 am. Clark began with an update on Transylvania County Tourism, touching on the transition in messaging and the decline in revenue in the past quarter. He added that numerous cuts have been made to close out the fiscal year.

Review Of The Implementation Plan

Mike indicated that the committee may want to focus on the first few items assigned to the DIC since they are the most time-sensitive. He also suggested adding a column to include specific action items being addressed or targeted for action in the near future. Discussion ensued on the items listed on the implementation plan, with the following highlights:

Pisgah Forest Gateway Project - There are concerns with anything related to NCDOT, who had a shortfall and didn't have the funds promised to various projects. However, three big projects: the Pisgah Forest Gateway, Asheville Highway Project, and the Wilson Road Plan are all still on track. It was noted that this committee's ability to assist is now limited financially. It was also noted that D2 and D4 are very similar and we don't have to take on each one of those as individual line items. Clark will be reaching out to the city to get an update.

Cycling Infrastructure - Recent support of the Ecusta Trail was a meaningful move in this category. We're open to exploring other opportunities, or other things like signage and infrastructure in the long term. It was noted that this is an area of the Strategic Plan with the most potential for opportunities. Part of the challenge is narrowing in on the projects we'd like to push within the next year, finding partners, and reaching out to them. Mike pointed out that this committee needs to start engaging and educating the county on these projects in order to lay some groundwork and see what opportunities are available. The county recently completed a comprehensive bike plan, Dee Dee added that perhaps we could be a partner and advocate for that in a way of a grant opportunity to help install or purchase bike racks. The city also seems to be doing things relative to the Brevard Trail, which might be worth talking about in the near

future. The goal is to make Brevard a bike friendly community, and with that in mind, TCT decided to not pull funding from Bike Transylvania.

Arts and Culture - We've had huddle-ups for best practice with retailers, accommodations, restaurants, and artists that were connected to TCT.

Meeting and Event Venue - Mark Weinsten was going to request funding to provide supplies to enable Parker Concert Hall to function as a conference facility. This is another representation of how there are elements of the Strategic Plan that are ongoing, and how we will be limited in funds moving forward.

Next Steps

Mike and Clark will review the committee notes and update the implementation matrix. Clark and MJ will tweak the Implementation Plan to have an actual action column. Sometime in the next three months, the DI committee will provide an update to the TDA Board.

Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority
Transylvania Always Committee
Minutes of June 23, 2020 Virtual Meeting

Present: Devin Gentry, Aaron Baker, Eric Caldwell, Brad Campbell, Grant Bullard

Absent: Lee McMinn, Tad Fogel

Staff Present: Clark Lovelace, Prentiss Brewer, Mary Jo Gordon

Guests Present: Nathan Jordan

Call to Order – Aaron Baker

Meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM

Minutes – Aaron Baker

Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed with no revisions. Devin made a motion to accept as presented. Eric seconded. Motion passed.

Organizational Update – Clark

Clark updated the committee on the recent happenings with TCT since two of those present are not board members. Revenues have come in at less than 20% of the usual since the shutdown. TCT cut all off the advertising that it was able to stop and eliminated all non-essential initiatives such as grants, Leave it Better, Transylvania Always, and strategic plan initiatives. Clark went over the changes in messaging from March to now. He also updated the group on his work with the Transylvania Business Support Task Force. The FY21 budget for TCT is down by 40%.

Financials – Clark

Clark reviewed the financials, pointing out budgeted year end, intended expenditures, and actual expenditures. The proposed FY21 TCT budget includes \$20,000 for this committee. Final budget approval is set to occur at the June 25 board meeting.

Sustainability Symposium Follow Up – Clark

Clark led discussion on takeaways and next steps. He will get with MJ to go over the notes from the meeting and will get back to the committee with a clear overview.

When to Initiate Leave it Better – Nathan

Nathan updated the group on the LIB campaign, saying that it is ready to go. Clark asked for feedback from the committee on timing of a launch. Nathan is to put together a new plan and budget for a rollout. He will also talk to ENO about working together as discussed earlier in the project. He will report back within 2 weeks.

Sustainability Assessment Update – Brad & Lee

Due to Brad's technical difficulties and Lee's not being able to attend, Clark updated the committee on the project. According to Brad, the assessment is complete and has been sent to staff and certain committee members for review. Eric and Prentiss have provided their feedback. A sub-committee may need to be formed in order to get this officially submitted. Also, Brad and Lee would like to develop sustainability training and certification for local businesses.

FY21 Focus – Aaron

Looking ahead to FY21, Aaron noted that since there will likely be no funds available, we may need to look more into manpower. Also, what can we influence or on what can we get involved?

Closing – Aaron

New Business - Friends of Gorges membership request was reviewed by Prentiss. Consensus was that, since we had ceased all grant programs, and that we had decided TA funding would be project-based (not for annual memberships), we would not be joining at this time. We will let them know that we are interested in hearing about anything they are planning in the future.

Action items:

- Clark to go over symposium notes with MJ and send out to the committee.
- Nathan to put together a new budget and plan for LIB campaign rollout, to include a discussion with ENO.

Next meeting set for 2nd Thursday of July at 2:15pm.

Meeting Adjourned – 3:15PM

Respectfully submitted by Prentiss Brewer