

BCTDA
2014-15
Sales & Marketing Plan

**Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority**

Presented by the
Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau

ASHEVILLE



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Asheville Area Tourism Industry

**For the Industry Calendar, go to:
 AshevilleCVB.com/Upcoming-Events**



Connect with the Asheville CVB



Partner Forums

Attend monthly meetings. Know what we're doing, provide feedback and network with each other.



Partner Connect

Sign up for the Asheville CVB newsletter to receive monthly updates in your inbox. Learn about upcoming events, industry news and tourism partner opportunities.



Asheville CVB on Facebook

Like the Facebook.com/AshevilleCVB page for immediate news and information on meetings, FAMs, trade shows, staff updates and event photos.

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Message to Our Tourism Industry Partners

The BCTDA and the staff of the Asheville CVB are proud to serve our community by attracting visitors to Buncombe County; providing customers for local businesses, generating tax revenues, and creating jobs. When the TDA was established in 1983, visitor spending totaled less than \$200 million. Today, more than 9 million visitors spend \$1.5 billion every year, supporting 23,000 jobs in Buncombe County.

The Asheville tourism industry set new records in 2013 as we worked together to showcase the beauty, vibrancy and special spirit of the Asheville area. Record numbers of visitors were connected to life enriching experiences and visitor spending increased eight percent – ranking #1 in North Carolina, and nearly doubling the state’s performance. Hotel sales increased 11.4% during FY 13-14.

The BCTDA’s top priorities have been to expand marketing reach, strengthen our group sales program, and enhance engagement with stakeholders. The CVB achieved several milestone accomplishments this past year, including:

- The sales team distributed 607 group business leads (up 26%), booking 336 groups (up 34%) with revenue of almost \$10 million (up 15%).
- A new brand identity with the tagline “Not Just Meeting. Exceeding” was developed along with a new toolkit of branded sales materials.
- We expanded television advertising from four markets to six, and added three more this fall.
- ExploreAsheville.com topped 3.8 million visits, an increase of 23 percent.
- Media relations efforts generated 605 significant placements with total print, broadcast and online reach of 2.4 billion.
- The Asheville Visitor Center served 202,000 guests.
- We launched an industry Facebook community, developed monthly communications, and hosted a series of events for industry partners.

The board will soon adopt “Strategy 2020,” a plan that will guide tourism promotion and product development for the next five years. The Tourism Product Development Fund was studied and a new application process was introduced for the 2014 funding cycle.

It is our great pleasure to be part of the Asheville tourism industry – working with you, serving our visitors, and helping our community to thrive.



Bob Patel, Chairman

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
Bhuna Corporation/Quality Inn & Suites



Stephanie Pace Brown, Executive Director

Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau

What is the BCTDA?

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is a quasi-governmental entity created by the room tax legislation first passed in 1983. The BCTDA oversees tourism marketing, sales and product development efforts and the expenditure of the county's four percent occupancy tax revenues.



2014-15 BCTDA Board Members (L-R): Jim Muth, Asheville City Councilman Jan Davis, John Ellis, Chip Craig, Bob Patel (Chair), Paula Wilber (Vice Chair), John McKibbon, Steve Frabitore, and Buncombe County Commissioner Joe Belcher.

2014-15 Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

Bob Patel, Chairman

Bhuna Corporation/Quality Inn & Suites
City Appointment – Lodging, 101 Rooms or More

Paula Wilber, Vice Chair

The Biltmore Company
Chamber Appointment – Tourism Related

Chip Craig

Greybeard Rentals
County Appointment – Lodging, 101 Rooms or More

John Ellis

Diana Wortham Theatre
City Appointment – Tourism Related

Stephen Frabitore

Tupelo Honey Café
County Appointment – Tourism Related

John McKibbon

McKibbon Hotel Management
County Appointment – Lodging, 100 Rooms or Less

Jim Muth

Beaufort House Inn
City Appointment – Lodging, 100 Rooms or Less

Buncombe County Commissioner

Joe Belcher
Buncombe County Commission
Ex-Officio Member

Asheville City Councilman

Jan Davis
Asheville City Council Ex-Officio Member

Board members may serve up to two consecutive three-year terms.

Marketing Asheville

In 1983, hoteliers in this community created a plan to tax themselves and earmark the proceeds for tourism marketing. The enacted legislation authorized a two percent room occupancy tax (and an additional one percent increase implemented in 1985) on lodging properties with five or more units. (In 2013, a legislative clarification stipulates that all properties collect occupancy tax, regardless of size.) It created a Tourism Development Authority as the entity responsible for administering proceeds of the tax to “further the development of travel, tourism and conventions in the county through state, national and international advertising and promotion.” The legislation also allows the BCTDA to “contract with any person, firm or agency to advise and assist it in the promotion of travel, tourism and conventions.”

To implement the marketing plan, the BCTDA contracted with the Convention & Visitors Bureau of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, which was already promoting tourism in the Asheville area. During the 30 years since the creation of the BCTDA, visitor spending has increased ten-fold, from less than \$200 million in 1983 to more than \$2.3 billion today.

More than 3.1 million visitors stay overnight in our community, attracted by the enriching experiences they find here.

Tourism Product Development Fund

A critical shift occurred in 2001 when the industry went back to state legislators with a bill designed to create an innovative funding process for tourism product development. The NC General Assembly passed the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) bill which increased the room tax by one percent for a total room occupancy tax of four percent.

The bill dedicates proceeds from the one percent increase to help with capital expenditures for new tourism products that will generate substantial new room nights in Buncombe County. In addition to attracting visitors to the destination, the BCTDA has become managers of the destination, ensuring its viability and sustainability.

BCTDA Mission Statement

To be a leader in the economic development of Buncombe County by attracting and servicing visitors, generating income, jobs and tax revenues which make the community a better place to live and visit.



BCTDA Vision Statement

Asheville/Buncombe County will retain its unique, authentic and environmental charm while welcoming global visitors searching for personal enrichment and memorable experiences.

The Asheville CVB Team



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The Chamber & BCTDA Relationship at a Glance

The BCTDA contracts with the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau, a department of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, to implement its marketing and sales strategies and tactics.

CVB staff members serve as contract agents for the BCTDA which authorizes, directs, oversees and funds its program of work. The BCTDA also contracts with other vendors including its advertising agencies, fulfillment services and a Web developer.

The Chamber funds, staffs and operates the Asheville Visitor Center.

Group Sales & Services

The sales and service team finished strong this past fiscal year with key indicators pointing to continued growth over the next 12 months. This year the sales and service team will continue to focus on selling activities that will produce results. The team will expand its direct sales efforts to include the Florida, Tennessee and Georgia (corporate) market areas. With the continued support of industry partners, the department will execute three "48-Hour Meeting Planner Experiences," with one specifically targeting the third/independent party segment; host client events in Chicago, Nashville and Atlanta; and attend key tradeshows and marketplaces.

Client communications will continue to play a key role in filling the sales funnel. With a communication strategy in place, we expect to be in contact with planners throughout the year with e-newsletters, pre- and post-tradeshow and marketplace communications, creative RFP contests and incentives, seasonal correspondence, targeted niche mailings and more.

Four major projects in the works and slated for completion this fiscal year include the continued development of Asheville's meeting brand to include national level print advertising, roll-out of a digital Meeting Planners Guide, delivery of a new sales video and launch of a redesign of the group section of ExploreAsheville.com.

Strategies

- Focus on the cities/regions that hold the most potential for Asheville. These include: DC/Chicago, home to the largest number of trade and professional associations; Atlanta, fourth largest home of Fortune 500 companies; and North Carolina, our core market for group events.
- Develop the Tennessee and Florida association and corporate markets
- Research and develop the pharmaceutical and incentive markets
- Remain focused on the sports market and seek to expand the types of sporting events held in Buncombe County
- Stay focused on our top 40 target corporate and association planners who have never hosted a meeting in Asheville (or within the last four years)
- Target coach and small group niche market buyers not currently doing business in the area and who have clientele willing to pay higher room rates. Schedule twice yearly in-office presentations to this target list.

Historic Metrics

Sales Leads Issued Annually

FY 13-14: 605

FY 12-13: 482

FY 11-12: 439

Definite Rooms Booked Annually

FY 13-14: 57,138

FY 12-13: 55,128

FY 11-12: 43,574

Estimated Revenue Generated

FY 13-14: \$9,684,241

FY 12-13: \$8,433,143

Familiarization Tour Participation

FY 13-14: 129

FY 12-13: 96

FY 11-12: 98

Independent Site Visits

FY 13-14: 50

FY 12-13: 40

FY 11-12: 27



Increase Target Market Sales Visits and Client Events

- Host client events in Chicago, Nashville and Atlanta targeting current and potential group buyers
- Execute sales visits to core and new markets
- Hold third-party and independent planner “Lunch and Learns” in conjunction with sales calls
- Schedule sales calls in conjunction with scheduled trade shows

Client Events	
Dec. 16, 2014	Chicago, IL
April 2015	Nashville, TN
Spring 2015	Atlanta, GA

Group Sales & Services 2014-2015 Objective



Increase the definite room night goal by 7% to 60,900 room nights booked.

Bring Buyers in to Experience the Asheville Product

- With community support, host three “48-Hour Meeting Planner Experiences”
- Continue to develop the video testimonials from planners who have attended a “48-Hour Meeting Planner Experience” and post on the all appropriate web pages
- Push individual site visits knowing the conversion rate increases once a planner actually visits
- Execute the “Music, Mountains and Mistletoe” motorcoach FAM with partner Nashville, TN on November 17-21 targeting 35 tour operators
- Participate and support independent FAMs and site visits hosted by industry partners
- Participate in domestic and international FAMs hosted by the NC Division of Tourism, Travel South USA and the Blue Ridge Parkway Association

“48-Hour Meeting Planner Experience”	
September 9-11, 2014	Direct meeting planners
November 12-14, 2014	Third party/independent planners
April 29 - May 1, 2015	Direct meeting planners
November 11-13, 2015	Direct meeting planners



Strongly Support the Sales Process

- Offer qualified meeting planners (500+ room nights, sourced through the ACVB, needs period, etc.) incentives for booking business in Asheville
- Launch the Asheville digital Meeting Planner Guide
- Finalize the sales sizzle video and post on all appropriate sites
- Build on existing base of group images and video assets
- Add new fact sheets to the existing base of fact sheets that speak to the needs of specific niche markets
- Explore sponsorship opportunities for this FY and next with organizations demonstrating a national level impact
- Use external lead generation vendors to identify new prospects for the area with a specific focus on pharmaceutical and incentive providers
- Continue to subscribe to Knowland's Insight Program, allowing access to the meeting patterns of half a million groups
- Maintain an expanded destination presence on Cvent and respond aggressively to leads received through this channel



Develop TEAM ASHEVILLE and Regional Partnerships

- Maximize Asheville's presence at tradeshows and client events by encouraging area hotels and service providers to partner with the ACVB to attend
- Communicate available partnership opportunities on AshevilleCVB.com and publicize in monthly industry newsletter
- Host quarterly director of sales/director of marketing and citywide task force meetings to exchange information, provide ACVB updates and strategize about future opportunities
- Partner with the NCDTFSC and regional tourism bureaus on international and group tour marketing initiatives
- Participate in 2014 motorcoach sales mission as coordinated by NCDTFSC



Other

- Attend IMEX America 2014 to evaluate for booth presence in 2015
- Research other show opportunities catering to the pharmaceutical and incentive markets for possible future attendance
- Evaluate trade show metrics annually to determine feasibility of continued attendance



Increase Asheville's Presence at Key Industry Tradeshows and Marketplaces from 15 to 20 Scheduled Events

Tradeshow	Dates	Location
NC Motorcoach/Virginia Motorcoach/Motorcoach Assn. of SC Marketplace*	July 2014	Richmond, VA
Smart Event	July 2014	Washington, DC
ASAE Annual Meeting*	August 2014	Nashville, TN
MPI – SEC Tradeshow*	August 2014	Weston, FL
MPI - Central Carolinas	September 2014	Cabarrus, NC
TEAMS Conference & Expo	November 2014	Las Vegas, NV
Alliance Tradeshow*	November 2014	Tampa, FL
Holiday Showcase*	December 2014	Chicago, IL
Smart Meeting	December 2014	Dallas, TX
Tennessee Society of Association Executives Tradeshow*	December 2014	Nashville, TN
Association Executives of North Carolina Tradeshow*	December 2014	Raleigh, NC
Travel South International*	December 2014	New Orleans, LA
American Bus Association	January 2015	St. Louis, MO
National Tour Association Travel Exchange*	January 2015	New Orleans, LA
Select Traveler Conference	February 2015	Nashville, TN
Heartland Travel Showcase	February 2015	Chicago, IL
Travel South Showcase*	March 2015	Shreveport, LA
National Association Sports Commission Symposium	April 2015	Milwaukee, WI
ASAE Springtime in the Park*	May 2015	Washington, DC
International POW WOW*	June 2015	Orlando, FL

* indicates partner opportunities

Raise Awareness and Knowledge of the Area Among Southeast AAA Branch Offices

- Continue quarterly web-based destination orientation and training programs focusing on niche and seasonal marketing promotions
- Conduct in-office AAA Explore Asheville Destination Training to Tennessee based offices
- Participate in the annual Blue Ridge Parkway AAA FAM in April 2105
- Continue to host in-market FAMs for target clubs such as Carolinas (September 2014) and Alabama (2015)

Communications and Convention Servicing

A focus on client communications will be an important component of filling the sales funnel. With a communication strategy in place, the ACVB will be in contact with planners throughout the year with e-newsletters, pre- and post-tradeshow and marketplace communications, creative RFP contests and incentives, seasonal correspondence, targeted niche mailings and more, keeping Asheville's name front and center. The completion of the new digital Meeting Planners Guide, expected in late September 2014, will also offer more ways to engage with existing and new clients. Promoting the download of the guide, a new call-to-action that will be available for group sales communications, will engage clients, create measurable connections and help present Asheville as a premiere meeting destination.

The convention service manager will continue to support the CVB sales managers' efforts and enhance the meeting planner and attendee experience through exceptional customer service, knowledge of local resources and by providing creative services. Focus will continue on marketing assistance to help planners build meeting attendance through materials that raise awareness of Asheville's attributes to potential meeting attendees.

Convention Services Strategies and Tactics

Enhance marketing toolkit for meeting planners, continue to offer assistance to as many meetings as possible and leverage the connection to the client to help generate future leads and content for sales communications.

- Provide services to 400 groups hosting events in Asheville
- Update promotional/attendance building brochure to match new CVB meetings brand
- Promote and distribute the CVB's new attendance building video, completed in August 2014
- Collect testimonials and meeting details from meeting planner clients for media leads

Communications Strategy

Increase frequency of group messaging to impact planners throughout the year and to generate more awareness of the area as a group destination.

- Research, evaluate and develop a traditional print advertisement to promote Asheville as a group destination
- Using the new print ad, increase area awareness with a presence in key industry publications
- Send two systemwide direct mail promotions to the meetings database offering incentives for sending RFP's
- Create awareness about new video and website assets
- Work with public relations team to pitch publications for stories about Asheville as a group destination
- Continue the e-marketing program that includes quarterly e-newsletter with RFP's promotions, custom e-blasts before and after all tradeshow, "48-Hour Experience" invitation e-blasts, template client event invitations and motorcoach FAM invitations and special niche messaging
- Explore sponsorship opportunities with major national and regional organizations for the current and next fiscal year

ASHEVILLE
NOT JUST MEETING. EXCEEDING.

INSPIRING
MOUNTAIN VIEWS

WIDE VARIETY
OF GROUP ACTIVITIES

VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

A UNIQUE CULINARY CULTURE

ALL TOGETHER NOW
UNIQUE CULTURE. STUNNING SCENERY. A BOUNTY OF INDEPENDENT RESTAURANTS AND LOCAL BREWERS. A THRIVING ARTS AND PERFORMANCE SCENE. WORLD CLASS ATTRACTIONS.

When it comes to group activities in Asheville, the sky's the limit. From rooftop receptions with breathtaking mountain views to exhilarating zipline adventures, we can recommend a variety of fun, memorable, one-of-a-kind experiences that will make your meeting irresistible to potential attendees.

CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES:

SHOPPING & DINING
In this shopper's paradise, explore traditional craft studios, trendy boutiques and cutting-edge galleries, often within the same block. After finding that certain special something, your attendees will be ready to savor our rich culinary heritage. With 200 independent restaurants and more than a dozen craft breweries, you'll quickly understand why Asheville is regarded as Foodtopia. Explore Asheville.com/Foodtopia

ATTRACTIONS
From the home, gardens and winery of George Vanderbilt's magnificent Biltmore to North Carolina's newest state park, Chimney Rock, the Asheville area offers attractions that are perfectly suited for your group. Wholly unique, they promise experiences that your attendees will be talking about long after your meeting is over.

Marketing & Public Relations

The marketing team and its agency-of-record develop strategies to increase awareness and understanding of the Asheville area destination brand and drive demand for overnight accommodations. Using data-driven insights, the team shapes messaging and determines the most effective distribution channels for paid media, while complementing that with integrated proactive media relations efforts, content development strategies, niche promotions and a social outreach program to further amplify destination buzz.

Asheville's Brand Promise

We guarantee you a life enriching experience each and every time you visit Asheville. It's personal, personal to you. And it is also personal to us. We live that same genuine experience and want to share it with you. We empower you to discover a collection of experiences that is as unique and varied as each individual who visits us, and allow you to do so in a warm, embracing and creative environment.

Brand Position:

The unique and eclectic array of experiences in Asheville opens wide your sense of discovery and enriches your life.

Core Values:

Welcoming ~ Natural ~ Vibrant

Paid Media

Target Audience
Adults 25-54
Median HHI: \$75K
Slightly skewing women

Primary Audience:

Experiential Travelers – Eclectic doers who relish discovery and collection of experiences. Enjoys trying different types of food, wants to explore and learn about new things, continues to learn throughout life, finds excitement in stimulating experiences, frequently chooses active vacations with lots to do, open-minded, intends to travel in the next year and traveled 3+ round trips in past 12 months.

Geographic Focus:

East of the Mississippi with special focus, particularly in broadcast, on core and opportunity markets.

- Core DMAs: Atlanta, Charlotte, Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point, Raleigh-Durham, Knoxville, Columbia, Charleston
- Opportunity DMAs: Nashville, Cincinnati

Key Marketing 2014-2015 Objective

Expand the presence of Destination Asheville in the national conversation and increase aspirational desire along with demand.

Goals:

Drive 4 million or more visits to the ExploreAsheville.com web site

Exceed 2 billion in earned media impressions

Generate 230,000 video views of Asheville CVB videos

Increase goal conversions of PPC program by 10 percent



Strategies & Tactics

Increase destination awareness by expanding paid advertising reach and beginning the process of building audience awareness outside of the Southeast.

- Continue advertising in core DMA markets of Atlanta, Charlotte, Greensboro-Winston-Salem and Raleigh-Durham.
- Continue advertising in the recent core Southeast DMAs of Charleston and Columbia.
- Add Knoxville to the core DMA markets.
- Expand into the new opportunity DMA markets of Nashville and Cincinnati.
- Use newly available market demand insights to tweak and optimize geographic focus throughout the year as new data is available.

Better define and differentiate destination strengths and increase understanding of attributes while ramping up emotional appeal to heighten desire to visit and encourage increased overnights.

- Pinpoint a redefined singular message positioning that serves as the underpinning for new creative development.
- Concept and produce new creative for use in broadcast, print and digital.
- Lead with video messaging as often as possible due to its increased storytelling potential.
- Complement an increased emphasis on broadcast TV through digital delivery platforms and Google TrueView.



What is the most meaningful role the brand can play in the life of the user?

Introduce a layer of retail/urgency messaging to better impact identified demand periods and can be delivered quickly and efficiently to encourage more immediate booking.

- Identify key audiences with ability to travel mid-week or on short notice.
- Use digital advertising and explore additional marketing channels to deliver specific messaging that drives visitation in the moment and complements destination brand awareness creative.
- Use a mix of time-sensitive events, value-added packages and pricing to generate incremental and mid-week business during need periods.
- Tailor call to action according to the market.

Extend advertising into opportunity seasons that have the best potential for turning day trips into overnight visits while taking advantage of developing need periods that also produce higher ADRs.

- Continue paid advertising into the holiday season to in an effort to convert day trips for Asheville holiday events to overnight visits.
- Use digital retargeting to create year-round continuity of messaging in the marketplace.

Use niche interests to create more laser-focused messaging that will appeal to specific subsets of the experiential traveler.

- Develop creative messages and focus on niche channels that align with segmented digital promotions aimed at specific segmented audiences with interests in culinary, arts, outdoors, meetings & conventions and weddings.
- Create compelling native advertising that appeals to niche audiences and has potential for viral share.

Entice potential visitors actively searching for information about vacation activities or destination attributes that align with the Asheville area experiences and offerings to put the Asheville area in the consideration set and drive them to book.

- Use pay-per-click (PPC) program to target specific keyword sets.
- Use A/B testing of messaging to optimize and maximize response to specific keyword campaigns.

Consistently apply data intelligence and market research to optimize messaging and delivery and understand consumer behavior as it pertains to destination travel.

- Use new travel intelligence tool to shift messaging and delivery vehicles by market to maximize efficiencies in reaching target audience.
- Use research as needed to test creative messages.
- Monitor and tweak performance of advertising, social campaigns, and digital promotions with the help of online analytic tools.

Content Development

Strategies & Tactics

Develop and curate world class content: Continue to embrace the idea of storytelling and build a content library to generate affinity for the destination, highlight distinctive brand attributes and evoke an emotional connection with the consumer.

- Develop an insiders' blogger program with a cadre of writers/photographers who can provide blog posts and additional content for the web site and repurposed for other uses.
- Procure existing high-quality content, including images, narratives, interactive digital and video that highlights the Asheville area and specific attributes that are meaningful to the consumer.
- Employ search optimization tactics and findings from Google Analytics, as well as Google AdWords, into development of new content pages and in seasonal updates.
- Develop additional content that can be used across all platforms that aligns with key content and marketing initiatives for 2014-15. Those include:

FOODTOPIA INITIATIVE

Build credibility for the Asheville area food scene as culinary experiences become more critical as a destination must-have and an important component in destination consideration.

- Develop new creative that differentiates and provides deeper insight into the Asheville area culinary scene and its experiences.
- Launch a Foodtopian Partner Program that enables stories, video and image asset gathering for use in culinary promotions and marketing efforts.
- Create a consumer-oriented culinary ebook using assets from Foodtopia partners tied together with fresh narrative that can be repurposed for other marketing efforts.
- Partner with Garden & Gun to present a Foodtopian dinner event.



www.ExploreAsheville.com/Foodtopia

Content Development (cont'd)

[AshevilleArtsAlive ARTS PORTAL](#)

Develop a comprehensive online resource for users interested in a more in-depth exploration of arts and culture-related offerings, attractions, events and resources that will serve as a separate pathway into the ExploreAsheville.com site.

- Partner with Asheville Area Arts Council to develop and promote.
- Create an arts-specific microsite.
- Develop an arts-oriented enewsletter to target arts-interested visitors.



www.AshevilleArtsAlive.org



[MUSIC EXPANSION](#)

Develop a comprehensive plan and assets to showcase the region's music scene and make it more accessible to visitors.

- Seek ways to inject music that is produced by local musicians or demonstrates ties to the Asheville area into newly produced creative assets.
- Develop an expanded music section of ExploreAsheville.com that includes new functionality to showcase live music events throughout the county, live streaming of selected performances and a jukebox for music sampling.
- Collaborate with music partners to identify ways to strengthen awareness of the music scene and its offerings.

[OUTDOORS/HIKING](#)

With the understanding that mountains continue to be a travel motivator, generate content that shows potential visitors and committed Asheville travelers connections points and accessibility of the beautiful outdoor offerings.

- Develop a comprehensive hiking section that showcases trail information and directions.
- Capture still images and video of trail highlights for use in section as well as for teaser content that can be used in channels that pull visitors back to the web site.
- Connect new trails section with other major content sections of the site such as Blue Ridge Parkway Explorers.



Content Development (cont'd)

Develop content that meets consumer expectations upon click-through with the aim of increasing time on site and more effectively funneling behavior flow to improve conversion goals.

- Create microsites with expanded and in-depth content and, in some cases, functionality to improve understanding of key areas of travel interests/experiences and improve the consumer planning experience online.
- Develop custom landing pages as a fulfillment mechanism for digital campaigns to increase time on site and encourage specific actions that lead to booking and other conversion goals.
- Use booking engine to drive consumers deeper into the planning funnel with the aim of closing the sale.

Leverage a newly rebuilt ExploreAsheville.com to serve as main point of fulfillment and motivate actual and aspirational visitation, promote saving and sharing content, and encourage additional exploration and vacation bookings.

- Work with web developer, Simpleview, on a site update that uses responsive design, incorporates stronger editorial content, is highly visual and interactive, and promotes online booking.
- Use Simpleview's Destination Travel Network (DTN) as a turn-key solution for implementation of an attractive advertising program on the web site that promotes downstream traffic to partners.

Capitalize on Asheville's awe-inspiring, scenic assets, cultural connectivity and philosophy of self-expression to provide more expansive and deeper awareness of destination assets, while creating emotional connections with potential and repeat visitors, destination fans and enthusiasts.

- Work with the agency and production team to create a world-class inspirational video that will showcase the destination and create additional video assets for a variety of marketing uses.
- Continue to contract locally for production of complementary video shorts that build our multimedia library, expand our YouTube Channel, and provides assets for digital and native advertising.
- Create and procure still photography that can be used across marketing channels, promotions and media outreach.

Provide additional information to consumers who have responded to advertising or requested additional information about the Asheville area.

- Work with Journal Communications to produce the Official Asheville Travel Guide (OATG) that can be used by potential visitors and travelers on the ground to learn about the destination and plan their visit.
- Ensure flexibility and device compatibility by providing online and iPad versions of the OATG.

Media Relations & Social Engagement

Strategies & Tactics

Continue a proactive media relations program with an emphasis on relationship building and on-brand, news-ready outreach to generate earned media in strategically targeted outlets and ensure key messages are conveyed in editorial, broadcast and online placements.

- Create customized pitches aimed at journalists, bloggers, television producers and online editors. Identify and respond to pitch opportunities generated through outside sources.
- Cultivate new and existing media relationships through meaningful one-on-one connections including media tours, targeted pitches, networking events, story support and site visit facilitation.
- Encourage journalists on assignment to expand and infuse stories with brand messages, as well as seasonal and niche story ideas. Promote inclusion of call-to-action conversion-oriented elements including ExploreAsheville.com resources, multimedia assets, travel packages, events and online booking.
- Continue to leverage, optimize and integrate press releases as multimedia editorial tools to inspire coverage, strategically boost SEO/keyword share and directly connect consumers with key destination brand messages.
- Leverage social media as an integrated tool for media relations, targeted pitching, news distribution and media reciprocity, by sharing stories and tagging journalists through CVB media channels.



Media Relations & Social Engagement (cont'd)

Use media missions and site visits to have face-to-face contact with media to increase dialogue on Asheville stories and secure on the spot coverage through broadcast.

- Conduct media trips and continue targeting broadcast media as part of trip efforts:
 - Nashville/Birmingham/Atlanta (Fall)
 - NYC Media Mission (Winter)
 - Quicktrips – Columbia, Charlotte, Greensboro (Winter)
 - SATW MarketPlace (Fall)

Maximize perennial media and consumer interest in season-specific travel through well-timed, integrated media and social marketing campaigns.

- Leverage the popular fall foliage season to maximize national and drive market exposure through an integrated marketing effort of strategically placed/secured fall predictions, destination news, call-to-travel elements and aspirational multimedia elements (e.g. time lapse videos, storylines content and photography).
- During typically slower winter months, hone-in on broadcast and news opportunities in key drive markets to boost awareness in seasonal destination offerings, specifically those tied to culinary, romance and time-sensitive event news (e.g. Asheville Restaurant Week, SoCon, travel packages).
- Identify and help facilitate development of newsworthy, seasonal travel packages to feed integrated marketing efforts with fresh, season-specific news and on-brand curated experiences.

Target emerging and existing niche markets, especially culinary, music, arts and outdoor, while maintaining emphasis on primary travel motivators.

- Leverage expanded culinary, arts and music content with niche media and in social channels (i.e. distribution and integration of the Foodtopia e-book and new/dynamic character-focused culinary/arts/music/hiking content).
- Support the rollout of the new Foodtopia initiative through social and online promotions by giving new life to and boosting engagement throughout the CVB's culinary-focused social channels, especially the Foodtopia Facebook page.
- Expand and test the use of targeting capabilities through the Asheville Traveler e-newsletter platform using content that is specifically developed for new/prospective travelers and self-identified niche interest groups (arts, outdoors, culture and food).
- Update and develop media materials and pitch ideas for specific content areas to generate media placements.

Use key social media channels to drive awareness and create engagement with traveling consumers.

- Use a combination of social media channels and tools to complement specific promotions, increase organic traffic, perpetuate destination awareness and expand the reach of marketing messages.
- Utilize Facebook to keep Asheville top-of-mind for online fans; extending reach with buzz-worthy content, sharable multimedia assets, timely news items, strategic post promotion/advertising and special giveaways to engage fans and drive traffic to ExploreAsheville.com.
- Continue to leverage YouTube and OneLoad as distribution platforms for the CVB's extensive video content program, including five new videos in FY 2014-15.
- Further integrate and curate branded content on other CVB social mediums, including Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest.
- Evaluate other emerging social tools and technologies to further expand the Asheville brand.

Media Relations & Social Engagement (cont'd)

Make CVB social channels work harder and smarter through content optimization and audience targeting.

- Craft attention-getting social messaging and dynamic multimedia assets with the aim of maximizing viral potential using a balance of wow-factor destination attributes, aspirational visuals and breaking news.
- Incorporate keyword strategy in all messaging to assist in driving traffic to websites.
- Seek link opportunities on large external sites that could enhance ExploreAsheville.com in search engine standings.
- Target brand enthusiasts and affinity groups with actionable, sharable content aimed to increase repeat visitation and boost length of stay.
- Further amplify the reach of social content through mobilization of industry partners, business stakeholders and proud community ambassadors (i.e. Movoto) willing to share CVB social and multimedia messages/assets through their channels.



Continue an online outreach program that incorporates e-mail newsletters and viral marketing opportunities, utilizing a more customer-focused approach.

- Continue to explore opportunities aimed at building the e-newsletter subscriber database/ open and click-through and rates.
- Deploy segmentation strategy for serving up content – newcomers versus repeat visitors/subscribers.
- Look at further segmentation by interest categories for delivery of highly customized content.



Build relationships with influential bloggers that result in publicity for Asheville.

- As hosts for Food Blog Forum 2014, develop a robust program of destination culinary immersion, featuring the diverse range of local food experiences. Fully leverage the inherent promotional opportunity and social buzz of the event through destination brand integration, proactive social/media relations and an incentive program to maximize post-conference coverage, partner features and branded recipe development.
- Build brand ambassadors by interacting with bloggers visiting Asheville either on assignment or for blogger conferences and events.
- Use resource tools such as Alexa, Klout, QuantCast and Technorati to determine blogger influence, estimate reach and prioritize resources.
- Cultivate a base of local and regional bloggers to help promote Asheville's messaging out of market.
- Continue blogger relationship development (i.e. luncheons, meetings) as part of media tours.

Use insights and measurement tools to gauge effectiveness of specific media relations and social campaigns and make adjustments as needed.

- Continue to track effectiveness and ROI of media relations efforts by employing news/clips services, tracking media touchpoints and site visits, logging proactive pitches, monitoring release performance and assessment of online, print and broadcast placements.
- Use Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, SproutSocial, Hootsuite, Tube Mogul and other tools to measure traffic and engagement on media placements, online stories and social activity as recorded in the monthly marketing matrix.
- Employ SproutSocial and HootSuite Pro to manage and monitor conversations about Asheville and proactively seek ways to engage travelers and potential travelers across social channels.
- Use insights to further refine campaigns, establish best practices or create new actionable items to help advance the business objective.
- Measure viral impact of shared content to help drive strategy for future efforts.

2014-2015 Media Schedule

Media & Market	Q3			Q4	
	July	August	September	October	November
Spot TV + Extensions					
Atlanta					
Raleigh					
Greensboro					
Charlotte					
Charleston					
Columbia					
Nashville					
Knoxville					
Cincinnati					
Print					
Garden & Gun		Food Issue		Style & Entertainment	
Nat Geo Traveler		SE Editorial			Travel Photos
Saveur + Extension				Culinary Travel	
The Knot + Online					
Our State			Black Mountain		
Town & Country			Fall Fashion		
Elle Décor			25th Anniversary		
Real Simple			Style Issue		
Food & Wine			City Poll		
NC Travel Guide					
Blue Ridge Parkway Directory					

Media & Market	Q3			Q4	
	July	August	September	October	November
Digital					
RocketFuel					
LocalResponse					
TripAdvisor					
Criteo					
Fodors					
New York Times					
ShareThrough					
Quantcast					
RGM					
YuMe					
Yahoo					
Adara					
Keyword Search (simpleview)					
Google Display (simpleview)					
YouTube TruView (simpleview)					
Facebook Advertising (CVB)					
Streaming Video					
BrightRoll					
M&C/Motorcoach Media					
Print Media					

2014-2015 *Business Objective*

Increase Hotel Sales
in Buncombe County

8%

Asheville's Brand Promise



We guarantee you a life enriching experience each and every time you visit Asheville. It's personal, personal to you. And it is also personal to us. We live that same genuine experience and want to share it with you. We empower you to discover a collection of experiences that is as unique and varied as each individual who visits us, and allow you to do so in a warm, embracing and creative environment.

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

36 Montford Avenue | Asheville, NC 28801

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