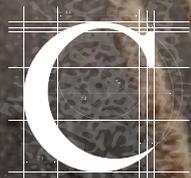




DEERFIELD VALLEY
3 YEAR STRATEGIC
MARKETING PLAN



CHARRETTE
A MARKETING FORUM

DECEMBER 15, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

In Fall 2020, Charrette Agency and its partner, Media Works, were retained by the Bi-Town Marketing Committee to create a five-year Strategic Marketing Plan for the Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley Chamber of Commerce, with an accompanying template for performance metrics. As a part of this commission, Charrette Agency conducted the following research and analysis to inform the Plan:

- A Stakeholder Engagement Study with members of the Deerfield Valley hospitality industry;*
- A Competitive Audit of New England destinations communications strategies;*
- Analysis of historic Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley Chamber of Commerce digital ad campaign data.*

A multi-year Strategic Marketing Plan for the Deerfield Valley region is presented in the pages that follow. It delivers recommendations beyond the contracted scope of work, based on Charrette Agency's deep experience in the destination marketing space.



ESTABLISHMENT OF DESTINATION

The Deerfield Valley is classic Vermont. Nestled in the Southern-most portion of the State between the Green Mountain National Forest and Connecticut River, the Deerfield Valley offers visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in the pure essence of Vermont's natural beauty and easy, appreciative living.

Largely an undiscovered treasure, the Deerfield Valley boasts quintessential Vermont experiences, flavors, and sights. It remains unspoiled by commercialization and crowds. Yet, the region is not yet recognized for its many tourism strengths. A large part of the Plan that follows is aimed at growing awareness of the Deerfield Valley as a promising tourism destination. One that warrants further investigation in the travel planning process, and, ultimately, a place that must be experienced. Savored. And, of course, recommended to fellow travelers.



PLAN MANAGEMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

“The role of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) is evolving and expanding into destination management to elevate the customer experience more intentionally.”

– Skift, Megatrends Defining Travel in 2019

The ultimate success of a future tourism program for Southern Vermont’s Deerfield Valley will largely depend upon the Chamber’s ability to accomplish three important initiatives:

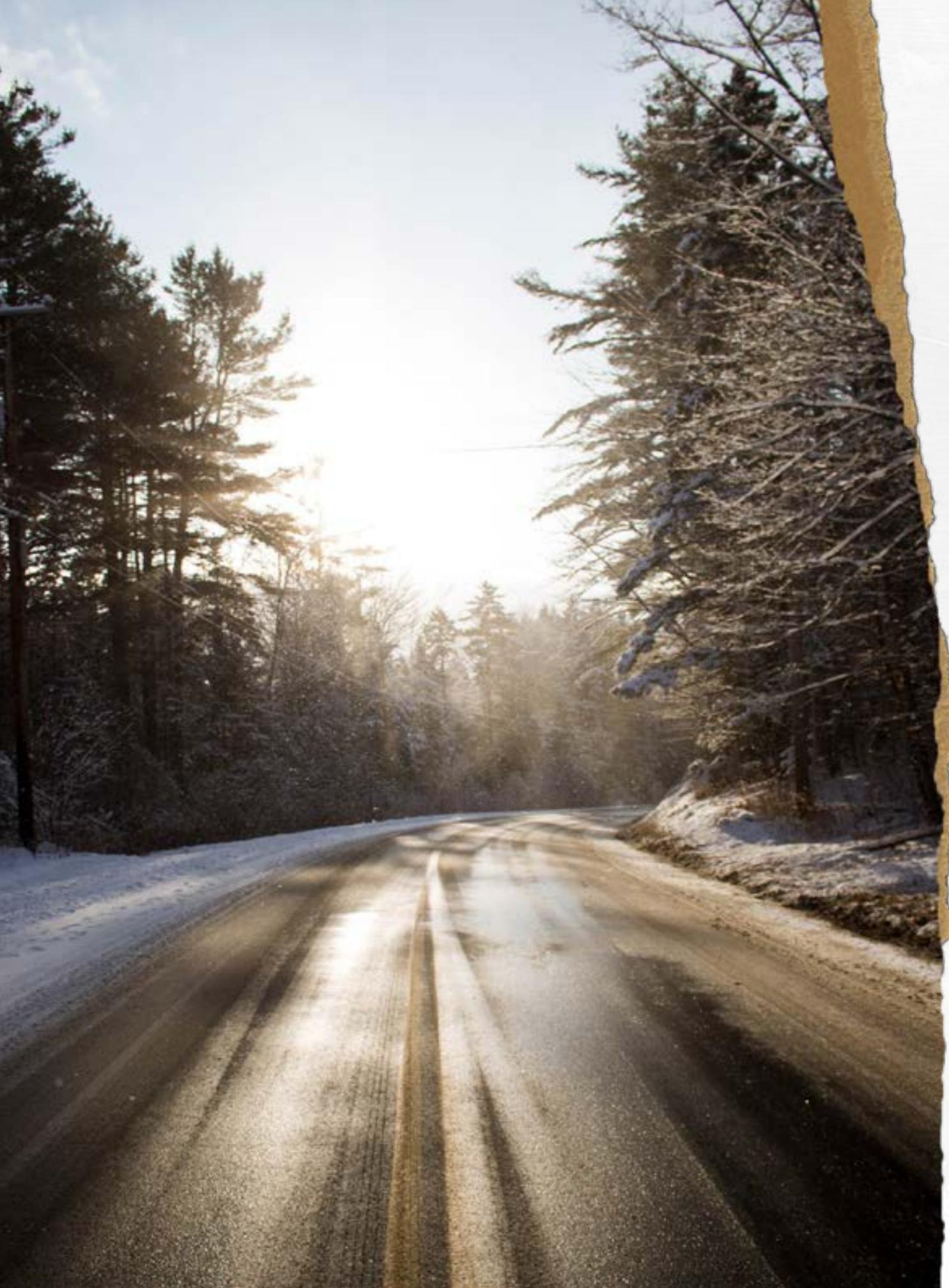
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- 1. Identify one person to be responsible for ongoing Plan implementation and oversight;*
 - 2. Develop a high quality consumer communication campaign that presents the destination in the best possible light, consistently, throughout the consumer journey or decision-making process, outlined on page 15.*
 - 3. Obtain the necessary communications program budget to support the proposed Plan.*

There are a number of important considerations that fall into each of those categories. Those are, in fact, the basis of this Plan. But, management responsibility for a marketing communications program is an overarching concern, revealed by the October 2020 Stakeholder Research conducted for the Chamber.

The future nature of management oversight could take many forms, but one strong recommendation is to grant a single individual with the following responsibilities:

- 
- Budget authority & access;*
 - Ability to engage stakeholders, Chamber leadership, and State-level contacts;*
 - Ability to work directly with creative and media partners,*
 - Responsibility for adherence to approved Plan and results tracking.*





STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley is a sought-after summer and shoulder season destination in the making, though it has yet to realize its full potential as an authentic Vermont stopping point and/or staying-over destination. The strategic imperatives presented in this section recommend process and brand positioning, while also guiding communications tactics as well as the media strategies and tracking mechanisms covered later in the plan. Collectively, they will allow the destination to begin building strong first-time and repeat visitation patterns.

Admittedly, the Plan is densely packed with recommendations. Both limited budget and man/woman power make it impossible to enact all ideas simultaneously. Therefore, each of the recommended strategic imperatives in this section have also been organized into an actionable priority list at the end of this section.

DEVELOP A VISION & SET OF GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OPPORTUNITY

A vision statement describes the desired future position of a company, brand or destination. Leadership uses the statement to guide stakeholder thinking on strategic issues, especially during times of significant change. The vision statement helps define performance standards; it inspires team-members to work productively toward common goals; and it helps guide decision making.

The vision statement is not a brand statement. Rather, it is an aspirational articulation of the physical and cultural attributes of a destination – your many positive attributes, qualities and characteristics. It's what you should believe about yourself cast in the best possible light.

Source: <https://www.bain.com/insights/management-tools-mission-and-vision-statements/>

STRATEGY

We recommend the following Vision Statement for Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley. It is entirely appropriate that this Statement be amended by leadership as a means of gaining consensus and buy in. It reflects a starting point.

Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley is rooted in the grandeur of the Green Mountains and steeped in Vermont culture and history. It offers authentic New England hospitality experiences, a relaxed lifestyle, and abundant outdoor experiences all of which inspire visitors to relax, appreciate, and engage.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Bi-Town Marketing Committee can use this Vision Statement, or a slightly amended version, to align stakeholders behind communications plan development and implementation. Stakeholder participation is critical to the success of this program.

In addition to the vision statement, a set of Guiding Principles is appropriate. These can be presented to your hospitality industry members so they begin to think more holistically about the destination, the tourism experiences it delivers, and the important role each person plays.

- 
- The tourism sector will work to contribute, significantly, to Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley's economy and quality of life.
 - The tourism sector will seek to balance visitation growth with sustainability by promoting the diverse range of experiences available across the region.
 - Deerfield Valley Chamber of Commerce will engage marketing communications and creative partners to authentically promote the destination to regional visitors interested in overnight and day-trip experiences.
 - Deerfield Valley will seek to become an important Vermont spring, summer and fall destination.
 - Deerfield Valley hospitality industry stakeholders will take advantage of communications and customer service training programs made available through the Chamber.

BUILD A COMPELLING, AUTHENTIC BRAND POSITION

OPPORTUNITY

One of the most meaningful ways a destination can connect with prospective and repeat visitors is to stand for something emotionally resonant. Travel is a badge we wear. Where we go and what we do there, represent something sacred about how we wish to see ourselves. And how we hope to be seen. That is why branding is such a powerful communications tool. A strong brand remains relevant long after a website, social media post or vacation has been experienced. A strong brand allows destinations to speak with a voice that is louder than their actual marketing budget.

Most New England destinations fail to connect with travelers on a deeper, branded level. Instead, destinations provide extensive lists of tourism experiences. Yes, it is essential to inform travel consumers about what there is to do in market, but, importantly, hospitality products must be wrapped in a brand package. This allows the consumer to differentiate one destination from the others, which appears much like a sea of sameness.

It is imperative that Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley provide travel consumers with an emotionally salient, easily recalled brand identity. This will facilitate word-of-mouth, press coverage, social media sharing and even recommendations from local stakeholders.

STRATEGY

Foothold of the Green Mountains

This brand line works as both a description of Deerfield Valley's physical position in Vermont as well as its emotional promise to visitors.

- 
- Dover, Wilmington and the surrounding region offer quick respite to travelers seeking a hasty retreat from crowded cities or simply hectic lives. Your position in the southern part of the State is a competitive advantage.
 - The Green Mountains and Vermont-at-large are well established for their natural beauty, relaxed rustic lifestyle, artisanal products, farm-to-table cuisine, craft beer, and small towns. All of this equity is transferred to Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley simply by anchoring yourself in the context of "the Green Mountains."
 - Finally, the concept of "foothold" suggests an emotional benefit of balance. "A secure position from which further progress may be made," sums it up nicely. Vacations are a time to decompress and reprioritize.

Source: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/foothold?s=t>

RESPONSIBILITY

Charrette Agency could develop a theme line and recommended brand copy that describes the promise of travel in Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley. That process would also deliver a set of graphic standards to be used across all of the Chamber's consumer-facing communications efforts. Color palette, typography, placement of key visuals and other communications considerations would be included.

CAPTURE VIVID, HIGH-QUALITY PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

OPPORTUNITY

One of the most important components of a future Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley communications program will be its messaging. Ads deliver both the brand essence and a vivid portrait of The Valley to the consumer. Advertising will paint a clear, compelling sense of tourism opportunities while simultaneously answering the question, “Who Do I Get To Be?” when I’m in Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley. Done correctly, the communications campaign will accomplish the following:

- Define the voice of the destination so it can be used consistently throughout your consumer communications efforts;
- Create a body of still photography and video assets that bring the destination to life and suggest high-quality, rewarding experiences;
- Bring the recommended brand to life with a theme line and copy that can be used consistently in communications.

STRATEGY

Digital advertising will serve as the basis of your brand campaign, both for maximum budget and targeting efficiency. A series of visually stunning ads should be created to support the recommended media plan herein. Some ads will be activity-specific; some will likely promote local events; and others will be more general in nature. The ability of the ads to generate website inquiries will be measured as part of ongoing tracking. Adjustments can be made over the course of the campaign.

All ads will contain the destination’s theme line, portions of the copy created to define the Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley brand, and key visuals or video.



RESPONSIBILITY

Charrette Agency could develop a digital advertising campaign that delivers the promise of the Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley brand. It would work with trusted partners to create photography and video assets that bring the destination to life in a manner reflective of the authentic product experiences of the Valley. And, it would demonstrate how brand copy, visuals, and voice should be incorporated into all consumer contact or touchpoints including, but not limited to:

- Website
- Social Media
- E-Newsletters
- Vacation Guide
- E-Mail Marketing
- Stakeholder Communications

UNDERTAKE A WEBSITE REDESIGN

OPPORTUNITY

Although travel planning consumers rely on destination websites less and less, they remain your front-line as a primary means of inspiring travelers, starting a relationship with them, and, ultimately, encouraging purchase. As such, your website must be afforded the appropriate quality, personality, voice, information, and user experience.

Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley has a website that contains much of the requisite travel planning information needed by potential visitors. Yet, it does not incorporate a sense of brand identity, nor does it communicate the level of quality and service expected by discerning visitors from your major metropolitan, key feeder markets.

The Competitive Audit conducted by Charrette Agency for Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley found that, "travel consumers may be challenged to differentiate between New England destinations," on the basis of their tourism websites and social media. The product experiences, photographs, and descriptions they employ overlap considerably. This presents an opportunity for the Deerfield Valley to stand apart.

STRATEGY

Although additional planning would need to take place, some of the suggested upgrades to the current Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley tourism website include:

- 
- Easier, more intuitive site navigation
 - Photo Gallery for browsing and to deliver a true sense of destination
 - Suggested Itineraries based on a range of traveler interest categories
 - Video for the landing page
 - Addition of a "What the Locals Do" section
 - Standardized, high-quality Listings: Lodging, Dining & Drinks, Shopping, etc.
 - Development of a digital Visitor's Guide for download and information capture
 - Incorporate photos, suggestions and interpretive experiences into all experiential sections
 - Design segmented E-newsletter offers based on interests such as hiking, mountain biking, etc. for targeted data capture and increased ad revenue potential

Future categories could include:



Blog/V-log of experiences

Webcam featuring 24/7 live feed from one of the many natural wonders within the destination to inspire dreaming

RESPONSIBILITY

Charrette Agency works with a trusted digital partner, Hart House Creative Solutions.

We could introduce you to Founder, Jenn Hart, and provide project oversight as needed.

KEEP SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVATION TOP OF MIND

OPPORTUNITY

Multiple research studies support the fact that travel consumers depend upon the opinion of trusted others (friends, family, co-workers) and digital influencers for recommendations on where to vacation. The sheer volume of available travel information causes a need to prioritize so vacation planners seek ideas and affirmation from those they respect. According to a Vermont Brand Study conducted in 2010, about half of respondents obtain travel ideas from family and friends (46%). This figure has only grown over the ensuing years.

Social media is a mechanism that serves multiple functions in destination marketing:

- 
- Dreaming** – It expands upon the ability of prospective visitors to imagine themselves in a destination by delivering highly captivating photography and video.
 - Relationship Building** – It serves information to the marketplace about a range of destination experiences and it allows conversation; thereby, personalizing the exchange between prospect and destination. Most accounts write back to or “like” consumer comments.
 - Reinforcement & Recommendations** – More than any other available tool, social media invites advocacy. It helps transform visitors into unofficial ambassadors. Consumer posts and comments can expand a destination’s base with great efficiency, thereby lowering marketing ROI.

Overall, 60% of travelers use social media channels to showcase their vacation photos. This number rises for Millennials – 90% of young travelers share their vacation photos on social media during their trip. (MDG Advertising, 2018) In fact, 31% of millennials said that posting holiday pics online is just as important as the holiday itself, and 29% would not choose a holiday destination if they were not able to post on social media while there. (WeSwap, 2018) And, 52% of future travelers have liked a Facebook page related to their destination. (MDG Advertising, 2018)

Furthermore, travelers have become self-appointed digital voices for destinations. In so doing, they essentially “take over the promotion of the destination, for better or worse, on a scale unreachable by direct media investment.” -(Skift, Megatrends Defining Travel in 2019)

STRATEGY

Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley’s social media presence must fulfil three key objectives:

- 1** *It must reinforce the destination’s brand identity by further dimensionalizing your voice and personality. Social media adds a level of intimacy to the consumer-brand relationship. It invites comments and sharing.*
- 2** *It must convey aspirational information in a high-quality manner, making it easier for travel consumers to imagine how they will feel in market and, importantly, who they get to be by associating with your social channels. Who one follows says much about how one sees him/herself.*
- 3** *It must invite sharing. Social media content is a form of social currency. We share it to build relationships with our networks. Brands reflect our personality, tastes and ideas.*

We recommend that Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley Marketing Committee cultivate unique tourism Facebook and Instagram channels in Year One. A calendar of posts should be created in advance so that events, a full range of experiences, and member stakeholders are included. Then, in Year Two, YouTube.com could be added to the mix so that video helps deliver brand messaging.

Additionally, we recommend that an informal program to encourage social media tourism posts by local “influencers” be developed. Dover and Wilmington have incorporated a fair number of urban transplants over the course of the last year. The Chamber should consider ways to involve this audience with its social media program. Content could be provided, as well as official “local influencer” roles assigned, and user-generated content could be invited, then tagged to the Chamber.

RESPONSIBILITY

There are a number of ways to manage an active social media presence, but it is essential that accounts remain active. Not only does this ensure your followers feel cared for, entertained, and have abundant reasons to tag their friends and share content, but it helps to work within Facebook’s ever-changing algorithms, which won’t allow for maximum engagement with your audience if maximum content creation isn’t maintained on a consistent basis. Your in-house tourism supervisor could be placed in charge of administering daily posts, and the Chamber should work with professional photographers and videographers in-market to create imagery that elevates the destination.

LEVERAGE EARNED MEDIA TO TELL A DEEPER STORY ABOUT THE DESTINATION

OPPORTUNITY

Media coverage is an important means of building both awareness and credibility as a year-round destination for Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley. As discussed in the Social Media recommendation, the preponderance of available travel information combined with the similarity of destination websites, makes recommendations essential. Travel writers are influencers. Relationships with journalists in feeder markets who publish weekend and summer travel getaway recommendations, digital travel bloggers, and local broadcast journalists should be cultivated.

STRATEGY

The best way of introducing these influencers to Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley, is to host them for the weekend. This is called a FAM or Familiarization Tour. Your team would develop a list of target journalists, plan the itinerary, work closely with your stakeholders so impressions are optimized, and then host a weekend of your best experiences.

RESPONSIBILITY

Charrette Agency works with a trusted public relations partner, The Palmtree Type. We could introduce you to Founder, Valeria Palmertree and provide project oversight as needed.



DEVELOP A GROUP SALES OPPORTUNITY SPACE: WEDDINGS & EVENTS

OPPORTUNITY

The natural and man-made surroundings of the Deerfield Valley make it an ideal place for micro-to-mid-sized weddings and special events, including business retreats. As revealed in the Stakeholder Research conducted for the Chamber, many weddings canceled in larger feeder markets, due to Covid, were relocated to Dover and Wilmington. Air BnB rentals as well as hotel properties in Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley have been booked by business groups interested in concentrated time away, combined with outdoor recreational activities. All of this suggests that Deerfield Valley is a desirable region for these audiences. It is likely that a greater share of the group sales/ wedding business could be realized.

The wedding industry in the United States was estimated to be worth \$53.4B as of 2013. Despite a sharp decline early during the outlook period, revenue is expected to surge 33.1% in 2021 as operators accommodate both new and postponed weddings. Certainly, New England accounts for a reasonable share of that very large pie. It is estimated that about 21% of couples have destination weddings - and competition for that segment is fierce.

Sources: <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/wedding-services-industry/>, <https://blog.destinationweddings.com/destination-weddings-trend-report-2019/>

GENERAL STRATEGIES & RESPONSIBILITY

Competing in the weddings and event space would require investment. Like the communications program at large, a dedicated Weddings & Event point person would help ensure the success of such a program. Ideally, that individual (or a small team with a designated supervisor) would conduct the following activities:



Create a page(s) on the destination website that capture the contact information of interested parties, delivering branded messaging about the area's suitability for weddings and events, and allowing for space to submit a request for a proposal;

Work with prospects to create project timelines, recommend resources and build trust;

Engage stakeholders in how to support wedding and event planners;

Field inquiries to stakeholders;

Amass a comprehensive set of local/regional vendors across categories, to offer as resources to wedding and event planners;

Track program implementation in order to create ongoing improvements and effectiveness measures.

UTILIZE RESEARCH TO CONTINUE TO INFORM THE WAY FORWARD

An additional means of demonstrating Plan efficacy to stakeholders and the Chamber, would be through a tourism research study after year three. This would provide a snapshot of brand awareness amongst the target audiences of the Deerfield Valley, as well as a more nuanced understanding, backed by quantitative data, of how they view the destination. Typically, an Attitude & Awareness Study is conducted before an advertising campaign launches in an effort to obtain benchmark data, and then, again, after media investment has been made.

That said, the Chamber may wish to consider this step optional due to limited budget. It is safe to assume that current awareness of the destination is low. If additional feedback is desired by stakeholders after three years of marketing activity, then a qualitative research study could be conducted a bit more affordably. A qualitative study could be fielded among both website visitors who do not book, as well as recent visitors to the Deerfield Valley. These two segments could provide insight into the vacation criteria sought by New England travelers and how well, or not, your destination meets them.

Finally, it would be important to engage a consultant after approximately three years, to help the Chamber reflect on changes in the consumer marketplace as well as local learning-to-date.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION

The accomplishment of all the recommendations contained in this Plan in Year One would be challenging. Accordingly, we've created a hierarchy of priorities to follow once budget and staffing have been adequately established.

The Bi-Town Marketing Committee's initial request was for a Plan to drive Summer and Shoulder season visitation. April to September is the period with the greatest growth potential; however, it would be important to incorporate winter tourism into a final website design so Deerfield Valley projects a consistently high-quality, inviting image. Further discussion can take place as to when this would take place and how it would be funded. We have included it as a second-tier item for purposes of discussion.

TIER 1

- Select an agency partner to create a Summer/Shoulder season brand campaign, supported by product experiences, that tells the stories of Deerfield Valley.
 1. That partner would coordinate work with a photographer/videographer to create a library of assets for website, social media and other uses.
 2. That partner could also help support media planning, placement, and tracking.
 3. That partner would help supervise and support other communications strategies including, but not limited to: website upgrade, social media content, and stakeholder communications.
- Redesign the destination website so it presents an upgraded version of the destination. Address navigation, data capture, descriptive and connective considerations.
- Develop a content calendar for social media with a focus on Facebook and Instagram. Detail which type of posts will happen and when. Execute against the content calendar consistently.

- Engage local hospitality businesses so overall destination communications and service levels are upgraded.
- Engage locals, particularly out-of-market second-home owners and repeat visitors.

TIER 2

- Further upgrade the destination website so it incorporates peak winter season experiences, weddings/events, as well as other functionality and content not yet incorporated. This may require the creation of additional photography and video assets.
 1. Incorporate peak winter season experiences.
 2. Redevelop the eNewsletter program.
 3. Incorporate a locals' recommendations section.
- Execute a FAM program for regional travel Influencers with the participation of local stakeholders.
- Expand the social media program to include additional channels like YouTube, SnapChat, and Twitter.
- Expand the hospitality industry stakeholder program to include coaching on tourism communications, new product development, and consumer relationship management.

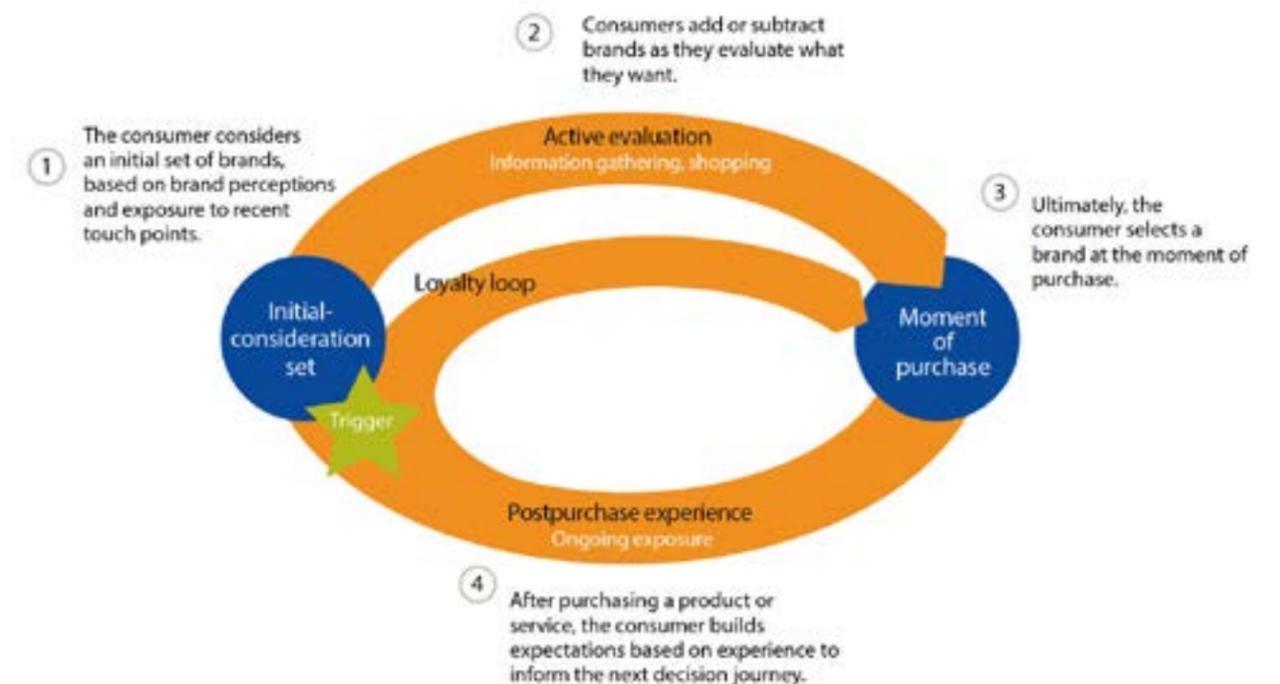


MEDIA PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

TRAVEL DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Let's begin with the travel decision-making process. Touchpoints are the myriad individual moments or transaction points between a consumer and a business entity. In this case, vacationers seeking authentic New England tourism experiences are our consumer and Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley and/or its stakeholder businesses are the business. A marketing and associated media plan must consider the entirety of the customer's journey through the travel purchase process or customer journey.

Though, at the date of drafting of this plan, the travel sales funnel has been notably shortened due to Covid-19, we anticipate it's gradual return to normalcy in time for the launch of Plan Year 1. Under normal circumstances, the trip planning process extends over the course of multiple weeks, spanning multiple channels and touchpoints. This complexity of customer interaction makes consistency, quality of communications, and personalization of information essential. The customer decision journey is best depicted in the following diagram:



CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

Today's marketplace is consumer-centric, which means the balance-of-power resides with the consumer rather than the business. Furthermore, consumer expectations for product quality, service, price, experience and personalization are at all-time highs. This is true across shopping categories: from data plans to shoes, from cosmetics to cruises.

- 
- Online shopping algorithms serve us recommendations based on our unique internet browsing history.
 - Social media invites conversation and responds to individual issues.
 - Data analytics allow consumers to assess competitive pricing with a single click.
 - And, high-resolution imagery and video are ubiquitous.

Consequently, travel consumers possess a set of expectations when entering the category. Their “dreaming” about where to vacation is encouraged by a host of touchpoints, as previously mentioned. Tourism websites, the travel media, friends & family, and social media influencers are all at the front-line.

Farther along the consumer journey at the shopping, booking and pre-planning phases, personalization become more essential. Eighty-one percent of travelers consider it very important for brands to provide personalized experiences to their customers, and 84% of hospitality industry firms plan to invest more in personalization capabilities in the next three years. (Travolution, 2019)



These expectations define the marketplace, and Southern Vermont's Deerfield Valley must meet them in order to realize a meaningful share of the New England tourism market.

AUDIENCE PERSONAS

Charrette Agency, in conjunction with its media partner Media Works, has identified several target audience segments that will increase the efficiency of media investment. These personas allow us to target messages and placement of media where the prospects with the highest propensity to travel are found.

The personas, compiled from the data gathered during initial research phases, represent the primary audiences for Deerfield Valley, and help inform decisions regarding marketing messaging, content, website features and overall visual design and aesthetics for the Deerfield Valley. Worthy of note, a secondary audience including Wedding Planners, Regional Brides, Group meeting & Event Planners would be additionally targeted in later plan years.





AUDIENCE PERSONA

THREE GENERATIONS AND A DOG

Women between the ages of 25-54, HHI \$100K+.
Members of active, multi-generational families in search of experiences that allow them to relax, reconnect and share their togetherness with friends and extended family via social media platforms.

AUDIENCE PERSONA

THE SHIPPIES

Adults between the ages of 25-54, HHI \$75K+. Those people looking to strengthen relationships and friendships, traveling without children, to a regional, drivable destination that allows for a change of pace from their hyper-connected norms, providing the opportunity to disconnect, and reconnect with each other.





AUDIENCE PERSONA

THE ADVENTURERS

Men between the ages of 18-34, HHI 50K+ and often traveling alone, who enjoy outdoor activities including hiking (beginner & intermediate), mountain biking (downhill, endurance & cross country), and water sports (boat & paddle rentals). This group enjoys the journey, trading travel to major global cities for short and long-term journeys to natural wonders.

MEDIA PLANNING

Paid media should amplify the Deerfield Valley’s messaging beyond organic (non-paid) channels to boost awareness and drive engagement among identified target audiences. Selecting appropriate channels, informed by research and in alignment with the expressed strategic imperatives herein, is paramount to success. And, the concrete definition of success will allow the team to assess whether the budget was spent efficiently across paid channels, allowing plan managers to optimize throughout the campaign and year over year.

STRATEGIC TARGETING

Primary Audiences

These are segments likely to be interested in visiting the Deerfield Valley based on their psychographics (psychographics are defined as the culture and passion(s) of the segment). We’ll consider these audiences as we approach the challenge of building top of funnel brand awareness. Messaging and media should inspire them to learn more about the destination. These audiences were defined in detail in the previous section.

Secondary Audiences

These are audiences whom we’ll target mid- to lower funnel. Members of this group display tendencies and behavior that suggest they’re in the market to research potential visits to similar destinations. Examples of this behavior include visiting similar sites to Southern Vermont, purchase behavior, or content consumption related to destination wedding planning. Also included in this group are lookalike audiences created based upon data provided by Deerfield Valley, (also known as first party data). Media and creative for this audience will “nudge” the destination into their consideration set.



1st Party Data
Segmented by Visitors by Season, this is Southern Vermont’s data that can be implemented into portions of the media plan.



Retargeting
Show ads to users who visited Southern Vermont’s landing page



Weekend Travelers
Show ads to users who visited sites/destinations like Southern Vermont



Behavioral/Contextual
Show ads to users who act like they want to visit Southern Vermont, or consume related content



TARGET MARKETS



PLAN APPROACH & STRATEGY

Aligned with the strategic imperatives presented herein, paid media will work to grow Shoulder/ Summer Season tourism products in Plan Year 1 and beyond. Key pieces of Deerfield Valley research coupled with consumer trends help dictate the approach to paid media and provide implications for measurement and targeting. One such insight as previously noted:

“Multiple research studies support the fact that travel consumers depend upon the opinion of trusted others (friends, family, co-workers) and digital influencers for recommendations on where to vacation.”

As such, we recommend primary “always on” media channels which:

-  Allow for social engagement;
-  Include flexibility to match messaging against specific targets and allow for testing and quick adjustments;
-  Focus on powerful, visual creative;
-  Leverage a community of peers who are actively discussing travel;
-  Create ambassadors within communities;

In addition, we’ll layer other channels with high reach and impact to build an awareness halo throughout the early stages of the consumer travel sales funnel in an effort to maximize budget efficiency. Aiming impressions at the target during the dreaming stage and, at the latest, early shopping stage allows us to inform the decision-making process early. We’ll then utilize organic (non paid) sources to help capture any undecided users later in the journey.

MEDIA ALIGNMENT

Building an additional layer of relevance into your media strategies, we’ve only recommended channels which align with the key Strategic Imperatives outlined earlier in this plan. An example of our approach is below:

Leverage the visual beauty of Southern Vermont

-  Facebook/Instagram
-  SnapChat
-  Division D (Influencer Network)
-  Teads (Programmatic Video)
-  Twitter

Build brand equity through trusted, admired resources

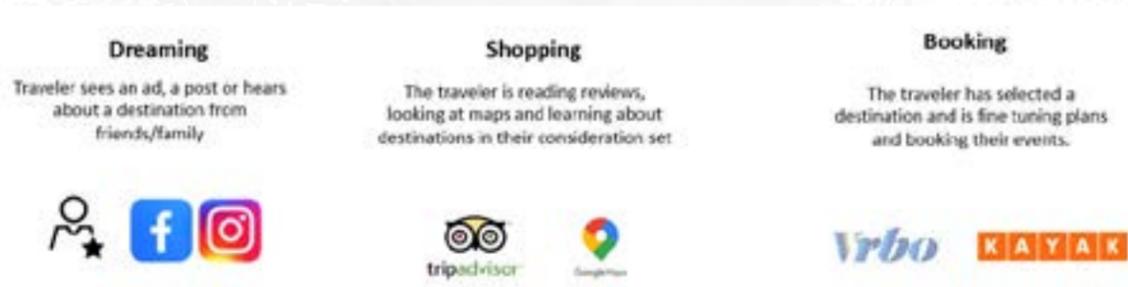
-  Division D (Influencer Network)

Partner with channels that have several key targets to maximize budget

-  Facebook/Instagram
-  SnapChat
-  Teads (Programmatic Video)
-  Twitter

Encourage conversation, “Buzz”, and Ambassadorship among key targets

-  Facebook/Instagram
-  SnapChat
-  Division D (Influencer Network)
-  Twitter



RECOMMENDED CHANNELS



Facebook/Instagram

One of the most visual and high-reaching social channels.



SnapChat (test)

A highly visual, and an ever-growing channel amongst younger-skewing audiences.



Twitter (test)

A “breaking news” resource which can prove useful for event marketing.



Division D

Influencer network allowing advertiser to pick three influencers who will visit and create content on behalf of the destination.



Teads

A powerful programmatic video network. Programmatic media focuses media buying on audiences. Through data and behavior algorithms, programmatic media targets and bids on desired audiences most likely to engage with and visit the destination. The idea is getting the right impressions at the right time at the right price. Video placements will appear within content consumed by target across a network of thousands of sites.

DATA INPUTS FOR MEDIA CHANNELS

Several types of data will feed into the recommended platforms to best target the audiences outlined in this section. Below are the types of data and definitions, along with examples:

1st Party Data – This data is owned by Deerfield Valley. The data can be segmented as desired (e.g. “Winter visitors). In addition to feeding this data into the platforms to target the actual users on the list(s), the platforms can analyze the data to build lookalike audiences to target. Usually, 1st party data lists have fields such as name and email. However, they can not include PII (personally identifiable information) such as social security number. The platforms below can accommodate 1st party data:

- Ⓞ Facebook/Instagram
- Ⓞ Twitter
- Ⓞ SnapChat

Vendor/Platform Data—This is data owned by each individual platform - think Facebook registration data. This data is often unique to each platform, and platforms are reluctant to share or sell this data to outside parties. Because of this, advertisers are required to execute media buys with these partners in order to access their data. In addition to typical registration data, platforms can leverage psychographics and activities such as (but not limited to): bird watching, casual hiking, antique lover. Platforms below can use their own data to reach key targets:

- Ⓞ Facebook/Instagram
- Ⓞ Twitter
- Ⓞ SnapChat

3rd Party Data – this is data supplied by third parties who are willing to sell data to platforms for targeting. A few example companies include American Express (selling purchase data), Oracle, and Dun & Bradstreet. Usually, platforms partner with multiple third party data providers to maximize their reach and flexibility. Third party data providers can also target psychographics such as (but not limited to): in the market for hiking boots, visited a state park in the last 6 months, frequent weekend vacationer. Platforms below are able to leverage 3rd party data:

- Ⓞ Facebook/Instagram
- Ⓞ Twitter
- Ⓞ SnapChat

- Ⓞ Division D (Influencer Network)
- Ⓞ Teads (Programmatic Video)

MEASUREMENT & TRACKING

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

As we've now proposed a strategic, multi-faceted approach to driving brand awareness and subsequent visitation to the Deerfield Valley, we must also identify methods of defining success once these efforts have been launched. Our approach to measurement recommendations encompass both Primary and Secondary/ Media KPIs, allowing you to take the totality of destination performance into account, rather than focusing in on one particular tactic or reporting vehicle. In this section, we've provided recommendations for campaign measurement utilizing data you currently have access to, and ways in which additional investment can provide richer insights.

PRIMARY INDICATORS

Primary KPIs help draw the most direct line between marketing efforts and visitation to the destination. These indicators almost always include Hotel Occupancy and Average Daily Rate (ADR), among others. But, as the Chamber's efforts to obtain consistently reliable booking data from its hoteliers have been unsuccessful thus far, we'd like to recommend the consideration of participation with Smith Travel Research (STR). STR is a global data and analytics service that sets the hospitality industry standard. The company provides data solutions at all levels, but a simple monthly (or weekly) STR Trend Report will lend the needed, and invaluable insights into Deerfield Valley historical monthly, year-to-date and total-year hotel performance metrics. For ease of use, Charrette Agency has reached out to STR to obtain initial pricing on your behalf, confirming this reporting is available at a relatively competitive price point once the reporting participation of your 16 hotel properties is confirmed – a task they'll work with you to accomplish.



However, should we proceed without comprehensive hotel reporting, Primary KPI's can be based on data Deerfield Valley is currently accessing, including:

- Rooms and Meals Tax Collections
- Arrivals from key feeder markets*
- Partner referrals

*KPI expressed as the number of people targeted in key feeder markets, who were served an ad as a part of a campaign, and then walk into the Southern Vermont geofence MediaWorks can establish around primary locations within the destination.

SECONDARY/ MEDIA INDICATORS

Shifting focus toward measurable Secondary/ Media Key Performance Indicators, we'd look to focus on:

- Website traffic
- Time spent on website**
- eNewsletter opt-ins**
- Social engagement

Here's what those KPIs look like when given measurable definitions of success:

Format	Media KPI
Quality Visits**	>11,550 quality visits
Video	150k Video Completions
Social Ads	Social Engagement on platform (e.g. video completions, re-tweets, swipes) > +4.0% (past result = 3.77%)
Influencers	Benchmark Buzz (comments, social engagement, earned impressions/engagements)

*Benchmarks based on aggregation of Media Works client results
**Quality visit is any visit to the site of +:30sec

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT

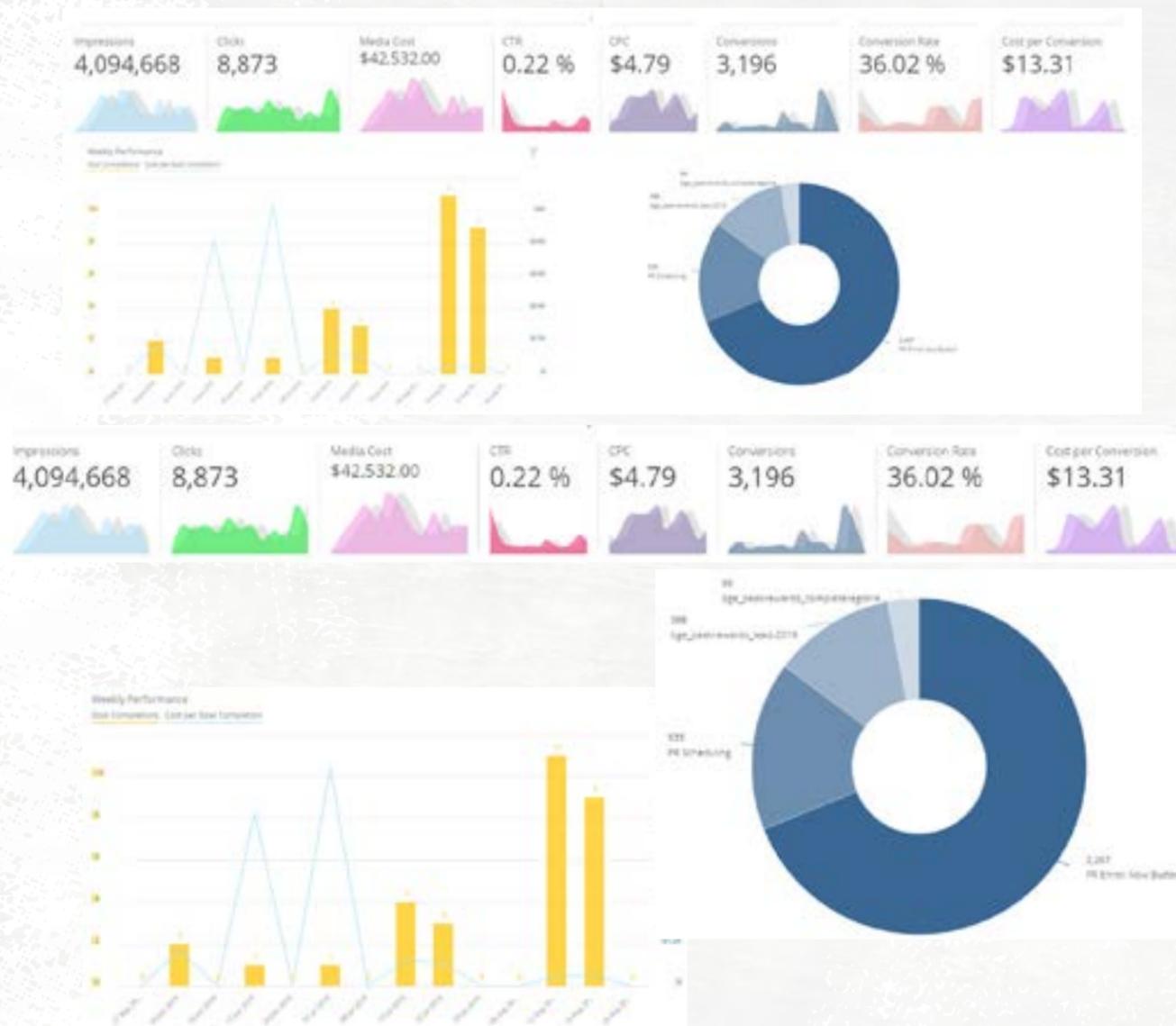
Campaign measurement devices in place in Deerfield Valley currently encompass many of the above recommendations, including Rooms and Meals Tax tracking, tracking of digital impressions, website analytics and in-market people counters. While these efforts do provide some insights, we're able to get closer to real-time performance with the aforementioned STR data, and other tools requiring additional investment, such as Inntopia's Destimetrics, which allow us to track the pacing of advanced bookings, Arrivalist, which tracks changes in mobile device location for those who arrive in the market after viewing an ad, and Adara, which tracks hotel, flight search and bookings (using first-party data from hotel, airline, and rental companies, OTAs, etc.). These mechanisms can work together, or even separately as budget allows, to paint a broader picture of performance, allowing for early campaign optimization should the need arise.



TRACKING

To ensure seamless integration of all marketing channels and efforts, real-time optimization, and the most efficient, scalable results possible, Charrette Agency recommends utilization of partner Media Works' proprietary Datorama dashboard. This tool is used to track campaign results against KPIs in real time, providing access to and reporting from all your media channels at any given time, eliminating silos and the need to pull run reports from different media platforms, each with different formats and insights.

Media Works will establish the Deerfield Valley's custom dashboard, complete with KPIs and team training, very similar to the below:



BUDGETS

YEAR 1

Brand Development	\$10,000
Campaign Creative	\$20,000
Photography/Videography	\$30,000
Paid Media	\$80,000
Website Redesign	\$30,000
Stakeholder Program Materials	\$5,000
STR Trend Report	\$6,000

YEAR 1 TOTAL

\$181,000

YEAR 2

Campaign Creative	\$25,000
Photography/Videography	\$30,000
Website Maintenance	\$20,000
Paid Media	\$84,000
Stakeholder Program Materials	\$5,000
Travel to Rgnl Tourism Mtgs	\$5,000
STR Trend Report	\$6,000

YEAR 2 TOTAL

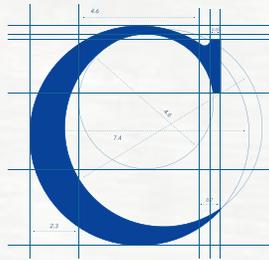
\$175,000

YEAR 3

Campaign Creative	\$25,000
Photography/Videography	\$10,000
Website Maintenance	\$2,000
Paid Media	\$88,000
Stakeholder Program Materials	\$5,000
Public Relations	\$20,000
STR Trend Report	\$6,000

YEAR 3 TOTAL

\$156,000



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