



# SLO TBID STRATEGIC MARKETING & BUSINESS PLAN

FY 23-24 AMENDMENT



## INTRODUCTION

**Hello, there! Welcome to the SLO TBID Strategic Marketing & Business Plan - our guide for the coming two years as we look to raise consumer awareness of and interest in San Luis Obispo as a travel destination.**

The SLO TBID Strategic Marketing & Business Plan for FY 22-24 was developed at the end of FY 20-21 in order to guide all tourism program efforts over a two year period. As we enter the final year of the two year plan, the TBID has reflected on the progress made towards the FY19-24 Strategic Imperatives and have identified adjustments to the strategic plan for the year ahead.

This amendment outlines the FY23-24 TBID program efforts that have been adjusted based on the focus areas for the year ahead, along with the existing SLO TBID Strategic Marketing & Business Plan elements that will continue to guide all FY23-24 TBID efforts. The SLO TBID remains dedicated to continuing to build off the momentum and successful program results achieved throughout the first year of this two year plan.

Overall, the approach will remain intentionally foundational, focused and flexible. It will continue to outline the overarching marketing initiatives that support SLO TBID's 2019-2024 Strategic Imperatives and will be used to guide the 30/60/90 Day Marketing Plan, which provides detail on channel-level marketing efforts on a quarterly and monthly basis.

We're so excited for what the year ahead will bring as we look to launch the newly redesigned VisitSLO.com, continue to build upon the SLO tourism brand and iterate upon the successful marketing tactics employed over the past year to help us continuously improve tourism in the City of San Luis Obispo now and into the future.



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# 2019-2024 STRATEGIC DIRECTION, OBJECTIVES & BRAND STRATEGY



## SLO TBID STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The SLO TBID stewards the brand of San Luis Obispo and represents its lodging partners, driving overnight stays by:

- Telling the San Luis Obispo story via targeted marketing content and activities
- Serving as a convener and subject matter expert for tourism conversations impacting the destination
- Advancing strategic partnerships that extend the reach and influence of the SLO TBID

### VISION

A welcoming community with a vibrant economy that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike.

### MISSION

We share the abundance of SLO, driving the lodging economy and serving as the voice of our stakeholders.

### VALUES

- Service
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Collaboration

### IMPERATIVES

- Elevate the SLO Brand and Experience
- Deliver Smart Growth
- Build Meaningful Partnerships
- Ensure Organizational Excellence
- Foster Destination Resilience

### VALUE PROPOSITION

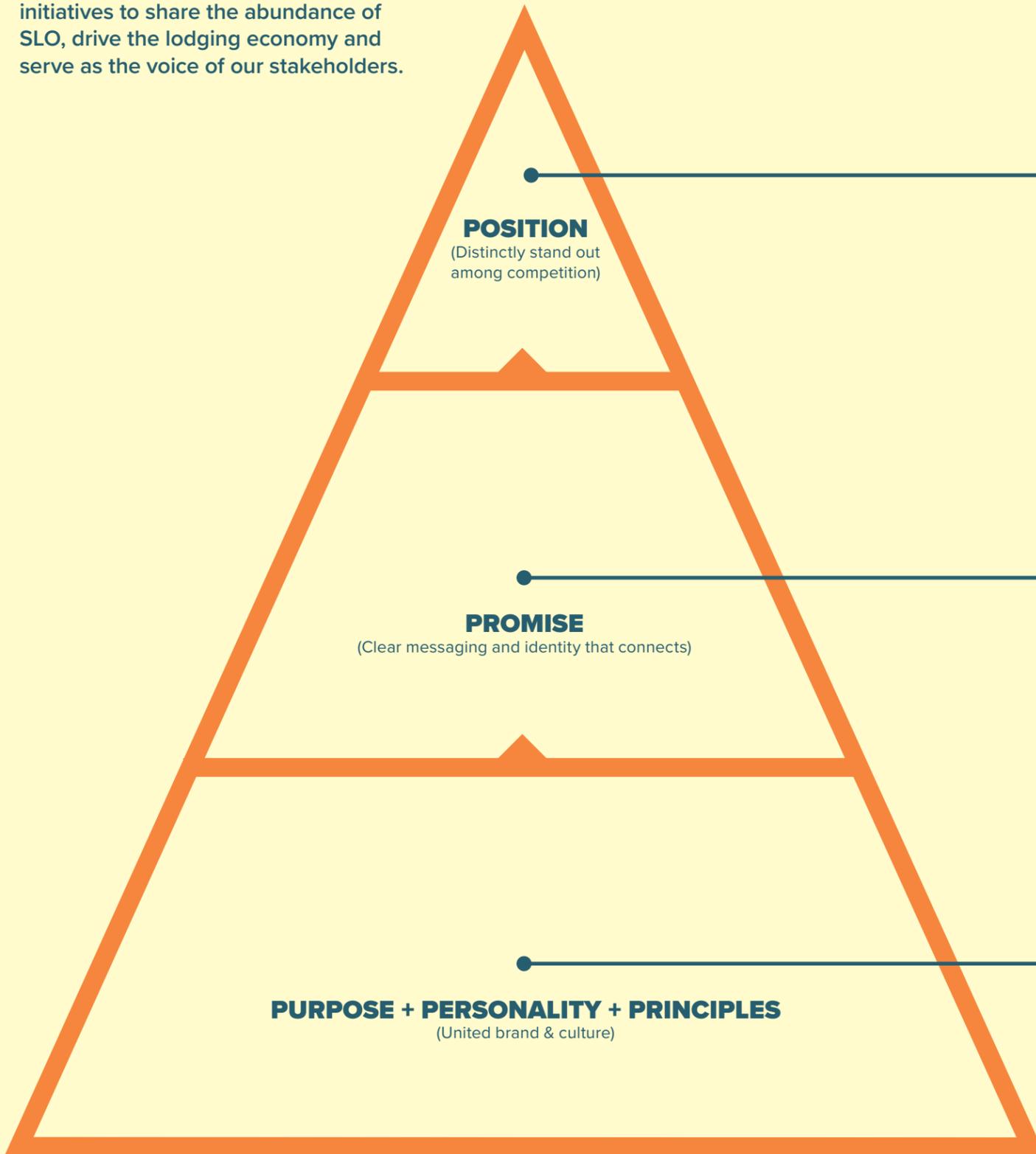
San Luis Obispo is an authentic and inviting California community where you can play, taste, explore, relax and recharge.

# SLO TBID STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES - FY 19-24

IMPERATIVE	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES
<p><b>Elevate the SLO Brand and Experience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase visitor awareness in target markets</li> <li>• Increase positive visitor perception</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRIORITY 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate the City’s priorities into the execution of the TBID’s marketing strategies</li> <li>• Identify the core SLO identity and develop a plan to market it</li> </ul> <p><b>PRIORITY 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a TBID Destination Stewardship approach</li> </ul> <p><b>PRIORITY 3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to influence community placemaking and destination management efforts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deliver Smart Growth</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceed California’s RevPAR growth over FY21 baseline</li> <li>• Year-over-year growth in ratio of weekday to weekend occupancy</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRIORITY 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an approach to monitoring local sentiment related to tourism</li> </ul> <p><b>PRIORITY 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence the SLO conference center development plan and effort</li> <li>• Identify structure and budget allocation for midweek and group business</li> </ul> <p><b>PRIORITY 3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a local business travel program to drive visitation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build Meaningful Partnerships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase average Earned Partnership Value score over 2022 baseline</li> <li>• Grow economic impact of tourism in SLO by 2024, over 2017 baseline</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRIORITY 3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and develop BOLD partnerships that generate overnight stays</li> <li>• Create a partnership management plan using measurable goals that are in line with our TBID mission</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ensure Organizational Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth in member newsletter open rates</li> <li>• Growth in stakeholder satisfaction score on survey</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRIORITY 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and document a process to execute, evaluate and track strategic plan</li> </ul> <p><b>PRIORITY 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to streamline governance and leverage constituency of TBID</li> </ul>
<p><b>Foster Destination Resilience</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year-over-year growth in TOT over FY21 baseline</li> </ul>	<p><b>PRIORITY 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement COVID-19 Response Plan</li> </ul> <p><b>PRIORITY 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document lessons learned from COVID era to feed resilience assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>PRIORITY 3:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform a destination resilience assessment</li> </ul>

# BRAND STRATEGY

The Visit SLO brand supports the TBID's initiatives to share the abundance of SLO, drive the lodging economy and serve as the voice of our stakeholders.



## HOMEBASE AWAY FROM HOME

You don't just visit SLO on vacation, you become part of our community and culture, an honorary local. The welcoming waves hello, neighborly nods and small-town California charm instantly make you feel comfortable and allow you to start living the "SLO Life." As you immerse yourself in our city, you bond with it and start to feel a sense of belonging that blends with the beauty of life's stresses being released because you're away—it truly feels like a home away from home. And with the beaches, iconic sites and stunning beauty of the world-class Central Coast nearby, it's also an incredible homebase during your vacation. SLO is the ideal homebase away from home.

## A CHANCE TO LIVE THE SLO LIFE

The "SLO Life" is a deep breath that releases life's pressures. It's a change of pace. It's a fresh take. It's a warm embrace. It's a feeling of comfort and calm in a welcoming place filled with a special energy, connection, creativity and a wholehearted spirit. You can feel the "SLO Life" wrap its arms around you and pull you close. It's tangible. And you'll never want to let that feeling go, so you live the "SLO Life" to its fullest while you're here and take a piece of it with you when you head back home.

## HEARTS IN BEDS

If putting "heads in beds" is our business purpose, putting "hearts in beds" is our brand purpose. We live to share all that San Luis Obispo stands for so we can emotionally connect with and welcome people who will fall in love with our community in such a way that they actually become part of it, caring for it like they live here and returning time and time again.



## BRAND PERSONALITY

We know the SLO Life is a vibe. It's a way of life.  
If SLO was a person, here's how we'd describe our personality.

### LAID-BACK

There's a calmness to SLO. It doesn't walk, it strolls. It doesn't talk, it chats. It's not lazy or apathetic, but is chill and engaged. It's carefree but it still cares a lot.

### ACTIVE

SLO doesn't hustle and bustle like a big city, but it moves. It gets out in the fresh air and sweats. It crafts and creates.

### YOUTHFUL ENERGY

Like any university town, there's a certain buzz of life and promise. SLO has that same spirit and sparkle in its eyes.

### NATURAL

There is an agricultural focus, environmental awareness and love for outdoor activities in SLO.

### FRESH

From the air to the locally grown food, the thinking and way of life, there's freshness to SLO.

### BRIGHT

The hills surrounding the city, the sunsets, the art, the buildings, the people and the smiles are all bright in SLO.

### WELCOMING

Whether you're a visitor or local, everyone is accepted and embraced in SLO. The entire city is a welcome mat that says, "Come on in and stay a while."

### FRIENDLY

Warm smiles, welcoming waves, neighborly nods. There's a race in SLO to see who will say "Hi!" first. There are no strangers, only friends you haven't met yet.

### CHARMING

It's hard to describe it in any other way. SLO's historic buildings, quaint shops, rolling hills, winding trails and approachable people just make it CACB (charming as can be).

### CURIOUS

As a university town filled with lifelong learners, creators, craftspeople and collaborators, SLO is filled with curiosity about the world.

### COMFORTABLE

SLO has an easy way about it. It's comfortable in its own skin, knows who it is and accepts who others are. It feels safe and secure.

### THOUGHTFUL

SLO is a giving city filled with generosity and respect.

### PROGRESSIVE

Not only is SLO on the leading edge of social and societal issues, its thirst for positive change and innovation is unquenchable.

### WHOLEHEARTED

Don't let its easygoing, laid-back ways fool you, this sincere and caring city is always 100% devoted to everything it does and says.

### CONNECTED

There is a deep connection between the people, between the people and the place and between the people and the environment in SLO.

### COMMUNITY

The sense of collaboration, support and encouragement between the people and businesses makes SLO more than a place-it makes it a community.

# BRAND MANTRA



We're San Luis Obispo

But you can call us SLO.

This is small-town California with charm for days.

But it's not just a place, it's a lifestyle.

Here, we live the SLO Life.

The SLO Life is hard to describe.

It's a vibe.

A spirit.

An unspoken way of life locals live by

And if you're here, you're a local.

And once you're here, you feel it wrapped around you.

It's comfort and calm in a welcoming place.

It's bright smiles and colorful people.

A city without strangers, only people you haven't met yet.

It's a change of pace.

We don't walk, we stroll.

We don't talk, we chat.

And the only time we hurry is to see who can say "hi" first.

The SLO Life is carefree

But it definitely cares.

It's a whole lot of wholehearted.

While it's laidback, it always moves

Gets outside and gets going

Works and plays

Sweats and creates

There's always a fresh take.

A breath of fresh air, in the air.

A buzz of progress and promise.

It's waking up every day to have the best day and live your best life.

And help everyone else live theirs.

Once you experience it, you know it

You know there's no life like the SLO Life

And once you stay here, it stays with you

For life.

**That's the SLO Life.**



## DESTINATION PARTNERS

In 2008, San Luis Obispo established a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), allowing the hotel industry to raise funds solely dedicated to tourism marketing and promotions to attract visitors to San Luis Obispo. The TBID is inclusive of all lodging properties in the City of San Luis Obispo including hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, inns and owner occupied homestays.

The SLO TBID partners with organizations at the state, regional and countywide level to leverage the reach and impact of our marketing programs for our tourism businesses in San Luis Obispo. These partnerships allow the SLO TBID to maximize investments and expand awareness in ways the organization would not be able to do alone.

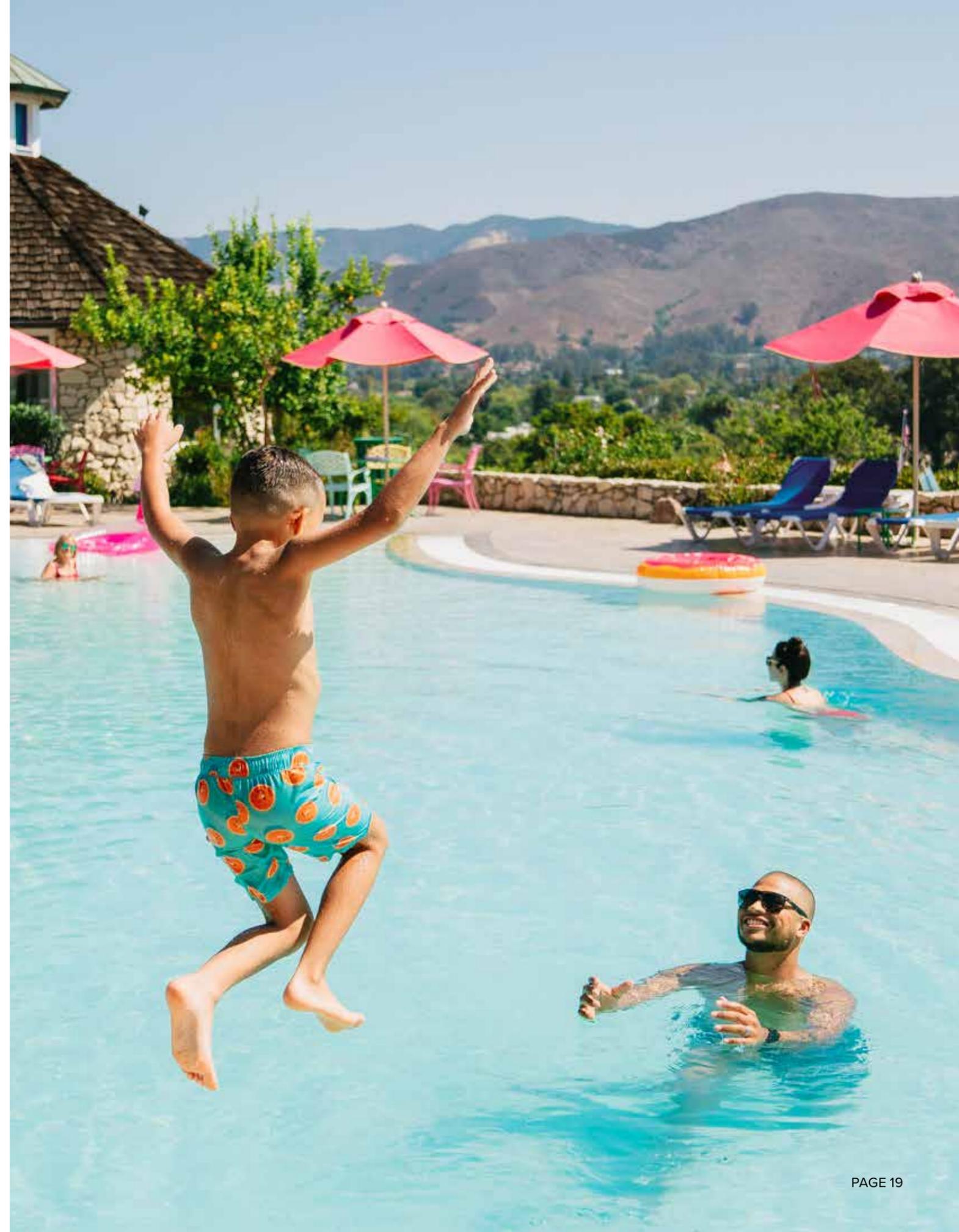
**VISIT CALIFORNIA**

**CENTRAL COAST TOURISM COUNCIL**

**VISIT SLO CAL**

**SLO TBID**

**SLO LODGING + TOURISM BUSINESSES**





# MARKET TRENDS & RESEARCH

## TRAVEL TRENDS

The pandemic had a profound impact on the travel industry, leading to a shift in consumer behavior and preferences. American travelers continue to show record levels of excitement for travel, but anxiety about the economy, rising costs, labor shortages and increasing frustrations around the domestic travel experience compared to prior to the pandemic has created an increased need for destinations to focus on how they can find innovative ways to provide valuable and unique travel experiences. Overall, the travel industry is poised for continued growth in 2023, as economic tailwinds and consumer sentiment point towards an uptick in demand for travel.

### DOMESTIC LEISURE TRAVEL

More Americans are planning to travel for leisure more in 2023 to make up for lost travel opportunities over the last few years. Recent reports from TripAdvisor and Destination Analysts indicate that travel will be a high or extremely high priority in American household spending this year, with a majority planning to spend more or the same amount for a single trip compared to last year. Among those most excited about travel right now include, Baby Boomers, families with young kids, and affluent households. Millennials are the age group most likely to fly while Gen Z is the most likely age group to drive. Overall, travelers are eager to relax, make memories and escape from routine.

### MEETINGS & GROUP TRAVEL

Group and corporate travel are expected to continue to fuel the recovery of the travel industry in 2023. With the return of in-person meetings and events, the demand for corporate travel and event spending is expected to rise significantly this year. Moreover, a recent survey of event planners found that a majority expect to see an increase in meetings over the next year as well.

### AN EMPHASIS ON WELLNESS

Traveler behaviors and priorities have shifted as a result of the pandemic. Many travelers are searching for a sense of contentment and mental wellbeing on their next trip and nearly a quarter plan to spend less time on their devices. When planning trips, travelers are likely to pursue wellness experiences that allow them to stay present and mindful such as enjoying nature, relaxation, spending time with family and immersing themselves in new cultures.

### SUSTAINABILITY

More than three-quarters of people want to make their travel more sustainable according to Booking.com's 2023 Sustainable Travel Report. However, 49% of those surveyed said sustainable travel options are too expensive, especially given rising costs and economic concerns. Travelers also report a lack of sustainable options which creates a unique opportunity for SLO to bring more awareness to the City's sustainability initiatives and Keys for Trees program.





## BRAND RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Over the past two years, the TBID has made significant investments in a variety of brand research programs through self-directed and co-op commitments. These studies helped to increase the TBID's knowledge and ability to have specific data and valuable insights to help further guide our efforts to develop program actions. Over the next two years, we will look to leverage the insights and data we've gathered in order to positively impact progress and performance towards our tourism marketing initiatives and strategies.

### BRAND HEALTH & EQUITY RESEARCH (FALL 2021)

- This study was an analysis of the San Luis Obispo destination brand from a qualitative and quantitative perspective.
- These insights and takeaways continue to guide our marketing efforts.

### SLO CAL DEI RESEARCH (SUMMER 2021)

- Through this co-op with Visit SLO CAL, the TBID was able to gain essential DEI insights that helped us to implement new strategies and expand diversity within TBID-owned assets.

### BRAND TRACKER & LOCAL SENTIMENT (WINTER 2021, SPRING 2022, FALL 2023)

- This Brand Tracker research has allowed us to set a baseline and trackable measure of sentiment towards SLO as a branded destination, among locals and prospective visitors.
- We will continually use these baselines in order to measure progress in key areas.

## BRAND RESEARCH FINDINGS & TAKEAWAYS

SLO has a lot of opportunity to position itself in the competitive set, since it has low levels of brand awareness. The lack of an emotional connection through advertising has resulted in a familiarity, trial and conversion issue for overnight stays.

**Takeaway: The newly established brand platform provides a successful foundation we can continue to improve upon in order to create emotional connections through the "Live the SLO Life" brand.**

SLO as an activities hub for a weekend getaway (or longer) is a strong message that resonates with our audience.

**Takeaway: The "Homebase Away from Home" positioning, which focuses on SLO being an activities hub, is a strong messaging strategy that resonates with travelers.**

SLO embodies what people love about California, while avoiding much of what people dislike about it.

**Takeaway: The "small-town California" positioning provides a great opportunity to highlight the variety of boutique shops, history, art, culture, restaurants, the outdoors and more that SLO has to offer within our messaging strategies.**

SLO has an opportunity to own the following destination features: Food & Beverage; A Happy Feel Good Community; Ultra-convenient hiking/biking.

**Takeaway: By continuing to focus on these three destination features, we can work to establish a stronger brand awareness tied to SLO's unique destination offerings. We'll want to emphasize Food & Beverage especially as SLO has a real opportunity to truly own this destination feature by highlighting the Farmer's Market, the abundance of great farm-to-table restaurants and impressive wineries.**



## BRAND OPPORTUNITIES

In order to inspire potential travelers, we need to show those who have never been to SLO, why it's a special place and more than a pit stop, and we can do this by giving them the view someone has after multiple visits. Based on the brand research findings and takeaways, we'll continue to pursue the following brand opportunities over the next two years:

- Creating emotional connections through our "Live the SLO Life" brand
- Conveying that small-town, curated California feel that represents what people love about California by continuing to show off the abundance of boutique shops, history, art, culture, restaurants, the outdoors and more that SLO has to offer
- Featuring the big three ownable destination features within our paid, owned and earned marketing channels
  - F&B (Farmers' market, restaurants, farm-to-table restaurants, wineries)
  - Happy, warm, sincere community
  - Easy access to hiking, biking, outdoors
- Highlighting the Central Coast hub, "Homebase Away from Home" positioning

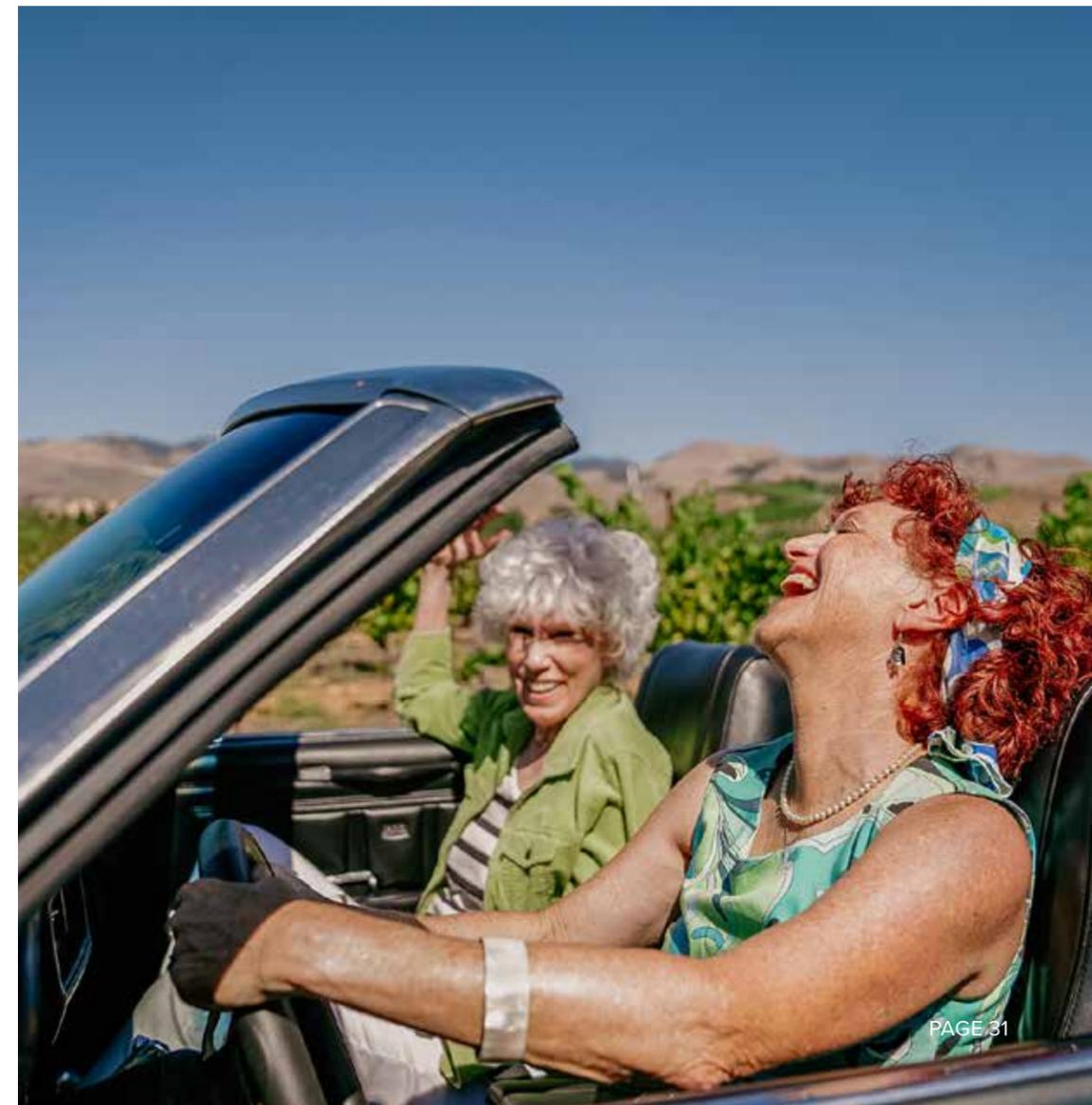
# VISIT SLO MARKETING PLAN



## TARGET AUDIENCES

Over the course of the next year, we will continue to focus marketing to intercept potential visitors at the point of intent. We will use digital signals to identify and capture these potential visitors at each stage in the travelers' journey and expand awareness of SLO.

We will also utilize a blend of demographic and geographic targeting to ensure we reach a qualified and diverse audience; providing them the information they need to feel inspired and welcomed into our community. In addition, we know that Visit California is employing trip motivators to attract visitors to the state. Having that understanding not only validates our intent based approach, but it also enables us to align with these efforts.



## DEMOGRAPHICS



**90K+ HOUSEHOLD  
INCOME**



**ADULTS AGES  
24-65+**

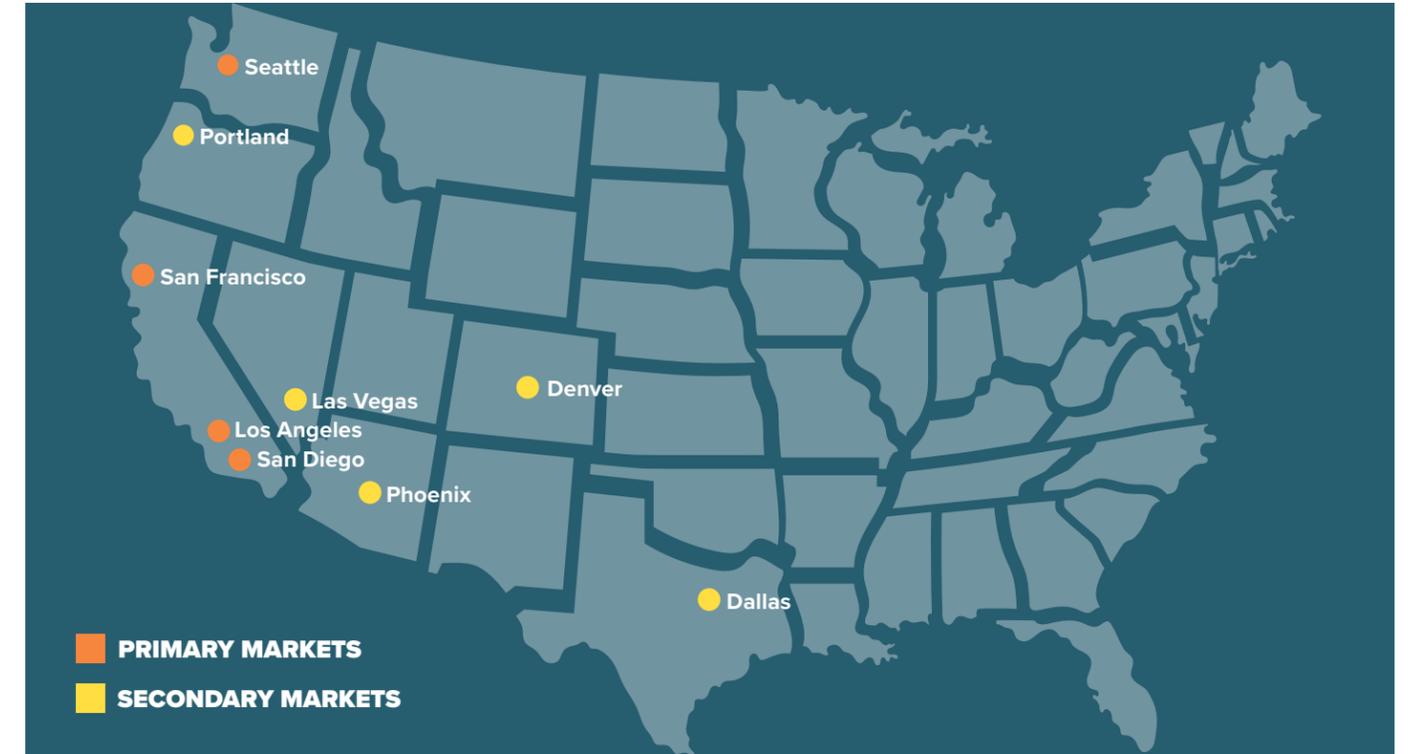


**INTEREST-BASED  
AUDIENCES, AGE 24-55**



**65+ FREQUENT  
TRAVELERS**

## GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS



### PRIMARY: DRIVE & FLY MARKETS

We will capture the opportunity of road trip and local travel trends, as well as aligning with the efforts of Visit California and Visit SLO CAL by actively targeting the following DMAs:

- San Francisco
- Los Angeles
- San Diego
- Seattle

Additional drive markets for consideration include Sacramento, Monterey and Santa Barbara

### SECONDARY: FLY MARKETS

The TBID will continue to evaluate the benefits and opportunities around widening reach to secondary markets such as:

- Phoenix
- Portland
- Denver
- Dallas
- Las Vegas

### INTEREST AND INTENT BASED AUDIENCES

#### Primary Audiences

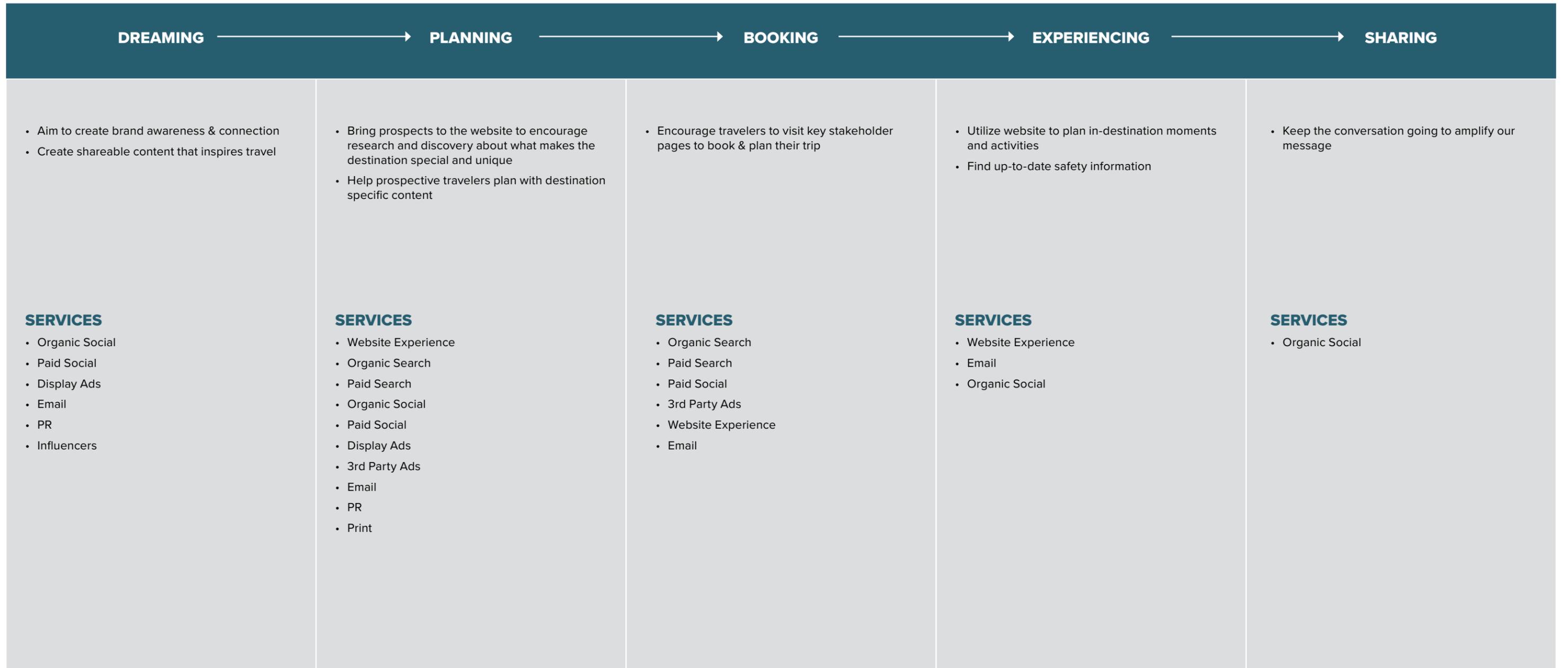
- Culinary: Values a unique culinary and beer/wine experience (ie. local restaurants, wineries)
- Outdoor: Values being active and experiencing nature (ie. hiking, biking, golf, extreme adventure)
- Relaxation & Wellness: Values rest and relaxation activities (ie. yoga, spa, wellness center)
- Family & Frequent Traveler: Values spending time with family and friends, may be looking for group activities

#### Secondary Audiences

- Arts & Culture: Values learning about local culture by appreciating art and history (ie. museums, art galleries)
- Cal Poly: Values experiences surrounding the university from a student, alumni, or family perspective

# ACTIVATING ACROSS THE TRAVELER'S JOURNEY

To ensure that we are intercepting travelers at all stages of the traveler's journey, we will utilize different marketing levers across that journey. This multi-pronged approach will drive an effective and efficient conversion strategy. The SLO brand messages and the areas of opportunity will all be adapted to tantalize potential travelers across this journey. In addition, looking across the traveler's journey incorporates the fluctuations in travel behavior.





**San Luis Obispo is committed to sustainability as climate action is consistently one of the most important issues for the local community and visitors alike.**

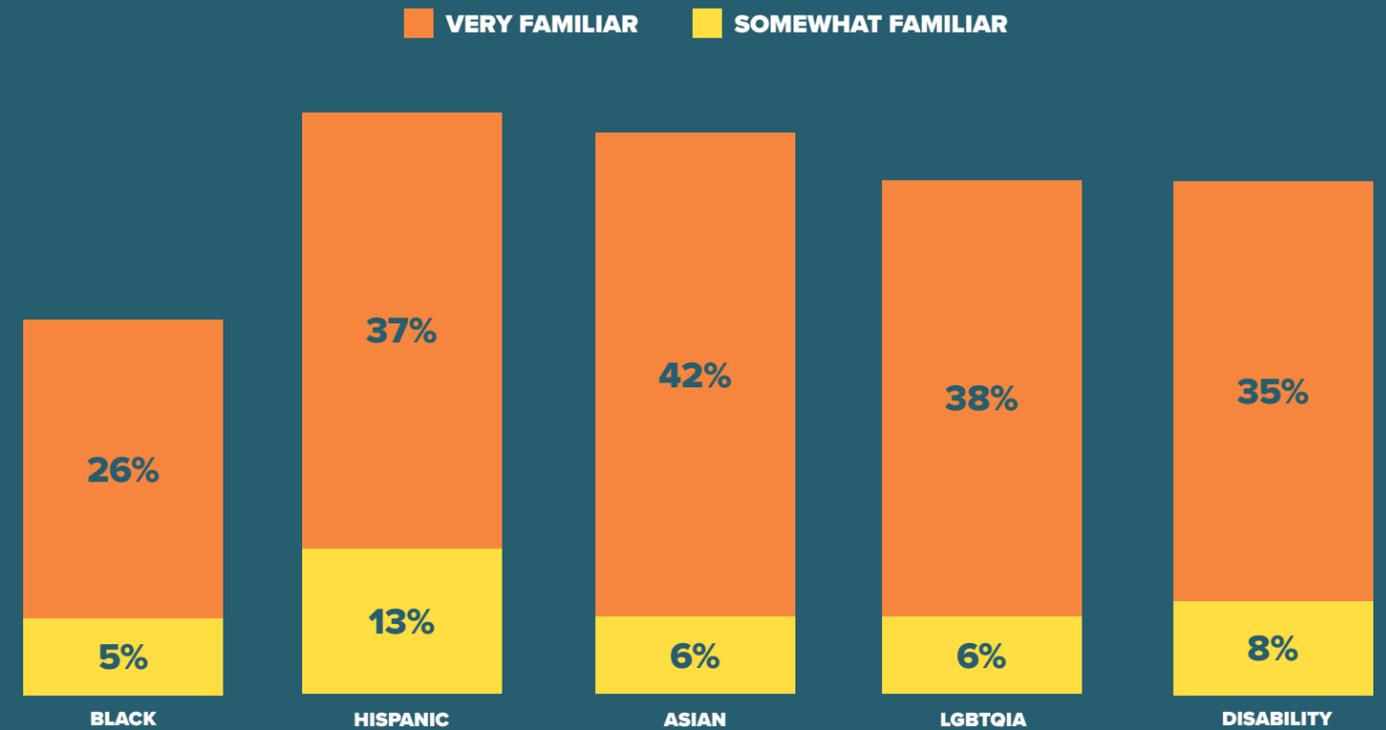
For the TBID, being good stewards of the destination and promoting conscientious travel is a responsibility. The city of San Luis Obispo and San Luis Obispo tourism are working each day to create a more sustainable SLO for locals and travelers alike. We educate travelers on how to enjoy SLO responsibly by supporting local communities, protecting culture and heritage, and leaving as light of an environmental footprint as possible. The TBID is committed to doing its part to protect and preserve beautiful San Luis Obispo.

Our commitment to advance sustainability and climate action within the tourism efforts will be addressed through the following programs:

- Continue to evolve the Sustainable SLO brand through the development of a sustainability-focused content strategy to support themes identified within the 30/60/90 such as Earth Day across owned channels (website/blog, email, social)
- Generate continued awareness of Keys for Trees through ongoing incorporation of this initiative into marketing materials
- Development of content around how travelers can live the SLO Life while traveling sustainably and responsibly
- Improved constituent outreach to promote participation
- Development of stakeholder resources to promote Sustainable SLO and responsible tourism practices to travelers
- Exploring new ways to tell the Sustainability story through owned channels
- Increasing awareness of Keys for Trees through retargeting efforts
- Seeking ways to tie in with Visit SLO CAL's new sustainability program
- Investing in new strategic partnership to advance sustainability efforts across all initiatives



## HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH THE CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO



## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

### INTRO

In FY 22-23, the TBID leveraged insights and findings from brand sentiment research to evolve the brand campaign strategy. In order to evaluate progress towards brand sentiment baselines established in the FY21-22 Brand Sentiment Research, the FY23-24 Research & Development goals and objectives have been amended.

### GOALS

Leverage research insights in order to positively impact progress and performance towards our tourism marketing initiatives and strategies

### OBJECTIVES

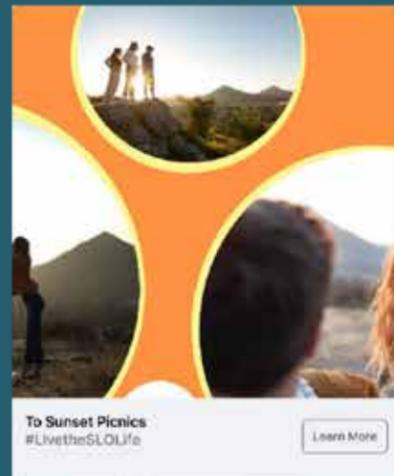
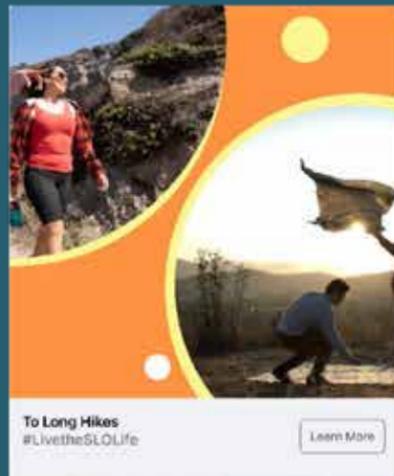
- Continue the development of a Destination Stewardship strategy
- Partner with Visit SLO CAL for research co-op like Sentiment Study and Economic Impact Research
- Deployment of a brand sentiment survey to gain an objective, statistically reliable and trackable measure of point-in-time sentiment towards SLO as a branded destination
- Support the update to finalize the Conference Center feasibility study through the EDSP
- Complete an RFP process for the Tourism Marketing Services contract commencing in FY 24-25
- Development of a Sales & Meeting Strategy
- Initiate the update to the TBID Strategic Plan

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

As the TBID, we share in the global mission for inclusion and change. Along with our partner destination marketing organizations like Visit SLO CAL, we are committed to spreading the message that San Luis Obispo is a destination that is welcoming and safe for all. As an ally, we listen and continuously reflect to fully understand that demand for more direct action so that all people can unequivocally feel welcomed here. It is in our organization's DNA to treat all persons equally, with dignity and respect, regardless of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability status. We are committed to sharing these values with everyone who travels to San Luis Obispo. You can be you, and we celebrate that.

With a continued commitment to advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within FY23-24 tourism efforts, the TBID will dedicate intentional focus to better understand the DEI space and how we can incorporate it into our work through the following programs:

- Developing DEI-related content strategy to support themes identified within the 30/60/90
- Continuing to expand diversity within TBID-owned assets
- Targeting more diverse audiences through paid, earned and owned media tactics
- Exploring photography and video production opportunities to help show the LGBTQ+ experience authentically across owned channels
- Development of content on the website around the LGBTQ+ audience
- Exploring more opportunities to expand work with GALA



## BRAND CAMPAIGN

### INTRO

In 2021, the new brand platform gave rise to the brand line, “Live the SLO Life”—a call to action to not just visit, but embrace the bright, laid-back, welcoming, progressive and fresh lifestyle of San Luis Obispo. For our brand campaign, it was important that the brand was flexible enough to allow for crafted messaging to align with our target audiences and their unique interests in things like outdoor adventure, wine and family vacations. With this foundation in place, a fully integrated marketing campaign was launched in October 2021 with a friendly invitation to new and returning visitors to, “Say Hello to the SLO Life.”

### OBJECTIVES

- Evolve the brand campaign strategy and creative based on brand research findings and campaign performance insights
- Increase qualified travelers coming to the website with the ultimate goal of increasing partner referrals and bookings for overnight stays
- Explore new placements and tactics in order to create personally relevant experiences among the target audience
- Create emotional connections through the “Live the SLO Life” brand campaign to improve brand sentiment and familiarity

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Transition to “Visit SLO” as the official internal and external destination brand
- Development of audience-specific landing pages
- Creative and audience segmentation testing
- Exploration of cross-platform partnerships and out-of-the-box activations
- Integration of SLO Life Tips into cross-channel content strategy

## PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

### INTRO

Why should weekends get all the fun? When you live the SLO Life, every day feels like Saturday. We call it the MidWeekend. In the spring of 2022, the Midweekend promotional campaign was launched to help drive midweek stays in the City of San Luis Obispo. To help sweeten the deal, visitors were offered a \$100 gift card bundle to use at local businesses when they booked 2 nights between Sunday and Thursday. The promotional campaign was integrated into the existing paid media plan with a focus on reaching our outdoor, relaxation, wine and dine, and remarketing audiences in order to send potential travelers to the Midweekend landing page to get direct access to information on the special offer.

### OBJECTIVES

- Drive overnight stays from Sunday-Thursday with a targeted promotion to those most likely to come “Live the SLO Life”
- Increase year-over-year growth in ratio of weekday to weekend occupancy
- Increase visitation during identified need periods

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Increase awareness of the MidWeekend campaign among the 65+ audience which have shown strong intent in past campaign initiatives
- Evolve MidWeekend campaign assets and landing pages, leveraging existing assets where possible for additional promotional campaign efforts
- Identify strategic partnerships to expand reach and promote participation from stakeholders



**SAY HELLO TO THE MIDWEEKEND**

san luis Obispo



san luis Obispo

**SAY HELLO TO CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'**

EXPLORE NOW



san luis Obispo

**SAY HELLO TO SMALL-TOWN CALIFORNIA**

EXPLORE NOW



san luis Obispo

**SAY HELLO TO SAN LUIS OBISPO**

EXPLORE NOW



**SAY HELLO TO THE MID-WEEKEND**

san luis Obispo



**SAY HELLO TO THE MIDWEEKEND**



## CREATIVE SERVICES

### OBJECTIVE

Visually create, manage, and oversee the visual representation of all branded SLO TBID marketing assets for a cohesive and impactful look and feel across all touchpoints.

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Asset library management (organization of existing photography & video b-roll)
- Creation of new photo and video assets to fill out gaps in the existing library
- Identifying content gaps in current asset library
- Creative iterations for the “Live the SLO Life” and “Say Hello to the MidWeekend” integrated campaigns in order to promote increased performance and enhanced user experiences across all marketing efforts
- Integration of “SLO Life Tips” branding into marketing materials
- Asset creation for co-ops, sustainability initiatives and annual reports
- Development of a comprehensive Visit SLO brand book to document and memorialize the strategic brand and creative work we’ve accomplished

## CONTENT CREATOR PARTNERSHIPS

### OBJECTIVE

In FY22-23, the SLO TBID looked to partner with Content Creators to generate original and unique videos to use across multiple marketing efforts. In FY23-24 the TBID will be pausing on the previous approach, and instead focusing efforts on paid Content Creator Partnerships.

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Exploring paid content partnerships with partners such as KindTraveler and Matador Network, as budget allows



## PAID MEDIA

### OBJECTIVE

Utilize an integrated paid media strategy to support and promote the brand and promotional campaigns, in alignment with research findings to drive impact towards the strategic objectives.

#### Build Brand Awareness and Dreaming

- Drive positive growth in brand awareness and familiarity of SLO as a branded destination through top-of-funnel marketing tactics that highlight the ownable destination features and create emotional connections with the “Live the SLO Life” brand
- Extend reach and awareness of SLO through the integration of MidWeekend messaging into the ongoing paid media plan with a year-round evergreen campaign strategy

#### Increase Engagement and Planning:

- Encourage further engagement and consideration of SLO among potential travelers by driving them to VisitSLO.com and generating newsletter sign-ups

#### Encourage Conversion and Booking:

- Optimize campaign strategies in order to encourage high-intent audiences to engage with partner pages and drive booking behavior

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Continue to optimize the paid media strategy, with an always-on approach
- Continue to identify top-performing audience segments and creative in order to serve potential visitors with highly-relevant and impactful messaging
- Analyze and prioritize target markets for budget effectiveness and traveler impact
- Ongoing management of Display, Paid social, 3rd Party Ads, Paid Search + Video Advertising

## PAID MEDIA SPECIFICS

### OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Using historical performance, campaign learnings and brand sentiment research, our paid media plan is a strategic full funnel approach incorporating successful past tactics while introducing upper funnel tactics to build more awareness of the SLO brand. Our marketing tactics are employed in an always on approach, with specific digital and traditional partnership flights incorporated during periods of travel planning.

### PAID SOCIAL

Paid social has been a significant source of engaged visitors to our website in the last year with increased traffic not only from Facebook, but from Instagram and Pinterest. This highly visual channel is the perfect place to build awareness and encourage visitation through static, video and carousel ads. In addition, traveler sentiment can start to be realized from social listening on ads.

### DISPLAY

Using programmatic display platforms, such as Google Display Network, we can appeal to high-intent, interest-based audiences. By layering intent, we will be able to appeal to more of a mid-funnel audience that has shown interest in travel to San Luis Obispo rather than an unqualified audience. In addition, we are using multiple formats with GDN to address travelers in their planning including responsive display ads, discovery ads and interactive ads.

### VIDEO

Additional video was added in the fiscal year '22 with both YouTube and Connected TV with successful full funnel results. This tactic is used to grow awareness of the destination and build relationships with travelers using visual storytelling aspect of video content.

### THIRD PARTY SPONSORSHIPS

With travelers returning to the area, we have begun exploring options such as online travel agencies with more granular third-party targeting. This tactic has shown to address travelers in the research and booking phase in the travelers' journey.

### PRINT

The media plan accounts for Certified Folder placements for our brochure in target geographic markets, as well as Visit California Road Trips Guide, Visit SLO CAL and San Luis Obispo Chamber Visitor Guides.





## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

In FY23-24, the SLO TBID will maintain the overarching Public Relations strategy, objectives and structure with additional initiatives.

### **OBJECTIVE**

- Promote San Luis Obispo as a destination to live, play and stay driving visitation and delivering economic impact
- Build consumer awareness serving as the voice of SLO by amplifying the destination brand and reaching audiences locally, regionally and nationally
- Communicate the vitality and character of San Luis Obispo and the community

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT**

- Implementing changes within the existing DCI partnership in order to maximize impact
  - Immersion trip for new DCI Senior Account Director
  - Support coordination of an Experiential Media Event in key market
- Continuation of current PR program efforts
  - Fulfilling all media requests
  - Boots-on-the-ground expert planning and executing all press visits
  - Sourcing, building custom itineraries and hosting travel writers on individual and FAM trips throughout the year with key partners
- Utilizing current marketing efforts & themes to craft pitch ideas to what's new and relevant
- Explore co-op partnerships with Visit SLO CAL to maximize earned media exposure



## MEETINGS, BUSINESS & TRADE TRAVEL

### OBJECTIVE

To expand destination awareness among travel and meeting planners to build consideration of SLO as a destination for their clients.

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Development of SEO-optimized content and landing pages
- Participation in Visit California Luxury Forum in partnership with Visit SLO CAL
- Developing a sales and meeting strategy through a contracted work scope
- Integrating meeting venue details into stakeholder listing pages on the newly redesigned VisitSLO.com
- Exploring ways to leverage partnerships and cooperative marketing & sales opportunities to align and advance this work effort

## WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

### INTRO

The website is the cornerstone of all our marketing efforts as everything flows to or from the website. In FY22-23 the SLO TBID undertook an extensive website redesign process for VisitSLO.com. In FY23-24, program efforts will be focused around curating and maintaining the newly designed website.

### OBJECTIVE

- Ensure site is healthy and stable at a foundational level & optimized for performance
- Enhance and elevate the user experience and performance of VisitSLO.com

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Optimize website content and overall user experience across high-traffic landing pages
- Continue to optimize site speed to enhance the mobile website experience
- Website enhancements and feature updates
- Maintaining site health and security while ensuring usability across all devices
- Continually update the website with the most recent software and plugin updates
- Ensure automated weekly backups
- Website support for Visit SLO initiatives
- General website update requests (content updates, etc.)



## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

### INTRO

Organic search continues to be the largest contributor of traffic to the website. We have made significant strides in driving high intent visitors to the site through our SEO strategy and will continue to scale our efforts for maximum impact. We will take a holistic approach to search engine optimization to ensure that we are building the authority of VisitSLO.com, in addition to improving the technical foundation.

### OBJECTIVE

Drive high intent visitors to the website through a focused owned content strategy and ongoing improvements to the website visitor experience.

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Optimize existing content in order to maximize the efficiency and reach
- Develop new SEO-optimized content to generate and capture demand with content that is timely, relevant and has high search volume
- Optimize content on the site to enable search engines to visualize content to promote rankings within the top listings of the search engine results page
- Improve the technical health of the site with a website redesign to allow for optimal SEO performance and plugin updates
- Ensure automated weekly backups

## OWNED CONTENT

### GOAL

Create and provide relevant and timeline information on the website to be leveraged and distributed across the SLO TBID owned channels.

### EMAIL MARKETING

We will leverage the SLO TBID email database to provide valuable content to readers. We will share information about topics travelers are most interested in so that we can generate stronger engagement across our email efforts.

#### FY22-23 PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Email list clean up in order to curate a more engaged audience
- Creating a gated content opportunity on the website with the destination brochure to grow the email list
- Enhancing the email template to align with the new brand
- Exploration of an expanded email strategy designed to help identify and reach key audience segments with hyper-relevant content
- Utilizing blog content for newsletter feature and including clear CTA's to encourage readers to visit the website
- Incorporating upcoming events within email content

#### FY23-24 FOCUS AREAS

Based on performance insights from the expanded email program initiatives in FY22-23, the FY23-24 email strategy will be focused around the following initiatives:

- Updating the cadence and volume of monthly newsletters to align with key learnings
- Continuing to engage segmented audiences with content relevant to their unique interests
- Exploring new ways to incentivize newsletter signups through gated content and giveaways

### BLOG STRATEGY & CONTENT

Storytelling is at the very heart of destination marketing. We will engage our audience with authentic stories, and the inside scoop, as the go-to source for all things travel related in San Luis Obispo.

Based on performance insights and the content opportunities uncovered during the website redesign process in FY22-23, the FY23-24 Blog & Content strategy will include:

- Curate trustworthy content with ample local insight to assist travelers throughout their travel journey
- Development of net new content on a monthly basis to support the newly redesigned VisitSLO.com





# ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA

## INTRO

Social media is one of the best marketing tools to connect with and engage potential visitors. We also know that for SLO the local population is highly engaged. We have an opportunity to continue to engage the audience while optimizing our efforts and further establishing a clear value to following SLO on social.

## OBJECTIVE

Connect and engage with our audience by providing timely and relevant information.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

In order to connect and engage with our social audience in valuable and meaningful ways, the FY23-24 Organic Social Media Strategy will include the following:

- Management of daily posts & stories
- Monitoring social feedback
- Creation of evergreen and promotional video reels leveraging existing content
- Sourcing of high quality UGC photos via CrowdRiff
- Sharing owned blogs and PR features on social
- Sharing more Business Travel owned blogs to new LinkedIn page
- Maintaining the ShareSLO presence on existing channels:
  - Meta (Facebook & Instagram)
  - Pinterest
  - LinkedIn
  - TikTok
- Continuing to expand and enhance content based on defined audiences and initiatives to integrate further with paid media efforts
- Leveraging more in-house creative content that follows observed industry trends

## STRATEGIC & INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

### INTRO

Success is never achieved alone — to maximize our impact, the TBID Board & Staff supports and nurtures strategic partnerships with destinations, agencies, industry partners and committees. Through knowledge sharing and communication, we will engage with partner organizations to drive impact toward shared goals.

### PARTNERSHIPS

- CCTC
- CHLA
- Cal Poly Athletics & Office of Student Affairs
- Cal Travel
- Downtown SLO
- MINDBODY
- SLO Chamber
- SLO Coast Wine Collective
- Visit California
- Visit SLO CAL

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Exploring opportunities to grow a greater presence at SLO Days; Parent Weekend; CAL Poly Open House
- Identifying how Downtown SLO can integrate into industry relations and partnership opportunities
- Re-engaging SLO Coast Wine Collective for co-op opportunities
- Maximizing awareness of SLO through inclusion in digital cross-promotion opportunities
- Expand destination awareness through B2B sales by leveraging trade show opportunities with industry partners





## EVENTS

### OBJECTIVE

To leverage destination events to position the TBID's brand as the exclusive overnight stay destination to accompany events and beyond, and to support the availability of experiences to attract visitation.

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

In FY22-23, the SLO TBID supported and participated in the development of the SLO CAL Festival and Event Strategy. In FY23-24 the TBID will advance this work to tie in with destination specific goals.

- Executing planning efforts for the development of a revised TBID Event Strategy from the outcomes of the SLO CAL Festival & Event Strategy
- Expanded opportunities to financially support tourism driving events in the City of SLO

## CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

### OBJECTIVE

Further educate and involve TBID constituents to increase program awareness and support through outreach, newsletters, training/education and support

### WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

In FY22-23, the SLO TBID organized and hosted a networking and educational event for constituents and industry partners to help increase program awareness and support. In FY23-24, the TBID will continue to identify opportunities to further educate and involve constituents through the following program initiatives

- Conduct constituent outreach on-going
- Develop and send newsletters and other communication
- Identify opportunities for training/education with strategic and industry partners
- Develop constituent resources to enhance and promote participation

## MEASUREMENT

From a quantitative perspective, we plan to measure success through the various stages of the travelers' journey. In the dreaming phase, we will assess interaction with the website by channel and from target geographies, impressions and reach from our paid and earned initiatives, reach of earned placements and organic share of voice. Looking at the planning phase, engagement metrics like site traffic, time on site and pages per session will be analyzed as well as social engagements and newsletter open rate. Lastly, in the booking phase, we can refer to partner referrals and newsletter subscriptions for success.

Throughout the travelers' journey, efficiency metrics such as Cost per Thousand Impressions (CPM), Cost per Click (CPC), Qualitative Score, Click Through Rate (CTR) and Cost per Acquisition (CPA) will all be reported to show opportunities for optimization.

From a qualitative perspective, we plan to collaborate with partners and stakeholders to assess impact, maintain up-to-date traveler sentiment research and leverage real-time traveler data.

SHORT-TERM		
AWARENESS METRICS	CONVERSION METRICS	EFFICIENCY METRICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Page 1 Keyword Rankings</li> <li>Newsletter Open Rate</li> <li>Organic Share of Voice</li> <li>Sessions / Users                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By Channel</li> <li>By Geo</li> </ul> </li> <li>Impressions</li> <li>Reach / Frequency</li> <li>Clicks</li> <li>Video Views/Completion Rate</li> <li>Barcelona Principles</li> <li>Earned Media Impressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize website to plan in-destination moments and activities</li> <li>Stakeholder referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep the conversation going to amplify our message</li> </ul>
LONG-TERM		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measuring Visitors Outcome from Drive Markets</li> <li>Evaluating Economic Impact of Visitors from Drive Markets</li> </ul>		

## BUDGET

For fiscal year 2023-2024, the TBID's revenue is projected to be \$2,140,800. The budget expenditure allocations are broken down between four primary categories with over half of the annual budget being allocated to marketing and contract services. The TBID continues to allocate essential funds to operations which includes staffing and tourism program expenses, as well as strategic partnerships and key tourism organizations.

### 2023-2024 TBID BUDGET EXPENDITURE ALLOCATIONS

- MARKETING & CONTRACT SERVICE
- OPERATIONS/STAFFING
- PARTNERSHIPS, EVENTS & TRADESHOWS
- TOURISM ORGANIZATION & RESEARCH

