



FY 2018 Marketing Council  
January 10, 2018 – 3:30 PM  
Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Board Room  
1945 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34236

## **Meeting Minutes**

**Committee members in attendance:** Russell Matthes, Scott Moudry, Erin Bryce, Anna Hahn, Barb Bullock, Laurie Pike, Sam Lowry, Sandra Rios, Phoebe LaForge

**Absent:** Renee Ryckman, Cindy Moore, Mischa Kirby, Carla Oakes, Stacey McLeod Anderson

**VSC staff in attendance:** Erin Duggan, Lynn Hobeck Bates, Sandrina McCloud, Seana Mincy, Enriqueta Balandra, Eddie Kirsch, Virginia Haley

### **AGENDA**

- Welcome, Erin Duggan, VSC Vice President
- Approval Minutes of October meeting:
  - Sandra Rios made the motion
  - Anna Hahn seconded the motion
- Research Update, Erin Duggan, Downs & St. Germain Research:

The northeast is the biggest market for visitors for 2017 bringing 362,660 tourists, but the Midwest is starting to catch up at 262,430. While visitors with children are not our typical tourist, they are coming from Minneapolis, Orlando, and Miami-Ft. Lauderdale as the top three locations. Most of our first-time visitors are from the United Kingdom followed by Buffalo-Rochester and Cleveland. We are also seeing some movement up the charts from the Ohio area. New York City and Boston are the top two cities with the highest median income at \$131,019 and \$126,938 respectively. When it comes to average spending per trip, our international visitors are spending more because they are typically here longer than domestic tourists.

Our current highest market penetration areas are Knoxville, Tampa-Clearwater-St. Pete and Naples-Ft. Myers. The areas with the highest amount of potential new visitors include cities with the highest populations: New York City, Washington DC-Baltimore, Chicago and Dallas/Ft. Worth.



- **Advertising Update, Seana Mincy, VSC Advertising Manager:**

Path and Captivate are new to the mix and they deal without OOH pieces in Canada and Boston. We started this year off strong, coming in at a 0.37 Arrivals per thousand (APM) for the quarter. This is up from 0.25 in Q1 of last year.

We implemented a media takeover of the Toronto market with digital, broadcast and OOH placements. Broadcast ran on CTV, Toronto's #1 station and ID Network, with a loyal audience fitting the Sarasota target. We wanted to reach people where they work so OOH featured digital screens throughout a network of paths connecting office towers, subway stations and 1200+ shops in Toronto. Digital video seen on the screens in elevators and lobbies in 79 buildings across Toronto reinforce the message. All OOH equaled almost 4 million impressions. Throughout Q1 for SEM we saw a 136% YoY growth in clicks to the site (from 51,344 to now 121,451) with just a 40% increase in investment

Arrivals have helped us identify new emerging markets for FY18. We've identified Cleveland and Columbus, OH as these test markets, and will be launching media to support this effort in Q2. Print advertisements will include arts-focused publications: Cleveland magazine, Cleveland Scene, Columbus monthly, Columbus Alive and Outlook Columbus. The Test and Learn budget has allowed us to test two new display partners. Matador is focused on creating content while Kayak will help us find new potential travelers.

- VSC Niche Meetings

Savor Sarasota restaurant week has become successful over the past 13 years since it started. This year we are offering \$32 for a multi-course meal. We put PR behind restaurants who extend the deal beyond the program dates. We are using this program as an example to help other niches.

- Arts/Culture

- In the past Arts organizations have said that many people think there are no more shows after Easter and that is their worst time. We created Sarasota Summer Stage which helped, but the inconsistency of deals made it hard for visitors to grasp.

- Attractions

- Several years ago we organized 30 Days of Discovery where tickets were BOGO in the month of September. It became so successful that attractions started backing out and the program was ended.

- Coming soon: Eco and Shopping

- If you have any ideas for additional niches we should talk to, please let us know.



- Co-op offerings for arts based on arts/cultural brainstorm session  
As a result of the Arts organization brainstorming session in November, we are able to offer quarter page ads in arts-focused magazines. We have not received any feedback from this effort, although we do plan to open it up to all our partners next week. We will also be pulling other niche groups aside for additional brainstorming sessions to help figure out the best way to help them attract visitors. We have identified the Eco/Nature and Shopping partners as our next groups.
- Marketing Outlook Summit:  
We are looking to cover tips and trends with different table ideas. The comments we receive from these discussions help shape our objectives and tactics to help us reach our goals. Past table discussion topics included: sales-leisure, partnership, website & content, PR, sports, sales meetings, etc.  
Some new topics discussed were:
  - Graphics/analytics-how to grasp the data,
  - Diversity/inclusion
  - Mobility/transportation (Uber, peddlers, trolley, app for iRide, possible bikes downtown and Siesta Key)
  - Weddings (VSC can make bags for weddings)
  - Air service and private jets
  - Marketing to Floridians (Getsmart geotargeting)
- Content & Website Update:  
Through Q1 sessions have been up 20%, users have been up 24%, average session duration is down 1%, bounce rate is up 13.26% and new sessions are up 4.5%. Pageviews are down 12.5% but that is not necessarily a bad thing. Hopefully, users are able to find content easier and quicker.  
Some of our top viewed pages are NYE events, Places to Stay, Events, Siesta activities. Most of our visitors come from organic searches because we are so high in Google results.  
In Q1 we integrated Getsmart which has been helping with event-related campaigns such as World Rowing and fall and holiday events. It targets specific types of content based on geotargets.  
We have signed a contract with Crowdriff that enables us to share publicly shared photos on our site and in marketing. The discussion has been had about whether these contracts will translate the same to print advertisements and how long we will be able to use the photos.  
We have been working with the partnership to help Simpleview CRM be a valuable asset for partners, including further communication between CRM extranet and business profiles.



Looking forward, microsites such as Savor Sarasota and Discover Natural Sarasota are getting a facelift and will have a similar look and feel to the website. This will help build a brand identity to these projects.

Our current e-newsletter has an estimated 70,000 subscribers. We have a goal to increase newsletter signups by 3% this FY. Some tactics being put into place are a pop-up on the website to capture more email addresses. We have also added the newsletter call to action on several new pages.

- Public Relations Update:

We hired a new agency in the fall and have been working on onboarding them. Some top highlights of Q1 include articles written in Thrillist, Vogue and AAA Living South. We also hosted a Visit Florida FAM from Germany in late November. Over Christmas, we sent out a mailer to some of our Toronto contacts with hopes they will be reminded of sunny Sarasota.

We had purchased a package with Visit Florida for the UK area and while we were one of the first buy-ins we have received excellent results. In the late spring, we will be working with meeting planners to host an Arts and Culture press trip with the new Art Ovation hotel and others opening their doors.

- Other Announcements / Updates

- Sandrina, Visitor Experience Manager

- New ideas for FAM tours with volunteers

- North Port and Laurie Pike would like a visit
- New routes, UTC, Venice Main Street, North Port

**Next Meeting – April 11<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 PM**