

Strategic Plan Initiative: Create and Convey Value Public Affairs Plan

Overview

The Division of Tourism (TravelNevada) FY16-17 strategic plan outlines six key agency initiatives, one of which is “Create and Convey Value.” This initiative is designed to heighten awareness of travel and tourism as the state’s leading economic engine through helping all stakeholders understand the importance of the tourism industry and its capacity to create jobs, drive the economy, generate a global brand for the state and enhance the quality of life for all Nevadans.

TravelNevada has achieved proven results in driving tourism throughout Nevada. Providing a series of strategic programs and activities to support these efforts as well as those undertaken by in-state partners, the state has realized increased traveler visits year-over-year through rural grant programs, aggressive marketing and public relations campaigns, comprehensive and interactive social media campaigns and through the development of tools and resources designed to attract both domestic and international visitors.

TravelNevada, in collaboration with The Abbi Agency as part of the integrated marketing team, will execute a strategy to inform, educate and engage in-state partners and influencers within critical audiences as part of a robust awareness campaign. This will be accomplished through the creation and employment of communication platforms and opportunities that highlight the overall impact of the industry, the efforts of the statewide partners and the agency’s achievements.

TravelNevada understands this initiative will work most effectively if the programs undertaken by the agency are operating at the highest possible level. Trust among all constituent groups is imperative for this initiative to be successful.

TravelNevada is not able to execute all tactics within this plan as many are advocacy efforts that must be done outside the parameters of a state agency. For this reason, identifying and mobilizing partners will be critical for the success of this plan.

The following plan outlines the programs and timeline for helping the agency to Create and Convey Value of the Nevada tourism industry and TravelNevada.

Goals

- Raise awareness of the value of the Nevada tourism industry in creating jobs, driving the economy and raising the global brand perception of Nevada.
- Help legislators and other influencers understand the importance of retaining revenue-generating dollars in revenue-generated activities, while identifying solutions for innovative financing of other agencies.
- Enhance relationships between TravelNevada and its key constituents.

Strategies

To achieve these goals, the following strategies will guide all efforts:

- Influencers Outreach – identify those to whom the messaging will be conveyed within the key audiences and prioritize according to sphere and potential; identify opportunities to engage with influencers.
- Industry Partner Engagement - Increase participation of statewide partners in TravelNevada programs and communicate partner success through the programs; identify champions within the tourism industry, but outside the agency, who can speak on behalf of the tourism industry and TravelNevada.
- External Communications - Create opportunities for consistent public appearances and media coverage that generate awareness in the tourism industry's position as an economic engine; develop and employ a two-way communication tool for TravelNevada and in-state partners to maintain constant contact and serve as a mouthpiece for both; coalesce educational messaging, agency ROI numbers, and economic statistics derived from proprietary and secondary research sources, highlighting the value of the industry and accomplishments of TravelNevada based on proven results.

Target Audiences

TravelNevada will employ a variety of communication tools to reach the following audiences:

- Influencers
 - Elected officials
 - Federal agencies that provide grants and oversight of arts, history and cultural entities
 - Statewide vertical industry partners, e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development organizations, regional marketing groups, municipality governance organizations
- Industry Partners
 - Nevada Commission on Tourism
 - Statewide tourism territory organizations

- Statewide travel industry partners (Destination Marketing Organizations [DMOs], attractions, lodging properties, retailers, restaurants, gaming properties, etc.)
- State government agencies, with primary focus on the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and sister agencies that most closely align with marketing, offering and developing experiences of interest to travelers (Governor’s Office of Economic Development, Department of Wildlife, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Department of Agriculture, etc.)
- State and federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) agencies
- In-state associations that govern and promote outdoor recreation
- Boards and associations that govern and promote gaming
- Media
 - Statewide business media
 - National travel trade media
 - National business media (secondary)
- Nevadans
 - Taxpayers
 - Potential in-state travelers
 - Legislator constituents/voters

Tactics by Audience

TravelNevada will achieve its objectives and reach its defined audiences through the following tactical elements:

Audience: Influencers

TravelNevada will define the individuals and leaders who comprise this informed group of decision makers. This group includes and is not limited to: state legislators, political action groups, travel and marketing industry associations and co-operatives, economic development regional agencies, salient nonprofits, county commissions, city mayors and managers.

- Identify influencers by organization type, sphere
- Work to develop key legislative initiatives that TravelNevada can employ with influential politicians – outlined in a separate legislative plan.
- Define and schedule industry association speaking engagements involving associations, civic groups, business organizations, etc. throughout the state of Nevada.
- Identify and apply for award opportunities for TravelNevada.
- Define a selective list of events in Reno, Lake Tahoe, Carson City/Virginia City, Las Vegas and rural Nevada that TravelNevada can attend to connect with local representatives.

- Define regional and rural ambassadors with whom we can partner for each of these selected events, and who can work with TravelNevada to provide a conduit through which relationships will continue to be developed.
- Educate each community through developed collateral and messages informing them of the programs, effectiveness and vision of TravelNevada.
- Listen and coach rural customer entities with sharing resources, assisting with grant application processes within the state and facilitating a conversation.

Audience: Nevada Tourism Industry

The support of the Nevada tourism industry is critical to the success of this effort. The industry will need to carry the advocacy mantle and champion Nevada tourism including, but also beyond, the mission of their own organizations.

- Identify industry champions and potential topic areas for each.
- Create a Nevada Hospitality Coalition comprised of associations that represent the hotel/lodging, retail, restaurants, gaming and resorts industries.
- Enhance TravelNevada.biz to provide messaging and opportunities for partners to help convey consistent information regarding the tourism and hospitality industries.
- Develop collateral materials that convey the success of industry members' participation in TravelNevada programming.
- Pursue highly visible opportunities for TravelNevada and key constituents (Commissioners, brand champions) to participate in meetings and in special appearances that offer opportunities to interact and influence key stakeholders in the public and private sectors.
- TravelNevada will provide training to the industry to enhance understanding of the legislative outreach process.
- Facilitate quarterly round table events encouraging "360" communications.

Audience: Media

The statewide media must be informed as to the value of the industry to help ensure the stories written represent the true picture. The media can be a tremendous partner if they have the stories, insights and vision required for them to consider TravelNevada a trusted source.

- Identify a list of key media and outlets in Nevada that have potential for conveying the tourism business message.
- Develop an editorial calendar that builds a strategic framework for messaging and story pitches.
- Coordinate and host two regional media mixers per year allowing the media to meet with TravelNevada and industry champions.

Audience: Nevadans

TravelNevada will reach state taxpayers, residents and the general public through traditional media relations efforts by targeting in-state broadcast, online and print media outlets to secure stories highlighting TravelNevada's efforts and achievements.

- Craft and publish a series of op-eds and other expert positioning pieces focused on high-level topics that are currently trending in Nevada. Work with TravelNevada to draft thoughtful, impactful responses.
- Work with in-state journalists to highlight the state's programs and year-over-year results through data-driven storytelling in up to ten (10) pieces in a mix of the state's media outlets.
- Conduct the 2016 Discover Your Nevada program, highlighting the opportunities for Nevadans to explore the state.
- Provide social media opportunities for Nevadans to celebrate their own state and act as ambassadors for visitors.

Key Messages

- The tourism industry employs more than 470,000 Nevadans, offering jobs at all levels of professional growth as well as entrepreneurial opportunities and jobs for retirees. This makes up roughly 29% of Nevada's workforce.
- Travel and Tourism (including hospitality and gaming) continues to be Nevada's leading economic engine. In 2014 alone, 53.4 million travelers visited the state, with Las Vegas experiencing record-breaking attendance at more than 41 million visitors.
- Nearly 13% of Nevada's GDP is attributed to the travel industry.
- Travelers visiting Nevada last year spent \$62.2 billion, a year-over-year increase of \$3 billion.
- For every \$1 TravelNevada spends on marketing and advertising, it generates \$33 in local and state tax revenue.
- The Division of Tourism offers \$1.4 million in marketing grants for rural communities and \$100,000 in infrastructure grants for infrastructure improvements per year.

Evaluation

TravelNevada will track its results through the following key performance indicators (KPIs):

- Enhanced commitment from lawmakers and decision makers to retain or enhance agency's budget.
- Increased support among state influencers through shared information and advocacy of TravelNevada and its programs.
- Scheduling and pursuit of twenty (20) meetings with lawmakers and influencers (conducted by champions outside of the TravelNevada staff).

- Eight (8) secured speaking engagements per year for TravelNevada leadership among political, industry and regional groups.
- Increased applications for cooperative marketing programs and rural marketing grants.
- Increased buzz, conversation, shared insights and participation among rural tourism experts and community leaders in TravelNevada programs.
- Execution of quarterly regional roundtables.
- Secured placements in ten (10) state-based media outlets on TravelNevada efforts, programs and achievements.

Travel Nevada will measure these efforts in conjunction with work done by the TravelNevada team and Commissioners on whether or not legislation changed in a more favorable manner.

Timeline

December 2015 – February 2016

- Develop and define targeted stakeholder lists at state and regional levels.
- Define and begin to schedule key events and speaking engagements.
- Define decision makers to align with and schedule meetings
- Develop and define targeted media placement goals.
- Refine messaging around TravelNevada's return-on-investment and KPIs.
- Develop TravelNevada in-state stakeholder media kit highlighting programs and achievements.
- Ignite conversations with rural and regional community leaders, assign partnerships to each target region.
- Plan quarterly regional roundtables.
- Develop an in-state media messaging and press release calendar.
- Connect with statewide hospitality organizations to explore potential for forming a hospitality industry coalition.
- Enhance TravelNevada.biz with a section dedicated to conveying messages about the industry and offering collateral materials for use in partner outreach.
- Revamp the TravelNevada e-newsletter for industry partners.
- Identify organizations and leadership for the Nevada Hospitality Coalition.

January – June 2016

- Execute meetings with key decision makers and lawmakers.
- Show presence at scheduled key events with TravelNevada team.
- Execute one (1) regional roundtable.
- Secure on-message media placements.
- Deliver collateral and resources developed on TravelNevada efforts to rural partners.
- Attend and participate in two (2) previously unattended rural calendar events.
- Participate in one (1) industry speaking engagements per month.
- Execute initial phase of media messaging strategy.

- Conduct a Hospitality Coalition meeting.
- March 2016 - Legislative Budget Process Likely Kick-off
- May 2016 – Non-budgetary Bill Draft Requests Likely Due

July – December 2016

- Execute meetings with key decision makers and lawmakers.
- Show presence at scheduled key events with TravelNevada team.
- Execute one (1) rural roundtable.
- Secure on-message media placements.
- Deliver collateral and resources developed on TravelNevada efforts to rural partners.
- Attend and participate in two (2) previously unattended rural calendar events.
- Participate in one (1) industry speaking engagements per month.
- Execute second phase of media messaging strategy
- Create legislative session plan (based on final Governor’s Recommended Budget and identified key issues) and develop associated collateral.
- Conduct a Hospitality Coalition meeting.
- August 2016 – Preliminary Budgets Likely Due, Budget Bills Likely Due
- October 2016 – Budget Office Likely Submits Agency Request Budgets to LCB
- December 2016 – Budget Office Likely Submits Adjusted Base Budgets to LCB

January – June 2017

- Execute meetings with key decision makers and lawmakers.
- Show presence at scheduled key events with TravelNevada team.
- Execute one (1) regional roundtable.
- Secure on-message media placements.
- Deliver collateral and resources developed on TravelNevada efforts to rural partners.
- Attend and participate in two (2) previously unattended rural calendar events.
- Participate in one (1) industry speaking engagements per month.
- Execute ongoing media messaging strategy.
- February 2017 – Legislative Session Begins
- April 2017 - Coordinate and host the Tourism Day at the Legislature.

July – December 2017

- Execute meetings with key decision makers and lawmakers.
- Show presence at scheduled key events with TravelNevada team.
- Secure on-message media placements.
- Conduct quarterly regional roundtables.
- Attend and participate in two (2) previously unattended rural calendar events.
- Participate in one (1) industry speaking engagements per month.
- Execute final phase of media messaging strategy.
- Develop campaign recap report.