

## **DSA WORK PLAN for FY 2021-22**

**ORGANIZATION:** MONTEREY COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (MCCVB)

**PRIORITY:** Drive Tourism Recovery

**MCCVB VISION:** Inspire the world to experience our extraordinary destination, responsibly.

**MCCVB MISSION:** Drive business growth through compelling marketing and targeted sales initiatives that maximize the benefits of tourism to our guests, members, and community.

Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau (MCCVB) is the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Monterey County. The work of the MCCVB has never been more critical. Travel and tourism were the among the hardest hit industries by the pandemic with an impact equaling approximately \$1.75 billion in lost revenue for the region from visitor spending and a reduction of nearly 50% in the hospitality workforce at the height of the pandemic. Current travel forecasts project a return to previous years' levels of travel could stretch up to three years. While consumer's demand for travel is beginning to return – the competition for each travel dollar is intense. MCCVB falls in the lowest quartile in budget per hotel room compared to competitive destinations such as Napa and Sonoma whose marketing power outpaces Monterey by 2:1.

The stakes have never been higher for Monterey County's second largest industry and the investment and collaboration between the County and MCCVB never more critical. Strategic objectives include investing in opportunities to grow consumer and group market share and strengthening of relationships with the community through inclusion, open communication and participation. In collaboration with local businesses and in partnership with local city and county government, MCCVB has reacted to the impact that the coronavirus has had on the tourism economy in Monterey County and is working harder than ever to assess and monitor the impact, implement the critical marketing, public relations, group business development, and community relations programming needed during this time.

MCCVB publishes an annual business plan focused on business development and marketing programs that inspire visitation and increase overnight stays in the region. A collaborative approach to destination marketing is essential to the success of these programs and is built into the development of each initiative executed. MCCVB's Board of Directors is made up of hoteliers, attractions, restaurants and other hospitality businesses from across the County.

Partnerships are established and fostered as content marketing of the county is implemented with its funding partners, members and affiliated associations.

MCCVB works closely with a broad group of partners throughout the County to ensure an integrated approach to information sharing, marketing collaboration and crisis management.

These include:

- Monterey County Hospitality Association
- Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
- Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce
- Carmel Chamber of Commerce
- King City Chamber of Commerce
- Monterey County Business Council
- Monterey County Film Commission
- Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association
- Monterey County Farm Bureau
- Monterey Regional Airport
- Monterey County Business Alliance

Being able to implement the programs necessary to bring hospitality business back to where it was prior to the crisis is a critical part to restoring economic vitality. While the MCCVB and tourism sector continues to face an enormous challenge, the resources provided by its investors will be leveraged in every possible way to bring us out of this crisis as quickly as possible.

MCCVB is committed to educating travelers. Monterey County is a bucket-list destination and attracts visitors from around the world to see and experience the jewel of the central coast. With visitation, comes a need for education on how to travel safely and responsibly so that our current and future guests can experience Monterey County's splendor for generations to come. MCCVB's Sustainable Moments and Responsible Travel initiatives will continue to engage residents, businesses, stakeholders, travel trade, clients and guests on best practices for experiencing all that Monterey County has to offer responsibly and safely. Responsible travel messaging is included in our content across all customer engagement touch points and will be augmented with conscious messaging required by local and State health recommendations. MCCVB also remains vigilant and ready to pivot to respond to other emergencies the region has historically faces including wildfires, storms and highway outages.

#### **PROGRAMS:**

**Marketing Communications \$744,512:** The primary goal of MCCVB's Marketing Communications department is to inspire and increase overnight visitation amongst Leisure, Group and International travelers. Driving inspiration is the result of brand-based Content Marketing, which includes synergizing advertising, public relations and social media to develop and distribute compelling, targeted content.

MCCVB targets demographic, geographic and psychographic markets that have a higher propensity to travel based on our research. Partnerships with our chefs, restaurants, sommeliers, and community partners in the specific regions of Salinas Valley, Carmel Valley, Big Sur and Pebble Beach are established and critical to the success of these market investments.

Public Relations initiatives integrate with marketing by utilizing media relations to “earn” publicity that is user-generated or editorial in nature. This supports advertising and marketing messages through credible, objective sources, and expands the reach of our ad buys, allowing for resource leveraging and a collective regional approach. Marketing and communications messaging tells the story of the destination, with focus on our natural and special assets including outdoor adventure, ecotourism opportunities, wine and food, agriculture, golf and of course the scenic beauty of the region.

**Group Business Development \$641,865:** The focus of MCCVB’s Group Business Development department is to create and cultivate revenue opportunities through groups, meetings and conferences for the benefit of our hotel community and other related members that increase revenue from conference and meeting attendees. Meetings and conferences are highly valued for a variety of reasons – chief among them is the ability to attract such business in ‘need’ periods where they can fill rooms and create increased rate compression that benefits the hosting hotel as well as other lodging properties in the area.

Group Business Development involves building one-to-one relationships with meeting planners and matching their needs with appropriate venues in the region. MCCVB develops lasting relationships with clients through prospecting, trade shows, sales missions, and client events. Our team generates and delivers high-quality leads to hotels and venues for bid opportunities. MCCVB also provides a strategic client services program to strengthen the destination’s value proposition. The services that we provide to meeting planners increase their attendees’ propensity to extend their stays and expenditures. We encourage and provide “pre and post” meeting itineraries, welcome tables, and meeting microsites to conferences and group events. MCCVB’s client services inspire conference attendees to experience the entire region and not just their conference venue.

**Community Relations \$130,525:** MCCVB’s Community Relations department aligns with the MCCVB’s strategic direction to promote inclusion between residents, local government and small business and the hospitality and tourism sectors. Attracting visitors to stay in the destination overnight directly affects the economic impact throughout Monterey County.

Under the Community Relations umbrella are the Membership and Visitor Services programs. Many small businesses do not have the resources or bandwidth to maintain marketing programs of their own and depend on the MCCVB to promote them. Relationships with local

businesses allow MCCVB to promote goods and services that enhance the visitors experience that in turn help local businesses sustain vibrant operations.

During the first year of the pandemic, MCCVB interacted with potential visitors through a virtual platform. Visitor inquiries were handled through Live Chat services, phone and email. With every engagement, the Destination Specialist promotes local businesses, provides resources to travelers on the local and state health recommendations and educates them on how to visit sustainably and responsibly while in the destination.

The advancement of technology and the ever-increasing use of smart phones has changed the way travelers plan their trips. To remain fiscally responsible and align with the shift in travel planning, MCCVB will transition out of the traditional brick and mortar model and enhance the current platform of the visitor services program with more robust tools such as a geo-fencing and virtual concierge services that target in-market visitors.

**General Administration \$199,572:** expenses are required to support all departments' programs and staffing. These costs are allocated within the departments in the work plan. MCCVB adheres to industry best practices throughout its operations and financial management of the organization.

MCCVB's business plan contains a great deal of detail on the programs that Monterey County's DSA investment is a part of and will be provided as a supplement to this document when it is finalized and published later this year. The County's investment in this program is critical to the creation of a robust, integrated, partnership-oriented program designed to drive overnight stays and bring important tourism dollars to our region.

#### **PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

MCCVB will continue to measure and report on success just as in previous years with metrics including:

- Generating travel demand
  - Intent to Visit Score Goal: 4.3 (5 point scale)
- Increase lead volume of group business
  - Lead Generation Goal: 560
  - Conversion Rate Goal: 29%
- Promote local businesses and focus on creating greater inclusion between jurisdictions in regional destination programs and promotion

Our ability to set specific metrics is obviously hampered at this time as shelter in place orders remain in place from the state government as well as County Health. It is important to note, MCCVB will follow orders of County Health and not promote travel until told it is okay to do so.

This work plan, including the performance measures and budget, is scheduled to be approved by the MCCVB Board of Directors in June; until then, it is subject to change.