

BUSINESS PLAN 2014 to 2018

Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission

FOCUS

STREAMLINE OPERATIONS

Visitor Guide Distribution

Currently the Visitor Guide is delivered to the Onancock HQ then distributed manually to 150 regional distribution points. One-off requests flow to HQ due to phone number published in website footer, on Facebook, and in Guide.

- Drop shop guide directly from printer to distribution points.
- Store remainder at Onancock/Welcome Center.
- Ship bulk orders from Onancock and one-off requests from Welcome Center. Change channel contact points (Facebook, website, guide) from WC to HQ.

Digital Asset Management

Images are key marketing drivers for travel and tourism. Current image library does not support people-centric story telling and is not indexed for easy retrieval by editorial subject or by hi-res v lo-res image.

- Obtain images from VTC, Bay Creek, other partners to build image library.
- Hire/budget for professional photographer to obtain add'l images that support marketing strategy
- Use staff and ESVATC's digital camera to capture key images.
- Must obtain and file releases for all people featured in any image.
- Index all images for easy retrieval. Right now they are mass downloaded to Picassa at ESVATC office and uncategorized.

Website Platform

The current website does not display well on mobile, does not support Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with a "conversion funnel," does not have downloadable images for media/sharing/crowdsourcing, has a domain "owned" by webmaster John Blandin, does not permit broad admin access to create pages on the fly, and has no self-service function so partners can self-service events/listings/packages & deals.

- Move current site to a website platform that displays on smart phones
- Add self-service business/event/package listings; content is approved and moved to production server by ESVATC staff.

- Add image library for download by media/industry partners.
- Add email sign up and guide order form to home page. Move Facebook to top spot. These are KPIs that can be monitored and then success articulated to funders and industry.
- Install admin management so pages/content/images can be added on the fly by non-tech staff.
- Current domain, owned by John Blandin; should be moved to ESVATC. Write letter requesting transfer.
- Add more robust partner content to support industry relations program.
- Create relational dbase so relative content shows (You also might like ...)
- Install Google Analytics to website.

Governing Documents

Bylaws, personnel manual, tax documents, trademark/legal, strategy/brand documents need review and updating.

- Bylaws need updating or modification.
- Resolution that formed the ESVATC is outdated, per Katie Nunez, as VA statutes have changed; revise. Once that is done, other updates to bylaws can be made.
- Resolve ESVATC's tax status; Bob Young, CPA, has audited the organization but has no knowledge of this matter. IRS employer ID number is attached to Donna Bozza as contractor/1099. Per Katie Nunez, ESVATC is a 501C6. Steps have been outlined to achieve 501C6 tax status.
- Personnel manual needs provision to govern staff review when conflicts arise.
- Move travel queries to Welcome Center, away from Onancock, replace phone numbers in all channels, website, Facebook, guide (website done Jan 2014; Facebook done May 2014).

Data Management

Business and event listings managed by the Welcome Center manager are labor intensive: three dbases must be updated for any new/edits to a business listing. The event dbase is created by the WC manager. There is no dbase for industry deals/specials/packages (which are a very sought after consumer item).

- The kiosk business dbase is a separate stand alone element and must be updated manually.
- The other two business dbases could be collapsed and updated as one.
- The event dbase should be self-serve by industry, with forced data fields, then approved by staff.
- Create a dbase, self-served by industry, for deals, specials & packages.

REVENUE GROWTH/COST SAVINGS

- Pursue Exmore TOT; prove up impact of ESVATC on revenue growth to their hotel properties (groups?) and approach town council via Northhampton Cty BOS.
- Restructure Accomack Country revenue stream so it increases as tax revenue grows.

- The Visitor Guide is revenue neutral, underwritten by advertising and produced by Vista Graphics. Investigate pulling annual guide production in house and capturing revenue from ad sales.
- Add ad server to the website and sell digital ads. Point to online sponsored partners in prominent positions. Set up bundled advertising program: digital, print, weblinks. Partners can add three images free to their product listing, additional images/videos/links cost per unit.
- Merchandise Eastern Shore flag/other products via local retailers (Blue Crab Bay, Island House, etc)
- Increase sponsorship/underwriting opportunities for Tourism Summit.
- Apply for grants from VTC and other partners.
- Switch to online billpay, save \$.50 on mailing bills
- Field intercept survey to measure consumer inclinations
- Field conversion survey to measure cost/benefit ratio of marketing efforts
- Forming a 501C6 will save sales tax costs.

STAFFING

Divert funds from full time office administrator to outsourced bookkeeping, half-time administrator, and half time content creator.

- Outsource bookkeeping to professional bookkeeper.
- Half time operations specialist will manage purchases/supplies, answer phones, coordinate media tours/requests, do BOD prep/maintenance, manage bulk fulfillment, maintain organizational/financial files, update data/distribution lists, add routine content to website.
- Half-time content creator will produce content for press releases, features, social media messages, images; community/consumer email; respond to media inquiries.

Board of Directors

Add two Board members per by-laws to round out the board and add key subject matter experts to the organizational leadership.

- Recruit key subject matter experts in technology, finance.
- Resolve counties' roles in board composition

Volunteers

Unpaid staff augments the work of paid staff and the board of directors, gives the community an active role in the Tourism Commission's efforts and provides focused conceptual and execution support.

Form strategic advisory committee (s) to

- A board member should be on each advisory committee.
- Tourism Summit Task Force
- Marketing Task Force.

- Revenue Generation, Finance
- Involve volunteers to distribute Guides up and down the shore, alleviate paid staff burden, give organization more visibility.
- Recruit interns to augment paid staff.

