

Santa Maria Valley

2020 Recovery Plan

We don't know how long we're going to be in this situation, and the current priority is to conserve as much of the budget as possible to a) cover expenses during a time when revenue is significantly down and b) to have enough saved to put toward paid channels once this is behind us.

Assumptions

- Even once we come out of this, we anticipate being in an economic recession. Initial travel will likely be within driving distance, and likely in-state for California.
- People won't want to break the bank on their first trip but will be ready to get out of town for an escape.
- They won't be immediately keen on visiting a big city or being around a ton of people.
- This recovery plan will become the framework for/start to the 20/21 marketing plan.

We feel strongly that part of our messaging shift should be giving people a reason/incentive to travel to Santa Maria Valley and that we shouldn't expect the creative to do all of the heavy lifting there.

As for geographies, we recommend continuing to go all in on Bakersfield and Fresno — we've already seen traction there and would like to focus our paid spend on these targets in order to maximize overall impact and not risk diluting the message by spreading our budget too thin.

Budget: \$75,000 (planned unspent FY 19/20)

- Paid Media: \$50,000
- Asset & Content Development/Media Management: \$25,000

Paid Media Strategy/Approach (12 weeks)

In the context of a \$50,000 media plan, we will assume a **three-month plan** over the course of which we will spend these dollars. While the assumption is that the period of actual recovery will be much longer than that, we want to be cautious of diluting this budget and spreading these dollars too thin. After the initial three months, ongoing media placement will come out of the \$389,000 currently budgeted for the remainder of the 20/21 fiscal year.

- Target Geographies
 - Bakersfield
 - Fresno
- Highly targeted; Digital only; Existing audience targets
 - Note that the percentages below are approximate; we will need to take a look at volumes and keywords for paid search and may need to adjust based on the environment once we're ready to launch the digital campaign.

- Paid Search - 30%
 - Will need to incorporate new campaigns and rewrite ads for existing ones (focusing on relaxation, small/uncrowded destinations, activities with few people, road trips, barbecue, etc.)
- Paid Social - 45%
- YouTube - 25%
- Remarketing (based on website visitors; included in breakdowns by channel as noted above)

Creative Approach

Let's Get Together, Again / Let's Get Back Together

As we welcome visitors back to Santa Maria Valley, we want to remind them of what makes us the perfect place to reconnect with each other and the central coast. We'll do this by going back to our roots. Full-flavored food, an unexpected wine experience, beautiful surroundings, and real value.

Sample messaging:

Let's get together. Back to our laughter. Back to relaxation. In a beautiful central coast valley that wasn't manufactured to be a tourist destination. Where the unconstrained beauty and genuine people make it the perfect place to grab your closest friends and head out for a relaxed wine weekend where you can do more for less. Smile wide, swirl your style and have a Santa Maria Style getaway.

Strategy

We will create a mini campaign around the theme "Let's Get Back Together," and an updated wordmark that will carry through our videos and digital ads. The imagery will focus on the warmth and beauty of the area to show our potential visitors that Santa Maria Valley has the wine and coastal experience that's the perfect warm-up trip after shelter in place. The tone of these ads will be cheerful, down to earth, and inviting. We will not rely on any outright statement about the end of the pandemic, we will just be extending an invitation to reconnect with friends and with the central coast.

Campaign Timeline

Run for 5-6 weeks to start and then evaluate. The plan will be to weave Uncorked back in after this, potentially with some overlap.

Creative Executions

- Two, scripted 15-second videos using our existing assets
 - Messaging focus:
 - Coast, climate and barbecue
 - Wide-open spaces and a relaxing wine experience

- Affordability weaved into both messages
 - Look and feel will be [similar to our original brand campaign](#), but will feature the tagline with artwork to accompany it. (Similar to the #SantaMariaStyle graphic)
- One, scripted 30-second spot, largely based on the two 15-second spots, for use in emails, on the website, YouTube, organic social posts, etc.
- 10-second, non-scripted video shorts (with music bed)
- Static social assets (single image & carousel) using existing imagery (start with 5-6 versions):
 - Messaging Focus:
 - Coast, climate
 - Barbecue
 - Wine
 - Wide open spaces
 - Affordability
 - Getaway Package
- Email Copy
 - Craft new email messaging around the “Let’s Get Together, Again”/“Let’s Get Back Together” campaign premise
 - Target both active and inactive subscriber segments
 - Use existing email design templates

Campaign Messaging Highlights (to carry through social, website content, etc.)

- Let’s get back together
- Get close or just get away
- Let’s reconnect
- Get some fresh air: take a stroll through the coastal mountains or an uncrowded vineyard
- Get out of the central valley and into the Santa Maria Valley
- Get the most from the coast / more for less
- No crowds, no heat
- A destination that was already off the beaten path
- A place that welcomes you like family
- Authentic hospitality

Content Approach

- Recovery-focused blog post (updated continually)
- Blog post about events & happenings coming up
- “Instagrammable” Moments blog post
- Continue to emphasize top-performing content (barbecue, hiking, outdoors)
- Getting travel writers and influencers to SMV (timing is TBD - capitalize on the fact that most aren’t making these requests right now; 2TravelDads, Donna Sozio, John Godfrey/VisitCA)
- “Dreaming of SMV” series with prior influencers

- Getaway package promotion
- Social media giveaway/sweepstakes
 - Branded swag, Susie Q's sauce, a bottle of wine
- Continue UGC sharing
- Website content
 - Update hotel pages with information on safety and cleanliness precautions, etc. Would need information from hotel partners.

ADDENDUM

Research & Resources

GFK: Developing Effective Ad Campaigns in the Age of COVID-19 (airs 5/21)

GFK: [How Disruption Is Driving Consumer Transformation](#)

[NY Times: Impact of travel Post COVID](#)

CHLA [Clean and Safe checklist](#) and [Reopening guidance](#)

[Re-Opening Your Hotel in a Post COVID-19](#)

A few key takeaways –

- Prepare now for a reopening. There will undoubtedly be delays with vendors that provide signage, HVAC/Elevator maintenance, water system sanitization, etc. Install plexiglass now and don't wait, order PPE so you are taking care of your staff when they return, consider touchless pay systems.
- Be cognizant of lawyers that are presumably not as busy as prior to COVID. They will be looking to go after employers that violate employee privacy rights (temperature monitoring, not providing a safe/clean space to work, becoming ill with COVID etc). ADA and COVID-19 liability lawsuits will be high.
- Be prepared to place staff at choke points throughout the property to ensure social distancing (elevator, lobby, check in counter. Using stanchions will be helpful but staff provides a guarantee that surfaces are cleaned after each person and distancing is defined.
- Plan to place signage everywhere including entrances into rooms, public spaces, restrooms, etc. on the cleaning measures to keep people safe. Implement an alert system that everyone (as example) breaks every 30 mins to wash hands.
- Reduce density – reduce the amount of entrances, mitigate chokepoints, and assign staff to monitor them.
- Absolutely no self-service of any food items.
- No more bell and/or room service.
- Confirm that your staff will return when you are able to hire them back. A hotel in SF was given a state contract to house medical/sick people only to realize none of their staff would return because they were making more money on unemployment, had to care for a sick family member, or lacked child care.

What are Hotels Doing?

- [Buy Now, Stay Later](#), a new hospitality marketing campaign, is selling "hotel bonds," similar in purpose and procedure to a treasury bond. Buy a \$100 "hotel bond" now, and in sixty days it will mature into a \$150 credit. For every \$100 bond you buy, you'll gain that extra \$50 after sixty days. Multiple bonds can be purchased from the same hotel.
- [The Wayfinder](#), a new boutique hotel in Newport, R.I., is still planning to open in mid-May, joining a handful of other properties that are moving ahead with planned openings.
- Hotels that plan to reopen in the near future will have to tackle the question "is my hotel safe and clean?" [The Points Guy has a look at what guests will expect in terms of hygiene and cleanliness.](#)
- As of April 14, 1,000 Hilton Hotels have suspended operations, which accounts for 16 percent of the chain's total global properties. Marriott hotels also expect to report a decline of at least 23% in revenue per room for the first quarter.

- The [Cayuga Collection](#), a portfolio of 10 independently owned luxury hotels in Costa Rica, Panama and Nicaragua, has shifted to staff education during the pandemic, including soft skills like empathy, listening and dealing with difficult guests.
- This week, Marriott International launched the [Marriott Global Cleanliness Council](#), which is developing new hospitality standards "designed to minimize risk and enhance safety for consumers and Marriott associates alike," the company announced.

[Arrivalist Daily Travel index for CA](#) - The Daily Travel Index is a free, publicly accessible information resource using Arrivalist's proprietary location data to measure travel activity specifically for trips of at least 50 miles. The Daily Travel Index is intended as a barometer of drive market activity

[Destination Recovery Toolkit](#) (Coraggio Group)

New Travel data shows key to recovery

[#BacktoTravel](#)

It appears that Travel Enthusiasts are well informed about the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic. The vast majority are hesitant to rely on media reports, but rather rely on their own determination to start traveling based on the advice of Health Officials AND destination/supplier information

Standing out from the crowd in the post-COVID digital restart (Phrasee)

Historically, those that have continued to invest during and after the crisis, have succeeded at a greater level than those who pulled back. In crisis, there is opportunity.

- Keep testing to see what resonates
- Don't leave things too late – prepare now as one thing is for sure, the restrictions will be lifted and people will be looking for a change
- Amplify the effect of email as the most critical consumer communication channel
- Make sure your communications stand out and strike the right chord
- Protect your brand voice

[Using Social Media to understand the mindset of the crisis consumer](#) (SparkLoft)

Social sentiment reports www.SparkLoftMedia.com

- Highlighted how we still need to be talking to our visitors and remind them we will be an option to travel to once it is safe to. They think the first wave of travelers will be the returning visitors. They talked about the sentiment volume we need to keep in mind: negative, neutral and positive. Stay positive but reassure visitors we will see them once it safe to do so.
- The mindset of consumers has fundamentally changed and now there's a difference in quarantine consumers: the action-oriented consumers, the curators and the escapists. Gives examples on how to speak to each of these consumers.
- Concept of pushing packages too soon. Since we are still in the unknown of anything really, we don't want to push any packages for the return of visitors, until we have more concrete information on when it will be safe to do so.
- Past visitor are your best friends
 - They are familiar with the destination so the risk is lower

- Associate your destination with positive memories
- Take action now
 - Identify past travelers
 - Start messaging to them through social and email
 - Social responses are key to keep folks engaged
 - Develop future promos for return visitors
 - Keep in touch but do not actively market (once restrictions are lifted)
- How to navigate the new phases
 - Use tactful & sensitive messaging
 - Reassure your future guests that they will be safe
 - Stay engaged with your audience
- Messaging
 - Respond and engage on social - connect with them individually
 - Message in a non-actional way/be kind and understanding
 - Ask them what they miss
 - Ask them to share memories
 - Make sure to reshare old content (make sure it is appropriate at this time)

[Destination Analysts - Travel Sentiments as of 4/20/2020](#)

- Overall people are feeling slightly less concern over the virus than they did in previous weeks
- 75% of American travelers have had their travel plans affected by coronavirus
- 70% had to cancel trips due to virus
- 8 in 10 Americans say they are done traveling until the scare of the virus is over.
- 36.5% believe they won't be traveling until there is a vaccine
- 72% say they can't wait to travel again, this continues to rise weekly
- Top activities they were going to do once the shelter in place is lifted
 - Hanging with friends at restaurants
 - Personal grooming
 - Go on a trip
 - What trip do they most want to do after pandemic
 - Focus on relaxing instead of stimulation
- There is a slight increase this week of trips for summer/fall
- 36% say the type of travel they do will change to more of a staycation and road-trips & avoid crowded destinations
- 40% this week say they will not air travel until there is a vaccine
 - 61% of people would feel more confident if the airlines had mandatory health screening within the US
- 75% surveyed don't want other travelers coming to their community
- Men are less concerned about traveling than women

How Americans are thinking about over tourism, overcrowding - Future of travel as a sustainable brand

- 31.2% American travelers consider leisure travel valuable along with spending time with friends and family
- 35% of Americans feel like it makes their community a better place to live - Good for economy

- If a destination is perceived to have over-tourism, they are less likely to visit again
- 15% say that air travel is bad for environment
- Younger travelers are more conscious of travel impact on environment
- Changes to travel once virus is over
 - Won't travel any place where a lot of people go
 - Stay local
 - Camping over hotel – what about vacation rentals?

Earth Day Highlights

- Sustainability is more important than ever to travelers
- Travelers are looking for pure atmospheres
- Locals have concerns on visitors impact on environment. Best to address these concerns.
- Create itinerary trips that have sustainably tips and key messaging
- Develop shared messaging that can be used for visitors to lower their impact
- Create travel safety recommendations
- Help train frontline employees at any facility

Focus after COVID 19

- Focus on community level experience
 - Leveraging destination networks that relate to the visitors experience.
- Encourage responsible visitation- prepare, care connect is a campaign to encourage responsibly visitation across Oregon
- Adapting the visitor experience
 - Small business owners- help bring biz together
- Use sustainable travel as a strategy for destinations
 - Become the catalyst to inspire industry and government to support sustainability initiatives
 - Environment, resident quality of life, quality of economy, visitor experience
 - Strengthen tourists planning and site management
 - Over tourism was a problem before COVID and will be after

Ways to address local fears for travelers coming to our region

- Provide destination and visitor education
- Offer meaningful health guidelines - want to make sure visitors are traveling smart
- Set exceptions
- Tap into research

Tackling sustainability more authentically coming out of the crisis

- Provide truly meaningful ways to travel that involves low impact waste travel.
- Create low impact travel itineraries to share with visitors
- Invest in systems of resiliency
- Rethink who our focus is, yes its about the traveler but also focus on the residents to make sure they feel comfortable with travelers in their area

Google My Business Essentials During COVID-19, by Miles Partnership (4/16)

Additional phrases that folks are using in search:

- Is it safe to travel to... (Highway 1, Cambria, etc.)
- Where to go when it is safe to travel again...

During the call they also mentioned the importance of continuing to communicate with not only our owned audience (social, email) but also the 'discovery' segment (those searching for a category, product, service) as Google shows that current traffic patterns have shifted to 45% direct and 55% discovery. (note: this is good intel to support our current SEM efforts.) Use of "make a Post" function (live for 7 days) to share community info, event info (once restrictions are lifted). Consider using a social message to 'post' on Google. Keep adding new photos/360 images/videos to GMB profiles.

LFA admins – please share with your constituents:

- If your hours of operation have changed, [edit your Business Profile on Google](#).
- Use [Posts](#) to communicate information directly on your Business Profile on Google, like special offers or inventory updates.
- Consider setting an [email auto-reply](#) with answers to frequently asked questions.

[Thrive Scenarios for Resilient Leaders](#)

Move beyond 'recovering' from the crisis and toward 'thriving' in the long run

3 timeframes for the crisis:

- Respond – manage continuity
- Recover – learn and emerge stronger
- THRIVE – prepare for the next normal

Ask yourself:

- Which of your **previous expectations** need to be rethought? What prospects that seemed unlikely could be accelerated?
- What might **consumers value** in particular in these different times?
- What are the **biggest threats** to your current business?
- What capabilities, relationships, and assets are important?

[Destination Analysts \(4/09\)](#)

[Travel sentiments](#)

Key takeaways:

- **Are we losing the summer travel season?** Last week 4-in-10 (39.3%) American travelers saw the coronavirus situation resolving itself before summer. Agreement with this statement is down this week to just 3-in-10 (31.0%). About one-half of American travelers (53.1%) expect to be back traveling this Fall. Only 16.4 percent disagree. Over the course of the month, there has been increasing agreement that staycations may end up replacing vacations this summer. The percent of American travelers agreeing with this sentiment has grown from 41.3 percent in wave 1 to 52.8 percent in the most recent wave.
- **Are we in for a Fall turnaround?** While the scheduling of leisure trips in the next three months has fallen, there does appear to be some increases on the horizon for the Fall months.
- **After the crisis, will travel behaviors change?** Less than one-third of American travelers say they expect to change the types of travel destinations they choose to visit

after the coronavirus situation blows over. However, when asked specific travel behaviors they will likely avoid after the crisis is over, more than half said they would avoid cruises (55.1%), and nearly half (49.8%) said they would avoid crowded destinations.

- **Traveler excitement to get back out on the road** increased this week, as nearly 70 percent of American travelers agree that they miss traveling and can't wait to get out and travel again.

[US Travel: CARES for DMOs](#)

Guidance applied to DMOs with employees and bank loans mostly.

ustravel.org/ReliefResources

[CARES Act Relief FAQ](#)

[Adara Webinar](#)

Focused on data analytics applied to how travel co's respond to the Covid-19 situation and steps to discerning an inflection point in travel demand when brands can begin to leverage the rebound.

- Gating Events" must occur first
 - o Reduction in rate of infection at wide scale (Infectious disease experts say we shouldn't plan to get back out too soon. Herd immunity needs higher %
 - o Lifting of SIP orders and Travel restrictions at Wide Scale
- Even though Adara data shows bumps in searches/planning, especially for Family travel 90 days out from now, Consensus was it is premature to make meaningful and specific predictions given what's happening is unprecedented in magnitude, severity and duration and a host of other reasons. **Based on current search volume and projected travel date, research shows more optimism toward travel beginning 6 weeks out – September 1.**
- Travel segments Likely to Recover first:
 - o **Domestic, Leisure, Short Distance (Drive market - w/in 600 miles)**
 - o Business: Medium Distance will recover before Short. Senior level Small meetings, operational and Unmanaged Corporate travel recover fastest.
 - o Substitutional demand (Video) conferencing will slow the recovery of larger business segments
 - o Certain travel will be more impacted by lingering emotional, psychological and attitudinal concerns

Recovery will happen in phases as follows:

1. Domestic Drive
2. Short Haul Air
3. International
4. Group/Meetings

Observation: A lot of this data is U.S. and international, not California – and certainly not San Luis Obispo County, but based on historical downturns we'll recover faster because the bulk of our business is the California drive market. I think we're spot on looking at which market segments will and will not be willing to travel right away and which new segments could help

rebuild our business. Younger, more affluent travelers will be the first because they aren't as afraid of the virus as older, affluent travelers. Note that I specifically mention affluent because these folks will not be as impacted by the economic impact of COVID-19.

Clarify in a Time of Crisis: Miles Media Travel Sentiment Study

Travel Sentiment Research – a sample of 1000 U.S. adults 18+

Weekly survey results and impacts PDF: www.COVID10.MilesPartnership.com/data-tracking

- 84% of travelers have changed their plans
 - 53% have cancelled completely
 - 43% have reduced their plans in some way
- Factors impacting plans are overwhelmingly due to the SIP recommendation:
 - 67% blamed COVID-19
 - 25% are concerned about the economy
- 65% say they plan to travel in the next six months and the majority are focused on a destination they can drive to.
- As of April 1, the majority of travel content being consumed was online video
 - 11 % say they are watching 3+ minute videos

Trip Advisor Research of users who had visited the site in March

- 59% say more likely to take a road trip post COVID
- 71% spent time IN THE LAST WEEK planning and researching potential trips
- 55% have spent FIVE HOURS in the last week planning their future trip
- People are looking for inspirational images and content and planning for that future trip – and wanting to get back to normal.