FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUN DESTINATION MARKETING PLAN

HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



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YEAR IN REVIEW

Awards and Mentions Bluffton and Daufuskie Island

O, The Oprah Magazine, 8 Places You'll Definitely Want to Visit When You Retire (2019)

Southern Living, Bluffton & the May River: Your Lowcountry Stop for Recreation and Relaxation (2019)

Southern Living, You Can Now Stay in a Historic Lighthouse Built on This South Carolina Island (2019)

Southern Living, South's Best Small Town, #8 (2019) and #9 (2020)

Wall Street Journal, House of the Year, Second Place: A Private Island Escape in South Carolina (2019)

Men's Journal, 2020 Travel Awards: The Best Adventures, Hotels, and Guides in the World

The Local Palate, Bluffton, History on the Half Shell (2020)

Travel + Leisure, One of the World's Best Resorts is Tucked Away in Bluffton, South Carolina (2020)

Wonderslist, 10 Most Relaxing Resorts in the U.S. and Canada, #3 Inn at Palmetto Bluff (2020)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce/Visitor & Convention Bureau continues to be the leader in promoting tourism within Southern Beaufort County. The organization as a whole utilizes national economic and tourism trends, consumer research, prior program performance, demographics and takes into consideration the needs of our community (residents and businesses) to be in the best position as the steward of the destination.

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VISION

Leading the Hilton Head Island region, community and partners collaboratively in effective education, advocacy and innovative programming ensuring tourism development and sustainable growth.

MISSION

Envision and advocate the common interests of our partners and stimulate the regional economy while enhancing the quality of life for all.

BLUFFTON'S BRAND COMMITMENT

Bluffton is the heart of the Lowcountry. It speaks to the town's central location, its lovable characteristics, and that Bluffton is the pumping, economic life force of the Lowcountry. Most importantly, it's a tone and a feeling. When you're in the Town of Bluffton, you can see and feel the love. It's real and authentic. It's the heart symbol in your logo, on a window, the pride residents have in their downtown or the warmth shared with strangers as an oyster roast. The Town of Bluffton is a well-kept secret. Nowhere else in the Lowcountry do you feel the love like you do when you are in Bluffton.

Source: Rawle Murdy Associates 2013

DAUFUSKIE ISLAND'S BRAND COMMITMENT

As an extension of Hilton Head Island and Bluffton, Daufuskie Island provides a more remote escape to the visitors of Southern Beaufort County, one that's even closer to nature and "off the beaten path." The elements of the brand personality related to tranquility and nature are strong with identity and expression.



2020-2021 STRATEGIES & TACTICS

1. Expand and broaden organic keyword rankings for Search Engine Marketing (SEM).

- a). Refine and grow a targeted list of keywords that align with the visitors' location and experiences.
- b). Develop relationships with potential visitors and key audiences through personalized messaging.
- c). Track, measure and analyze all responses within the consumer journey.

2. Leverage a strategic mix of targeted methods to identify and reach the most qualified users.

- a). Target qualified users through digital video across social platforms.
- b). Utilize Google Display Network (GDN) with display ads to increase visits to the website.
- c). Cultivate themed ad groups and keywords around categories that target consumers researching vacation terms.
- d). Create competitor targeted campaigns to capture demand from those researching other destinations.
- e). Reinforce the brand by serving ads to those who have visited the microsite.

3. Create content and measurements to adapt to social media platforms.

- a). Continue a paid social strategy driving traffic to VisitBluffton.org and VisitDaufuskie.org.
- b). Integrate the paid and organic social efforts, ensuring content boosting on Facebook when budget permits.
- c). Curate more user-generated content.
- d). Generate Facebook likes, Instagram followers and Twitter followers, ultimately driving traffic to content-rich pages of the microsites.
- e). Create unique and engaging templates for our audience to use.
- f). Grow social audiences through paid social media strategy.
- g). Utilize retargeting efforts for consumers that have engaged with our advertising and visited the microsites.

4. Improve the visibility of the Bluffton and Daufuskie Island landing pages within the search results of both search engines and social networks for branded key phrases and emerging search queries.

a). Ongoing technical audits and comprehensive reviews of the microsites to ensure content on the website remains crawlable and indexable by search engines.

b). Identify target keywords for content, and regularly highlight optimization opportunities for existing content to ensure relevance for search engines.

c). Identify and attract high quality links from high authority sites, along with sharing of content through influencer outreach and a targeted social media strategy.

d). Optimize and take advantage of new Google My Business (GMB) features where relevant to ensure users interest is captured both on and off-site.

- e). Research to find new opportunities for content that, once indexed by search engines, will drive qualified searchers to the microsites.
- 5. Market the destination to prospects in all meetings and group market segments to grow shoulder and off-season business.

a). Attend tradeshows and/or connect with meeting planners to build awareness and generate leads for group business.

6. Create a collateral piece with compelling imagery and content about the destination.

a). Develop and produce the Official Hilton Head Island, Bluffton and Daufuskie Island Vacation Planner.

b). Distribute the planner to visitors, elected officials, state Welcome Centers, AAA offices nationwide, tradeshows, events and media.

c). Collaborate with the Hilton Head Island Airport and the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport for displays and continuous distribution of the planner throughout the year.

d). Create an immersive digital and social version of the planner to leverage the ever-growing visitors online engagement.

7. Use research and reports to influence future marketing efforts.

a). Ongoing maintenance of the Chamber's online economic metrics portal.

b). Procure Smith Travel Research (STR) and DestiMetrics reporting on a regular basis for measuring lodging occupancy, average room rates, room demand and RevPAR.

c). Collaborate with LRITI of USCB and REAL of Clemson University along with ensuring details of our Google and ADARA analytics to provide quarterly and annual performance updates.



BUDGET

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BUDGET

*Note that the proposed budget has taken into consideration significant reductions in ATAX funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work with Southern Beaufort County to flex and scale the budget further as needed to ensure it reflects the appropriate levels of funding available for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

SEO / Social Media (Organic)	\$15,000
SEM / Social Media Advertising	\$65,250
Website & Campaign Maintenance	\$10,800
Photography/Video	\$15,000
Collateral / Fulfillment	\$10,000
Research & Planning	\$2,750
Ops & Management	\$79,200
Total Expenses	\$198,000



DEMOGRAPHICS & PERSONAS

We use multiple primary and secondary data sources to understand who our visitors are and what motivates them to explore Southern Beaufort County. Our real-time data sources include Google Analytics and ADARA, LRITI with the University of South Carolina Beaufort and Regional Transactions Concepts, LLC with Clemson University. Using insight gained from these partners, we are able to extract visitor persona detail which allows us the ability to further refine our messaging to a more qualified potential consumer. We have identified these persona groups as:

- Family
- Snowbirds
- Activities/Recreation Enthusiasts
- The Weekender
- Arts and Culture
- Culinary



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Family

Travel Objective:

Find a vacation spot that will please everyone during the school holidays.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Pla	n			Visit					Pla	an

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Family Travel Habits



Snowbirds

Travel Objective:

Find a warm destination that feels like home for the winter, where they can welcome family and friends for visits.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	
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Snowbirds Travel Habits



Activities / Recreation Enthusiast

Travel Objective:

Find a destination where they can pursue their interests on their downtime.

Ja	in Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
										ļ.	
		Visit				Plan				Visit	

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Activities / Recreation Enthusiast Travel Habits



The Weekender

Travel Objective:

Find a fairweather weekend escape from work and city life.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec		
	Ongoing Visitation & Planning												



The Storybook Shoppe



The Weekenders Travel Habits

Spontaneity:	High	Price Sensitivity		Average Conversion Value: I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I I			
Who They Are Upscale & Status Oriented Spontar & So	Urban Dwellers	& Attra Vacation F Water Act Dining & S Romantic Festivals & Weddings Palmetto F	Shopping Things to Do & Events	Marketing & Formats Facebook Videos Instagram TripAdvisor TV Online Video Forums & Blogs Pinterest	Channels		
Let's get away this long weekend. I'm looking for a place enough things to do, th offers some downtir I want to find a place I can b to my friends.	s Are the happen e with at also Where is to stay to brag about I want to do	ere any events ing in the area? s the best place for a weekend? something special date night.	eir Path to Purcha	Where can w a dinner reserv has a romant I want to wear s cute for the sho Where can I find	ation that c vibe? omething w tonight.		
Dream		Plan	Book	Visit & S	hare		

Arts & Culture

Travel Objective:

To explore cultural attractions, historical sites and the local arts scene.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Plan		Visit			F	Plan			Visit		Plan

SILVER

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2. Southern Beaufort County Marketing Plan 2020 – 2021

Arts & Culture Travel Habits

Low	l ı l ı l ı l ı l ı High	Price Sensitivity:	Average Conversion Value:
Vho They Ar	re	Preferred Activities & Attractions	Marketing Channe & Formats
Values Learning & Authenticity	Seeking an Immersive Experience	Historical District & Attractions Art District & Galleries Cultural District Culinary Experiences Festivals & Events Art of Old Town	Facebook Instagram TripAdvisor Online Video Forums & Blogs Pinterest
nage Conscious	Upscale & Status Oriented	Church of the Cross	Earned Media (Print/Digital)
"Ex	periences are Gr	eater than Things." Their	

Plan

Dream

Book

Culinary

Travel Objective:

Be immersed in a new destination (or an old favorite) by exploring the pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Plan		Visit				Plan			V	'isit	

Culinary Travel Habits







DESTINATION MARKETING PLAN 2020-2021

The Visitor & Convention Bureau will continue to position Southern Beaufort County as the ultimate escape filled with genuine experiences of all kinds. For those looking to travel and immerse themselves in a new vacation experience, Southern Beaufort County is where they will find historical traditions, culture, natural beauty and culinary delights.

With local tourism leaders, the Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce/Visitor & Convention Bureau has done extensive customer research and garnered detailed insight into these key areas of interest that define Bluffton and Daufuskie Island:

- Area "District" Designations including History, Cultural and Arts
- National Historic Register Designations including the Church of the Cross and AME Campbell Chapel
- Wright Family Park, Garvin-Garvey House and the Bluffton Oyster Company
- Palmetto Bluff / Montage
- Natural beauty / May River
- Unspoiled with palm trees and live oaks, lining sand roads
- Slower, laid back pace with bikes, horses and golf carts for transportation
- Local culture, artists enclaves and historic sites
- Haig Point and the Haig Point Lighthouse

Target Audience:

- Affluent consumers visiting Southern Beaufort County for cultural and arts experiences, historic tours, shopping and culinary activities.
- Overnight stays in Bluffton and on Daufuskie Island for new visitors as well as repeat visitors to the region.
- Group Tour Planners and their customers with interest in Southeastern destinations, particularly as a central location for hub and spoke coastal, historic, shopping, cultural, heritage, cuisine and environmental tours.

The Visitor & Convention Bureau invests in destination digital content management, qualified staff, content managers/editors and a professional, well-executed public relations and digital promotions program. These investments are key to operating a robust destination marketing program in today's competitive and cluttered travel communications environment – particularly with limited funding available for the paid media space. This aspect of our work has become increasingly important as new communications channels emerge and evolve to give consumers more choices, more channels and more content.

As Southern Beaufort County's DMO we are committed to the following:

- Supporting the destination's brand position throughout all marketing programs.
- Increasing overnight visitation in Southern Beaufort
 County.
- Increasing visitor expenditures at Southern Beaufort County attractions, retail and dining facilities, particularly in Bluffton and on Daufuskie Island. Thus increasing Southern Beaufort County's attraction, hospitality and sales taxes collected.

In addition, we will continue to provide a powerful set of services and award-winning strategic marketing solutions for Southern Beaufort County that will drive measurable results.

Digital Marketing Strategy & Media Campaign

The Visitor & Convention Bureau works closely to complement and build upon the existing brand and align it with the overall customer journey. Based on research, data and campaign results, we analyze and constantly evolve our marketing efforts to fit the needs of the consumer and how they digest information.

Placement Strategies

Given its ability to offer cost-efficient messaging across geographic and lifestyle-focused segments, digital media will continue to be the primary channel for Southern Beaufort County's 2020-2021 Marketing Strategy. With a key objective of growing partner referrals, preference will be given to Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and placements that skew towards our primary audience: the decision makers and vacation planners of the household (who skew predominantly female). When planning 2020-2021 placements, the performance of previous partner sites will be considered to ensure optimal reach, relevancy and results.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

In order to capitalize on its ability to help expand and broaden organic keyword rankings, the Visitor & Convention Bureau will continue to build on the strategic SEM program into 2020-2021 for Southern Beaufort County. This will include a targeted list of keywords that best align with Bluffton's and Daufuskie Island's target visitors and experiences.



Leisure Digital Media Partnerships

The ultimate goal of the 2020-2021 digital marketing plan is to directly increase the demand to community businesses. To achieve this, marketing efforts will work to influence consumers to visit the Bluffton and Daufuskie Island microsites.

Core goals will be aligned with the below tactics, targeted towards our key audiences. This approach will reach new users who are not yet aware of Bluffton and Daufuskie Island and their unique offerings, as well as re-engage those who are already familiar with our marketing campaigns and website. With this strategic structure established, we will further refine the plan to clarify channels, key metrics, messaging and consumer mindset against each phase of the consumer journey as seen below:

Targeting

Leveraging a strategic mix of targeting methods will assist in identifying and reaching the most qualified users. Bids will also be adjusted within search to ensure we serve ads to the same qualified users. Both first and second party data will be used in creating sophisticated targeting for Bluffton and Daufuskie Island.

First Party Data:

To close the consumer journey, we leverage extensive and refined remarketing lists layered with other targeting factors including geography, affinity, demographics and more.

Second Party Data:

We utilize lookalike audiences, modeled from remarketing lists, CRM database matches, behavioral, interest segments, in-market behaviors, etc.

Audience Targeting with Digital Media



The Consumer Journey

Media Budget



Awareness Phase

Digital video continues to be an integral tool in attracting and connecting with our audiences while showcasing the beauty and amenities within Southern Beaufort County. We will focus on our key areas of interest for Bluffton and Daufuskie Island capturing details of each and sharing these across our channels including nature, historic, cultural and arts districts and assets in those areas.

To build awareness at the top of the funnel in 2020-2021, digital video will be implemented predominantly across YouTube—the second-largest search engine in the world, with a network that reaches more than 90% of total Internet users. To increase reach, video will also be utilized across Facebook Video, Instagram, and Instagram Stories. In addition, prospecting Display ads will be used across the Google Display Network (GDN), to entice users to visit the website.

YouTube TrueView and TrueView for Action Videos Utilized as video pre-roll

- Video is skippable after the first 5 seconds and we are only charged if the user watches the complete video (>30 seconds) or clicks through to site, whichever occurs first
 - Cost per view (CPV) to a targeted audience is typically between \$0.02 to \$0.04 making this channel widereaching and cost-effective
 - With different video messages and varying lengths, the videos can be targeted at specific audiences to increase awareness and drive traffic to the site using a Trueview for Action Overlay

Facebook Network (including Instagram):

15 seconds or less videos



- Auto plays as users scroll through their newsfeeds
- Can be purchased on a cost-per-click basis at an efficient price (around \$1), or on a cost-per-10-second view, most comparable to Trueview's Cost Per Completed View (CPCV)

Instagram Stories: 15 seconds or less videos Utilize unique assets

 Plays within feed, along with images and videos shared by consumers' friends, family, and other Instagram accounts they follow



• Stories' ads provide a full-screen immersive experience with the goal to drive interest and traffic to the microsite

Prospecting Display

Utilized via the Google Display Network

• Appears within web content to qualified users



• Purchased on a cost-per-click basis at an efficient price to drive interest and users to the website for future remarketing

Awareness efforts will target all devices with a mobile prioritization as the majority of consumers in this phase are likely to interact with Bluffton and Daufuskie Island when on their mobile device.



Awareness Key Metrics

When determining the success of the Awareness Phase, metrics indicating an increase in demand and interest will be monitored. Over a longer period, we expect to see increases in volume and performance in lower funnel initiatives.

- Reach/frequency
- Website visitation and engagement
- Percent new users
- Search lift for brand-related terms

Intent Phase

The primary goal of the intent phase is to foster consumers who have previously expressed an interest in visiting Bluffton and Daufuskie Island via the website or through past engagement with the Awareness Phase advertising efforts.

Prospecting and Native Display Banners Partners:



Along with display ads we will extend reach through paid social media within Facebook and Instagram. Media will only be purchased based on a cost-per-click basis to help mitigate against fraud and limited viewability often seen in the industry.

Audience Targeting

- Affinity Audiences
- In-Market Audiences
- Custom Affinity
- Custom Intent
- Similar to/Lookalike Audiences
- Demographics
- Geography






Non-Branded Search

When cultivating consumer interest, non-branded search targeting category and competitor keywords allow us to raise our hand as a viable option. Similar to display, all search media is purchased on a cost-per-click basis which allows us to cost-effectively serve ads to drive future return on our search media spend.

Prospecting and Native Display Banners Partners:



	OVERVIEW	SAMPLE AD GROUPS
CATEGORY SEARCH	Themed ad groups and keywords around categories that target a consumer researching related types of vacations.	 Family vacation History, arts, cultural vacations Couples vacation Weekend getaway
COMPETITOR SEARCH	To drive purely incremental traffic, competitor targeted campaigns will be created to help capture demand from those researching competition.	SavannahBeaufortCharleston

Intent Key Metrics

Intent advertising is also measured against awareness and demand to capture specific metrics that indicate success at both the top and bottom of the funnel.

- Website visitation and engagement
- Percent returning users
- Assisted conversions
- Link-outs to partners

Conversion Phase

To capture the demand generated and cultivated through awareness and engagement, digital efforts will rely on the proven tactics of remarketing and branded search.

Remarketing

Remarketing is used to reinforce Bluffton and Daufuskie Island as the perfect vacation destination by serving ads to those who have visited VisitBluffton.org and VisitDaufuskie.org.

For increased relevance, people who have visited the landing pages from all sources can be sorted into lists so that secondary messaging can be shown to them based on their interest on the page, and where they navigate to next. They can be shown applicable display ads from that original visit to entice them to return for more information or to click on partner links. Users to the landing page will also be shown display ads for seasonal events.

Remarketing (Potential) Partners:







Branded Search

Branded search is the most fundamental digital channel and provides a foundation for nearly all digital marketing initiatives.

Branded Search Partners:



Key Benefit

Branded search ensures consumers are exposed to the most current offer. It also helps capture all demand and limits erosion to competitors. With branded search ads, you can control the message and highlight attributes seasonally, geographically and by keywords.



Conversion Key Metrics

Search is typically one of the last actions consumers take prior to converting, and we hold it to a higher expectation and measure it based on our full measurement plan focusing on:

- eNewsletter sign-ups
- Form fills
- Link-outs to partners

Social Media

Looking ahead, the social media landscape has become increasingly "pay to play". Each newsfeed prioritizes paid advertisements and boosted content over organic content posted by brands. This means our approach to content creation and measurements needs to adjust.

Strategically, this means:

- Placing a higher value on the quality of traffic we create for the microsites, in addition to the quantity.
- Continuing a paid social strategy driving traffic to the microsites.
- Integrating our paid and organic social efforts, ensuring content boosting on Facebook when budget permits.

In 2019-2020, a robust social media program was developed for Bluffton to promote its own identity under the new social handles of @ExploreBlufftonSC for Instagram and Facebook and @VisitBlufftonSC for Twitter. Daufuskie Island continued to be represented under the parent social media brand @VisitHiltonHead in order to further amplify the message and cross-market Daufuskie Island to a larger audience.

Building on the strong successes of our 2019-2020 performance, we will best support our social media goals and continue to focus on the following channels for 2020-2021:

facebook.

Facebook is our primary traffic source and we do not see this changing anytime soon. Our approach to Facebook will be to incorporate a range of content, including user-generated content shared by our locals and guests, co-op partnerships, marquee events and campaigns within Southern Beaufort County.



Instagram's strategy will continue to be focused on curating user-generated content from talented guests and locals. Our biggest push on this channel will be to engage in two-way conversations with our followers, to encourage them to mention our channel in their own content and to promote Bluffton and Daufuskie Island.



Our 2020-2021 Twitter strategy will be focused on channel growth and maintaining our higher-than average engagement rate. Content shared on this channel will be a mix of user-generated content, links to microsites, as well as local news, accolades and events.

SOCIAL PERFORMANCE

In an effort to grow brand awareness for Bluffton, on July 1st, 2019, destination specific social pages were created across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The numbers below reflect performance and growth from July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019.

CHANNEL GROWTH









31.02%

FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT RATE (FACEBOOK AVERAGE 0.09%)

2,118,385

FACEBOOK REACH

32.24%

INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT RATE (INSTAGRAM AVERAGE 1.6%)



REACH

Top Social Posts for 2019



Staying Current and Creative

facebook.

- Sharing stories
- Engaging with partners
- Mix of aspirational and UGC images paired with information and articles.



- A focus on Stories that delight and engage
- Maintaining our unique and creative feed
- UGC repurposing
- Aspirational voice and ton targeting younger audiences

twitter

- News and accolades
- Engaging with partners
- Keeping an eye on trends and timely content
- UGC repurposing



Paid Social Media Strategy

To continue supporting the goal of establishing credibility on Facebook and Instagram, as well as the microsite, the paid social media strategy will focus on driving momentum forward. To do this, the below paid social tactics will be implemented:

- Facebook/Instagram Traffic Campaigns (25%)
- Facebook Boosted Posts (15%)
- Instagram Boosted Posts (15%)
- Facebook Page Growth (25%)
- Instagram Follower Growth (10%)
- Twitter Follower Growth (10%)

Targeting & Tactics

The paid tactics and targeting will vary depending on what part of the funnel the user is in:

Awareness Phase

The awareness portion of our paid social strategy will be utilized to help establish brand familiarity amongst potential visitors. We will create our audiences via Lookalike Audiences, modeled from remarketing lists, as well as behavioral and interest segments layered with other targeting factors including geography, affinity and demographics.

Awareness and engagement-focused ads in this stage of the customer journey will include:

- Facebook Boosted Posts
- Instagram Boosted Posts



Awareness Key Metrics

When determining success for awareness-based campaigns, we will look at metrics indicating that interest and social media presence is increasing. Over a longer period, we expect to see increases in volume and performance in lower funnel initiatives.

- Reach / Frequency
- View-Influenced Visits
- Social Media Platform Growth
- Engagement Rates

Intent Phase

During the intent phase, we will engage users who are more likely to like or follow our social channels, as well as drive qualified traffic to the microsites.

These planning-stage audiences will be created utilizing retargeting efforts based on consumers who have engaged with the awareness phase advertising initiatives, and those who have visited the microsites. We will additionally continue to target users based off of their interests, behaviors, demographics and geographics.

Generating Facebook likes, Instagram followers, Twitter followers and driving traffic to content-rich pages of the microsites will be the focus of this stage of the customer journey and tactics will include:

- Facebook Page Like/Growth Ads
- Instagram Followers/Growth Ads
- Twitter Followers/Growth Ads
- Traffic/Always On Ads



Planning Key Metrics

When determining success for intent-based campaigns, we will look at metrics indicating that social media page following has increased, as well as overall website traffic is increasing.

- Website Visitation and Engagement
- Overall Facebook Page Likes
- Overall Instagram Followers
- Overall Twitter Followers
- Link-Outs to Partners

Awareness

- Social channel growth
- Growth in millennial & Gen X audiences

Retention

- Channel engagement
- Hashtag use
- Mentions
- Sustained increase in younger demographics MoM & YoY

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The 2020-2021, SEO strategy is about ensuring relevant, valuable content continues to be indexed by search engines, and that appropriate content and answers are retrieved and presented to searchers persuading users to engage with that content. Additionally, all SEO marketing initiatives will focus on ensuring the visibility of VisitBluffton.org and VisitDaufuskie.org in the search results of both search engines and social networks for branded searches, as well as a full spectrum of other relevant search queries, with the goal of increasing the overall awareness of Bluffton and Daufuskie Island.

All SEO strategies will focus on improving the visibility of the Bluffton and Daufuskie Island landing pages within the search results of both search engines and social networks for branded key phrases and emerging search queries, with the intention of increasing awareness of Southern Beaufort County as a vacation destination.



The SEO strategy can be broken down into five core areas:

- 1. Technical SEO: Ongoing technical audits and comprehensive reviews of the microsites to ensure content on the site remains crawlable and indexable by search engines.
- 2. Content Creation and Optimization: Identify target keywords for content, and regularly highlight optimization opportunities for existing content to ensure relevance for search engines.

With the growing popularity of voice search, search engines are becoming better at matching a searcher's intent to the content they show in search results. In 2020-2021, an SEO focus will include strengthening contextual signals sent to search engines for the content on the microsites through:

- Internal links that create content clusters
- External links
- Structured data (schema)
- Ensuring existing and new content answer questions and solve problems

- 3. Building a Foundation of Authoritative Referrals: Links to a site and citations continue to send strong signals to search engines that a site is authoritative on a particular topic and should rank well for searches. There will be campaigns to identify and attract high quality links from high authority sites, along with sharing of content through targeted social media strategy.
- 4. Local SEO: Google My Business (GMB) continues to influence user behavior in organic search results with additional service categories, offers, products and additional features that enable users to interact with business information outside the website. In 2020-2021, optimizing and taking advantage of new GMB features where relevant will ensure users interest is captured both on and off site.
- **5.** Identifying New Opportunities: A significant component of the SEO program will be research to find new opportunities for content that, once indexed by search engines, will drive qualified searchers to the microsites. This research will focus on finding popular search queries that people perform when considering a vacation, trip or activity, and where Bluffton and Daufuskie Island would meet the needs of those searchers. This research will be applied to new content creation and to existing content where optimizations can be implemented.

Group Sales and Tradeshows

The Southern region of the county continues to grow and position itself as a group destination more so now than at any point in the last decade. The variety and quality of experiences for group visitors has never been more diverse, offering a robust arts, historical and cultural scene, with growing culinary experiences. The Visitor & Convention Bureau will continue to promote Bluffton and Daufuskie Island while attending travel tradeshows throughout the country.

Military continues to be a focus for the Southern Beaufort County region. With close proximity to Parris Island, hosting out of town families and guests remains the ideal market for our focused service hotels. We will continue to build awareness of Bluffton and Daufuskie Island inspiring these families to extend their visit or celebration, creating lasting, special memories.



Group Tour

Group Tour remains an important market to maintain current and new relationships. Bluffton and Daufuskie Island continue to be attractive destinations for a hub and spoke opportunity. With Savannah 40 miles away, Beaufort 30 miles and Charleston just under 2 hours, Southern Beaufort County is ideal for groups to stay in one location for up to a week and focus on day trips from one central area. We intend to draw group tour visitors by:

- Building relationships with tour operators.
- Educating our partners on what it means to be a group friendly community.
- Offering tiered pricing/packaging attractions with accommodations.
- Expanding promotion of group experiences on our website and special group ticket pricing.

American Bus Association (ABA)

More than 3,500 tour operators, suppliers and exhibitors come together at the American Bus Association (ABA) Marketplace - the industry's premier business event. Marketplace is truly a market-place – an active, vibrant forum of buyers and sellers where business gets done. With more than 140,000 prescheduled appointments and 900 pre-qualified operators, Marketplace offers a year's worth of sales meetings in one week. And with legendary networking and social events, attendees turn conversations from the conference floor into long-term business relationships. Couple this with leading education seminars and the industry's largest exhibit hall, and Marketplace is unmatched as the best industry event each year.

In January 2021, the Visitor & Convention Bureau staff will attend the ABA Marketplace and take advantage of up to 60 pre-scheduled appointments with pre-qualified operators to promote and sell Southern Beaufort County.

IMEX America

IMEX America hosts over 3,000 corporate, incentive, association and third-party planners. The largest in the industry in North America, this Hosted Buyer Program qualifies and brings key buyers to the show, with IMEX America covering travel and accommodations. This program guarantees thousands of highly qualified buyers from the association, corporate and agency sectors.

South Carolina Society of Association Executives (SCSAE)

SCSAE's tradeshow is your one stop location for meeting and greeting with association CEOs/Executive Directors, Meeting Planners, Membership Directors, Communication Directors and Corporate Meeting Planners. Association professionals can meet with more than 70 exhibitors including hoteliers, convention centers, technology vendors and more.

SportsTravel Magazine's TEAMS

TEAMS: Travel, Events and Management in Sports, is the world's leading conference and expo for the sports-event industry. Presented by SportsTravel magazine, TEAMS '20 will be held in October, in Houston, Texas. Launched in 1998, TEAMS attracts more than one thousand attendees including CEOs, executive directors and event managers from sports organizations as well as representatives from sports commissions and convention bureaus, corporate sponsors, event suppliers and other hospitality industry opinion leaders. TEAMS has helped define the sports-event and appointment-based tradeshow industries.

Note: All tradeshows mentioned are currently scheduled at this time and are subject to change given the current status of Covid-19 and it is impact.

Collateral & Fulfillment

The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau develops and produces the Official Hilton Head Island, Bluffton and Daufuskie Island Vacation Planner. This print and digital publication is our primary fulfillment piece and is a comprehensive guide to what to see and do within the region including Bluffton and Daufuskie Island. We receive many online, as well as phone inquiries, and distribute the planner to elected officials, state Welcome Centers, airports, AAA offices nationwide along with tradeshows, events and media.

In today's more visual world, telling a story through stunning photography and compelling content is an imperative component to the travel journey process. This "coffee table" piece allows our visitors to visualize their vacation and discover the destination, through this first touchpoint, the reason for our many accolades, ultimately imagining themselves here on vacation. In addition to working with a publisher, our in-house marketing staff provides the business directory, event calendar, local photography editorial content management, editorial review and proofreading for this asset.

Promotions and Brochure Distribution at Airports

Included in our budget for fulfillment costs is a monthly fee to support brochure distribution at the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport's Welcome Center. A monthly fee is also included in the budget for fulfillment distribution in the lobby of the Hilton Head Island Airport.



2020 Vacation Planner - Town of Bluffton Feature

homes, today a private residence. A section of the house dates back



an with a own Bluffton's eets. Stately oaks dripping with lacy Spanish moss line the one square mile of Old Town Bullton, where beutiques, restaurants and galleries stand side by side with

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History and architecture buffs on weaking tours through her homestown. Architeg along under the shade of lasticus painetose, Heyweid ramopole her visitos acades to her tourn's beginnings in the early 1800s. Bufflon was a timy village loanging on the banks of the May River, founded by folks export to onjoy the breakes and escore the loanguithr sammer heat.



oscopal Church, built in 1853. sweet lea in rocking chairs on the Take a moment to enjoy a sweeping Seven Oaks verlandah, (Not a bad way BRUNCH AT THE COTTAGE ver view from the imposing Huger-tordon House, one of Bluffon's oldest. A few blocks down Cahoun, anne at Open seven days a week. The Cottage on Ca The Store, built in 1904 as a family home and store. Today, it's owned by Babbe Guisclo, a Biuffornan for more than four a Sunday branch that I A vector of the house dates back of the permanent sectors and the local town Bridge Street to the three-story we could paint a beautiful picture.



These docent-led tours are a feitor The restored Garvin-Garvey House, write fences and well-kept gardens. a small Freedman-owned cottage built punctuate a town deep in the heart of during Reconstruction, is maintained the South Carolina Lowcountry enriched by the Beaufort County Land Trust and with an enduring sense of place.

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CLASSICS WITH A TWIST At FARM in Old Town Bluffton, Chef Brandon Carter — recently honored as one of five South Carolina chef ambassadors — offers a sophisticated take a sophisticated take on Lowcountry classic cuisine. FARM's menu evolves seasonally but always features fresh-caught seafood and produce from local fan Try the Fragmeré Sceu, Try the Fragmore Stew, loaded with sweet shri and sausage; tomato torcellini; or grilled quail served with coma we and p succetash. The bluebers hand pie topped with weet whinped cream is a perfect finish.



race many Lowcountry residences.

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Next up. Hexward points out the

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2020 Vacation Planner - Daufuskie Island Feature









Research & Analytics

Research provides powerful information to evolve and perfect the Visitor & Convention Bureau's marketing strategy. Throughout the year we will continue to extract detailed reports and information that guides us in understanding our visitors. These research programs will lead to marketing and advertising initiatives aimed at growing the tourism industry for Southern Beaufort County. The following programs will be ongoing:

- Maintenance of ThinkBluffton.org, the Chamber's online economic metrics portal.
- Smith Travel Research (STR) weekly and monthly reports which measures lodging occupancy, average room rates, room demand and RevPAR for hotels only. Includes monthly comparative report with competitive destinations.
- DestiMetrics monthly Home & Villa lodging reports on occupancy, average room rates, RevPAR and six month forward booking pace reports. Two-source DestiMetrics report crunches back end Smith Travel hotel data with DestiMetrics back end home and villa data to produce a monthly destination report on total destination accommodations tax paying occupancy, average room rates and RevPAR.
- Collaborate with LRITI of USCB and REAL of Clemson University along with ensuring details of our Google and ADARA analytics to provide quarterly and annual performance updates stemming from our DMO contract.
- Subscription to the U.S. Travel Association's (USTA) Travel Monitor Program and related reports.





HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU

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