

**Utah Office of Tourism
Board Meeting
Friday, September 11, 2020
Online ZOOM Meeting**

Members Present: Lance Syrett, Brian Merrill, Dirk Clayson, Elaine Gizler, Glen Overton, Kym Buttschardt, Mike Taylor, Sara Toliver, Shayne Wittwer, Greg Miller, Nathan Rafferty, Dean Cox

Members Excused: Jim Powell

Staff: Vicki Varela, Dave Williams, Julia Barnhouse, Becky Keeney, Lorraine Daly, Andrew Gillman, Bianca Lyon, Rachel Bremer, Celina Sinclair, Haley Rodgers, Jody Blaney, Emma Checketts

Visitors: Adam Whalen, Alison Garner, Breck Dockstader, Ciera Miller, Cody Adent, Hannah Saunders, Jessica Merrill, Joan Hammer, Jonathan Smithgall, Judy Cullen, Kaitlin Eskelson, Kevin Lewis, Kylie Kullack, Lee Adamson, Lee Banov, Megan Griffin, Molly O’Niell, Monique Beeley, Raelene Davis, Robert Stephenson, Robert Stephenson, Sara Otto, Sydnie Furton, Tess Pascua, Tom Love, Randy Rhodes, Sean Brownell, Alex Frankel

WELCOME

Lance Syrett called the meeting to order.

MINUTES

MOTION: MIKE TAYLOR MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 14, 2020 MEETING THAT WAS HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM. SARA TOLIVER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Vicki Varela, Managing Director, UOT, reported on the following items:

- The second round of Shop in Utah applications will open at 9:00 am MST on September 14, 2020.

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

- **Marketing Committee Report**

- CARES Funding Opportunities:
 - Meet in Utah \$2,000,000 – Vicki Varela, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism:
 - Utah leads the nation, along with North Carolina, where the legislature is willing to allocate significant funding to assist the tourism industry.
 - The most distressed industry in the state is the convention industry as determined by the low hotel occupancy and rates in the surrounding areas.
 - Senator Hemmert and Representative Spendlove showed great enthusiasm in finding a way to assist the 8 convention districts around the state: Kanab, Ogden, Davis County, Salt Lake, Dinosaurland, Greater Zion, Logan and Utah Valley. They have started conversations with the

Utah Office of Tourism to find a way that the allocation funds could be used to assist these convention districts. UOT staff has proposed the following strategy:

- \$975,000 from 3 – Season campaign
- \$525,00 from ski campaign
- \$500,00 unallocated funds
- Total of \$2M incentive that would be distributed to the 8 convention districts around the state, which would be distributed to local meeting planners. Looking for short-term bookings for smaller groups than they would traditionally book in order to keep as many of the convention businesses running.
- Zion Shuttle Assistance \$205,000 - Vicki Varela, Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism:
 - Washington County showed great leadership working with Zion National Park to accommodate visitors through Springdale and ease congestion around people visiting the park. There is an additional need for more shuttles in the park that needs more financial support.
 - UOT would like to match Washington County’s funding of the shuttle program in order to increase the shuttle capacity.
- Tour Operator Incentive Program \$200,000 – Rachel Bremer, Tourism Global Markets Director, Utah Office of Tourism
 - Similar to the Meet in Utah grant program, UOT has been looking at ways to develop both industry and consumer incentives to rehabilitate international visitation in 2021.
 - Europe and Canada are primary focus.
 - Main strategy is to incentives tour operators and travel agents to book more Utah product and work with Utah suppliers. This would include hotels, guides and outfitters, etc.
 - Agents booking the trip will receive an incentive of early booking bonuses. The consumer will receive an incentive, the Utah Mighty Deals E-Book.
- Grand County Assistance \$100,000
 - Proposal is still in process.
- Ski+ FY 2020/2021 Integrated Marketing Campaign Plan Review ([presentation](#)) – Kylie Kullack, Head of Client Partnership, and Scott Sorenson Creative Director, STRUCK
 - Goals and Creative Strategies
 - The Challenges
 - Colorado’s stronghold on market share
 - The decline in willingness to travel due to COVID-19
 - Uncertainty regarding COVID-19 and how resorts will respond
 - The trend of shortening booking windows
 - Ski marketing partners and publications closing their doors.
 - Potential difficulty of convincing travelers to plan a winter road trip to Utah.
 - The Opportunity
 - Take advantage of a full winter budgets (and competitors’ challenges) to help out struggling partners by driving travel this winter – and continue building the Utah ski brand for the future.
 - The Goals
 - Responsibly drive travel o Utah’s ski resorts and communities.

- Grow Utah's winter brand awareness and consideration to ensure Utah remains a top-of-mind ski destination in the futures.
- Education travelers about responsible winter travel behaviors and COVID-19 ski resort responses.
- The Audiences
 - Traditional Winter Audiences
 - Millennials: Powderhounds and Social Skiers
 - Families: Luxury and Economy
 - Boomers
 - Repeat Visitors
 - Utah Residents
 - Regional (drive market) audiences
- The Message
 - Main Campaign:
 - Snow quality/quantity
 - Accessibility of best-in-class skiing
 - Availability of non-skiing off-mountain activities
 - Supporting messages:
 - Covid-29 safety information, resort openings/closings
 - Distributing visitation: traveling during the week and on non-holiday weekends
 - Looking farther out: planning a trip to ski resorts in summer
 - Overcrowding – Forever Mighty messaging
- Messaging & Creative
 - Main campaign messages:
 - The original More Mountain Time message as is
 - A recut message to underscore the message of snow
 - A third message that speaks to the era without being explicitly about a pandemic.
 - We are utilizing the existing Mountain Time spot – the following outlines the variations we will develop for use:
Footage reviewed to ensure COVID relevancy
 - Banner Ads and messaging (see [presentation](#))
- Next Steps
 - Production
 - Lining up editing sessions with Cosmic & post production work
 - Production of the digital assets
 - Development of a campaign standards kit

Media	2019/2020	2020/2021	Media Mix	% Growth
TV	\$1,370,057	\$567,568	16.8%	-58%
Out of Home	\$432,215	\$432,432	12.8%	-
CTV	\$500,000	\$1,070,000	31.7%	114%
Digital	\$1,029,000	\$1,017,027	30.1%	-1%
Social Media	\$156,000	\$183,000	5	17%
PPC	\$60,000	\$60,000	1.7%	-7%
Long-Form Video	\$150,000	\$45,000	1.3%	-70%
Audience Building	-	\$50,000	n/a	-
Print-Polybagging (SkiUtah)	\$90,000	\$90,000	n/a	-

- Review and Board Approval of \$3,116,739 Media Buy (presentation)– Jonathan Smithgall, Vice President of Digital Marketing and Media; Megan Griffin, Vice President of Legacy, Love Communications
 - Paid Media
 - A look back at 2019/2020 mountain time:
 - In November, our campaign was pacing 49% behind the previous year’s campaign with only \$430k in observed hotel revenue. By February 8, after multiple rounds of creative optimizations, we had officially surpassed the previous year’s pace by more than \$130k.
 - The 2019/2020 MT campaign reached 53% of snow traveling households, down from the previous year’s 57%.
 - The addition of Chicago as a target market led to growth in ad-aware households
 - The ski resorts were on track for a record-breaking year before they had to shut down.
 - The Mountain Time landing page saw a 56% increase in web traffic compared to the previous year.
 - Advertising had the strongest awareness % in Las Vegas and Miami. However, Los Angeles and New York had the greatest total ad aware households.
 - Online, the campaign tracked over \$7.8M in hotel revenue, an estimated 45k travelers.
 - We were able to track digital media overlap with PPC for the first time and found that 19.5% of ad exposed audiences engage with our Paid Search campaigns.
 - We noticed sizable increases the week after December 25th indicating the importance of having a strong marketing presence from December 26th – January 4th. This led to our biggest month over month increase in hotel bookings for the entire campaign.
 - Lastly, we observed a truncated Look to Arrival window. With an increase in the amount of days people spent searching for their ski vacation, and a significantly shortened book to arrival window.
 - Budget breakdown:

- Mountain Time 2020/2021 Flight Dates
- Media Plan Recommendations
 - Run a flexible campaign that can be adjusted as needed
 - Capitalize on new partnerships to continue our evolution into being able to measure every aspect of our marketing efforts.
 - Remove underperforming partners from last year’s campaign, double down on the partners and tactics that were successful
 - Build additional custom audiences to target across all digital elements of the marketing campaign; social, CTV, native, pre-roll, banner.
 - Continue to innovate!
- Legacy Media (see [presentation](#) for visuals)
 - Spot Television
 - Digital Out of Home
 - Digital Marketing
 - Mountain Time Custom Audiences
 - Mountain Time Cross Media Targeting
 - Media plan deeper dive: added value partners
- Proposed Media Buy Budget Breakdown:

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MOTION: NATHAN RAFFERTY MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE \$3,116,739 MEDIA BUY AS OUTLINED. SHAYNE WITTEW SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Content Strategy ([presentation](#)) – Andrew Gillman, Tourism Creative and Content Director, Utah Office of Tourism
 - Paid Search
 - Strategy
 - Considering family trips & general winter vacations
 - Planning a ski trip
 - Seeking specifics on resorts & travel
 - Targeting
 - Nationwide, focused on drive markets
 - Remarketing
 - Social
 - Organic social content projects

- #WednesdayWednesdays on Instagram Story with @WasatchSnowForecast
- “Let’s Talk Utah” Series on IGTV (3 ski/winter episodes)
- #FindYourUtahStoke Series with GoPro on Instagram Story/Reels
- Snowfall B-roll on Instagram/Facebook Story and possibly Twitter
- Community Management
 - Standard community management guidelines on page 65-70 in the [Domestic Social Media Playbook](#)
 - Canned responses: prepare a shared resource doc to be used across customer communications
 - Handoff approach: PL team sends Red/Yellow-level messages to Melissa who will then reach out to below entities when appropriate to help craft response:
 - Ski Utah: red-level questions and concerns specific to Utah’s overall ski industry standards
 - Ski resorts: Red-level questions and concerns specific to one ski resort
 - DMO’s
- Paid Social: Domestic
 - Domestic Ski+ social ad plan in the FY21 Domestic Master Ad Plan.
 - Budget: \$90,000
 - Summary of ad types:
 - Platforms: Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest
 - Objectives: Video views, traffic, awareness, engagement
 - Creative Needs; 1:1 and 9:16 assists
 - Targeting:
 - Overall: Start off national and narrow into drivable markets – align with the rest of the media buy.
 - Custom audiences (via Love communications): repeat visitors, confirmed visitors from competitive ski destinations, and PPC and/or Native.
 - Domestic Social Channels KPIs (see presentation)
 - Domestic Influencers
 - # of activations: minimum of 2 influencers who primarily reach out-of-state audience
 - Budget: \$20,000
 - Timing: During ski season (Dec – Mar)
 - Long-form video content for IGTV and/or YouTube
 - Domestic Influencer KPI Benchmarks (see presentation)
 - Ambassadors
 - # of activations: minimum of 3 ambassadors sharing ski-related content

- Budget: roughly \$9,000 in ambassador compensation + travel can potentially contribute to ski
- Timing: During ski season (Dec – Mar)
- Deliverable focus:
 - #WeatherWednesdays with @wasatchsnowforecast on @VisitUtah Instagram Story
 - Monthly branded posts on ambassador Instagram Feed
- Public Relations
 - Key Media Messages:
 - Ski Season Safety and Operations + Openings
 - Snow Quantity/Quality
 - Accessibility of Best-In-Class Skiing
 - Non-Skiing Activities (i.e., Snowshoeing, XC Skiing, Dog Sledding, Restaurants/Bars, etc.)
 - Pitch angles and storylines to resonate with the current travel landscape, winter season, and media feedback:
 - New operations and safety measures that accommodate social distancing on the mountain
 - What to expect this ski season: the greatest snow on earth and wide, open spaces and solitude
 - How to “mountain” responsibly this winter: ski, snow, and off-mountain enthusiasts
 - The rise of mom and pop mountains and resorts
 - How to “winterize” your family road trip: Road-to-mountain experiences
 - Proactive PR Topics & Tactics
 - Monthly PR Headlines pitch to KPI media outlets and freelancers
 - Proactive outreach to past press trip attendees and IMVs from winter 2019/202 season, including:
 - Aimee White Beazley (freelance, AFAR, Bloomberg, DuJour)
 - Nina Ruggiero (Travel + Leisure)
 - John Oseid (Forbes)
 - Utah U Fall/Winter Virtual Classes
 - Winter Session focused on Visit Utah winter/ski key messages
 - Individual Media Visits (IMVs) with key journalist for first-hand experiences in Utah and coverage
- Website
 - Re-platformed Site Launch
 - Site launches on Kentico platform on 10/29
 - Managing content build-out and optimizations on both platforms until launch
 - With new site launch, we’ll have KPI tracking for the Mountain Time campaign across website content types (articles, itineraries, landing pages) for the first time.
 - Prepared to link visitutah.com visitation to Adara bookings data.

- Visitutah.com Campaign Foundations
 - Optimizing winter pages with COVID language and campaign messaging goals.
 - Key landing pages:
 - Mountain Time
 - Utah Ski Resorts
 - Optimizing storytelling and landing page experiences for search intent.
 - Keeping Responsible Travel and COVID-19 Information pages up-to-date with winter planning content
 - Revising Snow Tracker API to pull in the number of open runs by resort.
- Storytelling
 - Article Content
 - Revising existing article content to map to messaging goals
 - New articles:
 - Paula Colman article making the case for Utah ski travel in 2020.
 - Focus on accessibility, affordability and flexibility.
 - TBD (Andrew, Ellen and Struck)
 - E.g. D&I, innovators and innovations
 - Review of non-skiing off mountain opportunities (e.g. snowshoeing)
 - Summer at mountain resorts
 - Existing articles to promote based on conditions:
 - Max Out Your Multi-Pass (+ Making the Most of Epic, Ikon)
 - Big Snow. Gotta Go.
 - Planning Your Big Snow Trip
 - When to Ski and Eat and Play in Utah
 - Getting Back on the Mountain

UTAH TOURISM INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Cody Adent, UTIA Executive Director, gave the following update:

- Joan Hammer is organizing the silent auction for the Tourism Conference.
- Registration is still open for the September 23 – 24 2020 Tourism Conference.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Sara Toliver – Thankful for the support shown to the Tourism Industry.
- Greg Miller – The Land Cruiser Heritage Museum has reopened by appointment only. This has generated lots of interest. Greg has observed that his shared condo in Moab has maxed out it's availability, which shows the surge of travel to the area recently.
- Elaine Gizler – Moab started marketing in Colorado and in Utah for the first time since March 17, 2020.

- Kym Buttschardt – The unveiling of the Salt Lake City International Airport was quite spectacular.
- Break Dockstader – thankful for the support that he and his businesses have received from the tourism industry.

MEETING ADJOURNED