



VIRGINIA
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LO♥ERS

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BRAND VISION

The Brand Vision Strategy is a plan developed by the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) to strengthen the “Virginia is for Lovers” brand to ensure it stays relevant to the evolving travel consumer. This plan provides VTC and its industry partners, including destination marketing organizations, convention and visitors bureaus, localities, tourism associations and private sector businesses with a detailed map to follow to develop marketing messages about travel in Virginia. By aligning messaging from the highest brand level to niche marketing by small business owners, potential travelers to Virginia will see a consistent and refined message.

Created in 1968, the Virginia is for Lovers (VIFL) brand still has strong equity. However, while widely known and recognized nationwide, VIFL does need to have a more definitive, relevant meaning: vacation in Virginia. As tactics develop for this long-term strategy, VTC will focus on promoting key travel products through experiences.

VTC’s brand-focused marketing efforts could integrate successfully with other state agencies that serve traveling consumers such as the Virginia Departments of Conservation and Recreation, Game and Inland Fisheries, Forestry, Agriculture and Consumer Services, Transportation, Alcoholic Beverage Control, the Virginia Lottery and the Virginia Wine Board, as well as state attractions.

VTC has created a targeting strategy rooted in best practices, narrowing the reach to more high-value potential travelers with inspirational content for travel in Virginia. By positioning VTC as a travel content source rather than simply an advertiser, the agency becomes a trusted source of historic life experiences for potential travelers. This strategy will create a shift in visitation to people who spend more. The focus will be on engagement value instead of traffic volume, a key consideration for helping to find high-value potential travelers.

In 2012, VTC unveiled its Drive Tourism Plan, a blueprint providing an infrastructure for growth and development for tourism. The plan noted the need for VTC to “market the lures.” The Vision Strategy provides a recommendation for how to draw on the product strengths already available, develops a strong and unique position among Virginia’s competitors, and provides a recommended messaging framework for industry partners to use.

Purpose - Help improve the economic future of Virginia and maintain a high quality of life through revenues tourism generates for the state.

Mission - Expand domestic and international in-bound travel and motion picture production to generate revenue and employment in Virginia.

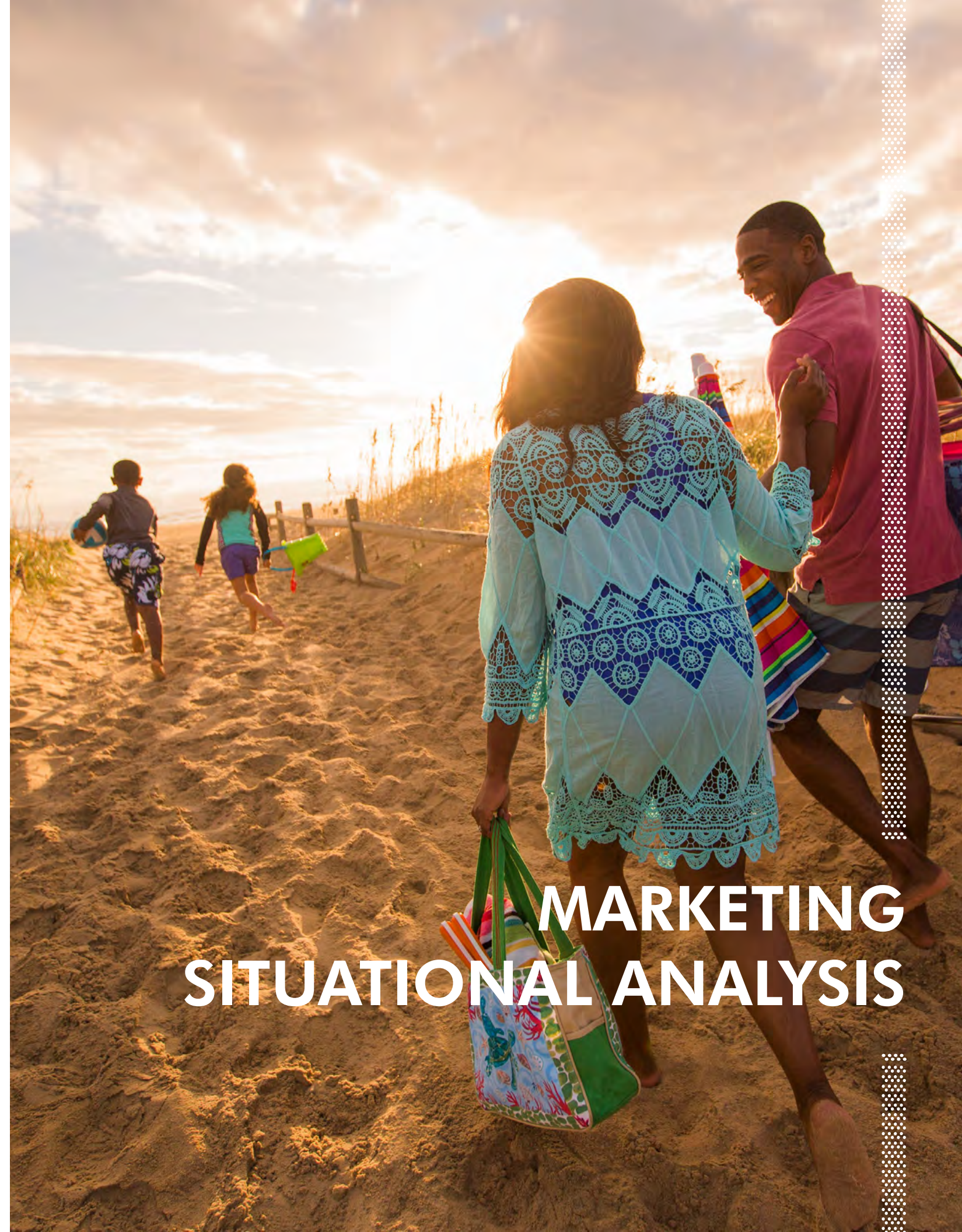
Goal - Increase Virginia travel and film spending annually.



KEY STRATEGIES



- 1** Strengthen “Virginia is for Lovers” brand awareness globally and encourage Virginia industry adoption.
- 2** Drive visitation from Virginia’s most high-value targets: out-of-state, first time travelers in markets defined by continuous research.
- 3** Sustain visitation from current Virginia travelers.
- 4** Utilize national, industry-leading blend of travel research, data and marketing to track trends and marketing performance.
- 5** Engage important media influencers, grow Virginia industry partnership and establish public-private partnerships.
- 6** Provide support for Virginia tourism industry partners in product development and marketing.



MARKETING SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS



Audience Analysis

Three key personas defined by research to be the highest-value consumers:

FAMILIES - This group accounts for 49 percent of travel spending in Virginia and are very important for sustainable growth

UNATTACHED - Young and free or older without kids, these travel groups are smaller but pack a powerful spending punch. They account for 24 percent of travel spending in Virginia. Establishing a relationship with the younger members of this group is key to keep spending strong in the future.

BUCKET LISTERS - Older travelers who now have an opportunity to cross things off their lists of travel goals. Virginia's strong history and lifestyle travel products make the Commonwealth attractive to this group.

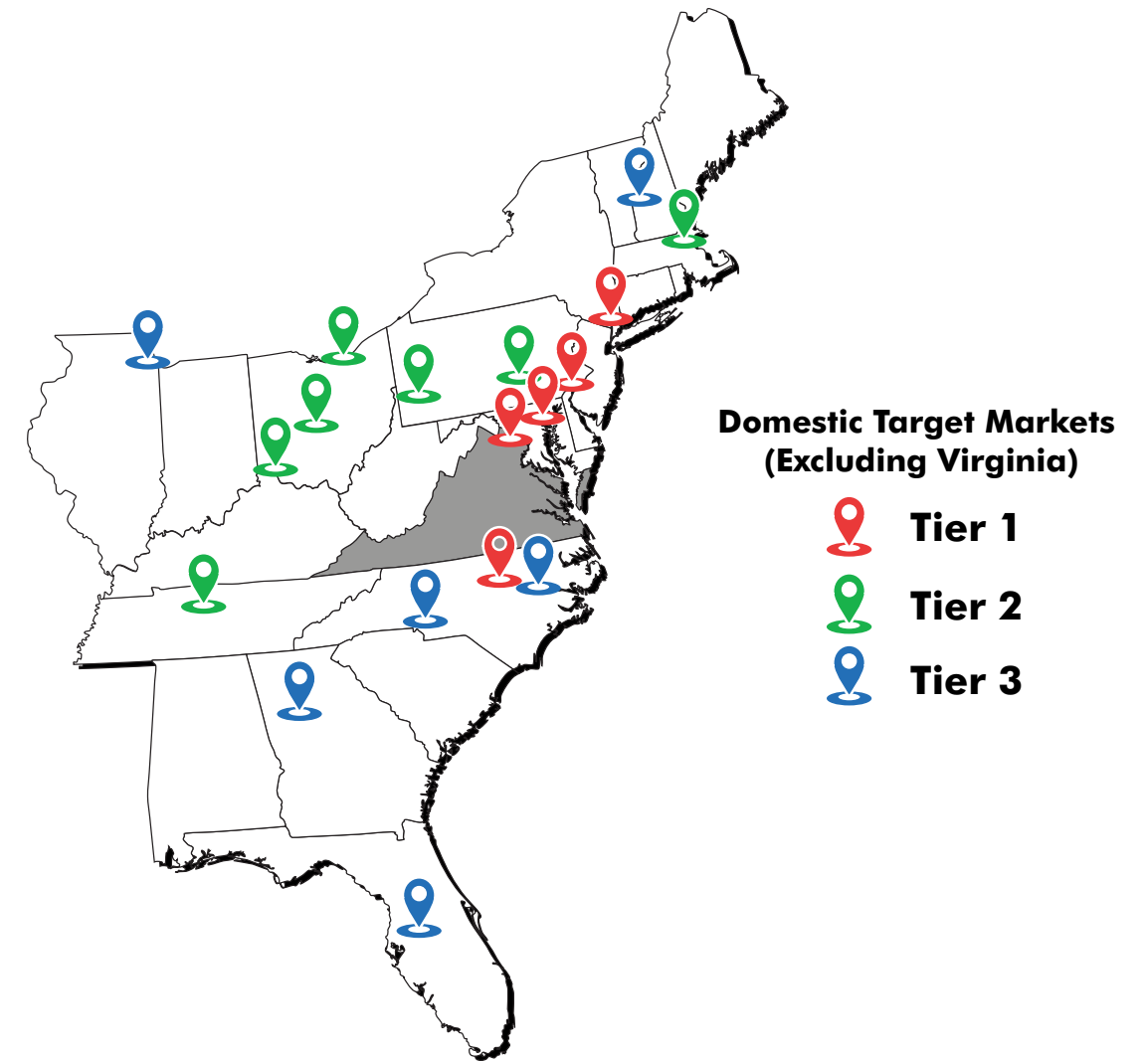
Geographic Market Analysis

Tier 1 – Core Top Domestic Target Markets (Excluding Virginia)

1. Washington, DC
2. Raleigh/Greensboro, NC
3. Philadelphia, PA
4. Baltimore, MD
5. New York City, NY

Tier 2 – Domestic Target Markets (Excluding Virginia)

1. Cleveland, OH
2. Cincinnati, OH
3. Columbus OH
4. Nashville, TN
5. Pittsburgh, PA
6. Harrisburg, PA
7. Boston, MA



Tier 3 – Domestic Target Markets (Excluding Virginia)

1. Chicago, IL
2. Atlanta, GA
3. Hartford, NH
4. Charlotte, NC
5. Greenville, NC
6. Tampa, FL

International Markets

- United Kingdom
- Canada
- Germany
- France
- China

Brand Perception Analysis

- Very high recognition of Virginia is for Lovers brand tagline
- Confusion about what Virginia is for Lovers means
- Lukewarm consideration of Virginia as a travel destination
- Lack of connectivity between statewide industry partners and Virginia is for Lovers brand
- Lack of awareness of Virginia's tourism product besides history No. 1 reason for not visiting



BRAND PLATFORM AND ARCHITECTURE

Brand Platform

Position - Virginia brings joy to life for people in the world who want to create historic life experiences during an era of generic instant gratification.

Promise - To bring to joy to life by helping people make historic life moments.

Mantra - Historic Life Experiences.

Tag line - Virginia is for Lovers.

Brand Architecture

Virginia is for Lovers

Sub-brands

- Virginia is for Beach Lovers
- Virginia is for Craft Beer Lovers
- Virginia is for Film Lovers
- Virginia is for Food Lovers
- Virginia is for History Lovers
- Virginia is for Music Lovers
- Virginia is for Mountain Lovers
- Virginia is for Outdoor Lovers
- Virginia is for Oyster Lovers
- Virginia is for Sports Lovers
- Virginia is for Wine Lovers
- Weddings
- Family Fun
- LGBT

Specialty messaging

- Groups
- Meetings





MARKETING PLAN

The Virginia Tourism Corporation operates as a fully-integrated marketing unit composed of owned media (VTC owned Web sites and social channels), earned media (public relations) and paid media (advertising). Moreover, the VTC marketing department's overall goal is to increase brand awareness and connect it to travel consideration for Virginia is for Lovers. In short, it is VTC's job to make people think of Virginia and travel at the same time. Once people are thinking of the state favorably in terms of travel, they will book trips to Virginia, stay longer and spend more money.

The lines between communication disciplines blur more every day. VTC builds marketing tactics in layers:

- 1. **Owned Media** - Content distribution on VTC owned channels, such as: Virginia.org, Virginia's Travel Blog, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc.
- 2. **Earned Media** - Targeted public relations and partnership opportunities
- 3. **Paid Media** - Targeted advertising, sponsorships and syndicated content partnerships

Product Awareness Focus

The core strength of VTC's marketing campaigns lies in product categories such as history, family fun, mountains and beach. The leading marketing objective is to maintain the great awareness already for these products and the communities who have developed them. Secondly, VTC seeks opportunities to promote new regional product and features, as they are among the most important to Virginia traveler interests.

VTC will also focus on increasing awareness of the sub-brands previously noted as a key tactic for Brand Vision.

Research shows the leading reason prospective travelers choose another state is unfamiliarity with Virginia travel product besides history. Furthermore, there are high levels of consumer satisfaction but low levels of awareness among the most valued prospective travelers for these products. The goal is to eventually elevate awareness of all of Virginia's core travel products.

Supporting Research and Foundational Documents

[Drive Tourism Statewide Plan](#)

[VTC Operations Plan](#)

[VTC Research](#)

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