

**VIRGINIA  
IS FOR  
LO♥ERS®**

**GUIDE TO  
VTC MARKETING**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....2

VTC’s Integrated Marketing Approach.....3

Target Markets.....5

Key Personas.....6

Drivers.....7

Experience-Focused Marketing.....8

Opportunities and Risks.....9

Strategic Marketing Priorities.....10

Cultivation.....11

Storytelling.....12

Simplification.....13

Empowerment.....14

VTC’s Marketing by Department.....15

Marketing Administration.....16

Digital Marketing.....17

Brand.....18

Communications.....19

Domestic Sales.....20

Global Marketing.....21

Conclusion & Additional Resources.....22



The Virginia Tourism Corporation's (VTC) marketing team is inclusive of five departments working as a fully integrated team. According to a brand study commissioned by VTC through Omnitrak, Virginia is top of mind and enjoys high awareness among all target markets. The state enjoys the third highest unaided awareness and 61% total integrated awareness. VTC marketing remains effective in influencing visitation, as demonstrated by the increase in intent to visit among those exposed versus non-exposed to Virginia's marketing efforts. However,

there still remains an opportunity to build on Virginia's brand perceptions by promoting and offering key drivers and value for money, in addition to a welcoming/friendly atmosphere. The study further revealed that through integrated marketing efforts and the power of partnerships, VTC is able to effectively influence future travel intentions to Virginia. Integrated marketing that includes a holistic approach of paid, owned, and earned media has greater success penetrating target markets compared to paid media alone, according to the study.



# VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

is one of the most iconic and recognizable travel brands in the world. Emboldened with that powerful brand equity, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) is charged with promoting the Commonwealth as a premier travel destination by showcasing all there is to love in a Virginia vacation. The dollars spent by travelers fuel the economy, provide work opportunities for Virginians, and improve communities across the state. Simply stated, tourism helps to make Virginia a great place to live, work, and visit.

## VTC MARKETING HAS TWO CLEAR GOALS:

**Increase awareness and consideration of Virginia as a top travel destination.** Through integrated marketing efforts and storytelling, VTC helps to achieve a positive image of Virginia, build relationships with travelers and create a sustainable travel economy. Tourism also helps to build creative communities and diverse economies, making Virginia towns and cities vibrant and attractive places to live, to do business, and to travel.

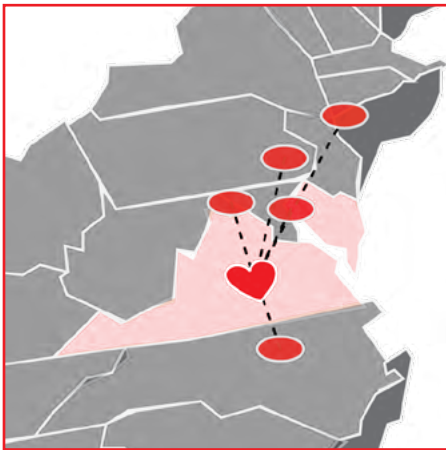
**Increase bookings and arrivals to Virginia.**

Through strategic media diversification, personalization, and technology, VTC strives to deliver the right message to the right people at the right time in order to encourage critical dollars spent by travelers into statewide communities. Through these efforts, tourism fosters entrepreneurship opportunities, provides new and sustainable job opportunities for Virginians, and improves the quality of our communities around the Commonwealth.



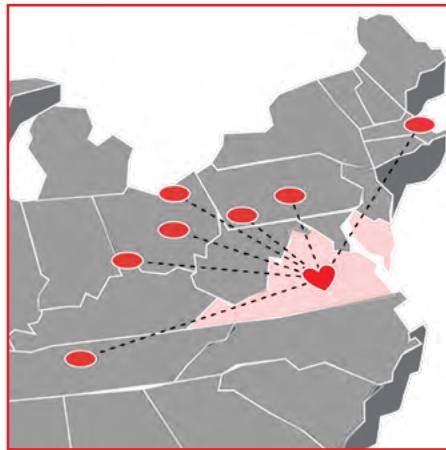
# TARGET MARKETS

## DOMESTIC TARGET MARKETS



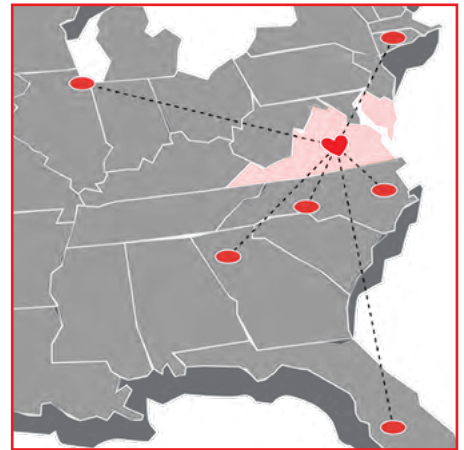
### TIER 1

- Washington, D.C.
- Raleigh/Greensboro
- Philadelphia
- Baltimore
- New York City



### TIER 2

- Cleveland
- Cincinnati
- Columbus
- Nashville
- Pittsburgh
- Harrisburg
- Boston



### TIER 3

- Chicago
- Atlanta
- Hartford
- Charlotte
- Greenville
- Tampa

## INTERNATIONAL TARGET MARKETS

### PRIMARY

- Canada
  - » Québec
  - » Ontario
- United Kingdom
- China
- Germany
- France

### SECONDARY

- Australia
- India
- Japan
- South Korea



# KEY PERSONAS



## FAMILIES

- Living in single-family homes in suburban setting
- Kids of all ages living at home
- Creating memories is what matters the most
- Looking for packages, mostly value-driven options



## UNATTACHED

- Young, single, engaged or newly married
- Ambitious, well-educated and have professional jobs
- Seek authentic travel experiences with culture, music, sports, adventure, and inspiration
- They like to relax and visit local eateries, wineries, distilleries & craft breweries. They taste the local culture via food



## BUCKET-LISTERS

- Married “empty nester” couples who are reconnecting with their loved ones
- Their clever investments over the years allow them to indulge in the finer things in life
- They look for leisure, culture, and storytelling
- Their travels consist of outdoors, sporting events, wineries, exotourism, gardens, golf, cultural & heritage sites



## OUR DRIVERS

### CURRENT EQUITY

What we're known for today

- Iconic History & Heritage

### PRIMARY DRIVERS

What we'll make ourselves known for to bring in new visitors

- History
- Outdoors
- Family Fun
- Culinary
- Arts & Culture
- Vibrant Communities

### NICHE DRIVERS

What we'll build awareness of through integrated marketing efforts

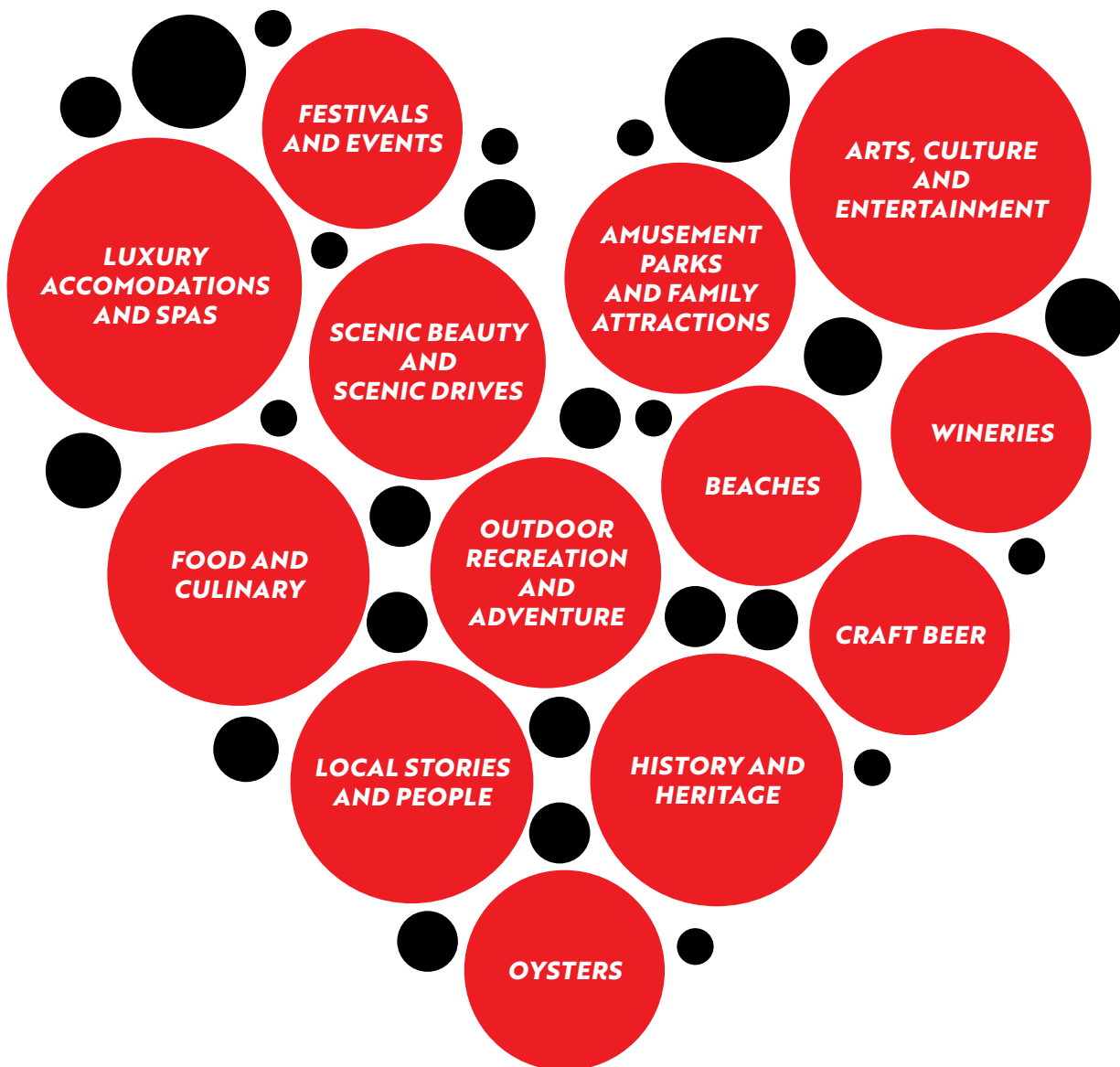
- Music Towns & Venues
- LOVEworks
- History+
- Small Towns
- Notable Neighborhoods
- Luxury

# EXPERIENCE-FOCUSED

## MARKETING

The core strength of VTC's marketing campaigns lie in highlighting experiential travel activities and attractions such as history, family fun, mountains, culinary, and beach. Research indicates the leading reason prospective travelers choose another state over Virginia is unfamiliarity with key travel products, with the exception of history. The goal is to eventually elevate awareness of all of Virginia's core travel experiences. As such, the main objective of VTC marketing is to maintain strong brand awareness while seeking opportunities to promote new, diversified experiences as well as history.

**TO GAIN GREATER MARKET-SHARE,  
VTC MUST PROMOTE THESE EXPERIENCES OF INTEREST TO TRAVELERS:**





# OPPORTUNITIES

## AND RISKS

### OPPORTUNITY TO GROW

Virginia welcomes millions of travelers each year, resulting in a direct economic impact of \$28 billion from domestic and international visitor spending. With the continued increase in travel demand, Virginia has an opportunity to optimize meaningful growth through key attributes important to target audiences. According to the Omnitrak study, travelers seek destinations that are:

- Filled with a variety of things to see and do
- Relaxing
- Warm and friendly
- Worth the money/are a good value
- Known for a great food and beverage scene
- Exciting
- Easy and convenient to get to
- Provide good entertainment options
- Provide activities for adults
- Authentic
- Provide package deals
- Uncrowded

During a time where these attributes play a key development role for destinations, Virginia is well-positioned in perception as a great place to visit and to live. Virginia is viewed very favorably among target consumers in these areas:

- Place - highly recommend to visitors
- Place - proud to live
- Beaches
- Scenic drives
- Outdoor recreation activities

### RISKS

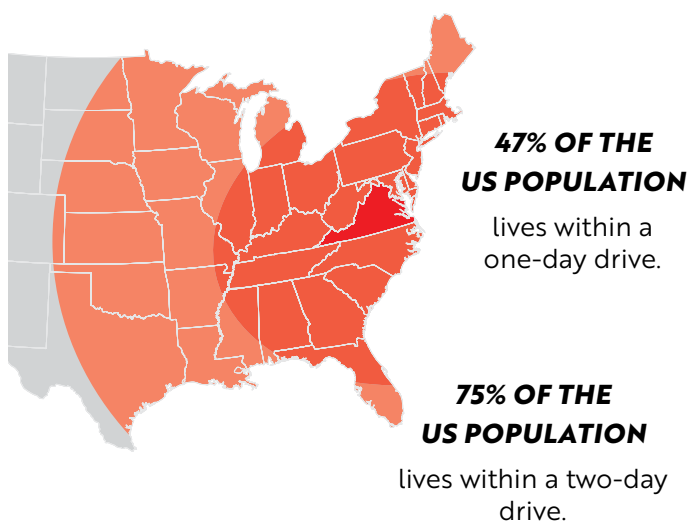
While there is a robust opportunity for growth and increased market-share, there are potential risks and threats to the growth of the tourism industry in Virginia, such as:

- Increased tourism marketing investment from competitors and destinations around the world
- Economic risks and possibility of another recession
- Natural disasters
- Visa policies
- Political crisis

### GEOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGE

As a central geographic position along the U.S. eastern seaboard, the Commonwealth is situated within 47% of the U.S. population within a one-day drive, and 75% of the U.S. population within a two-day drive. Beyond its geographic position and proximity to Washington, D.C. Virginia is a highly competitive destination with 12.3% brand market share among destinations such as Florida, New York, Washington D.C., North Carolina, South Carolina, Pennsylvania and Tennessee. While Florida tops the list with 14.1 % followed by New York (12.9%), Virginia shares third place with Pennsylvania. Overtaking Pennsylvania's position would put Virginia is 7th place.

VTC Marketing would be **most** effective if efforts could extend to a national and global audience. However, current budget constraints restrict paid marketing activities to the following markets.





## **STRATEGIC MARKETING PRIORITIES**

The VTC strategy is to showcase the diversity of Virginia's abundant travel experiences in addition to the state's rich history

# CULTIVATION

## GROWING VIRGINIA'S TOURISM ECONOMY

Through efforts across all divisions, VTC will position Virginia as a top-travel destination in the United States to visit in order to increase and optimize the state's tourism economy. In 2019, every \$1 invested in VTC integrated marketing efforts generated \$167 in travel spending and \$7 in state tax revenue.

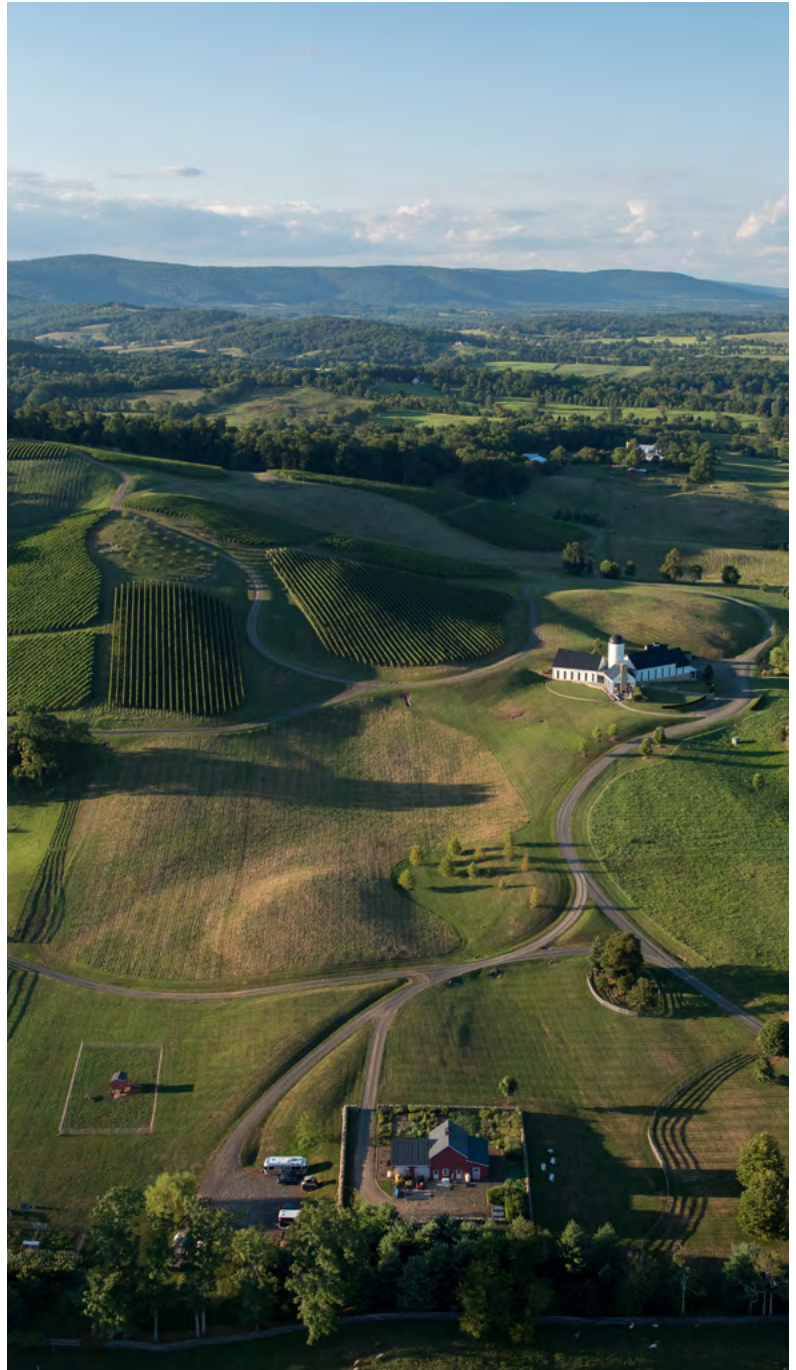
## CULTIVATION GOALS AND BEST PRACTICES

Tourism is a multi-million dollar industry in Virginia that stimulates the economy by creating hundreds of thousands of work opportunities for all communities statewide. Virginia tourism generates significant tax revenue into local and state economies, helping to pay for critical services important to residents and improvements to communities across the Commonwealth.

### **VTC HELPS TO GROW TOURISM IN VIRGINIA BY:**

- Increasing awareness of Virginia as a premier travel destination through owned, earned, paid, and social media strategies
- Targeting high-value travelers, based on information learned from comprehensive market research
- Showcasing the diversity of Virginia's abundant travel experiences through owned, earned, paid and social strategies
- Customizing messaging through geo-targeting:
  - » In-State: Year-round
  - » Visiting Friends and Relatives: Year-round
  - » Out-of-State: High Season and Shoulder Season (paid); Year-round (owned + earned)
  - » International: Year-round

By continuing to cultivate a robust tourism economy, VTC's integrated marketing efforts can improve Virginia's perception as a desirable place not only to travel to, but also as a desirable place to live, study, work and do business.





# STORYTELLING

## VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS = TRAVEL

Through strategic integrated marketing efforts, VTC enhances brand awareness and is the correlation between “Virginia is for Lovers” and travel. Visitors recognize the iconic slogan and logo but often do not understand the meaning or associate it with travel. This marketing priority allows VTC to develop a long-term brand strategy to maintain and strengthen the “Virginia is for Lovers” brand, making it more meaningful and relevant to today’s consumers. Most importantly, storytelling ensures the connection between “Virginia is for Lovers” and travel and strengthens authenticity.

## STORYTELLING GOALS AND BEST PRACTICES

- Continue to build awareness and trust with consumers to promote Virginia as a desirable travel destination. The brand and destination is positioned as a welcoming and authentic place to create memories with friends and family.
- Engage first-hand accounts of positive and exciting Virginia vacation experiences to provide recommendations, endorsements, and authentic accounts of real Virginia vacations. Travelers trust first-hand recommendations from friends, family, and social influencers that they follow and respect.
- Promote Virginia through the lens of fun, excitement, and relaxation. The look and feel of all consumer-facing marketing must be aligned with the following values:
  - » **PASSION:** Define the “Lovers” in Virginia is for Lovers
  - » **INSPIRATION:** Capture emotion and intent to travel
  - » **DIVERSITY:** Showcase a wide array of people and travel experiences
  - » **AUTHENTICITY:** Highlight “very Virginia” travel products and experiences
  - » **FUN:** Present **THE** key attribute of Virginia travel experiences.



# SIMPLIFICATION

## PATH-TO-PURCHASE

Utilizing detailed research as a primary resource, ensure travelers have a seamless path-to-purchase when planning a trip to Virginia.

## SIMPLIFICATION GOALS AND BEST PRACTICES

Enhance Virginia's image as a top destination to travel throughout all facets of the consumer journey:

- Awareness
- Planning
- Consideration
- Purchase
- Visit
- Sharing

Implement key strategies and tactics through relevant earned, owned, paid and social channels in order to:

- Diversify media distribution
- Encourage engagement
- Increase Virginia's share of voice
- Maintain consistency in-market messaging: storytelling must always be "on"
- Carefully track successes and failures and be able to quickly pivot from what's not working
- Ensure delivery of the right message to the right people at the right time.





# EMPOWERMENT

## LEVERAGING BRAND EQUITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Empower Virginia tourism industry partnerships and global co-branding partners to enhance Virginia's visibility, while extending marketing reach through a unified voice. Encourage Virginia's tourism industry to use Virginia is for Lovers in all of their marketing as well.

### EMPOWERMENT GOALS AND BEST PRACTICES

Enhance Virginia's visibility through key, strategic partnerships.

- Powerful partnerships with national and/or international brands with similar or greater brand equity.
  - » Find partners with similar missions and/or audiences
  - » Leverage partnerships to reach brand new audiences
  - » Leverage partnerships to position the Virginia is for Lovers brand in new, unprecedented ways
  - » Leverage limited marketing dollars through collaborative co-branding initiatives.

Extend marketing reach through a consistent, unified voice

- Ensure that all consumer-facing messaging is consistent, harmonious and congruent.
- Ensure that the brand tone, voice, and personality are woven through all consumer-facing messaging.
- Empower the Virginia tourism industry to utilize similar messaging to take advantage of the effective and powerful brand equity of Virginia is for Lovers and extend the reach and frequency of the messaging.
- Empower the Virginia tourism industry to take advantage of the powerful Virginia is for Lovers brand by equipping them with the tools they need to succeed in an overly competitive, overly saturated market







## ***VTC'S MARKETING BY DEPARTMENT***

VTC'S Marketing Division includes six functional areas – Communications & Social Media, Operations, Brand, Digital, Domestic Sales, and Global Marketing.

## MARKETING ADMINISTRATION

The Vice President of Marketing serves as the chief marketing officer for the agency and ensures that all marketing disciplines are completely integrated, on message, on brand, and producing results that translate into brand awareness, arrivals and bookings, and overall organizational marketing performance.

### 2020 OBJECTIVES

- Monitor and report key performances indicators, key performance metrics, current trends, and overall results
- Oversee the integrated marketing departments of brand, communications, digital, domestic sales, global marketing, and marketing operations.

## MARKETING OPERATIONS

The Director of Marketing Operations provides strategic direction on all projects, fiscal accountability and professional support to the entire marketing team as well as other divisions. Due to the fast-paced, ever-changing nature of marketing, it is essential to have one designated person that can be boots-on-the-ground, as well as a finger on the pulse of the division. The Director helps all of VTC Marketing departments work more efficiently and smoothly as projects and activations are tracked and executed strategically and collaboratively. This position manages day-to-day marketing operations to ensure optimal workflow, best practices, follow up, and quality of work within deadlines.

### 2020 OBJECTIVES

- Join Brand, Communications, and Digital departments to ensure messaging is consistent across all platforms
- Increase partner knowledge about co-branding opportunities for Virginia is for Lovers merchandise
- Co-produce and maintain monthly shared calendars for content and operations
- Ensure partners have access to opportunities for collaborative external marketing partnerships
- Lead special projects that involve all departments within Marketing and/or all divisions within VTC







## DIGITAL MARKETING

The Digital Marketing department provides important resources for travelers in all stages of their trip planning, from the official Virginia is for Lovers Website ([www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org)) to e-newsletters and more. The Digital Marketing department is also a critical connector between the Virginia tourism industry and the traveling public, providing powerful opportunities for destinations across the Commonwealth to reach new travelers every day.

### 2020 OBJECTIVES

- Increase number of unique clicks from [virginia.org](http://virginia.org) website and the Virginia Travel Blog to industry partner websites, social media, and other online content by 20% as measured by Google Analytics
- Increase percentage of unique sessions to [virginia.org](http://virginia.org) website and the Virginia Travel Blog from outside Virginia by 10%
- Exceed 12 million unique sessions to the [virginia.org](http://virginia.org) website and the Virginia Travel Blog
- Assist 500 tourism industry partners by helping to manage their content on [virginia.org](http://virginia.org)



## BRAND

The Brand Department oversees all paid marketing for Virginia Tourism, including advertising, brand activations, sponsorships and promotions. Working closely with The Martin Agency, the Brand Department implements a high-level brand awareness campaign throughout the year aimed at attracting new generations of travelers, first-time visitors and high-yield customers to Virginia. The Brand Department also develops and implements the Industry Co-op plan, aimed at providing affordable and flexible advertising opportunities for the Virginia Tourism industry. The plan provides scalable options for all budget sizes aimed at helping industry partners attract new visitors.

### 2020 OBJECTIVES

- Provide Virginia's travel industry partners with a \$1,000,000.00 cooperative advertising program (private sector tourism businesses and regional tourism entities) by negotiating affordable paid advertising opportunities to help increase their frequency and reach.
  - » Ensure at least 80% of \$1M of cooperative advertising program is utilized by industry partners
  - » Ensure April 2020 launch
- Maintain an 80% brand awareness through target markets
- Ensure paid media benchmarks and consistency are achieved for Spring and Fall:
  - » **Spring:**  
14,200 - 15,600 bookings; \$3.8M - \$4.5M hotel revenue; 3,100 - 3,600 Arrivals; 0.15 - 0.16 APM
  - » **Fall:** 14,400 - 17,300 bookings; \$3.4M - \$3.6M hotel revenue; 3,100 - 3,600 Arrivals; 0.14 - 0.15 APM
- Produce 275,000 Virginia is for Lovers travel guides
- Increase partner participation in LOVEworks reimbursement program to 200+ installments around the state

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications department oversees all strategic communications, public relations, social media, and collaborative content strategy for Virginia Tourism. Through integrated and collaborative efforts, the Communications department cultivates and maintains a positive public appearance through engaging content as well as a careful awareness and reaction to public opinion. The department is dedicated driving great, authentic content and consistently engaging in real-time conversations to show the news media, travelers, and key stakeholders why Virginia is for Lovers.

### 2020 OBJECTIVES

#### Content Creation

- Create 10 new regional guides for Virginia.org and/or the Virginia Travel Blog
- Create a minimum of 25 new evergreen content pieces for the Virginia Travel Blog
- Develop content for 24 consumer e-newsletters

#### Facebook

- Increase response rate to 80%
- Decrease response time to 8 hours
- Increase out-of-state followers by 5%
- Increase average engagement rate per post by 2%
- Create 2 Facebook stories per month detailing Virginia travel experiences and opportunities
- Generate 5% increase in total number of email addresses acquired through promotions

#### Instagram

- Secure a minimum of 7% average engagement on reach
- Increase followers of @VisitVirginia Instagram account by 10%
- Increase the number of posts using #LOVEVA by 10%
- Increase the number of link visits included in stories by 25%

#### Public Relations

- Secure 70% of coverage in priority outlets based on media performance metrics in TrendKite.
- Increase number of media interactions by 5%
- Increase number of media reach/impressions by 5%
- Increase total number of influencer partnerships by 5%
- Secure at least 20 positive placements in which Virginia is for Lovers (and/or relevant sub-brands) are highlighted in the headline or lead paragraph
- Coordinate 1 out-of-state media blitz opportunities for a minimum of 10 tourism partners

#### Twitter

- Increase engaged users by 5%
- Increase number of mentions by 5%
- Increase the number of #LOVEVA mentions by 10%
- Host a minimum of 2 Twitter chats annually

#### YouTube

- Reach 10,000 subscribers
- Increase organic traffic to the site by 10%

#### Pinterest

- Increase reach and average daily clicks to the Virginia Travel Blog with promoted pins by 5%



## DOMESTIC SALES

The Domestic Sales department is responsible for planning, implementing and measuring marketing initiatives that target buyers representing the packaged travel markets, AAA/CAA counselors, and sports events rights holders. These buyer segments are reached by participating in trade shows, sales calls, sales missions, hosting client events and e-marketing.

## 2020 OBJECTIVES

- Develop and lead 5 sales and marketing initiatives
- Represent Virginia with tourism industry partners by attending a minimum 6 national or regional conferences
- Leverage domestic marketing budget by 65 partners and \$30,000 in partnership revenue.
- Reach to 650+ buyers of top Virginia experiences and sports facilities
- Create a minimum of 10 trade-focused blogs
- Increase visitation to the trade-focused landing pages by 1%



## GLOBAL MARKETING

The Global Marketing department is responsible for planning, implementing and measuring the effectiveness of direct sales and marketing initiatives to international visitors and vendors. The Global Marketing team utilizes key communications and promotions to reach Virginia's key international markets: Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, China, India, Japan and South Korea.

### 2020 OBJECTIVES

- Create Tour Operator marketing co-ops with \$2:1 match in U.K., Germany, France and \$1:1 match in China working with CRUSA
- Participate in BRAND USA marketing programs in U.K., Germany and China
- Print 80,000 copies of holiday guides in English, German, French and Chinese working with CRUSA
- Participate in 8 trade/consumers shows in Canada and working with CRUSA, participate in 7 consumer shows through VUSA programs in Germany, China, and France.
- Secure 20 sales calls, 11 training seminars and 4 site inspection tours in Canada; and secure 360 sales calls, 46 training sessions, and Hotelbeds B2B program in partnership with CRUSA
- Host 10 Familiarization Tours in Virginia with tour operators, travel agents, media and influencers
- Secure positive sentiment throughout at least 80% of earned media placements.
- Conduct a minimum of 20 Canadian sales and follow-up calls, and 4 Canadian site inspection tours
- Participate in a minimum of eight Canadian trade/consumer shows
- Conduct a minimum of 10 Canadian travel trade training seminars
- Organize 1 Canadian travel trade webinar
- Increase number of French-language Facebook page followers by 5%
- Conduct one mission with Destination Marketing Office representatives, including trade and media, in Ontario and/or Québec.
- Conduct a minimum of 5 Canadian consumer media site inspection tours, including group media trips or individual media visits.





## CONCLUSION & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For further information and assistance please contact the following individuals:

Jane Lammay, MBA  
Director of Marketing Operations  
[jlammay@virginia.org](mailto:jlammay@virginia.org)  
804-545-5546

Caroline Logan  
Director of Communications  
[clogan@virginia.org](mailto:clogan@virginia.org)  
804-545-5572

Joni Johnson, CTP, TMP  
Director of Sales  
[jjohnson@virginia.org](mailto:jjohnson@virginia.org)  
804-545-5544

Lindsey Norment  
Brand Director  
[lnorment@virginia.org](mailto:lnorment@virginia.org)  
804-545-5578

Tom Kirk  
Director of Digital Marketing  
[tkirk@virginia.org](mailto:tkirk@virginia.org)  
804-545-5558

Heidi Johannesen  
Global Marketing Director  
[hjohannesen@virginia.org](mailto:hjohannesen@virginia.org)  
703-217-2263

You may also attend an interactive face-to-face event where you will learn about VTC's marketing techniques, practices and how you can participate in VTC's marketing programs. This orientation session is most beneficial for local tourism directors, managers, owners, attractions, events and promoters of Virginia tourism businesses. Or please take a look at the following links for further information:

[Research](#) | [Brand](#) | [Communications](#) | [Digital](#) | [Domestic Sales](#) | [Global Marketing](#)