VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS® × WINTER 2020-2021 PR + CONTENT STRATEGY
Virginia is for Lovers is one of the most iconic and recognizable travel brands in the world.

Using 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 our economy, provide work opportunities for Virginians, and improve communities across the state.

Simply put, tourism helps to make Virginia a great place to live, work, and visit.
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

INCLUSIVITY: Provide information and resources so that ALL travelers feel safe and welcome in Virginia

FUN: Present THE key attribute of Virginia travel experiences
Based on recent research, we should take an indirect approach with the travel message over winter (December - February).

We will continue to ask travelers to consider Virginia when planning a trip but we will utilize similar messaging from “Find What You Love” and “We’ll be Waiting” by positioning Virginia as a place to connect/disconnect, **when the time is right**.

This will be an important time to promote partners and local businesses with low-risk, no-contact experiences.
It has become increasingly evident that the winter season could potentially parallel or be worse than the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Spring 2020. As such, VTC will revert back to Phase I/II goals and tactics:

- Support
- Mitigation
- Adaptation
- Engagement
- Reassurance
- Slow Re-entry into Market

More information on the Brand Response can be found [here](#).
GOALS: AFTER SECOND WAVE

Maintain awareness and consideration of Virginia as a top travel destination. While many Americans currently have no travel plans, we want Virginia to be top of mind when they are ready to resume travel.

Increase bookings and arrivals in Virginia. As Virginians and drive-markets seek safe destinations that are closer to home, we provide information and inspiration to help them book their trip.
Remaining Social budget: $14,000

Remaining Search budget: $30,000

*Paid Spring campaign set to launch March*
Target Audiences

- Virginia
- Washington, D.C.
- Raleigh/Greensboro
- Baltimore

EARNED ONLY
- New York City
- National media

TARGET MARKETS + PERSONAS: NOW
CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

- **Strategy:** In general, all marketing initiatives should ladder up to VTC’s hero campaign, WanderLove.

- **Strategy:** All marketing initiatives should be firmly tied to travel, whether the consumer is planning travel now, or in the future. In general, VTC will not promote initiatives or campaigns that do not inspire travel.

- **Safety:** All content should have a strong safety message. Images and videos should show people wearing masks. Copy should include information about COVID-19 safety guidelines and Virginia’s mandatory mask policy.

- **Safety:** In general, VTC will not promote in-person events and gatherings.

- **Safety:** When COVID-19 cases are spiking, VTC will not promote heavy travel messaging.

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** Here in Virginia, we stand for LOVE. We stand for equality, diversity, and inclusion. Our job at VTC is to promote Virginia as a premier travel destination, and we aim to make everyone feel welcome when visiting Virginia by providing resources, information, and inspiration. With this mission and goal in mind, we are making a conscious effort to not only be diverse in our marketing, but to strive for inclusiveness in everything we do.
The Hero-Hub-Hygiene model, originally developed by digital marketers at Google and YouTube, has become the industry gold standard for content marketing. The 3H principles provide strategic framework for brands to organize the most compelling content and deliver those messages to the right audience, at the right time, through the right channels.

**HERO**
Large-scale, tent-pole campaigns or “pow” moments designed to raise broad awareness

**HUB**
Regularly scheduled “push” content designed for target audiences

**HYGIENE**
Always-on content designed to “pull” in targeted core and prospective audiences
HERO CONTENT:
WANDERLOVE

VTC’s WanderLove campaign provides travel inspiration for low-risk travel experiences, including road trips, outdoor recreation, hidden gems, small towns, and our signature LOVEworks program.

Winter 2020: WanderLove remains our Hero, but with COVID cases spiking again, we will lean into planning for future travel and encouraging travelers to visit when they are ready.

TIMING: NOVEMBER 15- SPRING 2021

More information on WanderLove
HUB CONTENT: BRAND PILLARS

EAT. DRINK. LOVE.
wine | craft beer | cider | spirits | oysters | heritage cuisine
virginia chefs + recipes | safe dining experiences | agritourism | farm-to-fork

HISTORY + HERITAGE
presidential homes | museums | living history sites | educational travel
historic battlefields | women's history | black history | virtual history experiences

FAMILY FUN
family-friendly destinations | value travel

OUTDOORS
hiking | biking | paddling | camping | parks | ATVs | trails | scenic drives
sustainable tourism | beaches | mountains | outdoor sporting

ARTS + CULTURE
virtual music + performances | socially-distanced live performances | art | craftsmanship | art districts | street art | filmed in virginia

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES
diversity + inclusion | small towns | hotels + resorts | city + town profiles | luxury destinations
LOVEworks | LGBT-friendly | notable virginians | neighborhoods
HYGIENE CONTENT: WINTER TRENDS

- What’s new for 2021: openings, renovations
- National Plan for Vacation Day
- Road trips
- Visiting friends and family
- Outdoor recreation (winter hikes, winter sports, winter camping, whale watching)
- Small towns (Holiday Main Streets, small town shopping)
- Cabins + rentals
- Virginia Mountain Resorts
- LOVEworks
- Holidays - Drive-thru lights, tree farms, holiday main streets, shop local
- Workcations & Family Field Trips
- Luxury getaways
- Spas & Wellness
- History

- Chef spotlights & Virginia Recipes
- Seasonal Craft Beverages
- Romance – Engagements, Elopements, Small Wedding Venues
- Where to go in 2021
- Winter holidays – Christmas, NYE, Presidents Day, MLK Day, Black History Month, Valentine’s Day
- Evergreen food and drink stories
- Sustainable tourism and building back better
- Social distancing activities
- Hotels, attractions, destinations taking extra safety precautions
- Contactless hotels/travel experiences
WINTER PR STRATEGY
HERO STRATEGY: PR
WANDERLOVE

**Goal:** Secure 10 media placements that support WanderLove campaign.

**Timing:** November 15-Spring 2021 (long-lead); After COVID cases stabilize (short lead)

**Strategy:**
Pitch in-state and regional media outlets on Virginia road trips as a safe and accessible re-entry into travel, highlighting additional low-risk experiences – outdoor recreation, hidden gems, small towns and LOVEworks.

**Media Targets:**
- In-state print and online newspapers, in-state broadcast, in-state regional magazines, in-state bloggers and influencers
- DC & MD regional media
- Target National Media
- Regional Influencers to promote road trips.
**Goal:** Secure 15 media placements to feature Virginia as a premier, safe travel destination.

**Timing:** Ongoing

**Strategy:** Focusing on Virginia's core brand pillars, as well as seasonal topics and trends, pitch in-state, regional and national media outlets to highlight Virginia as a premier, safe travel destination. VTC will partner with Rachel McAllister to assist in these efforts.

**Media Targets:**
- In-state print and online newspapers, in-state broadcast, in-state regional magazines, in-state bloggers and influencers
- DC & MD regional media
- National media
- Influencers within driving distance (no fly markets)

**Pitches At a Glance:**

For more: Proactive Pitch Calendar
WINTER SOCIAL STRATEGY
LET’S GET SOCIAL

883K Followers

168K Followers

7K Followers
1M monthly views

5.56K Subscribers

62.2K Followers

2.1K Followers
HERO STRATEGY: SOCIAL
WANDERLOVE

Goal: Build awareness to Virginia is for Lovers brand, as well as Virginia as a premier travel destination; drive site traffic.
- 90% completion rate on Instagram Stories
- 350K video views on Pinterest
- 30K reach per post on Facebook

Timing: November 15 - Spring 2021

Strategy:
Promote low-risk travel experiences for Virginians by featuring UGC content on all channels, up-to-date safety messaging, updated blog content, and relevant partner content.

WanderLOVE Content:
- Influencer videos
- VTC blog content
- VTC WanderLove landing page
HUB + HYGIENE STRATEGY: SOCIAL
BRAND PILLARS + TRENDS

Goal: Drive awareness and gain followers over all channels
- 10K new followers on Instagram
- Average 20K post engagements a week on Facebook
- Average 1M impressions and 20K engagements per month on Pinterest

Timing: Ongoing

Strategy: Focusing on Virginia’s core brand pillars, as well as seasonal topics (holiday content, local shopping) and trends, create content to highlight Virginia as a premier, safe travel destination. Additionally, we will promote Eat.Drink.Love with a new Inside the Kitchen Chef Series.

Tactics + Implementation:
- Share evergreen winter content focusing on safety copy with all messaging
- Hire influencers and brand partners to further amplify reach
- Share relevant partner winter content on multiple channels
- Share up-to-date VTC blogs from the 2020 content calendar
WINTER BLOG STRATEGY
HERO STRATEGY: BLOG

WANDERLOVE

Goal: Continue promoting partner content through Matcha, update existing in-house blog articles as there are changes in COVID protocols.

Timing: November 15-Spring 2021

Strategy:
Promote low-risk travel experiences for Virginians by featuring Road Trips, Hidden Gems, Small Towns and Outdoor content. Incorporate LOVEworks as a uniquely Virginia road trip experience.

WanderLOVE Blogs:
- Norfolk to Virginia's Eastern Shore
- Fredericksburg to Virginia's Northern Neck
- Roanoke to Abingdon
- Harrisonburg to Charlottesville
- D.C. to Culpeper
- Richmond to Danville
- Williamsburg to Norfolk
- Blue Ridge Parkway
HUB + HYGIENE STRATEGY: BLOG
BRAND PILLARS + TRENDS

**Goal:** Create 20 blog articles to promote Eat.Drink.Love with our Inside the Kitchen Chef Series. Support holiday content with new and updated articles that promote lodging, restaurants, wineries, breweries, cideries, distilleries, and local shopping. Secure 525,000 unique page views.

**Timing:** November 15-Spring 2021

**Strategy:** Focusing on Virginia’s core brand pillars, as well as seasonal topics and trends, create content to highlight Virginia as a premier, safe travel destination.

**Tactics + Implementation:**
- Target high-volume keywords when creating new content (e.g. Blue Ridge Parkway, Blue Ridge Mountains, Skyline Drive, Virginia Mountains)
- Target high-volume keywords in creating new “But Did You Know...” content (e.g. Appalachian Mountains, Virginia peanuts, oyster farm)
- Update existing winter content to reflect COVID-19 changes, including canceled festivals and events
- Update and share evergreen winter content (winter hikes, winter sports, etc.)
- Hiring freelance writers to create articles promoting content hubs, such as Eat. Drink. Love, Music, Outdoors, and Family Fun
- Work with partners through Matcha to create new content promoting content hubs, such as Vibrant Communities
WINTER EMAIL STRATEGY
HERO STRATEGY: EMAIL
WANDERLOVE

**Goal:** Send 1 dedicated WanderLove campaign email with an Open Rate goal of 10% and Click Thru Rate goal of 1%

**Timing:** January

**Strategy:**

**Results:**
HUB + HYGIENE STRATEGY: EMAIL
BRAND PILLARS + TRENDS

Goal: Continue to grow VTC’s email marketing capabilities throughout winter, with an Open Rate goal of 12% and a Click Thru Rate goal of 1.5%

Timing: November 15-Spring 2021

Strategy: Focusing on Virginia’s core brand pillars, as well as seasonal topics and trends, curate content to highlight Virginia as a premier, safe travel destination.

Upcoming Email Schedule (Tentative)

- **November** - Holiday Gift Guide Dedicated Email
- **December** - Local Love - EDL / Chef Series
- **December** - Sharing the LOVE With You and Yours
- **January** - Where to WanderLove in 2021 (Book Now, Travel Later / What’s New)
- **January** - Socially Distant Winter Activities
- **February** - Romance / Valentines Day / LOVEworks
- **February** - Black Travel
- **March** - TBD
WINTER WEBSITE STRATEGY
HERO STRATEGY: WEBSITE

WANDERLOVE

Goal: Update the WanderLove landing page with relevant winter content and images

Timing: November 15 - Spring 2021

Strategy: Add Winter Hikes, Whale Watching, Skiing, and IG Worthy Winter Destinations to keep the campaign relevant through winter months.
**HUB + HYGIENE STRATEGY: WEBSITE**

**BRAND PILLARS + TRENDS**

**Goal:** Generate 100k collective pageviews of content featured on Virgina.org/winter.

**Timing:** November 15 - Spring 2021

**Strategy:** Update content on Virgina.org/winter with high volume keywords and strategic editorial themes to increase organic traffic. Amplify page views by promoting featured content in emails and social media.

**Key content themes:**
- Skiing in Virginia
- Holidays in Virginia
- Ice Skating
- Cabin Rentals
- Whale Watching
- Mountain Resorts
- Winter Hikes
- Luxury Retreats
- Romantic Getaways
- IG Worthy Winter Destinations
- Safe Winter Destinations
WINTER SEARCH STRATEGY
SEARCH STRATEGY

**Goal:** Continue to generate efficient site traffic from Google, CTR > 6%, AVG. CPC <$3

**Timing:** December 2020 - February 2021

**Strategy:**
- Align with content strategy- promote Holidays, Winter experiences
- Shift to Planning for future vacation message
- LOVEworks
- Increase use of Google Discovery Ads to promote niche topics (e.g. Winter scenics, LoveWorks, other topics as determined)
LOOKING AHEAD: SPRING 2021
SPRING 2021

SHARE WHAT YOU LOVE
Hero campaign highlighting family experiences in Virginia with Disconnect/Connect message

NEXT STEPS
VTC and TMA will present several options for paid media launch, timing will be TBD in spring
RESOURCES
CONTENT RESOURCES

- Campaign: WanderLove
- 2020 Revised Content Calendar
- Content Marketing Best Practices
- Tips and Tricks from our Social + Content Team

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS
CONTENT CHANNELS

- Virginia.org
- The Virginia Travel Blog
- VTC's Social Media Channels
- The Virginia Travel Guide
- Paid advertising
- Co-op advertising
- Email Marketing Program
- Earned Media
- Influencer Partnerships