

2021 MARKETING PLAN

VIRGINIA
IS FOR
LOVERS

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Overview

This marketing plan details the strategic approach VTC will take to inspire and encourage visitors to explore Virginia with the ultimate goal of establishing the Commonwealth as a premier travel destination. Through integrated marketing efforts and storytelling, VTC will create a relationship with travelers that will increase awareness and visitation.

This integrated approach will focus on brand-building and tactical marketing initiatives. Additionally, this plan will tackle some of the greatest challenges facing tourism destinations: a low level of awareness regarding the diversity of tourism products and experiences in Virginia. The goal is to raise awareness of and spotlight Virginia's key attributes in order to increase visitation through integrated marketing efforts.

DRIVE 2.0 AND THE VTC MARKETING STRATEGY

In 2019, Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) completed a long-term strategic plan to help increase tourism visitation and spending across the Commonwealth. This plan is titled "Drive 2.0," and builds on the existing findings and conclusions from the 2013 Statewide Tourism Plan. This strategic plan is a result of conversations with Virginia's tourism industry and tourism partners as we look to the future and plan for success. It focuses on answering two key questions:

What should we be promoting?

What should we be building?

VTC's integrated marketing plan complements Partnership Marketing's Drive 2.0 long-term strategic plan by providing a strategic roadmap for VTC and industry partners to develop marketing and relevant promotional messages about travel in Virginia. By aligning messaging across the board -- from the state level to small business owners -- potential travelers to Virginia will see consistent, unified and compelling messaging.

Guiding Principles

These principles will guide VTC’s marketing efforts, providing a clear direction for how strategies are developed and tactics are executed. These are at the core of every marketing initiative VTC will create and manage, and will provide a map for VTC and its partners to follow.

WELCOMING TO ALL

All marketing efforts will reflect the value we place on diversity, equity and inclusion. We will tell the true, full story of Virginia and its history. We will be intentional about engaging and representing diverse communities.

“GO THERE AND DO THAT.”

Our content, programs and initiatives should motivate our audience to come and experience Virginia for themselves. Is it informative? Does it provide value? Does it align with the key attributes that travelers are looking for?

STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

We will maximize our budget by focusing on fewer, bigger and better initiatives. We believe in quality over quantity. We will be efficient without sacrificing impact.

STRENGTH IN PRODUCT DIVERSITY

We have a “wide” problem: our travel product is extensive, but we cannot be all things to all people at all times. We will position Virginia as a premier destination by marrying product offerings with traveler desires, as informed by research. It is important to lead with the drivers but also leverage our differentiators.

PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Our partners are as diverse as our products, and our resources must reflect this variance. We will listen to our partners through consistent surveys, and we will respond by looking holistically at partner integration rather than taking a “one size fits all” approach.

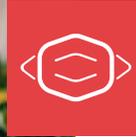
IMPACT THROUGH EVOLUTION

“Because that’s how we’ve always done it” has no place in our strategy. We will constantly search for creative solutions and innovations to ensure we are meeting our consumers where they are with what they want.

RESEARCH-LED DECISION-MAKING

Research and analytics will inform marketing strategy in all stages, from planning to implementation to evaluation. We do not “set and forget” marketing plans; we implement, analyze and adjust as needed to ensure we achieve our goals.

Key Areas of Focus for 2021



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The ongoing pandemic will continue to be a top concern in the minds of travelers. VTC recognizes the importance of highlighting health and safety guidelines as well as promoting travel responsibly. In 2021, VTC will place a significant emphasis on safe travel messaging, striving to ensure travelers and communities alike feel safe, while encouraging visitation.



ROAD TRIPS

As the effects of COVID continue to linger, road trips will be a safe way for people to start traveling again. According to research, 63% of Americans plan to travel by car to see friends and family as their first trip in 2021. Virginia has an advantage as a drive destination and will highlight safe and responsible road trips as a major theme this year.



DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

Research indicates that the top motivators for travel this year are disconnecting and taking a break from everyday life. VTC's brand strategy will highlight Virginia as a place to disconnect and reconnect on a trip in 2021. The *Share What You Love* campaign features disconnecting as a major theme and will show experiences that will allow travelers to connect with their family and loved ones in a more authentic way.



INCLUSIVITY

VTC is committed to positioning Virginia as an inclusive and diverse destination that is welcoming to all travelers. Because of Virginia's unique role in the history of race in America, it is important to prioritize making all travelers, especially Black travelers, feel welcome, safe and that they belong when they visit Virginia. By highlighting Black travel experiences and deeply considering the experience of a Black traveler, the intent will be clear: to be more welcoming, inclusive, and to create a sense of belonging, not only for the Black traveler, but for all travelers.

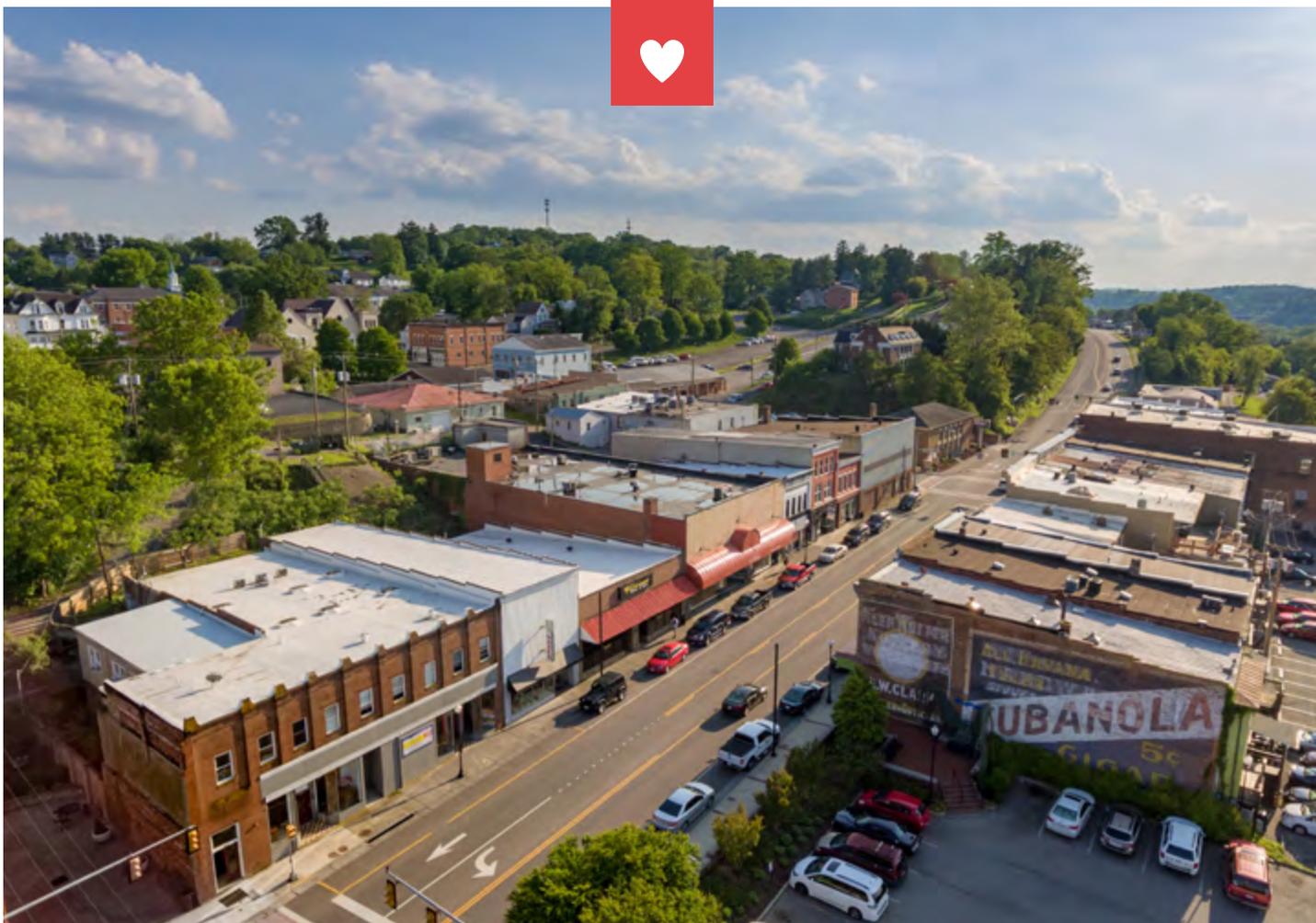
Situational Analysis

VIRGINIA'S TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Tourism is an economic driver in Virginia. In 2019, the Virginia tourism industry generated \$27 billion in domestic travel spending and supported 237,000 jobs. On average, visitors spent \$73 million a day. The travel industry has been a vital component of Virginia's economy, accounting for nearly \$1.9 billion in state & local tax revenues for the state in 2019

In 2020, COVID devastated the tourism and hospitality industry, specifically Virginia's food industry, lodging, attractions, small businesses and communities. The percentage loss in weekly travel spending

has been fluctuating between -45% to -35%. The actual travel spending loss in Virginia has amounted to over \$11.2 billion through December 5, already surpassing the baseline projected loss of \$10 billion for 2020. Although the pandemic has pushed the travel metrics to the lowest point, it has been projected that the travel industry recovery will be slow and a multi-year process. Currently, Virginia's tourism spending is on the path of recovery and will reach the 2019 tourism spending levels in 2023 at the earliest. Virginia will reach its 2019 Q4 GDP level by the fourth quarter of 2021.



THE 2021 TRAVELER

The consumer in 2021 is going to think, act, feel and travel differently from any other year. With a year of “unprecedented” chaos, health concerns, working from home, social distancing, restricted travel and *virtual everything*, **there will be major pent-up demand to disconnect and relax**, as soon as it is safe to do so. But things are likely to look a little different.

With more remote working, **there will be a rise in the idea of “workcations”** as people will swap home offices for ocean offices. ‘Zoom Gloom’ is a real thing and with more time than ever being spent in a virtual space, **people will be eager to detach from their screens** and enjoy the real moments on a vacation. Many people experienced the real disappointment of canceling or postponing some of life’s biggest moments, like weddings, birthdays, and anniversaries. **2021 will be the year to make up these missed memories.** And finally, anyone who knows a parent-in-quarantine knows they are in desperate need of a vacation, stat! 2021 will see a rise in couples and parents taking some much needed time away. (Sources for Trends in Appendix).

Media Habits and Decision Making

2020 saw an increase in digital consumption across the board as consumers had to find ways to connect, learn, work and entertain themselves from the confines of their homes.

Virginia’s audience is digitally savvy, connecting at least once a day to: social media; traditional TV; connected TV; online and streaming video; online articles and news outlets; traditional radio; and streaming audio. Those who were exposed to three or more of VTC’s marketing channels showed higher interest in visiting Virginia within the next 12 months.

When it comes to decision-making, consumers are seeking trusted sources for information. **Friends and family remain the top source for travel inspiration and planning** (66%), but audiences also sought information from **travel review sites** (50%), **destination websites** (42%), and **social media** posts from family/friends (38%) and brands/companies/influencers (27%) (Omnitrak).

[Complete data available in Appendix \(pg. 31\).](#)



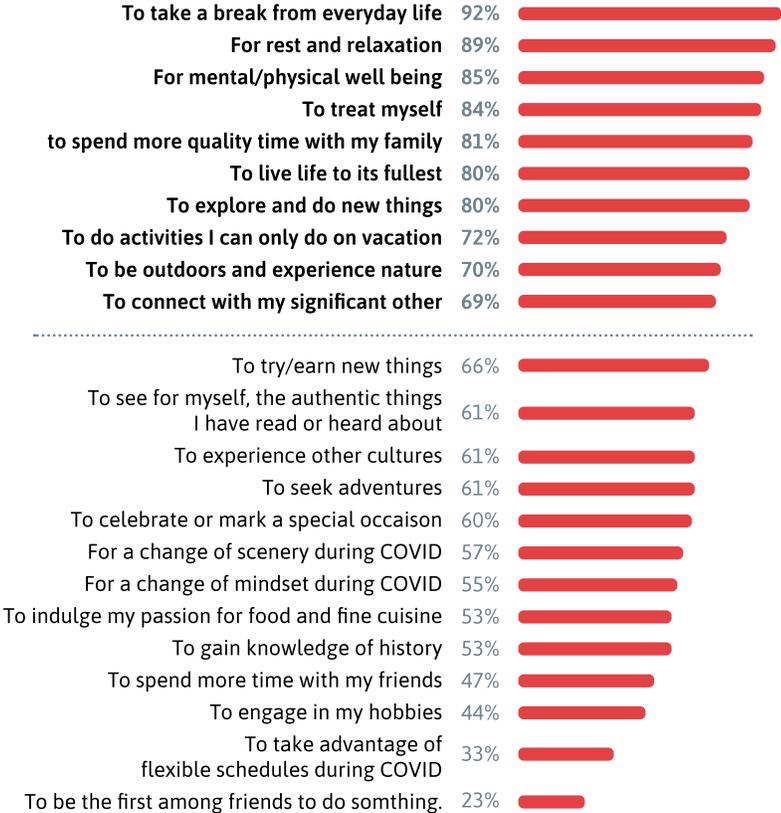
THE 2021 TRAVELER

Travel Motivators

It comes as no surprise that after the stress and chaos of 2020, most people are looking to travel to relax and disconnect. Nearly the entire audience (92%) said they would travel to **take a break from everyday life**. Another top motivator is to reconnect-- whether it's with family, a significant other, or with themselves, travelers have indicated **spending more time with loved ones** (81%) and for their **mental health** (85%) as important parts of the travel experience.

Travel has always sparked the desire to explore new areas and try new things and those desires still rank high with travelers. 80% cite wanting to **explore and do new things** on vacation, 70% say they want to **be outdoors and experience nature**, and 66% want to **learn new things**. (Omnitrak)

REASONS FOR TRAVEL



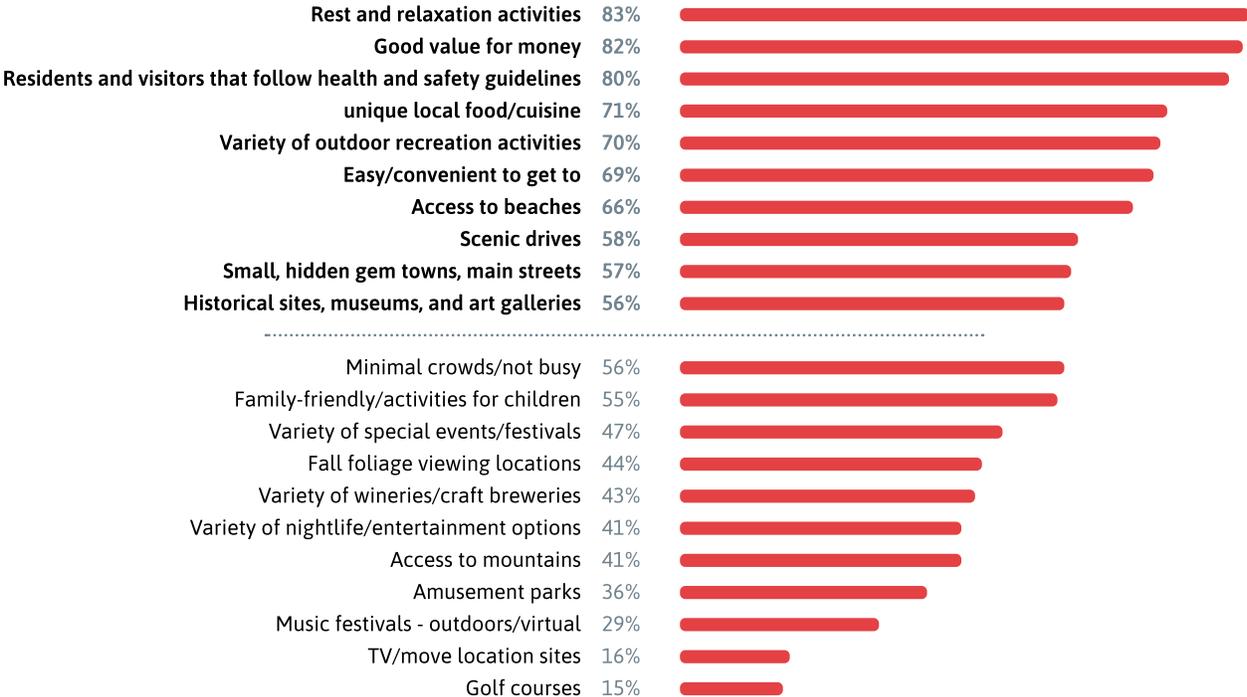
THE 2021 TRAVELER

Travel Motivators (cont'd)

After dreaming about a trip, deciding on a destination can be the hardest part. When choosing a destination, travelers are looking for a place that can offer **good value** (82%), **rest/relaxation activities** (83%), **residents that follow health/safety guidelines** (80%), and **a destination that is easy and convenient to get to** (69%). (Omnitrak)



IMPORTANCE OF DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES



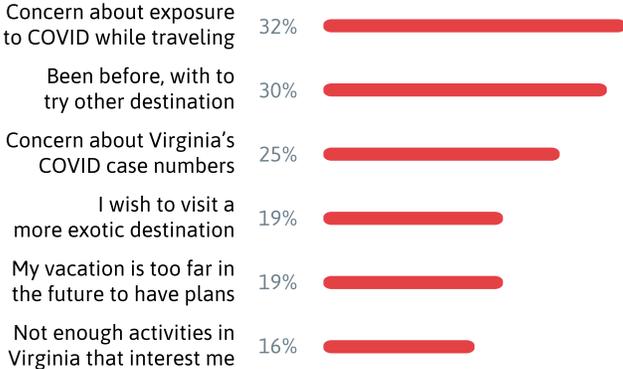
THE 2021 TRAVELER

Travel Barriers

COVID-19 is the number one barrier to travel. While people miss traveling and there is growing confidence in future travel, the ongoing pandemic will continue to be a top concern on the minds of most travelers. Concerns about **exposure while traveling** as well as the **current number of cases in a destination** are top reasons for not traveling in the next 6-12 months (Omnitrak). Additionally, 48% of travelers say they will not travel until **vaccines are made widely available** (Destination Analysts).

Along with health concerns, travelers are also worried about the **national economy** (85%) and their **finances** (55%) (Destinations Analyst). According to research, while Americans plan to prioritize leisure travel in their budgeting, they will be more budget-conscious while traveling (Destinations Analysts). Destinations that are perceived as good value and offer deals will be most attractive while the economy and personal finances are top concerns.

TRAVEL BARRIERS (NEXT 12 MONTHS)



STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

Health and Safety

With the ongoing pandemic, travelers are most concerned with staying healthy and visiting destinations that are safe. While Virginia ranks high with in-state residents for health and safety guidelines, there is room for improvement with out of state (OOS) audiences. 79% of OOS travelers cite health and safety as a priority but only 22% agree that Virginia is following these mandates. (Omnitrak)

Moving Forward

it will be imperative that VTC highlights Virginia's ongoing commitment to following health and safety guidelines and promoting safe and responsible travel experiences.

DESTINATION ATTRIBUTE IMPORTANCE VS. DESTINATION RATING - OUT OF STATE TARGET

Destination Attribute	VA	NY	MD	NC	SC	PA	WV	DC
Rest and relaxation activities	51%	33%	41%	63%	58%	41%	38%	18%
Good value for money	36%	17%	29%	45%	40%	37%	36%	15%
Residents and visitors that follow health and safety guidelines	22%	42%	31%	19%	16%	24%	15%	31%
Unique local food/cuisine	22%	60%	37%	30%	34%	26%	14%	33%
Variety of outdoor recreation activities	60%	48%	48%	65%	54%	54%	51%	26%



STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

Product Awareness

As a destination, Virginia’s strengths can be found from the sandy beaches to the tops of the Blue Ridge mountains and everywhere in between. Simply put, **there’s a lot to love on a Virginia vacation**. The vast array of experiences for travelers are a huge advantage for Virginia, especially when marketing the state, however, awareness of these experiences can be a challenge. Out of state audiences have cited, as a reason for not visiting Virginia, **they are not sure what part of Virginia to visit** (19%) or **what there is to see and do while here** (16%) (Omnitrak).

Exposure to VTC’s marketing efforts boosts travel intentions, over half of the target audience aware of VTC’s marketing efforts (61%) said they were *interested* in visiting Virginia in the next year, compared to just 43 percent of those who were not exposed. Similarly, 41 percent of those aware said they *plan* to visit in the next six months, compared to 12 percent of those unaware. (Omnitrak)

Moving forward

it will be critical for VTC to maintain awareness and interest among OOS audiences through integrated marketing efforts.

MARKETING IMPACT ON TRAVEL INTENTIONS

(Out-of-State Audience)

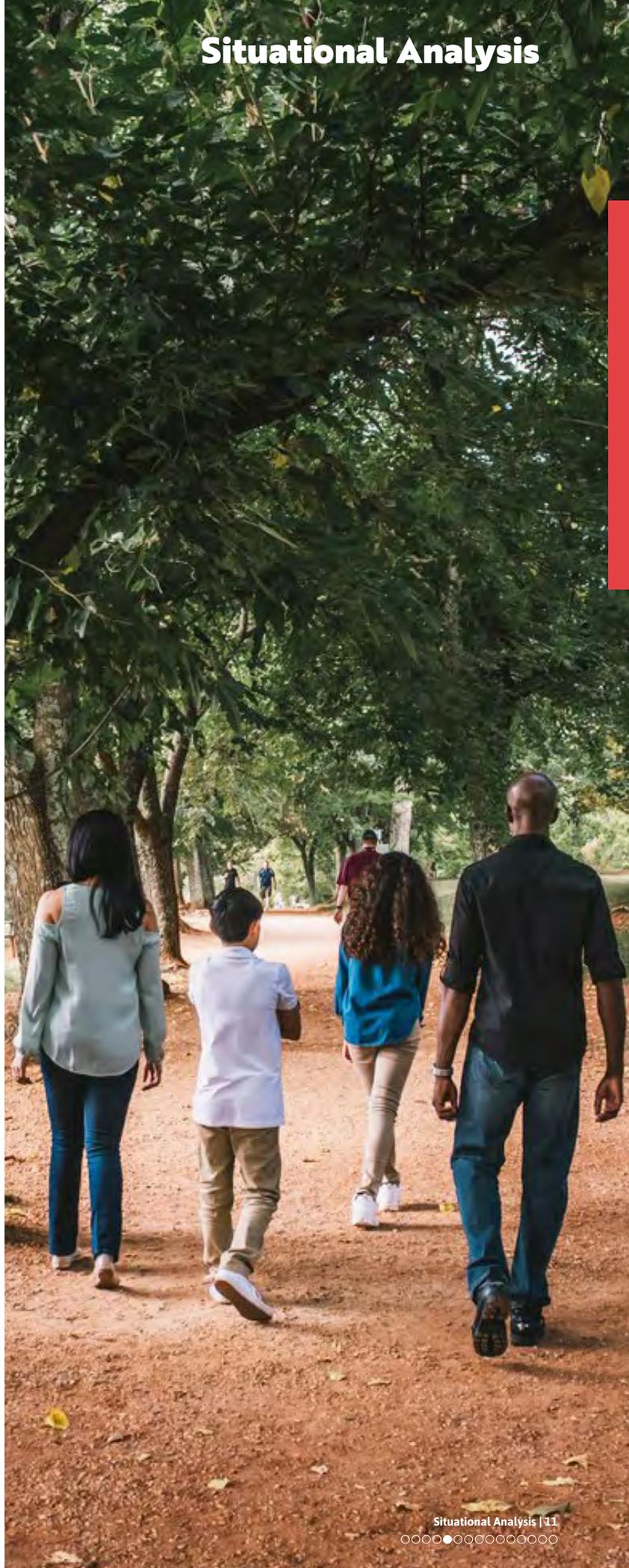


Convenient Location

Located within driving distance of many large cities, Virginia is not only easy to get to but also has a mild climate, which means less time traveling and more time exploring throughout the year. Virginia has always been a strong drive destination (FY19 profiles), which positions the state well for the year ahead, as **63% of Americans will travel by car**, to see friends and fam as their first trip in 2021 (Longwoods).

Moving forward

VTC will leverage Virginia’s strength as a drive destination to promote road trip experiences throughout the state.



STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

Destination Attributes

When it comes to specific travel experiences, Virginia is known best for **history, outdoor recreation, scenic beauty, and beaches** (Omnitrak). These are the core strengths of Virginia’s travel experiences and thus the core of VTC’s marketing objectives.

Based on the results of VTC marketing efforts in 2020, Virginia maintained high perceptions of the core strengths while also meeting travelers’ desires for **good value, rest/relaxation activities, easy/convenient to get to, and small towns and main streets**. (Omnitrak)

Among the top destination attributes listed above, travelers also want a destination with **unique local food and a place that is not crowded**, which Virginia scored low among OOS audiences. (Omnitrak)

[Destination Attribute and Messaging rank chart available in Appendix \(pg. 32\).](#)

Moving forward

VTC’s integrated marketing efforts will focus on highlighting top destination attributes to align with traveler desires and improve perceptions of Virginia.

Competition

Virginia’s location, while convenient, also poses a unique challenge when it comes to destination marketing. Virginia is surrounded by states that offer very similar travel experiences and when compared, Virginia does not always outrank the competition when it comes to traveler perceptions. North Carolina will be a state to watch as they hold the top spots for **rest/relaxation activities and a good value destination**, which are top attributes to travelers. (Omnitrak).

The good news is that Virginia scored highest against competitive states in four of the top destination attributes, including **scenic drives, family-friendly activities, small towns/main streets, and amusement parks**. (Omnitrak)

Moving forward

it will be critical for VTC’s marketing efforts to stand out among the surrounding competition, especially when the competition will be recovering at the same time.

VIRGINIA’S TOP 10 DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES VS. COMPETITOR DESTINATIONS

Destination Attribute	VA	NY	MD	NC	SC	PA	WV	DC
Scenic Drives	62%	45%	39%	50%	37%	54%	55%	16%
Access to beaches	60%	25%	52%	68%	69%	5%	6%	5%
Variety of outdoor recreation activities	60%	48%	48%	65%	54%	54%	51%	26%
Historical sites, museums, and art galleries	52%	66%	36%	27%	22%	51%	19%	74%
Easy/convenient to get to	52%	57%	60%	36%	26%	59%	30%	52%
Family-friendly / activities for children	52%	44%	47%	52%	46%	51%	30%	44%
Rest and relaxation activities	51%	33%	41%	63%	58%	41%	38%	18%
Small, hidden gem towns, and main streets	49%	32%	39%	47%	43%	48%	39%	16%
Amusement Parks	49%	25%	26%	18%	12%	45%	45%	10%
Fall Foliage	48%	57%	37%	29%	16%	56%	56%	17%

Marketing Goals and Objectives

In general, VTC aims to increase awareness and consideration for Virginia as a vacation destination and turn that consideration into visitation through bookings and arrivals. The following goals and objectives are part of our integrated marketing efforts, and if achieved would show our success in 2021.



AWARENESS:

- **Objective:**
Maintain awareness for Virginia as a travel destination
- **Objective:**
Maintain awareness for the VIFL brand
- **Measures of success:**
 - **Paid Media:**
reach, impressions, frequency, video views, keyword search
 - **Earned Media:**
placements, interactions, impressions, lead placements

CONSIDERATION:

Virginia is considered a top vacation destination among other competitive travel destinations.

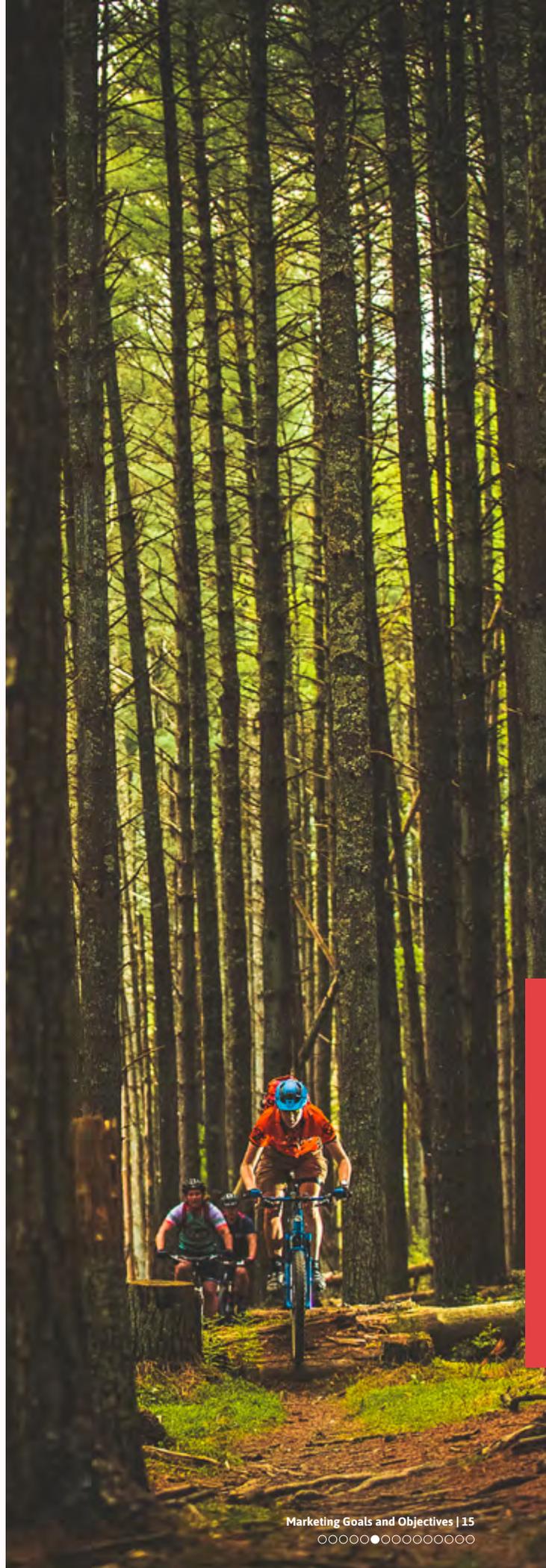
- **Objective:**
Increase Virginia's appeal as a leisure travel destination, 65% or higher (Omnitrak)
- **Objective:**
Show increase in site traffic related to marketing efforts, 10% or higher
- **Objective:** Increase Virginia's consideration among the competitive set, 25% or higher (Omnitrak)

Marketing Goals and Objectives

ENGAGEMENT:

show high engagement levels between potential travelers and VTC marketing efforts.

- **Objective:**
Maintain high engagement levels with potential travelers
- **Objective:**
Utilize VTC marketing efforts to convert travelers down the funnel toward visitation
- **Measures of success:**
 - **Social Media:**
audience acquisition, channel traffic, engagement rate, impressions, video views, subscribers
 - **Owned Media:**
blog pageviews, audience acquisition, time on site, organic traffic, lead generation, email subscribers, travel guide orders, bounce rate, partner referrals, unique website traffic
 - **Paid Media:**
keyword search, video views, cost per conversion, cost per completed view, cost per click





Marketing Goals and Objectives

IMPACT:

Show visitation/overnight stays in Virginia among the targeted audience as a result of VTC marketing efforts.

- **Objective:**
Increase overnight visitation in Virginia as a result of VTC marketing efforts
- **Measures of success:**
 - **Paid, Earned, and Owned Media:**
bookings, arrivals, overnight visitation, hotel revenue, ROI on integrated marketing

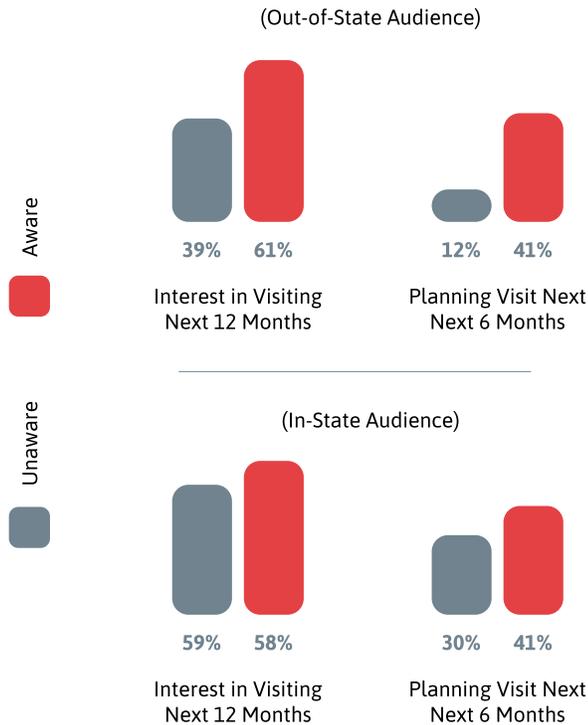
PARTNER PARTICIPATION:

Maintain a high level of partner participation.

- **Objective:**
Maintain high partner participation in marketing initiatives and annual co-op program
- **Measures of success:**
 - **Paid Media:**
partner participants in marketing campaigns and co-op programs

Audience

MARKETING IMPACT ON TRAVEL INTENTIONS



IN-STATE AND OUT-OF-STATE AUDIENCES

In-State and Out-of-State Audiences

The success of the Find What You Love and WanderLove campaigns have demonstrated the value in targeting **both in-state and out-of-state (OOS) travelers** with marketing campaigns.

While VTC marketing efforts have historically been targeted for OOS, COVID-19 caused travelers to stay closer to home, leaning on more drivable destinations (Longwoods).

And yet VTC'S 2020 marketing efforts had a **greater impact on the OOS target audience** (Omnitrak), who also spent more money (Omnitrak) when they visited.

At the same time, Virginia residents best understand the breadth of their home state's offerings and could be **valuable ambassadors** to additional audiences.

Moving forward

It will be critical to maintaining awareness and interest among the OOS audiences while also recognizing the value with in-state residents for immediate impact as well as for advocacy.



Families

Living in single-family homes in suburban settings with kids of all ages living at home. Creating memories is what matters the most. Mostly looking for packages and value-driven options



Unattached

Young and free or older without kids, these travel groups are smaller but pack a powerful spending punch. Establishing a relationship with the younger members of this group is key to keep spending strong in the future. They seek authentic travel experiences with culture, music, sports, adventure. They also like to visit local eateries, wineries, breweries, etc.



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. Their travels consist of outdoors, sporting events, wineries, gardens, golf, cultural and heritage sites.

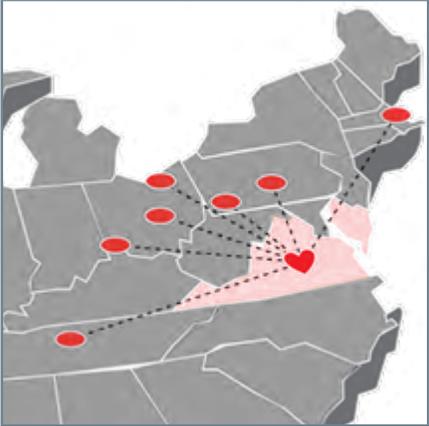
Geography

DOMESTIC TARGET MARKETS (Excluding Virginia)



Tier 1

- Washington, DC
- Raleigh/Greensboro, NC
- Philadelphia, PA
- Baltimore, MD
- New York City, NY



Tier 2

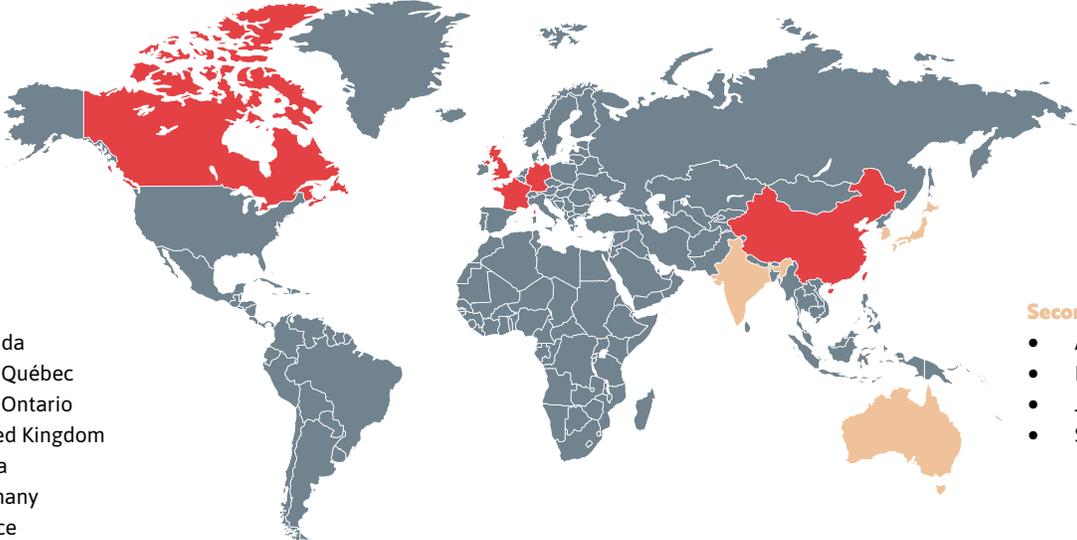
- Cleveland
- Cincinnati
- Columbus
- Nashville
- Pittsburgh
- Harrisburg
- Boston



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

Brand Platform and Architecture

How do we define the Virginia is for Lovers brand?

BRAND PILLARS

Passion, Inspiration, Fun, Diversity, Authenticity, and Inclusivity.

POSITION:

We live in a world that has forced us to distance from each other and connect virtually, which in turn has left us more disconnected from our roots and the things that make us real- our relationships, our bodies, our minds, and our world.

PURPOSE:

Love is the catalyst for doing amazing things that make us feel human. It connects and reconnects us to the things that are real.



PROMISE:

Virginia is where you connect with something real.
Disconnect to reconnect.

ACTION:

Virginia brings you back to what matters most through your passions.

SLOGAN:

Virginia is for Lovers.



Marketing Initiatives

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

CAMPAIGNS AND CONTENT THEMES

Primary (Hero Initiatives)



Share What You Love
Disconnect to reconnect.

WANDERLOVE
FIND WHAT YOU LOVE IN VIRGINIA



BLACK TRAVEL

Primary Campaigns - Timeline

March - November: WanderLove

Ongoing in-state campaign highlighting low-risk travel experiences in Virginia, including road trips, scenic drives, LOVEworks, outdoors, small towns, and hidden gems. The campaign leverages road-trip videos and itinerary-based content to encourage travelers to visit Virginia safely.

May - July: Share What You Love

Summer flagship campaign highlighting family experiences in Virginia with the main theme of "Disconnecting to reConnect" on a vacation. The campaign will leverage video and imagery featuring a family on a trip to Virginia Beach. A strategic media plan will be deployed and success will be measured by KPI's for each channel.

June - September: Black Travel Experience

Ongoing initiative for VTC with a dedicated campaign this summer. Because of Virginia's unique role in the history of race in America, it is important to ensure all travelers, especially Black travelers, feel welcome and safe. VTC is working with JMI and The Martin Agency on a campaign that deeply considers the experience of the Black traveler to highlight Black Travel opportunities and position Virginia as a diverse and inclusive destination.

September - November: Share What You Love

Fall Flagship campaign highlighting getaways and experiences for couples with the main theme of "Disconnecting to reconnect" in Virginia. The campaign will leverage video and imagery featuring a couple on a trip to the mountains of Virginia. A strategic media plan will be deployed and success will be measured by KPI's for each channel.



CAMPAIGNS AND CONTENT THEMES

Secondary (Hub Initiatives)

Eat. Drink. Love.

Topics include wine, craft beer, cider, spirits, oysters, heritage cuisine, Virginia chefs + recipes, safe dining experiences, agritourism, and farm-to-fork.

History & Heritage

Topics include presidential homes, museums, living history sites, educational travel, historic battlefields, women's history, black history, and virtual history experiences.

Family Fun

Topics include family-friendly destinations and value travel.

Outdoors

Topics include: hiking, biking, paddling, camping, parks, ATVs, trails, scenic drives, sustainable tourism, beaches, mountains, and outdoor sporting.

Arts & Culture

Topics include virtual music + performances, socially-distanced live performances, art, craftsmanship, art districts, street art, and filmed in Virginia.

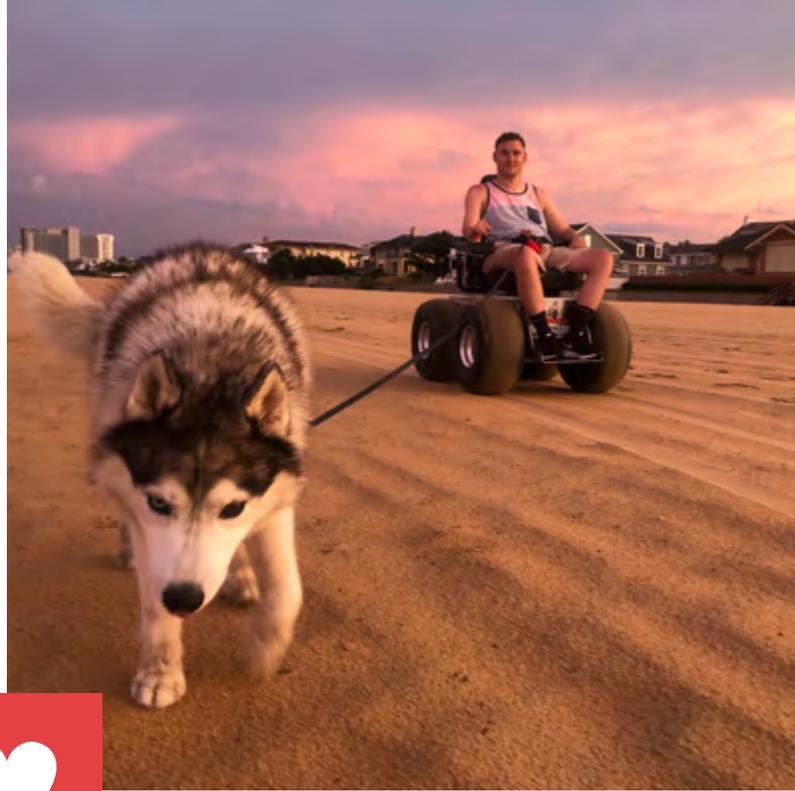
Vibrant Communities

Topics include: diversity + inclusion, small towns, hotels + resorts, city + town profiles, luxury destinations, LOVEworks, LGBT-friendly, notable Virginians, and neighborhoods.



Industry and Partner Opportunities

One of VTC's primary responsibilities is to support the Virginia tourism industry. We have a set goal of achieving at least 75% partner participation in marketing initiatives and 80% participation in co-op programs. To accomplish this we will deploy the following tactics:



BRAND AND CAMPAIGN INTEGRATION

Empower partners to utilize Virginia is for Lovers brand/strategy:

- Provide direction and templates for each campaign that are easy to access, simple and flexible, and provide consistent opportunities for partners.
- 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.

INDUSTRY CO-OP PROGRAM

Provide an integrated program of marketing resources for the Virginia tourism industry:

- Industry Advertising Co-Op
- VTC Email Advertising
- Virginia.org Advertising
- Welcome Centers/PMAP
- Travel Guide Advertising

International Marketing

The International Marketing department at VTC is responsible for planning, implementing, and measuring the effectiveness of direct sales and marketing initiatives to our international visitors, travel trade, and media in Canada, Australia, India, and Japan.

2021 INITIATIVES

In partnership with our Virginia suppliers, continue to increase awareness and outreach to drive visitation and increase spending from Canada and our key overseas markets. We will:

- Create Tour Operator marketing co-ops with \$1:1 match in Australia and India.
- Partner with BRAND USA to increase market reach in Canada and overseas markets.
- Participate in all available virtual and in-person travel consumer, trade, and media shows in Canada and overseas markets.
- Host up to 10 in-person Familiarization Tours in Virginia with tour operators, travel agents, media, and influencers.
- Host up to 13 virtual Familiarization Tours in Virginia with tour operators, travel agents, media, and influencers.
- Increase Tourisme Virginie Facebook page followers by 20% through organic and paid content; use Facebook as a tool to increase visitation to the Canadian section of virginia.org.
- Lead a sales mission in the Canadian market when international travel resumes.
- Implement a comprehensive multi-media advertising campaign in Canada to drive awareness of Virginia as a vacation destination, increase website visitation and impact visitation to Virginia from Ontario and Quebec.
- Inform international travel trade and media of the Virginia brand message and tourism product.
- Forge new and enhance current relationships with Canadian and overseas travel trade and media .
- Increase awareness of the Virginia luxury product and United Airlines service to Virginia while focusing on key growth opportunity markets.

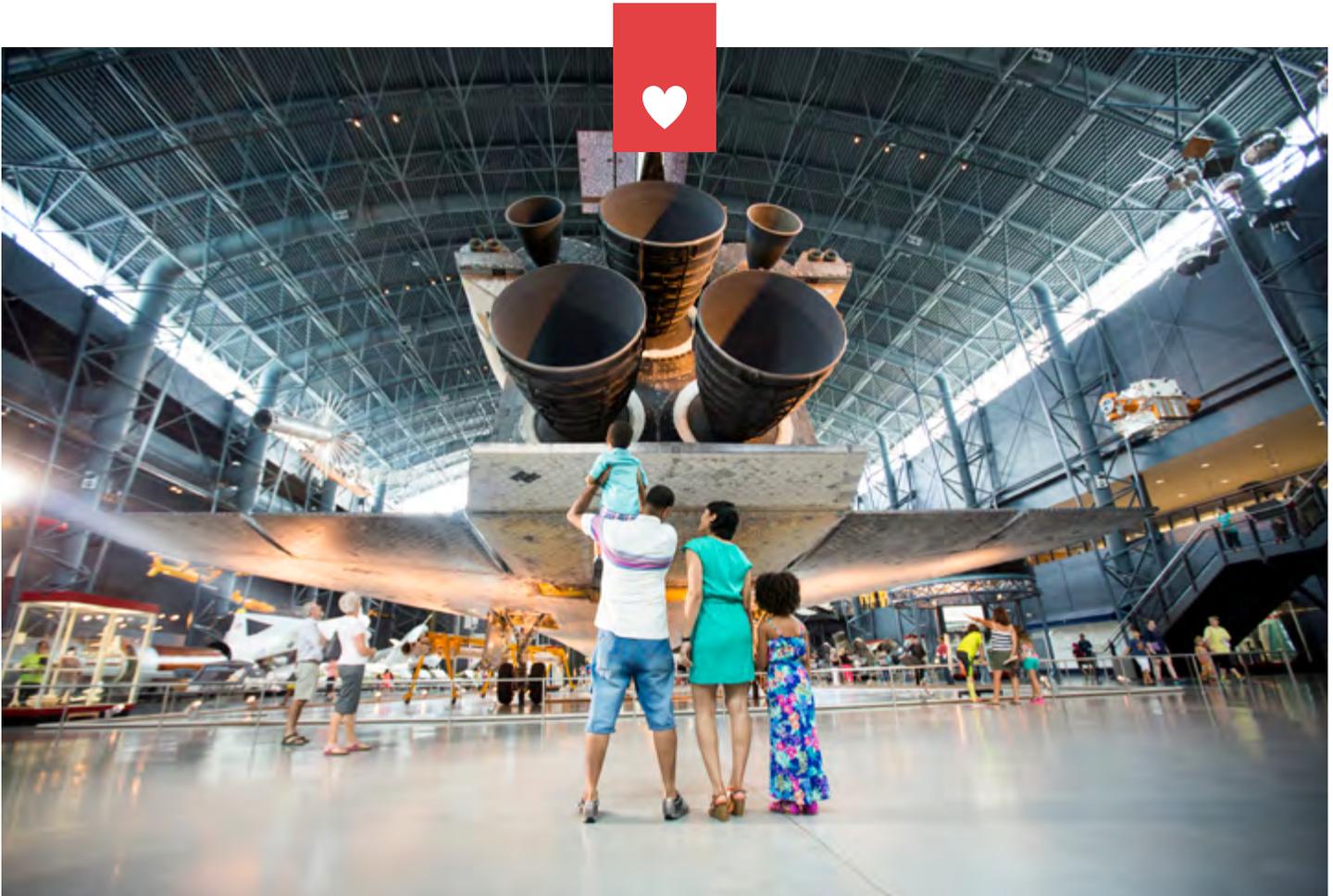
Domestic Sales

The Domestic Sales department is responsible for planning, implementing, and measuring marketing initiatives that target planners representing the packaged travel markets, AAA/CAA counselors, and the sports events industry.

2021 INITIATIVES

Our initiatives aim to increase awareness and consideration of Virginia as a premier group tour and sports competition destination and to connect planners to our destination marketing organizations to secure bookings. We plan to:

- Participate in a minimum of six virtual and in-person trade shows/conferences and share the lead reports with industry partners to actualize new business.
- Support industry partners in their efforts to host AAA/ tour planners/ rights holders for familiarization tours and planner trade shows/conferences hosted in Virginia.
- Partner with Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations to support sales missions to AAA and tour operator offices.
- Sponsor at trade shows to increase Virginia and partner destination's brand awareness.
- Provide partnerships in VTC trade show booth and/or in VTC hosted client events to our industry partners at an affordable cost.
- Host a minimum of six virtual tour presentations in partnership with destination partners to educate on tour products and to keep engaged with tour operators.
- Create new itineraries to support virtual tours that highlight a minimum of three destinations and package them with partner information as tour planning resources.
- Work with trade media in offering discounted advertising opportunities to our industry partners in special Virginia State Guides and digital co-ops.
- Work with the TC Digital team to design three microsites for use by group tour, meeting and sports planners that are engaging and rich in content. Optimized to increase visitation.



VTC Industry Resources

While this integrated plan details the strategic approach VTC will take to inspire and encourage visitors to explore Virginia, it is also a guide for the Virginia Tourism industry at large. VTC will continue to provide guidance and recommendations to industry partners and offer helpful and flexible ways to participate in all integrated marketing efforts. Below is a comprehensive list of VTC resources, by department, available for industry partners:

BRAND

- [vatc.org - Brand Management](#)
- [Brand Marketing Initiatives](#)
Find opportunities to amplify your message with these initiatives from VTC
- [Industry Advertising Co-op Program](#)
The Industry Advertising Co-Op Program is open for participation on a rolling basis.
- [Travel Guide Advertising](#)
This annual guide is the VTC's primary consumer fulfillment piece, learn about advertising opportunities
- [LOVEworks Reimbursement Program](#)
Qualifying partners may receive up to \$1,500 to participate in this statewide branding initiative.
- [Virginia is for Lovers Logo Request](#)
Submit a request to use the Virginia is for Lovers® Logo in your marketing.
- [Creative Services Resources](#)
Find resources and guidelines for producing and implementing your own creative materials as well as how VTC can be a resource for photo and video assets

COMMUNICATIONS

- [vatc.org - Communications](#)
- [Virginia is for Lovers Pressroom](#)
VTC press releases, image requests, story ideas, influencer resources and more.
- [PR Best Practices](#)
An overview of best practices for media relations, hosting FAM tours, pitching and more.
- [PR Resources for Partners](#)
Resources on VTC's PR programs, including PR Leads, LOVE on the Road, and the Virginia is for Lovers Press Pass.
- [Content Marketing Hub](#)
Best practices for content marketing, seasonal content marketing strategies, and other content marketing resources.
- [Social Media Hub](#)
An overview of VTC's social media marketing, including social media guide and how to engage with our social channels.
- [Tips & Tricks from VTC's Social & Content Team](#)
Best practices on videos, social, content marketing and more.

DIGITAL

- [vatc.org - Digital Marketing](#)

DOMESTIC SALES

- [vatc.org - Group Tours, Meetings and Sports Marketing](#)

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

- [vatc.org - International Marketing](#)

OPERATIONS

- [vatc.org - Marketing Operations](#)
- [Retail & Consumer Merchandise](#)
Facing Merchandise Sales
- [Marketing@virginia.org](#)
use this email for generic requests or questions

RESEARCH

- [vatc.org - Research](#)
- [STR Lodging Reports](#)
provides monthly year-to-date lodging data for the Commonwealth
- [Travel Data Profiles](#)
monthly surveys that identify the travel behavior and demographics of various travelers to Virginia
- [International Travel Data Profiles](#)
Here you can find the most recent data for International, Canadian, Overseas, Overseas Leisure, UK, Chinese, German, French, Indian, South Korean, Japanese, and Australian visitors to Virginia
- [Additional Research Reports](#)



Appendix

RESEARCH: COVID-19 & TRAVEL

- [Longwoods International](#)
- [Destination Analysts](#)
- [VTC Research Reports](#)

RESEARCH: TOURISM ECONOMICS

- Assumptions for travel recovery, turning point in Q2 (end of March) with leisure travel picking back up
- HHI of \$100k+ account for 24% of households but 59% of leisure spending
 - Faired pretty well in pandemic, have money to spend on travel when it's safe to do so
- Destinations that are more resilient are those that do not rely heavily on group travel and international travel. Virginia and DC are more resilient
- Travelers will not wait to travel as soon as it is safe. 80% will return within 6 months

RESEARCH: TRENDS & INSIGHTS

“Zoom Gloom”

1,270% increase in Zoom downloads between February and March. People are spending most of their time on virtual calls for work or to catch up with friends and family. People will be eager to take a break from all the screen time

“Life on Pause”

Missing out on life’s big moments in 2020, memorable trips, anniversaries, weddings, birthdays, etc. 2021 will be a time to re-do these moments when it is safe to do so

“The Parent Tax”

Parents who are having to bear the full burden of teleworking, homeschooling, and home-making are having a much different experience than those without children during quarantine. They will be eager for a vacation and a break.

User-Gen Content

2020 saw the use of raw, untouched images and this trend will continue. Brands utilized Live features on social, tik tok, reels, user-gen images and videos, placing customers in spots, which added to credibility and authenticity.

Branded Activism

2020 saw many brands taking a stand and showing their values especially with DEI

Nostalgia

People are seeking comfort from the familiar, which is why Nostalgia marketing has taken off. Many brands created spots with nostalgic feel-- (think: Jeep and “Groundhog Day” spot, Cobra Kai/Karate Kid for Quickbooks, Discover Card spot) 2020 saw huge trends in 90’s, this trend will continue into 2021

RESEARCH: FORBES 2021 TRAVEL TRENDS

Quiet Winter Getaways

43% of travelers have winter trips planned for early 21—with nearly half (44%) traveling to beach destinations and 24% to more remote ski spots. The most searched destinations for winter 2021 include the Florida Keys, FL; Smoky Mountains, TN and NC; Naples, FL; Lake Tahoe, CA and Maui, HI. In contrast, destinations known for their bustling nightlife, such as Manhattan, NY, and New Orleans, LA, have been slower to recover in terms of travel interest.

International Escapes Topping Bucket Lists

Although travel restrictions forced 53% of the surveyed U.S. travelers to cancel or rebook travel plans this past year, many added international destinations to their future travel bucket lists.

Rise of Rural

In 2020, search data already showed that nearly 90% of overall searches were for trips to rural areas. Cabin rentals are expected to be especially popular, accounting for 33% of total accommodation searches in 2020, a drastic +143% increase from 2019.

Solo Travel Takes a Pause

Solo travel is taking a downturn in the year ahead. In 2020, the share of bookings for single accommodations on HomeToGo have dropped by 44% compared to 2019, with most looking to travel with an average of six companions.

More Last-Minute Trips

When it comes to flexibility, more travelers are booking spontaneous last-minute trips. The average number of days between booking to check-in is now 50 days, down -37.5% from the average lead time pre-pandemic.

An Eye on Cleanliness

With increased scrutiny on cleanliness due to COVID-19, search data cites that 45% of travelers included enhanced cleaning within their top three decision-making factors. This will likely lead to an increase in health and safety measures from vacation rental managers and owners alike.



RESEARCH: OTHER TRAVEL TRENDS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES

No Footprint Travel

There is a major overall theme emerging in the travel world today, and that theme is ECO-FRIENDLY. Travelers from all generations are more conscious of the impact that their travel has on the environment, and even on the local economy. In a new effort to lessen one's personal footprint when traveling, travelers are now embracing more eco-friendly, carbon-neutral methods of getting from one place to another. Not only that, but the types of hotels stayed at, if any at all, local transportation choices, and food that is eaten while at that destination are all being looked at as well. Offline travel – with focus on immersive experience more so than sharing the experience on social media

Offline Travel

It seems that in today's travel world you can look around and see at least half the people around you attached to their cell phones, tablets, laptops, and other technologies. People are constantly connected, and constantly sharing their travel experience. Expect to see fewer people doing this in 2021, as the new idea of embracing 'offline travel' is taking off. Travelers are focusing more on really immersing themselves into their travel situation nowadays, rather than immediately talking about them and sharing photos. Cell phones aren't forgotten when traveling, but wifi and data are turned off, allowing you to enjoy your surroundings fully!

Always OOO

In 2021, we will see a rise in people swapping home offices for ocean offices (workcations).

Glampervan Road Trips

With travel restrictions forcing people to take domestic holidays, travelling by road (rather than rail or air) is the obvious choice in the viral age, as being in your own vehicle provides the most security. Plus, it gives a wonderful sense of freedom after a prolonged period of being at home.

"Bleisure" Travel

Perhaps mixing business and travel isn't such a new concept to many people in the workforce today, but it is becoming quite the permanent trend within the travel world, with even higher bleisure travelers expected in 2021. Many companies are opting to mix business with pleasure when it comes to travel to conferences or cross-country meetings, allowing employees more time to enjoy themselves while away and even adding more recreation opportunities themselves. There are options for family members to join the trip as well. There are several benefits to bleisure travel, both for the employees and the companies, such as higher in-office incentives, better attitudes, and more productivity overall.

Farm to Fork Travel

More and more people are becoming increasingly aware of what they eat and where it comes from, which is why 2021 is going to be the year of the rise of Farm to Fork Travel! Several health-conscious travelers are making the more frequent decision to travel based upon what they want to eat and see exactly where it came from, especially vegan travelers. With an increasing global pressure to go meatless by 2050, new methods of farming, harvesting, and producing food, in general, have gained the public spotlight, and there are many travelers willing to base a trip off of just that!

Solo Travel / Co-living

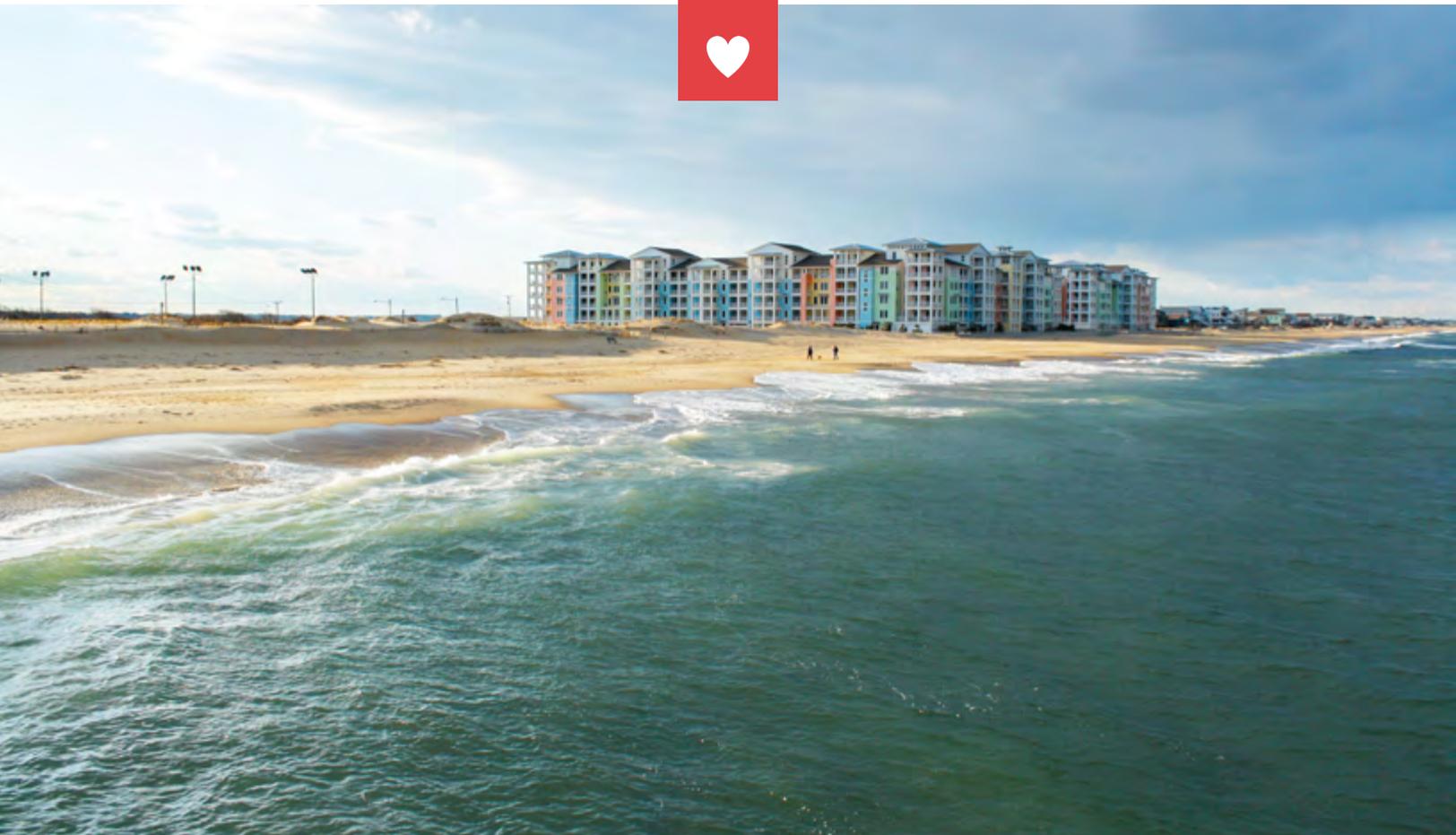
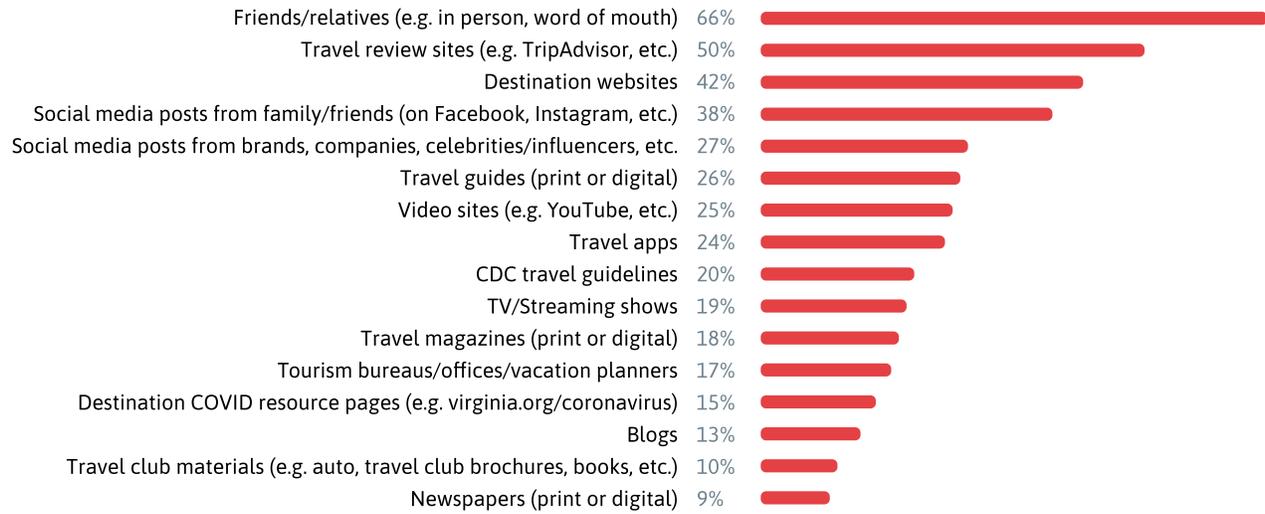
While Solo Travel isn't exactly a new trend in the travel world, co-living is. Many solo travelers are looking to save money and time while also branching out of their comfort zone and meeting new people while traveling, which is why co-living has become quite a big new trend. Unlike hostels or Airbnbs, co-living arrangements allow you to meet up with like-minded travelers and not only share more permanent living space but share travel experiences and knowledge during your stay together as well. Co-living is more for those who want to travel on their own schedule without being required to lease something out or pay an arm and a leg to overnight stay over and over again.

Train Travel

The Greta Thunberg's of this generation are all aboard with the idea of reducing their travel footprint and opting in for train travel versus air travel. Overall, trains are more energy-efficient methods of travel per passenger mile than both planes and cars, putting off less-harmful carbon emissions due to them not being released directly into the upper atmosphere. They are also more cost-efficient for travelers, with fewer increases in fuel prices overall.

**SOURCES CURRENTLY USED FOR
SELECTING LEISURE DESTINATIONS**

(Omnitrack, 2020)



DESTINATION ATTRIBUTES AND IMPORTANCE

(Omnitrak, 2020)

Destination Attribute	Need Gap Analysis (Attribute Importance - Virginia Rating)	Messaging Rank
Residents/visitors follow health & safety guidelines	-40%	Opportunity
Unique local food/cuisine	-30%	Opportunity
Minimal crowds/not busy	-17%	Opportunity
Good value for money	-26%	Strength
Rest & relaxation activities	-14%	Strength
Easy/convenient to get to	-2%	Strength
Access to beaches	1%	Strength
Variety of outdoor recreation activities	2%	Strength
Small, hidden gem towns, main streets	3%	Strength
historical sites/museums/art galleries	8%	Strength
Family-friendly/activities for children	13%	Strength
Scenic drives	14%	Strength
Variety of wineries/craft breweries	8%	Maintain
Amusement parks	17%	Maintain
Fall foliage viewing locations	22%	Maintain
Access to mountains	23%	Maintain
Variety of nightlife/entertainment options	-8%	Low Priority
Variety of special events/festivals	-3%	Low Priority
Music festivals - outdoors/virtual	7%	Low Priority
TV/movie location sites	7%	Low Priority
Golf courses	24%	Low Priority

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