Fiscal Year 2017 MARKETING PLAN

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I. Overview

Created by the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners in 1988, the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council (AITDC) oversees the development and marketing of Amelia Island as a world-class tourism destination. As provided by Florida law, the AITDC is responsible for the expenditure of revenues received from the levy and imposition of the tourism development tax.

Serving as the umbrella organization for the visitor industry, the mission of the Tourist Development Council is to serve the citizens and businesses of Amelia Island by maximizing the economic impact of tourism and enhancing the quality of life. By doing so, the AITDC strives to raise the awareness and importance of tourism to the economy of Amelia Island. The efforts of the AITDC generate millions of dollars in visitor spending annually. Those dollars help support a vibrant tourism industry which is Nassau County’s largest private sector employer and collective generator of sales tax revenue.

The goals of the AITDC are to generate visitation to Amelia Island and its attractions/special events, thereby increasing tax revenues, including sales taxes and those imposed on the hospitality industry. In turn, those tax revenues may be used to improve the quality of life for the citizens of the community, provide the support necessary for beach replenishment, and ensure a viable hospitality industry. A healthy tourism industry also supports the operation of city, county, and state-owned facilities, such as the Fort Clinch State Park, Amelia Island Museum of History, bike trails, and beachfront parks.

By adopting this plan, the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council seeks to:

- Define the goals, objectives, strategies, and programs for the marketing efforts of the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council in fiscal year 2017.
- Communicate those matters to firms and individuals who make up the local tourism industry for their information or use in establishing their own marketing programs.
- Communicate those matters to other interested parties, including the Nassau County Commission and Nassau County Clerk of Courts.
- Serve as the coordinating tool for the staff and marketing agencies of the AITDC, to integrate advertising, promotions, public relations, sales, special events, and interactive services into a comprehensive program of work for the year.
- Provide a foundation upon which the operating budget can be based.

The plan is flexible to allow changes to occur to take advantage of unexpected marketing opportunities that may arise during the year. Such changes may require shifting of resources among objectives, strategies, or programs to ensure adequate response to new opportunities.

Funding

The AITDC is funded by a 4% tourist tax on short-term accommodations. Those accommodations on Amelia Island rented for less than six months are subject to the tax. The Nassau County Tax Collector and the Nassau County Clerk of Courts each receive 1.5% of the tax collected as an administrative fee. How these user fees must be spent was established by county ordinance in 1988 and mandates the bed tax revenue breakdown as: 65% Advertising & Marketing and Operations; 15% Administration; 10% Travel Trade; and 10% Beach Improvements. More than 75% of our bed tax revenues are dedicated to advertising and promoting Amelia Island for leisure and business travelers. Most destination marketing organizations spend less than half their funding on sales and marketing.
Value Statements
Our value statements serve as an internal organizational compass, helping us stay true to the mission stated above while providing a lens for navigating the complex landscape.

1. Provide a high quality experience for visitors, while protecting the high quality of life for residents.
2. Protect and promote our valuable natural assets, namely
   a. Our beaches
   b. Our maritime forest
   c. Our wetlands
3. Generate economic opportunity and support the social/cultural structure of the destination.
4. Continue to grow visitation at a sustainable level while we expand our efforts to target visitors who are more economically valuable and socially synonymous.
5. Build respect, credibility and trust amongst our peers and in the community.

Long-Term Tourism Objectives
1. Create sustainable tourism visitation to the destination while maximizing the economic impact from visitors.
2. Create and communicate a unique brand identity for Amelia Island that reflects the destination’s qualities and resonates with potential visitors. Improve top of mind awareness and build brand loyalty with past visitors and in our established markets, while growing brand awareness in our growth and emerging markets.
3. Build branded events for the destination that have a positive impact on need periods while supporting third-party events that elevate the brand and have opportunities to drive overnight visitation.
4. Bring together in common effort all groups associated with tourism and/or visitor attractions on Amelia Island for implementing cooperative marketing programs that maximize limited resources.
II. Executive Summary

*Hamilton*, the latest smash hit to take over Broadway, has experienced unbelievable success for its outstanding performance. Winning over the hearts of all, *Hamilton* has received countless accolades including 11 Tony Awards and taking home the top honor for Best Musical. Similarly, the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council (AITDC) has received many awards for marketing excellence including three “Best in Show” Henry Awards over the past 5 years by VISIT FLORIDA.

Amelia Island has been fortunate to have experienced a significant period of growth since 2010, enjoying a leading position in our competitive set and serving as a top economic driver in Nassau County. For the past 8 years, we have had an unbroken string of improvement in Occupancy, ADR, and RevPAR, but past success does not guarantee future results. In 2016, the tourism industry faced many factors - from Zika to Hurricane Matthew. Terrorism both domestically and internationally have had a chilling effect on travel, and the noise of the Presidential elections has Americans turning a deaf ear to many communication channels. These and other external factors will continue for the foreseeable future, putting a damper on growth both domestically and internationally.

But, as they say on Broadway, “The show must go on!”

In crafting the marketing plan for fiscal year 2017, the AITDC has taken a page from *Hamilton* and other Broadway hits - tell a mesmerizing story, engage the audience, and generate great success at the box office. Our strategy for the coming year remains constant - generate positive, sustainable growth by expanding into new markets, growing market share in existing markets, and further developing the destination product to reduce seasonality. Although we anticipate more moderate growth than in years past, we do expect improvement in key metrics.

We've written an excellent score, filled with captivating characters, interesting storylines, and award-winning choreography.   IT’S SHOWTIME!

Meet the Cast & Crew

The success of any good performance is a result of the cast and crew that make the magic happen behind the scenes. The AITDC is fortunate to have a professional team to carry out the marketing plan under the leadership of our own producers - the Amelia Island Tourist Development Council Board (AITDC). The AITDC manages the expenditures related to the promotion of tourism to Amelia Island as called for in the Strategic Plan and budgeted by the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Of course, none of our achievements would be possible without the support of the BOCC, who are not only our investors, but through the AITDC monitor our results and set policies designed to supporting the tourism industry in Nassau County. The members of the AITDC are:

**AITDC Board Members**

- Danny Leeper (Chairman), Nassau County BOCC, Term: 2015-2016
- David Caples (Vice-Chair), Lodging Resources, Term: 2013-2016
- George Sheffield, President, The Palace Saloon, Term: 2015-2018
- Donald Stamets, Omni Amelia Island Plantation, Term: 2015-2018
- Barbara Halverstadt, Jacksonville Aviation Authority, Term: 2016-2019
- Tim Poynter, City of Fernandina Beach, Term: 2015-2018
- Robin Lentz, City of Fernandina Beach, Term: 2016-2019 Ex-Officio,
- Jack Healan – Ex-Officio
Lastly, our marketing plans could not be effective without the support and participation of our partners and stakeholders.

**Board of County Commissioners**

The BOCC has given us the support necessary to execute our award winning marketing plans and the assets to do the job. In return we have surpassed our goals in every category. Because of their support, we’ve experienced a doubling of taxable lodging revenue over the past five years. The magnitude of the performance is highlighted by the fact that Amelia Island outperforms ~27 other destinations in the state of Florida and the Southeast.

**Lodging and Tourism Partners**

Our lodging and tourism partners have many opportunities to work with the AICVB to leverage our budget and brand positioning through promotions and cooperative advertising. From providing rooms and activities for giveaways to actively participating in co-op advertising, our stakeholders are the stars in our productions.

**CVB Team Members**

**Gil Langley**

Gil Langley is nationally recognized for his 40 years’ experience in travel industry development, sales and marketing, and nonprofit management. He is known as a results-driven executive with numerous successes in strengthening market position, brand recognition, and tax revenues in destinations across the country. Gil serves as the President and CEO of the AICVB. Since his arrival in 2007, the AICVB budget has more than tripled to over $6 million and the destination leads its competitive set in numerous performance metrics. In his first year on Amelia, Gil received the prestigious Regional Award for Excellence in Economic Development and Tourism from the NE Florida Regional Council. Under his direction, the AICVB has won numerous state and national marketing awards including 20 Adrian Awards for excellence in advertising and 23 Flagler Awards presented by VISIT FLORDA for marketing excellence. He serves on numerous boards, including the Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, Jacksonville Sports Council, GatorBowl Sports, Florida’s First Coast of Golf, and NE Florida Lodging and Hospitality Association.

Prior to arriving in Amelia, Gil served as President of The Langley Group, providing management, public relations, advertising, strategic planning, and marketing consulting services nationwide. He holds an MBA in Marketing from the Bloch School of Business and is among the 5% of nonprofit executives who hold the coveted Certified Association Executive designation from the American Society of Association Executives.

**MARKETING:**

**Amy Lacroix**

Amy Lacroix serves as the Director of Marketing for the Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. Charged with overseeing the strategic visioning for a multimillion-dollar marketing plan, she is responsible for negotiating media buys, developing creative materials, executing special events and evaluating marketing opportunities that further the destination’s branding. With over ten years of tourism marketing experience, Lacroix previously served as marketing manager for the Omni Amelia Island Plantation Resort where she oversaw the communications for the $100 million re-imagination and handled real estate marketing for the oceanfront community. She holds a bachelor’s degree in public relations and marketing from Murray State University.
Kate Harris

Kate Harris is a digital storyteller and content marketer who serves as the Director of Digital and International. After teaching English to professional adults in Europe, she joined The Coca-Cola Company, where she was a speechwriter for the CEO and senior leadership. She has written for a range of publications and created content for clients including The Home Depot, the United States Green Building Council, and Mercedes-Benz USA. She helped the Nassau County Tax Collectors Office implement the “Kids Tag Art” program to support arts education. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Kate is active in the local theatre community and volunteers with the Amelia Island Sea Turtle Watch.

Ktimene Axetell

Ktimene Axetell serves as Director of Digital Strategy. Ktimene brings 15 years of digital marketing experience to her role at the AICVB, with a career that started in search engine marketing in San Francisco. With 4 years of international work experience and an MA, Economics & Communication, International Tourism, she understands global competition amongst destinations and is passionate about quality of life on Amelia Island. Having conducted pro-poor research with the United Nations World Tourism Organization, she is devoted to harnessing digital tools to make Amelia Island a sustainable destination.

OPERATIONS:

Deb Nordstrom

Originally from Chariton, Iowa, Deb Nordstrom moved with her family to Fernandina Beach and attended Middle and High School. She completed two years of business school in Jacksonville and began her career in hospitality in Orlando, Florida, working as the personal assistant to Harold Rosen, the owner of hotel properties on International Drive and Lake Buena Vista. When her husband accepted a position with Carlson Travel Company, they relocated to Minneapolis, where she held positions at Cargill Corporation. Upon moving back to Florida, she returned to the hospitality industry working with the AITDC as the assistant to the Tourism Director, with the Amelia Island Plantation as the assistant to the Vice President of Marketing and presently with the Amelia Island AICVB as Manager of the Amelia Island Visitors Center.

Melanie Crawford

Melanie Crawford grew up locally, graduating from West Nassau in 1982, Melanie moved to Amelia Island in 1983 and attended Florida State College of Jacksonville. For 10 years, she was involved in the management of a family owned business. In 1993, Mel accepted a position at Container Corporation of America (now West Rock). When the position of Office Manager was created at the AICVB in 2010, Melanie was hired after a now famous interview where she demonstrated honesty, integrity, and her forthright style. As Administrative/Operations Manager, Melanie oversees the daily operations of the AICVB, manages the finances of the organization, monitors vendor performance and contract compliance, and develops promotional programs for VIP guests. She is the longest serving team member at the AICVB.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Leigh Palmer

Leigh Palmer serves as the director of strategic initiatives for the AICVB. Her duties include managing major projects, developing new ideas for promoting Amelia Island, and securing stakeholder support of events and promotions. Prior to joining the team, Leigh spent six years working as a major gift officer for the University of North Florida, raising over $3.5 million to support art and sciences. During her free time Leigh enjoys boating, fishing, cooking and traveling with her husband and two children.
EXTERNAL TEAM MEMBERS:

- **Hayworth Public Relations**  Kaitlin Harris, kaitlin@hayworthpr.com
- **Paradise Advertising**  Rudy Webb, rwebb@paradiseadv.com
- **My Agency Savannah**  Melissa Hille, melissa@myagency.savannah.com
- **SilverTech**  Griffin LaFleur, glafleur@silvertch.com
- **Digital Edge**  Mya Surrency, mya@digitaledge.marketing
III. State of the Market

2016 Year in Review

Amelia Island tourism stakeholders have reason to celebrate the success of the past 12 months. Tourism is an integral part of our local economy, creating jobs, driving revenue for both the private sector and local government, and making our community a desirable, memorable place live and visit. We measure our success using both qualitative and quantitative metrics. Some of the highlights of 2016 include:

- A projected $650 million* in total economic impact (*includes visitors staying overnight, day tripping and visiting friends & relative (VFR))
- An eighth straight year of record-breaking taxable lodging revenue reaching a projected $135 million in lodging sales
- 1 in 4 jobs in Nassau County supported by tourism related businesses
- 639,000 overnight visitors, up 5% YoY;
- Every dollar invested in marketing by the AITDC generates $197 in visitor-related expenditures
- Every 99 overnight guests results in one new tourism job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>FY2015</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Actual FY2016</th>
<th>YoY increase, 12-month running</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupancy</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
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<td>ADR</td>
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<td>RevPar</td>
<td>$150.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>$101,623,916</td>
<td>$108,438,165</td>
<td>$106,407,009</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visitor Snapshot

Based on thousands of interviews with visitors, we can put together an accurate portrait of the typical visitor to Amelia Island. Based on annual data from our 2015 Amelia Island Visitor Profile report by Research Data Services, Inc., Amelia Island’s visitors are:

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1 Stats are from various sources including AI Visitor Profile, Department of Revenue and Department of Economic Opportunity
• Average head of household age - 50.5 years old
• Household income - $128,982
• Average party spend - $1,911
• First visit to Amelia Island - 55.2%
• Average length of stay - 4.2 days
• Average party size - 2.7 people
• 54.4% of visitors traveled as couples while 37.5% were families
• 59.3% of visitors visited Amelia Island on vacation with 24.9% as a getaway and 13.2% on business
• 48.7% of visitors selected Amelia Island for the beach
• 97.9% of visitors were very satisfied or satisfied with Amelia Island
• 96.4% of visitors would recommend Amelia Island to friends/relatives
• 87.3% of visitors plan to return themselves

Importance of Tourism in Nassau County

Amelia Island is twice as dependent as other Florida counties on tourism. We are proud to report that taxable lodging sales on Amelia Island in 2016 have exceeded $135 million resulting in:

• $650 million in annual impact on local economy (Includes overnight visitors as well as day trippers and visitor friends and family)
• $110 million in payroll from tourism jobs
• 25% of total county employment is made up of tourism jobs
• 38.1% of sales taxes generated by tourism related businesses
• Every dollar invested in marketing by the AITDC generates $197 in visitor-related expenditures
• Every additional 99 overnight guests results in one new tourism job

Market Landscape

Amelia Island is operating as a destination in a hyper-competitive market. VISIT FLORIDA reports the largest share of leisure visitors of any US state, with Amelia Island outperforming the state and competitive set on Occupancy, Average Daily Rate, and RevPar. We must look outside our destination, our region, our state and even our country to understand the dynamics that will shape consumer behavior in 2017 and beyond.

Tourism is multi-dimensional, and Amelia Island as a destination can thus be impacted by a number of forces. The forces are largely out of our control, and their value drivers can be positive or negative for our economy, ecology and community. The organization regularly scans the remote environment -- that is, the indirect forces that represent future opportunities and threats -- as well as the direct, endemic forces with short- to medium-term impacts (for example, hurricane season and emerging technologies) on Amelia Island. The organization monitors macro-economic as well as micro-economic trends. We will examine one value driver from each sphere:

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2 Stats from various sources including AI Visitor Profile, Department of Revenue, Department of Economic Opportunity

3 page 12, https://www.visitflorida.org/MarketingPlanReader/#p=12
• **Political**
  o International travel advisories. All three of Amelia Island’s top international markets (Great Britain, Germany, and Canada) have issued travel advisories around the United States. USA Today reports that “The United Arab Emirates, Bahamas, France, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand and Germany are among those urging caution to US-bound travelers. The concerns include mass shootings, police violence, anti-Muslim and anti-LGBT attitudes and the Zika virus.” Travel advisories can have a pernicious effect on local economies when risk perceptions are enhanced amongst the population. Because they are issued by a credible source, they are often seen as the final word in a matter. By using blanket statements for the entire country, relatively safe destinations such as Amelia Island can suffer from reduced international expenditures. This is particularly unfortunate in the international tourism receipts are accounted for as exports and are fresh injections of cash into local economies. Reduced international in-bound tourism hurts the balance of trade for the United States.
  o On the national level, the consumer hangover from the bruising eighteen-month presidential campaign may leave consumers confused and uncertain about the future direction of the economy. This could have a serious impact on consumer confidence - perhaps the most important indicator of the intent to travel, making it an extremely challenging task to deliver a marketing message that will resonate.
  o In the Florida legislature there continues to be efforts to divert the Tourist Development Tax (TDT) to non-tourism related purposes. In most cases, these efforts are defeated by a coalition of hospitality industry organizations, led by the lodging industry which advocated for the creation of this user fee in the state. Changes to the uses of TDT could negatively impact our ability to market Amelia Island and carryout the mission of the AITDC as approved by the voters in 1988.

• **Health**
  o Zika. Perceptions of Florida as a hot-zone for Zika and risk aversion to the devastating effects of Zika on fetuses have both impacted Florida tourism. This includes cancelations, notably amongst groups, in addition to consumers who simply avoid the area and book elsewhere. Just as the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami declares that it has overcome the spread of Zika through mosquito control measures, another Miami neighborhood now reports active transmission. Pregnant women are advised to avoid travel to that part of Miami. The reality is that there has been only one confirmed case of travel-related Zika in Nassau County, which is nearly 400 miles from Miami, and is not unlike the rest of the USA in the prevalence of travel-related cases. Further, the species of mosquito that carries Zika represents only about 2% of the Nassau County mosquito population in cooler months, making this, per Florida Department of Health, a location with a low risk of the disease spreading.

• **Economic**
  o Exchange rates are a strong driver around how consumers worldwide plan their trips, and whether they choose to travel domestically or internationally. If internationally, exchange rates will determine which country or zone they will visit. A stronger United States dollar (USD) leads to higher purchasing power abroad, making outbound international tourism more appealing. A relatively weaker Euro may make Europeans thus substitute in domestic trips or those in the Eurozone. Similarly, a relatively weaker Great Britain Pound makes travel to the US less attractive, as purchasing power is lower.
VISIT FLORIDA reports lower yield amongst international inbound travelers since their total budget in their own currency leads to less overall spending power in USD.⁴

Amelia Island will need to attract the attention of Europeans and Canadians with less elastic demand for a Florida beach vacation. This means that the steady gain of strength in the US dollar is less likely to affect their purchase decision. Because Amelia Island does have a luxury offering, we should target consumers who exhibit the Veblen effect, making them more likely to purchase something with a high price attached. (Note: this will be a small portion of our actual visitors)

Domestically, low gas prices should positively affect our ability to attract drives markets. In particular, the family that travels from Atlanta or Nashville in a large SUV should prove more efficient to attract, with more disposable cash to spend in the destinations. Similarly, lower oil prices have affected airline ticket prices, though not proportionally.

⁴ https://www.visitflorida.org/MarketingPlanReader/#p=35
• Technology
  o Take a mobile-first approach. US smartphone adoption is estimated to be around 85%, and likely higher in our target demographics. Our website must communicate effectively and quickly with someone on a handheld device, delivering them the information they need to influence their purchase decision. Page load times must be under 1 second to avoid users bouncing, making SEO, especially image optimization, very important. Further, text must be concise yet loaded with keywords, while the page templates must be set up for responsive design.
  o In FY2016, half of the AmeliaIsland.com audience was on mobile or tablet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Device</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>desktop</td>
<td>1,347,297</td>
<td>1,347,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mobile</td>
<td>675,682</td>
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<td>491,704</td>
<td>36.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>179,911</td>
<td>13.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Competitive Market Analysis
  o Amelia Island’s growing awareness has her competing globally. For a German, they may consider the Southeast US rather than Mallorca. For someone from Chicago, they may be looking beyond the Michigan shore. Or for someone from Texas, we may be competing with the Florida Gulf destinations. For benchmarking purposes, we will continue to define our direct competitive set within the bounds of the US Southeast coastal destinations and Florida beaches.
  o Amelia Island continues to outperform Florida and our competitive set in Occupancy, RevPar and ADR.
○ Comp set evaluation of Advertising Tactics & Positioning (examples)

- **Charleston** - The Charleston CVB’s ads play to niche interests, namely gastronomy and history. The Charleston CVB website has pop-ups asking users whether they would like a visitor guide. This could go onto the AmeliaIsland.com roadmap. Their website does accept advertising, which can affect the user’s perception.

  The Charleston Wedding Guide is buried in the navigation, which is surprising given the prominence of weddings in Charleston and their ability to impact occupancy. On visiting, the guide is rich in visual and listings, though the navigation is a bit confusing. [http://www.charlestonweddingguide.com/](http://www.charlestonweddingguide.com/)

- **Savannah** - Visit Savannah ads have two messages, as well: special offers and insider secrets. Insider Savannah plays off the rich history, artsy and hip angle (home to SCAD), and neighborhood tips. The neighborhood flavor is very much in line with what has made AirBnB successful -- a feeling of living like a local during a trip. Amelia Island is just starting to establish downtown “flavor” through its travel guide and #LoveAmelia series, though our selection of specific neighborhoods is not as developed from a touristic angle.

  The homepage utilizes embedded video with “a perfect weekend in Savannah” by Conde Nast to story tell about the range of activities available downtown. A scrolling marquee showcases upcoming events and offerings.
- **Hilton Head** - Hilton Head’s monthly magazine and vacation rental company seem to dominate the digital ad space. The Hilton Head website harnesses user-generated content through a large Instagram feed at http://www.hiltonheadisland.org/lowcountrylife/. This capability exists using Chute and can be put on the AICVB roadmap. The website does a good job at visual storytelling and showcases Travel & Leisure’s World’s Best Award in a prominent placement. They also include a pop-up survey asking usage questions. (Questions: Are you local? For what purpose are you on the website? What is your zip? What specific information are you seeking? Contact details for sweepstakes)

- **Jekyll Island** - Jekyll’s ad messages include history (Jekyll Island Club as a landmark), deals, and weddings. The Jekyll Island club dominates the ad space. The Jekyll Island does a good job with visual storytelling but does not have the depth of content, especially editorial, of AmeliaIsland.com

- **Jacksonville** - Jacksonville’s target personas appear to be deal-seekers, nature lovers, and gastronomy/craft beer aficionados.
IV. Marketing Objectives & Strategies

For the 2017 fiscal year, we have four main marketing objectives to achieve our goals and stay in line with the AITDC mission. These marketing objectives set the tone for our strategies and tactics throughout the year.

1. Be Brand Stewards
   The AITDC seeks to cultivate a role of destination stewardship for Amelia Island by taking a leadership position in anticipating and addressing sustainability issues in environmental, economic and socio-cultural spheres within our community. With a focus on building strong community partnerships, we hope to be stewards of our destination by building long-term sustainability for the tourism industry as well as our community at large. The AITDC serves as the visitor inspiration organization and a vital information source for potential guests, while our industry partners deliver the visitor experience. As “keepers of the brand,” we work to serve as the face and voice of Amelia Island, delivering a brand message that satisfies our industry, represents our community and properly positions Amelia Island on a global scale.

2. Increase Yield
   As brand stewards, the AITDC is highly focused on building a sustainable tourism industry for our community through balanced, incremental growth that delivers the optimal economic impact. With the growth of Amelia Island’s occupancy to 71.8% in FY2016, and almost 90% in peak season, there is less room for growth in occupancy than in years past. In FY2017, our marketing efforts will continue to focus on increasing the yield of our tourism industry by growing economic impact from visitors instead of growing the volume of visitation. We will achieve this through driving rate; extending the length of stay; increasing incremental, in-market spending; building repeat visitation and visitor frequency; and reducing seasonal gaps.

   To assist our efforts in growing the yield of tourism on Amelia Island, we sharpen our marketing efforts towards a very specific audience to increase the potential return on investment by using highly targeted marketing based on geographic, demographic and psychographic data.

   Demographic Targeting
   To define our target audience, we first layer on the following audience demographics:
   - Adults, ages 35-64
   - Generally female decision maker
   - $125,000+ household income
   - Couples, Empty-nesters and Family market segments

   Domestic Geographic Targeting
   Established - these are markets with a well-established knowledge base of our destination where we hope to keep top-of-mind awareness and convert into repeat visitation through building brand loyalty. We reach these markets through mainly unpaid efforts such as public relations and engagement in social media.
   - Atlanta, GA
   - Georgia
   - Florida
Growth – our growth markets are DMA’s we’ve been in for several years but still strive to grow overall brand awareness and increase the volume of visitation. Combined, these markets have nearly 245 weekly flights into the Jacksonville International Airport.

- New York City metro
- Charlotte
- Washington D.C. metro
- Chicago

Emerging - with lower brand awareness and visitation numbers, our emerging markets offer a higher growth possibility. The emerging markets include three new geographic target markets for Amelia Island - Philadelphia, Houston and Dallas. In the emerging markets, we seek to create brand awareness and improve brand recognition.

- Boston
- Nashville
- Philadelphia
- Houston
- Dallas

International Targeting

Amelia Island is entering the third year of a 5-year plan to attract international travelers from German-speaking Europe and from the United Kingdom. These travelers stay longer, spend more, and have an appreciation for ecotourism and sustainable travel.

This year, our number of international visitors was up by 19%. German users’ online session durations increased by 30% and conversions increased by 25%. In Great Britain, the visitor bounce rate improved by 14%. And in Canada, our largest foreign market, web sessions were up over 20,000. Of those, 13,000 web sessions were from Ontario, home to our key market of Toronto, which was heavily targeted to communicate the launch of new Air Canada flights.

We recognize that we have a very unique offering that appeals to a targeted, sophisticated European traveler, one for whom currency valuations and special offers are not key factors. Many have been to Florida several times but have yet to discover Amelia Island. Market research demonstrates that Amelia Island’s unspoiled beaches are a draw, along with beauty of the maritime forest canopy and rich cultural offerings.

A comprehensive marketing effort targeting Germany in 2016 positioned Amelia Island using the Brand USA multi-channel campaign. We were heavily featured in the December 2015 Florida issue of MERIAN magazine, one of the oldest and most esteemed travel publications created by top journalists and photographers. Other German market campaign components included regular blog posts published in-language, geo-targeted FaceBook ads, and an in-language portal to AmeliaIsland.com.

In the UK, we were one of the first destinations to sign on and participate in VISIT FLORIDA’s inaugural London Takeover program. During the coldest month of the year, Florida destinations surrounded the people of London with sunny messaging carrying the theme “Love, Florida.” Amelia Island was a part of the mix digitally, on bus shelters on the city’s busiest shopping street, on social media channels, and in a special pop-up pedicure installation in the upscale Westfield mall where visitors could enjoy a custom polish
designed by us (and christened Ahh-melia) while watching the popular ‘Amelia Island in 60 Seconds’ video, which was created for this campaign.

In FY2017, our approach will focus on a B2B strategy targeting tour operators with upscale clientele, as well as an increased push to get earned media from German and UK media and influencers.

In the coming year, we will:

- Be in market, in Europe, at least once a quarter with sales missions and presence at the World Travel Market and ITB travel shows as well as at IPW in the US. For the UK market, we will partner with St. Augustine and Florida’s First Coast of Golf.
- Partner with Weber BenAnmar in Germany for in-language materials, trade mission materials, and PR.
- Continue to work with Jacksonville International Airport to attract airlines to add direct international flights.
- Participate in the new VISIT FLORIDA London co-op with a focus on a digital presence in front of influential tour operators.

Psychographic Targeting
To further refine our desired audience, we layer on psychographic data or specific personas, when and where appropriate. Capturing an audience based on specific personas allows us to build audience segments of like-minded visitors seeking specific types of trips, activities or atmospheres that Amelia Island provides. This level of psychographic targeting allows us to focus on Amelia’s niche markets such as groups/meeting, weddings, nature, health & wellness, etc. From there, we can develop personalized messaging such as customized itineraries that are of specific interest to the intended visitor, increasing our chances of conversion.

Audience Segmentation / Niche Markets:

- **Travel enthusiasts** - Love to travel but are looking for something new, different and authentic to the destination
- **Experiential travelers** - Seek a destination where they can be active with a variety of experiences including outdoor recreation or light adventure. This group seeks social currency through experiences.
- **Nature explorers** - Appreciate natural beauty and look for a destination that both supports an outdoor lifestyle but also focuses on sustainability in the community
- **Golf fanatics** - Play and travel specifically for the love of the golf game
- **Wedding trekkers** - Travel as family and friends for a destination wedding
- **Wellness gurus** - Pursue a destination where they can continue their lifestyle focus on health and wellness
- **Leisure gatherers** - Travel for reunions, religious/fraternal organizations, or other leisure groups
- **Gender tourists** - Girlfriend getaways, guy trips, LGBT travelers
- **Romance Seekers** - Interested in romantic getaways and activities to relax and connect with their partner
- **Business travelers** - Encompasses both meetings and group markets but also individual traveling for business
3. Anticipate & Mitigate Market Forces

Amelia Island is known to be a place where one can disconnect to reconnect - with family, with a partner, with oneself. The destination may seem somewhat insulated from the market, but it is certainly prone to global forces, both remote and immediate. A maxim to bear in mind would be, “We live on an island, but not in a bubble.”

We must take a balanced approach, anticipating the global forces that will affect our destinations. Fuel prices, Zika, political advisories, Brexit, exchange rates, etc. At the same time, we must be reactive to immediate forces that are also out of control. For example, using digital channels to inform about Hurricane Matthew’s approach and then highlighting positive stories that came out of it, enhancing the image of Amelia Island as a cohesive community.

We also strive to opportunistic with positive forces. For example, when Pokémon Go took the consumer world by storm in July of 2016, the organization had to quickly assess the opportunity and our role in it. We knew we had to ride the wave, but we also knew that we wouldn’t “win” competing with larger destinations that could execute a full-scale adoption with a large budget. Instead, we “counter-marketed” by staying true to our brand promise of being a place where visitors can “disconnect to reconnect”. The promotion, “PokeBreak”, offered consumers an alternative to playing Pokemon Go. We dedicated one weekend to families with special events, lodging packages and fun itineraries as a way to “Seize the Summer” and make memories before going back to school. During the promotion, an incremental 600+ room nights were pushed.

The AICVB also recognizes the need for us to be both flexible and nimble. With 7 full-time staff members and 3 devoted to marketing, we are a small team representing a destination that competes in a global marketplace. We are David in the face of Goliath. Our strength is not in bulk, but in being nimble. By keeping an ear to the ground through social listening and building our social community, we have the ability to quickly push out messaging that mitigates global forces. For example, in the wake of Hurricane Matthew, we swiftly launched an “open for business” campaign that shifted homepage messaging from “Pristine Beaches on Florida’s Northeast Coast” (used to orient the user and distance the destination psychologically from the rest of Florida) to “Amelia Outshines Matthew.” This messaging extended to email and social, as well, all within 2 business days of our staff returning from evacuation. Amelia Island was amongst the first in the competitive set to proactively push a positive brand message and share positive stories.

4. Develop an Integrated Marketing Approach

Our overarching marketing strategy is to develop a holistic, integrated marketing approach to expand our marketing efforts and maximize our limited budgets. To begin, we utilize a foundation of solid research to make data driven decisions. Clearly understanding who our visitor is, what they desire and how they engage, plan and experience our destination allows us to better market the right message to the right person at the right time.

To truly create a symbiotic plan, we developed a unified paid media schedule using complementary media buys across publishers, timing and markets. The 2017 media plan will lead with digital, using over 50% of the placement budget, balanced by traditional media such as print, outdoor and radio. The media plan utilizes a funnel approach to the desired consumer action. By using an interdependent approach to our media buys we increase the chances of our messaging reaching our target audience multiples time to greater influence their behavior. Using a paid, owned, earned & shared marketing approach allow us to capitalize and cross promote information across all channels and mediums to better amplify the messaging. Through our owned channels
such as our website and social media accounts, we are able to build brand engagement that helps to create brand loyalty leading to repeat visitation. The best way to build brand engagement is through the regular creation and amplification of content through our own content studio.

**Data Driven Decision Making**

The AICVB utilizes a great foundation of research on which to base our decision making. From our ongoing in-market visitation research studies with Research Data Services, Inc. to our in-house research tools such as digital analytics, we utilize a variety of research to understand our audiences and visitors to more greatly target and message effectively.

**Digital Data**

Data pulled from digital sources will lead to actionable insights. Each learning will be swiftly operationalized. Here are some examples of learnings from 2016 that will impact 2017:

- **Google Analytics.** Emerging markets. Houston saw a 30% YoY increase in site visitation during 2016,
- **Personalization** led to an overall 25% bounce rate on AmeliaIsland.com. Having executed only 8 tests thus far in audience groups including Texas, Germany, mobile users, Northern users, and international English speakers.
- **A/B testing and list segmentation** has led from an average open rate of 12.9% to more than doubling at average 26.9%, with some emails opened at over 50%.

**Market Snapshots**

- **Florida.** Website sessions from Florida, the #1 market in web traffic to AmeliaIsland.com, grew 41% in FY2016 compared to FY2015, The largest growth in visitation was from Orlando and Miami. This may reflect geo-fencing campaigns run to drive event traffic, a tactic the organization will employ again in FY2017.
- **Georgia.** The #2 market in terms of website visitation, traffic from Atlanta grew by almost a quarter. Given low oil prices and the importance of events in evening out seasonality, we will continue to invest in Atlanta markets with our media budgets.
- **New York.** With personalization, the bounce rate was reduced by more than 25%, while time spent increased 54%. This indicates that giving New Yorkers a specific content experience leads to greater engagement. Overall traffic was down, due to a program in FY2015 that drives volumes of traffic that immediately bounced, thus artificially inflating numbers. Though quantity of users was down, quality substantially improved, and the conversion rate doubled.
- **DC.** Similarly, Washington, DC, traffic quality improved, with an 87% increase in conversion rate and 71% increase in time spent on the site. The bounce rate was reduced by nearly one third.
- **Chicago.** Likewise, Chicago traffic had been hit by a large volume of unqualified (potentially fraudulent) traffic in FY2015, skewing the numbers. In FY2016, the quality of the traffic dramatically increased, with a 101% increase in session duration, 117% increase in conversion rate, and nearly ⅓ reduction in bounce rate.
- **Texas / Houston / Dallas.** Texas sent over 40,000 users to AmeliaIsland.com in FY2016, nearly a 30% increase over the prior fiscal year. Houston and Dallas were the largest source markets, with similar 28-9% traffic increases YoY, with 3 out of 4 of those being new users to AmeliaIsland.com. The new users indicates an opportunity to grow awareness of all Amelia Island has to offer, especially since
this is a key drive market for the state of Florida. Our goal with Texas will be to convince those who drive to the panhandle to make their way further east for a unique experience on uncrowded beaches.

Overall, the top markets (outside Nassau County) in terms of visitation to AmeliaIsland.com were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>% New Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jacksonville</td>
<td>54,304</td>
<td>72.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>40,873</td>
<td>71.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>35,241</td>
<td>75.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>31,960</td>
<td>78.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>25,586</td>
<td>70.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>14,878</td>
<td>78.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>13,061</td>
<td>77.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>11,353</td>
<td>80.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>9,901</td>
<td>75.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>9,058</td>
<td>76.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>7,337</td>
<td>77.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa</td>
<td>6,914</td>
<td>80.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>6,064</td>
<td>81.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainesville</td>
<td>5,985</td>
<td>79.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah</td>
<td>5,576</td>
<td>73.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallahassee</td>
<td>4,566</td>
<td>78.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>4,451</td>
<td>79.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nassau</td>
<td>4,379</td>
<td>43.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>4,068</td>
<td>84.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>4,058</td>
<td>76.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New visitors’ sessions increased 17% YoY, while returning visitor sessions increased 26%. The latter indicates that the website became “stickier,” providing users a reason to return by programming relevant content.
As for demographics on the AmeliaIsland.com website, Google Analytics reports the following age and gender breakdown.
V. Tactics

Paid-Owned-Earned Approach

The organization takes a symphonic approach to media, where the brand promise is the melody. Paid, owned, and earned media must work in conjunction. Paid media refers to placements purchased, in the form of “ads”, banners, emails, and content, in specific publications or through targeted networks. Owned media includes impressions on the channels we control: the AmeliaIsland.com website, our social media channels such as Facebook and YouTube, and print publications distributed in our Welcome Center. Earned media includes unpaid impressions from public relations (PR), journalists/influencers, and social media mentions and shares. These work conjunction when paid ads promote owned content or we use owned channels to amplify PR. One example would be paying $50 to boost a post from Atlanta Magazine about “Pet-Friendly Amelia Island.” This allows us to piggyback a credible news source, target our precise market, and meet goals of increasing reach, awareness, and consideration of the destination amongst pet owners.

- **Owned Media.** On owned media, we have full control of the message transmitted and the timing.
  - [www.AmeliaIsland.com](http://www.AmeliaIsland.com)
    - In FY2016, AmeliaIsland.com served 1,053,827 unique users, who spent an average of 2:16 on the website and turned 2.85 pages per session.
    - Personalization: serve up the right message to the right person at the right time. The homepage is the most important and most trafficked page on the website, so it should look different to users based on their origin and their behavior. This could be including on the homepage a link to the Georgia vs. Florida sweepstakes for a Georgia visitor, a tropical storm warning for a Florida visitor, and an image of uncrowded beaches for a Chicago visitor.
    - SEO. In FY2016, organic search drove 52% of traffic to AmeliaIsland.com:

Users who entered the website via organic search bounced less, viewed more pages and spent longer on the website than the average user for the year. Starting with the most highly-trafficked pages, text will be optimized for keyword completeness, image file size and alt tags. Metadata will also be customized for each page. This is an ongoing effort.
■ Email optimization and marketing automation. Emails from Amelia Island are evolving from mass blast to 60,000 subscribers to more targeted emails dropped to list segments. New fields on the email opt-in on AmeliaIsland.com will map to MailChimp, the email service. This will allow someone who indicates interest in Arts & Culture to immediately receive an email with specific, relevant content. The same would be true for someone indicating an interest in nature; they would receive an automated email with information on parks, beaches, biking, and kayaking, with links back to the website. Further, all outgoing email will be A/B tested with two subject lines dropped to a portion of the list. The subject line with the highest open rate will “win” the test and be distributed to the rest of the list. Email open rates have more than doubled to an average of 26% in the last several months.

■ Social Media
  ● Facebook, Twitter, Instagram: continue promoting destination assets and shareable stories by creating content
  ● YouTube: continue building the #LoveAmelia series that highlights local secrets, ways of life, businesses and personalities. These videos convey a sense of charm and of distinct neighborhoods for a more nuanced view of Amelia Island beyond being a beach destination.

  o Collateral Materials. We will continue to produce and distribute printed collateral materials that help communicate our key messages, promote our industry partners, and encourage in-market activities. Our owned collateral materials include the annual Visitor Guide and Value Card as well as brochures for the Artrageous Artwalk, bike trail, nature/nature trails, etc.

  o Content Studio. The emphasis will be on video production, in line with Facebook’s algorithm favoring video and based on our success with the #LoveAmelia series that was begun in FY2016. Video assets can be distributed on owned channels including AmeliaIsland.com, Facebook, YouTube, and Vimeo, as well as pre-roll placements.

● Paid media.
  o Digital advertising for Fiscal Year 2017 has a total budget of $1,375,000. This budget will support all digital advertising tactics and partnerships across the funnel.

■ Media Plan funnel. At the top of the funnel, partners will drive awareness of Amelia Island as a destination and grow our reach in target markets. Publications including Conde Nast Traveler and Travel + Leisure will work with the Amelia Island staff to develop native content that tells a unique story of Amelia Island. This content will be created with the publication’s audience’s specific interest, behaviors and demographics in mind. Native ads will drive traffic to the articles; this year, the buys will guarantee traffic to the article pages. We will take a unified approach to

■ Native ads through travel endemic networks such as TravelSpike will drive traffic to Amelia Island’s own blog posts and articles that live on our website. Native ads, though a paid product, are meant to appear more organic on the publisher sites, alongside relevant content.

■ Banner ads, though an important part of the digital media buy, will be less of an emphasis. Instead, display channels will be “always on” with partners including Adara and Sojern, which provide booking data through their partnerships, as well as with TripAdvisor. These mid-to-low funnel partners target Amelia Island travel intenders. Adara reports a 4:1 return on ad spend on lodging alone. Creative on Adara and Sojern networks will primarily promote mid-funnel specials and events. Creative on TripAdvisor will be brand ads since a good portion of those users are still considering destinations in the competitive set. Arrivalist also delivers the capability to target
visitors to Amelia Island with in-market ads. That creative will focus on growing impact by giving visitors ideas about where to go and how to spend their money (restaurants, events, etc.), and will be a co-op opportunity.

- Social ads on Facebook and Instagram have proven to be ultra-efficient, hyper-targeted, easy to build with existing assets, quick to deploy and to return measurable results. Therefore, the Facebook and Instagram budget as a portion of the total budget will grow this year. With the growing suite of ad formats Facebook provides, all phases of the visitor journey can be targeted, from initial awareness to trip realization.

- SEM. The search engine marketing budget will total around $96,000 this year. Ads will be built around branded and competitive keywords to help drive incremental traffic to AmeliaIsland.com. This effort goes hand in hand with SEO, which will boost organic traffic on relevant keywords. Both SEM and SEO drive highly qualified traffic to AmeliaIsland.com, with excellent engagement: FY2016 to date.

  o Traditional media for FY2017 accounts for $1,425,000 of the $2.8 million placement budget.

  - Print. The print medium is the second largest bucket in our advertising placement budget. Although traditional print mediums have weakened as the popularity, importance and tactics in digital advertising have grown, it is still important element to our overall media approach. We use print media to help balance and complement our digital buys, hoping to increase the number of times our target audience sees our messaging. Our print media plan for FY2017 will focus on building voice in highly recognized, national publications such as *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, and *Garden & Gun*. These highly coveted publications not only reach our target audience, they also align and elevate our brand and assist in our overall efforts to position Amelia Island for competing on a global level.

  - Radio. Radio is mostly utilized to promote special events in the drive markets such as Dickens on Center, Restaurant Week and Concours Week. Our buys in the radio medium mostly focus on National Public Radio stations such as WJCT in Jacksonville.

  - Television. While most of the historical TV budget has been transferred to our digital budget to help promote our online videos, we will still hold a small television budget. This budget can be used for our annual “Be Nice to our Visitors” campaign which runs locally to help promote the positive aspects tourism provide to our local community, in preparation of the increase in spring and summer travel.

  - Out of Home. This year’s OOH budget will cover a fall program in the Charlotte International Airport (CLT) as well as with JetBlue airlines through an on-board digital map sponsorship. The CLT airport program will target those travelers going through the 8th busiest airport in the US. Servicing 41 million passengers annually, CLT sees 700 departures and landings per day and is the 3rd largest airport on the east coast. With 55 flights into JIA per week, our fall program aims to target those traveling during the busy holiday season through an 8-week flight with roughly 25 million impressions from a series of video ads on digital screens in the atrium and throughout concourse, plus a series of Mini Backlit Spectacles (duratrans) throughout the terminals.

- Earned Media. Amplify it. Harness the credibility of third party publications by paying to amplify their content on social media. This has the added benefit of a fresh editorial voice and allows another party to do the heavy lifting of content creation while the destination benefits from exposure. When a blogger writes about Amelia Island, we share it with our audience. When a visitor, no matter what their social following, take a beautiful photo with a unique perspective, ask to use it on our social channels.
Earned media also covers our efforts in public relations through our relationship with Hayworth PR. Amelia Island’s PR goal is to promote the destination, its partners, events, and experiences as a relaxing and rewarding vacation retreat in Florida, attracting meeting guests and vacationers from around the world through frequent and varied positive print, online, and broadcast media coverage. For the fiscal year PR program of work, see the appendices.

Measuring effectiveness: Attribution and Returns

Attribution, or giving a particular advertising impression “credit” for a sale or goal met, is a challenge in many industries, with e-commerce leading the way. Digital media’s advantages include interactivity and the ability to report on clicks that lead to website visitation. However, tourism planning is complex and non-linear. Users exposed to a brand’s banner may not necessarily click on the ad, and may choose to visit the website -- or visit the destination -- at a later date, while using an average of 17 various websites to inform their choices. For example (hypothetical), a commuting executive in Chicago might see a digital out of home ad in O’Hare, then see a Facebook ad for a special deal targeting Chicago users. They might go on to search for “Amelia Island” on Google before visiting the website, being convinced that the destination is unique and worth a trip, then getting a sense of things to do. They may then seek meta-search providers such as Kayak for pricing on air and hotels. This user might inform their decision through user-generated content in the form of reviews on TripAdvisor before finally making their purchase directly through Delta and on the Hampton Inn websites, all without transacting on AmeliaIsland.com. Where is credit due? In digital, emphasis is shifting to first impression.

Two data partners allow us to track attribution and returns.

- Arrivalist, with whom we ran a test campaign within our TripAdvisor ad buy in FY2016, is now tracking physical arrivals of guests on Amelia Island who were exposed to our digital media ads. This serves to show us which digital media channels move convert audience members to visitors most efficiently, which in turn will allow us to optimize our media plan.
- The second partner is Adara, which measures bookings -- both lodging and air -- against the exposed audience. This currently delivers a 4:1 return on advertising spend, even without certain properties in partnership with Adara. Currently, this reporting is limited to the Adara media buy.

Personalized Experiences

In FY2016, content personalization was rolled out on the AmeliaIsland.com homepage. This effort was associated with an overall 25% drop in bounce rate -- a very encouraging performance indicator. Texas users and Northeastern US users were served uncrowded beach imagery with “pristine” messaging to distinguish us from the rest of Florida. Users in drive markets were served up images of cultural and natural assets including historical downtown Fernandina Beach and sea turtles hatching, to give users with some familiarity another perspective on the destination. German users were served up with a page in the German language with information that set Amelia Island apart from crowded mass tourism destinations such as Mallorca. Mobile users received static images with simple calls to action on the most mobile-optimized pages.

In FY2017, personalization will be the main opportunity on AmeliaIsland.com. Content specific to certain geographies, behaviors, and referral paths will be tested and optimized. For first time visitors to AmeliaIsland.com, we want to leave a favorable impression, give them a sense of variety, and invite them to move further down the funnel through visitor guide request, newsletter subscription, and online booking.
As an inspiration organization, Amelia Island CVB must surprise and delight users at all points along their decision-making journey, from catching attention with that first impression all the way to educating them on the events and happenings around them while they are in market. Fresh, engaging content that resonates with the user is critical in capturing attention and competing with other destinations.

Content served up by Amelia Island ranges from blog posts on cool things to do, emails with insider tips, editorial coverage with itinerary ideas, and images and videos capturing the essence of Amelia Island. Together, these are true brand assets, and the organization has the channels to distribute them en masse, yet with the tools to deliver them to a hyper-targeted audience at any stage in the marketing funnel we wish to target. Distribution channels include the AmeliaIsland.com website, email newsletter, Facebook (owned and paid), Instagram (owned and paid), Twitter (owned and paid) YouTube, Periscope, Vimeo, and native advertising.

The content studio has two roles: first, produce shareable content about Amelia Island, and second, program it through the appropriate channels, amplifying it with budget where needed. There is a critical mass of content already produced that can be programmed on the AmeliaIsland.com website based on a user’s geography and behavior. However, new content must continue to be produced – frequency, novelty and relevance are key in competition. It bears noting that the volume of content output by the AICVB organization is comparable to that of a much larger DMO with dedicated staff and an agency on retainer.

Two-thirds of brand marketers are moving advertising budgets away from TV and into online video. Video is the medium that is favored by the algorithms of giants like Facebook and preferred by consumers. Multimedia content—such as video—reaches three times as many people and gets 20 percent more attention time than standard blog posts. Using video, we can deliver a living narrative so that we can fulfill our role as destination storytellers. Images, sounds, motion, personalities and natural phenomena all come together to make video the medium of choice for the content studio. Videos are becoming the way we make and save memories.

In fiscal year 2016, more than a dozen videos were produced, many in the #LoveAmelia series. “Pépin & Pétanque” brought to life the French culture and history of Amelia Island through beloved chef extraordinaire, Jacques Pépin. The video included a live cooking demo with fresh local shrimp – also a part of our history – with the backdrop of the marina and an international Pétanque tournament. Those familiar with Amelia Island had an opportunity to learn more about what makes the destination special and why someone like Pépin would choose to spend months here.

In fiscal year 2017, the storytelling continues. This October, “Spirited Amelia” features an effervescent blend of local ghost stories (and haunted venues) along with the alcoholic spirits, custom cocktails and historic watering holes.

The 2017 editorial calendar includes more video produced by the content studio as well as an effort to bring video storytellers to Amelia Island and also empower and encourage our stakeholders to use new and easy to use technologies such as Facebook Live to tell their stories via video. We will be releasing a video co-op offering with our partners Dorsey Media Group to allow stakeholders to gain their own specific video content module that can in turn be shared by Amelia Island CVB as well.

**Content Editorial Calendar for 2016-17**

- Niche market targeting to New York City
- Escape the Noise variation for winter weather
- While You Were Sleeping – behind-the-scenes of what happens at night in pastry kitchens, shrimp boats, and more
• Holiday celebrations and other key event coverage - done live

By thinking like a multimedia newsroom and working to deliver stories that travelers want to hear and are inspired to share, we join the major companies who have shifted their emphasis to multimedia content creation. Since we live here and are closely tied in and networked with our business community, we can be responsive and authentic. Working with partners from the First Coast allows the content studio to deliver quickly.

Branding Through Events

The backbone of the editorial calendar is the series of annual events that serve three purposes:

• Drive overnight visitation to Amelia Island, boosting occupancy in slower months
• Halo the Amelia Island brand with the impressive talent/productions the destination attracts
• Enhance quality of life for residents directly through the experience and indirectly through economic impact.

Amelia Island is home to a variety of events that draw significant visitation:

• Iconic “only on Amelia” events, such as the Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival, Dickens on Centre, and the Bed & Breakfast Cookie Tour. The 2016 Shrimp Festival led to nearly $9.6MM in economic impact.
• Signature events, such as the Amelia Island Concours Week, that are hosted by the destination and serve to elevate the visitor profile and drive room rates. This past year, Concours Week led to $20MM in economic impact.
• Arts & Culture events, such as the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, which attracts globally renowned performers such as Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, and Anne Akiko Meyers. Other arts events include the Amelia Island Jazz Festival, Sounds on Centre, and Artrageous Artwalk, to name just a few. Culture and Heritage events led to $59MM in economic impact in 2016.
• Ancillary events that offer lodging alternatives for events held in Jacksonville, namely those at Everbank Field, such as the GA vs. FL and the Navy vs. Notre Dame games. For these, we piggyback demand for Jacksonville, offering proximity to the game but distance from hectic city logistics.

Each type of event has the ability not only to attract visitors, but also to reflect on the Amelia Island brand. We are more than a beach town: we have the gravitational force to attract names recognized the world over. For example, even when rooms are limited in availability before and during Concours Week, continued advertising campaigns with top funnel partners, as well as event coverage itself, helps to create an exclusive, aspirational aura around the destination that may increase consideration.

Events run the gamut of visitation patterns. Some traditionally tend to attract excursionists whose impact is a fraction of that of overnight guests. Others help elevate rates and strengthen occupancy for the whole island. The 2nd annual Dickens on Centre is an event in transition, designed to lift occupancy year over year as regional awareness grows. The AITDC is dedicated to maximizing economic impact: this means a focus on driving overnight visitation to Amelia Island, but secondarily means inspiring visitors to experience - and spend - in the destination.

Events also have the capacity to surprise and delight guests, enhancing their visits and their spending. Making in-market visitors aware of, for example, local theatre productions, provides outstanding value while supporting a cultural asset. Some December 2016 visitors learned of Dickens on Centre through their concierge, experienced the festival, and purchased food and beverage that extended their economic impact throughout the community.
For these reasons, the calendar of events on AmeliaIsland.com is open to special events that attract visitors and/or provide outstanding value that enhances satisfaction with the potential to drive repeat visitation and word of mouth.

**Support Meetings & Groups**

Amelia Island’s promise of allowing leisure visitors to “disconnect to reconnect” extends to visitors as part of corporate and group meetings, as well as weddings. They are removed from the demands of urban life for a chance to reach unparalleled concentration and productivity within their team, all with the backdrop of nature. Despite Amelia Island being a relaxing destination, meetings partners can produce state-of-the-art events.

Amelia Island supports meeting planners, groups, and lodging partners through the following:

- Meetings section on AmeliaIsland.com, with photo galleries and room specifications.
- Weddings section on AmeliaIsland.com, with the opportunity for brides to submit an RFP.
- Support incentives for Familiarization trips (FAMs) with programs including Flights for Sites, which reimburses planners for qualified trips.
- Actively solicit meetings and group business through extensive partnership with stakeholder properties.
- Special sales efforts for large pitches, including customized FAM trip experiences and dedicated microsites.
- Represent Amelia Island at conferences and trade shows, such as Florida Encounter, promoting the destination throughout target areas such as New York, Chicago and Atlanta.
Partner Resources

The AITDC structure uses no local tax dollars, membership, or advertising fees in our operations. The vast majority of our partner resources are available to stakeholders at no cost.*

Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau acts as an inspiration organization, growing awareness in our markets and giving consumers the content they need to make travel decisions. The AICVB opens the door for these consumers, giving them a glimpse of what they can expect during an Amelia Island vacation. Ultimately, however, the service providers on Amelia Island, in particular the lodging partners, bring users through the door. Visitors’ experiences with these providers are what determines whether they return again and again. Think about it as being cast in a starring role in our production.

Please use the tools and opportunities below that AICVB makes available to eligible Amelia Island businesses:

1. Get listed on ameliaisland.com, reaching over 1M people/year.
2. Submit events to the Amelia Island Calendar of Events on ameliaisland.com.
3. Share your stories, photos, and news on Amelia Island social media channels and on our Blog.
4. Point to ameliaisland.com from your website to give your users ideas of things to do and where to go.
5. Use Amelia Island hashtags to reach travelers and influencers around the globe with #ameliaisland #loveamelia.
6. Spread the word on how to protect our beaches and sea turtles, and distribute Clean Beaches door hangers.
7. Access cutting-edge market research on visitors, who they are, what brings them here at ameliaislandAITDC.com.
8. Get listed in the Visitors Guide, sent to 165,000 people in 2015-16 and distributed at the Welcome Center.
9. Distribute Amelia Island print materials to visitors at your business: Visitors Guides, Historic District Walking Tour, Artrageous Artwalk, bike maps, and meetings brochure.
10. Participate in a co-op advertising program at subsidized rates.
11. Develop special packages for us to promote in our event campaigns.
12. Display collateral materials and promote events at the spectacular Amelia Island Welcome Center (open seven days a week, 364 days a year.)
13. Pick up copies of Host travel writers or influencers
15. Request photos from Amelia Island’s CleanPix galleries, and send us new photos of your business and events.
16. Get RFPs from brides and grooms to be interested in getting married on Amelia Island.
17. Join VISIT FLORIDA’s popular Twitter Chats.
18. Train with the VISIT FLORIDA hospitality training module.
19. Participate in the Dickens on Centre window decorating contest (downtown merchants only).
20. Communicate with us on what is working well for your business!

Above all, communicate with us. Share what works well for you and what does not. As we evolve as an organization, we rely on your feedback. Also, we encourage businesses to get ahead of demand by sharing this information as far in advance as reasonably possible such that we can effect changes in consumer behavior. Marketing campaigns do not often launch overnight.

* See eligibility requirements at http://ameliaislandAITDC.com/#/for-partners/eligibility
Appendices
## Fiscal Year 2017 Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>FY 2017 Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourist Dev. Funds</td>
<td>$4,795,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve/Carryforward</td>
<td>$1,250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Tourist Dev. Funds</td>
<td>$5,901,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDC Admin - 15%</td>
<td>$697,800</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing - 65%</td>
<td>$4,205,799</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel Trade - 10%</td>
<td>$533,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beach Improv - 10%</td>
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</table>

### Paid Media Placement Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
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<tr>
<td>TV</td>
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<tr>
<td>International</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out of Home</td>
<td>$137,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Calendar of Events

October

- VISIT FLORIDA’s Toronto Media Mission, October 18
- Annual Industry Meeting, October 19
- Travel + Leisure Travel Advisory Board, October 27
- VISIT FLORIDA I-75 Fall Fair, October 28

November

- World Travel Market, November 7-9
- TMS Family Travel Conference, November 10-12
  - Post Media FAM, November 12-14
- VISIT FLORIDA Leadership Summit, November 28-20
- VISIT FLORIDA Encounter, November 30-December 2

December

- Dickens on Centre, December 8-11
- UK Sales Missions

January

- VISIT FLORIDA Huddle, January 9-11
- Amelia Island Restaurant Week, January 20-29
- Florida Tourism Day (Tallahassee)
- Villages Travel Show

February

- Chamber Music Festival Superstar - Itzhak Perlman, February 6

March

- ITB, March 8-12
- Amelia Island Concours Week, March 9-19
- Georgia Bridal Show

April

May

- Isle of Eight Flags Shrimp Festival, May 5-7
- Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations - Destination Marketing Summit
- USTA National Travel and Tourism Week, May 7-13

June

- IPW, June 3-7

September

- VISIT FLORIDA Governor’s Conference on Tourism, September 7-9
- Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations - Annual Meeting
GOAL

Promote Amelia Island, its partners, events, and experiences as a relaxing and rewarding vacation retreat in Florida, attracting meeting guests and vacationers from around the world through frequent and varied positive print, online, and broadcast media coverage.

STRATEGIES

- Proactively pitch national media outlets and generate travel coverage of the destination
- Capitalize on established relationships with key media contacts to secure additional national print and broadcast coverage for the destination
- Increase digital presence by working with digital influencers and the destination’s digital marketing team to increase editorial exposure on key sites
- Expand promotion of the destination as a viable choice for affordable, effective meetings
- Execute creative ideas with broad media appeal to generate significant positive exposure within target markets
- Provide targeted pitches based on market-level research to media contacts in expanding air travel markets
- Leverage promotional opportunities with Charlotte Airport to increase awareness of Amelia Island among air travelers and other potential visitors
- Utilize the destination’s “Come Make Memories” brand to further position the island as a premier vacation destination of choice over other warm-weather location options for leisure travel
- Identify and develop fresh story ideas to feed the ongoing editorial feature pipeline
- Direct individual and group media familiarization programs with well-respected, qualified travel journalists
- Assist CVB marketing team with international media opportunities as appropriate
- Connect like promotional partners with the destination for national and regional exposure through contests, sweepstakes, special events, and similar programs, with specific focus on big-box retail outlets
- Expand awareness of existing on-island events through increased media coverage, with additional support for CVB-led events
- Maintain consistent branding and messaging through all initiatives
- Assist in educating local industry partners to stimulate greater participation in and support of specific CVB initiatives

TACTICS

- Create a consumer activation point in Charlotte in Q2 (i.e. Queen’s Cup Steeplechase, Derby Days at the Mint Museum or Quail Hollow Championship)
- Implement a promotional activity at either Boston or JFK airport to coincide with jetBlue ad buy (Nov/Dec)
- Host at least one digital influencer-specific fam trip to increase online presence through blogs and social media
- Coordinate a major promotion opportunity with a lifestyle or wellness brand tied to Amelia Island, i.e. Lululemon, Bourbon & Boweties or Benjamin Moore
- Coordinate a promotion targeting male travelers by partnering with male-centric brands, i.e. JackThreads, Fish Hippie, Southern Tide or Southern Marsh.
- Assist in providing media materials and/or attend media events at VISIT FLORIDA’s Florida Encounter and Florida Huddle tradeshows
- Host a media post familiarization trip in conjunction with the TMS Fall Showcase event (Nov. 12-14)
- Participate at VISIT FLORIDA’s Toronto Media Mission (Oct. 18)
- Conduct one-on-one deskside appointments with media in New York, Atlanta, New Orleans, Nashville, Birmingham, Charlotte and Orlando
- Coordinate a consumer activation and media event in New York in Q2 or Q3
- Provide manicure treatments at Time Inc. publications in Birmingham on First Day of Summer
- Bring in a minimum of 12 writers on individual press trips from targeted lifestyle publications in core, growth and emerging markets to promote Amelia Island as an ideal vacation destination
- Write and distribute press releases to national, regional and niche media outlets, which includes a quarterly round up announcing special events that currently draw or have the potential to draw overnight guests
- Secure five promotions, which will provide non-traditional exposure requiring minimal cash investment, in the specific target markets
- Coordinate in-store cooking demonstrations with culinary outlets in regional drive origin markets
- Provide press materials to CVB staff attending various tradeshows for additional trade media coverage
- Confirm interviews for CVB staff, as appropriate, with trade editors at tradeshows
- Respond to crisis situations as necessary to ensure release of accurate information and minimize any negative impact on visitation
- Maintain current and useful information for media on the press section of the Amelia Island website
- Participate in annual town hall forum for tourism leaders to discuss upcoming PR events and opportunities for participation
- Compile a comprehensive list of editorial opportunities, targeting a variety of media outlets, including meeting trades; daily newspapers; regional, women’s consumer, family, men’s consumer and travel specific magazines; in-flight publications; syndicated articles; broadcast media; and specialty niche publications such as fishing, culinary, epicurean, outdoor, golf and spa
- Monitor and respond to media leads from VISIT FLORIDA, SATW E-news, Media Kitty, and HARO
- Respond to all media inquiries within 24 hours, and supply requested materials to media within 48 hours
Professional Development

The AITDC understands the value of partnership and participation in professional development opportunities within our industry. The AITDC and its staff members are part of the following trade associations:

- Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI)
- Florida Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (FADMO)
- US Travel Association
- Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association (FRLA)
- VISIT FLORIDA
- Brand USA
- American Society of Association Executives (ASAE)

The AITDC will attend the following development and education shows:

- FL Governor’s Conference on Tourism
- FADMO annual meeting
- FADMO marketing summit
- DMAI Annual Meeting
- DMAI CEO Forum
Additional Sources:


http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-police-travel-idUSKCN0Z0R0M


http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/07/14/485877515/u-s-often-issues-travel-warnings-but-lately-the-tables-are-turned

http://view.ceros.com/contently/future-marketing-is-video/p/1