



City of La Quinta

CITY / SA / HA / FA MEETING DATE: June 2, 2015

ITEM TITLE: MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR 2015/2016

AGENDA CATEGORY:

BUSINESS SESSION:

CONSENT CALENDAR:

STUDY SESSION: 1

PUBLIC HEARING:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Provide direction to staff regarding 2015/2016 Marketing Strategies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Each year the City Council reviews the marketing strategies for the upcoming fiscal year.
- These strategies outline the methods the City will use to promote and strengthen community events, tourism, and economic development over the next fiscal year.
- The strategies include a mix of print, media, and digital methods in local, community, and regional distribution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City's overall annual marketing investment is \$1.22 million dollars. This amount includes the Marketing and Community Relations budget, SilverRock Resort's marketing budget, and marketing agreements with La Quinta Arts Foundation, La Quinta Chamber of Commerce, and Desert Classic Charities (CareerBuilder Classic). The fiscal impact to execute these marketing strategies is \$250,000 and is accounted for in the Marketing and Community Relations budget for Fiscal Year 2015/2016.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The marketing strategies for next year will focus on three main areas: 1) Regional (drive market and beyond), 2) Local (within the Coachella Valley), and 3) Community (within La Quinta).

Digital metrics indicate that over 70 percent of PlayInLaQuinta.com users are ages 45 and over. Additionally, the regional markets of Los Angeles and San Diego make up

20 percent of all views on the tourism website and 15 percent of all Facebook “likes.” These metrics indicate La Quinta’s messaging is reaching a portion of the target markets; however, new strategies to target a younger demographic (while increasing emphasis in the Orange County and Inland Empire regional markets) should be considered. The strategies identified below will impact all three geographic markets, Regional, Local, and Community. These include:

- Updated Creative
 - The popularity of Point-of-view (POV) imagery has grown with the advent of the “GoPro” style video cameras. The new creative will feature POV image from around La Quinta (hiking, shopping, golfing, dining, etc) with “Experience La Quinta” messaging.
- “Selfie” Spots
 - Predetermined locations around La Quinta where “selfies” are encouraged and posted on social networks with a special hashtag to grow brand awareness in the Millennial and Gen X target markets.
- Guide to La Quinta
 - Produce a 12-16 page “Guide to La Quinta” that will promote activities, points of interest, dining and shopping locations, and other City information.
- Locale Magazine
 - A regional magazine designed for Millennial/Generation X’ers that will include the “Guide to La Quinta” as a pullout in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Orange County with special feature on their website (125,000 views per month).
- Tourism Website Enhancements
 - Vacation Rental Map
 - Develop an interactive map of “registered” vacation rentals in La Quinta.
 - Improved image and video galleries.

Metrics indicate high brand awareness with people ages 45+ both locally and in the Los Angeles and San Diego regional markets. In order to maintain this level of brand awareness, the following marketing strategies are recommended for continuation. These include:

- “Signature Event” Marketing Opportunities
 - Continue to support local, large-scale events with sponsorships, event program ads, and other collateral and advertising opportunities.
- Align with the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau and their efforts to promote the Coachella Valley and La Quinta as a destination in the international and national markets.

- Local Cooperative Marketing Program
 - Provide cooperative marketing opportunities for local businesses to expand their market exposure.
- Community and Local Messaging Campaign
 - Continue a Valley-wide messaging campaign supporting La Quinta businesses and events to encourage shopping, dining, and event attendance.
- Palm Springs Life Advertorial
 - A four-page advertorial promoting economic development and tourism to both the local and regional markets.
- The Gem
 - Continue to produce the “City Pages” monthly and insert an Annual Report (formerly City Newsletter).
- PlayInLaQuinta.com Website
 - Continue to update the site with new content, photos, blogs, and other links that increase search engine optimization.
- Social Media
 - Continue to engage the users of social media using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.
- Pay-Per-Click Programs
 - Continue to drive traffic to the tourism website and social media engagement through Pay-Per-Click programs.
- Travel Website Ads
 - Continue to promote tourism and visitors by placing clickable ads on travel websites.
- Public Relations and Event Partnerships
 - EmpowerLaQuinta.com
 - A new community engagement website that encourages community members to post ideas and comments about City projects.

- Continue to provide community outreach by attending community meetings and hosting a booth at the Farmers Market.
- Coordinate the brand refresh and develop an unveiling.
- Provide public relations for local City events, “Signature Events,” City facilities and programs, and as needed for emergency services.
- Partner with local stakeholders and non-profits to provide promotional support for local events.

Staff is seeking Council direction on the marketing strategies proposed for Fiscal Year 2015/2016. Professional Services Agreements with JNS Media and Graphtek Interactive will be brought before Council for implementation of these marketing strategies.

Report prepared by: Tustin Larson, Marketing & Events Supervisor
Report approved for submission by: Edie Hylton, Deputy City Manager

Attachment: 1. Marketing Strategies

2015/2016 Marketing Strategies

The Goals

The following proposed goals will guide the City's Marketing Plan for Fiscal Year 2015/2016:

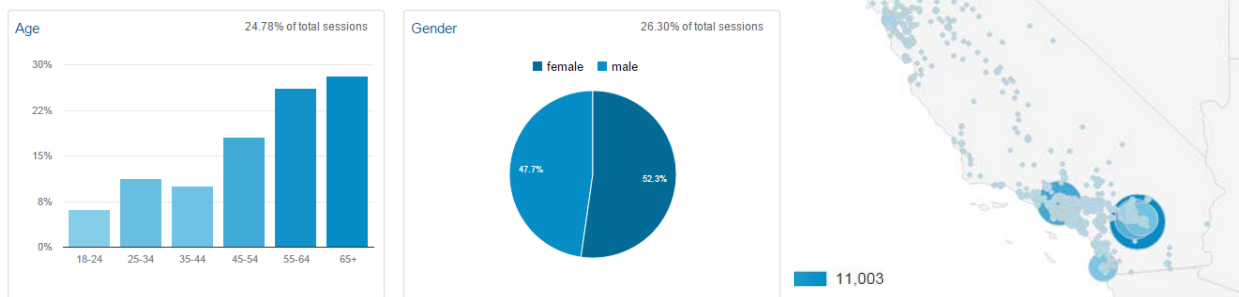
- Continue to identify new mediums and programs that keep La Quinta top-of-mind as local consumers make considerations regarding where to visit, live and do business.
- Continue to support and promote large-scale "Signature Events" in proximity to La Quinta by providing information about retail shopping, restaurants, and hospitality complexes within city limits.
- Continue to support the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) with their international and national marketing campaigns to promote the Coachella Valley as a premier tourist destination.
- Align marketing efforts with the CVB to promote La Quinta in the Regional markets to increase tourism and improve revenue generation.
- Offer cooperative programs that support La Quinta businesses and maximize their advertising budgets.
- Continue digital advertising, increase interactive content on the tourism website, social media and travel resource ads to promote La Quinta and encourage tourism, business, and event attendance.
- Identify new methods of communication with residents and the media on important City news, events, and programs.
- Coordinate with the Marketing Committee, including the Chamber of Commerce, La Quinta Arts Foundation, Desert Classic Charities (CareerBuilder Challenge Golf Tournament), La Quinta Resort, Old Town La Quinta, and SilverRock Resort to implement partnerships that maximize and leverage marketing budgets.

Metrics

The City of La Quinta has been collecting metrics over the last 12 months using Google Analytics and Facebook. These metrics provide data on the users of our PlayInLaQuinta.com website and the City's Facebook page. The data is used to understand how many people are interested in La Quinta, where they live, how old they are, what pages they visit on the site, and other variables. This information is invaluable when determining marketing strategies as it provides direction on advertising methods and ad placement. Below are the metrics from January 1, 2014 – May, 2015:

Google Analytics for PlayInLaQuinta.com website:

- 175,000 total website views (up from 64,000 – 173% increase)
 - 137,000 unique visitors
 - Total views are counted each time the site is accessed. Unique views are counted only once. In other words, unique visitors are new visitors.
- 70% of viewers are ages 45+, with an equal amount of men and women.
- 23% of all views are from La Quinta – residents or visitors from within La Quinta.
- Los Angeles and San Diego account for 20% of all website visits.
- Top viewed pages 1. Hiking (13%), 2. Event Calendar (7.5%), 3. Shopping (7%), 4. Golf (4%), 5. Hotels (4%).



Facebook Insights:

- 44,600 total users “likes” (up from 23,000 – 94% increase)
 - “Likes” are Facebook users who subscribe to the City of La Quinta’s page.
- 1/2 of users are ages 45+, women make up 2/3 of users.
- 4,000 “likes” from Coachella Valley.
- Los Angeles and San Diego account for 15% of all “likes”.
- Averaging 400 new “likes” per day.
 - This is equivalent to 400 people per day subscribing to the City’s page. These Facebook users are “opting-in” to learn more about the City of La Quinta.

Target Markets

Metrics indicate there is very high brand awareness (70%) with ages 45 and up. Additionally, the regional markets of Los Angeles and San Diego make up 20% of all views on the PlayInLaQuinta.com website and 15% of all Facebook “likes”. Based on the metrics, it is recommended that the marketing campaigns be targeted to the following groups:

- Millennials and Generation X.
- Young affluent families.
- Active adults who enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, bicycling, and golf.
- Adults with disposable income.
- Affluent couples, empty-nesters & retirement prospects.
- Geographic regions: Coachella Valley, Regional drive markets. (Los Angeles, San Diego, and greater emphasis on Inland Empire and Orange County)

Print & Media

Marketing strategies are directed to keep La Quinta top-of-mind to both visitors and locals. City staff has focused on efforts that support tourism, local businesses, and continued community investment in La Quinta. Staff will continue working with JNS Media for the Print & Media strategies.

Community market – within the City of La Quinta

- **The Gem** - Staff will continue production of the “City Scene” pages for The Gem (a monthly Chamber newspaper that is delivered to La Quinta residents and Chamber members). Promote programs, classes, special events, and important City news related to: SilverRock Resort, Museum, Library, Wellness Center, Community Services, Police, and special feature articles such as emergency preparedness, commission vacancies, and special messages from City partners.
- **“Selfie” Spots** - Staff will develop a program with a combination of signage, and an online mapping tool to promote “selfie spots.” These spots are predetermined locations where participants are encouraged to take photos of themselves “selfies” because of special environmental amenities. Each location will have a special “hashtag” (words that start with # that indicate a trend on social media networks) that will encourage participants to post with their photos on social media networks.
- **Guide to La Quinta** – As a new strategy, staff is recommending creating a 12-16 page “Guide to La Quinta” fulfillment piece. The guide will be designed by and featured in

Locale Magazine (see Regional Market) as a pullout in three regional markets, and additional overrun will be used as a standalone visitor's guide. The guide will be available in La Quinta and other local market hotels and visitors centers around the Coachella Valley. The guide will contain information about the city, activities, events, points of interest, shopping and dining locations, hotels, and more.

Local market – within the Coachella Valley (includes La Quinta)

- **“Signature Event” Marketing Opportunities** - Continue support for large-scale local events in proximity to La Quinta. Events of this magnitude have national/international exposure and attendees often shop and stay in and around the City of La Quinta. Printed advertisements will appear in event programs, pairing sheets, and other event publications for the following events:
 - CareerBuilder Challenge Golf Tournament
 - Horse Shows in the Sun (HITS)
 - Eldorado Polo
 - Riverside County Date Festival
 - La Quinta Arts Festival
 - BNP Paribas Open
 - Coachella Music Festival
 - Stagecoach Country Music Festival
 - Palm Springs Restaurant Week

- **Local Cooperative Marketing Program** - Continue to promote cooperative marketing by working with current partners, and by adding new partners to increase their community and local market exposure. (City being one of the partners) Some of these include:
 - La Quinta Arts Festival Program Ad
 - BNP Paribas Open Daily Pairing Sheets
 - Palm Springs Restaurant Week Ads
 - Palm Springs International Airport Display

- **Local messaging campaigns** - Continue a Valley-wide messaging campaign that supports La Quinta businesses and events to encourage shopping, dining, and special event attendance. The multi-tiered plan comprised of television and print will be leveraged with Public Relations, bonus advertising such as extra ads, etc. This effort will run in key months to support events and the “Experience La Quinta” message. Some of these include:
 - ½ page ads in CV Weekly
 - Full page ads in Desert Health News
 - ½ page ads in Greater Palm Springs Travel Host
 - ½ page ads in Palm Springs Life magazine
 - Ads in the Desert Sun – two per month
 - 60 live mentions per month on local radio stations – 90 live mentions during “Signature event” months
 - 200 airings per month of :30 television commercials on local channels

- **Palm Springs Life Advertorial:** Produce a City of La Quinta advertorial featuring the progress of the City over the last calendar year. The advertorial will be featured in the Palm Springs Life October 2015 issue (the City’s customary progress piece) – which will also be featured in the “Vision” collateral piece put together through a collaboration between Palm Springs Life, Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP), CVB, and the County of Riverside Economic Development Agency. Distribution is 32,000 in both the local and regional-drive markets with a digital version on their website.
- **Guide to La Quinta** – See Local market.

Regional Market – Drive markets (Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County, Inland Empire)

- **Align with CVB Advertising** – Continue to align with the CVB’s advertising program in order to leverage the City’s membership dollars and reach outside markets. Target areas include: Southern California (Los Angeles & San Diego), Northern California Bay Area, Pacific Northwest, Midwest, and Western Canada. The various campaigns involve print, radio, and online efforts to attract more visitors to the Coachella Valley as well as support and ultimately grow direct air service.
- **Locale Magazine:** As a new strategy, staff is recommending creating a 12-16 page “Guide to La Quinta.” The guide will be designed by and featured in Locale Magazine. Locale will run the guide in their three main Southern California markets of Los Angeles, San Diego, and Orange County as a pullout. The pullout will also be featured on the Locale website which received 125,000 views per month. The guide will contain infographics about the city, activities, events, places of interest, shopping and dining locations, hotels, and more.
 - Over 64% of Locale readers are ages 25-44.
 - 240,000 distributed in three markets.
 - Over 30,000 social media fans, including 11,000+ Instagram followers.
 - 125,000 website views per month.
- **Regional messaging campaigns** - Continue a regional messaging campaign that supports tourism to La Quinta. The plan includes advertisements on radio and television. This campaign will run in season to support opportunities for outdoor recreation, “signature events”, and entice visitors with messaging support the viability of a driving destination. Some of these include:
 - 60 live mentions per month on regional radio stations – 90 live mentions during “Signature event” months
 - 200 airings per month of :30 television commercials on regional channels

Website & Social Media

City staff will continue to work with Graphtek Interactive for digital marketing efforts and social media interaction.

- **Increased Interactive Website Content** - The City's tourism website, PlayInLaQuinta.com, continues to grow in popularity with regular content updates, and increased interactive components. Last year added a vacation rental directory displaying only registered rental agencies and the creation of interactive bike and art maps. To maintain a high level of visitors to the website, increased interactive components will be added including:
 - An interactive map of available "registered" vacation rentals. The map will show locations of rental properties throughout the City of La Quinta where the user could select the property and complete the registration process through a 3rd party system.
 - Improved photo and video gallery
- **EmpowerLaQuinta.com** - This is a new website designed for public engagement. This site creates a clearinghouse for the community to engage directly with the City staff. It works by establishing topics and asking for ideas. Community members then add ideas, upload photos, add comments, and support for ideas. Communities around the country are using this tool to interact with their residents to prioritize projects, consider new projects, create awareness, and communicate directly with residents.
- **Social Media Engagement** - The City continues to improve its standing in the digital world using several social media networks. The most popular by far is the City's Facebook page. This network continues to grow and engage residents and visitors with images, news stories, and tourism content.

The City of La Quinta's Twitter feed has also grown over the last year. Improved posts and engagement have increased followers from 5,000 to 9,500. Posts include tourism content, photos, news articles, and re-tweets from tourists, travel bloggers, business owners, and residents sharing vacation photos, business specials, complimentary tweets, etc.

The City's Pinterest account continues to grow with over 1,000 items of visual content across 37 different categories. Currently 1,200 people are following the account.

- **Social Media Engagement** – Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Programs: PPC's continue to be an effective tool in driving traffic to the tourism website and social media networks. Advertisements are developed and targeted toward a specific audience. It is recommended to continue utilizing PPC programs for both the Local and Regional markets targeting hiking, biking, shopping, events, art, and golf.
 - Website Pay-Per-Click (PPC) Program: The Pay-Per-Click program allows the City to purchase sponsored links on the result pages of searches conducted via search engines such as Google / Yahoo / Bing. A link will pop up toward the top of the sponsored link section; attracting more unique visitors to the La Quinta tourism website. When visitors click on the La Quinta sponsored link, it takes them to PlayInLaQuinta.com where they explore activities, hotels, dining, shopping, and golf in La Quinta. PPCs can be extensively tracked and provide valuable metrics for a campaign's return on investment.
 - *Facebook Pay-Per-Like (PPL) Program: La Quinta ads are purchased and designed to target users that are not already following the La Quinta page. These ads appear under "sponsored ads" within the news feed; when a user clicks on the La Quinta ad, it takes them straight to the La Quinta Facebook page. 74% of new likes were due to PPL's.
- **Travel Website Ads** –Staff will continue to work with Graphtek Interactive to buy ad spaces and design vibrant, dynamic ads. Each clickable advertisement is tracked and the images and messaging can be changed regularly based on real-time performance metrics to improve the return on investment. Metrics from last year indicated that ads with more active lifestyle images performed better than dining or golf.

Public Relations & Event Partnerships

- **Community Outreach** – Continue efforts to reach out to community groups, homeowners association and service clubs to listen to issues and provide city updates. Staff will speak about new programs and facilities that are planned along with a city financial update. The City Staff will also be at the Farmer's Market once a month to answer questions and distribute city information.
- **Public Relations** – The public relations will be continued over the next fiscal year through a coordinated effort of press releases, websites, and social media that results in an increase of coverage for all City events and programs.

- Local - Publicity efforts will focus on all City events that are pertinent to local businesses, residents, and tourists through online calendar listings, email blasts, social media updates, and major press releases when deemed appropriate. Emphasis will be placed on Museum, Library, and City events and programs. Additional public relations support will be provided for any issues the City is dealing with outside the parameters of these events, on an as needed basis.
- Regional - Promote amenities surrounding “Signature Events” (golf, shopping, dining, museum, art, etc.) that warrant PR efforts to regional markets (Los Angeles/Orange County, San Diego, Inland Empire). Additional public relations support will be provided for any issues the City is dealing with outside the parameters of these events, on an as needed basis.
- Brand Refresh – If approved by Council, Staff will coordinate the brand refresh to update all internal and external communications and fleet. A timeline will be developed to coordinate the refresh and create an unveiling event for the press and public.
- [CareerBuilder Challenge Golf Tournament](#) - The successful partnership with Desert Classic Charities – coordinate with new sponsor to develop community events. Continue leveraging publicity in conjunction with the event as well as designing editorial pages focused on the City in the CareerBuilder Challenge Program Guide.
- [La Quinta Arts Foundation](#) - Continue to work with the La Quinta Arts Foundation team to develop sound strategies that maximize respective advertising budgets and PR efforts. Assist the Foundation in promoting other key events such as Art Under the Umbrellas.
- [La Quinta Chamber of Commerce](#) - Continue to support and promote key Chamber events such as the annual Rod & Custom Car Show, Taste of La Quinta through online calendar updates, email blasts, social media updates and other promotional efforts such as print and radio ads. Work with the Chamber on the monthly “City Scene” pages in The Gem to communicate City happenings to La Quinta residents and businesses.
- [Support for new marketing collaborations and event partnerships](#) – Continue to identify new opportunities for marketing collaborations and support for events that enhance the City of La Quinta.