

SLO TBID STRATEGIC MARKETING & BUSINESS PLAN



FY 24-26



INTRODUCTION

SLO LIFE TIP: BE THE FIRST TO SAY HELLO!

Hi, and welcome to the San Luis Obispo Tourism Business Improvement District's (SLO TBID) Strategic Marketing & Business Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. This document will be your guide on our journey to elevate San Luis Obispo as a must-visit destination over the next few years.

To make this plan, we pored over the past and learned from our successes. Now, we're excited to share our vision for the future. This document outlines our strategic goals and initiatives, serving as a compass for creating unforgettable experiences that showcase San Luis Obispo's small-town California charm.

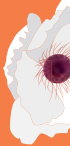
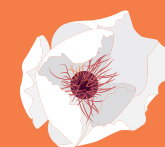
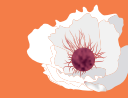
To keep us agile and responsive, we'll implement this plan within a more detailed Quarterly Marketing Plan. We'll also track progress on a monthly basis so we can adapt to changing trends. This plan aligns with our broader five-year Strategic Plan, ensuring every action contributes to our longterm goals.

Get ready for fresh ideas, captivating campaigns and a whole lot more as we continue to share the SLO Life far and wide!



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STRATEGIC DIRECTION, OBJECTIVES & BRAND STRATEGY



SLO TBID STRATEGIC DIRECTION & IMPERATIVES

The SLO TBID stewards the brand of Visit San Luis Obispo and represents its lodging partners, driving overnight stays by:

- Telling the San Luis Obispo story via targeted marketing content and activities.
- Serving as a convener and subject matter expert for tourism conversations impacting the destination.
- Advancing strategic partnerships that extend the reach and influence of Visit San Luis Obispo.

VISION

A welcoming community with a vibrant economy that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike.

MISSION

We share the abundance of SLO, driving the lodging economy and serving as the voice of our stakeholders.

VALUES

- Service
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Collaboration

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure Organizational Excellence
- Deliver Smart Growth
- Build Meaningful Partnerships
- Activate the SLO Life

2025-2030 VISIT SAN LUIS OBISPO STRATEGIC PLAN

NORTH STAR

Vision

A welcoming community with a vibrant economy that enriches the lives of visitors and residents alike.

Mission

We share the abundance of SLO, driving the lodging economy and serving as the voice of our stakeholders.

Values

We believe in:

- Service
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Collaboration

Position

The SLO TBID stewards the brand of Visit San Luis Obispo and represents its lodging partners, driving overnight stays by:

- Telling the San Luis Obispo story via targeted marketing content and activities.
- Serving as a convener and subject matter expert for tourism conversations impacting the destination.
- Advancing strategic partnerships that extend the reach and influence of Visit San Luis Obispo.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

OBJECTIVES

INDICATORS

STRATEGIES

Ensure Organizational Excellence

- Maintain stakeholder sentiment of Visit San Luis Obispo performance.
- Increased engagement and participation with Visit San Luis Obispo's Brand Book and promotional toolkits.

- Grow organizational capacity.
- Invest in internal relationship building.
- Develop an innovation process.
- Communicate successes.
- Invest in stakeholder connections.

Deliver Smart Growth

- Increase in resident sentiment.
- Increase mid-week occupancy.
- Increase length of stay.

- Foster ongoing positive resident sentiment.
- Develop remote work messages as part of SLO Life.
- Advocate for conference center development.
- Partner with Visit California and Visit SLO CAL to bolster targeted segments of travel.

Build Meaningful Partnerships

- Create one net new signature brand partnership
- Partnerships balanced across identified key sectors

- Perform an audit of our partnership landscape.
- Develop partnerships to address key gaps.
- Develop an events strategy to complement Visit SLO CAL's approach.

Activate the SLO Life

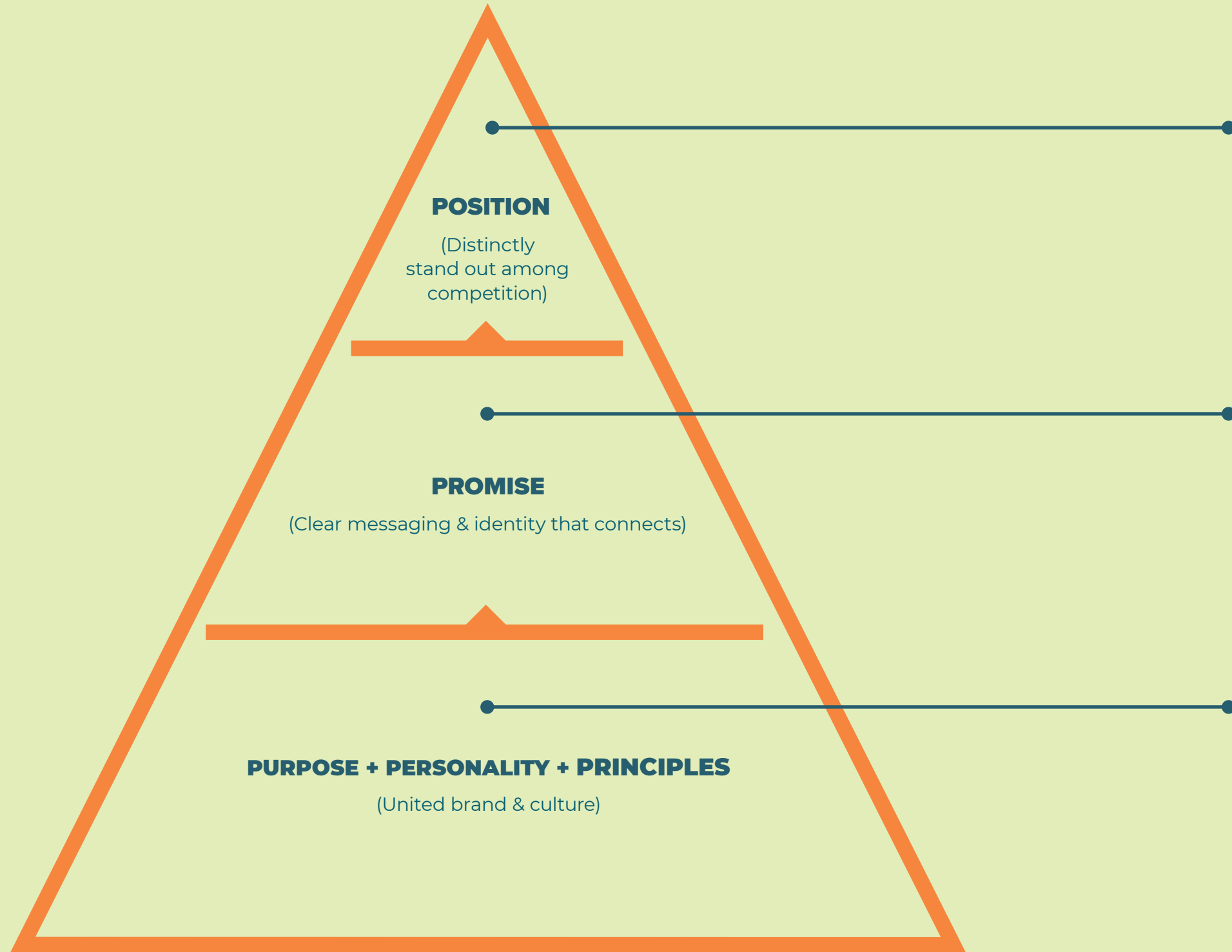
- Lift in brand sentiment against baseline.
- Increase RevPAR.
- Increase awareness of SLO as a sustainable destination.

- Further enhance the use of data to inform marketing programs.
- Maintain focus on social awareness & environmental responsibility.
- Maximize the evolution of the "Live the SLO Life" brand.
- Differentiate Visit San Luis Obispo while building off Visit SLO CAL's success.

STRATEGIC ACTION

BRAND STRATEGY

The Visit San Luis Obispo brand supports the TBID's initiatives to share the abundance of SLO, drive the lodging economy and serve as the voice of our stakeholders.



HOMEBASE AWAY FROM HOME

You don't just visit San Luis Obispo on vacation. You become part of our community and culture, an honorary local. The welcoming waves, neighborly nods and small-town California charm instantly make you feel comfortable and invite you to start living The SLO Life. As you immerse yourself in our city, you bond with it and start to feel a sense of belonging that blends with the beauty of releasing life's stresses, because it truly feels like a home away from home. And with the beaches, iconic sites and stunning beauty of the world-class Central Coast nearby, it's also an incredible homebase during your vacation.

A CHANCE TO LIVE THE SLO LIFE

The SLO Life is a deep breath that releases life's pressures. It's a change of pace. It's a fresh take. It's a warm embrace. It's a feeling of comfort and calm in a welcoming place filled with a special energy, connection, creativity and a wholehearted spirit. You can feel The SLO Life wrap its arms around you and pull you close. It's tangible. And you'll never want to let that feeling go, so you live The SLO Life to its fullest while you're here and take a piece of it with you when you head back home.

HEARTS IN BEDS

If putting "heads in beds" is our business purpose, putting "hearts in beds" is our brand purpose. We live to share all that San Luis Obispo stands for so we can emotionally connect with and welcome people who will fall in love with our community in such a way that they actually become part of it, caring for it like they live here and returning time and time again.



BRAND PERSONALITY

We know the SLO Life is a vibe. It's a way of life.
If San Luis Obispo was a person, here's how we'd describe our personality.

LAID-BACK

There's a calmness to San Luis Obispo. It doesn't walk, it strolls. It doesn't talk, it chats. It's not lazy or apathetic, but is chill and engaged. It's carefree but it still cares a lot.

ACTIVE

San Luis Obispo doesn't hustle and bustle like a big city, but it moves. It gets out in the fresh air and sweats. It crafts and creates.

YOUTHFUL ENERGY

Like any university town, there's a certain buzz of life and promise. San Luis Obispo has that same spirit and sparkle in its eyes.

NATURAL

There is an agricultural focus, environmental awareness and love for outdoor activities in San Luis Obispo.

FRESH

From the air to the locally grown food, the thinking and way of life, there's freshness to San Luis Obispo.

BRIGHT

The hills surrounding the city, the sunsets, the art, the buildings, the people and the smiles are all bright in San Luis Obispo.

WELCOMING

Whether you're a visitor or local, everyone is accepted and embraced in San Luis Obispo. The entire city is a welcome mat that says, "Come on in and stay a while."

FRIENDLY

Warm smiles, welcoming waves, neighborly nods. There's a race in San Luis Obispo to see who will say "Hi!" first. There are no strangers, only friends you haven't met yet.

CHARMING

It's hard to describe it in any other way. San Luis Obispo's historic buildings, quaint shops, rolling hills, winding trails and approachable people just make it charming as can be.

CURIOUS

As a university town filled with lifelong learners, creators, craftspeople and collaborators, San Luis Obispo is filled with curiosity about the world.

COMFORTABLE

San Luis Obispo has an easy way about it. It's comfortable in its own skin, knows who it is and accepts who others are. It feels safe and secure.

THOUGHTFUL

San Luis Obispo is a giving city filled with generosity and respect.

PROGRESSIVE

Not only is San Luis Obispo on the leading edge of social and societal issues, its thirst for positive change and innovation is unquenchable.

WHOLEHEARTED

Don't let its easygoing, laid-back ways fool you, this sincere and caring city is always 100% devoted to everything it does and says.

CONNECTED

There is a deep connection between the people, between the people and the place and between the people and the environment in San Luis Obispo.

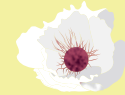
COMMUNITY

The sense of collaboration, support and encouragement between the people and businesses makes San Luis Obispo more than a place-it makes it a community.

BRAND MANTRA

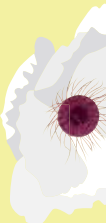


We're San Luis Obispo
But you can call us SLO.
This is small-town California with
charm for days.
But it's not just a place, it's a lifestyle.
Here, we live the SLO Life.
The SLO Life is hard to describe.
It's a vibe.
A spirit.
An unspoken way of life locals live by
And if you're here, you're a local.
And once you're here, you feel it wrapped
around you.
It's comfort and calm in a welcoming place.
It's bright smiles and colorful people.
A city without strangers, only people you
haven't met yet.
It's a change of pace.
We don't walk, we stroll.
We don't talk, we chat.
And the only time we hurry is to see who
can say "hi" first.



The SLO Life is carefree
But it definitely cares.
It's a whole lot of wholehearted.
While it's laidback, it always moves
Gets outside and gets going
Works and plays
Sweats and creates
There's always a fresh take.
A breath of fresh air, in the air.
A buzz of progress and promise.
It's waking up every day to have the best
day
and live your best life.
And help everyone else live theirs.
Once you experience it, you know it
You know there's no life like the SLO Life
And once you stay here, it stays with you
For life.

That's the SLO Life.



DESTINATION PARTNERS

In 2008, San Luis Obispo established a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), allowing the hotel industry to raise funds solely dedicated to tourism marketing and promotions to attract visitors to San Luis Obispo. The TBID is inclusive of all lodging properties in the city of San Luis Obispo including hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, hostels, inns and owner occupied homestays. The appointed TBID Board members in collaboration with City Staff and agency partners help to guide the marketing efforts for the public-facing destination brand Visit San Luis Obispo.

The SLO TBID partners with organizations at the state, regional, countywide and local level to leverage the reach and impact of our marketing programs for our tourism businesses in San Luis Obispo. These partnerships allow the SLO TBID to maximize investments and expand awareness in ways the organization would not be able to do alone.

VISIT CALIFORNIA

CENTRAL COAST TOURISM COUNCIL

VISIT SLO CAL

VISIT SAN LUIS OBISPO

SLO LODGING + TOURISM BUSINESSES



MARKET TRENDS & RESEARCH



TRAVEL TRENDS

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Sustainable travel continues to trend as travelers become more conscious of their environmental footprints. While they may not be willing to pay significantly more for green options, they seek destinations that prioritize sustainability. Additionally, travelers are looking for experiences that benefit the environment rather than harm it, such as bike tours, volunteering and tree planting activities.

YOUNGER GENERATIONS

A recent study by McKinsey found that 66% of travelers surveyed expressed greater interest to travel now than before the pandemic. Millennials and Gen Z are traveling more frequently and allocating a higher share of their income to travel compared with older generations. Additionally, data shows that younger travelers are taking more spontaneous trips, unlike boomers who plan trips with longer lead time.

EXPERIENCES OVER THINGS

Many travelers are seeking more unique, personalized experiences that go beyond traditional sightseeing. These may include cultural immersion, local cooking classes and hands-on activities that offer opportunities to make memories or live like the destination's locals.

AI TRAVEL PLANNING

Advances in generative AI and machine learning are changing the way people plan and experience travel. In addition to standalone, AI-powered itinerary planners, search engines are leveraging AI to enhance and personalize hotel bookings, airline tickets and overall trip planning.

LUXURY TRAVEL

The luxury hospitality sector is forecasted to grow by 6% in 2025. Reports show that 35% of luxury travel spending comes from travelers with net worths between \$100,000 and \$1 million, recently named "aspirational luxury travelers." This group of travelers may be willing to spend more on certain aspects of their trip, but not on every purchase.

COOLCATIONING

As temperatures continue to rise during warmer seasons, some travelers are choosing destinations with more moderate weather over traditionally hot beach locations or to escape the heat of their home locale. This trend, known as "coolcationing," is gaining traction as people seek comfortable climates for their vacations.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL TRAVEL

According to a survey by the NYU School of Professional Studies' Jonathan M. Tisch Center of Hospitality, over half of the parents surveyed plan to travel with both their children and grandparents. This trend highlights the growing popularity of multi-generational and group travel experiences.



BRAND RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Over the past few years, the TBID Board has made significant investments in a variety of brand research programs through self-directed and co-op commitments. These studies helped to increase the organization’s knowledge and ability to have specific data and valuable insights to help further guide our efforts to develop program actions. Over the next two years, we’ll look to leverage insights and data we’ve gathered to positively impact progress and performance towards our tourism marketing initiatives and strategies.

FALL 2021

Brand Health & Equity Research

- An analysis of the San Luis Obispo destination brand from a qualitative and quantitative perspective.
- These insights and takeaways continue to guide our marketing efforts.

WINTER 2021, SPRING 2022, FALL 2023, FALL 2025

Brand Tracker & Local Sentiment

- This Brand Tracker research has allowed us to set a baseline and trackable measure of sentiment towards San Luis Obispo as a branded destination, among locals and prospective visitors.
- We’ll continually use these baselines in order to measure progress in key areas.
- The Fall 2025 Brand and Local Sentiment Tracker will help inform the next marketing and business plan.

SPRING 2024

Brand & Emerging Market Research

- This custom research study leveraged audience insights and a partnership with Wiser Insights Group to better understand market influencers, perceptions and sentiments within new emerging markets as they pertain to San Luis Obispo. This study provided robust evidence for the effectiveness of current positioning strategies and identifies clear opportunities for expanding San Luis Obispo's appeal and market share.



BRAND RESEARCH FINDINGS & TAKEAWAYS

FALL 2023 BRAND TRACKER & LOCAL SENTIMENT FINDINGS:

- Overall perception of San Luis Obispo as an overnight destination observed an 8% increase in the Fall 2023 brand tracker compared to the baseline established in Winter 2021. However, the current growth is toward shorter stays and fewer nights.
- There was significant improvement in sentiment among San Luis Obispo locals, with a majority reporting that they like what tourism adds to the area.

SPRING 2024 BRAND & EMERGING MARKET RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS:

To inform the development of a comprehensive and effective marketing strategy within their formal response to the City of San Luis Obispo's RFP for Destination Marketing Services, Noble Studios conducted a custom research study in partnership with Wiser Insights Group. This research provided invaluable insight into the target audience, brand perception and market opportunities for San Luis Obispo. These findings will continue to be foundational in shaping this plan's strategic recommendations.

- **SLO awareness is highest in Las Vegas.** 48% are familiar or have visited the destination.
- **SLO has strong name recognition across identified emerging markets**—even if they have never visited and know nothing else about the destination. This signals an opportunity to build familiarity through targeted awareness campaigns.
- **Seattle ranks highest for sustainability-focused travelers.** As we begin to develop those audiences, it will make sense to invest there.
- **Travelers who have visited SLO (or the Central Coast in general) rank higher for HHI.** 47% earn \$100k or more, and 64% hold a 4-year college degree or postgraduate degree. This data supports our targeting goals, and is a positive sign for gaining market share.



BRAND OPPORTUNITIES

Overall, research indicates that the Visit San Luis Obispo brand has legs—legs we fully intend to stretch and take for a good run over the next two years. By focusing on key areas of opportunity identified through various brand research studies, we will continue to elevate the destination’s appeal while driving increased awareness and visitation.

Learning: Shift Perception to Overnight Destination

Opportunity: Evolve the MidWeekend campaign into an always-on strategy, emphasizing the “ideal homebase to explore the Central Coast” positioning to positively impact growth in 2+ night stays.

Learning: Own Key Destination Features

Opportunity: Based on brand sentiment studies, the highest motivators influencing San Luis Obispo visitation included the following destination features: Food & Beverage, A Happy, Feel Good Community and Ultra-Convenient Hiking & Biking/Outdoor. To help establish stronger brand awareness tied to San Luis Obispo’s unique destination offerings, we should continue creating dedicated content and messaging focused on these three ownable destination features.

Learning: Build Familiarity and Consideration in Emerging Markets

Opportunity: Based on brand sentiment studies, the highest motivators influencing San Luis Obispo visitation included the following destination features: Food & Beverage, A Happy, Feel Good Community and Ultra-Convenient Hiking & Biking/Outdoor. To help establish stronger brand awareness tied to San Luis Obispo’s unique destination offerings, we should continue creating dedicated content and messaging focused on these three ownable destination features.

Highest-Rated Motivating Attributes Influencing Visitation

- Great outdoor hiking and biking
- Charming and historic downtown, with unique shopping and local attractions
- Mediterranean climate
- 15 minutes from multiple beaches

Learning: Increase Visit San Luis Obispo Brand Awareness

Opportunity: San Luis Obispo is more than a destination—it’s a lifestyle. To strengthen our brand identity, we’ll look to personify the Visit San Luis Obispo brand with a SLO Life Coach who can share SLO Life Tips and teach people how to Live the SLO Life. The SLO Life Coach will provide a fresh way to get people’s attention, teach them about the SLO Life by hitting on our key destination attributes and advantages (as highlighted by our research and strategic goals) and make people smile.

Learning: Sustainability is a Key Differentiator

Opportunity: By emotionally and authentically sharing the story of Sustainable SLO and Keys for Trees, and by incorporating sustainability as an undercurrent through all that we do, we can continue to win travelers’ hearts and minds while differentiating the the destination from competitors and uniquely building awareness.

SUSTAINABILITY

San Luis Obispo is more than just a beautiful place to visit—it's a destination committed to preserving its natural beauty for generations to come. Our brand vision is to be a tourism organization that seamlessly balances business and sustainability, making San Luis Obispo a must-visit destination while actively contributing to the City's 2035 carbon neutrality goal.

Sustainability is deeply woven into the fabric of our community, and we believe it's a key differentiator to attract conscientious travelers. While our Sustainable SLO initiative is a cornerstone of this commitment, it's also just the beginning. We aim to embed sustainability into every aspect of our tourism efforts, from marketing and partnerships to visitor experiences.

Over the next two years, Visit San Luis Obispo will continue to support the City's sustainability initiatives through dedicated efforts, passionate partnerships and ongoing tourism programs with a focus on the following objectives:

- **Supporting in-market experiences that showcase San Luis Obispo's commitment to sustainability for visitors and locals alike.**
- **Inspiring more sustainability-minded travelers to visit San Luis Obispo.**
- **Elevating San Luis Obispo as a national leader in sustainable tourism.**
- **Educating visitors about how their trips can contribute to sustainability efforts.**
- **Pursuing partnerships with sustainable businesses to enhance and create awareness of Sustainable SLO.**
- **Increasing local stakeholder engagement in sustainable tourism initiatives.**
- **Assisting the City in reaching their carbon neutrality goal.**
- **Through the Keys for Trees program, supporting the 10Tall initiative (planting 10,000 trees by 2035).**





DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

As Visit San Luis Obispo, we share in the global mission for inclusion and change. Along with partner destination marketing organizations like Visit SLO CAL, we are committed to sharing this important message: San Luis Obispo is a destination that is welcoming and safe for all. As an ally, we listen and continuously reflect to fully understand demands for more direct action, so that all people can unequivocally feel welcomed here. It is in our organization's DNA to treat all persons equally, with dignity and respect, regardless of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or ability.

We are committed to sharing these values with everyone who travels to San Luis Obispo. You can be you, and we celebrate that. Our dedication to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is reflected in our ongoing efforts to:

- Develop DEI-focused content that resonates with diverse audiences, aligning with key themes within our Quarterly Marketing Plan.
- Authentically showcase the diversity of our community through imagery, storytelling and partnerships.
- Utilize paid, earned and owned media channels to reach a broader, more diverse audience.
- Offer key destination materials in Spanish to ensure inclusivity for visitors.
- Amplify the voices of diverse-owned businesses within our community.

By prioritizing DEI in our marketing and business strategies, we aim to create a destination where everyone feels valued, respected and celebrated.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Over the past few years, the TBID has leveraged insights and findings from brand sentiment research, audience research tools and co-op research investments to inform program efforts. Over the next two years, Visit San Luis Obispo will continue to seek out research insights through the following program initiatives:

- Exploring new co-op research opportunities with Visit SLO CAL and Visit California.
- Supporting efforts related to the Conference Center feasibility study.
- Developing the 2025-2030 TBID Strategic Plan.
- Deploying a Fall 2025 brand tracker and local sentiment study.



VISIT SAN LUIS OBISPO MARKETING PLAN



ACTIVATING ACROSS THE TRAVELER'S JOURNEY

To ensure we're reaching travelers (and to account for fluctuations in travel behavior) we'll utilize different marketing levers across all stages of their journey. This multi-pronged approach will drive an effective and efficient conversion strategy. We'll adapt Visit San Luis Obispo brand messages and areas of opportunity to tantalize potential travelers.

DREAMING	PLANNING	BOOKING	EXPERIENCING	SHARING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to create brand awareness & connection • Create shareable content that inspires travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring prospects to the website to encourage research and discovery about what makes the destination special and unique • Help prospective travelers plan with destination specific content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage travelers to visit key stakeholder pages to book & plan their trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize website to plan in-destination moments and activities • Find up-to-date travel information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the conversation going to amplify our message
<p>SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic Social • Paid Social • Display Ads • Email • PR • Influencers 	<p>SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website Experience • Organic Search • Paid Search • Organic Social • Paid Social • Display Ads • 3rd Party Ads • Email • Public Relations • Print 	<p>SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic Search • Paid Search • Paid Social • 3rd Party Ads • Website Experience • Email 	<p>SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website Experience • Email • Organic Social 	<p>SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organic Social

TARGET AUDIENCES

All kinds of people are curious about the SLO Life. Our job is finding them and bringing them here! To ensure we're reaching the most receptive audiences, we'll leverage deeper insights into target demographics and potential travelers' psychographics. This will help us tailor messaging and placements to the individuals most inclined to travel to San Luis Obispo.

Furthermore, we'll look to strategically expand into emerging markets through a blend of demographic and geographic targeting strategies. This data-driven approach ensures we reach new markets effectively and deepen connections with existing ones, driving results aligned with our goals and KPIs. In addition, we'll align efforts with Visit California and Visit SLO CAL to gain efficiency and effectiveness.

Website Visitor Data (July 2023 - June 2024) - 54% Female

- The largest age group is 25-34, followed by 35-44
- 93% of website traffic comes from the United States

TARGET AUDIENCES (DEMOGRAPHICS AND PSYCHOGRAPHICS)						
CORE AUDIENCES				NICHE AUDIENCES		
Outdoor	Relaxation & Wellness	Culinary	Families	Retargeting	65+	Sustainability
						
Potential travelers looking to be active and experience nature.	Potential travelers that seek rest and relaxation activities.	Potential travelers looking for unique culinary and beer/wine experiences.	Potential travelers likely to book family or multi-generational group trips.	Potential travelers that have showed intent by engaging with our ads/website. Along with Cal Poly parents.	Potential travelers in the 65+ age range that are likely to book a trip to the Central Coast.	Potential travelers that live more sustainable/green lives and consider environmental impact.
Ages 25-54. HHI \$110k+.	Ages 25-54. HHI \$110k+.	Ages 25-54. HHI \$110k+.	Ages 25-54. HHI \$110k+.	Ages 25-54. HHI \$110k+.	Ages 25-54. HHI \$110k+.	Ages 25-54. HHI \$110k+.

GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

PAID GEOS

We want continuous, year-round emphasis on the most profitable and visitor-attracting target markets. We assessed markets that have proven historically successful, organic website traffic and airline passengers by origin, as well as market demographics. In addition, we accounted for up-to-date travel sentiment for market consideration.

We want to also consider the efforts of Visit California and Visit SLO CAL.

Tier 1 will represent those markets that show the most opportunity for growth and awareness. Tier 2 will represent California Drive markets that are important for maintaining ongoing investment to drive continued visitation.

Tier 1 Markets: Seattle DMA Las Vegas DMA Dallas DMA

Tier 2 Markets: San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose DMA San Diego DMA Los Angeles DMA



Visit San Luis Obispo
Sponsored · 

Blue skies, green hills and plenty of reds and whites. We'll raise a glass to that.

SLO Life Tip

WINE IS A FOOD GROUP.



Visit San Luis Obispo
Live the SLO Life

Explore Wineries
Live the SLO Life

Learn More

Farm-to-Table Fare
Live the SLO Life

Plan My Visit
Live the SLO Life



Visit San Luis Obispo
Sponsored · 

SLO Life Tip: SLO Your Stroll. With so many hills and hikes to discover, you'll be out and about from sunrise to sunset.

SLO Life Tip



Explore Outdoor Activities
Live the SLO Life

Learn More

BRAND CAMPAIGN

Over the next two years, we'll strategically amplify the brand through a new campaign anchored in our tagline: "Live the SLO Life." These efforts will leverage work from the last two years, as well as impactful messaging and visuals that resonate with our identified audiences across all channels.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue sharing the SLO Life and putting hearts in beds through a compelling and creative brand campaign.
- Increase awareness among new audiences and emerging markets while deepening brand connection across existing audiences.
- Create emotional connections by integrating sustainability messaging and further differentiating the destination in a meaningful way.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- A new campaign creative direction focused around the "SLO Life Coach."
- Integration of the "SLO Life Coach" across all channels.
- Evolving brand visuals within the overarching brand guidelines.
- Further refinement of audience-specific landing pages.
- Audience segmentation testing.
- Exploration of content partnerships to further amplify brand awareness.
- Integration of sustainability messaging to attract like-minded visitors.

THE MIDWEEKEND CAMPAIGN

Why should weekends get all the fun? When you live the SLO Life, every day feels like a Saturday. We call it the MidWeekend.

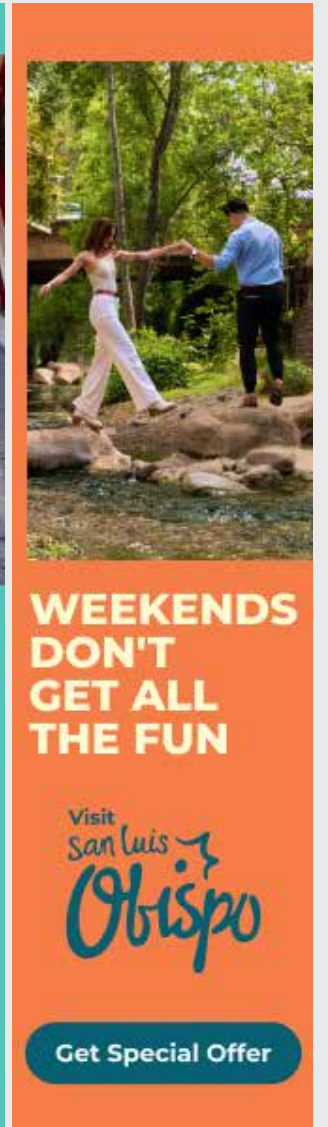
In the spring of 2022, the first MidWeekend promotional campaign was launched to help drive midweek stays in the City of San Luis Obispo. The MidWeekend promotional campaign has become a staple within our annual tourism program. Over the next two years, we'll focus on positioning San Luis Obispo as a convenient and inviting homebase for exploring the Central Coast, encouraging longer stays and increased visitation during traditionally slower periods.

OBJECTIVES

- Solidify San Luis Obispo's position as the ultimate midweek destination.
- Increase year-over-year growth in ratio of weekday to weekend occupancy and length of stay via promotional campaign refinement.
- Drive overnight stays Sunday through Thursday with promotions targeting travelers most likely to come "Live the SLO Life."
- Increase visitation during identified need periods.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- An evolution of the MidWeekend campaign: new messaging and visual elements in alignment with the new brand campaign.
- Exploration of key partnership activations to amplify promotional campaign awareness.
- Seeking out media opportunities to offer potential travelers more personally-relevant travel inspiration.
- Transition to an always-on approach for MidWeekend messaging.
- Messaging and strategic ties between midweek stays and sustainable travel experiences.



Live the SLO Life



SUSTAINABLE SLO

In recent years, Visit San Luis Obispo introduced Sustainable SLO as a dedicated sub-brand to help further showcase our commitment to sustainability. The sub-brand provides a consistent visual language that helps us speak to travelers and locals alike. This initiative, along with the impactful Keys for Trees program, have been instrumental in raising awareness of our sustainability efforts and driving positive change.

Building on this strong foundation, we aim to amplify Sustainable SLO's influence and create an even deeper emotional connection with our audience. By sharing inspiring stories, expanding our reach and forging strategic partnerships, we will solidify San Luis Obispo's position as a leader in sustainable tourism. We'll also strategically leverage this messaging to strengthen connections between travelers, our destination and our commitment to sustainability.

The following strategies will guide our efforts to elevate Sustainable SLO and make a lasting impact:.

VISUAL STORYTELLING

- Creating a short-form educational video that explains the Keys for Trees program, its benefits and how visitors contribute to sustainability.
- Exploring a long-form video project to tell the Keys for Trees story in a more emotional and engaging way, showcasing the positive impact the program has on people's lives, our community and the environment.
- Creating signs to identify trees planted in partnership with EcoSLO.

AUDIENCE EXPANSION

- Identifying new ways to reach to a wider audience of sustainability-minded travelers.

CONTENT INTEGRATION

- Developing engaging content aligned with key sustainability themes (e.g. Earth Day) and seamlessly integrating it into the Quarterly Marketing Plan for broader reach across all tourism marketing efforts.
- Seeking ways to further highlight Sustainable SLO and sustainability content across VisitSLO.com.

PARTNERSHIPS

- Tapping into Kind Traveler's sustainable network to reach their eco-conscious audience.
- Hosting a unique familiarization trip for media and influencers centered around a Keys for Trees tree-planting event in partnership with EcoSLO.
- Align with Visit SLO CAL's sustainability program, exploring potential synergies.
- Explore partnership opportunities with Highway 1 Discovery Route.

AMPLIFYING AWARENESS OF KEYS FOR TREES

- Seamlessly incorporate Keys for Trees into existing marketing materials and messaging to continue bolstering awareness.
- Tailor paid retargeting efforts to show potential travelers how their stays contribute to Keys for Trees.

INFLUENCER & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Influencer and community partnerships play a vital role in authentically showcasing the essence of San Luis Obispo. By collaborating with influential voices, we can reach targeted audiences and inspire travel to our destination.

OBJECTIVE

To maximize on these partnerships, Visit San Luis Obispo will adopt a more strategic and collaborative approach. The SLO Chamber, Uniquely Driven and Badger Branding will work together through public relations and content marketing to develop a comprehensive influencer strategy that aligns with our overall marketing goals.

- Develop a structured approach for identifying, vetting and engaging influencers.
- Prioritize partnerships with micro-influencers who resonate with specific target audiences.
- Explore partnerships based on mutual benefits and shared values, emphasizing authentic storytelling.
- Target influencers who align with key market segments: sustainability, LGBTQ+, solo travel, BIPOC travel, outdoor adventure, road trips and more.

By implementing these strategies, we aim to build strong relationships with influencers who can authentically represent San Luis Obispo and inspire travelers to experience our destination firsthand.





PAID MEDIA

OBJECTIVES

- Utilize an integrated paid media strategy to support and promote the brand, promotional and event campaigns, in alignment with research findings, to drive impact toward strategic objectives.
- Collaborate on media plans that contribute to continued growth in core markets and expansion into new emerging markets that show strong potential.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Build brand awareness and inspire dreaming behavior.
- Leverage custom research and audience research tools to further enhance brand equity within core and emerging markets through tailored messaging and media placements.
- Optimize and expand top-of-funnel marketing tactics in existing and emerging markets to grow positive brand awareness.
- Extend reach and brand awareness by integrating MidWeekend messaging into the ongoing paid media plan with a year-round approach campaign strategy.
- Explore ways to expand reach among sustainable travelers.
- Increase Engagement and Planning Behavior.
 - Encourage further engagement and consideration of San Luis Obispo among potential travelers by driving them to VisitSLO.com.
- Target audience with higher household income to encourage longer stays and higher spend in market.
- Encourage Conversion and Booking Behavior.
 - Engage in ongoing optimizations to campaign strategies in order to encourage high-intent audiences to engage with partner pages and drive booking behavior.



PAID MEDIA SPECIFICS

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Using historical performance, campaign learnings and brand sentiment research, our paid media plan is a strategic full funnel approach incorporating successful past tactics while introducing upper funnel tactics to build more awareness of the Visit San Luis Obispo brand. Our marketing tactics are employed in an always on approach, with specific digital and traditional partnership flights incorporated during periods of travel planning.

PAID SOCIAL

Paid social has been a significant source of engaged visitors to our website in the last year with increased traffic from Facebook and Instagram. These highly visual channels are the perfect place to build awareness and encourage visitation through static, video and carousel ads. In addition, traveler sentiment can start to be realized from social listening on ads.

DISPLAY

Using programmatic display platforms, such as Google Display Network, we can appeal to high-intent, interest-based audiences. By layering intent, we will be able to appeal to more of a mid-funnel audience that has shown interest in travel to San Luis Obispo rather than an unqualified audience. In addition, we are using multiple formats to address travelers in their planning including responsive display ads, discovery ads and interactive ads.

VIDEO

Additional video was added in previous fiscal years with both YouTube and Connected TV with successful full funnel results. This tactic is used to grow awareness of the destination and build relationships with travelers using visual storytelling aspect of video content.

DIRECT PLACEMENT

With travelers returning to the area, we have begun exploring options such as online travel agencies with more granular third-party targeting. This tactic has shown to address travelers in the research and booking phase in the travelers' journey.

PRINT

The media plan accounts for Certified Folder placements for our brochure in target geographic markets, as well as Visit California Road Trips Guide, Visit SLO CAL and San Luis Obispo Chamber Visitor Guides.

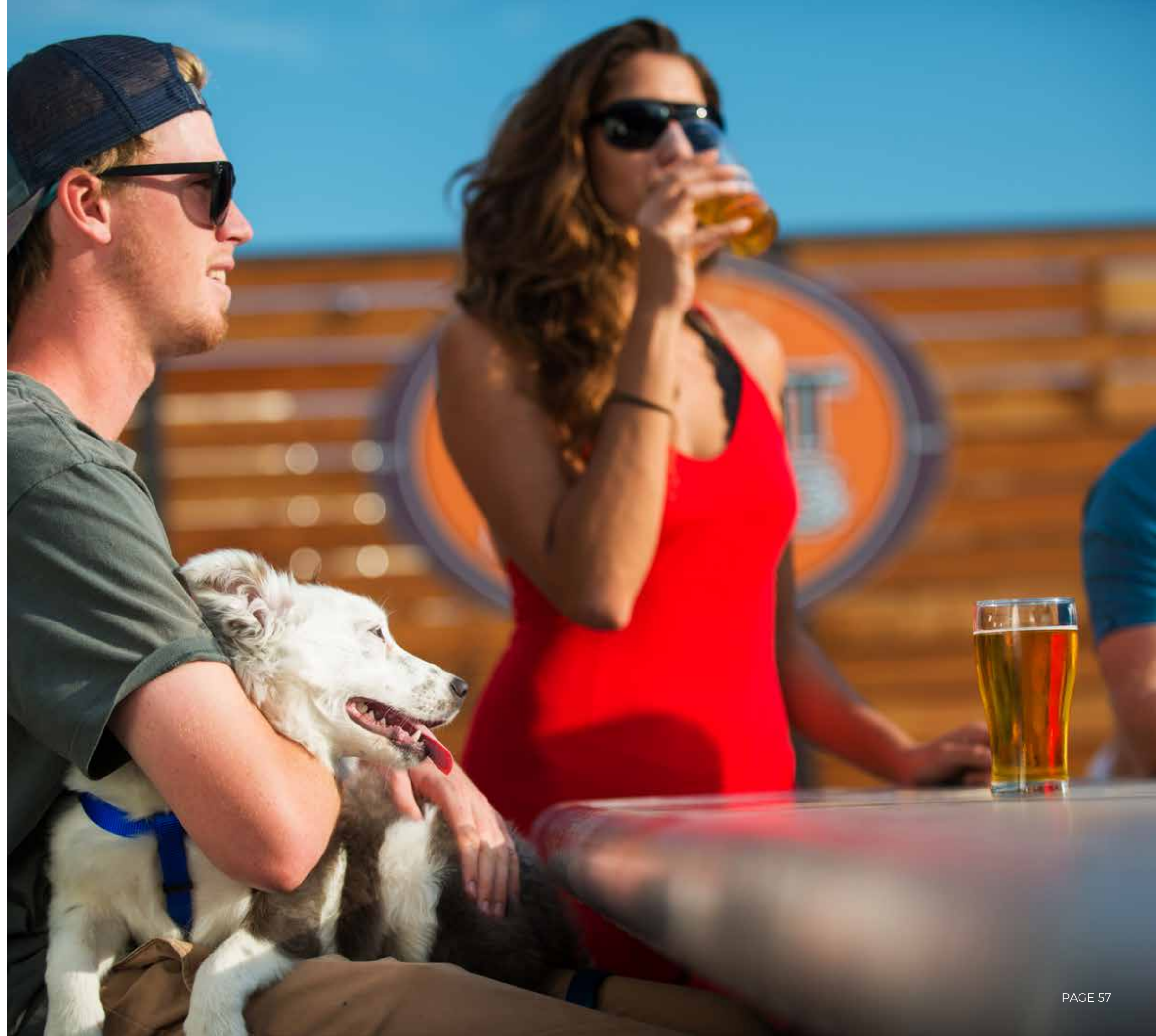
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Effective public relations is essential to building and maintaining a strong destination brand. By strategically leveraging local, regional and national media outlets, we can generate positive press coverage, drive visitation and solidify San Luis Obispo's reputation as a must-visit destination.

Through a collaborative effort with the SLO Chamber and our new partnership with Uniquely Driven, we'll execute a comprehensive PR strategy that highlights our destination's one-of-a-kind character. Uniquely Driven's expertise in multicultural marketing will play an important role in our efforts to reach new audiences and advance our DEI initiatives.

OBJECTIVES

- Secure impactful media coverage to promote San Luis Obispo as a premier travel destination to stay and play, driving visitation and delivering economic impact through longer stay duration.
- Build consumer awareness through earned media, serving as the voice of SLO by amplifying the destination brand and reaching new and existing audiences locally, regionally and nationally.
- Communicate the unique attributes, vitality and character of San Luis Obispo and the community through interest-based storytelling.





PUBLIC RELATIONS

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Onboarding and immersion trip for new PR Agency, Uniquely Driven.
- Enhance PR efforts to expand awareness among target drive, fly and national audiences, including:

Travel and Interest-Based Audiences

- Outdoor Adventure
- Family-Friendly
- Foodies/Culinary
- Wine/Beer/Cocktails
- Health and Wellness
- Eco/Sustainability
- Business and Meetings/Bleisure
- Solo Travel
- Dog-Friendly
- Events (social, meetings, educational, group travel, etc.)

LGBTQ+ Community

Generation-Based Audiences

- Millennials
- Gen Z
- Baby Boomers
- Multigenerational group travel

Multicultural Audiences

- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian American
- African American

- Influencer strategy targeting micro-influencers (e.g., sustainability, LGBTQ+, solo travel, BIPOC travel, outdoor adventure, road trips, family).
- Continued always-on PR efforts:
 - All media request fulfillment.
 - Expert press visit planning and execution.
 - Custom itineraries and hosting for travel writers on individual and FAM trips.
- Pitch ideas leveraging current marketing efforts and themes and cultural moments.
- Co-op partnerships with Visit SLO CAL and Visit California to maximize earned media exposure.
- Leveraged partnerships, such as Kind Traveler's journalist and influencer network, to host a sustainability-focused group trip.



BUSINESS, MEETINGS & TRADE TRAVEL

While San Luis Obispo has huge potential for business and meeting travel, our current focus is building a strong foundation in partnership with Visit SLO CAL. As they embark on the first phase of their county-wide sales strategy, we'll align our efforts to support their initiatives and maximize our collective impact.

OBJECTIVE

Enhance San Luis Obispo County's visibility as a premier business and meeting destination, driving increased consideration among travel and meeting planners.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Leverage existing relationships with Visit SLO CAL to maximize resources and amplify our reach.
- Explore co-op opportunities to attend industry events and showcase the destination.
- Proactively pitch media outlets and attend industry events to generate positive press coverage.
- Identify opportunities to position San Luis Obispo as an attractive destination for business travelers seeking leisure experiences.
- Enhance Visit San Luis Obispo's LinkedIn profile to connect with industry professionals and share destination updates.

By working closely with Visit SLO CAL and implementing these strategies, we'll lay the groundwork for future business and meeting travel development while maximizing our current resources.

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT & MAINTENANCE

VisitSLO.com is the digital heart of our marketing efforts, acting as an online hub for travelers seeking information and inspiration. Following the redesigned website's successful launch in July 2023, our focus over the next two years will be on maximizing its effectiveness. This will involve ongoing content curation and maintenance, plus continuous user experience optimization, to connect visitors with everything they need to plan their trips and Live the SLO Life.

OBJECTIVES

- Ensure site is healthy and stable at a foundational level and optimized for performance.
- Enhance and elevate the user experience and performance of VisitSLO.com.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Creation of new web blocks and styles to accommodate new types of content, like embedded California Now stories, Instagram reels and more.
- Exploration of ways to further personalize audience-specific and promotion-specific landing pages for visitors.
- Optimization of landing page user experience to improve conversions to hotel stakeholders.
- Technical optimizations for search engines and user experience.
- Ongoing enhancements to website functionality and design.
- Maintain site health and security while ensuring usability across all devices and regular software and plugin updates.
- Quarterly Media Page updates to ensure inquiring journalists and press have access to the latest content.
- General website content updates.





SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Building a strong SEO strategy is critical for maximizing San Luis Obispo's online presence and attracting high-intent travelers. Search engines, increasingly powered by AI, are constantly evolving, prioritizing user intent and comprehensive content. By implementing a holistic SEO approach, we can not only strengthen VisitSLO.com's technical foundation but also enhance its authority with search engines, ensuring our destination remains discoverable by the right audience at the right time.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue building website authority to improve VisitSLO.com's position and findability on search pages.
- Drive high-intent visitors to VisitSLO.com through a focused owned content strategy and ongoing improvements to the website visitor experience.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Content Development and Optimization**
 - Content audits and keyword research to identify opportunities to optimize existing content, or to create new content to maximize visibility and reach.
 - Development of new SEO-optimized, relevant and compelling content that resonates with our target audience and has potential to rank for important keywords.
 - Ongoing optimizations towards Google's Experience, Expertise, Trustworthiness and Authoritative ranking factors.
- **Technical Optimization**
 - Addressing technical issues to ensure search engines can easily crawl, index and understand the website.
 - Strategic implementation of structured data markup like Schema to help VisitSLO.com appear in more rich, visual results in Google search.
- **Additional Tactics**
 - Integration of paid and organic search efforts to maximize real estate within search engine results pages.
 - Ongoing monitoring of top ranking keywords and SEO results for key competitors.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

The more people know about San Luis Obispo, the more they love the destination and the longer they stay. Compelling storytelling is essential to showcasing San Luis Obispo's unique charm while helping people get to know SLO more intimately, ultimately inspiring them to Live the SLO Life. By creating engaging and informative content across multiple platforms, the TBID aims to deepen audience connections and drive increased visitation. Over the next two years, our strategy will focus on producing versatile content that can be adapted for various channels, maximizing our reach and impact.

OBJECTIVE

- Create a content creation and distribution ecosystem that keeps subscribers and SLO fans engaged through fresh content, regular email marketing and constant inspiration to Live the SLO Life.

WHAT TO EXPECT

EMAIL MARKETING

Continued focus on growing our email database, including:

- Creation of more gated content opportunities on the website.
- Exploration of new partnerships, giveaways and paid media tactics to incentivize newsletter signups.

Deepening connections with subscribers:

- Leveraging audience and performance insights to deploy e-newsletters at the right time to the right audiences.
- Continuing to engage segmented audiences with content relevant to their unique interests.
- Keeping those familiar with the destination engaged and excited.
- Helping travelers Live the SLO Life by sharing inspiring content, events and deals.

VISITSLO.COM BLOG

- Writing inspiring travel through itineraries, theme-based content and event-driven content.
- Weaving the DEI and Sustainability thread into every content piece possible.
- Embedding Visit California Travel Network stories when applicable.





ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tool for fostering engagement, building brand loyalty and reaching new audiences. By delivering compelling and authentic content, we can cultivate a strong digital community of both locals and visitors who feel connected to San Luis Obispo. Through strategic platform management and audience insights, we'll optimize our social presence to support visitation and strengthen our destination brand.

OBJECTIVE

Connect, engage and grow our audience by providing timely and relevant information.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

- Target out-of-area audiences in our drive and fly markets via comprehensive social media strategy.
- Define and execute Influencer Strategy in collaboration with the TBID's public relations partners.
- Maintain and manage presences on all platforms, daily posts and social feedback.
- Create and implement video-heavy evergreen and campaign-driven content, leveraging new and existing styles.
- Work toward making Sustainable SLO Instagrammable, including itineraries and trails.
- Increased focus on building Visit San Luis Obispo's presence on Tiktok.
- Work in unison with partners to remain consistent across blog posts and messaging.
- Stay in-the-know about what's trending and successful on social media and execute accordingly.
- Lodging-specific roundups/features emphasizing property amenities.
- Integration of SLO Life Coach.

STRATEGIC INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Success is never achieved alone. To maximize our impact, the TBID Board & Staff supports and nurtures strategic partnerships with destinations, agencies, industry and community partners. Through knowledge sharing and open lines of communication, we will actively collaborate with partner organizations driving impact toward shared goals.

PARTNERSHIPS

• Central Coast Tourism Council (CCTC) • California Hotel & Lodging Association (CHLA) • Cal Poly Athletics & Office of Student Affairs • Cal Travel • Downtown SLO • Gala Pride & Diversity Center • Kind Traveler • SLO Chamber • SLO Coast Wine Collective • Visit California • Visit SLO CAL

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Tapping into Kind Traveler's sustainable network through focused initiatives.
- Working with Gala Pride & Diversity Center to create more inclusive content, tools and trainings.
- Exploring opportunities to grow a greater presence at SLO Days, Parent Weekend and CAL Poly Open House.
- Identifying how Downtown SLO can integrate into industry relations and partnership opportunities.
- Re-engaging SLO Coast Wine Collective for co-op opportunities.
- Maximizing awareness of SLO through inclusion in digital cross-promotion opportunities.
- Expanding destination awareness through B2B sales by leveraging trade show opportunities with industry partners.





EVENTS

OBJECTIVE

To leverage events by positioning Visit San Luis Obispo as the exclusive destination partner while sharing the unique experiences and offerings of the city thus attracting more visitation and longer length of stays.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

In FY 23-24, Visit San Luis Obispo continuously supported the implementation of the SLO CAL Events and Festivals Strategy. In FY 24-25, we will continue to support signature SLO events and grow destination specific goals through participation in Visit SLO CAL's Events & Festival Strategy Working Group.



CONSTITUENT RELATIONS

OBJECTIVE

Engage TBID constituents in the work of Visit San Luis Obispo, amplifying the connection and increasing awareness of growth opportunities.

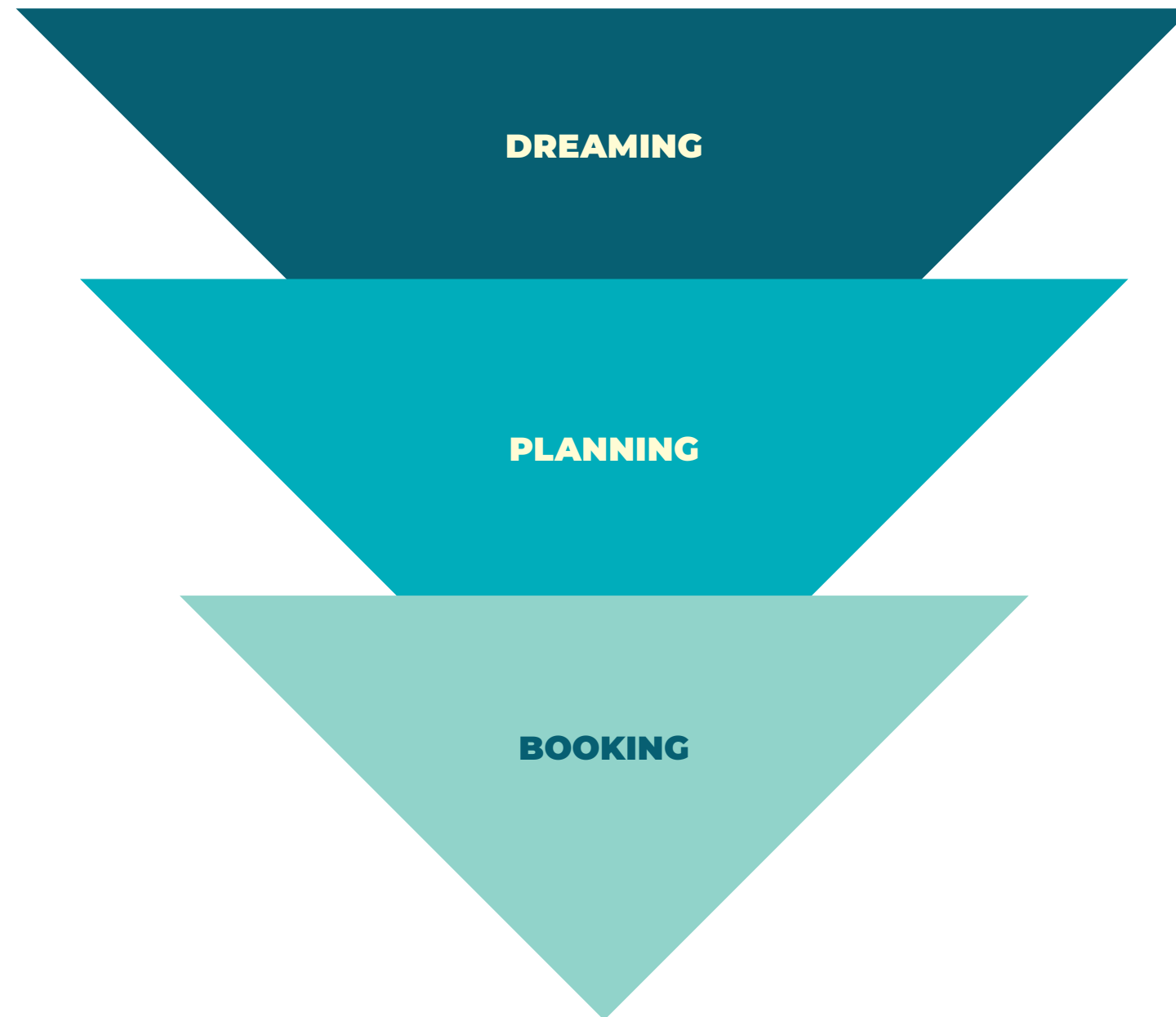
WHAT TO EXPECT

Visit San Luis Obispo will continue to identify opportunities to further educate and involve constituents in the tourism program through the following initiatives:

- Continue biannual Partner Receptions, fostering connection and collaboration.
- Identify opportunities for training/education with strategic and industry partners.
- Develop constituent resources to enhance and promote participation.
- Ongoing constituent outreach including the development of newsletters and other pertinent communication.

MEASUREMENT STRATEGY

From a quantitative perspective, we plan to measure success through the various stages of the travelers' journey. In the dreaming phase, we will assess interaction with the website by channel and from target geographies, impressions and reach from our paid, owned and earned initiatives. Looking at the planning phase, engagement metrics like website sessions, time on site and pages per session will be analyzed as well as social engagements and newsletter open rate. Lastly, in the booking phase, we can refer to partner referrals and TOT for success. Throughout the travelers' journey, efficiency metrics such as Cost per Thousand Impressions (CPM), Cost per Click (CPC), Qualitative Score, Click Through Rate (CTR) and Cost per Acquisition (CPA) will all be reported to show opportunities for optimization. From a qualitative perspective, we plan to collaborate with partners and stakeholders to assess impact, maintain up-to-date traveler sentiment research and leverage real-time traveler data.



PRIMARY METRICS

- Impressions
- Reach/Frequency
- Video Views
- Brand Sentiment

PRIMARY METRICS

- Website Sessions
- Content Engagement
- Ad Engagement
- Newsletter Signups

PRIMARY METRICS

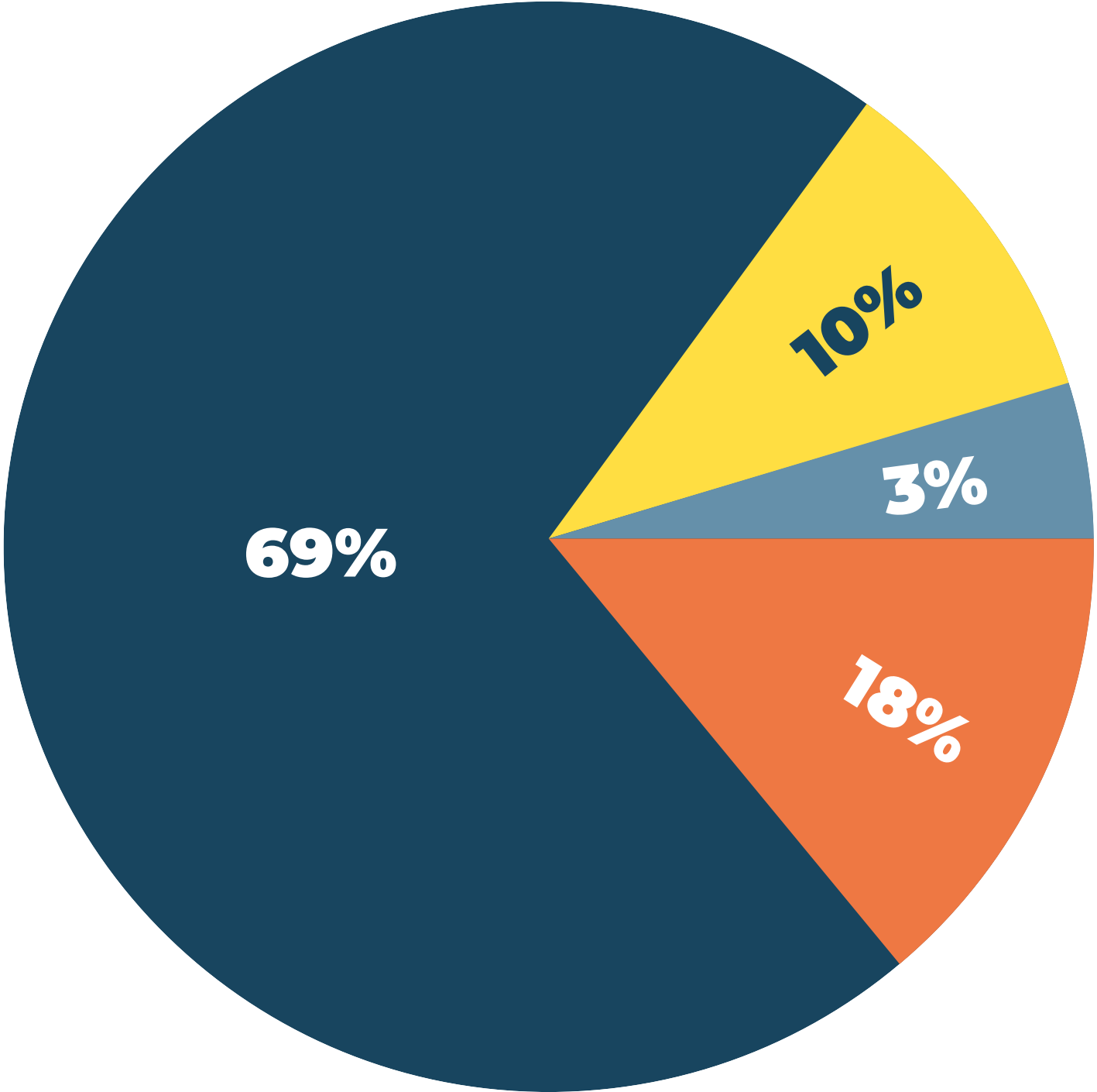
- Partner Referrals
 - Type of Conversion
 - By Channel
 - By Value
- Bookings
- Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT)

BUDGET

For fiscal year 2024-2025, the TBID's revenue is projected to be \$2,167,900. The budget expenditure allocations are broken down between four primary categories with over half of the annual budget being allocated to marketing and contract services. The TBID continues to allocate essential funds to operations which includes staffing and tourism program expenses, as well as strategic partnerships and key tourism organizations.

2024-2026 TBID BUDGET EXPENDITURE ALLOCATIONS

- MARKETING & CONTRACT SERVICES
- OPERATIONS/STAFFING
- PARTNERSHIPS, EVENTS & TRADESHOWS
- TOURISM ORGANIZATIONS & RESEARCH



Live the
SLO
Life

