



Travel Lane County
FY2010 Marketing Plan

Executive Strategic Summary

Integrated Marketing Plan Brief FY 2010

Vision

Travel Lane County's technology platform, its website and customer relationship management system, is the core to and from which all other marketing efforts relate. All marketing materials incorporate the Eugene, Cascades & Coast brand and look and feel like part of a cohesive branding effort.

Ideal Customer

The Eugene, Cascades & Coast ideal customer is made up of five target audiences: consumers, meeting & sport planners, travel professionals, local stakeholders and media. The brand enhances the reputation of the region among these key audiences. The most ideal targets are termed "active engagers." They are discerning, socially aware, environmentally conscious and experienced travelers who want experiences where they are not just spectators but can be engaged from easy to highly skilled activities.

Remarkable Difference

Eugene, Cascades & Coast's leading attributes are:

- **Soft Adventure:** The diverse landscape provides countless opportunities for active and engaging outdoor encounters for all ages and abilities.
- **Nature:** from the rugged wilderness of the Cascades to abundant waterways, pastoral valley settings and the stately beauty of the Oregon Coast. This is a region with lodgings surrounded by nature and where you are never far from places of great beauty in which you can immerse yourself.
- **Easy Access:** Traversed by I-5, Highways 58, 101 and 126, the outdoor adventures of the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region is easy to get to and around, learn about, find, buy, do, equip, and to engage with experienced guides and outfitters.

These attributes should be articulated in brochures, advertising, websites, sales materials, social media, etc. where appropriate. Some may be emphasized more than others depending upon the target audience and the objectives that are being addressed. They will also influence the choice of supporting words, emotional benefits and images.

This year the website, TravelLaneCounty.org, will go through a major redesign so it will enhance the brand. We are looking to bring more action to the website through images and video. The site will also be integrated with the social media elements we are developing.

Lead Generation in the Online Environment

The marketing materials that are produced should be of such quality that they generate increased interest in the destination and the organization. There are several ways in which results can be measured to see if the new marketing materials and brand are generating more interest given declining "leads" through traditional methods. Opportunities for consumers to "opt in" and trust us with their email address for future communication is a core goal. Return on investment measures will focus on "actions" and "interactions."

Specifically, we will track e-newsletter statistics for consumers, stakeholders, meeting and sport planners. We will track website usage statics and conversions through Google Analytics. Tracking direct response campaigns. Then utilizing the data to make changes to those specific mediums as appropriate, thus, increasing further responses. We will be tracking our web traffic differently this year.

Lead Conversion Plan

There are signals of intent to travel which are key performance indicators for website traffic. We will be monitoring these more closely and use surveys or standardized measures as available to estimate conversions:

1. Ordering a visitor guide
2. Signing up for e-newsletter
3. Visiting a deals or special packages page
4. Look at a listing page
5. Reaching a defined stage in a online booking
6. Downloading a file
7. Clicking through to a hotel
8. Seeking more information on us

Convention & Sports Marketing Plan

We will continue our focus on marketing Lane County as a destination for conventions, meetings, sports events, reunions and weddings. While our core strategies and tactics from prior years will remain unchanged, market forces, new technology and upcoming groups present new challenges and opportunities.

Market Assessment

The convention market has shifted to a buyers' market due to the challenging economy. Discussions with our hospitality partners indicate that while a few hotels have strong 2010 business on the books, most are showing gaps in confirmed business. Short-term (within the next six months) bookings have been the norm for the past 8-9 months. We anticipate a surge in 2010 confirmations once the economy demonstrates a turn toward the positive and we are maintaining communications with pending prospects.

The sports market continues to be strong, especially in the area of youth sports. The importance of sports events to the local economy has emphasized the need for a sports commission. The implementation of this entity will be a top priority in FY10.

Providing exemplary convention and sports service assistance provides Lane County with a competitive edge for rebooking group business. We will maintain two experienced and dedicated services manager positions along with three full time sales positions reporting to the VP of Convention & Sports Marketing.

Changes to Marketing Plan

Return on investment is critical to marketing program decisions. Therefore, we have eliminated several trade shows due to decreasing return on investment. The ASAE (American Society of Association Executives) is a national trade show that will be eliminated. In addition, several statewide trade shows will also be eliminated: Oregon Society of Government Meeting Planners, Oregon Society of Association Managers, and the Meeting Professionals International Cascadia Conference (joint Oregon-Washington chapters). These statewide shows have experienced dwindling planner attendance over the past several years, and our sales managers have been able to establish relationships with planner members through phone calls, emails and attendance at monthly luncheon programs. Membership will be maintained but the trade shows will be dropped. Our lead (215, 60% confirmed), confirmed room night (65,000) and new booking (40%) goals will remain the same as in FY09

Familiarization tours and event hosting will be increased in FY10. By bringing planners to Lane County, we know we will be able to positively increase decisions to hold events in our area.

Major Projects and Initiatives

- Online group housing reservation system. The first group to utilize the system, Pacific Gospel Music Association's Fall Festival, went live online in early April. This system will be used extensively for upcoming track & field meets and the FIMBA Pan American Maxi-Basketball Championship. The reservation system allows ease of use for delegates/athletes and offers the planner an accurate and efficient means of determining guest room pickup numbers.
- FIMBA Pan American Maxi-Basketball Championship. This international event, held July 2-10, 2010, will bring in 1,200-1,500 participants. As the event host, Travel Lane County is leading the local organizing committee to ensure all required components are met. This event also offers an opportunity to generate revenue, which would be used for bidding future sports events.
- American Public Transportation Association Transit Board Conference in July 2010. Led by LTD and board member Greg Evans, Travel Lane County staff will be highly involved in the implementation of this conference, bringing some 300 delegates to the Hilton Eugene & Conference Center. APTA plans over 20 conferences per year, so creating a successful conference has the potential to bring future business.
- Sports commission. We will complete establishment of an imbedded sports commission., using Travel Lane County's corporate structure as the business umbrella.
- eNewsletters and Social media. A program to distribute eNewsletters to targeted segments (i.e., sports planners, religious planners, association planners, etc.) will begin in May 2009 and continue through FY10. These eNewsletters will highlight new developments in the county and provide an opportunity to members to market specials to conventions and sports events. We will also explore possibilities of increasing convention and sports business through social media outlets, including Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Tourism & Visitor Services Marketing Plan Brief FY 2010

Our Core Strategy is to build relationships with soft adventure-driven travelers, travel trade and media; inspire them to visit or write about the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region; and guide them to natural adventures they will never forget.

Ideal Customer

Active travelers who prefer doing and being active to just being a spectator. They are interested in personal growth and learning experiences and are looking for ways to enjoy authentic personal experiences that are enriching and that they can talk about when they return home. They engage with us through subscribing to our consumer e-newsletter, following us on Twitter or as a fan on Facebook. They visit often and encourage their friends/family to visit also.

Remarkable Difference

For those who love to be active and immerse themselves in the great outdoors, the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region has Oregon's greatest variety of soft adventures in the most easy to reach and yet uncrowded locations. We arouse their senses through an array of relaxing, enriching and action-packed pursuits where they can escape and immerse themselves in some of Oregon's most beautiful natural settings. Here they can take time to reconnect with themselves and with those who are important to them.

Tactics & Measurements

- **Key Experience Development:** Bring the brand of the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region to life by ensuring that the easily accessible adventure-driven experiences are featured prominently in consumer materials, in media outreach and in travel trade outreach.
Measurement: Soft, moderate and high adventure activities are identified within each key experience and for each sub-region. These are all listed on TravelLaneCounty.org and the top key experiences are programmed into the marketing calendar as special features throughout the year.
- **Complementary Experience Development:** Dining, cultural experiences, lodging and other activities important to a vacation experience are featured through visitor services for visitors once they are here in the Eugene, Cascades & Coast or are in the final planning stages of their visit.
Measurement: We will measure the number of times we provide appropriate materials to visitors.
- **Finding the Adventure-Driven Traveler:** Starting with our current customer database, we will identify adventure driven travelers. Through advertising, consumer shows, keyword buys, banner ads and editorial we have opportunities to inspire more adventure driven travelers towards our destination.
Measurement: Adventure-driven customers are invited to subscribe to a new Adventure eNewsletter (goal: 35% click through rate). Consumer phone calls, requests for information and web contacts are measured to show results (goal: 10% increase over FY09).
- **Relationship Building:** Email marketing, trade shows, Twitter, FaceBook, Flickr, Fall Foliage blog, a "Kids Adventure Club" and personal interactions in our visitor center and van allow us opportunities to build relationships with consumers, travel trade and media.
Measurement: Consumer interactions and social media followers are measured with a goal of 1,000 FaceBook fans and 2,500 Twitter followers. Staff assists with 84 articles that are on-message for Real Adventures. Real Close. Travel Trade itineraries featuring adventure activities are tracked (goal: 17 hotel bookings). Editorial exposure featuring key experiences is measured.

Gateway Adventure Center (GAC)

Vision

Increase overnight visits to the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region through establishment of an easy-to-access visitor/adventure center adjacent to the Gateway Interchange that provides an introduction to the destination that is so effective it compels a stopover.

Ideal Customer

A leisure traveler along the i-5 corridor that has no set itinerary and is open to stopping over and spontaneous experience and retail purchases. Visitors here for a destination stay that are looking for itinerary assistance, and are open to purchased experiences and extending their stay.

Remarkable Difference

The GAC will offer an Interactive Experiential Environment unlike any other visitor center in Oregon.

The GAC will demonstrate superior customer service and anticipation of needs through retail, experience/visitor product, and programming available on site.

The GAC will be staffed with knowledgeable, enthusiastic, sales-oriented adventure specialists that will be so effective as to compel extended stays and spontaneous stop-overs.

Tactics & Measurements

Visits – Generate 31,500 visits to the GAC in year one (12 mos). Implement a variety of marketing methods, including I-5 signage and (possibly) billboards, extensive social media messaging, leverage of all supply/distribution chain visitor communication methods, include call to action language throughout our marketing materials and any others we can leverage such as regional, state, and private guidebooks. We will count all visits and differentiate between locals and visitors.

Bookings-We are looking to book business. Book stays in commercial accommodations of all types, book experiences with outdoor guides and outfitters, ticket arts performances, reserve seats in restaurants, book tours. We want to conduct transactions on site, or get as close to it as we can, to extend stays and spread dollars to local businesses. We will count and track all transactions by type and develop additional transaction types as they become apparent to us.

Retail-We are looking to get local information and products into customers' hands. We will support our primary mission of increasing overnight stays by sell maps and guidebooks on the Eugene, Cascades and Coast region. We will sell products made here or that promote our destination. We will offer packaged wine from wineries in our destination, beverages, food, promotional products and clothing art, anything that builds a connection between the consumer and our destination. We will generate net proceeds and support the operations of the GAC with those proceeds. We will track and report all sales by category, adjusting retail strategies to maximize revenue and customer service. Our target (net sales) is \$20,000 in FY2010 (six months of operation), \$50,000 in FY2011.

Member Leverage – board postings, brochures, digital advertising- We want the GAC to be an effective sales mechanism for local businesses. We want interactions that will generate revenues for business and revenues to support our operating costs. We will offer brochure display and distribution on site, display and digital advertising opportunities, and access to “day of” postings for tours and activities, which we will book on site if the operator would like. We will establish demand levels in year one, keeping “pay to play” fees relatively low, and make adjustments for year two. We will track all member engagements and resulting interactions. Our revenue target is \$10,000 in FY2010, \$15,000 in FY2011.

Resident Visits-We want to engage residents in exploring and experiencing the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region. We will program talks, demonstrations, tastings, anything and everything related to experiencing the destination and invite residents in to learn more about where they live. We'll book them on as many excursions as we can and/or supply them with itineraries and information and get them out and active within the destination. While on site, we will engage them in all the ways we engage visitors.

Convention & Event Referrals-We want referrals for group business, and we will actively solicit referrals from visitors and residents alike while they are in the GAC. Requests for referrals for conference, convention, and sports business will become a common question in our interactions with customers in the GAC. We will track and report all referrals and their resulting status as they move through our system.

Membership Marketing Plan Brief FY 2010

Maintaining current levels of membership is difficult during this time of economic challenges. Our focus is on bringing in members that can benefit from the marketing opportunities Travel Lane County offers, identified under **Ideal Customer**. We will focus on our great value of the unique offerings to businesses that join our organization. We are thinking of prospects and members in new ways to help us ensure that they are maximizing opportunities. In addition, there are several additional revenues that we will focus on.

Ideal Customer

Businesses that can benefit from visitors, meeting and sport planners, and media exposure as it relates to the tourism industry. Quality businesses that feel that they can increase their revenues through visitor spending and are easily accessible to visitors. Businesses that believe the tourism industry is an important component to the economic well being of the community and are willing to spend advertising dollars to gain exposure to visitors and planners.

Remarkable Difference

Travel Lane County provides businesses with opportunities to directly market to visitors, tour operators, meeting and sport planners, and media as it relates to the tourism industry. We advertise in a variety of regional/national publications to drive customers to our website for information on the Eugene, Cascades & Coast. Through our website and publications we show visitors the authentic, accessible adventures that they can experience when visiting Eugene, Cascades & Coast.

Product/Service Innovation

- **Suspects:** Initial introduction to Travel Lane County's member offerings and products that we sell. Further qualifying to see if there is a fit for their business and our organization.
- **Prospects:** Established relationship between the business and Travel Lane County staff. Prospect invited to attend a Market Your Business Orientation and to receive a quarterly prospect e-newsletter.
- **Members:** Pay minimum annual dues for their business type, generally starting at \$230. Receive listings on website, appropriate publications and monthly member updates. They have the opportunity to participate in member programs but don't generally leverage them.
- **Premium Members:** Receive listings on website, appropriate publications and monthly member updates. They actively engage in Travel Lane County programs such as advertising, member events, provide product or services for increased exposure. Take advantage of the variety of marketing opportunities presented to them, including nominal fees for additional category listings.
- **Champions:** Receive the above benefits and are actively engaged in the organization. In addition they support various programs through sponsorship dollars.

Additional Revenues

- **Event Sponsorship:** Seek out sponsors for Tourism Forums, Market Your Business and Visitor Industry Celebration.
- **Rest Area Display Panels:** Target organizations that want to promote their event to potential customers traveling on I-5 at two rest areas (Gettings Creek and Oak Grove).
- **Corporate Sponsorships:** We will look for overall corporate sponsors, and sponsors for the adventure center.
- **Visitor Map Listing Sales:** Increase number of participants on our visitor map to improve map value for visitors and increase revenues to exceed production costs.
- **Label Program Sales:** Continue to provide this program to members that wish to purchase contact mailing information to market their products and services.
- **E-newsletter Sponsors:** New offer to members that want to promote their products to other members and possibly consumers.

Membership Goal is to work toward re-establishing 600 members.

Community Relations Marketing Plan Highlights

Vision

Generate awareness, understanding and local involvement in Lane County's tourism industry and Travel Lane County.

Ideal Customer

Local media, area businesses, community organizations, public officials and local residents.

Remarkable Difference

Travel Lane County is a credible resource for industry statistics and information and a nexus of information that is relevant to all target audiences.

Strategies and Measurements

Connecting with residents to encourage local travel and capitalize on the friends and family market, as well as the "stay-vacation" concept.

Implement a new *Kids Adventure Club* to target local families with school-age children (designed to apply to visiting families as well). Family/kids receive a monthly e-newsletter featuring: kid/family-friendly events calendar; news about special offers, contests, giveaways; and features promoting seasonal family fun in the Eugene, Cascades & Coast region. **Measure** actions (click throughs from e-newsletter, downloads of coupons, requests for publications, postings of photos or blog entries, etc.) affiliated with this program on our website with a target of 1,500 actions annually.

Continue online photo contest and local advertising campaigns. **Measures** photo submissions.

Communicate with public officials.

Communicate key industry issues and increase opportunities for presentations, face-to-face meetings and other direct personal communications. Continue producing and sending Travel Lane County Tourism Industry News update, press releases, reports and special invitations. Acknowledge, recognize and give special thanks to public officials. **Measure** the opening of e-news, presentations, information requests.

Reach out to key community and business groups.

Target local groups for conventions/events leads. Create incentive program that encourages locals to host a state, regional or national meeting in Lane County. **Measure** lead generation.

Continue making presentations to groups about Travel Lane County, sending press releases and news updates for use in business/community newsletters and publications. Attend meetings and serve on committees while communicating consistent messaging. **Measure** presentations and meetings.

Work with and assist local media

Optimize (Search Engine Optimization) Tourism Industry News Updates and press releases. Develop printable, optimized electronic media kit. Personally contact *new* key reporters to the market to introduce them to Travel Lane County resources. Send event and convention calendars. Provide media with editorial assistance, interviews and relevant member referrals for media stories. **Measure** the opening of e-newsletters and press releases, published stories, information requests and interviews.

Utilize social media strategies, such as Twitter to communicate items of interest with local media. **Measure** followers and fans and follow up actions.

Implement member surveys.

Use our survey tool take the pulse of members, collect input on upcoming travel seasons and get member feedback following key events and travel seasons. Send results out to members and media. **Measure** survey responses, track uses of resulting information.

Convention & Sport Media Outreach

Send out industry relevant e-newsletter to convention and sports meeting publications to generate free editorial content about new convention, meeting and sports-related news, developments, awards, conventions and sporting events in Lane County, etc.