



2011-14 Strategic Plan

Travel Salem
181 High Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-581-4325
www.TravelSalem.com

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Salem Art Fair & Festival (Ron Cooper Photography)



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Over the past several years, Travel Salem made huge strides in product development, the launch of a successful membership program, and broad engagement and support from the region's leaders and business community. Excitement continues to build as we move into the next phase with a clear emphasis on bold innovation, leveraged partnerships and integrated communications strategies.

Our focus continues to be on the visitor in the 2011-14 Strategic Plan – what tools and resources they need, and how we can best assist them. We push the envelope to reinvent our products and services to stay relevant with the consumer. How and why they make their purchasing decisions drives our marketing strategies and product development initiatives. Research combined with innovation and a sheer passion about all things tourism drives our work. Travel Salem continues its focus on delivering first-class customer service and resources such as our cutting-edge Visitor Information Network and award-winning Travel Café that served more than 105,000 visitors last year, our online and social media resources that reach visitors on demand (when and where they want information), and our public relations efforts that share our region's unique stories with an international audience. This strategic plan seeks to reinforce these services, and bring tangible value to the meeting planner, event organizer and to the overall visitor experience.

Travel Salem's successes are a reflection of the strength and spirit of our community, and are shared equally with our partners, who make what we do possible. The mid-Willamette Valley region is bountiful in terms of authentic and original assets that give Oregon its character, but also in terms of the amazing people behind the scenes who work tirelessly on behalf of creating a truly memorable experience for the visitor. The strategic plan puts partnerships front and center in our collaborative efforts to make the Salem area a premier and preferred destination.

The marketing and communications strategies reflected in this plan are geared to drive economic impact and job creation for the communities we serve. Utilizing everything from fresh interpretations of existing programs to ground-breaking initiatives, Travel Salem works to attract both leisure visitors and convention/event delegates to the region, which results in enhanced quality of life for the residents that live, work and play here.

Travel Salem will continue to support local businesses and advocate on behalf of the visitor experience, and will seek new funding mechanisms that ensure a healthy and vibrant tourism economy.

Thank you for your ongoing support of your regional destination marketing organization, proudly serving Marion and Polk counties.

Warmest regards,

Angie Morris

TRAVEL SALEM'S DNA

Mission

Travel Salem markets and promotes the greater Salem area as a premier, year-round destination for conventions, events and leisure travelers. Serve as the official destination marketing organization and a vital tourism economic development generator for the region.

Vision

Through bold innovation and integrated partnerships, Travel Salem's programs and services heighten the visitor experience and drive economic impact, which supports local businesses, job creation and an enhanced quality of life.

Values

We are committed to service, integrity and excellence that provide tangible results and strengthen the businesses and communities we serve.



Wednesday Farmers' Market (Ron Cooper Photography)



Objectives & Strategic Initiatives

COMMUNITY RELATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Bird's Eye View

The objectives and strategic initiatives outlined in this plan are broad in nature, taking a high-level approach to opportunities and challenges facing the organization and the industry.

The strategic initiatives are general in scope to allow the organization to be nimble and flexible with its tactical approach. The Strategic Plan will be executed through annual business plans that utilize specific tactics to achieve results.

Create partnerships & resources to influence community dialogue and decision-making that impacts tourism, quality of life and the Salem area's viability as a travel destination. Support local businesses by providing opportunities and solutions to open doors, address challenges and harness best practices. Create broader understanding of tourism as an economic development generator with the community at large.

- a) Develop a Travel Salem Community Action Committee to serve as industry advocates on boards, task forces and committees
- b) Redefine who sits at the region's tourism "table," creating broad engagement to help shape industry dialogue and outcomes
- c) Develop the "tourism canon" of key defining principles that are embraced by stakeholders and used to help establish a unified industry platform; incorporate into communication strategies
- d) Develop a data dashboard that tells the tourism story in accessible and meaningful terms; incorporate into communication strategies
- e) Engage with key stakeholders, and work synergistically with other industries (e.g. commodities, manufacturing, healthcare, education), on issues that impact the Salem area's appeal as a premier destination
- f) Enhance partnerships to leverage influence and resources



Objectives & Strategic Initiatives

CAPACITY BUILDING



Travel Salem's foundation, Cultivating Communities, is a year-round, charitable, education-based organization dedicated to the travel and hospitality industry in the mid-Willamette Valley.

Cultivating Communities mission is to provide education and information about the visitor industry; provide educational scholarships to enhance tourism workforce development; make grants to nonprofits whose work bolsters the tourism industry; and create education outreach opportunities that strengthen partnerships between nonprofit organizations and the visitor industry.

Develop long-term stable funding, strategic staffing levels, and the technology and tools necessary for organizational growth.

- a) Maximize available resources and seek new funding streams through partnerships, innovation and product development initiatives
- b) Create a supportive environment for growth & development of Cultivating Communities, Travel Salem's nonprofit foundation
- c) Increase Membership participation to represent the diverse business community in Marion & Polk counties
- d) Build an effective "team" to support scope of services using a strategic staffing methodology
- e) Implement technology and streamline processes to enhance program efficiency
- f) Seek ways to promote sustainable practices to positively impact the bottom line



Objectives & Strategic Initiatives

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Kaleidoscope of Opportunity

Market research shows the primary draws for visitors to the Salem area are culinary, recreation and cultural/heritage experiences.

While these three pillars are central to Travel Salem's marketing efforts, there are many other assets and experiences that create a healthy and vibrant tourism ecosystem for the Salem-bound visitor (e.g. sports events, shopping, gaming, family fun).

Travel Salem leverages the three primary drivers and packages up other assets to create a broad range of experiences and options for the visitor.

This kaleidoscope of opportunity makes the mid-Willamette Valley a compelling and distinctive destination.

Position the region as a desirable travel destination for convention & leisure travelers utilizing vertically integrated marketing & communication strategies. Leverage the regional travel experience by connecting visitors to the unique people, products, and stories that will lengthen the visitor's stay. Drive Travel Salem's key performance measurements.

- a) Develop and incorporate a comprehensive brand promise in all communication strategies; evangelize the Salem area brand "Absolutely Oregon"
- b) Emphasize Travel Salem's central pillars (culinary, recreation and cultural/heritage) to position the Salem area as a premier leisure & convention destination
- c) Leverage key partnerships and strategies to explore points of intersection that expand Travel Salem's reach and effectiveness (e.g. Travel Oregon, Willamette Valley Visitors Association, Travel Portland, SEDCOR, Chambers of Commerce, and groups representing Travel Salem's central pillars)
- d) Maintain & enhance a strong and dynamic Travel Café & Visitor Information Network focusing on personal and customized assistance; provide platform for innovative connections between local businesses and the consumer
- e) Utilize a centralized and coordinated content management approach, to maximize content across all marketing & communication platforms
- f) Leverage online strategies to promote the Salem area as a preferred destination
- g) Execute a vigorous public relations and communications strategy to increase exposure, build credibility with target markets and the community, and drive consumers to action
- h) Update the Salem area visitor profile to leverage travel trends, preferences and brand opportunities
- i) Leverage "green" messaging to enhance the region's marketability and overall appeal with consumers
- j) Provide recruitment & relocation support to area businesses
- k) Develop standardized visitor services that are employed throughout the region (e.g. Q Cares certification)



Objectives & Strategic Initiatives

CONVENTIONS & EVENTS

Contribute to the overall economic health of the region by booking conventions and events through direct sales efforts, cooperative promotional efforts and innovative marketing strategies. Drive Travel Salem's key performance measurements.

- a) Focus on high-yield citywide business opportunities, and develop reciprocal partnerships to support & drive regional benefit
- b) Utilize a wide variety of sports venues and opportunities to capture events and tournaments
- c) Utilize online strategies to engage meeting planners
- d) Research creative niches (e.g. chess tournaments, robotics, tattoo) as well as primary feeder markets
- e) Leverage cooperative marketing opportunities (e.g. trade shows, familiarization tours, advertising, sales missions)
- f) Lead efforts to develop reciprocal regional partnerships to keep business in the mid-Willamette Valley
- g) Market & promote sustainable practices of the region's hospitality industry as a way to capture group business interested in green destinations
- h) Continue to engage with the Salem Area Lodging Association, Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association and other industry partners
- i) Develop and pitch pre-packaged itineraries to groups



Objectives & Strategic Initiatives

SERVICES

Provide the information, resources and support necessary to enhance the travel experience of the convention & group delegate and bolster repeat visitation.

- a) Secure first-time and repeat business utilizing proactive communication and outreach strategies and by providing superior customer service
- b) Continue to develop partnerships with local businesses and marketing entities in an effort to recruit new opportunities, enhance client experiences and streamline efforts
- c) Utilize industry partners as “champions” to increase awareness of services offered, and recruitment of new opportunities
- d) Develop a “service” brand: a strategic and thoughtful approach to high-level customer service which will enhance recruitment & retention of group business

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENTS

Travel Salem's programs and services are designed to deliver tangible results for the communities and businesses we serve. There are several key performance indicators that can provide a sense of the overall economic health of the Salem area tourism industry. When evaluating progress, these indicators must be considered alongside other measurements such as financial resources and membership support. Add into the mix environmental influences and other economic trends to gain better insight into the health of the industry. Specific tourism-based activities also provide context for evaluating the big picture, and can reveal trends and key market factors that influence how the organization makes adjustments in program initiatives. Travel Salem is not the sole contributor to or driver of the region's tourism economic outcomes. However, the organization takes a leadership role in tourism promotion to help shape industry results.

Key Performance Measurements:

Estimated Economic Impact 2009 = \$452 million (a decrease of 9%)

Measures results in travel spending, employment and tax revenues. Additional detail is provided to break out how those travel dollars are spent in terms of accommodations, arts & entertainment, recreation, retail, transportation and more.

Transient Occupancy Tax 2009 = \$2.14 million (a decrease of 11.5%)

Room tax revenues collected from Salem lodging facilities. This data is reported quarterly and is acquired from the City of Salem.

Leverage FY 2009-10 = \$1.51 million (an increase of 11%)

Leverage is comprised of donated products and services that are secured to increase organizational capacity (e.g. volunteers, media, in-kind, WVVA). This data is reported quarterly and is provided by Travel Salem.



Zenith Vineyard (Ron Cooper Photography)

2010-11 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Aurora Antique Shopping (Kelly James Photography)