2019-20 Santa Maria Valley Marketing Plan

Introduction

This plan provides the roadmap to meeting Santa Maria Valley’s marketing objectives through an authentic brand, relevant content and targeted placement. As we head into our fourth year of implementing an integrated marketing communications plan, our goal is to deepen our interactions with our target audience, creating resonating content to encourage active engagement. Our objectives remain the same, our goals have evolved, and our strategy has been refined throughout the following plan.

Marketing Objectives

- Increase overall awareness of Santa Maria Valley, including its assets, events and local flavor in an effort to attract visitors.
- Increase the number of targeted, unique website visitors to the website, so that we may best influence their decision to visit the area. This will be monitored by tracking visits to hotel pages and outbound clicks to hotel websites.
- Continue our strategic and cohesive marketing and communications effort for Santa Maria Valley.
- Maintain our creative messaging with the ideal home base and #SantaMariaStyle concepts.
- Expand and broaden our audience based on digital analytics on our site traffic.

Key Performance Indicators

To be determined. A goals section will be created in the final marketing plan to support KPIs when the media strategy has been confirmed.

Brand Foundation

Santa Maria Valley provides visitors a true change of pace in an unpretentious atmosphere while discovering an approachable, unexpected wine experience, traditional Santa Maria Style barbecue and open space to explore rolling hillsides and coastal access points; all at a price that gives you more.

BRAND PILLARS
- Genuine Heritage
- Unexpected Wine Experience
- Santa Maria Style Barbecue Culture
- Real Value
- The Ideal Home Base
- Naturally Unconstrained
BRAND PROMISE
We treat visitors like family.
This promise is bold, simple and attainable. It can be as natural as a warm greeting or asking how someone’s visit is going. This promise embodies the culture of Santa Maria Valley and the authentic hospitality its businesses and residents are known for.

Target Audience

[Note: This section will be further informed by the digital research project which will be completed at the end of May 2019. KPS3 will bring a research progress report to the May advisory committee meeting based on any performance trends in the test midway through.]

With such an even age distribution amongst California travelers, we have become age agnostic in our targeting. We must communicate across three generations and therefore put a greater emphasis on targeting people by their interests and beliefs and not rely solely on demographics.

INTERESTS AND BELIEFS
The investments we make in media and content creation will be informed by the interests and beliefs of our target visitor. Those who love Santa Maria Valley value the following aspects of tourism.

• Outdoors
• Family
• Culinary
• Events/Entertainment
• Value
• History and heritage

MOTIVATORS
• Being outside
• A bottle of wine and a juicy steak
• Finding a place to be yourself
• Friendly, “real” people
• Value for time and money spent

WHAT’S NOT APPEALING
• Dress codes
• Reservations
• Lines
• Facades
• Prestige or status

GEOGRAPHIC
Geographically, we’re targeting cities within a 3-hour drive from Santa Maria Valley that have a relatively straight shot to Santa Maria Valley with few other destination options along the way.

DEMOGRAPHICS (FOR SPECIFIC MEDIA BUYS)
• Age: 25-54
• $75,000-$100,000 Annual household income
• Skew female if/when considering specific programming
Santa Maria Valley’s Core Customer

Laid Back Recreational Weekender

Casual
I’m most comfortable in jeans and in shoes I can wear all day. I’m not fussy about most things. I like going at my own pace.

Good Taste
I know and appreciate delicious, classic, fresh food that’s thoughtfully prepared but don’t think I should have to spend a fortune on it. Family-style eating with my favorite people at the coziest hole-in-the-wall is the best but I also love stumbling across a cool taco truck. As long as the food is good, I wouldn’t think twice if there are paper napkins at a restaurant. I wouldn’t exactly call myself a foodie. I just like to eat.

Low-Impact Outdoorsy
I like to go for a nice bike ride or a walk. I like to roll the windows down. The fresh air always feels good and puts me in a good mood. I can easily get distracted by something in nature, especially a beautiful sunset. Hiking is fun as long as we’re not gone all day. I’ve always wanted to drive a dune buggy. I like sitting on a patio and enjoying a glass of wine or a cold beer.

Authentic
I enjoy real people. I appreciate real conversation, a genuine smile and people who are comfortable being themselves. I don’t like the feeling that I am just another number. I don’t want a cookie-cutter or cliché experience. I want to do things that enrich my life and make me happy.

Youthful
I want to keep feeling young, even as I age. It’s important to me that we continue to have fun with new and different experiences, creating memories I’ll cherish for years.

Outgoing
I make friends wherever I go. I like to send my friends to places I’ve been and loved, and will keep up with people I meet along the way on social media.

Economical
I am frugal and like to make our money work harder. I look for offers and discounts that stretch our dollars and our time together. I would rather spend less on a room and venture out to do more. Besides, all you do in the room is sleep, anyway.

Loyal
I will come back to have the same amazing experience and love it when people remember me. I like the feeling of being treated like I’m family - that’s the real VIP treatment.
Media Strategy

MEDIA PLACEMENT

In the 2019-20 fiscal year, we will continue a highly targeted media plan, increasing our budget in this area with the goal of soliciting a specific action (hotel conversions).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broadly Targeted Media (Awareness among a large audience)</th>
<th>Targeted Media (Awareness among a smaller, defined audience)</th>
<th>Highly Targeted Media (Soliciting action among a small audience with demonstrated interest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Print</td>
<td>Paid Search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOH</td>
<td>Display Ads</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV / OTT / CTV</td>
<td>Digital Video</td>
<td>Remarketing (Display, Video, Social, Search)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Video</td>
<td>Digital Radio</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Radio / Digital Radio</td>
<td>Native Display Ads</td>
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<tr>
<td>Podcast Advertising</td>
<td>Native Sponsored Content</td>
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<tr>
<td>Display Ads</td>
<td>eNewsletter Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Display Ads</td>
<td>Social Media</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>19-20</th>
<th>18-19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highly Targeted Media</strong> (Increased from 35% to 56% of budget)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search</td>
<td>$72,000.00</td>
<td>$30,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>$40,000.00</td>
<td>$40,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remarketing</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
<td>$6,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Targeted Media</strong> (Decreased from 43% to 38% of budget)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native &amp; Video</td>
<td>$74,945.00</td>
<td>$84,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yosemite Journal</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broadly Targeted Media</strong> (Decreased from 12% to 5% of budget)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Audiences</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrangler Network</td>
<td>$2,500.00</td>
<td>$2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Budget</td>
<td>$8,555.00</td>
<td>$14,555.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unassigned</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$22,945.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$220,000.00</strong></td>
<td><strong>$220,000.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Includes all media strategy, planning, negotiation and media promotion development. Also includes coordination with media representatives and trafficking of final media files.

Media Management also includes Digital Media Management in monitoring campaigns on Facebook and Google and Search Engine Marketing efforts.
Digital & Web Strategy

WEB DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT
The following are major milestones the team will plan to accomplish in the first six months of the fiscal year. After six months, we will re-evaluate and prioritize the web development needs and projects according to our key performance indicators.

1. **Homepage design**
   - Update design with look, feel and messaging of new campaign
   - Heat map: See where people are going on the homepage
   - A/B Testing (4 month process) - “Conversion Rate Optimization” (CRO). Examples:
     - Happening Here vs. Events
     - Stay with us vs. Book your room
     - What’s new vs. Blog vs. News

2. **Personalization / Promotions Integration**
   - Wine country pages >> nearby Santa Maria Valley hotels display ads
   - Explore platforms like Google Optimize and VWO (website visitors are served specific, personalized messages depending on their location)

3. **New wine content features**
   - Winery Profiles
   - Revisiting the SMV map to integrate more tools (e.g. search for wine varietal type)
   - $500 Wine Weekend Landing Page

**Additional web projects to evaluate in January 2020:**
- Revisit blog structure and categorization
  - Because we use wine -- all the wineries would be under wine - would make SEO rank better.
  - Internal linking strategy to help boost page authority
- Adding AMP to the site and having an AMP template – Mobile users
- Create a new Weather Page
- Explore a “Plover Cam” feature
- Revisit the online cookbook

Search Engine Optimization

In 2019-20, all marketing and PR efforts will position Santa Maria Valley as the ideal homebase for affordable California Wine Trips for less than $500. From an SEO perspective, ranking organically for queries relating to these trips is the long game. Wine tasting and wine trip keywords are moderately high volume and very competitive. We will need to focus on this one effort consistently this year and in future years in order to get the Santa Maria Valley website into a strong place organically.

In our first year with this positioning, the support of other marketing channels in this effort -- PR, social, and paid search in particular -- will be critical to our SEO success.
Over the years, we’ve made gains for branded wine terms (e.g., Santa Maria wine tasting) and have a good hold on them currently but we have not devoted the resources to making a concentrated effort on building our presence for non-branded wine searches. **This will be our SEO priority for 2019-2020.**

1. **Conduct keyword research and identify our keyword priorities and goals.**
   Our research will be divided into two primary buckets:
   - Long-tail, non-competitive, low-volume keywords that we can win quickly
   - High-volume, competitive keywords that we go after over time
     - This is what we do currently and would continue to go after with our paid campaigns
     - Some of these keywords may be related to competitors (e.g., Santa Barbara or Temecula)

2. **Based on our keyword research, we’ll then develop our SEO plan for the year.**
   The plan will outline and prioritize our on-page, technical, and content tasks for the year.

Our SEO research and plan will inform the year’s PR, social, paid search, and content efforts as well. In 2019-2020 especially, we will be relying heavily on the creation of new website content to support the SEO strategy.

**Strategic Communications Plan**

**The triple threat of communications: PR | Content | Social Media**

Santa Maria Valley’s communications strategy is designed to successfully build relationships that establish rapport and communicate strategically with our audiences. When public relations, content and social media complement one another, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Our approach to developing plans and campaigns, optimizing to reach, touching and engaging people all supports the key goal of stellar storytelling.

Our approach will also consistently tie into our digital-first mindset, understanding that opportunity can be found through data. We will continue to act on that to connect brand-centric messaging with quantifiable insights, driving bottom line results.

**Public Relations**

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Obtain $775K in publicity value and 36 regional/national articles in the fiscal year, while increasing awareness of Santa Maria Valley.
2. Continue to cultivate partnerships and mutually beneficial relationships with allied organization, VisitCA, to increase share of voice on VisitCA’s website, social media and print.
3. Help increase website hotel page conversions, generated in part by referral and social media traffic from our positive media coverage.
Forrester’s Opportunity Snapshot: A Custom Study Commissioned By Cision, October 2018 reported the following:

Which is the following ways does your organization use earned media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To build and/or sustain awareness</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To create competitive advantages</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To build and/or sustain customer loyalty</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To promote company values</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base: 151 marketing experts or higher in North America who are knowledgeable about communications/public relations efforts.

STRATEGIES

Continue to form and leverage relationships with regional and national print, online, broadcast media, and influencers/bloggers for earned media exposure to increase awareness of the Santa Maria Valley and their main brand pillars, with a continued focus on wine, and with supporting messaging around the pillars of food/barbecue, outdoor and culture.

- Invite targeted media, with a focus on larger audienceship and the main brand pillar of wine, to participate in Familiarization (FAM) visits.
- Continue to work with VisitCA’s content marketing and public relations teams to amplify content on their website, social media and print platforms to benefit their content strategy.
- Maintain efforts to attend VisitCA hosted media missions and receptions in key markets such as New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco to make new contacts, foster relationships with media and other CA DMOs (who also attend).

TACTICAL HIGHLIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

- Develop pitch angles and pitch emails.
- Pitch brand pillars relevant to the reporter’s beat based on research on what they cover. For instance, Thrillist would receive a pitch on Santa Maria Style barbecue and Wine Enthusiast would receive a pitch on the Wine Trolley.
- Monitor media opportunities.
- Continue to use our FAM evaluation form and process of evaluation to select the right reporters, writers, influencers and bloggers who are a fit for us. Our budget parameters for the year support roughly 10-12 FAMs.
- Continue to collaborate with industry partners (CCTC, VisitCA) and other DMOs (Santa Barbara, SLO County, Highway 1 Discovery, Pismo Beach) on central Coast FAMs as appropriate.
- Respond to relevant HARO (Help A Reporter Out) inquiries.
- Continue to work in tandem on native content efforts, ensuring these writers have a great experience, write and generate quality content and use our links, handles and hashtags as necessary.
- Marshall coordination of PR, social media and original content on SantaMariaValley.com as a synchronized effort to deliver a consistent message, and educate the audience about our region.
- Identify events appropriate for a specific reporter to cover.
- Use Cision to monitor and track media.
- Work with internal search and analytics team to align with the main brand focus, understand referral traffic to the website, how content is performing and optimizing for greater results.
- Generate monthly reports to highlight results and impact of efforts to the advisory committee.

**TARGET MEDIA**
Our approach is to primarily target the leisure travel audience, continuously reinforcing our unique experiences -- Santa-Maria Style barbecue, wine country and authentic hospitality at a value. We will prioritize based off of our Top list, type and size of audience and reach.

- Regional Travel Print and Online
- National Travel Print and Online
- Southern / Central California Media Outlets with some emphasis on Los Angeles/Santa Clarita/Bakersfield
- Northern California Media Outlets
- Travel, Food and Wine Bloggers
- Niche Publications

**TOP MEDIA HIT LIST**
1. USA Today*
2. Westways/Via/AAA*
3. The Los Angeles Times*
4. The Food Network
5. PBS/NPR (national public TV or radio)
6. CNN Travel
7. Thrillist
8. Food & Wine*
9. Travel + Leisure*
10. Conde Nast Traveler

Platform 10-½
Also at our top are bloggers and influencers that have the right audiences, reach and quality of content.

11. Sunset
12. The New York Times Travel
13. The Travel Channel*
14. Epicurious
15. AFAR
16. Roads + Kingdoms
17. Men's Journal
18. National Geographic Travel
19. BuzzFeed (or the like: Refinery29, Elite Daily)
20. Good Day LA
21. Bon Appetit
22. INSIDER*
23. HuffPost*
24. 7x7*
25. Eater LA*
26. Wine Enthusiast*
27. Wine Spectator
Forbes*  
The Daily Meal*  
Travelocity*  
Martha Stewart Living  
GQ  
People  
VICE

*Pubs we have received coverage from in the past or the story is in progress

Content

CONTENT CURATION APPROACH
Connecting with our visitors in a deeper way, on a personal level is how we will build long-term engagement. We will build engagement through storytelling - sharing why Santa Maria Valley is the perfect home base where you can eat, drink, and do more for less. Our hashtag, #SantaMariaStyle, allows us to showcase stories of our own and source those of others who are experiencing all the valley has to offer.

New for the 2019-20 year is the combining of social media, newsletter, web and blog content all under one budget to streamline the writing process, ensure cohesive messaging and consistency in updates across all channels.

The integrated content calendar has been built with anticipated events and seasonality. The first two months will be focused on updating the winemaker profiles. September will be focused on California Wine Month and promoting the Swirl Machine. Content for the subsequent months will be determined and driven by SEO.

The Swirl Machine has a specific Marketing Plan dedicated to its promotion leading up to and through its launch in September; California Wine Month.

INTEGRATED CONTENT CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>September</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Event Updates / Promotion  
Obon Festival  
Bent Axels, Windmill Century Bike Ride  
Winemaker Profiles  
Refresh Wine Blog Posts | Event Updates / Promotion  
North/South Run  
Winemaker Profiles  
Refresh Wine Blog Posts | Event Updates / Promotion  
Cruizin’ for Life Car Show and Cruise  
Los Alamos Old Days (end of Summer), Santa Barbara Vintners Celebration of Harvest  
California Wine Month Blog Post  
Swirl Machine Blog Posts |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Updates / Promotion</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Santa Maria Beer Fest&lt;br&gt;Dia de Los Muertos&lt;br&gt;Central Coast Airfest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Pork &amp; Pinot at Cambria Winery&lt;br&gt;Turkey Trot 5K&lt;br&gt;Taste of Nipomo Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center Trees of the Season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Foxen Canyon Christmas on the Trail&lt;br&gt;SMV/Guadalupe Christmas Bird Count&lt;br&gt;Christmas Orcutt Parade, Parade of Lights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>California Restaurant Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Start of Strawberry Season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Amgen Tour/Cycling&lt;br&gt;Santa Maria Brews &amp; Cues&lt;br&gt;Santa Barbara County Vintners Festival&lt;br&gt;Strawberry Festival&lt;br&gt;Orchid Show&lt;br&gt;Kite Festival&lt;br&gt;Santa Barbara Wine Country Half Marathon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Wine Trolley Begins&lt;br&gt;West Coast Kustoms Car Club Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Elks Rodeo &amp; Parade&lt;br&gt;Foxen Canyon Wine Trail Passport Event&lt;br&gt;Elks Car Show, Santa Maria Elks Lodge Car Truck &amp; Motorcycle Show</td>
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**eNewsletter**

With the creation of drip campaigns in 2018-19 fiscal year, we now have the framework established in MailChimp to offer our newsletter subscribers customized content according to their preferences.

We will continue to send emails twice per month to our regular subscriber list, highlighting upcoming events, recent blog posts with an invitation to stay.

As newsletter performance (open and click through rates) is collected and analyzed we will optimize and enhance newsletter content and send strategy (time of day, day of the week, etc.) as needed.
Social Media

OBJECTIVES

- Position the Santa Maria Valley as an affordable wine country destination.
- Inform audiences about events and attractions happening in and around the region.
- Increase audience followings on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.
- Increase traffic to the website from Facebook and Pinterest.
- Increase engagement across all platforms, boosting our overall social referrals to the website.

STRATEGIES

- Creating and maintaining a posting strategy and schedule for Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest to ensure social media presence is consistent and these channels work together to reinforce the key messages.
- Planning meaningful, original posts that resonate with and provide value to our audience. The monthly posting schedule will be submitted in the week prior to a new month beginning for approval.
  - Storytelling by introducing the region and all it offers to our audience.
  - Driving the connection between the Santa Maria Valley and world-class wine.
  - Sharing media stories that demonstrate that the Santa Maria Valley is home to renowned wine and barbecue.
  - Re-posting related communications provided by both guests to the region and locals.
- Accomplishing the specific engagement goals proposed in the KPIs section for each social media platform in followers, likes, reach and shares.
  - Improving content quality and targeted messaging.
  - Encouraging audience dialog with timely responses to comments and inquiries.
  - Being strategic about posting cadence and consistency.
  - Monitoring hashtags in the social sphere.

- Connect with and follow travel media and writers and key influencers to build followers and increase engagement across all platforms.
- Monitor social media conversations, questions and comments and engaging with the audience.
- Develop recurring themes on Instagram with unique hashtags, the management of social media contests, and the management of Instagram takeover events.

Creative Development

We know the 2019-20 fiscal year will bring the development of a new marketing campaign. In addition to that, we had some additional “blue sky” ideas for projects this budget could cover.

1. **New concept statements / new look/feel / new creative campaign**

2. **Santa Maria Valley Wine label**

3. **Scavenger hunt collateral**
   - Can help with user-generated content and capturing visitor data
   - Find the hidden gem at Santa Maria Valley points of interest
   - 10 things to do for a unique Santa Maria Experience (e.g. Travel Nevada)
   - Scavenger hunt based on an itineraries
   - 6 of 10 or you have to go in sequence to get your next clue
   - Redeem for a bottle of SMV wine
4. Collateral on wine trails or wine tasting (alternative to wine map) – In partnership with wineries
   - Complement to the visitor guide, digestible
   - Placement in hotel rooms, tradeshows, events
   - E.g. Ale Trail from North Lake Tahoe - something really promotable

**Photography / Video**

With the development of a new creative campaign, we will manage a full video shoot to collect new photo and video assets to support an integrated marketing campaign using our preferred photographer, Jeff Dow.

We will also continue to leverage our relationship with local photographer Josh Morris, of Chromatic Collective to collect additional photo assets of local attractions and to continue our “30 Miles” video strategy.

Beyond creating awareness, our video strategy will contribute to our goals by providing engaging content that can be used (and reused) to reach people in every stage of their path to purchase.

1. Campaign photo/video shoot to support the 19-20 Campaign
2. Local attractions and events assets, building asset library
3. “30 Miles” video series

**Management**

**REPORTING + ROI TRACKING**
The production of a monthly marketing summary report based on key metrics and KPIs, as well as general statistics such as overall traffic, demographics, search engine traffic, and traffic by region. Includes misc. ad hoc requests for analytics or performance summaries.

**ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT**
Includes non-project specific campaign management, strategic planning, goals-related research, status meetings, campaign optimization, budget and timeline tracking spread over the course of the fiscal year. Assumes travel expenses for 6 trips for meetings per fiscal year. Travel time will not be billed.

**MARKETING CONTINGENCY**
Added category to accommodate for miscellaneous requests such as city council reports, sizzle videos, and additional misc. creative requests.