

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

NIAGARA FALLS[®]

USA

Marketing in a Pandemic



A DESTINATION OF HOPE

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO, JOHN PERCY

The COVID-19 pandemic hit the travel industry incredibly hard. For our organization, that meant a significant loss of revenue. However, we reacted quickly and efficiently to ensure that we continued to stay top of mind for when travel could resume and we had to do so with a much leaner budget.

Throughout the year, we worked tirelessly to respond and adapt to changing travel rules and regulations. Initially, when the whole world shutdown, traditional tourism promotion had to take a backseat to softer and more inspirational messaging—and there is no place more inspirational than Niagara Falls.

Once businesses began to re-open, travel industry research showed that consumers who were interested in traveling were especially interested in visiting destinations where they could spend the bulk of their time outdoors and socially distanced from others. Most travelers were also favoring destinations that were within an 8-hour drive from their homes.

As a very strong drive market and with a high abundance of outdoor space and activities, our marketing campaigns focused on these attributes. As a result, we were able to fare better than many other destinations across the country during the summer and fall.

It was a difficult year for everyone but I am proud of the efforts that this entire team put forth to continue to inspire and engage potential visitors. This crisis will give way to recovery and we are ready to safely welcome the world back to the destination that we all love so much.



A stylized, handwritten signature of John Percy in black ink.

President & CEO
Destination Niagara USA

MARKETING PHASE 1 ●—○—○—○

DESTINATION OF HOPE | APRIL 1 - 22, 2020

As COVID-19 became more wide spread and the nation began to shut down, we activated our ***Destination of Hope*** campaign on April 1, targeting users with a prior intent to travel, along with previous visitors to our website. Based on our data insight, we geo-targeted larger drive markets including New York City, Boston, Columbus, and Niagara County. Our strategy was to deliver content that conveyed a message of hope and community, focusing on a future travel intent audience.

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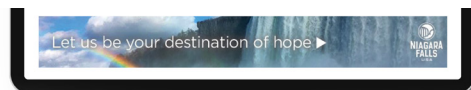
Target audiences: Users with prior intent to travel and previous website visitors.

Channels: Facebook, Connected TV, Google Display Network, and Email

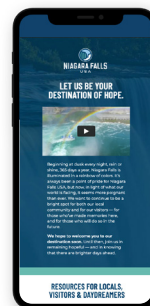
Geo-targets: Niagara County and larger drive markets including New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, and Columbus (+25 mile radius around those cities).



Destination of Hope Video



Destination of Hope Banner Ad

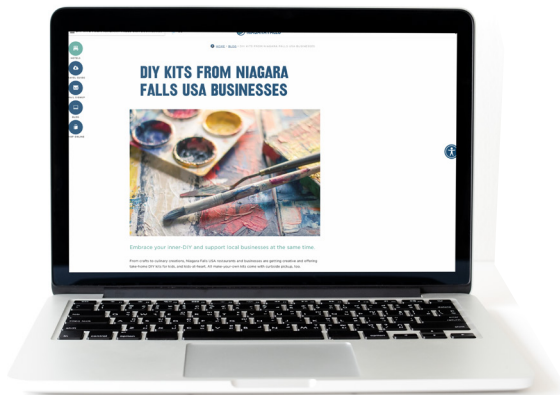


Destination of Hope Landing Page

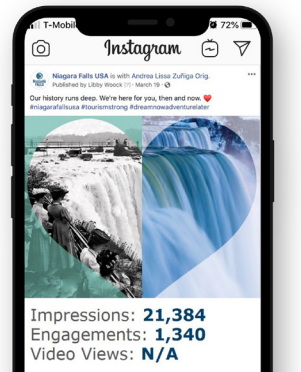
MARKETING PHASE 1 ●—○—○—○

SOCIAL MEDIA AND BLOG CONTENT

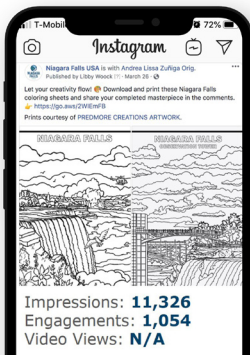
Throughout the early weeks and months of the pandemic, we continued to curate content on our social channels and blogs to not only keep our destination top of mind for visitors when they could begin to travel again, but also to support and promote local businesses in Niagara County.



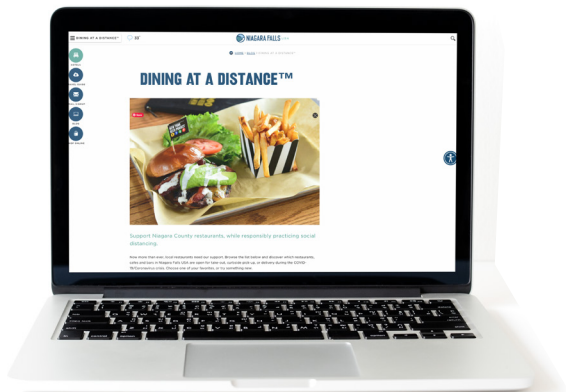
DIY Kits from Niagara Falls USA Businesses



"We're Here for You"
Instagram Post



Downloadable
Coloring Sheets



Dining at a Distance

MARKETING PHASE 2 ○●○○○

DREAM NOW, ADVENTURE LATER | MAY 11 - JUNE 15, 2020

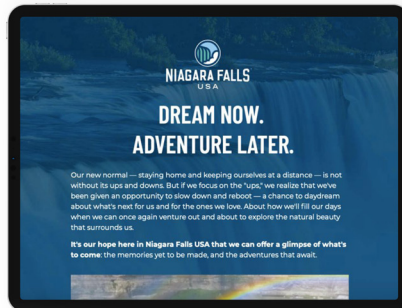
In May, we activated our ***Dream Now, Adventure Later*** campaign—increasing engagement with a travel intent audience within a 4-hour drive radius. The message encouraged consumers to dream of their next Niagara Falls USA adventure, and when the time was right to travel again, our destination would be ready.

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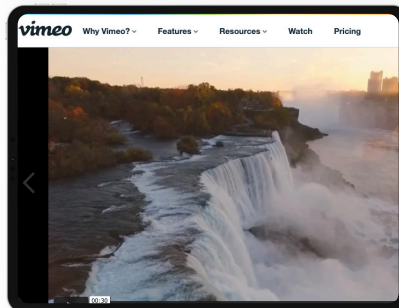
Target audiences: Users with an intent or prior intent to travel, 21 to 55-year-olds.

Channels: Facebook, Connected TV, and Email

Geo-targets: Initial 2-hour drive from Niagara Falls USA, but with insight from database survey, updated to an 8-hour drive.



Dream Now Adventure Later Landing Page



Dream Now Adventure Later Video

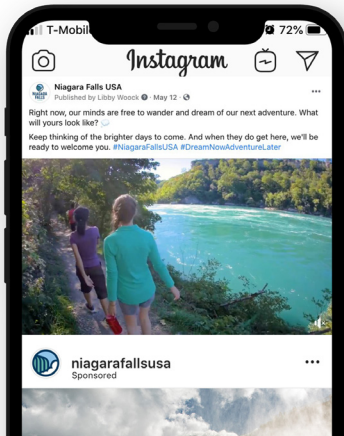
MARKETING PHASE 2 ○—●—○—○

SOCIAL MEDIA AND BLOG CONTENT

We created relevant blog content for our website providing additional information and resources that consumers and locals could refer to if planning now or later including:

- COVID-19 Updates/Information
- Virtual Experiences in Niagara Falls USA
- Niagara Falls USA Virtual Meeting Backgrounds
- DIY Kits from Niagara Falls USA Businesses
- Virtually Escape with Movies Filmed in Niagara Falls USA
- Dining at a Distance

All content was amplified through our social media channels. We also highlighted downloadable destination coloring sheets, 360-degree videos, and Falls illuminations.



Dream Now Adventure Later



Niagara Falls USA Fun Facts

MARKETING PHASES 3 & 4 ○—○—●—○

WIDE OPEN SPACES, NOW OPEN FOR ADVENTURE | JUNE 17 - AUGUST 31, 2020

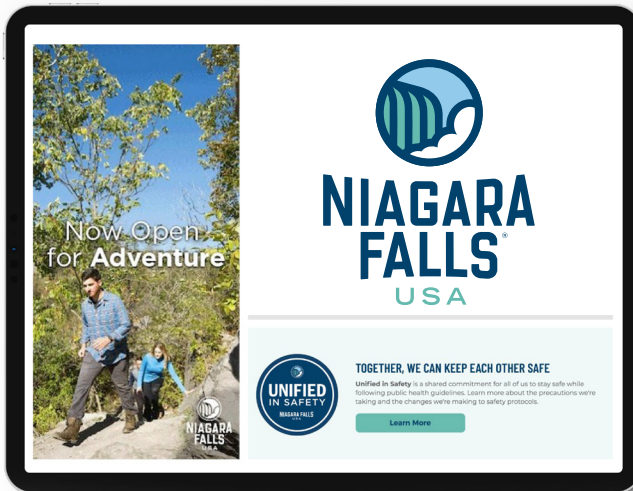
As attractions re-opened in late June, we activated our marketing campaign **Wide Open Spaces - Now Open for Adventure**. Hotel occupancy increased 76% from June to July and then increased 28% from July to August. We remained consistently higher than the national average from August through Labor Day, especially weekend days.

We also promoted our **Unified in Safety** program as part of this marketing phase to let consumers know that our destination was taking the necessary precautions and making safety protocol changes to keep each other safe.

Target audience: Users with an intent/interest to travel, 21 to 55 year-olds.

Channels: Facebook, Programmatic Display, Google Search Ads, and Email

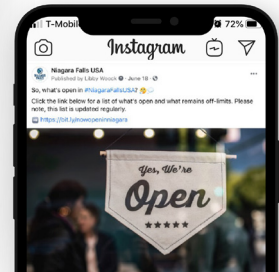
Geo-targets: U.S. cities within an 8-hour drive



Now Open & Unified in Safety Digital Banners



Outdoor Murals



What's Open

FALL CAMPAIGN



FALL CAMPAIGN | SEPTEMBER 18 - OCTOBER 20, 2020

For our fall campaign, we encouraged people within a 4-hour drive to explore the beauty of the fall in Niagara Falls USA, while building on the momentum of the recovery. In addition, we created specific targeted messaging to New York State residents.

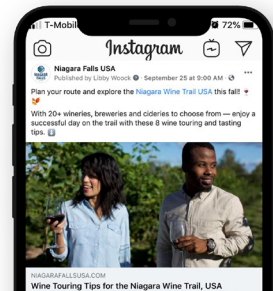
Target audience: Families (22-55), Couples (20-50), Mature Audiences (50+), and NYS Residents

Channels: Facebook, Google Display Network, Google Search Ads, and Email

Geo-targets: 4-hour drive from Niagara Falls USA; pivoted to only New York State in early October.



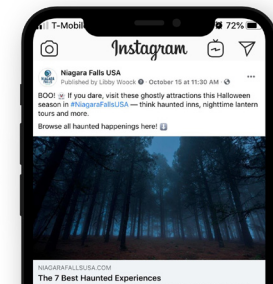
Families Digital Ads



Wine Trail Post



Couples Digital Ads



Haunted Niagara Falls

STAYCATION CAMPAIGN

STAYCATION CAMPAIGN | NOVEMBER 24 - DECEMBER 20, 2020

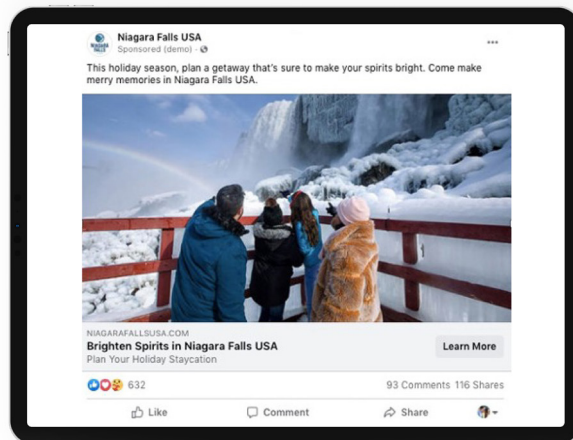
The **Staycation** campaign encouraged residents to support local businesses and plan a staycation in Niagara Falls USA.

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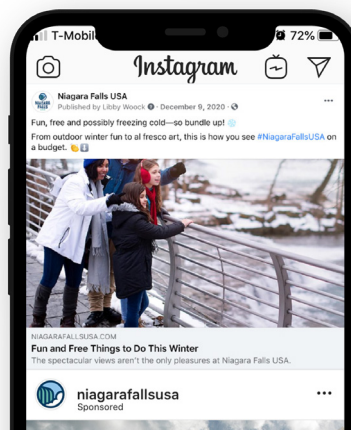
Target audience: Families, Couples and Girlfriends, ages 21-55

Channels: Facebook, Instagram, and Email

Geo-targets: Niagara County, with a custom 716 area code audience



Winter Staycation



Free Things to Do Post

SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGN

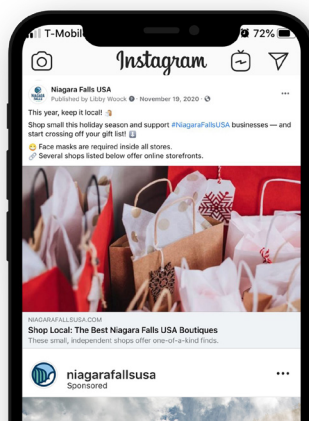
SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGN: NOVEMBER 24-DECEMBER 20, 2020

The goal of this campaign was to support local businesses by encouraging residents to shop local for their holiday gifts.

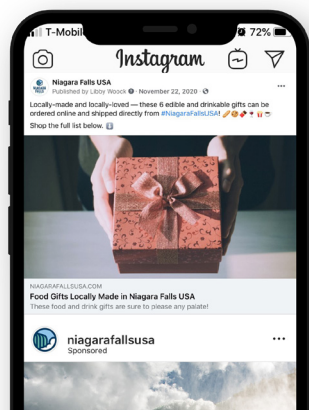
Target audience: Users with an interest in shopping

Channels: Facebook, Instagram, and Email

Geo-targets: Niagara County, with a custom 716 area code audience




Shop Local Boutiques




Six Edible and Drinkable Gifts

CUMULATIVE RESULTS: ALL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

IMPRESSIONS:

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| 34,329,893 ORGANIC | 1,730,273 PAID SEARCH | 78,894,355 GOOGLE DISPLAY NETWORK |
| 12,134,359 PROGRAMMATIC DISPLAY | 11,786,889 PAID SOCIAL |  138,875,769 TOTAL IMPRESSIONS |

TOTAL CLICKS:

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| 803,750 ORGANIC | 300,507 PAID SEARCH | 633,869 GOOGLE DISPLAY NETWORK |
| 19,997 PROGRAMMATIC DISPLAY | 207,835 PAID SOCIAL |  1,965,958 TOTAL CLICKS |

CONNECTED TV:



309,252
VIDEO STARTS

256,200
VIDEO
COMPLETIONS

83%
VIDEO
COMPLETION RATE

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA



2020 WEBSITE VISITATION:

2,064,412

55% INCREASE
OVER 2019



2020 Page Views:

4,393,895

55% INCREASE
OVER 2019



2020 Unique Visits:

1,389,166

33% INCREASE
OVER 2019



Total Blogs

38

Stats for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn



Total fans for all four channels:

125,490

Link clicks from posts:

95,953

Total impressions from all
four channels:

20.1 MILLION

Overall engagement from all
four channels:

605,259

MEDIA

EARNED MEDIA

Our media pitching continued throughout the pandemic with national and regional outlets. Topics that writers were looking to cover ranged from stories about local heroes to virtual experiences, and places where families could get outside and explore nature.



Number of Articles:

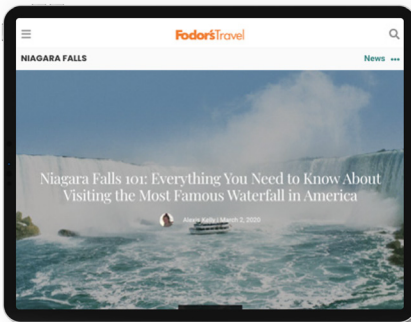
62



Media Impressions:

622,133,750

TOP MEDIA PLACEMENTS

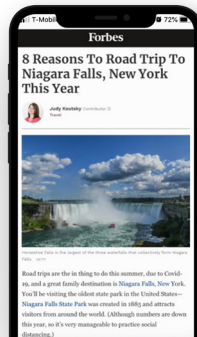


Fodor's Travel

Niagara Falls 101: Everything You Need to Know About Visiting the Most Famous Waterfall in America

Impressions:

934,090

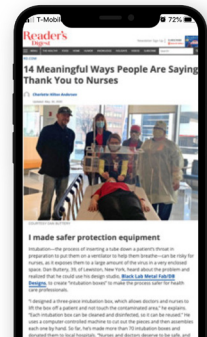


Forbes

Reasons To Road Trip To Niagara Falls, New York This Year

Impressions:

33,734,080



Reader's Digest

14 Meaningful Ways People Are Saying Thank You to Nurses

Impressions:

2,734,204

OUTDOOR FOCUSED MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Number of Articles including weekly fishing report:

83

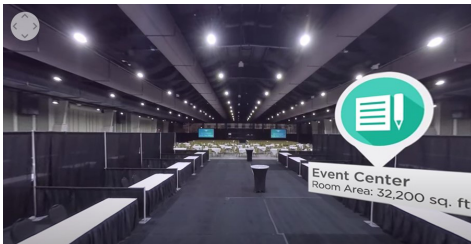


Media Impressions:

1,105,903

CONVENTION & MEETING SALES

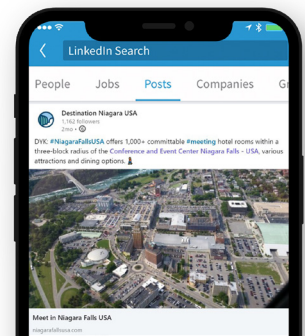
Meetings & Conventions began postponing through spring, summer and fall in 2020. The sales team began to plan for 2021, understanding that meeting planners were not actively sourcing or booking during this time. Knowing that site visits would continue to be a challenge based on travel advisories and budgets, we created a series of **360-degree videos** highlighting downtown meetings hotels, the Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls, and the surrounding area. This provided our sales team the tools needed to continue prospecting and booking conferences and meetings for the future when in-person events could safely return.



360° Video Stills

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- Increased engagement with meeting planners on LinkedIn by posting specific meeting-related content.
- Hosted virtual events with a variety of meeting planners from various market segments.
- Attended the Virtual Connect Marketplace and met with planners interested in Niagara Falls USA for future meetings.
- Updated the Niagara Falls USA Meeting Planner Guide.
- Developed a concession program with the Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls and meetings hotels, providing deals and discounts designed to engage meeting planners, while highlighting our **Unified in Safety** commitment.



Convention & Meeting LinkedIn Posts

TRAVEL TRADE SALES

As domestic groups began to cancel their tours to the destination, our Travel Trade Sales team assisted tour operators with those cancellations. Domestic and international travel trade shows were also canceled so it was imperative that we continued to provide visibility in our priority markets with activations including:

- Virtual coffee breaks on Zoom with high-value clients.
- Virtual World Travel Market sales appointments with UK tour operators.
- Travel trade educational webinar series in UK, Germany and Ireland through partnerships with Brand USA and I LOVE NY.
- All American Roadshow / Virtual Tradeshow providing the opportunity to reach over 1,500 travel agents throughout the U.S. interested in Niagara Falls USA.
- Social media promotions with tour companies to keep Niagara Falls USA top of mind with their customers.
- Collaborated with AAA of Western New York to send a targeted email to their local members encouraging a holiday staycation in Niagara Falls USA.



Virtual Coffee Break Kit

TRAVEL GUIDE INSERTIONS



We expanded our Travel Guide distribution to increase visibility and inspire travel when safe to do so in our top engaged markets and within our local market:

**The
Boston
Globe**

Sunday, July 26, 2020

25,000
COPIES

**Chicago
Tribune**

Sunday, July 26, 2020

25,000
COPIES

**The
Philadelphia
Inquirer**

Sunday, August 2, 2020

25,000
COPIES

**LOCKPORT
Union-Sun
& Journal**

Saturday, August 22, 2020

9,000
COPIES

NIAGARA GAZETTE

BOARD & COMMITTEES

2020 DESTINATION NIAGARA USA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| Name | Business | Category |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Lynn Oswald | Small Business Development Center | General Business |
| Carol Calato | Calato Manufacturing | General Business |
| John DiGuiseppe | Platter's Chocolates | General Business |
| Mark Laurrie | Niagara Falls City Schools | General Business |
| Jennifer Pauly | Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce | General Business |
| Doug Nickerson/ Geoffrey Reeds | American Niagara Hospitality | Hospitality/Tourism |
| Frank Strangio | Wingate by Wyndham | Hospitality/Tourism |
| Brett Stewart | Merani Hotel Group | Hospitality/Tourism |
| Melissa Free | Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino | Hospitality/Tourism |
| Lou Paonessa | NYPA - Niagara Power Vista | Hospitality/Tourism |
| Mayor Michelle Roman | City of Lockport | Investor Appointment |
| Brian Smith | City of Lockport/Mayor's Representative | Investor Appointment |
| Richard Updegrove | Niagara County Legislature Representative | Investor Appointment |
| Mayor Robert Restaino | City of Niagara Falls | Investor Appointment |
| John Percy | Destination Niagara USA | Ex-Officio/Non-Voting |
| Unseated | NCCC/Culinary Institute (permanent seat) | Ex-Officio/Non-Voting |
| Unseated | Niagara University (permanent seat) | Ex-Officio/Non-Voting |
| Anthony Vilardo | USA Niagara Development (permanent seat) | Ex-Officio/Non-Voting |
| Angela Berti | NYS Parks (permanent seat) | Ex-Officio/Non-Voting |

COMMITTEES

| Executive | Brett Stewart | Mark Laurrie | Lynn Oswald | John DiGuiseppe |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Title | Chair | Vice Chair | Treasurer | Secretary |

| Finance |
|----------------|
| Brett Stewart |
| Lynn Oswald |
| Carol Calato |
| Mark Laurrie |
| Jennifer Pauly |

| Nominating |
|----------------|
| Brett Stewart |
| Lynn Oswald |
| Frank Strangio |
| Jennifer Pauly |
| Lou Paonessa |

2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

| Revenue | | % of Revenue |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Niagara Falls | \$937,420 | 52% |
| Niagara County | \$111,483 | 6% |
| Lockport | \$36,741 | 2% |
| Grants | \$174,469 | 10% |
| Business Generated Revenue | \$488,712 | 27% |
| Retail | \$46,925 | 3% |
| Casino | - | - |

Total 2020 Revenue =

\$1,795,750

| Expenses | | % of Revenue |
|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Personnel | \$987,100 | 39% |
| Marketing | \$1,128,148 | 44% |
| Group Leisure | \$39,533 | 2% |
| Convention and Meeting | \$70,609 | 3% |
| International Markets | \$31,513 | 1% |
| Visitor Services | \$46,639 | 2% |
| Outdoor Promotion | \$49,478 | 2% |
| General and Administration | \$206,604 | 8% |

Total 2020 Expenses =

\$2,559,624

Destination Niagara USA

Our Mission: We are a private non-profit with a mission to expand the economic prosperity of the Niagara Falls USA communities by generating individual and group visitation.



Positioning Statement: For those who would rather go and do rather than just see, Niagara Falls USA is the embodiment of America's adventurous spirit, connecting people to nature through immersive experiences that move, challenge and inspire them.