



# 2021 OUTLOOK:

What's Changed, What's Coming for the New Year

## 2021 Destination Marketing Outlook

Thank you for joining...the webinar will  
start at 4 minutes after the hour

**PRESENTED BY:**





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## 2021 Destination Marketing Outlook



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What's Changed, What's Coming for the New Year

## Your Hosts:



Joseph Dabbs  
Senior Director of Sales



Jacquelyn Blackwell  
Regional Sales Manager



Bart Thau  
VP Marketing & Research



# 2021 OUTLOOK:

What's Changed, What's Coming for the New Year

## TODAY'S TOPICS

### Traveler Sentiment

- An uncertain indicator
- The impact of vaccine distribution

### 2021 Trends

- Content Marketing
- UX and Search
- Display & Targeting
- Social Media
- Empathy



# INTRODUCTION

- Our 2020 marketing plans were upended in March
- Travel was severely restricted, and destinations were closed
- April bookings were down 90-95%
- **Vacation rentals** rebounded mid-May through September beating 2019 occupancy percentages in the following states\*:
  - Alabama
  - Georgia
  - South Carolina
  - Tennessee
- Florida lagged 2019 until August and beat 2019 performance in September\*

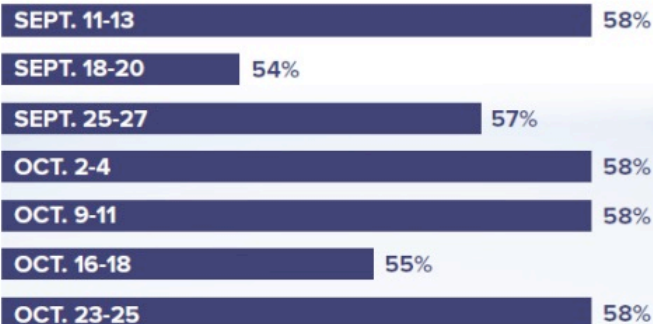
\*Keydata Dashboard, Pacing and Booking Activity updated Oct 7, 2020

\*STR: US Q3 2020 Hotel Performance,



**Hotel  
Occupancy  
was still  
down 33.2%  
YTD as of  
Oct 2020\*\***

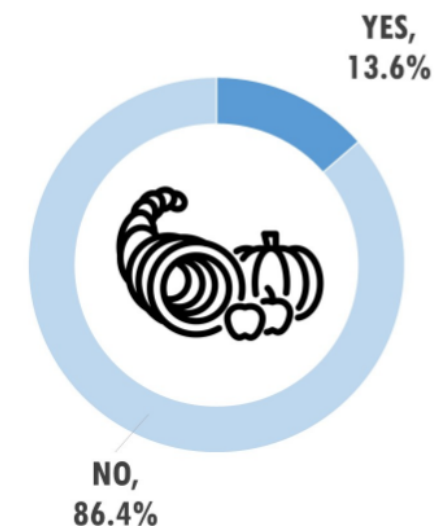
## Percentage of travelers who are happy to schedule a vacation in the next 6 months\*



## TRAVELER SENTIMENT

- Throughout the fall vacationers remained optimistic about planning vacations within the next 6 months
- But Thanksgiving travel was stilted after major warnings from CDC officials
- And, over 50% of travelers are more hesitant to travel in the next 3 months due to the recent rise in COVID-19 cases\*

### Thanksgiving\*



(Base: Wave 38 data. All respondents, 1,205 completed surveys. Data collected November 27-29, 2020)

\*<https://www.destinationanalysts.com/covid-19-insights/coronavirusw-travel-sentiment-index-report/>



# UNCERTAINTY

## The biggest challenges for 2021

- “We don’t know what we don’t know”
- Will vaccines be a game changer?
- Will stimulus relief pass and who will benefit? Destinations? Local Businesses? Individuals and Families?
- How can we create demand and grow in this environment?

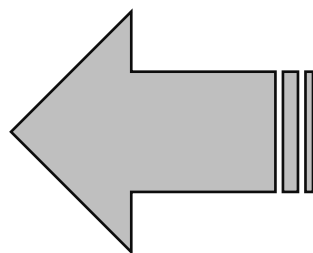


**Creating demand now  
with new segments  
while ultimately growing  
overall market share  
should be our goal as we  
head into the new year.**

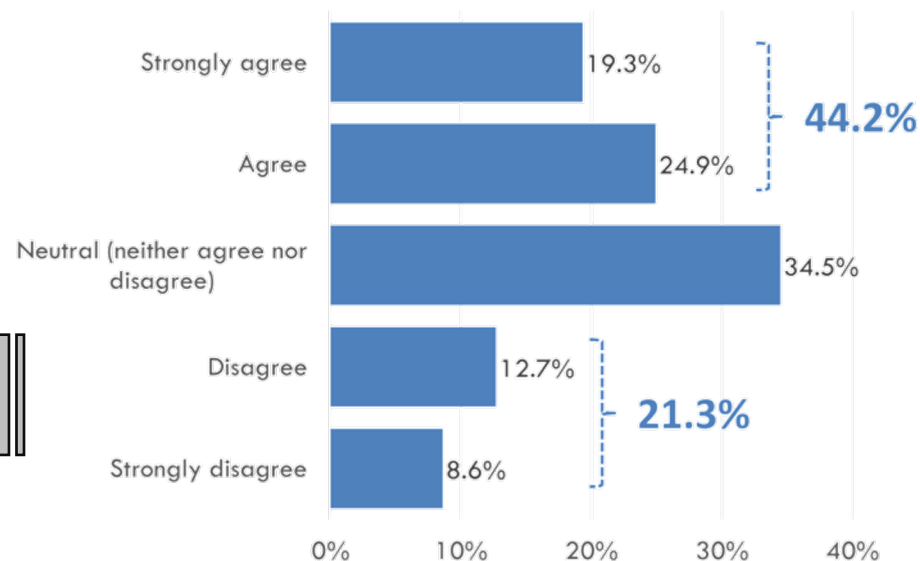
# VACCINES

## Perceived Impact on Traveler Sentiment

**44% are positive**  
**21.3% are negative**  
**34.5% are neutral**



### WILL TAKE A MAJOR VACATION AFTER VACCINE DISTRIBUTION



**QUESTION:** HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT? MY FIRST TRIP AFTER A COVID-19 VACCINE BECOMES AVAILABLE WILL BE A VACATION, LIKELY TO A PLACE FAR FROM MY HOME.

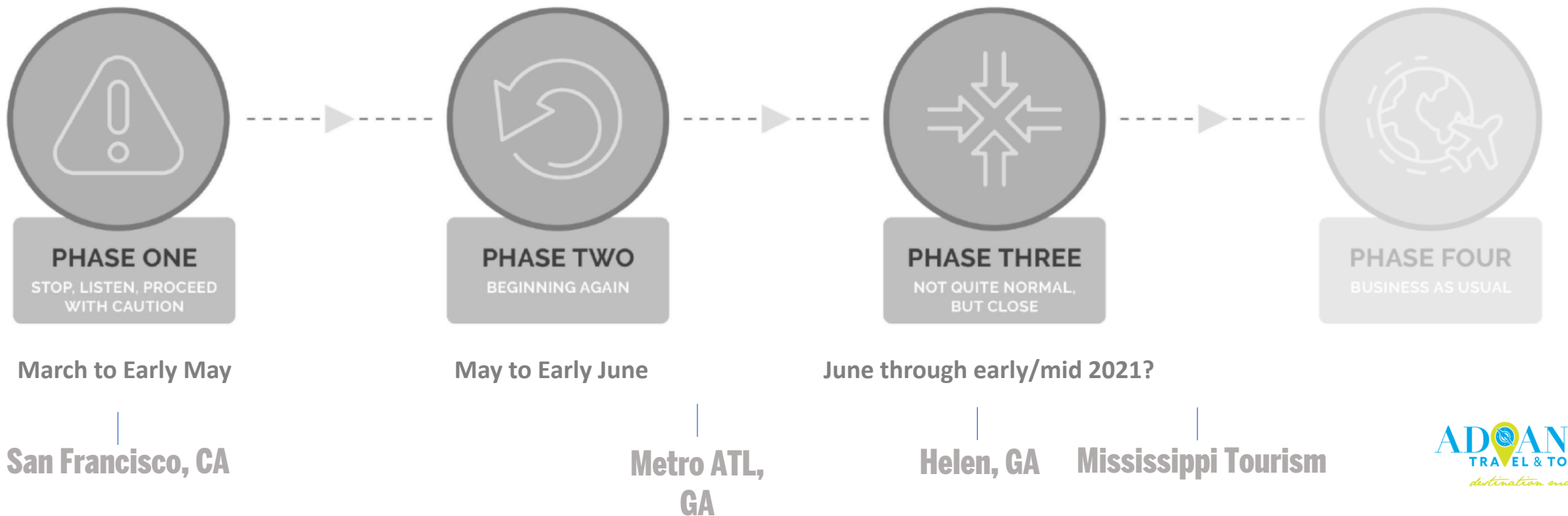
(Base: Wave 38 data. All respondents, 1,205 completed surveys. Data collected November 27-29, 2020)

Destination  **Analysts**  
DO YOUR RESEARCH

**ADVANCE**  
TRAVEL & TOURISM  
*destination marketers*

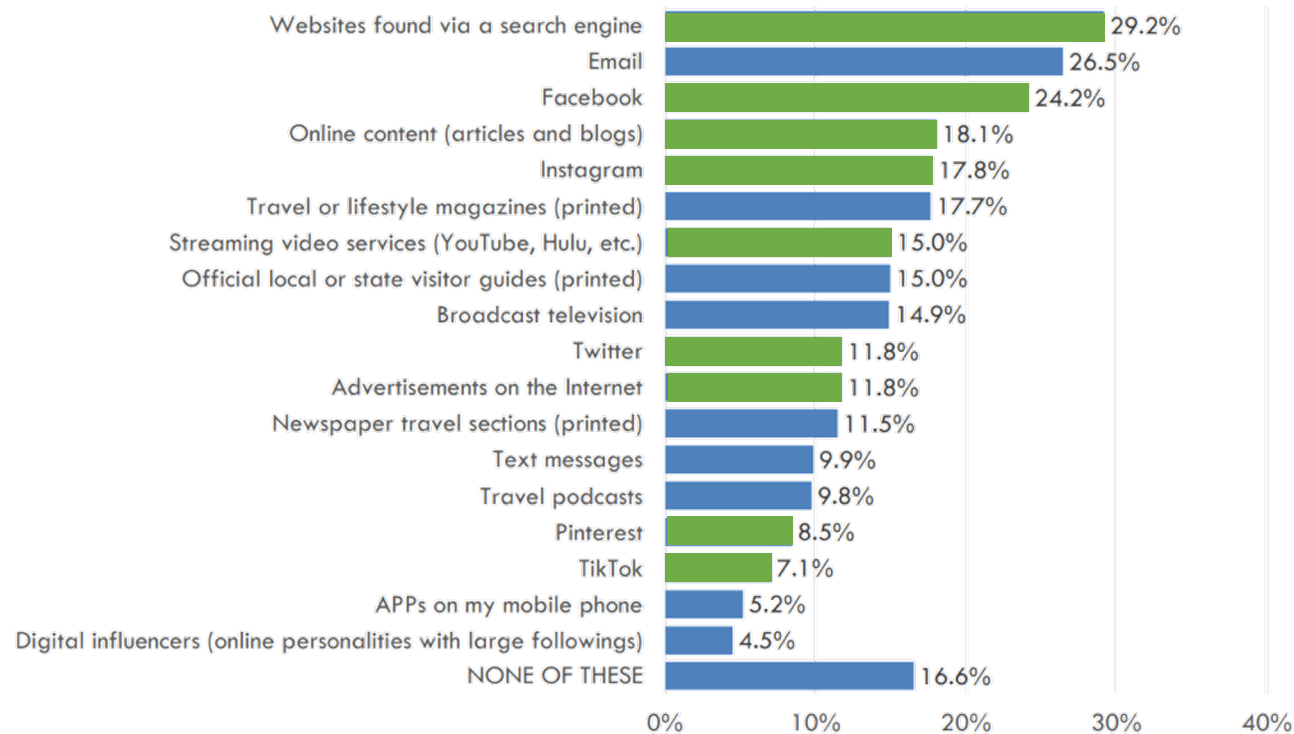


# Four Phases of Recovery



# DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

## Best ways to reach travelers



\*Destination Analysts – Wave 31 Data, collected Oct 9-11, 2020 – 1203 completed surveys





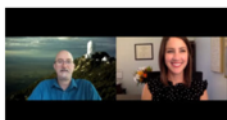
## 2021 TRENDS: CONTENT

- Content is key to engaging prospects who are researching destinations more than ever before
  - Safety information
  - Appropriate Experiences
  - Resources for virtual visitors to build trust and connection for the future
- Align content initiatives to touch each of your visitor personas
- Revise your personas to identify subgroups within – those ready to travel now, and those who will travel in the future.
- Use a variety of channels to distribute – social, display, video, sponsored content

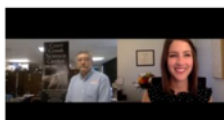
# Pandemic Case Study:

## Discovery Park of America - Tennessee

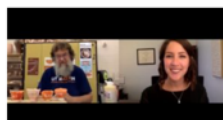
- Pre-pandemic content focused on promotion of events, offers and classes
- Post-pandemic developed educational content that allowed families (a key persona) to access free educational content relevant to their mission
- Virtual field trip lessons and interviews with University of Tennessee at Martin professors



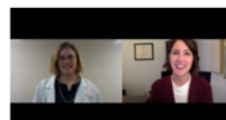
How are stars born?



Did you know Tennessee has a state fossil?



Pottery and Poems

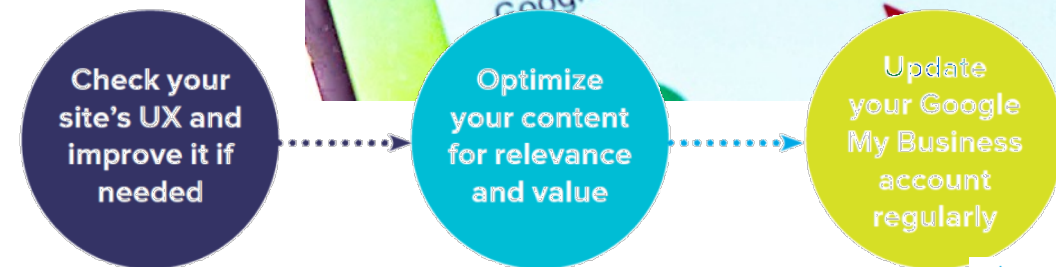


The Sun's Ultraviolet Light and Our Skin



# 2021 TRENDS: SEARCH AND UX

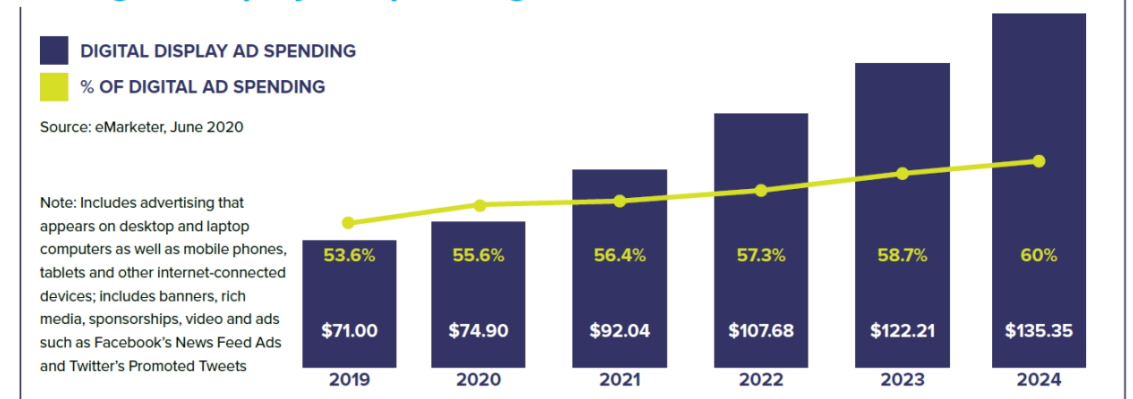
- Updated Google algorithms “Web Vitals” now measures **user experience** and impact your search ranking
  - Page load speed
  - Interactivity – video, maps
  - Stability of Content
- **Semantic Search** considers a searcher’s intent
  - To **Get** information
  - To **Make** a purchase or shop
  - To **Compare** destinations or experiences
  - To **Find** a particular website



# 2021 TRENDS: Display & Targeting

- Digital display advertising is driving growth
- Data privacy will change the 3<sup>rd</sup> party cookie by 2022
  - Google will end 3<sup>rd</sup> party cookies by 2022
  - Firefox already blocks 3<sup>rd</sup> party cookies
  - Safari is following Google's lead
- How will advertisers target display **without** 3<sup>rd</sup> party cookies?

US digital display ad spending 2019-2024

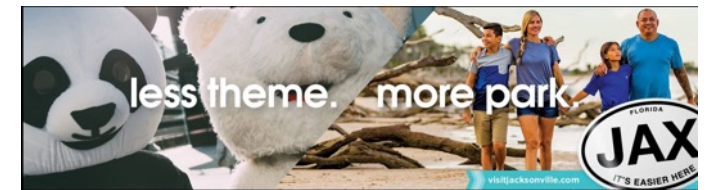




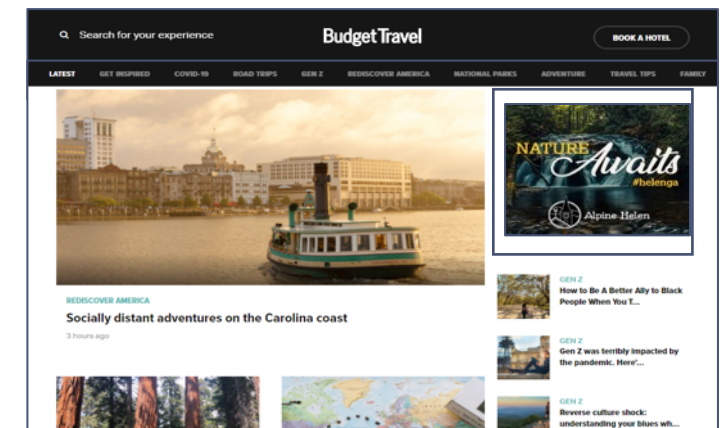
# 2021 TRENDS: Display & Targeting

## Evolution of Targeting with Cookies

- Contextual Targeting – what's old is new again
  - No more behavioral user tracking across websites
  - Marrying ads contextually to content that matches your target audience's interests
- Effectiveness of Contextual Targeting
  - **Start now** by A/B testing behavioral and contextual targeting to find the right content to match each persona
  - Early findings reveal a cost savings of up to 48% over behavioral strategies



Test contextually-targeted display ads while cookies are still available

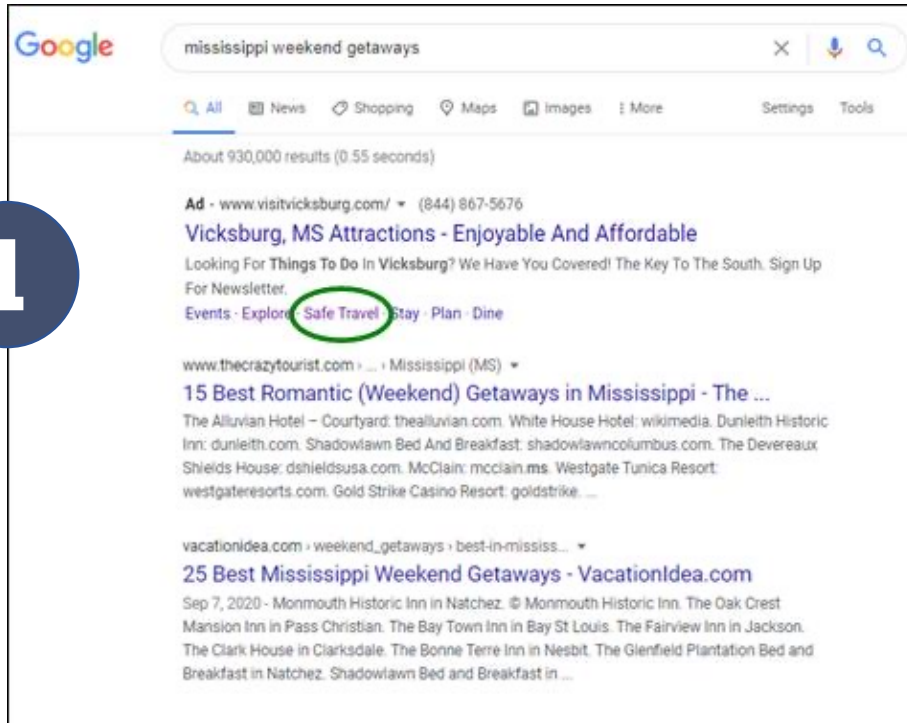


# 2021 TRENDS: Display & Targeting

## Evolution of Targeting with Cookies

- First Party Cookies – place ads directly on publisher sites
- Search Retargeting Display – Capture intent, serve corresponding ad, click-thru to relevant content

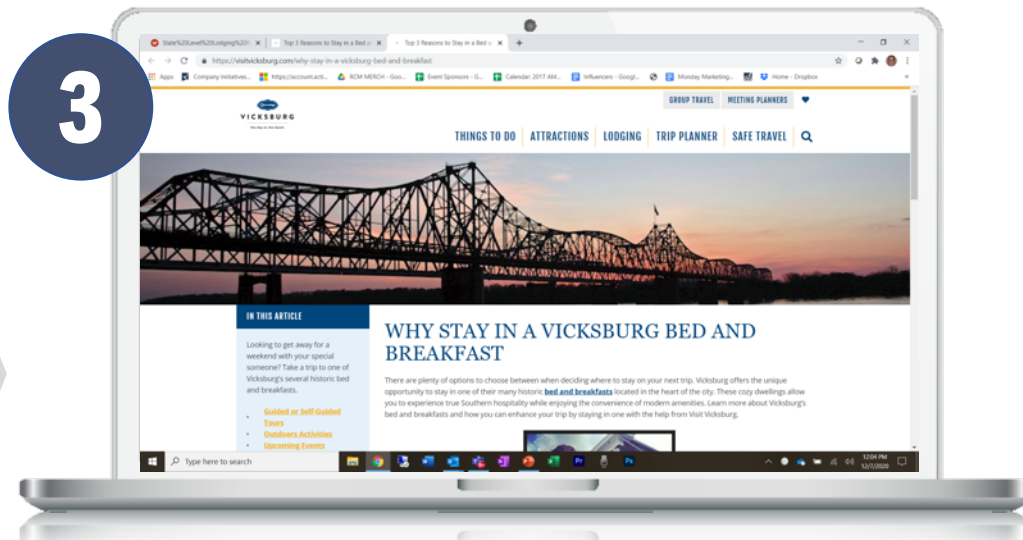
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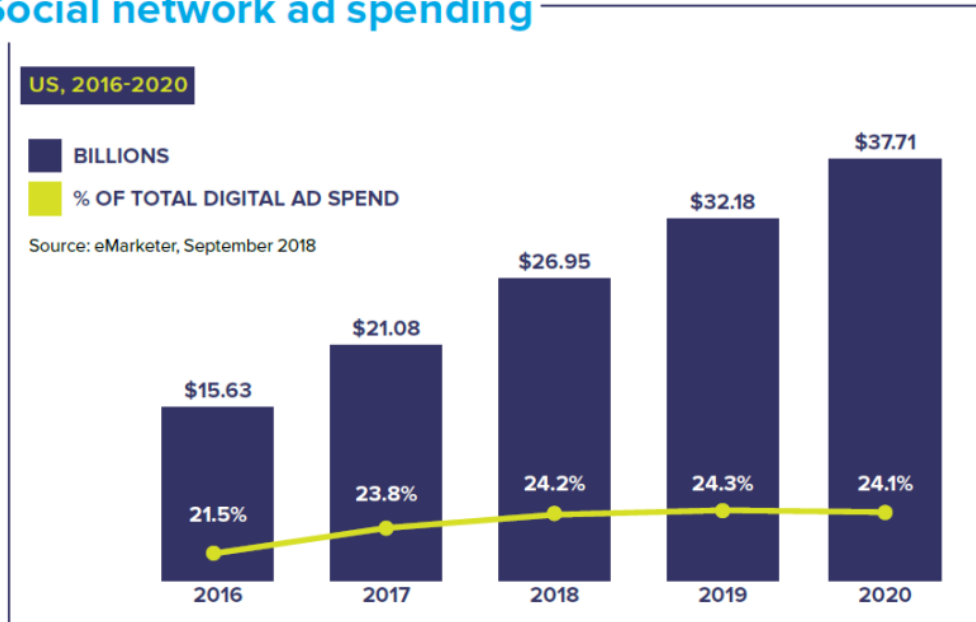
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# 2021 TRENDS: Social Media

## Social network ad spending



- Social media engagement increased 61% in 2020
- Ad spending up 13% in Q2 over Q1 2020
- Customer retention is a key strategic objective for social channels
  - Can hyper-target to customer lists
  - Messaging can be segmented to different personas
  - Organic posting will reach most passionate customers and fans saving some ad spend

# 2021 TRENDS: Social Media

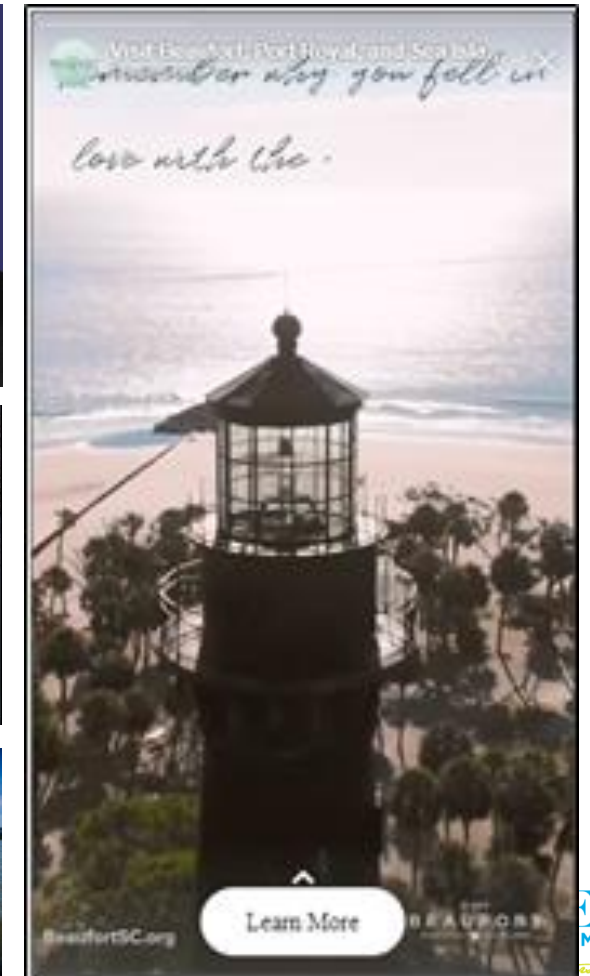
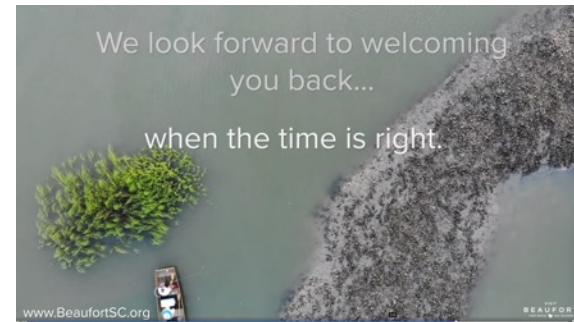
- Utilize the right platform to distribute your content to the right audience
- To ensure brand safety and alignment use block and allow lists
  - Content Allow Lists – use these to target contextually or align yourself with strategic content categories
  - Block Lists – block specific pages or publishers by social or web URL
  - Publisher Allow lists – only advertise on specific pages or publishers





# Pandemic Case Study: Beaufort, SC

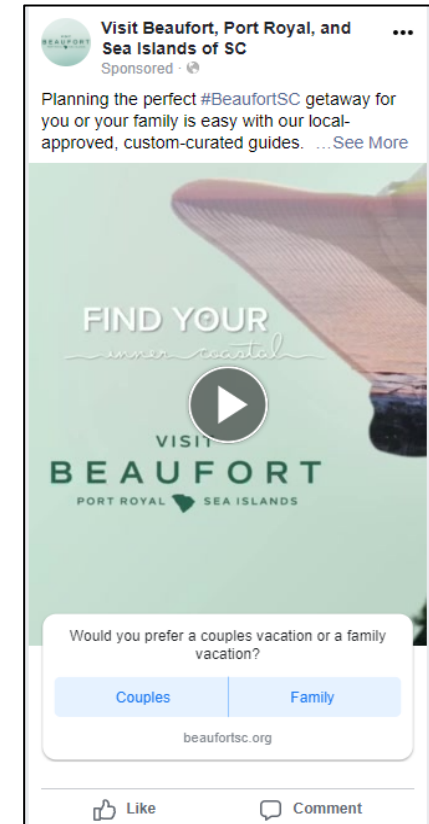
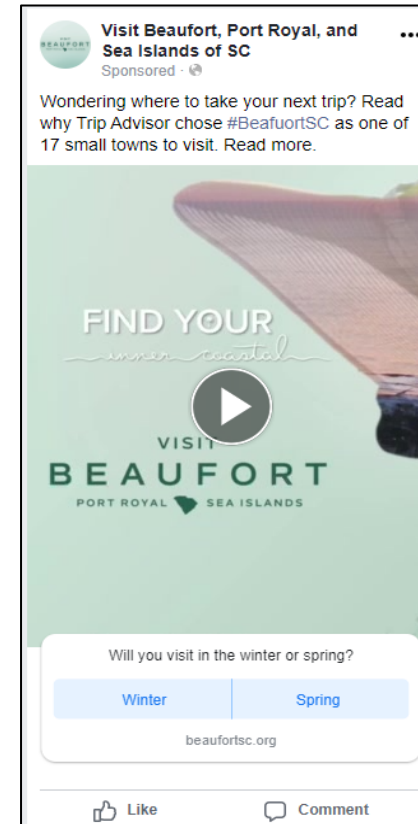
- Switched to hyper local and road trip audience targeting
- Moved 100% to social and digital advertising channels
- Images in campaigns focused on wide open spaces, beauty of the sea islands and the port city
- Continued to speak to the dreamers on-hold while encouraging responsible visits from those ready to travel



# Pandemic Case Study: Beaufort, SC

## How we've adjusted the strategy

- Still using wide-open spaces
- Stronger Call-to-Action asking people to visit even through lower season of Dec-Jan
- Higher emphasis on paid search and retargeting
- Engaging with social audiences to get their input via social polls







Prioritizing connection over conversion and demonstrating empathy is crucial in resonating with your audience and will ultimately benefit your destination's bottom line.



## 2021 TRENDS: Empathy

- 2021 is a year of rebuilding
- People-first marketing - prioritizing the relationships we have with travelers
- Extending empathy from messaging to face-to-face encounters and experiences



# Your Questions





[advancetravelandtourism.com](http://advancetravelandtourism.com)

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## Your Hosts:



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Special thanks to  
our partner:





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Advance Travel & Tourism is a destination marketing team within Advance Local, one of the leading media and marketing companies in the United States. From local to regional, national or international, we reach travelers everywhere.

Advance Travel & Tourism works with travel partners across the US, with local account managers waiting to meet you in person (or on Zoom in today's environment). Our hands-on approach ensures we understand your needs and creates a solution that meets your goals and budget.