



LEON COUNTY DIVISION OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT MEETING & CONVENTIONS 2017- 2018 SALES PLAN

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The Meetings & Conventions Department enhances the economic vitality of our community by promoting meetings, conferences and conventions for Leon County through direct contact with meeting planners and decision makers and coordinating efforts with the local industry.

Goal:

Generate 7,777 room nights, representing a 3% increase over fiscal year 2016-17 goal.

Strategy:

Increase the number of decision makers who view Tallahassee as a viable destination for meetings, conferences and conventions by retaining relationships with current clients while focusing on new business efforts especially with third party meeting planners in the in the following market segments.

- Association
- Government
- Specialty (educational, religious and fraternal)
- Corporate

Tactics: Direct Sales

- Attend, exhibit and participate at 25 annual conferences, tradeshows, educational events and networking opportunities. *New events added this year include; two hosted events with industry partners and attendance at Meeting Professionals International Georgia Chapter. (GAMPI).*

- Focus on attracting state and regional meetings and conferences where attendees can drive to the destination since research shows that limited airline service is the primary obstacle to gaining more meeting business.
- Use active memberships in Florida based chapters of organizations for focusing on in-state groups such as the Florida Society of Association Executives, Meeting Professionals International North Florida and the Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP) Florida Capital Chapter.
- Attending tradeshows that specifically target Florida based meeting planners such as Florida Encounter, Florida Society of Association Executives (FSAE) Annual Meeting and XSITE.
- Focus appointments at national tradeshows such as Connect Marketplace and Small Market Meetings with groups from specialty and association market segments that hold regional meetings in the southeast.
- Meet with Atlanta-based meeting planners and take advantage of proximity (4-5 hour drive) for regional meetings including third party meeting planners.
- *Increase focus on third party meeting planners during prospecting, appointments and events. These planners typically have multiple clients and assist decision makers with site selection.*
 - Continue prospecting through iDSS for past business and lost business.
 - Prospect through CVENT for lost business.
 - Grow relationship with HelmsBriscoe agents, association management representatives and other 3rd party meeting planners.
- Through direct leads, local partnerships and appointments at trade shows, assist 50 meeting planners throughout the decision making process including disbursing leads to appropriate meeting venues and hotels and coordinating site visits as needed. This is a 67% increase over the last three years.
- Host site visits for decision makers and influencers with active RFP's. Site visits will include industry participation from hotels, meeting venues, restaurants and attractions.

- Serve as a destination liaison by assisting meeting professionals with all aspects of their meeting planning including group team building activities, off-site dining and itinerary recommendations.
- *Utilize the strengths of the destination through testimonials in marketing materials from past special event grant recipients and other clients who were assisted by Visit Tallahassee.* Based on Downs & St. Germain research (Meeting Planner Study- October 2016), 92% of planners who held meetings in Tallahassee were mostly or extremely satisfied with their experiences.
- Promote the Transportation Fund, Bid Pool and Special Event Grant Programs to meeting planners at tradeshows, events and e-newsletters in May to announce the opening of the grant cycle. These funding programs provide Tallahassee a competitive advantage by helping address the lack of sufficient meeting space under one roof, a key obstacle to increasing meeting business.

Email Marketing

- Communicate quarterly with targeted meeting planners through email newsletters that provide information about latest destination developments and partner news. The email newsletter schedule, based on planning by market segment, includes:
 - Corporate/Association- November and March
 - Government- December and July
 - Specialty- February and September
 - All Markets- May (to promote Special Event Grant Program)
- Reach Florida decision makers through on-going emails distributed through the Florida Society of Association Executives (FSAE).
- *Include messaging in all fall email newsletters that promote meetings in the spring 2018 to replace traditional legislative business incorporating partner special values.*

- *Increase exposure with Meeting Professionals International (MPI) North Florida membership by becoming a Silver Sponsor, the benefits includes the following.*
 - *Logo on NFMPI.org*
 - *Four complimentary registrations*
 - *E-newsletter mention*
 - *Welcome letter to membership*
 - *Two social media mentions*
 - *Email blast distribution*
 - *Exhibit table at a monthly meeting*
- Update information on VisitTallahassee.com to include:
 - Photos/videos
 - Testimonials
 - Corporate Social Responsibility and Team Building
 - Group dining
- Expand digital outreach by incorporating direct links to pertinent information on VisitTallahassee.com and digital meeting planner's guides when prospecting and following up via email with clients.
- Collaborate with the Marketing Communications staff to secure destination visits by writer/editors from meeting planner publications.

Industry Participation

- Collaborate with partners to showcase the destination by hosting four events for meeting professionals.
 - 1) Florida Society of Association Executives (FSAE) Meeting Planner Roundtable in November.
 - 2) Society of Government Meeting Professionals in July.
 - 3) Host event in Tallahassee for local planners including existing clients and prospects from association and government segments.
 - 4) Host an event in a major, in-state market such as Tampa, Jacksonville or Orlando with an emphasis on corporate, association and third party meeting planners.
- Co-host a Society of Government Meeting Professionals (SGMP) Florida Capital monthly chapter meeting attended by 40 government meeting professionals.

- Secure industry participation in a booth at Capital Events Trade Show, an event attended by Tallahassee based association and government meeting planners.
- Involve meeting venues, hotels, restaurants and attractions during site visits for meeting planners and decision makers.
- Through individual meetings and on-going communication, emphasize the all of the resources available to local partners from transportation funding assistance, to helping arrange group experiences at after hour and off site functions.

Customer Service/Hospitality Training

- Explore programs available through the Dedman School of Hospitality at Florida State University and the feasibility of adapting them for the benefit of the local industry.

