

ESTO MERCURY AWARD ENTRY

Travel South USA's Integrated International Marketing Success

Description

Tactics

Outcome

TRAVEL · SOUTH  USA

 Visit
TheUSA
.com

Description	Tactics	Outcome
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Travel South USA represents a sprawling region encompassing **12 Southern states**, with a focus on connecting Southern destinations, attractions, entertainment and hotels with tour operators and journalists from around the world who influence more visitor spending in the region.

With a limited, cooperative international marketing budget, Travel South’s goal was to introduce international travelers to all there is to discover in the region while reinforcing the key pillars of culinary, food, culture and, most importantly, the power of the road trip.

Specifically, **Travel South’s objective was to increase exposure of its 12 state partners** – Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia – in key international markets in a way that was both scalable and cost-effective, and would ultimately result in increased international bookings and longer stays.



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Working with Brand USA, the USA’s national tourism marketing organization, and the state partners directly, Travel South arrived at a cooperative marketing solution that included three key strategic steps:

1. **Dedicated International Microsite on VisitTheUSA.com**

Travel South partnered with Brand USA to create the first-ever regional-focused microsite on VisittheUSA.com. The microsite leverages Visit the USA’s existing infrastructure and expansive international reach to create Travel South’s own destination-specific content and messaging.

The microsite was created in 16 languages for a region that touts destinations that are as diverse as they are action-packed.

2. **Content that Inspires and Speaks to International Audiences**

In order to ensure the new microsite housed a dynamic content experience to inspire potential travelers, Travel South worked with its partners and Brand USA to create compelling new, multimedia content pieces to tell the region’s story.

3. **Media Campaigns to Drive Demand**

Lastly, Travel South increased the reach and exposure of its new microsite and content pieces via targeted media campaigns, aimed at both increasing awareness of the region and engagement with the content pieces.

The target markets for the media campaigns were: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy.

Campaign timeframe: July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018.



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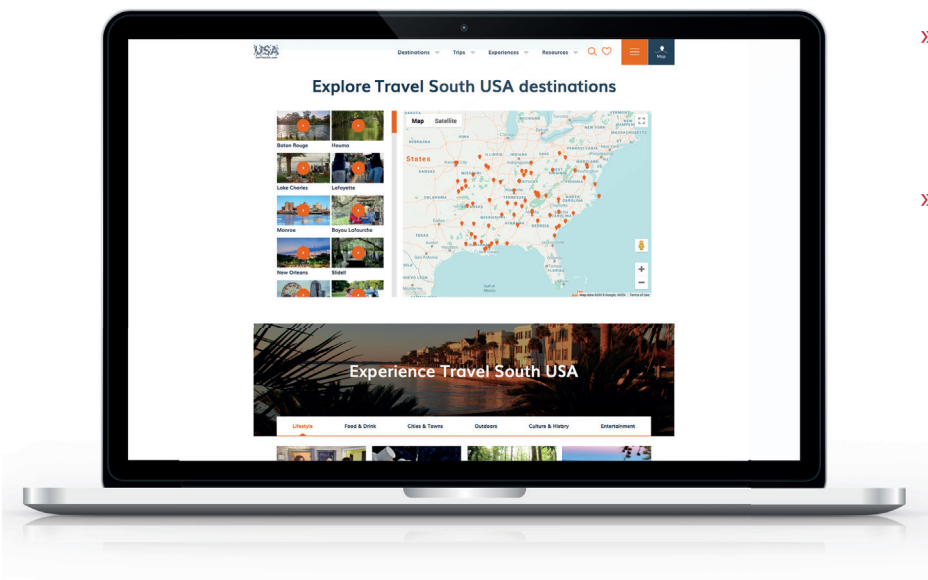
Travel South’s microsite began with content creation, ensuring the 12 states had multiple vehicles with which to tell their distinct stories to international audiences. CONTENT PIECES INCLUDED:

- » 12 state landing pages which serve as the key introductory points for the region and create a sense of place within the U.S.
- » 36 articles and road trips that show accessibility and hidden gems of the region
- » A custom resources section with content emphasizing the accessibility of the region and introducing travelers to essential information about traveling within the South

Once created on **TravelSouth.VisitTheUSA.com**, the new content (along with Travel South’s previously existing international content) was integrated into the new microsite architecture. FEATURES INCLUDE:

- » Travel South-dedicated homepage that highlights the regions and the most engaging pieces of content
- » Custom Travel South-specific navigation featuring map graphics representing each of the 12 states and cities of note

- » Complete translations in 16 languages, leveraging human translators
- » Dedicated URLs and hosting for 16 markets



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Finally, it was time to create awareness of the region by driving traffic to this new content experience via various dedicated media campaigns, such as:

- » Participation in the 2019 Global Inspiration Guide
- » Dedicated one-off reprints of the Travel South section of the Inspiration Guide to distribute in targeted markets. Language editions include Portuguese, English, Chinese, Italian, French.
- » Multi-channel programming in key markets – UK, Australia, Germany, Canada, China – that included display, SEM and native content and video programming.
- » Ongoing regional exposure through special marketing initiatives such as Rhythms of the South, Hear The Music and others.



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The total budget for this cooperative marketing campaign was \$475,000 contributed from Travel South USA and partners. With an ongoing participation with Brand USA that began in 2011, this investment has resulted in a dedicated, ongoing international presence for Travel South’s regional partners, as well as measurable awareness of and engagement with the new content. Without combined investment from Brand USA, Travel South and state partners, the newly created content would not have been able to reach this quality international audience across so many markets and platforms.

The marketing campaigns generated the following results:

- » **600% INCREASE** in pageviews to Travel South USA content since migration to VisittheUSA site platform in 2015
- » **36,473 Hotel Room Nights Booked**
- » **\$6 MILLION+ Gross Bookings**
- » **30 MILLION+ Digital Impressions of the Global Inspiration Guide**

