



THE BRAND CHALLENGE

How do you convince consumers to spend significant money on something that exists only as an experience? This was the challenge of a tourist destination with a dusty reputation. The client needed to get consumers to rethink what they thought they knew about the destination and open their eyes to a whole new set of experiential possibilities. What better marketing to meet this challenge than an experiential marketing campaign?

THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign team brought the destination to the consumer. With a number of haulers the team transplanted their large footprint to state fairs, local festivals, and other major events across the country to share the vacation experience first hand. With interactive games, virtual reality rides, immersive multi-walled video displays, and multiple branded take-aways the agency set out to dismiss past stereotypes, stop consumers in their tracks, and get them to reconsider their next vacation destination. And it worked. Really well. Consistently.

THE MEASUREMENT STRATEGY

Insights for this campaign couldn't focus just on the immediate impact on consumer travel intention; we needed to have a plan that would clearly demonstrate if consumers actually visited. But how do you do this when a family may wait as long as 6 months before they actually book a trip? We asked them.

- **Exit Surveys.** As patrons exited the event, we surveyed them on their past experience, past points of view, and new view of the tourist destination.
- **Post-Event Survey.** Any patron to the event registered with the tour team and provided his email address. We used these email addresses to follow-up three weeks later to ask what they remember, what actions they'd taken, and what actions they planned to take.
- **Follow-Up Survey.** Using the same email addresses, we reached back out to patrons after six months and asked again what they remember, what they've done, and what they plan to do.

RESULTS

We delivered a report after each event to the agency. The agency forwarded these on to their client. The data from the exit survey showed that for most event locations, the impact was strong, with as much as 25% of event patrons experiencing a significant shift in their attitudes about the destination as a great vacation option.

The post-event surveys showed that this positive shift continued with the majority (90%) of patrons three weeks and six months later. After three weeks, 10 to 15% of patrons reported they had planned a trip and 20 to 30% said they intended to take a trip. Six months after the experience 11% (consistently across events) reported that they had booked a trip to the destination for vacation.

With an average spend of \$1,100 or more per visit, it was easy to see the ROI. The typical event engaged 3,934 consumers over a week with the full immersive experience. With 11% visiting the destination at a value of \$1,100 each (a client provided figure), each stop was generating upwards of \$476,000 in incremental value. With PortMA's methodology and support, it was easy for everyone involved to see the value and importance of the program.