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Fiscal Year 2013

MARKETING PLAN

United States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS[®]
st CROIX st JOHN st THOMAS
VISITUSVI.COM

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MISSION

In an effort to aid in the economic development of the territory, the 21st Legislature created the Department of Tourism (DOT) on May 8, 1995 and charged it with the mission of generating tourism revenue for the United States Virgin Islands.

In keeping with our mission, the Department will market the USVI using marketplace intelligence to promote the economic growth of the territory through sustainable tourism development coordinated with the industry and its stakeholders. The Department will aid in the development of programs which advance the understanding of the value of tourism to the territory. The Department of Tourism will promote the unique features of each island and develop long term strategies using the powers and duties provided by the 21st Legislature in the creation of the Department.

ORGANIZATION VISION

The Department of Tourism will position our islands to be the premier destination of choice for travel from North America, Europe and the Caribbean with a constant eye on emerging markets. We will provide a superior vacation experience using our natural resources, attractions, activities, history, culture, food and people to promote our unique islands. Our marketing strategy will enable us to increase revenue to the territory by focusing our efforts on areas with the highest potential for return on investment.

GOALS

The Department of Tourism has set the following core goals to ensure the fulfillment of its mission:

- To increase the number of domestic and international tourists to the territory
- Increase the amount of visitor expenditures on a yearly basis
- To improve community awareness of the value of tourism to our economy.
- To ensure the uniqueness of each island is represented in our marketing efforts
- To build brand equity and create growth opportunities for St. Croix and to maintain brand equity and increase growth opportunities for St. Thomas and St. John

COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

Each year the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI) Department of Tourism focuses on developing a marketing blueprint that allows us to outline for the USVI community the vision, goals and objectives for the fiscal year and to share the tactics that will be implemented to grow market share.

This is the sixth marketing plan submitted by the Department under the deJongh/Francis Administration. Given current economic conditions, this has also been the most difficult to create. The Department will be operating with a budget significantly lower than that of years past and thus has been challenged to be more creative than ever in order to meet our goals.

The tourism playing field is constantly changing. As such, despite budget challenges, the Department will seek out opportunities to encourage repeat visitors and identify source markets for new ones. Fiscal year 2013 will be a year of continuing relationships and building upon the foundation that has been laid over the last five years. A few of the key areas on which we will focus are:

- Transitioning from purely the quantity of sales interactions to the development of customer relationship management that allows us to identify & focus on the agents that consistently produce sales for the territory.
- Greater focus on the potential of the Caribbean as a source for corporate & group travel.
- Brazil as a source market for the USVI
- Health and wellness tourism
- Expanded reach in the film industry
- Continued courting of Virgin Islanders living abroad to actively participate in influencing travel to the territory.
- Completing a five year tourism development plan
- Greater collaboration with Eastern Caribbean destinations to attract and provide incentives for increased cruise visits between May and October

This plan reflects the Department's commitment to the enhancement of the USVI tourism product and growing its market share.

MARKET SEGMENTATION

While developing the strategy for 2013, the Department reviewed data collected over the last year by the USVI Bureau of Economic Research regarding visitors to the destination. The results are as follows:

DOMESTIC ARRIVALS	
New York	61,936
Florida	43,016
Pennsylvania	37,240
Massachusetts	36,991
New Jersey	36,328
Texas	35,484
California	31,693
Virginia	28,317
Georgia	24,931
Illinois	24,872

INTERNATIONAL ARRIVALS	
Denmark	16,479
Canada	5,267
Italy	1,359
Europe (Unlisted)	911
United Kingdom	712
Germany	574
Argentina	559
Venezuela	494
Chile	423
Brazil	260

REGIONAL ARRIVALS	
USVI	33,966
Puerto Rico	13,404
British Virgin Islands	3,732
Caribbean Islands(UNLISTED)	2,749
Barbados	420

Our goal is always to allow our marketing funds to work as efficiently as possible. We intend to focus our efforts on these subsets of the wider populations as they are prospects that are "most likely" to travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands for business or pleasure. Our research, along with input from our partners will allow us to develop strategies to ensure the highest return of our marketing and sales expenditures.

SALES AND MARKETING

As noted, tourism revenues provide significant economic benefits for the U.S. Virgin Islands economy. The Department of Tourism's mission is to enhance and extend local economic development efforts by marketing our islands as a tourist destination for those in the United States and international markets, thereby generating revenues and jobs.

As the travel industry has evolved, we find ourselves operating in a fiercely competitive environment that no longer includes only the Caribbean region, but the world. We are forced to remain on the cutting edge as it relates to how we cut through the "clutter" and communicate with the traveling public about the U.S. Virgin Islands.

To accomplish this, the USVI Department of Tourism provides a truly integrated marketing effort. The functions and services of each of our interrelated program areas – advertising, public relations, sales and product development – support the Department's overall mission.

Our advertising campaign is designed to promote the U.S. Virgin Islands as a premier travel destination by engaging potential visitors through a variety of national/international advertising. The plan includes integration of a multimedia strategy in print, television, with a focus on digital marketing opportunities, in recognition of the increasing role of the internet in the decision making process of the consumer. We will also leverage media opportunities such as mobile and social channels to extend the brand message and encourage viral activities.

Our public relations strategy involves the proactive outreach to the media as well as the travel trade industry throughout the US and international markets including, Canada, Scandinavia, Italy, the Caribbean, and South America. Through in-market events, press trips, familiarization tours, and social media campaigns, public relations provides first-hand promotion of the USVI travel product, and creates cooperative opportunities for our travel industry partners. Public relations also markets directly to consumers using social media and promotional methods, in further support of our advertising efforts.

The sales strategy will focus on proactively promoting directly to both the consumer and the travel trade the diverse vacation activities and experiences offered in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Sales calls, sales blitzes, reservation center trainings, along with trade and consumer shows are some of the efforts that will be employed by our sales force.

KEY MARKETING PRIORITIES

Build and maintain awareness of USVI as a premier vacation destination able to fulfill travelers' needs

- Target specific audiences (geographic and lifestyle) with the highest propensity to travel to USVI
- Generate both cost-efficient and strong levels of response to DOT advertising
- Target Caribbean markets to increase awareness and potential visitation to USVI as a nearby quick-trip destination
- Have a presence in key print publications, national television and increased online marketing campaigns
- Promote our diverse and wide-ranging offerings to key "niche" segments including romance, dive, and meetings & incentives
- Maintain regular communication with travel agents
- Generate positive destination media coverage
- Promote positive impact of tourism to local community
- Reach potential visitors in online social environments
- Drive resident and visitor conversations about the USVI
- Inspire consumer advocacy of the USVI as a vacation destination
- Use of destination's online booking engine to drive sales

ADVERTISING

In FY13 the USVI marketing plan will build upon the successes of the programs we executed in FY12. Given the current economic conditions in our key markets and the Department's decreased marketing budget for 2013, the Department must work harder to entice consumers who may be less willing to part with their disposable income. The DOT will continue to execute those programs that have a proven track record in delivering visitors to our shores. After many years, the DOT has acquired a great deal of "property" that can be refreshed and repurposed for the current marketplace.

As important as the media placements purchased are the properties that the USVI owns such as our images, website, and databases. Additionally the reputation of the USVI as portrayed in our public relations efforts and social media outlets such as Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter is crucial in convincing consumers to choose the USVI over the competition.

In FY13 we will use these elements to execute a plan that touches consumers through the outlets they have incorporated into their daily routines. These routines, in recent years, have become more digitally focused. Technology has become the way that

consumers stay in touch. Whether sharing pictures, or the latest happenings in their lives, they depend on their devices to keep them connected. Delivering the USVI message that's appealing and relevant to their life stages and interests is paramount to breaking through the clutter.

The behavioral and attitudinal characteristics of these consumers will be used to provide guidance for the strategic and messaging direction for the destination to provide contextual relevance to the USVI offerings and their vacation experience desires.

Advertising Objectives - Using recently developed USVI creative:

- To influence consumers during each phase of their decision making process
- To position the USVI as the smart choice for their vacation destination given the current economic climate
- To utilize media channels that have become increasingly more important to consumers
- To promote use of visitUSVI.com booking engine

Brand Positioning

In 2013, the DOT will build off the momentum of its "You Unscripted" campaign and positioning by refining the overall strategy for the destination to reflect and respond to the cultural context, attitudes and behaviors of its visitors, as well as the current economic climate. The positioning will still reflect the unique product offering that distinguishes the USVI from other Caribbean destinations, that of a truly experiential vacation, but it will also stem from the consumer insight around the cultural context, attitudes and behaviors towards travel.

Target Audience

With the continued uncertainty about the economy, consumers continue to be mindful and guarded about their spending habits. While many are still traveling, the current economic situation has caused them to redefine "value." Consumers are seeking experiential value in addition to monetary discounts. They want to get the most out of the vacations they are taking.

Given the transformation that has been occurring across the media landscape, great care will be taken to find that best mix of media to reach our target audiences. Though traditional media will be used to reach some target segments and to support promotional offers, we anticipate an increased use of digital platforms such as search, display, social and online video as central components of the FY13 plan given the use of these media by our target.

Traditional

We will continue to use traditional channels such as TV, print and radio to reach consumers with branding and promotional messages.

Search

The paid search strategy will be designed to meet specific goals, whether they are specific cost-per-click (CPC), cost-per-action (CPA) or brand awareness. As part of a full marketing plan, paid search brings efficiency to the delivery of our online goals. Additionally an ongoing SEO program will ensure the USVI website registers at the top with the major portals. The USVI is interested in driving cost-efficient traffic to its site, as well as retaining these visitors for as long as possible to provide them the most relevant information and encouraging them to book a trip to the USVI. The majority of segments important to the DOT will also be supported by a paid search presence: Romance, Family, Dive, Yachting, Military, Cruise Consumer, Sports, Intra Caribbean, Seasonal Promotions and Shopping. However, much of the search strategy is to focus on the destination as a whole. Paid search will support primarily consumer efforts, however it will also include keywords to support the MICE market. The DOT will continue to have a presence over multiple engines. The marketing will capitalize on the presence of other media in the market.

Communications Plan

Niche targets, promotional offers, and branding will be supported over the course of the year by integrated media efforts. The FY2013 consumer effort, inclusive of a mix of print and digital media, reflects a prioritization of the following segments:

Bridal/Romance

Dive

Affluent travelers

African American

Intra-Caribbean

General Travel/Family

Yachting/Sailing

Sports

	Niche	Promo	Brand
Print	X		X
Broadcast		X	X
Digital	X	X	

From a timing standpoint, media will run throughout the year, budget permitting, with a goal of:

- aligning with the seasonality of the destination
- supporting key editorial coverage and/or events (e.g. consumer or trade shows)
- reflecting the booking window for promotional offers

Search media will serve as the on-going effort to sustain a presence for the destination on an annual basis.

Target Segmentation

With the multi-island offering of the USVI, our vacation destination has the experiences and variety to appeal to many travel segments. Given the impact of the economy on discretionary spending, efforts against niche audiences will be prioritized based on their potential financial opportunity to the destination. Factors such as length of hotel stay, potential to shop, dine and participate in on-island activities have been considered. These potential travelers will be reached with messaging across a variety of media channels inclusive of print, broadcast, digital, search and social platforms. The groups we are targeting represent key life stages/moments, passion points and/or vacation interests:

Bridal/Romance

As the economy continues to fall on rough times, there is a growing trend of couples waiting to become engaged or married until a later age in their life. The census bureau recently reported that the median age for couples tying the knot is 28 for men and 27 for women.

While the Census bureau reports on fewer and later marriages, it is notable that of those getting engaged, couples age 25-44 are more likely to have a destination wedding utilizing the cost-saving in all-inclusive package deals.

The trend of marrying at an older age also allows couples to save over a longer period of time in addition to having longer in a career path to a higher paying job. The likelihood

of destination weddings is highest for couples with a HHI of more than \$75K a year.

Dive

According to research studies, dive tourism accounts for about 3-4 million trips worldwide each year, with the Caribbean attracting around 5.7 million scuba divers each year.

Demographically, divers tend to be aged 25-35 years, are predominantly male, travel frequently, and tend to have a partner. The female audience, however, is actively growing. There is also strong correlation between diving, fishing, and yachting. Research indicates that 41% of the population who participated in sailing and 48% of the population who participated in saltwater fishing in the past 12 months also participated in snorkeling.

This segment is an important source for the destination since divers tend to spend more and stay longer than the average vacationer.

The dive community can be found sharing dive travel information online. Key publications that speak directly to this market along with digital media will be used.

Sports

Alliances with professional and/or collegiate sports provide another venue for reaching potential travelers through non-traditional methods. As appropriate, we will seek out partnerships and alliances with key partners in an effort to leverage media buys to garner merchandising that can be used for incentives or giveaways.

Yachting

The average adult traveling to the Caribbean is twice as likely to participate in sailing as other adults, making yachting a key tourism activity for the region. Yachting tourists often mimic the same behavior of backpacking tourists, following pre-determined paths from one region to another. Stops along the path also revolve around tourism adventures and itineraries.

The Caribbean ranks as a top yachting region globally, alongside the United States and the Mediterranean as top competitors. The Caribbean ranks first in Yachting tourism due to inter-island yacht charters and traffic from the Europe to the US and trans-Atlantic traffic.

This market includes many crossover segments between the luxury traveler, trade traveler, and activity around the Department of Tourism boat shows.

Family

Families are a great key target for the US Virgin Islands, as the destination offers a variety of exploration and sight-seeing for all ages.

A primary reason why travel matters among families is the chance to bond and feel connected to one another. Families also tend to gravitate to warmer climates for vacations with 40% of families with 2 or more children under age 18 traveling to beaches as a vacation destination. Of families traveling outside of the US, 50% choose the Caribbean as a destination.

Multi-generational leisure travel is also on the rise, with grandparents making up one third of all leisure travelers. Studies have indicated the number of grandparents traveling with grandchildren continues to rise and is an important market within the overall U.S. leisure travel population. The study also found that most leisure travel was to celebrate a "life event" and visit family and friends.

As travel costs continue to decline to accommodate a struggling economy, family travel has become more affordable for families than in the past, making the USVI an ideal destination.

As much of this vacation research occurs online, digital is recommended as the lead channel to reach the family market.

Affluent Traveler

As the economy continues to see a downturn in the US, the more affluent market is spending more time entertaining at home than traveling, challenging travel marketers to appeal as comfortable, if not more comfortable than their home surroundings. Research also shows this demographic likes to spend more time searching for travel deals than in the past. However, the benefit of attracting this market is that once in the destination, they tend to spend a good deal of money on accommodations, dining, in our retail establishments and activities. According to a recent interview in Eye For Travel marketing site, one of the world's largest travel sellers, when choosing accommodations, the affluent traveler is 80% more likely to pay \$400 to \$499 a night, 39% more likely to book a vacation of 10 or more days, and 66% more likely to book a package between \$2,500 and \$5,000. Thus, the affluent traveler will remain on our radar for 2013.

African-Americans

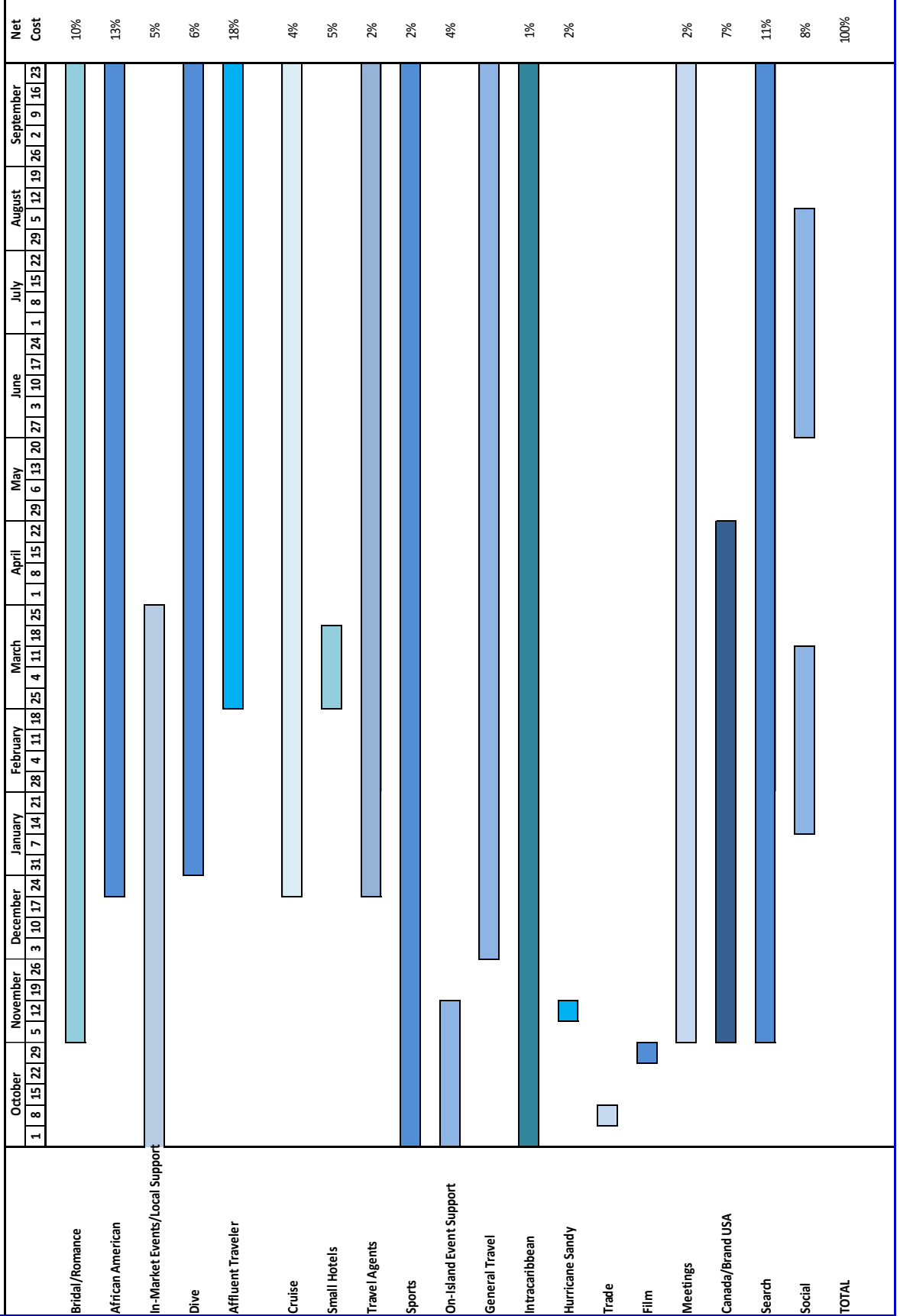
According to Simmons, about 10% of those who have traveled to the USVI in the last three years are African-American. This audience has a high propensity for travel to the Caribbean and often seeks the Caribbean for destination weddings & honeymoons as well as family vacations.

Efforts against this market will be focused on print and digital along with radio (as affordable).

Trade

Trade groups such as meeting and incentive planners and travel agents continue to be an important resource for the destination. Digital media will be the primary channel used to reach them as we have seen within the B2B space growth of in the availability and consumption of more digital media (e.g. e-newsletters) along with the fact that it is more timely and relevant than the companion print publications. Along with MICE market and travel agents, the DOT plan will support cruise agents, and film.

FY13 USVI Media Recommendation



Social Media Marketing (advertising and public relations tactics)

The Department of Tourism's market research indicates that social media channels will continue to play an increasingly important role in the coming year, as more and more travelers seek inspiration and advice from their friends and family via social networks.

Over the last year, the Department has made significant strides toward establishing a strong presence on social media channels, with a focus on Facebook and Twitter. An analysis of how tourism brands are using these channels has indicated that Facebook presents a tremendous opportunity for destinations to create a loyal community of fans that can be utilized to promote the destination through positive word-of-mouth and repeat visits. Twitter is most often utilized as an effective "broadcast channel" to keep followers (including travelers, media and influencers) abreast of the latest destination news and offerings.

Social media will be used to support our promotional activities, generate conversations about the brand and as a vehicle for our USVI ambassadors to promote the destination. Because word of mouth is very influential in travel decisions, social media both fuels and fosters the conversation, allowing consumers to easily obtain information and move them to action. In 2013 social media will allow for ongoing dialogue with consumers as well as augment other paid search consumer efforts. It will also provide visibility beyond the destination's website, www.visitUSVI.com.

Social media marketing will provide:

- Targeted approach to potential visitors and social media advocates
- Engagement of on-island stakeholders to share content and create local promotional opportunities
- Incentivize visitors to share photos, videos, reviews and other content to promote the destination through contests

Our Objectives

- Engage consumers and influence them to choose the USVI and secure them as advocates (those who share) and brand ambassadors
- Leverage social media travel conversationalists as brand ambassadors and capitalize on their networks, and drive to online bookings
- Use social media tools to increase on-island spend, engaging local stakeholders to share content and promote their businesses
- Monitor relevant conversation to gain insights and chart results
- Reach new audiences
- Deepen relationships
- Showcase visitor satisfaction
- Provide relevant and persuasive information

Facebook

- Maintain convenient hub for audience relationships
- Address all audiences with helpful, persuasive information
- Host promotions and encourage sharing
- Tap into new audiences with paid advertising

YouTube

- Position video content where it can be easily found
- Drive viewers from other platforms back to YouTube for extended viewing

Pinterest

- Provide sharable content across audiences
- Special focus on bridal

Twitter

- Develop and promote social media-specific promotions that target potential visitors on Twitter
- Interact 1-1 with followers in view of the broader audience
- Distribute information about upcoming events
- “Surprise and delight” followers with special perks and benefits to generate awareness and interest.
- Augment offline ads for the destination with Twitter logo and handle for potential visitors to follow.
- Develop signage/banners at airports encouraging visitors to follow the destination on Twitter
- Harness the power of destination visuals through photo contests.
- Create opportunities for further synergy between stakeholders and the Department of Tourism through Twitter platform.
- Utilize Twitter handle to promote sales team efforts.

Blogger Outreach

To capitalize on marketing opportunities that exist to reach potential visitors in the “blogosphere,” the Department will continue its initiatives in FY2013 to increase the destination’s presence on high-profile travel blogs. The DOT will:

- Establish schedule for blogger-only familiarization visits on an individual and group basis.
- Explore participation in key blogger industry events to raise destination’s profile.

- Develop promotional relationships with influential bloggers to showcase the USVI.
- Investigate opportunities to establish “Mocko Jumbie” as a voice for a destination blog

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations will continue to play an important role in the Department’s overall marketing plan in FY2013 as a cost-effective channel to create positive exposure for the destination.

In the coming year, the Department will extend and enhance its effective public relations strategy to both reach potential visitors with branded messages while keeping the local community informed of the DOTs activities and the importance of tourism to the destination.

The continued concern regarding the fiscal health of our key travel market makes it increasingly important for the destination’s marketing messages to appeal to travelers’ desire for of value and meaningful, authentic experiences in the coming year. As many travelers will be making purchase decisions based on perceived job security, disposable income and the appeal of potential savings from visiting drive destinations, the Department of Tourism will increase its focus on saturating those stateside markets that offer non-stop service or easy connections to the territory.

Public relations will play an important role in this approach, coordinating and executing comprehensive media, travel agent and direct-to-consumer activities in these markets. To identify priority markets for FY2013, the Department will carefully monitor airlift and airline capacity trends and move quickly to implement marketing and public relations support based on need and the opportunity to grow market share.

In addition, the public relations team will continue to identify ways to showcase experiential aspects of the destination that resonate with the mindset of potential visitors—who desire fulfillment through experiences and memories with loved ones.

In FY2013, the Department will also extend its efforts to reach potential visitors through digital and social channels based on research that indicates the power of these platforms to influence travel inspiration and purchase decisions. Over the past year, the Department has focused on building a strong presence in this area through a variety of public relations initiatives. The intent to is capitalize on the strides made in this area.

All activities will be evaluated to ensure that every PR investment achieves the maximum return on investment (ROI), and every activity will continue to be weighed against the Department’s 3:1 benchmark for ROI.

To maximize efficiency and effectiveness of spend, PR activities will also include segment-specific initiatives, targeting the niche markets and special interest segments that make up the majority of visitors to the Territory. The priority segments for PR support will include: **Family, Bridal/Romance, Dive, Yachting/Sailing, Luxury, Sports, Intra-Caribbean, African American** and **MICE**. The PR team will pursue feature coverage across media outlets that specifically target these markets.

In addition, the Department will continue to seek ways to amplify its editorial public relations efforts through strategic marketing partnerships with brands that speak directly to potential visitors in each of the priority segments and markets. Over the last several years, these partnerships have created new opportunities to reach consumers, promote bookable offers and break through the clutter of competitive destination marketing.

In keeping with the Department's overall strategy for FY2013, the primary focus for forging strategic partners with a shift from mass market brands to niche (segment-specific) brands that directly reach those travelers most likely to visit the destination in the coming year.

On an ongoing basis, the overall public relations campaign will continue to support our tourism sales and advertising efforts with a host of creative tactics using television, print and online publications, the Internet, email, events and presentations. This approach is designed to educate the travel trade industry (tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, airlines, etc.), consumers and the U.S. Virgin Islands community about the USVI product—its people, its places and its experiences.

As part of our overall public relations plan, we will continue to engage our tourism stakeholders, our youth and the community at large through outreach, presentations and dialog with local media to ensure their participation in the marketing process and buy-in of the tourism industry. The public's embrace of the tourism industry continues to be key to the success of the Department's marketing efforts and the sustainability of the industry moving forward.

In addition, the PR team will proactively review and enhance its crisis communications protocol and preparedness measures on a regular basis. This effort will position the Territory in the best manner to address and respond to issues that may negatively impact tourism.

PR Plan Components:

1. MEDIA RELATIONS

Ongoing Media Relations – For FY2013, the Department's PR team will maintain its focus on leveraging strong editorial relationships to deliver positive coverage for the destination. The team's strategy for ongoing media relations over the coming year will be as follows:

- Manage a communications campaign with multiple points of editorial contact to sustain media coverage throughout the year.
- Keep the U.S. Virgin Islands top-of-mind among editorial gatekeepers.
- Saturate media with relevant, timely information to generate stories.
- Develop ongoing PR initiatives that tap into seasonal and/or opportunistic trend to drive visitors from key regional markets.
- Tailor frequent, relevant communications to niche markets (i.e., romance, family, sports, meetings/incentives, dive, etc.) via press releases, media alerts and pitches.
- Disseminate news to international markets via offshore offices.
- Publicize on-island events to generate interest among media and consumers that drive visitor bookings.
- Promote special offers to drive bookings to destination.
- Coordinate media missions in key markets

Press Hospitality: Group and Individual Media Visits – Press hospitality will continue to be a primary driver of large feature coverage that showcases various aspects and partners. For FY2013, the team will seek to infuse more cultural and authentic experiences into each press visit, including additional hosts in connection with local events and more opportunities to meet with VI personalities. To accomplish this goal, the team will apply the following approach:

- Secure feature coverage for the destination by coordinating group visits of top-tier press.
- Support group press trip schedule and drive ongoing media coverage by coordinating individual media visits for key press.
- Seek opportunities to support on-island events of interest to potential visitors through press hosts.

MICE Market Outreach

- Develop MICE email correspondence
- Coordinate USVI sales missions visiting key MICE planners
- Secure targeted MICE planners and MICE media to participate in 4-day familiarization trip to USVI

On Island Public Relations

Ensuring on-island partners and the Virgin Islands community are aware of the DOT's efforts is an important part of the DOT's strategy. The Department realizes the importance of an educated/informed public. Some tactics that will be employed during FY2013 are:

- Distribution of regular press releases to local media to ensure the VI community is well informed about DOT activities
- Exploration of the use of audio news releases and sound bites to provide media outlets with comments in the absence of, and in addition to live interviews
- Creation of video news briefs on news items of general interest to be used on the Ambassador and consumer web sites, as well as in social media where appropriate.
- Capturing more data from local partners through surveys and distribute findings to the VI business community. The purpose of this would be to engage our partners more regularly in an effort to determine their needs, challenges, trends and projections, so we can adjust our marketing efforts as needed. Additionally, when appropriate, we would share the aggregate results with partners who might benefit from this information.
- Developing a schedule of presentations and interviews for the Commissioner and other DOT executive staff to maintain dialogue with the community
- Drafting 2-3 op-ed pieces throughout the year to engage the community in thought about various tourism topics
- Expanding the customer service pledge program to include bi-weekly email blasts to pledge takers with customer service tips and "Wow" stories
- Conducting outreach to villa rental companies, managers and owners to develop a more comprehensive database of villas in the territory and improve communications
- Developing a local ambassador program to identify individuals in the community that would be willing to host visiting journalists or other VIPs. Hosting might include welcoming VIP guests to their home for a meal or visit, attending DOT events to meet with VIP guests, being interviewed by visiting journalists.

2. KEY MARKET CAMPAIGNS

In-Market Activities (Primary Markets) - In keeping with the Department's overall strategy for FY2013, the marketing team will continue to seek ways to saturate key stateside markets that offer direct and connecting service to the Territory.

The DOT will explore new markets to conduct key market campaigns that show increased arrivals or potential to grow share, such as Texas and California. However, due to budgetary constraints during FY2013, the department may have to focus on one market versus several events as been the practice during pas fiscal years.

Activities will include:

- Coordinate targeted media blitzes in select mainland market to accomplish the following:
 - Saturate market to generate widespread awareness and interest in the destination.
 - Create opportunities for experiential direct-to-consumer events and/or interaction with potential visitors.
 - Generate significant print and broadcast media coverage.
 - Promote bookable offers from key gateway markets.
 - Showcase tourism news and on-island development.
 - Provide marketing support for the destination's airline and industry partners.
 - Coordinate one-on-one desk side interviews for DOT spokesperson with high-profile lifestyle and travel media outlets in each market
 - Coordinate media events targeting 25-30 top-tier members of the press in each market.
 - Integrate and synchronize with sales and advertising efforts as appropriate.
 - Coordinate "virtual" media blitz - a cost effective way to cover target markets
- The following domestic markets are those the DOT has identified as possible priority markets for these events:
 - Texas—Dallas/Fort Worth, Houston, Austin
 - California—Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego

International Markets – With continued interest from the Canadian market, and continued performance from Denmark, the PR team will continue to support international marketing efforts in FY2013 to maximize press and sales opportunities from these feeder markets. Activities will include:

- Work closely with international sales team to extend reach of PR activities in international markets.
- Leverage sales activities as opportunity for media and/or consumer outreach.
- Liaise with offshore offices to identify editorial opportunities and ensure consistency of message in international markets.
- Develop translated press and collateral materials.
- The following have been identified as primary international markets for FY2013:
 - Brazil
 - Canada
 - Denmark
 - Italy

3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS & PROMOTIONS

Strategic partnerships and promotions continue to prove effective for generating broad exposure and awareness for the destination, while producing strong and measurable ROI. For FY2013, the primary focus for strategic partners with shift from mass market brands to niche (segment-specific) brands that directly reach those travelers most likely to visit the destination in the coming year. These include retail relationships and joint promotions with branded products, but also partnerships with well-known brands in key stateside feeder markets. To accomplish this goal, the team will execute the following activities:

- Identify new ways to reach potential visitors through cost-effective (high ROI) partnerships and promotions with high-profile brands.
- Pursue opportunities for co-branded presence in key gateway markets in connection with any planned in-market activities.
- Target categories for partnerships and promotions will include the following:
 - Retail partnerships
 - Segment-specific (with focus on bridal, family and dive)
 - Online promotions (that also leverage the Department’s social channels)

4. MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

The Department’s bi-monthly newsletter has been so well received that the DOT now will be distributing it on a monthly basis. The newsletter continues to provide important information to the DOT's key stakeholders on marketing initiatives and opportunities for greater collaboration. Over the last year, subscriptions to the newsletter have steadily grown, and the Department has found new ways to make the newsletter content even more relevant with industry profiles and a dedicated feature on customer service. The

strategy for FY2013 will be to continue to evolve the newsletter based on partner feedback to ensure that it provides an invaluable resource for stakeholders.

5. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

Over the past year, the Department has continued to proactively manage external communication on behalf of the tourism industry on issues that have the potential to negatively impact visitor arrivals, including hurricane response. These efforts are based on a comprehensive crisis communications protocol that has been developed and updated over time. For FY2013, the Department will regularly review, test and enhance these measures to ensure the most effective response that minimized negative impact to the local economy. Activities will include:

- Maintain updated crisis communications protocol and procedures in preparation for any event or news coverage that may negatively impact the Territory's tourism industry.
 - Ongoing enhancement of updated hurricane PR plan and procedures.
 - Development of a standard operating procedure for incidents affecting our tourism product or partners.
 - Create training opportunities for stakeholders to more effectively integrate with Department's response plan.
 - Update general crisis communications procedures.
 - Maintenance of emergency website, satellite phone and press information hotline communication channels.
 - Daily media monitoring to uncover potential crisis and/or opportunities
 - Assist local partners by conducting crisis communication seminar for stakeholders

SALES

The United States Virgin Islands Department of Tourism has developed an aggressive sales strategy for both domestic and international markets. As part of the plan to keep the USVI top of mind as the leading Caribbean destination of choice for leisure and business travel, a mix of the following will be implemented: sales calls; regional sales blitzes; trade show participation; and the training of sellers of travel and membership in key organizations.

Domestic Objectives:

- Increase by 5% the number of client sales appointments booked as result of outreach at trade shows.
- Develop a strategy to build stronger relationships between the national sales team and travel agents.
- Increase by 3% the number of tour operator/formal travel agent group presentations per region.
- Participation in tradeshow giving the sales team access to both, new niche markets for the Department of Tourism and to travel agents that might otherwise not be reached through current sales efforts, specifically the faith based travel market and the home based travel agent.

Domestic Strategies:

In FY 2013, the U.S. Virgin Islands sales team will implement a targeted, results-driven strategy to track return on investment (ROI) and enhance partnerships with travel, wedding, dive, and meeting professionals within each of its six (6) regions.

The sales team will attend consumer and industry trade shows throughout the U.S. with specific marketing tactics to measure ROI from both target markets. These shows target key markets shown to be steady in the current economy and where the sales team has built strong relationships

- Bridal – 5 domestic shows
 - Dive – 5 domestic shows
 - Boating/Adventure – 8 domestic shows
 - General Consumer – 13 domestic shows
 - Travel Agent – 31 shows
 - Meeting Planner/Corporate – 6 domestic shows
 - 11 tour operator –hosted shows (FunJet, Apple, MLT, Go-Go Worldwide Vacations, and Travel Impressions) in key markets.
- Each sales representative and sales manager will conduct a minimum of 80 monthly sales visits to travel agents, wedding planners, meeting planners and other targets.

- Conduct/host training at the reservation centers for the ten (10) top-producing tour operators and reservations call centers in the U.S. to ensure that booking agents fully understand the benefits of visiting the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- The sales team will provide support during any in-market events taking place in FY2013 by hosting travel agent events and visiting key agencies while in-market
- Host 45 travel agent presentations and special events, targeting agency decision makers throughout the six regions.

International Market Development

During fiscal year 2013, the department will continue its efforts in the Scandinavian, Italian, Canadian and Caribbean markets. New to the mix will be Brazil. Results of exploratory trips have proven the Brazilians are interested in the USVI. There is significant interest in the destination as a location for destination weddings. For 2013, the DOT will focus on presenting the territory as the ideal location for Brazilian brides and grooms-to-be, working with receptive operators and exploring options for representation.

During this fiscal year, the department will

- Maintain representation in Canada, Denmark, Italy along with Puerto Rico
- Host at least one in-market event in each area.
- Maintain a presence at key trade shows in each market.
- Host one travel agent/tour operator FAM Trip and one Media Trip from each market.

In May of 2012, in a public/private sector partnership with the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Commerce, Brand USA launched a \$50 million program to encourage travel to the USA from international markets. Through the DOT's aggressive position that the territories must be equally represented in this program, a partnership has been secured and the islands are represented in this multi-million dollar program. The USVI has secured funding that will provide additional exposure for the destination in the Canadian market. During phase two, the islands will take advantage of Brand USA's push in the Brazilian market to enhance the USVI's undertakings in that country.

TRADE SHOWS

The Department of Tourism is pleased to provide the FY2013 trade show schedule, which also includes our travel agent & media sales blitzes, tour operator training sessions and international shows.

The DOT participation in trade shows strengthens the industry presence of the destination and reaches key influencers that book business to the USVI. During these events, the DOT maximizes media opportunities by distributing press materials, coordinating desk side appointments with media attending the show, and off-site interviews in the surrounding market(s).

In order to ensure maximum exposure for our private sector partners, while adhering to the Department's budget, we have outlined the following policy for participation in DOT-sponsored industry events. Some major changes have been made to the show selections based on the Department's commitment to ensure all of the DOT's initiatives are aligned with our overall ROI marketing strategy.

To maximize the benefits of our participation, a trade show participation policy has been developed and is outlined below. The policy outlines the different levels of participation available to our partners based on the type of trade show or event.

STANDARD PARTICIPATION (DOMESTIC): One Representative from each Hotel & Tourism Association

The majority of shows on the FY2012 schedule will fall into this category. The DOT will purchase standard trade show booths at most shows and will invite each hotel association (USVI Hotel & Tourism Association (St. Thomas/St. John) and the St. Croix Hotel & Tourism Association) to each have one individual present at the show. These two individuals will represent the association membership. At times, there may be a cost associated with attendance depending upon show fees, size of booth and number of representatives participating. For example, in those cases where additional cost is incurred for registration, the individual associations will cover the registration cost for their representatives. Please note: the individual association will cover all travel-related expenses for its representative. Additionally, all costs for shipping and/or the cost of receiving delivery of shipped HTA material at the booth will be the responsibility of the individual associations.

SPECIAL EVENT PARTICIPATION (DOMESTIC): All interested parties

This applies primarily to events for which the audience consists of media, travel agents, tour operators, consumers and airline representatives. Every attempt will be made at these events to allow our association and individual partners to attend, have 2-3 minutes to present their product and/or either a shared or individual area in which to present their material. Generally, these events will be cocktail receptions that include a presentation by a DOT representative. These events are open to all tourism-related businesses interested in attending, including, but not limited to, members of the Hotel & Tourism Associations, Chambers of Commerce and Charter Yacht League. There is no cost for participating. However, individuals will be responsible for coordinating their own personal travel and paying all travel-related expenses. Participants will be required to donate a prize from their respective business and provide a certificate/letter describing said prize to be given at the event. The DOT will attempt to arrange sales calls

the day before and/or after these events to provide additional value especially for the partners traveling from the USVI to participate. When this is not possible, we encourage you to make your own arrangements to maximize your time in-market.

STANDARD PARTICIPATION (INTERNATIONAL): All interested parties

As the DOT participates in a limited number of International Trade Shows, we want to ensure maximum involvement to the extent that it is financially feasible. In most cases, the DOT will purchase booth space that can accommodate all partner participants who may want to attend these shows. At present, these shows will remain open to any tourism-related business at no cost. However, the DOT reserves the right to revisit this position if partner participation becomes extensive and causes the reevaluation of the booth size needed for the event. Individuals are responsible for coordinating and covering their personal travel costs, shipping/delivery and miscellaneous expenses in connection with the show.

TOUR OPERATOR TRAINING PROGRAMS: Hotel participation

The DOT will coordinate and cover the cost of Food & Beverage functions for tour operator training programs with key operators. Participation in these training events will be open to all hotels that are in the specific operator's program. (This optional attendance is only available if a specific hotel property participates in the program of the operator we are visiting). Individuals are responsible for coordinating and covering their personal travel costs.

MEETINGS & INCENTIVE MARKET TRADE SHOWS: Qualifying Hotels and Destination Management Companies

The Department will provide participation in both of these shows to HTA and its individual members at a predetermined cost for each show. All attempts will be made to maintain the current ratio for which the collective private sector cost has been less than 20% of the total show booth space rental and decorating cost.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM-ONLY EVENTS

There are some shows on the schedule which are noted DOT only. Where DOT only is noted, partners cannot be accommodated. These shows generally fall in one of the following categories:

1. One-on-one meeting shows such as Pow Wow and CHA Marketplace (where the DOT will have two or more representatives at the destination booth).
2. Shows at which due to limited booth size, we cannot accommodate more than the DOT staff and a tour operator booking partner in the space purchased. (Examples are the New York Times or LA Times shows).
3. Shows where the DOT is partnering with another agency or organization (such as Cruise Shipping Miami).

It is the intention of the DOT that this clear outline will provide for a mutually productive and continued successful partnership in FY2013. Please understand that the attached schedule is subject to change based on market conditions. Every attempt will be made to provide ample notice of changes to the schedule.

2013 Trade Show Schedule

Event/Activity	Date	Booth Size	Regional Office	Location	Audience	Partner Participation
Oct-12						
IMEX America	10/9-12/12	20X20	Atlanta	Las Vegas, NV	Meeting Planners	Yes
Global Gaming Expo	10/1-4/12	10X10	STT	Las Vegas, NV	Gaming	No
American Express Meetings & Events	10/26-29/12	10X10	STT	Dallas, TX	Meeting Planners	No
CLASSIC VACATIONS	10/11/2012	6' table	New England	Boston	Travel Agents	No
MAINE ASTA	10/17/2012	6' table	New England	Portland, Me	Travel Agents	No
PTANA Travel Expo	10/22/2012	6' table	New England	Randolph, Ma	Travel Agents	No
PTANA Travel Expo	10/23/2012	8X10	Washington, DC	Philadelphia, PA	Trade	No
PTANA Travel Expo	10/24/2012	8X10	Washington, DC	Baltimore, MD	Trade	No
Nov-12						
DEMA	11/14-17/2012	10x10	Chicago	Las Vegas, NV	Dive Trade	Yes
Premiere Meetings Exchange/Conde Nast Traveler	11/11-14/2012	6' table	STT Office	Miami, FL	Meeting Planners	No
Travel and Adventure Show	11/10-11/12	10x10	Miami, FL	Dallas, TX	Consumer	No
Luxury Travel Exchange International	11/27-29/12	10x10	TBD	Las Vegas, NV	Trade/Hosted Buyer	Yes
VSTA	11/1/2012	10x10	New England	Burlington, VT	Travel Agents	No
Ski and Sun Getaway Travel Show	11/18/2012	10x10	TBD	Cromwell, CT	Consumer	No
Dec-12						
NO SHOWS SCHEDULED						
Jan-13						
Baltimore/ DC Dive Show	TBA	10X10	Washington, DC	Baltimore, MD	Consumer	No
AAA Great Vacations Expo	1/18-20, 2013	10X10	Chicago	Columbus, OH	Consumer	No
Adventures in Travel Expo	1/26-27, 2013	10X10	Chicago	Chicago, IL	Consumer/Travel Agent	No
Adventures in Travel Expo	1/12-13/13	10X10	TBD	Los Angeles, CA	Consumer	No
New York Times Show	1/18-20/13	10X10	TBD	New York, NY	Consumer	No
Georgia Bridal Show	1/6/2013	10x10	Atlanta	Atlanta, GA	Consumer	No
Georgia Bridal Show	1/13/2013	10x10	Atlanta	Birmingham, AL	Consumer	No
DALLAS BRIDAL SHOW	1/26-27/2013	10x10	Miami	Dallas, TX	Consumers	No
Feb-13						
Peninsula Tradeshow/Travel Agent Presentations	2/19-21/12	8X10	Washington, DC	Multi-city, NC/ SC	Trade	No
Our World Underwater	2/15-17/2013	10x10	Chicago	Chicago, IL	Dive Consumer	No
Adventures in Travel Expo	2/16-17/13	10x10	TBD	Santa Clara, CA	Consumer	No
MIAMI INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW	Feb. 14-18, 2013	10x10	Miami	Miami, FL	Consumer	No
Boston Globe Travel Show	2/8/-10/13	10 x 20	New England	Boston, Ma	Travel Agents & Consumers	
Mar-13						
Adventures in Travel DC	3/9-10/13	10X10	Washington, DC	Washington, DC	Consumer	No
AAA Travel EXPO	March		New England	TBA	Trade/ Consumer	No
Beneath the Sea	3/22-24/2013	10x10	Chicago	Rutherford, NJ	Dive Consumer	No
SEATRADE	3/11-14/13	10X10	Miami, FL/STT	Miami, FL	cr	No
HOUSTON WEDDING SHOWCASE	3/9/2013	10x10	Miami	Houston, TX	Consumer	No
Successful Meetings University International	3/8-10/13		TBD	New York, NY	Meeting Planners	No
Apr-13						
AAA Travel EXPO	TBA	10X10	Washington, DC	TBA	Trade/ Consumer	No
Travel Impressions	TBA	8X10	Washington, DC	Charlotte, NC	Trade	No
MTSA Kansas City/St. Louis/Omaha (3 shows + roundtabl	TBD	10X10	Chicago	Kansas City/St. Louis/Omaha	Travel Agents	No
MC Global Interact Conference	4/24-26/2013	10x10	Chicago	Vancouver, CA	Meeting Planners	No
PENINSULA PRESENTATION	4/1-4/12	6' table	Miami	Hou/Dal/San Antonio/Austin	Travel Agents	No
Travel Impressions	TBD	6' table	Atlanta	Atlanta, GA	Travel Agents	No
May-13						
Travel Impressions	TBD	6' table	TBD	Long Island, NY	Travel Agents	No
The Villages Expo	TBD	10x10	Miami	Orlando, FL	Consumer	Yes
DAYTRIPS & DESTINATIONS	May-12	10x10	Miami	Cromwell, CT	Consumers	No
Jun-13						
Scuba Show	6/8-6/9/2013	10X10	Chicago	Long Beach, CA	Dive Consumer	No
ASTA Summerfest	TBD	10X10	Chicago	Davenport, IA	Travel Agents	No
International Pow Wow	6/8-12/13	20x20	Atlanta, GA/STT	Las Vegas, NV	Trade	Yes
Cruise 3Sixty	6/19-23/13	10x10	TBD/STT	Vancouver, British Columbia	Trade	No
Jul-13						
Travel Agents of Tennessee	TBD	10x10	Atlanta	Nashville, TN	Travel Agents	No
Aug-13						
FunJet Product Show	TBD	6' Table	Chicago	St. Louis, MO	Travel Agents	No
FunJet Product Show	TBD	6' Table	Chicago	Milwaukee, WI	Travel Agents	No
FunJet Product Show	TBD	6' Table	Chicago	Chicago, IL	Travel Agents	No
FunJet Product Show	TBD	6' Table	Chicago	Minneapolis, MN	Travel Agents	No
Sep-13						
Washington, DC Bridal Show	TBA	10X10	Washington, DC	Washington, DC	Consumer	No
Apple Vacations Product Launch	TBD	10X10	Chicago	Chicago, IL	Travel Agents	No
Apple Vacations Product Launch	TBD	10X10	Chicago	Detroit, MI	Travel Agents	No
MLT University	TBD	10X10	Atlanta, GA	Atlanta, GA	Travel Agents	No

FILM PROMOTION

Over the last several years, the Department of Tourism has engaged in proactive marketing efforts aimed at the feature film, television and print advertising industry to pursue on-island location productions and shoots.

This program is designed to spur on-island spend that benefits the local economy, as well as projects that favorably depict the destination to potential visitors. The Department's film marketing efforts have resulted in a significant influx of projects, on-island spend and by extension, jobs.

There continues to be tremendous potential to develop a vibrant film industry that will not only generate significant exposure for the islands, but also provide a consistent livelihood for the industry's support services and new career opportunities for U.S. Virgin Islands youth. The DOT recognizes the significant economic opportunities for film activity in St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas.

During Fiscal Year 2012, the Sustainable Tourism Through Arts-Based Revenue Stream (S.T.A.R.S.), ACT No. 7344, was passed. This act, which provides tax waivers based on expenditures and length of stay in territory, will further help to attract film productions to the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For FY2013, the Department will build upon the strong foundation that has been laid within the film industry by creating opportunities for additional film scouts, relationship building and further merchandizing projects that take place in the territory. There will also be a focus on enhancing the destination's film marketing channels, both online and offline to effectively compete with destinations that showcase a similar offering to this audience and sharing with our partners the benefits available to them through Act 7344.

To increase our visibility in the marketplace and better educate the film community on the benefits of shooting in the USVI, the Department will also continue its participation in a number of key film industry shows during FY2013.

Objectives:

- To showcase the USVI as a premiere location for feature films, TV programming, commercials, photo shoots and other film activity, which can provide economic and promotional value to each of our islands.
- Secure and host high-profile print and broadcast location shoots that prominently feature the destination.
- Contribute to the growth of the local economy and create opportunities for USVI-based film resources in connection with on-island location shoots and film productions.
- Increase caché of travel to the USVI by aligning the destination with high-profile feature films and brands.

FY2013 Strategies:

- Underscore benefits of the destination as a U.S. Territory for location production.
- Identify opportunities for further collaboration with on-island film partners, including support for projects secured.
- Refresh film marketing collateral to reflect recent projects.
- Develop new branded premiums that appeal to the film community.
- Coordinate FAM trip for film location managers to educate themselves on the destination and its film offering.
- Conduct location scouts/individual familiarization trips for commercial producers and/or location managers.
- Identify targeted advertising and editorial opportunities in niche publications.
- Dissemination of film marketing collateral to showcase the on-island resources available for location shoots.
- Archive historical film materials for future use.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Word of mouth continues to be a primary source of garnering new business. In today's technological world with vehicles such as Trip Advisor, Twitter and Facebook, word of mouth has expanded its reach and impact. Product development has an even greater priority in maintaining existing customers and influencing new ones to travel to a destination. With this knowledge and an ardent commitment to raising the service standards in the territory we will continue to enhance the USVI product by:

- Ensuring the destination provides a warm arrival and fond departure experience
- Enhancing Customer Care programs
- Securing data for customer relationship marketing
- Continuing to draft Virgin Islanders abroad to serve as VI Ambassadors
- Establishing partnerships for professional development for industry partners
- Creating an atmosphere which supports personal ownership/responsibility of the tourism product by all Virgin Islanders

Strategies

- Initiate on-going professional development partnerships with stakeholders
- Develop a presentation kit that engages Virgin Islanders in the DOT sales efforts
- Enhance the DOT Tourism Internship Program
- Expand the tourism awareness program for elementary, junior high and high school students
- Ensure ongoing dialogue with key partners COC, HTA, TSA, VIPA, WICO, Taxi Associations, etc
- Update the crisis management plans annually
- Host a Tourism Conference with the objective of a 10 year Master Plan for Tourism Development.
- Build on the customer service pledge campaign launched in July 2010 to include special promotional opportunities for business that have taken the pledge, training and professional development opportunities for individual pledge takers, direct dialogue with pledge takers to provide customer service tips, promotional items

Customer Service Training

The Department of Tourism recognizes the importance of providing professional development opportunities for our tourism workforce in order to continuously improve the level of customer service in the Territory. In 2013 the Department will organize 12 customer service training seminars free of charge to employees in the service industry. Different programs will be offered for front line staff and managers. To encourage ongoing growth, each course series will build upon the previous course, then repeat

later in the year to provide prospective attendees with options and to maximize attendance.

Customer Service Pledge Program

In order to help maintain the commitment to customer service, the Department will send out bi-monthly customer service tips to our growing database of pledge takers as well as share “Wow” stories to help provide ongoing motivation. Notices will also be sent out to pledge takers to inform them of training opportunities.

Small Hotels Conference

The Department of Tourism plans to conduct the 4th annual Small Hotels Conference once again to provide marketing and technical support to the territory’s small hotels and businesses. The conference topics are designed to facilitate the improvement of the small hotel product and aid hoteliers in enhancing their profitability.

Bridal Symposium

The Department of Tourism will organize a symposium targeting wedding/bridal vendors in the USVI. The event will involve wedding industry guest speakers, a vendor trade show and a FAM/PRESS trip component to allow media and off-island travel agents specializing in destination weddings to learn more about the USVI product first-hand.

Governor’s Conference on Tourism

As part of the process of designing a long-term tourism development plan for the USVI, the Department of Tourism will organize the Governor’s Conference on Tourism this year to bring together stakeholders, suppliers and other industry professionals for discussions and analysis of the draft development plan. The draft plan was developed from community input gathered at 16 strategic visioning sessions coordinated by the DOT last fiscal year.

Crisis Communications Training

As part of an overall VI Government focus on maintaining a safe and secure community, the DOT will sponsor crisis communications training during FY13. Training will assist the private sector in emergency planning, development of SOPs, and providing media coaching to prepare them to handle media inquiries during a crisis/emergency.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Given the funding challenges we will face in FY2013, the Department's ability to fund various events will be limited. However, we will attempt to sponsor events that enhance the visitor experience and support Virgin Islands arts and culture. The DOT will also support off-island events that may translate into future business for the USVI. However, each sponsorship must meet the 3:1 return on investment criterion. For every dollar spent in sponsorship funding, the Department must see a return of three dollars for the United States Virgin Islands.

The DOT requires written requests for sponsorships. The following must be addressed in each request:

1. An executive summary listing the principals of your organization or corporation. Please include bios and references as well as results of other events you have produced.
2. An overview of the event including the marketing budget, marketing plan, target market, and talent, if applicable.
3. Outline specifically the sponsorship being requested from the Department of Tourism:
 - a. Funding
 - b. Public Relations
 - c. Advertising
 - d. Other
4. Provide the promotional value of the event in your marketing plan. The Department of Tourism only considers sponsorships with a minimum 3:1 return on investment ration.
5. Proposed event dates. The Department of Tourism will only consider proposals received a minimum of 120 days prior to the event.
6. Please provide information on the return on investment of this event. Examples include number of guests, hotel rooms and nights that will be booked to the USVI as a result of this event; the estimated food, beverage, activities, attractions and transportation spend.
7. List of sponsors including other government agencies
8. To assist with new events that may not have historical data, the DOT may offer a sponsorship based on delivery. This model will include a minimum guarantee/sponsorship which is correlated to each other. For example \$25.00

per room night delivered to the territory (delivery of 100 room nights = sponsorship of \$2,500).

While many come to the Department of Tourism with a great idea for a worthy event, it is important to note that we simply will not have the resources to support every event, especially given the current economic climate. We remain committed, however, to reviewing each proposal and to providing a response to each request

CRUISE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Since 2007 the Department has placed special emphasis on growing the overall cruise market with additional focus on the return of cruise ships to St. Croix. This segment continues to be a major contributor to visitor arrivals to the territory. A sustained effort to enhance communication with the leadership of the cruise industry is an ongoing endeavor. Building the overall cruise industry to the Virgin Islands both in passenger arrivals and passenger spend is crucial to our long term success. During FY13 the DOT seeks to enhance the approach of comprehensively marketing the Ports of the USVI and continue to stimulate demand for St. Croix as a port of call. To accomplish this, the following strategies will be employed:

- Further develop the marketing position of one destination with three world class cruise facilities to include: advertising, tradeshow, CLIA sales efforts, PR
- Continue the dialogue with annual visits to cruise executives from the Ports of the VI – the combined effort of VIPA/WICO/DOT
- Implement a financial cruise incentive to increase cruise calls between May and September
- Work in partnership with EDA and the private sector partners to develop and enhance business opportunities which provide customer desired/demanded services as shared with us by the cruise industry

AIRLINE GROWTH STRATEGY

The availability of stable and affordable air service is an important element in sustaining a viable tourism product. The Department of Tourism will concentrate on maintaining all existing flights and building new service from key markets both domestically and internationally.

Objectives

- Increase air service to the USVI with a specific emphasis on non-stop service
- Create an environment for competitive fares
- Create an atmosphere that encourages partnerships between airlines, tour operators, and online providers for the promotion of air and land vacation packages

Strategies

- Collaborate with the Virgin Islands Port Authority to ensure the Virgin Islands' presence at all air development trade events and conference.
- Create a relationship to secure independent (third party) airline intelligence

- Enhance the airline presentation material for soliciting new business
- Specifically target Denmark & Northeast for flights to St. Croix; Canada & Texas for flights to St. Thomas
- Schedule bi-annual visits to all existing airline partners to maintain existing relationships
- Continue the coordinated efforts to ensure general advertising includes a call to action to support airline partners wherever feasible
- Include airline partners in marketing promotions, in-market events, media activities, familiarization and trade shows wherever feasible
- Each sales region to coordinate at least one presentation annually for the airline reservations or sales agents in their area of responsibility
- Develop relationships between the DOT public relations agency and the various airlines public relations departments

PACKAGES AND SEASONAL PROMOTIONS

Although the Department of Tourism is well aware its destination wide promotions continue to be a vital contributor to the industry's success during slow economic periods, during FY2013, the DOT may not be in a position to support mass market promotions. Given the current funding levels, the agency will continue to support niche market specific promotions used to garner publicity for the destination as well as additional room nights. These promotions will be supported through a variety of public relations vehicles, traditional and online advertising and sales efforts. Each of the bookable offers will, as we have over the past several years, include opportunities for the visitor to explore and experience the USVI beyond their hotel rooms. We firmly believe the success of these promotions is due not only to the advertising and sales support, but the **value** of the offers to the consumer. Our bookable offers, which have included competitive hotels rates will continue to provide the opportunity to dine in the destination's restaurants, experience our diverse attractions and activities, and splurge in our many retail establishments - spreading the business throughout many segments of our tourism industry.

The destination's MISSION: **USVI Vacation** targeting the military and **Inntimate Treasures**, featuring our small hotels will continue to be available year round. During FY2013, St. Croix only promotions will be available in the marketplace based on marketing funding that has been specifically earmarked for the promotion of the island of St. Croix.