OCALA/MARION COUNTY VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU

BRAND DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM MARKETING

Evok served as the full-service agency of record for the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau, an ecotourism-focused destination in Central Florida, for five years. During that time, our work resulted in a 236% increase in county visitation—outpacing the entire state of Florida—and a growth in RevPAR for the region from $30.83 to $68.08. The following case study outlines our brand development process, approach to media buying and audience segmentation, and creative direction for authentic tourism marketing.

INDUSTRY
TRAVEL & TOURISM
GOVERNMENT

AUDIENCE
OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS
YOUTH SPORTS GROUPS
CORPORATE ASSOCIATIONS

CATEGORY/TACTICS
BRAND STRATEGY
CREATIVE CAMPAIGN
DIGITAL MARKETING
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT
SOCIAL MEDIA
PUBLIC RELATIONS
REPORTING

IDEAS.

In need of an updated brand identity, communications strategy, creative campaign collateral, and efficient public relations and social media outreach, the Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau engaged our agency to provide an integrated solution.

IDENTIFYING KEY OBJECTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH BRAND DISCOVERY SESSIONS

We began our partnership with Ocala/Marion County with deep-dive discovery sessions with key stakeholders. These sessions help in getting to the root of the destinations we work with, what sets them apart, and how those unique characteristics fit into the traveler decision-making journey.

During discovery sessions, we:

- Review the current brand and its strengths and weaknesses
- Review existing strategic plan elements
- Review existing brand and marketing pieces
- Tour the destination to ensure first-hand experience
- Meet and talk with stakeholders and partners
- Host a working session with stakeholder team to explore the current and desired brand and core messaging
- Determine the gaps or problems that the destination has with its current brand image
- Help conceptualize the brand and determine brand vision, brand voice, brand story and brand positioning
- Determine how we will deliver the brand through internal and external communications and larger brand campaigns
- Determine and baseline how we will measure public perception of the brand

Following community meetings in all five Ocala/Marion County Commissioner districts, we combined our findings to narrow our efforts. We identified three main marketing objectives for the destination:

- Attract leisure and group visitors to Ocala/Marion County
- Engage partners within the industry to enhance available resources and coordinate promotional
- Add value to the visitor experience to encourage extended stays and return visits
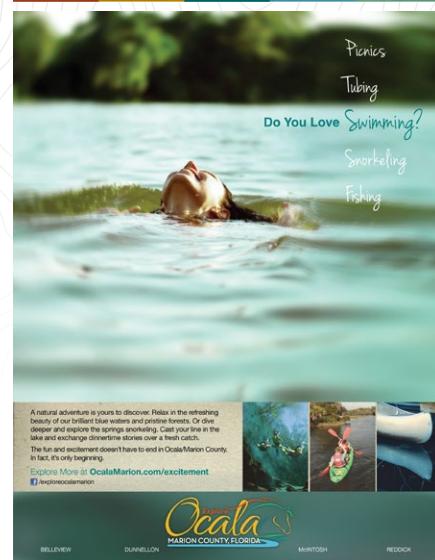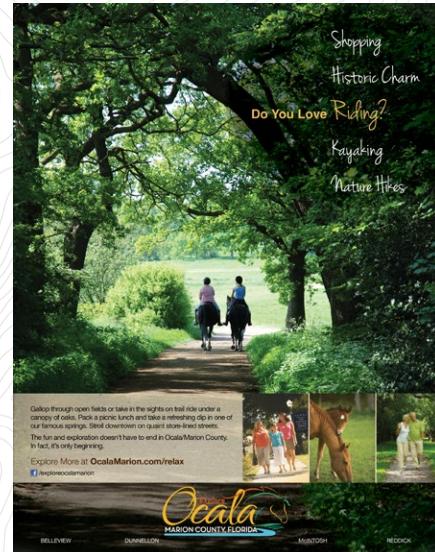
Print Ads

Previous Brand

New Brand

Belleview	Dunnellon	McIntosh	Ocala	Reddick

City Color Bar

WORK.

AUTHENTIC DESTINATION BRAND DEVELOPMENT

Our work to create a revitalized brand identity for the VCB included a new logo, tagline, brand standards guide and full collateral suite. In developing new destination brands, our approach ensures every element fully and accurately represents the destination, its attributes and its personality. In doing this, we create a concrete, relevant and meaningful brand definition for visitors, partners and stakeholders that:

• Builds differentiation
• Is relevant and meaningful to your key audiences
• Promotes simplicity and clarity
• Transcends amenities and product/service offerings
• Helps define an experience that cannot be easily replicated
• Is credible and attainable
• Is aspirational and enduring
• Leverages equities and strengths

LOCAL COLORS

Color Palette

Brand Style Mood Board

Brand Standards Manual

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN EXECUTION

To build a library of photos and videos that adhered to the updated Ocala/Marion brand, we enlisted locals through social media to participate in a two-day, on-location photo shoot. This initiative not only saved precious budget dollars, but it was also incredibly useful in generating a bank of images ready for use within a variety of marketing efforts throughout our creative campaign.

With visitation objectives set during our discovery sessions, our team developed a creative campaign focusing on three distinct audiences: leisure travelers, meeting and event planners, and youth sports groups. Each facet of this campaign showcased the breadth of offerings available in the County with a call to action to "Do More."
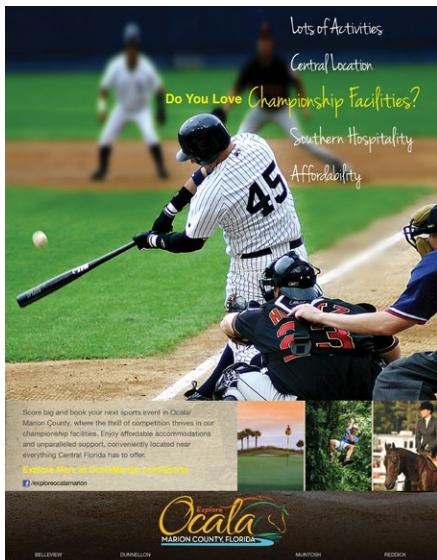
Sports Print Ad
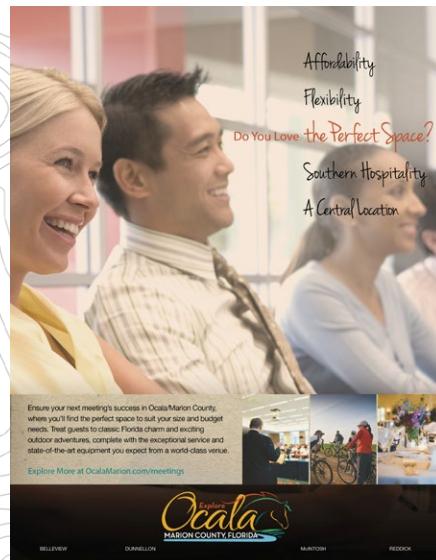
Meetings Print Ad
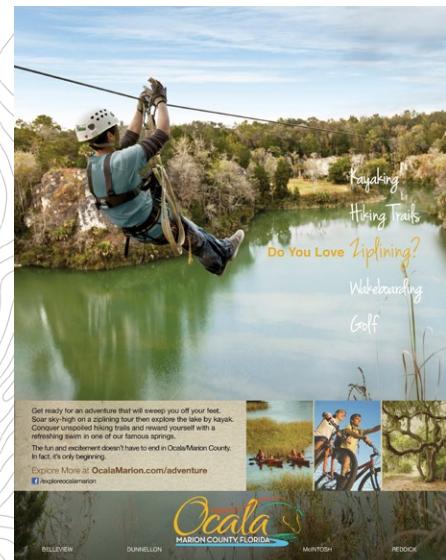
Leisure Print Ad

New Brand Website

INTERACTIVE DEVELOPMENT

Our team also redesigned the County's website, OcalaMarion.com, to include a fully responsive, dynamic theme concentrating on user experience, as well as an Itinerary Builder utilizing predictive modeling technology to suggest activities in the region based on visitors' online behavior and interests.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

As agency of record, we were also tasked with managing public relations and social media efforts in order to maintain a consistent, engaging brand voice. Our agency created and managed social media profiles for the destination across all relevant channels, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Generating consistently high engagement numbers, our team created a strong content calendar inclusive of entertaining and informational content, as well as exciting promotions and giveaways to connect with Ocala/Marion County's social audience. During our tenure with Ocala/Marion County, our social team increased their qualified, engaged Facebook followers from 2,000 to over 220,000.

Summer Campaign Facebook Header

Summer Campaign Facebook Timeline Graphic
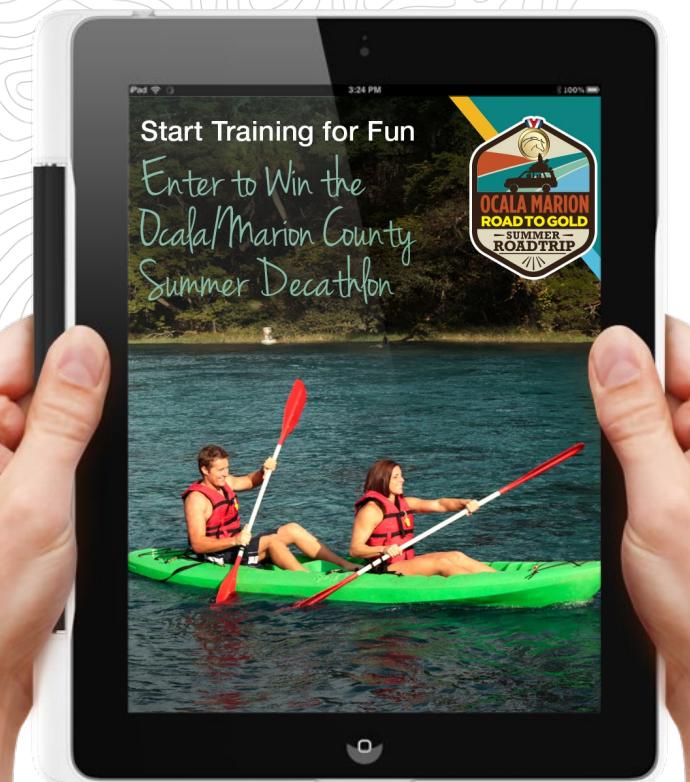
RESULTS.

Our efforts for the Ocala/Marion County VCB resulted in a Henry statue from VISIT FLORIDA for the best overall tourism website in the state, a Golden Image Award from the Florida Public Relations Association for Top Social Media Engagement in the State of Florida, as well as Adrian Awards from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International. Overall, our efforts resulted in:

16.2%
increase in occupancy rates

$30.83 to $68.08
growth in RevPar for the region

236%
increase in Ocala/Marion visitation outpacing the state of Florida

On the social media landscape, we also helped Ocala/Marion County's reach and audience engagement grow astronomically, with:

220,000+
Facebook followers, up from 2,000 just over 4 years

11.6 million
enagaged users

1,094%
increase in stories created through shares

1,137%
increase in total reach

505%
increase in organic impressions

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A comprehensive brand redevelopment effort—including a new identity, messaging framework, and creative standards—helped reposition Ocala/Marion County as an authentic ecotourism destination rooted in its natural assets.

- Deep stakeholder discovery sessions and community engagement informed a strategic foundation that aligned the destination's vision, marketing objectives, and visitor experience.

- An integrated marketing campaign targeting leisure travelers, meeting planners, and youth sports groups expanded reach and showcased the county's breadth of offerings, driving a 236% increase in visitation and significant RevPAR growth.

- Robust social media and PR efforts strengthened the destination's digital footprint, growing its Facebook audience from 2,000 to more than 220,000 and earning statewide recognition for engagement performance.

- Evok's long-term partnership demonstrated how data-driven brand strategy, cross-channel creative, and community-centered storytelling can elevate a destination's competitiveness and deliver measurable tourism impact.