

From the CEO

# Traveling toward a brighter future

California's travel and tourism industry dreams big — and is facing a future where the Golden State is the top destination in the world.

California continues to be the No. 1 destination in the United States. Travelers **spent \$122.5 billion** in 2015, a 3.4 percent increase over 2014. Tourism employs more than **1 million Californians**, adding **36,000 new jobs**. The industry also generated **\$9.9 billion** in local and state tax revenue last year, reinforcing its role as a cornerstone of the state's economy.

Visit California's Marketing Work Plan highlights new and evolved campaigns championing only-in-California experiences that will continue to drive more high-value visitors to the Golden State in the years to come. These programs build on successful foundational brand programming by creating new programs that dive deeper, offer increasingly sophisticated content and more effectively target global consumers.

The industry-supported Dream Big Dividend boosted the state's marketing budget to more than \$100 million and opened the door to a monumental future of prosperity for the Golden State. Along with growing marketing programs that deliver maximum ROI for the industry, Visit California also has scaled its Communications and Operations efforts to increase effectiveness and service to industry stakeholders.

This plan reflects the leadership and commitment of hundreds of active industry leaders, including the Board of Directors and seven committees whose guidance has led the development of a marketing program that delivers the California Dream around the globe.

I look forward to our continued collaboration and partnership. Together, the industry is accelerating to a future where California shines bigger and brighter than ever before.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Beteta".

**Caroline Beteta**  
President & CEO, Visit California

# Introduction

Visit California's FY16/17 marketing plan is the organization's annual roadmap, guiding the work and investments that will be executed in the coming year. The plan outlines ways Visit California will continue to grow into an organization that is well equipped to execute a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy that targets global consumers in the second year of Dream Big Dividend funding.

Uniting as a state in 2014 to overwhelmingly support the Dream Big Dividend Competitiveness Initiative, the travel and tourism industry wrote a mandate that is guiding California's longer-term future. The Dream Big Dividend is supporting more than \$100 million in robust state-level tourism marketing, which protects California's share of domestic and international tourism, while more fully maximizing the industry's ROI.

## Background

As the only organization that provides a statewide platform for promoting California, Visit California targets domestic and international markets to position the state as a premier destination to prospective travelers. Marketing the California brand to the world is essential to ensuring the tourism industry continues to provide economic value to the bottom line of businesses and regions across the state.

Tourism is a valuable economic engine for California. The industry was responsible for \$122.5 billion in visitor-related spending and \$9.9 billion in state and local tax revenue in 2015. That influx of dollars supported jobs for more than 1 million Californians — the highest count in the more than 20 years since impact data has been tracked. Tourism has consistently outpaced the broader economy in growth and number of jobs created.

Visit California serves the state by growing inbound travel to California to increase visitor spending in the state, while raising the overall profile of California around the world. Boosting tourism also encourages critical infrastructure improvements and attracts strategic investment in the state, including significant economic development.

## Marketing

Visit California has a well-established research program that serves as the foundation upon which its global marketing strategy is built, including producing core tourism research statistics for California. Data also informs strategic planning, program development and extensive psychographic modeling, which provide additional insight into the key audiences with which the California brand is likely to resonate.

Visit California considers quantitative data and additional information to evaluate priorities in California's top international markets. Tourism Economics' proprietary Market Allocation Platform is used to determine markets that have optimal receptivity to California travel. The research tool uses information on market potential, macro and micro environment factors, as well as marketing costs and historic investment.

The results inform Visit California's market prioritization, which details strategies and tactics based on three tiers:

- **Tier 1: Consumer Brand Markets**

In Tier 1 markets, Visit California invests heavily in direct-to-consumer advertising and promotional programs. A concentration of paid media activity supports trade and public relations initiatives.

The Dream Big Dividend funds seven markets in the top tier: United States, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Mexico and United Kingdom.

- **Tier 2: Consumer Content Markets**

In Tier 2 markets, Visit California invests in direct-to-consumer media to drive traffic to its owned channels to augment trade and public relations initiatives.

The Dream Big Dividend allows four markets to move into Tier 2: France, Germany, Japan and South Korea.

- **Tier 3: Trade & PR Markets**

In Tier 3 markets, Visit California reaches the consumer indirectly through trade and public relations initiatives and works closely with Brand USA to maximize its investment. Tier 3 markets include India, Italy, Scandinavia and the Middle East.

## Global Brand Landscape

California is synonymous with abundance. Combined with California's unique brand character — the California Attitude — this positioning is the foundation for the state-wide global brand program. The Dream Big platform allows for greater consistency and connectivity from one execution to another, from one initiative to another, and across channels and markets, allowing the industry to build an even stronger global brand for California.

As Visit California continues to expand and enhance the industry's marketing program, a global brand messaging framework that allows for aspirational storytelling while also providing an opportunity to draw down to the experiential will fuel California's competitive advantage.

As a subset to the global messaging platform, brand experience pillars provide an organizing principle for the countless attractions, amenities and activities found across the state, and serve as a wayfinding construct to help consumers navigate content.

By drilling down the consumer audience within each pillar into specific personas, Visit California is able to develop effective core messaging and content most likely to resonate with them. These persona profiles distill the consumers' basic values, motivations and other considerations that inspire consumers and inform their behavior.

A driving tenet of the industry's global marketing program moving forward is development of branded content that can be easily accessed and shared across devices and screens. Coupled with Visit California's base of highly effective television commercials, Dream Big storytelling is brought to life through compelling made-for-digital video content that reinforces the brand premise — “we're for dreamers” — and celebrates the “if you can dream it, you can do it in California” attitude.

A central component of Visit California's global digital strategy is Dream365TV, which is sustained with ongoing paid, owned and earned program content. The Dream365TV content trajectory includes a balance of highly curated and original video content developed to round out a specific framework of distinct content types: limited events that feature top talent, anchors that serve as the core series on a weekly basis during programming bursts and original or curated theme videos that span California's pillar experiences. Dream365TV videos are released year-round on a schedule modeled after YouTube best practices.

Visit California leverages the passion and expertise of those already creating content about the state while continuing to invest in the creation of original content that differentiates the state and illuminates the Dream Big platform against an established sentiment framework.

## Strategic Framework

Visit California's FY16/17 marketing plan includes a broad range of marketing activity designed to fuel inspiration and desire for the California brand globally. All initiatives are built on an "always on" foundation, which varies by market and aims to reach three primary audiences: consumers, travel trade and media professionals.

The program of work is designed to reach the specific audiences research has identified as including the greatest ROI potential, including:

- a broad global brand target, which takes into consideration age, income and travel propensity
- opportunity brand targets, which home in on key demographic niches, particularly households with children and high-income households
- passion-based targets, which aggregate people by interest.

Each audience layer is reached with programming designed specifically for their consumption characteristics.

Extensive research has shaped a suite of Global Brand Target Audiences, including the Super Affluent who have a propensity for travel and spend freely on authentic travel experiences, as well as the ever-important family segment looking for California to come to life.

To reflect continued shifts in consumer media consumption, Visit California's content program adopted a holistic approach that places an emphasis on consistency across distribution channels through a combination of entice- and inform-level content.

As travel trade continues to be a foundational component of marketing to consumers, educational tools continue to be expanded for key travel trade audiences and three global travel agent personas, developed through focus group research, allowing for better segmentation and targeted marketing.