



**The Ultimate Playground Communications
Playbook
March 2024**

THE BASICS

Brand Overview

- California is welcoming travelers to the 'Ultimate Playground' with a new global brand platform. This marks the state's first brand evolution in more than a decade, grounded in research from the [National Institute for Play](#), to inspire visitors to realize a fun and free-spirited vacation in California.
- Play is scientifically-proven to be good for you – and California's playful lifestyle, paired with its abundance of experiences, create something no other destination can claim.
- California is the ultimate playground.

Visit California x National Institute for Play (NIFP)

As part of this brand launch, Visit California is partnering with the National Institute for Play (NIFP) to raise the global conversation around the importance of play as a public health necessity and basic human need. The National Institute for Play (NIFP) was founded in California in 1989 to study the scientific knowledge on play behavior and its implications for a healthy, happy life.

Visit California's new brand platform is rooted in decades of NIFP research. A new NIFP study released on Feb. 29 underscores the power of play and describes eight distinct styles of play, the basis of people's individual pursuits that bring them the most pleasure and fulfillment. The NIFP study also draws a direct connection from travel to play.

Key Messages for Consideration

- The state's first brand evolution in more than a decade, grounded in research from the National Institute for Play, inspires visitors to realize a fun and free-spirited vacation in California.
- "Ultimate Playground" highlights California's culture, values and ethos, while celebrating its diversity, playfulness and free-spirited attitude. Combine that with an abundance of world-class and vast experiences, and California IS the Ultimate Playground — the ultimate place to express travelers' individual form of play and to pursue playfulness in their lives.
- The power of play is scientifically proven. Research shows when we play, our brains 'light up' and help shape how alive we feel, how well we learn, how cleverly we create/innovate, and how we relate from that point forward.
- There is no better time to play especially as the pandemic and its aftermath, extreme political polarization, global geopolitical conflicts, and the climate crisis contribute

to unprecedented, widespread levels of anxiety, depression, addiction, and hopelessness.

- Research also draws a straight line from travel to play.
- In a world of unsettling challenges, Visit California offers an antidote for travelers: Rediscover joy in the ultimate playground that is the Golden State.
- California is the ultimate playground and travel is the ultimate catalyst for play.

VISIT CALIFORNIA HQ PR STRATEGY

HQ PR Strategies

Below you will find how VCA HQ will roll out the Ultimate Playground domestically. Localize and tailor the strategies/tactics based on your market.

- ***Build the case for play:*** Highlight and define the benefits of play (and its link to travel) based on the National Institute for Play research.
- ***Position California as the ultimate place for play:*** Spotlight California as the antidote. The state's playful lifestyle, paired with our abundance of experiences, create something no other destination can claim.
- ***Highlight the many ways to play in California:*** Help travelers identify their "play style," and how it connects to various California regions and activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF NIFP'S NEW STUDY ON POWER OF PLAY

Executive Summary:

The Power of Play: Losing and Finding Ourselves through Everyday Play

- *The Power of Play: Losing and Finding Ourselves through Everyday Play* is a **new academic research summary** produced by the National Institute of Play (NIFP), which is based in Carmel, California
- The report's authors – Scott G. Eberle, Ph.D., and Stuart Brown, M.D. – have each dedicated their life's work to **studying the importance of play on the human condition**. Joining their expertise, *The Power of Play* is also a comprehensive summary of more than 100 sources from scholars in a wide array of fields.
- Diving deeply into the science, benefits and types of play, the report asserts that the diminishing presence of play in our daily lives is an urgent public health matter. "*The pandemic and its aftermath, our nation's extreme political*

polarization, global geopolitical conflicts, and the climate crisis contribute to unprecedented, widespread levels of anxiety, depression, addiction, and hopelessness. Play is part of the solution.” This proposition is supported by an evolutionary perspective – play would not have continued to be part of our biology over millions of years unless it were a substantive contributor to human flourishing.

- The authors argue play is core to the human experience and is engrained in all of us. **People already know how to play** – it’s hard-wired in our brains. The important thing is identifying the experiential-environmental triggers that activate it. *“When we do, our lives change for the better in surprising and far-reaching ways.”*
- Because play takes many forms, it is not recognized as evolutionarily ancient in its origins. In fact, scientists believe that the biology of play and sleep exist to enable vibrant lives and basic survival.
- **Regardless of one’s age**, play is important to our well-being – **physical, social and emotional**. Scientifically, when someone plays, their brains “light up” – establishing neural pathways that activate pursuit of intrinsically motivated actions which in turn create authentic pleasure and joy. Over time this leads to increased self-esteem, emotional resilience, and communal belonging while also mitigating the build up of stress and fostering physical activity.
- Based on thousands of interviews, the authors have identified **eight styles of play**. Most people embody a mix of these types, with one dominant style coming to the forefront from infancy: Collector, Competitor, Creator, Director, Explorer, Joker, Mover and Storyteller.
- Dr. Brown likens a lifetime of play with keeping one’s immunizations up to date. As a **public health imperative**, play prevents emotional rigidity, isolation, loneliness and depression. Active play fosters muscle strength and weight loss. The time we spend playing should be seen as an investment not an expenditure.
- In the paper’s Afterword, Dr. Eberle outlines the power of travel as an activator for play. It *“deepens the emotions, fuels the imagination, sharpens the perspective, enlarges the social understanding, and inspires the heart.”* In essence, **travel gives people freedom and license to play their own way.**

To access the full study, visit nifplay.org.