

Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater

Problem

How do you boost tourism during the winter months?

Solution

Use OOH formats to bring the sun's warmth to those suffering in the cold.

Background

Past research confirmed the destination brand position of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area as offering a wide range of surprising, unexpected, and authentic experiences coupled with America's award-winning beaches. Along with the many other beautiful beaches of Florida, St. Petersburg/Clearwater's primary season for travel and tourism is the winter months and target areas include the feeder markets of New York and Chicago. The challenge for Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater (VSPC) was attracting customers in these core feeder markets and standing out from the rest with message and approach.



Objective

The campaign aimed to reach target consumers during the gloomy months of winter with a sunny message to reinforce and increase brand awareness, generate travel to the destination, and drive traffic for the promotion for St. Petersburg/Clearwater. VSPC's target consumer audience included adults ages 25-54 with a household income of \$75,000+. For this campaign specifically, the focus was on reaching New York, Chicago, and Toronto residents in those demographics.

Strategy

The strategy was to reach potential visitors from our key markets of origin – New York City and Chicago. The idea is to communicate to these folks during their daily life as they travel to and from home/work. These are heavy public transportation/commuter markets therefore; it was important that we reach them while in transit, on the street, in their favorite coffee shop and in elevators going to office.

Plan Details

Flight Dates: January - March 2014

Markets/OOH Formats:

New York:

- Snow stamps and sculptures, subway branded trains, commuter rail interior posters (Long Island, Metro North and New Jersey Rail System), urban panels, double decker buses, coffee cup sleeve program, elevator screens (2,500 screens in 246 buildings with a :15 video)
- The New York campaign reached over an estimated 553 million New Yorkers during this time period.

Chicago:

- Snow stamps and sculptures, subway station domination (Ogilvie Station), double decker buses, coffee cup sleeve program, elevator screens (2,500 screens in 246 buildings with a :15 video)

- The Chicago campaign reached over an estimated 58.3 million Chicago residents during this time period.

Results

During the three-month duration of the campaign, the I Need Sun landing pages saw 193,686 page views and an average time of 1:03 spent on the site. The sweepstakes generated 59,934 on-line entries and 47,478 text entries for a total of 107,412 sweepstakes entries.

The destination saw a jump in Northeast and Midwest visitors of 10 percent during the campaign time period, with Canadian travelers increasing 1.6 percent. New York and Chicago were cited as the primary feeder markets. In total for the winter months, the region saw an 8.6 percent increase in visitors for the same time period year-over-year. The boost in visitors has helped year-to-date bed tax collections push 11.5 percent ahead of 2013.



Along with stellar web site, sweepstakes, and visitation results, VSPC achieved what every marketer hopes for - media and social buzz surrounding the campaign. The *New York Times* featured a full story about the campaign in their Business Media section on February 3, the day after Super Bowl when most people would be looking for conversation about Super Bowl advertising. FirstBusinessNews.com ran a feature story about the campaign and how VSPC used the harsh elements of winter to creatively sell sun to the snowbirds. The *Chicago Tribune* featured the snow sculptures as “breaking news” when they were being sculpted. And best of all, consumers in New York and Chicago enjoyed and took it upon themselves to share the I Need Sun message via social channels.

