

RFP Proposal

Visit Florida

Taylor Skinner

Cover Letter

Dear Visit Florida,

Our team is sending this research proposal to address the questions outlined in your market research RFP for VF audience segmentation. We are a market-research-focused group of five highly dedicated and experienced individuals who have worked on projects diving into specific targeted research and marketing campaigns. We have also worked with clients such as Universal Studios and Delta Airlines to shed light on actionable research insights that have resulted in successful campaigns. As a Florida-based group, we understand the landscape of promoting both within and outside of the state while also being privy to Florida's special qualities.

In this proposal, we have planned interview-based research to redefine Visit Florida's audience segments, grasp an understanding of what drives consumers to the state, and reveal which media will reach consumers most efficiently. We are confident that our research outline will provide our team with in-depth research to then provide you with accurate and precise information.

Please contact us with any questions or concerns. Our team looks forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your consideration,

Taylor Skinner

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Executive Summary

VISIT FLORIDA (VF) is a non-profit corporation formed in 1996 that acts as a guide to Florida. As tourism is a driving force of Florida's economy, VF intends to further boost tourism in Florida by providing information that supports a fun, well-planned, unique visit to Florida for both domestic and international travelers. From reporting on the best activities to do in Florida to naming specific to giving Florida travelers resources to navigate the state, VISIT FLORIDA is a crucial resource to make the best of traversing Florida.

VISIT FLORIDA names "enrich[ing] the quality of life in our communities" (*What We Do*, 2024) as its mission, as well as making an impact and living passionately as some of its values (*What We Do*, 2024). These, in tandem with its persistent efforts to preserve Florida's natural ecosystem by giving tips for ecotourism (Tjaden, 2024), show that VF is a corporation that looks to support the state of Florida and its people.

Audience

VF caters to a large scale of audiences. The segmentation study commissioned by VISIT FLORIDA in 2017 identified five distinct domestic audience segments: Family Memory Makers, Winter Sun Seekers, Adventure Seekers, Experience Seekers, and Impulse Getaways. Demographically, these groups vary in age, income, and family composition, with Family Memory Makers typically consisting of households with children, while Winter Sun Seekers often include older individuals or retirees seeking warmth during winter months. Geographically, these visitors come from diverse regions across the United States, with a significant concentration from northern states. Behaviorally, they display varied travel patterns, from planned family vacations to spontaneous weekend trips. Psychographically, the audience's motivations range from seeking relaxation and warmth (Winter Sun Seekers) to desiring thrilling activities and new experiences (Adventure Seekers).

Market analysis

VISIT FLORIDA continues to be increasingly successful each annual quarter and from year to year as the numbers of visitation in Florida continues to rise. Since 2021, after the COVID-19 pandemic made a dent in the visitation numbers for VF, the percentage of grand total visitation continues to be record breaking for the company. VF 2021 marketing strategy has set the company apart from its competitors and allowed it to be a leading destination for travelers.

According to the VF 2021-2022 Annual Report, in 2020 and 2021 VISIT FLORIDA improved its overseas visitation by 21%, becoming America's #1 destination point. In the industry of Convention & Visitor Bureaus, VF has a market share of 6.4% (IBISWorld, n.d.). By the end of 2023, the grand total visitation was up 2.3% from the previous year, and the domestic visitation was up 1.1%. These increases were marked as the highest ever visitation rates for Florida, signaling that Florida is the preferred destination for international and domestic travelers.

Threats

VISIT FLORIDA faces competition from other states and countries and their initiatives to actively increase tourism within their states. According to an article published by Xola, popular tourist hotspots among the United States include places like New York, California, Texas, and Hawaii. However, Florida is the fastest-growing state for tourism (Vianna, 2022). There are threats that directly affect the tourists. The permanent residents of Florida dislike tourists because they tend to find them to be disruptive to their normal routine and get in the way of how residents live their lives. An article published by the Independent Florida Alligator recounts just how frustrated residents of Florida have become with "spring breakers." The party

mindset and the crowds of just this percentage of tourists has exhausted permanent residents, making the environment less welcoming (Wang, 2024).

Tourists themselves may also feel threats directed towards them. The political climate of the state of Florida poses threats towards different communities, such as the LGBTQ+ community, people who speak with an accent, and international travelers. The NAACP published an article advising travelers to proceed with caution when visiting Florida due to open hostility towards minority groups (Fields, 2023). This could deter tourists from even considering visiting Florida, threatening the success of VISIT FLORIDA.

Domestic travel to Florida is directly impacted by the state of the economy in the United States; during recessions, tourism tends to decline while it typically increases with increasing levels of disposable income. The tourist business has also changed because of technological improvements, with social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok becoming indispensable resources for destination marketing. To effectively reach potential guests, VF must continuously adapt to various platforms. A strong online presence and strategic relationships are also required to sustain exposure considering the growing popularity of mobile booking apps and online travel agents.

Benefits of the Industry

Due to Florida's growing popularity amongst tourists, VF can expand its reach and make Florida the biggest state for tourism, stimulating economic growth and creating more job opportunities. In this sector, many jobs come because of the tourism industry. For example, tourist spots require travel agents, tour operators, theme park workers, and many more. VF also provides a platform to foster major strategic partnerships with major companies, such as Busch

Gardens and Experience Kissimmee. Creating partnerships such as these increase the success of the tourism industry.

The benefits of the tourism industry include increasing the number of people which in turn stimulates the economy and infrastructure. It provides greater opportunities for employment generation, preserves local culture, and promotes community development. It provides a sense of cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens. The tourism industry provides great opportunities for the states hoping to increase the amount of visitation that they receive.

Agency Overview

Experience Overview

Taylor Skinner is an advertising major at the University of Florida. She started her own media research company in 2021, where she gained a deep understanding of diverse consumer demographics and market trends. She implemented innovative strategies to gather insights and deliver campaigns to companies Spurriers and Piesanos in Gainesville, Florida and increased their sales by 30% in six months.

Capabilities

Taylor Skinner is Florida-based with a deep knowledge of popular travel destinations. Her background is in qualitative research, with hands-on experience launching creative projects for major companies like Universal Studios and Delta Airlines. Efficiency is our forte, and we thrive under tight deadlines, bringing innovation to every project.

Experience

My ability to manage prosperous social media campaigns came in very handy when we developed focused outreach plans to entice a wide variety of participants. I made use of a variety

of outreach methods, such as direct mail and social media, to guarantee a large and representative sample for our interview. My expertise in creative advertising and graphic design that I possess was invaluable in crafting captivating and impactful interview materials. To ensure high levels of interest and engagement from potential participants, I produced aesthetically appealing invitations and advertising content that highlighted the special benefits of taking part in our study.

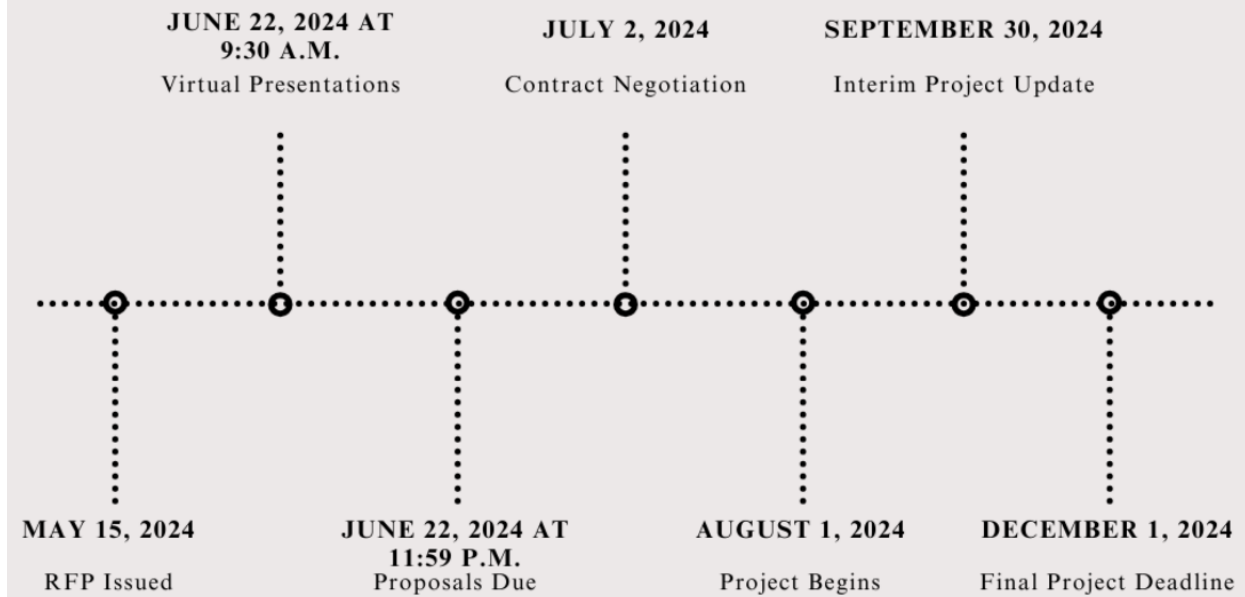
As the interviews got underway, I showed remarkable analytical and coordinating abilities. With meticulous group management, I created a safe space for participants to freely share their thoughts and experiences. The data obtained was guaranteed to be accurate and insightful through the utilization of proficient moderators and thorough note-takers.

Using my knowledge of qualitative research, I carefully examined and grouped the replies to find recurring themes and patterns. I was able to acquire a thorough grasp of the variables influencing travel decisions and how they change among various demographic groups thanks to this in-depth investigation.

My primary goal is to provide Visit Florida with actionable insights during the project. I am able to offer precise and useful advice for focused marketing campaigns because of my experience translating research findings into a workable marketing strategy. I made sure that my conclusions applied directly to Visit Florida's current and upcoming promotions, in addition to being thorough.

Timeline

Timeline



Recommended Methodology

Research Questions

Research questions for this study will be as follows:

RQ1: What segments make up the target for domestic marketing?

RQ2: What are each segment's biggest unaddressed concerns about Florida?

RQ3: What strategies (i.e. digital media, traditional, etc.) best reach each identified segment?

RQ4: How do demographics impact segmentation?

Participants and sampling

The age of participants will range from 18 to 78. Participants will be asked their age in an interview, and subsequently, any research based on how age affects segments will be satisfied. Participants will be male, and female, and members that identify their sex as LGBTQ+. There should be a relatively even number of men and women, however, because the non-binary population is low in the United States – the highest recorded number percentage out of the age ranges only being 6.4% of those 18 to 29 (Singer & Deschamps, 2017).

The research will also include both domestic (Floridian) and out-of-state participants. This will help us get a grasp on whether domestic travelers are segmented differently than out-of-state travelers. Participants will also be a range of ethnicities and races, as per the interest of demographics affecting segmentation.

Recruitment for participants will be conducted through social media posts on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, as well as through direct mail to those in 55+ communities. Participants will be given the incentive of Florida's minimum wage, \$12.00 per hour of their time interviewing. By highlighting Florida's unique appeal and offering a seamless and supportive interview experience, participants effectively be recruited for the study.

Group Interview Design

A well-thought-out outreach strategy is crucial when trying to get prospects to Florida for a group interview. We create a personalized and captivating invitation that highlights the special

advantages of the job opportunity and Florida's energetic lifestyle first. To efficiently reach potential candidates, make use of a variety of communication methods, including email, social media platforms, and professional networking sites like LinkedIn. We make sure our first message is both educational and captivating. We start our email with a compelling subject line to make sure it gets noticed in a crowded inbox. After this, write your message in an approachable but formal manner. Give a clear explanation of the group interview's objectives, list the open jobs, and justify the candidates' selection. Don't forget to highlight the benefits of moving to Florida, such as no state income tax, tons of fun things to do, and a great standard of living. It can be more appealing and human to include endorsements or success stories from current workers who moved to Florida. This approach not only enhances your chances of finding the right fit for your organization but also boosts our reputation, capable of drawing citizens from across the country.

Sample Size

The sample size for the interviews is 50 participants. Since they are being questioned using small group interviews, this sample size will provide more detailed information on each of the different demographics and generations. Having this sample size will ensure that every group will be accounted for. Interview questions can be found in the appendix.

Analysis

After conducting the focus group interviews, we will collect our qualitative data and then begin to clean the data and look for patterns in our participants' answers. By collecting qualitative data, we will be able to answer the “why’s” and “how’s” of our participants' behaviors. This will allow us to gain a better understanding of who our participants are, why they

would be interested in visiting Florida, and if VISIT FLORIDA has had an impact on their travel decisions.

Once our group interviews are completed, we will use the notes and transcriptions of the interviews to filter through the collected information. We will first ensure that any data collected is accurate to what the participants mentioned in the interviews. Once data has been checked for accuracy, we will define information into categories to identify any commonalities between our participants and their answers. From there, we will be able to gain a better understanding of the participants and can use that information to make improved marketing decisions in the future.

Data Collection

Using group interviews for this research allows for a concentrated interaction among participants, fostering the exploration of diverse perspectives and experiences of Florida. Group interviews encourage shared themes or differing opinions that may not be fully expressed in individual interviews or surveys. Additionally, the group setting creates trust building and comfortability for participants. This enhances the depth of the responses and allows participants to remember experiences based on other participants. The group interview process helps in understanding the various factors that influence travel decisions and how these factors differ among different demographic groups. By understanding trends, research can inform targeted marketing strategies for VF to create promotional efforts with diverse segments of potential travelers.

Variables

The variables that will be measured in this study include things such as different demographics. This includes the ages of the participants, their geographic location, income,

gender, marital status, and occupation. Other variables that will be measured will have to do with domestic and international policies that impact travel. Additionally, this study will look at what factors bring people to visit Florida. This will be beneficial to the study because having this information is beneficial to understanding who visits Florida, and what markets are untapped.

Study Design

This study consists of conducting interviews for six different age groups ranging from 18 to 65+. Participants were emailed an invitation consisting of the details of the study along with other information. Participants were found through social media interactions and direct mail. Once we received enough interested participants, we randomly selected 50 participants from ranging age groups to be in our group interviews. Participants were invited to go to Florida to participate in these group interviews where groups were split by age with group sizes ranging from 8 to 10 people per group. All groups were asked the same set of questions by a moderator who works with VISIT FLORIDA. Responses were recorded by two note-takers at VF and used later for data analysis.

Procedures

The analytical approach to group interviews provides valuable qualitative data to help understand participants' travel behaviors and preferences. The group interview is designed to be an in-depth yet concise conversation among participants. These interviews will last about an hour to make sure participants remain engaged and do not start to feel overwhelmed. During the interview, there will be one moderator who will guide the discussion and make sure the conversation stays on track. Meanwhile, there will be two note-takers who will document the

participants' responses, making sure to highlight trends and insightful quotes. This structure ensures that data collection is accurate and reflects what was discussed in the interviews.

Conclusion

After recording our findings, our data will reflect the different facts and trends regarding the different visitors to Florida. This will allow VISIT FLORIDA to be able to market to their target audience more effectively. Understanding their market will yield greater results, such as increased visitors to Florida and a more robust economy. Additionally, these marketing efforts will allow VF to reach a more diverse audience than they previously achieved.

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Appendix

Research Questions

RQ1: What common characteristics group together VISIT Florida audiences?

RQ2: What unaddressed concerns do the targeted segments have about Florida?

RQ3: Which forms of media do the targeted segments consume the most?

RQ4: What motivates the targeted segments to travel?

Interview Questions

1. What is your name and occupation?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. What is your sexual orientation and gender identity?
5. What is your marital status?
6. Do you have children?
 - a. Do you have pets?
 - b. Do you have familial obligations (i.e. taking care of parents)
7. What state do you live in?
 1. What region of Florida
 2. Have you lived anywhere else?
8. Have you been to Florida?
 - a. If so, where did you go?
 - b. What did you do when you were there?
9. If you have not been to Florida, what has prevented you from visiting?
10. What images or words come to mind when you think of Florida?
11. How often do you travel per year?
12. What time of year do you travel?
13. What factors do you consider when looking for a place to go for vacation?

3. Weather, budget, time of year
4. Do you go on vacation to relax or experience new things?
14. Would you visit the same place more than once?
15. What is your favorite place to travel and why?
16. Do you travel with others?
 5. With family, spouse, friends, etc.?
17. What factors prevent you from traveling to a place?
18. What is your preferred way of travel?
 - a. Plane, drive, train, etc.
19. How do you choose where to go on vacation?
 - a. Friends, social media, etc.
20. Does your culture impact where and/or how you travel?
 - a. i.e.: Do you look for places that are culturally different than what you identify as?
21. What media do you consume most often?
22. How have Visit Florida ads impacted your motivation to travel to Florida?
 - a. If you have seen a VF advertisement, where have you seen it?