

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY:

L.A. Tourism & Convention Board



The winning team at the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board were determined to attract visitors from all over the world by appealing to meeting planners it couldn't usually reach. Through a strategic online presence and face-to-face events, it was able to expand its market and strengthen the L.A. story.

21%

increase in unique room
nights year over year

27%

increase in unique RFP
value year over year

26%

increase in unique planner
organization clients

Attracting an International Market

For the L.A. Tourism & Convention Board (LATCB), the challenges Darren Green, Senior Vice President of LATCB Sales, and his team faced weren't necessarily inside their organization. Tasked with bringing more business and tourism to Los Angeles, LATCB needed to attract meeting, event, and other decision makers to the destination. One challenge is the city's size. With traffic and so many residents and visitors, planners struggled to navigate the city themselves, all while helping visiting attendees.

Competition is another challenge: "L.A. is not primarily a convention or meetings destination. When you look at a San Diego, San Francisco, Las Vegas, Orlando, they are very common meeting places, primarily driven by tourism and the hospitality industry," said Green. It contributes a lot to their communities and a lot to their local economies. L.A. contributes a lot also, but we're competing within markets like entertainment, international trade, high tech, medical, and more."

"We always try to zero in on what the customer wants so we can make it a simpler and easier buying process," Green explains. "Everyone has their own story about L.A., and because of that, we have a very diverse community."

Challenges and Goals

Attracting the global client

Expanding brand awareness through various media

Competing against industries and destinations in L.A.

LATCB wanted to take the collective L.A. story and welcome international visitors to join the narrative. Since international customers tend to enjoy longer stays with more stops, events, and activities, the team prizes this sector of business and it's where they see "exceptionally strong meetings emerging."

The opportunity for a broader international client base is something many tourism and destination marketers want to capitalize on. LATCB found that the best way to gain greater awareness is with face-to-face events and a strong online presence. "We have no vested interest other than to facilitate the needs of our customers. We aren't aligned with any specific hotel or venue – we're selling the destination," emphasizes Darren. And to do that, they looked to meeting and event software to connect them with the right audience.

Strengthening Relationships with Industry Counterparts

Engaging in larger events has taken LATCB's marketing efforts to the next level. At Cvent CONNECT 2015, Ernest Wooden Jr., President and CEO of LATCB, participated in an expert panel to discuss the organization's meeting and event success. This delivered extra brand exposure and helped the company broadcast its own L.A. story in front of event professionals and prospects. Further, Green hosted an educational breakout session, which discussed how the organization sells destinations to all types of clients. He found the most value in "connecting with peers and developing that exchange."

While attending educational sessions for suppliers at CONNECT, a few team members also earned their Cvent Certification. Darren adds, "The interactions within the event were great, and we especially appreciated the ability to network with our peers and counterparts." The team's experience also delivered a greater influence in their market, "I think that what I really found impressive was that we were reaching a customer that you may not see at an MPI, PCMA, ASAE, or even an IMEX. We had an opportunity to meet with a lot of influencers and high-level recommenders, which really are the next generation of meeting planners, even beyond millennials."

While attending the tradeshow portion of CONNECT, they hosted a booth during The Exchange. Darren saw an almost immediate payoff and said, "We were surprised at the traffic that we had at The Exchange booth and the number of leads we received. We were reaching customers outside of the traditional meeting platforms. The most exciting part for us was uncovering a new type of customer, which in this day in age is so hard to do." That new customer base was a tech-savvy client looking for the best global destinations.

“

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– **Darren Green,**
SVP, Sales, LATCB

Gaining Speed and Writing the L.A. Story

As the fastest growing high-tech city nationwide, L.A. is saturated with huge tech companies. Darren goes on to explain, “When you look at the airport, the beaches, and the areas from Venice to Santa Monica to Marina Del Rey, you won’t find the older traditional meeting planner. A lot of their planners source using the Cvent platform because it’s the quickest, easiest way to find solutions to their problems. And it’s really improved driving business, not only with the high-tech space, but also with some of the medical and pharmaceutical markets as well.”

The L.A. Tourism & Convention Board looks forward to increasing momentum in marketing its destination. “There’s never been a more exciting time to partner and be in L.A.,” Darren insists, “and I think Cvent can help us get the word out. We have a lot of major high-profile events that are coming to the city.” Some of these events include a new football stadium in 2019, Super Bowl LV in 2021 and possibly the 2024 Olympics. Developing its L.A. story is just one part of a bright future, “It’s not just about the new business that you can drive, but it’s about understanding best practices and the people. Are you the only ones doing it? Or are you differentiating yourself?” And the LATCB is doing everything they can to stand up and stand out.

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