

## Travel & Tourism College Capstone Project Background

### Beaumont, Texas Convention Meeting Planner Guide and Sales Collateral

The reason I chose to use to revamp Beaumont's Meeting & Convention Sales Material for my Travel & Tourism College Capstone Project was because I found it to be a solid opportunity to showcase the skills I developed by attending TTC and apply those skills towards a large and important project I had planned for the CVB sales team. This project includes updating and redesigning the printed sales kit the sales team uses when presenting Beaumont, Texas as a meeting destination to meeting planners. The piece includes a printed booklet and custom presentation folder that must be informational and promotional in nature. Once completed, the new Meeting Planner Guide's online and social content was updated to reflect the new creative and messaging. Advertising creative for meeting publications were also updated to match the look of the new piece.

#### ***Project Execution***

The project began with meetings with our Director of Sales and Convention Sales Manager about the departmental needs and use of the collateral materials. Updates, hand written notes and existing materials were thoroughly reviewed. From sessions at Travel & Tourism College, my understanding of client needs and expectations grew and I realized our convention sales materials should be enhanced accordingly. I realized that the entire book should be completely rewritten and restructured.

As with all publications, once a piece is printed, businesses change names and information can quickly become dated. To deal with this issue, I chose to use a local printer and print small quantities (50 or less at a time) of the new Meeting Planner Guide book. Keeping the graphic design in-house and the printing local will help save money and will allow the publication to stay current and useful.

The Beaumont Meeting Planner Guide & Sales Collateral arrived in house for distribution on September, 22, 2014.

#### ***Who was this presented to?***

The updated sales collateral was presented to the CVB Sales team and the CVB Advisory Board of Directors at the October 2014 Advisory Board Meeting. The updated materials are currently in use by the Beaumont convention sales team with bid presentations.

#### ***Impact***

The updated Meeting Planners Guide has been met with positive reviews and signed contracts. The Director of Sales and Convention Sales Manager are quite pleased with the new Sales Kit and have passed along a satisfying number of complimentary reviews from clients who've received the new materials.

#### ***Resources & Information Used***

I used a number of resources for this project including existing CVB records, updates and notes from TTC sessions. Competing CVB's marketing materials and meeting planner websites were used for inspiration, and to determine the best way to present the information. Adobe Creative Suite (Illustrator, Photoshop and InDesign) was used to design the files and create the artwork. Photography assets were collected and

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assessed; new photos were commissioned by local photographer Lacie Grant. Content was written and edited in house. Special credit and thanks goes to Ashley White for assistance with writing and website updates, and to Freddie Willard and Rebecca Woodland for assistance with editing and fact-checking. Final content for printing was approved by the Beaumont CVB Convention Sales Team.

### ***Expected Results***

The primary use of the Beaumont Meeting Planner Guide is to promote Beaumont, Texas as a meeting destination and to help planners make decisions. The sales kit is designed to present hotel bids and specific custom information to planners. The ultimate expected results are actual convention bookings.

### ***How did I use what I learned in TTC on this project?***

Meeting and convention sales is a competitive and complex business. The position of Marketing Director keeps me focused on promotion and advertising and has buffered direct interaction with actual meeting planners during the negotiating and sales process. At Travel & Tourism College sessions and networking events, I was able to deepen and further my knowledge of all working aspects of a destination marketing organization including convention planning and servicing.

Here are a few specific examples of what I used from my time in Travel & Tourism College for this specific project:

#### **Storytelling.**

The summer 2014 session by Jenifer Sarver on Storytelling was especially helpful. She spoke about the importance of knowing your story and being able to tell it in the most compelling way. A reminder of basic storytelling steps were extremely helpful with developing the overall story, structure and contents of the Meeting Planner Guide Sales Kit.

*Storytelling basics: First, craft a detailed outline. Next, develop a compact narrative, Focus on audience needs & interest. Last, develop specific examples.*

#### **Communication & Team Management.**

In Steve Aibel's Whale Done! Team Management session, I took a number of key takeaways. Trying to incorporate change with this project would be a challenge. Steve's discussion on using the Least Reinforcing Scenario (LRS), and management tips helped me to strengthen relationships with the part of our team I had the least amount of experience with (and success with) implementing change. I found using LRS, communication techniques helped with motivation and lessened the amount of frustration on all our parts. These principles helped me to build trust, accentuate positive points of discussion, and catch communication errors before they occurred. The presentation helped me to better pay attention to what the organizations needs were overall. These management techniques have helped me to achieve communication goals and management goals for maximum effectiveness with this project.

#### **Public Relations & Advocacy.**

Each year of TTC, we took courses on the importance of public relations. My freshmen year, we learned and discussed the importance of gaining positive client testimonials. During our senior year, we covered crisis communication and touched on capitalizing on the power of advocacy and building

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relationships. These concepts were very helpful and transferable. For example, to enhance and give more credibility to key sales messages in the Meeting Planner Guide, I used clips from clients to strengthen the meeting planner's confidence in choosing Beaumont as a convention destination. The client testimonials are used to convey marketing messages in the Meeting Planner Guide printed pieces as well as in our digital messaging and print advertising.

### Marketing Messaging. Product Development

*"Whatever it is that makes you different or clearly better, you must hang your hat on that." Roger Brooks*

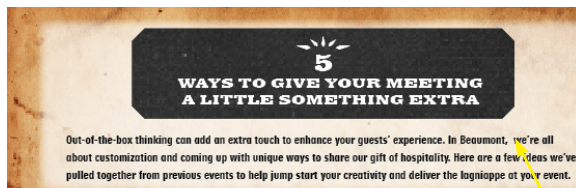
Joe Veneto, The Opportunity Guy, spoke about packaging and the importance of details. This concept resonated strongly with me on this project because our messages frequently promote unexpected "extras" and capitalize on the "lagniappe" found in our destination. Beaumont Sales and Convention Servicing team's motives are to exceed client expectations, and then some. The last page of The Meeting Planner Guide features a graphic with a sampling of services that showcases the many "Ways to add a little something extra" to your event. Rather than using text and lists to convey (and sell) the destination's capabilities with creative evening events, I pulled inspiration from both Joe Veneto's session on creative packaging and Roger Brooks' 7 Deadly Sins of Marketing lecture.



## BEAUMONT, TEXAS CONVENTION MEETING PLANNER GUIDE &amp; SALES COLLATERAL



COVER IMAGE  
FOCUSES ON  
EXPERIENCE &  
VIBE RATHER THAN  
GENERIC STOCK  
MEETING PHOTO



## PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS ADD CREDIBILITY &amp; BUILD AWARENESS



A local Beaumont band performs for a group meeting at the city's event center.

The Beaumont CVB's meeting services revolve around two key themes: creativity and customization.

Not many CVBs have a certified fitness instructor on staff. But Rebecca Woodland, Beaumont's convention sales manager, is also a fitness instructor. Last year, the CVB used that to offer a Fit and Fun incentive program for events that submitted an RFP and had 500 room nights.

Using her fitness expertise, Woodland has taught a 1920s-inspired Charleston line dance, led a yoga class for attendees the morning after an event and organized a version of a Mardi Gras parade that resembled a conga line with umbrellas and beads. Woodland led one group in a modified zumba class after lunch, when most people are in a food coma.

"It worked out beautifully," Woodland said. "They all loved it; even all the guys did it. The whole room was moving and laughing and cutting up."

Although a fitness class isn't an official meeting service, most anything is available "if they come to us first and have a certain number of room nights," she said.

The CVB also does custom downtown scavenger hunts and downtown dine-arounds, with visitors stopping at several museums for cocktails, appetizers, entrees and desserts.

Every summer, the city is swamped with softball tournaments, so

## DIGITAL + SOCIAL CONTENT

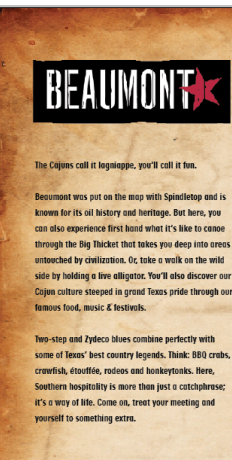


## PROMOTIONAL CONVENTION SALES MESSAGING BALANCED WITH CLIENT NEEDS + USEFULNESS



## UPDATED CUSTOM PRESENTATION FOLDER HOLDS BIDS &amp; DETAILS

## CVB SERVICE SHOWCASE ILLUSTRATES THE EXPERIENCE, TELLS THE STORY



## MEET BEAUMONT

- 3,500 guest rooms citywide
- Over 180,000 square feet of meeting space citywide
- Average room rates of \$86
- 42,000 sq. ft. of meeting space - Beaumont City Center
- 94,400 sq. ft. of meeting space - Ford Park Event Center
- 20,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, 200 sleeping rooms at the MGM Elegant Hotel & Conference Center
- 22,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, 253 sleeping rooms at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Beaumont Plaza
- 16,000 sq. ft. of meeting space available in downtown's newly opened Event Centre

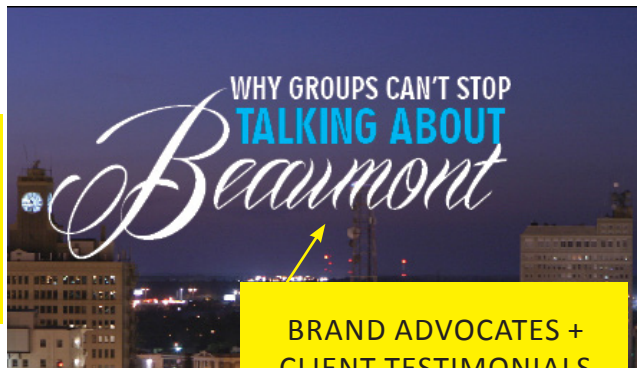
the CVB recently organized a contest for attendees. Teams had to take pictures of themselves enjoying Beaumont at hotels, restaurants or area attractions, and then post photos to Instagram with a particular hashtag. The team that posted the most pictures won a prize. The players had a blast, and it helped

increase exposure for the city, Woodland said.

"How do we get people to have fun?" she asked. "That's what our customization is about. That's what we do for our clients."

[www.beaumontcvb.com](http://www.beaumontcvb.com)

## BRAND ADVOCATES + CLIENT TESTIMONIALS



## Client Testimonials

"The feedback from everyone was wonderful... I can't thank you enough for the wonderful hospitality that everyone in Beaumont showed us."

—Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas

"The CVB exceeded our expectations! You folks were outstanding, we are praising Beaumont's CVB every chance we have! Every newsletter in our National organization will know what a great job you did for us. 'Texas with a little something extra!' is certainly true!"

—Centennial Chapter of the Antique Automobile Club of America

"Extremely helpful! We used the CVB for pre-planning, bidding, site visits and registration assistance along with gifts for dignitaries. The CVB saved us time and money particularly during the bidding process. They could not have been better. We would recommend Beaumont CVB to others, no question about it!"

—Lions International District 2-51

"You went way beyond what I expected. Rebecca guided us through the maze of planning a large event. Thank you for making this one of the best conference sessions we have had!"

—Grand Chapter of Texas Order of Eastern Star Convention

"The food was fantastic... the convention center was very helpful and flexible with our schedules. They were ready with anything we needed with only a moment's notice. We will definitely use Beaumont for meetings in the future."

—Texas Asphalt Pavement Association

"Thank you for all of your help! Everything went so smoothly and I'm being completely honest when I say that Beaumont was my favorite spot. Everyone was so welcoming, and the fans were very kind and cooperative. I appreciate all of your help promoting the event... Thanks again for everything!"

—Kyle Petty Charity Ride

