

Highlights of Visit Knoxville's Activities 1st Quarter FY 2015/2016



Sales & Services

HIGHLIGHTS

- Exceeded the quarterly sales definite booking goal with a total of 31 bookings equating to 80,978 delegate days.
- Hosted 11 site visits for potential booking opportunities.
- Attended five trade shows.
- Performed a Nashville area sales blitz in conjunction with attending the Tennessee Society of Association Executives Annual Board Meeting.
- Performed two scouting trips which included the Women of Faith Annual Conference in Louisville, KY and the National Quartet Convention in Pigeon Forge.
- Supported 46 events and meetings. Additionally, the services team took the lead in executing all logistics and on-site operations of Boomsday.
- The Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association honored the industry all-stars from across the state at the annual "Stars of the Industry" awards gala. Kelli Gibson, Sr. Director of Convention Services was honored with the Tourism Manager of the Year Award (Large Market).

Marketing & Communications

HIGHLIGHTS

- ESPN came to Knoxville for the World Cornhole Championships. The coverage of the event produced more than \$2.5M in earned media for Knoxville.
- Blue Ridge Outdoors put Knoxville in their Top Towns contest. The winner will be announced in November.
- Thanks to a new partnership with UT, the VK logo is now embroidered on the sleeves of shirts worn by ushers at UT football, basketball, softball, and baseball games.
- Visit Knoxville provided promotional support and assistance (via ad placement and/or social media) for the following festivals and events: Hola Festival, Asian Festival (October), Knoxville Film Festival, KMA Art Fair, Scruffy City Comedy Festival (November), BLANKFest, Knoxville Stomp, Open Streets, and Knoxville Powerboat Classic.
- Developed Knoxville's 2-page layout for the 2016 Tennessee Vacation guide and assisted with the development of Knoxville itineraries the state is promoting on social media and via emails.
- Developed and distributed a dual-purpose rack card promoting the Arts and Theatre Districts.
- Conducted modified conversion study, brand awareness study, and sentiment baseline study. Full research results will be made available during the next quarter.
- Visit Knoxville is teaming up with the Tennessee Theatre to provide one lucky winner with a pair of free tickets to a year's worth of shows in 2016 (one pair per month). Contest begins November 1. Winner will be announced mid-December.
- Collaborated with Roots Rated to brand and install an outdoor information kiosk at River Sports Outfitters.

Marketing & Communications

HIGHLIGHTS *(Continued...)*

- Partnered with Knoxville Mercury on Knoxville's Top Knox Awards.
- Placed advertising in Nashville's UNITE magazine, the only licensed LGBT lifestyle magazine in the country. Knoxville also received a feature write-up and designation as a top LGBT destination. The digital issue of the publication can be viewed at: http://issuu.com/unitemagazine/docs/unite_fall_2015__web
- Provided assistance on some well-rounded articles about Knoxville:
<http://money.cnn.com/gallery/smallbusiness/2015/08/19/best-cities-thumbtack/5.html>
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/02/travel/a-50-dollar-day-in-knoxville-tennessee.html?_r=0
- VK's Social Media audience and engagement continues to gain momentum:
 - Facebook Fans: 107,114 (up from 106,787 last quarter)
 - Twitter Followers: 20,342 (up from 18,800 last quarter)
 - Instagram Followers: 8,809 (up from 5,183 last quarter)
 - Pinterest Followers: 834 (up from 785 last quarter)
- VKTV is Visit Knoxville's In-Room Hotel Channel that provides guests with information on things to do, places to eat, festivals, and more. VKTV went live last quarter at the downtown Hampton Inn. Installs are scheduled for the next quarter at the following properties: Four Points, Crowne (VKTV is installed, but waiting on room TV upgrades), Hilton Downtown, Holiday Inn World's Fair Park, and Best Western Cedar Bluff.
- The VKNetwork consists of HDTVs airing silent promotional videos in high traffic locations including the Downtown Visitors Center, Knoxville Zoo, and Knoxville Convention Center. A screen was installed at the Hilton Downtown at the end of June. Two screens are being installed at the Best Western Cedar Bluff in October.

Visitor Services

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Tourism Manager traveled to Covington, KY to staff a Knoxville information table/pre-promote for the KY/TN Water Professionals Conference in anticipation of the group's 2016 convention in Knoxville.
- The Tourism Manager and Sr. Director of Visitor Services traveled to the GMOA-AMA-SCMA Regional Motorcoach Trade Show to introduce the Tourism Manager as the new contact for the Tour & Travel market as well as advertise Knoxville as a premier destination to Tour Planners and Operators throughout the Southeast.
- The Sr. Director of Visitor Services attended the Smart Growth America/Transit Oriented Development 101 meeting, a session of the listening tours organized by KAT; as well as many internal discussions and workings on the possible routes and their effects on tourism.
- The team participated in a partner showcase to advertise the Discover Tennessee Trails & Byways program. Partners from around this region showcased at a Tennessee Smokies Baseball game handing out brochures, maps, fans, etc., all while talking to the crowds about the trails available to them here in Tennessee.
- In recognition of World Tourism Day on September 27th, the Knoxville Visitors Center provided free luggage tags to all those who came into the center that weekend.
- The Tourism Manager conducted five Gotta Know Knoxville training programs which produced 88 new ambassadors.
- Visit Knoxville Volunteers were utilized in eight groups/events, during which a total of 198 man hours were provided as a no-cost, service-added benefit to VK's clients.
- The Visitors Center greeted 5,139 walk-in visitors and assisted 745 callers regarding Knoxville information.
- The number of brochures moved from our location totaled 12,766, up from 12,364 in the last quarter.
- Visitors Guide distribution included 6,230 individual requests, 59 local groups totaling 10,528 visitors guides picked up, and 14,350 copies shipped in bulk.

Visitor Services

HIGHLIGHTS *(Continued...)*

- Requests are received from around the world. The Top 10 states requesting guides were:
 1. Tennessee
 2. Florida
 3. Texas
 4. Illinois
 5. Ohio
 6. Pennsylvania
 7. Georgia
 8. Indiana
 9. North Carolina
 10. Missouri
- The Top 10 states of visitors checking into the Visitors Center were:
 1. Tennessee
 2. Florida
 3. North Carolina
 4. Ohio
 5. South Carolina
 6. California
 7. Texas
 8. Illinois
 9. Georgia
 10. New York

Ongoing

INITIATIVES

- Visit Knoxville reached an agreement to absorb the content of OutdoorKnoxville.com into the outdoor section of VisitKnoxville.com. The launch for both sites is planned for January 2016.
- The Visit Knoxville Film Office assisted several projects from local and out-of-town production companies by providing crew members, assistance with locations, help in obtaining proper permits and city services, and providing services from local vendors to large productions taking place out of town.
- The Film Office was also a presenting partner of the Knoxville Film Festival held in September. The Film Office provided \$15,000 of a \$20,000 Grand Prize earning to the winner of the 7-Day Shootout. The winner will be using the money to produce a feature film shot entirely in Knox County within the next year.
- Visit Knoxville is on the planning team with WDVX, Knox County Public Library, and East Tennessee History Center for the Knoxville Sessions celebration May 5-8, 2016. Visit Knoxville and Knox Stomp representatives teamed up with WDVX to promote both Knoxville and the May festival at the Rhythm & Roots Festival in Bristol.

Special Hotel

INITIATIVE

- Visit Knoxville created a new program to bring engagement with our hotel partners to a higher level. The Visit Knoxville Concierge Program provides hotel partners with a single point of contact at VK. Quarterly visits are executed by the VK team.

Quarterly Accolades

A Few Reasons Why KNOXROCKS!

- Knoxville ranked 12th Among America's Top 20 Best Value Cities by Trivago.com!
- Knoxville selected as a top LGBT destination by UNITE Nashville magazine!
- Visit Knoxville voted Tennessee's 2015 Destination Marketing Organization of the Year by the Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association!

**For more information on any of the above, please contact Lisa Coulter,
VK Marketing & Communications Coordinator at lcoulter@knoxville.org.**