



# City of Indian Wells Tourism/Partner Marketing

STRATEGIC PLAN  
2015-2017

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EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY

The overall purpose of the Partner Marketing Strategic Plan is to promote the Indian Wells brand and continue positioning the City as a preferred tourism destination within both the leisure market and group/meeting/convention market. Partner marketing strategies include branding opportunities, relationship marketing (FAM trips, sales missions, etc.), strategic partnerships, tennis marketing, and other opportunities that arise annually and fit into the strategic objectives.

Successful implementation of this program influences growth of Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), the leading contributor to the City's General Fund. The City of Indian Wells is the third largest TOT collector in the Coachella Valley with tourism dollars contributing almost 60% (\$6.3 million) of the City's General Fund revenue.

City staff oversee and implement the Partner Marketing Strategic Plan. As partnerships are the cornerstone of the Indian Wells tourism marketing efforts, staff work closely with the City's Resort Partners to promote Indian Wells resort properties and create tourism demand.

The funding for this program is by formula equal to a base of \$160,000 plus 20% of the incremental transient occupancy tax received as a result of the City increasing the transient occupancy tax rate to 11.25% from 9.25% (Measure H, December 2011). The overall goal of this program is to positively influence revenue to the City's Resort Partners, which then contributes to an increase in the City's General Fund.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Our Mission:

Create an unsurpassed quality of life for residents and guests by providing superior public safety, exceptional service, and outstanding amenities that will further enhance our image as a prestigious community and international resort destination.

## Our Vision:

To deliver on our City's mission statement by using best practices, effective communications, and cutting-edge marketing strategies while continuing to enhance our City's brand experience and work effectively with our strategic partners.

## Our External Brand Position:

Indian Wells' unique combination of its small size, prestigious residents, tranquil surroundings and selective choice of partners, has fostered and sustained a high quality of life which attracts and satisfies individuals with the most discerning tastes.

# OUR BRAND



Indian Wells is an intimate and tranquil California desert destination for discerning individuals who seek and value exclusive experiences. Indian Wells is dedicated to preserving the quality of life for its residents and caters to guests as if they were members of its residential community. We believe our guests will continue to return to Indian Wells or become future residents, so it is our goal to nurture and create only premium experiences that attract and satisfy the common interests of these individuals. Selective experiences and a high-end brand define Indian Wells as the “luxury leader” of the Valley. Indian Wells consistently differentiates itself by being the leader in per capita income, median house value and average household income.

The City of Indian Wells was named after a critical discovery of a well that became a destination for pioneers and was identified on some of the earliest maps of California. The original well was hand-dug by the earliest inhabitants of Indian Wells, the Cahuilla Indians. The fact that women of the tribe dug over 30 feet, by hand, to find this life-sustaining force is a remarkable story. The significance of this event, and the ingenuity and determination that it represents, is the true spirit of the Indian Wells brand. The determination to intelligently overcome seemingly insurmountable odds is what the Indian Wells name represents.



The arrowhead logo symbolically represents the story of the well, and is oriented downward to the source of water, but now points to the source for exclusive experiences. The human figure represents the people of the community subtly intertwined with the natural elements of palm trees and sunshine.

# INDIAN WELLS RESORT PARTNERS

Our Partner Marketing program encompasses all of our resort partners and is designed to provide a marketing platform to promote the Indian Wells brand. Building a solid brand platform and initiating City marketing strategies has enabled our partners to deliver an exceptional client experience to our target audiences. Marketing strategies leverage our brand and partnerships to deliver high-impact programs and offerings that increase revenues for our resort partners and the City's general fund. (The name and brand of Indian Wells is important to our partners; two have incorporated the "Indian Wells" name into their brand in the last few years.)

Our resort partners include ►



The IW Campus and Indian Wells Tennis Garden consist of the following product offerings to our target audience.



### Tourism Influencers

There are many components of the tourism/group marketing strategies that are handled by state and regional tourism agencies. With agencies and our hoteliers all marketing to similar audiences, the City's strategies need to reflect the goals and objectives of the City to grow TOT by influencing and not competing with these agencies. Partnership with these organizations is vital to the overall success of the City's tourism marketing efforts.

Visit California provides a statewide marketing and communications platform to promote the California Brand, as well as the value of tourism, to consumers and media around the world. Visit California serves as the foremost authority on the travel and tourism industry in California, as well as the issues affecting it.



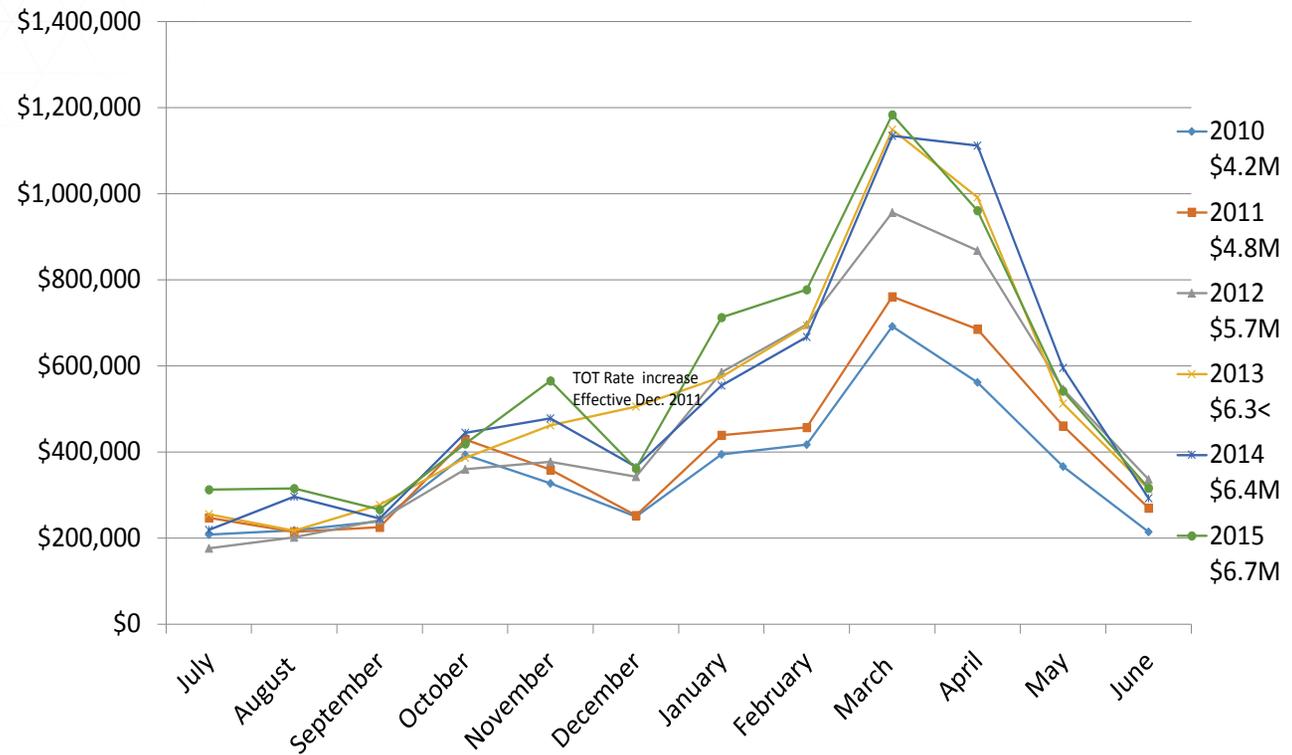


The Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) is the official tourism agency for the entire Coachella Valley, providing sales, marketing and promotional efforts targeted to potential leisure and convention group markets.

The CVB data indicates critical components that marketing or our brand has little influence over, but that do impact visitor's coming to the Coachella Valley. These issues include:

- ▼ Adequate Airlift – limited airlift, especially for group/meeting planners is the single largest deterrent for group booking. Although the CVB and Palm Springs International Airport work to incentivize airlines to add and keep flights, groups indicate it is impactful to their decision.
- ▼ Accommodations Capacity – The amount of inventory available at an acceptable rate for our target audience is based primarily on the capacity of product available.
- ▼ Visitor Satisfaction – If visitors are satisfied with their experience, they will return. As the resorts are in the customer service business, the City can only influence brand awareness, with other entities delivering the direct experience and satisfaction to the visitor.
- ▼ Seasonal Influences (summer, mid-week) – The weather is a factor in summer, especially mid-week as many visitors do not visit the Coachella Valley during the exceptionally hot months, but rather only during "season".

## Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) 2010-2015 Largest contributor to City's General Fund



## Marketing Goals & Objectives

The City's Partner Marketing Program Goals and Objectives are to strategically support our partners and to influence growth in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT).

### Goals

- ▼ Provide marketing platform to promote the Indian Wells brand
- ▼ Create tourism/group demand for our product
- ▼ Build brand awareness
- ▼ Strategically leverage assets
- ▼ Build support with tourism partners for a common vision for the destination

### Objectives

- ▼ Deliver a world-class visitor experience
- ▼ Continue to strengthen our resort partnerships
- ▼ Align with partners and tourism influences to promote the brand through creative initiatives
- ▼ Create and execute marketing strategies year-round with Resorts, Indian Wells Golf Resort, Indian Wells Tennis Garden/BNP Paribas Open
- ▼ Create opportunities to incentivize meeting/convention business to book in Indian Wells
- ▼ Create a revenue generating tourism event (influences TOT and Admissions Tax)

Sending a broad message out to millions of people is not nearly as effective as sending targeted messages to priority segments located in our top markets. It's imperative in today's marketing world to identify priority segments and shifts in consumer and media trends that impact tourism to create destination and brand marketing strategies.

Our target audience can be generally divided into two groups:

**Group/Meeting/Convention Planners & Third Party Booking Agents:**

A person, organization or third party who specializes in the planning and organization of conventions and other business meetings. Group business accounts for an average of 60% of our resorts' overall bookings

Strategy: Focus on supporting goals and tactics that allow for meeting planners to visit and experience our destination and products. Continue to support Familiarization Trips (FAM – bringing this target audience to the destination) like SiteSo Cal and Northstar Meeting Group and continue annual Sales Missions to promote and sell our Indian Wells campus to clients.

**Leisure Travelers & Travel Agents/Agencies:**

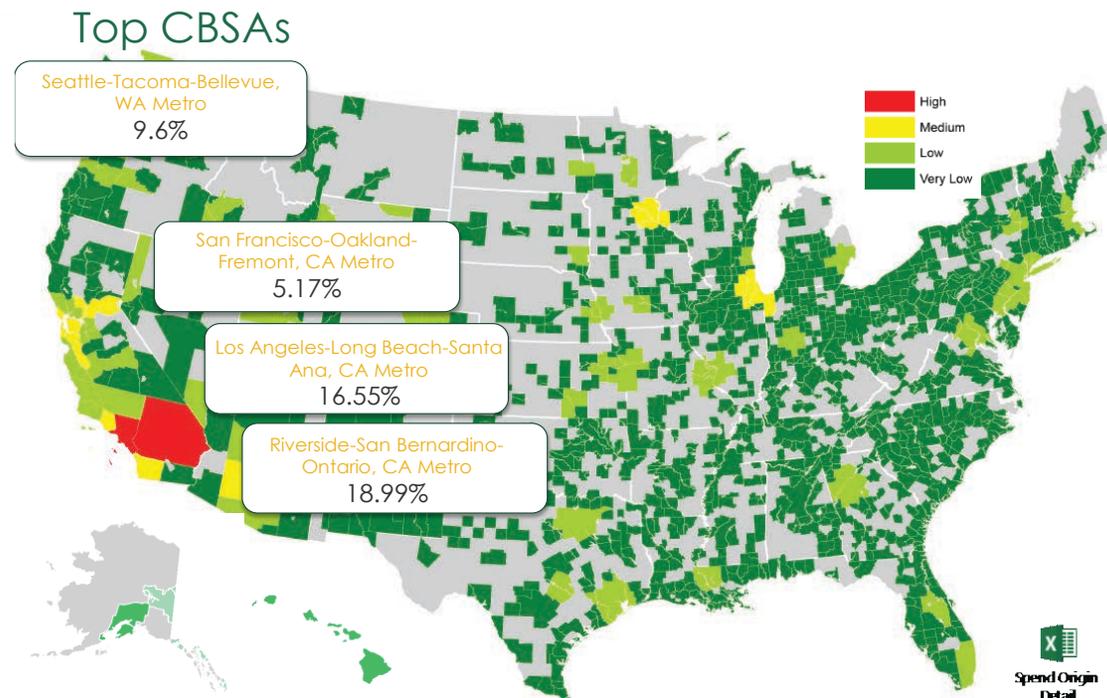
The group is dominated, for Indian Wells, by the drive-market (see TOP CBSA's map showing largest concentration of leisure guests traveling to Indian Wells, Buxton Visitor Profile, 2015). Nationally this group is influenced by travel agents and online booking engines (i.e. Expedia, Travelocity, etc.).

Strategy: To capitalize on promotion and advertising opportunities to our top markets, as well as co-op offerings to promote Indian Wells to drive-market.

“ Approximately 78% of California’s domestic leisure visitors in 2014 were residents of California.”

(Source: TNS TravelsAmerica)

Leisure Demographic: Buxton Research showing top leisure areas traveling to Indian Wells:

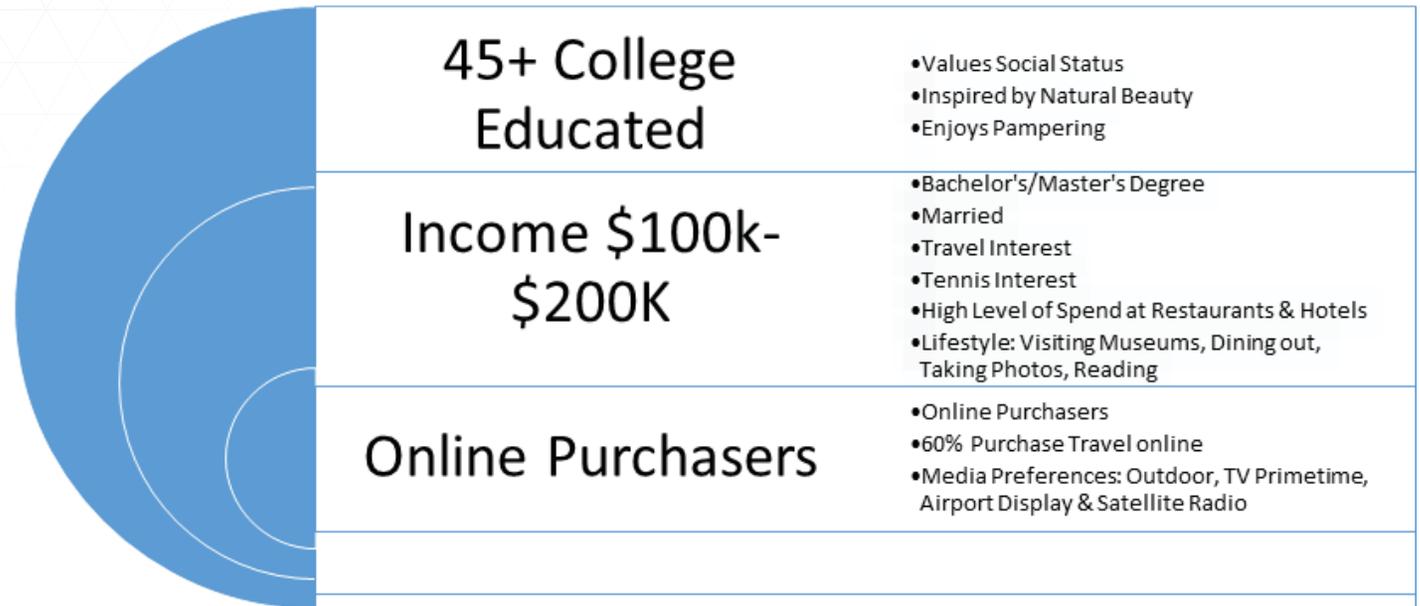


Spend Origin Detail

Buxton

TARGET AUDIENCE

Profile



*\*Buxton research on Leisure Visitor Demographic (Indian Wells Visitor Profile/Prospects - Buxton, 2015)*

A multi-platform, integrated marketing strategy will guide the initiatives for fiscal years 2015-2017. Using an integrated approach, all marketing initiatives will carry a consistent brand image and messaging on all channels of communication (print, web and social media), as they all work together to promote to our target audiences using shared overall goals and objectives.

### Strategy ONE:

“Sell” Group/Meeting/Convention Planners to book at the Indian Wells resorts by annually investing in group incentive initiatives for meeting planners to experience Indian Wells.

#### Initiative:

- ▼ **Familiarization (FAM) trip to Indian Wells:**

Northstar Meeting (group incentive) (November, 2015) – 60 high-end meeting planners attend conference held in Indian Wells. Follow these leads through the system, with a goal of educating group planners on Indian Wells. Follow leads to determine long-term return on investment.

- ▼ **Sales mission site visits to educate planners on Indian Wells.**

Host meeting planners in Indian Wells or cities like San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago and New York who are looking to bring Group business to Indian Wells. Follow leads to determine long-term return on investment.

- ▼ **Tennis familiarization (FAM) trip to Indian Wells:**

Host meeting planners annually at the BNP Paribas Open to enjoy a luxurious two-days in City suite and experience the greatest tennis tournament in the world and all that Indian Wells has to offer.

- ▼ **City signing incentives** (host receptions, Mayor Attendance, transportation) to compete with other resorts and other destinations bidding on the group.

## Strategy TWO:

Create and execute marketing strategies year-round with Resorts, Indian Wells Golf Resort, and Indian Wells Tennis Garden/BNP Paribas Open and create consumer marketing efforts to focus on a variety of general awareness and niche marketing campaigns.

### Initiative:

- ▼ **Provide compelling offers/outbound marketing campaigns for shoulder/summer season.**
- ▼ **Use tourism database and paid media** (opportunities annually TBD) to promote shoulder and summer season specials focusing on golf and family. Most travelers looking for a destination will start their vacation search online and use multiple devices in the process.
- ▼ **Use City website** to direct and promote visitors to partners' websites and continue to showcase Indian Wells online.
- ▼ **Partner with Greater Palm Springs Conventions and Visitors Bureau on media buying offers.**  
TV Co-op Package: 400 TV spots in drive market (Los Angeles, San Diego, Phoenix, Las Vegas) to promote shoulder season (March-June), includes production of commercial.
- ▼ **Partner with Greater Palm Springs CVB and Tennis Channel to promote BNP Paribas Open.**  
Working to encourage Greater Palm Springs CVB to promote tennis. The City initiated a co-op media partnership for the 2016 tournament.

**“Customers will be  
85% digital by 2020”**

*(source: Kapost)*

## Strategy **THREE:**

Actively increase opportunities to promote Indian Wells to the Tourism Media (Press) and use relevant content to engage our audience through social media channels.

### Initiative:

- ▼ **Increase tourism public relations efforts** (travel writers, bloggers, and digital reviews).
- ▼ **Work with local, national and international travel/tourism media and trade media** to disseminate information about the tourism experience in Indian Wells.
- ▼ **Use social media to disseminate relevant content and build a relationship with the consumer and to deepen consumer engagement with the Indian Wells brand (social media – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube).**

Represent the destination in images and content through social media channels and use blog, social media, and media event at BNP Paribas Open, as well as news releases, travel/tourism bloggers, national magazines, newspapers, and travel media (golf, tennis, and group business).

- ▼ **Encourage subscribers to follow all Indian Wells' social media platforms.**

Current Social Media Platform Numbers:

- FACEBOOK: 10,731 IW Fans
- YOUTUBE: 8,171 views
- TWITTER: 4,055 followers/2,977 following

**“ Social Media is great for building trust and getting their attention.”**

*Michael Aagaard, Conversion Optimization Expert*

## Strategy FOUR:

Promote and support events and sponsorships that help build brand awareness.

### Initiative:

- ▼ **Increase tourism public relations efforts in relation to City sponsored events and local events** (travel writers, bloggers, and digital reviews). Events continue to be a strong catalyst for generating visitor interest in the destination.
- ▼ **Continue to capitalize on City sponsored events** (Sponsorship budget). Use existing events to promote the brand and continue efforts in researching and obtaining a revenue generating tourism event.

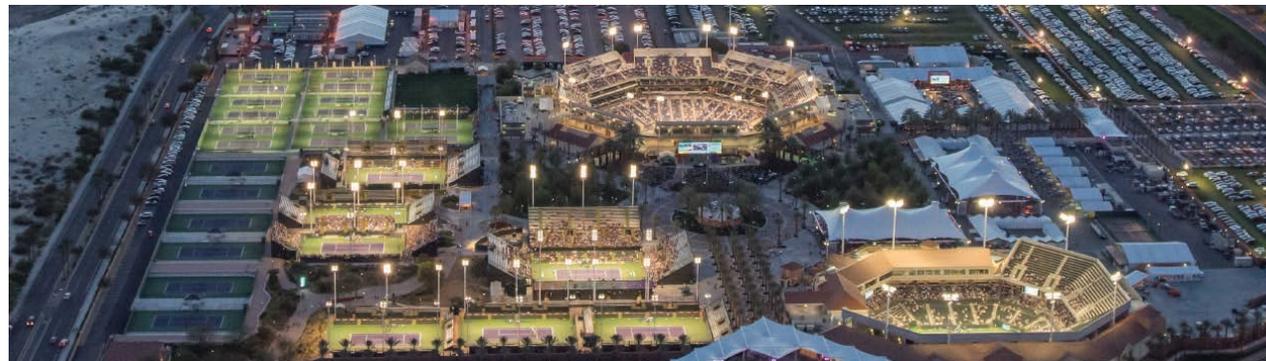


**Strategy FIVE:**

Work to align all partners and tourism influencers to promote brand and marketing opportunities.

**Initiative:**

- **Coordinate IW Resorts and BNP Paribas Open together to “brand” the resorts during the tournament.**  
This year all resorts (paid by BNP Paribas) will have elevator wraps, key cards, and tear drop banners at shuttle stops promoting the tournament. All resort front-of-house staff (bell-man, valet) will be wearing (paid by FILA) tennis wear to promote the tournament.
- **BNP Paribas Resort booth and Indian Wells Golf putting green.**  
The City annually hosts a “branded” booth at the BNP Paribas Open tournament for the two week run of the tournament, and a well branded Indian Wells Golf Resort putting green where we hand out gifts emblazoned with Indian Wells signature logos, and deliver a mini-massage treatment to engage visitors in the Indian Wells experience.



## Performance Measures/Measure Of Success

City Staff will continue to measure marketing investments by monitoring available ROI and measuring TOT impact and report back in our annual "Marketing "Recap" report to Partner Marketing Committee.

