



## **| ACRA Goals and Objectives – Back to Basics |**

### **Program Year 2016**

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016-December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016

Thanks to the Board of Directors who took time on November 17, 2015 to help shape the 2016 program of work. At the retreat we were able to create a new vision for the organization and affirm the mission. We reviewed what we love about Aspen, what keeps us up at night and finally why do we exist as a board and as an organization. We finished the day thinking of BHAG's (Big Hairy Audacious Goals.) From the retreat, the staff and mico groups reconvened to produce this program of work. This is a one year plan, which is entitled "back to basics." Our intent is to get back together in the Fall for a full day retreat to produce a new 5 year strategic plan aligning with new board leadership. The great ideas that came out of the retreat - but did not make this one-year plan, will be revisited in the Fall of 2016.

The Aspen Chamber Resort Association (ACRA) is a non-profit, community organization dedicated to supporting the business community and enhancing the visitor experience. The ACRA is a unique blend of a traditional business chamber and a visitors' bureau made up of approximately 750 local businesses, a strong, diverse board of directors, and a talented staff.

#### **VISION:**

Creating an environment for Aspen to thrive.

#### **MISSION:**

To serve our member businesses and the community in general by:

- Attracting visitors to the resort;
- Providing valuable member benefits and services;
- Synergy with non profit and government entities;
- Advocate on releveant local issues.

#### **GUIDELINES:**

- Tell our story better, both as a community and as an organization.
- Find better ways to listen to our community and membership.
- Set realistic operational and financial goals.
- Actively participate in the planning for the future of our community.

## **| MEMBERSHIP |**

**Objective: To provide high-quality educational programs and ensure members understand, participate and use the services and tools available to them.**

**A. Goal: Maintain a membership base of 750 through retention and recruitment efforts and strive to exceed that number by two to three percent**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Respond in a timely manner to member and prospective member inquiries and requests.
- (2) Publish new member listings and updates in the E-News.
- (3) Send membership invitations to prospective members.
- (4) Invite board members to participate in recruitment/outreach activities.
- (5) Invite potential members to key events.
- (6) Track membership cancellations and exit interviews.
- (7) On a monthly basis ACRA staff goes on a meet and greet to member businesses.

**B. Goal: Provide members with information about services and tools available to them**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Include business listings in the Aspen Business Directory and on the ACRA website.
- (2) Prepare a one or two sheet flyer highlighting the programs and services that members or prospective members may use with staff and or volunteer leaders/board.
- (3) Present a new member orientation program on a quarterly basis.
- (4) Highlight services and program with targeted mailings or electronic messages, articles in the newsletters and/or other communications.

**C. Goal: Evaluate all member programs and services to ensure value in ACRA membership**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Provide evaluation forms to all registrants on site to gauge feedback on programming
- (2) Work with member service committee to evaluate ways to strengthen and improve member services
- (3) Inform leadership of member recommendations regarding programs and services
- (4) Implement modifications to educational programs and services to enhance offerings

**D. Goal: Develop creative, stimulating marketing materials to inform members and promote increased attendance at ACRA educational programs by 15%**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Produce individual membership invites focusing on benefits of attending
- (2) Upload all information on to the website and create some brand awareness around the programming
- (3) Utilize the Defy Ordinary brand to unify the marketing materials

**E. Goal: Develop active leadership potential for governance positions for all members**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Provide opportunities for members to express interest in leadership positions via nomination process
- (2) Cultivate interest in service through mentoring and encouraging qualified individuals to serve.

**| COMMUNICATIONS |**

**Objective: Provide high-quality communications that provide a flow of information to educate and promote ACRA and business/community issues.**

**A. Goal: Publish electronic version of the newsletter to inform members of ACRA activities, industry issues and member news with a 30% open rate**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Publish a destination e-news; membership e-news and a public affairs e-news six to eight times a year.
- (2) Encourage members to send their newsletters and press releases to ACRA.
- (3) Include segment in newsletter and available on line that educates and provides metrics on issues identified be matters of interest to ACRA.

**B. Goal: Update the online membership directory in real time**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Maintain online directory and database information for each individual member.
- (2) Request annual updates and review of member information for each record.

**C. Goal: Increase communication with employees of member businesses by 25%.**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Capture member businesses employees email addresses by calling the top 20 employers to request employee email lists.
- (2) Add additional spaces on membership application and invoices to provide employers with opportunity to include employees in communication.
- (3) Have email sign up at member events offering incentives and prizes.

**D. Goal: Conduct 2 surveys a year including Business Advocacy Survey and Membership**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Prepare and distribute information regarding on-line advocacy survey.
- (2) Strive for 30% member participation in the annual survey by providing members with an incentive and multiple reminders to complete.
- (3) Ensure online results are available and an executive summary is distributed
- (4) Archive the data for reference.
- (5) Evaluate and refine the current questionnaire for relevance.

## **| PUBLIC AFFAIRS |**

- A. **Goal: Coalition Building: Develop strategic partnerships that position the Chamber as a leader in building consensus for the purpose of strengthening.**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Identify common goals between city and county government and business sector to ensure a proactive approach at the local level.
- (2) Ask staff, volunteer leaders, and members to serve on appropriate committees or boards where they can be most helpful.
- (3) Provide relevant input and information to community organizations, leaders and elected officials for issues, projects or decisions that could impact tourism, visitors, and business.
- (4) Serve as the convener/facilitator as appropriate on community business issues.
- (5) Increase connections with other local institutions and community groups, including employees, the press, and those who oppose the interests of business and tourism, in order to broaden our coalitions.
- (6) Increase collaboration between other area chambers across the Western Slope to influence area issues (i.e. transportation.)
- (7) Develop City to City Visit Program to study identified issues and implement at least one City to City visit.

- B. **Goal: Create Positive Community Dialogue on Tourism and Business Issues: Develop a year-round, community wide education/promotion plan to improve community alignment on general issues that impact tourism and business.**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Identify key community dialogues that impact the community's reception to tourism and business interests.
- (2) Craft promotional campaigns on targeted issues to create a positive engagement with the community.
- (3) Educate the public on targeted issues, providing basic metrics and information.
- (4) Engage with those in the community whose views on such subjects are adverse to the interests of tourism and business.
- (5) Create more opportunities to educate the community and our membership on the work of ACRA so that our interests and involvement are more commonplace.

- C. **Goal: Targeted Advocacy: Identify governmental/community issues upon which ACRA should advocate a position, to protect the sustainability of tourism and business.**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Stay abreast of current issues and concerns, review Economic Sustainability report.
- (2) Continue to utilize and strengthen process filters for advocacy, so that the model provides clarity and direction for deciding when ACRA should advocate a position.

Our position for this year's program of work is that ACRA should take no position as it relates to any particular private development.

- (3) Anticipated issues for this year's program of work: Air Service (public infrastructure,) Land Use Code (vision of community,) Housing (employee sustainability,) and Traffic (quality of life, environmental impacts.)
- (4) Educate the public on such issues, providing basic metrics and information. Objective is for ACRA to be viewed as a credible and valued resource on relevant issues and discussions.
- (5) Engage with those in the community whose views on such issues are adverse to ACRA's mission.
- (6) Coordinate and host candidate forums and events to provide the community and chamber membership with current information on such governmental issues.

## **| DESTINATION MARKETING |**

**Objective: To attract visitors to the resort with an integrated sales and marketing campaign that promotes Aspen as a premier year round destination.**

**A. Goal: Expand visitation in the late spring and fall shoulder season to increase overall non-winter months occupancy by 3% (May-October)**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Build on success of Secret Season and fall promotions.
- (2) Allocate more resources to spring/fall and start promotion earlier in season(s).
- (3) Conduct non winter visitor research to inform the Defy Ordinary campaign.
- (4) Target markets with early and extended air service including SF, LA, Dallas and Chicago.

**B. Goal: Build upon the Defy Ordinary campaign and increase web visitation to over 1,000,000 annual visitors in 2016**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Highlight Defy Ordinary brand in print collateral including Vacation Planner and rack brochure driving traffic to web.
- (2) Utilize integrated marketing campaign including social, advertising, PR and arts aspen initiatives to drive traffic back to web.
- (3) Create rich content and video to increase engagement on artsaspen.

**C. Goal: Increase awareness of Aspen for non-winter months in 3 International markets**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Continue on success of UK efforts.
- (2) Revise market strategy for Brazil and Australia due to economic challenges.
- (3) Collaborate with marketing partners for bigger impact.
- (4) Implement targeted PR and sales campaigns in defined markets.

**D. Goal: Increase group sales leads by 10% year over year**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Telemarketing campaign targeting top feeder markets.
- (2) Destination sales missions in partnership with group stakeholders.
- (3) Advertising campaign targeting wedding prospects.
- (4) Extend booking incentives to all prospect leads.
- (5) Increase exposure on social media to position ACRA as thought leaders in meetings and events.

**E. Goal: Continue community collaborations and add one partnership to leverage brand and resources**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Identify new events / groups for Aspen.
- (2) Target national companies for partnerships.
- (3) Identify opportunities for collaboration with marketing partners.

**F. Goal: Position ACRA as leaders in the Destination Marketing industry by attending 4 professional development conferences.**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Attend DMAI conferences and /or other training for staff.
- (2) Start researching DMAI accreditation for the organization.
- (3) Utilize opportunities for presentations and networking at industry events.
- (4) Participation on industry BODs and committees.

**| SPECIAL EVENTS |**

**Objective: Produce high quality special events that drive visitation and/or add vitality.**

**A. Goal: Coordinate 5 special events for the community, visitor, and ACRA membership benefit**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Continue to produce the annual Wintersköl, Fourth of July Celebration, Arts Festival, and 12 Days of Aspen as well as act as event manager for the FOOD & WINE Classic in Aspen.
- (2) Focus on existing events ACRA is already producing, strive to make them the best possible.
- (3) Continue to assist other organizations and individuals wishing to produce events in Aspen by acting as a source of event information and liaison for the community.

**B. Goal: Make sure 100% of new special events staff is trained and educated on their specific job as well as the organization**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Educate new special events staff on all aspects of each event.
- (2) New Special Events Manager to serve as primary contact and event manager for Aspen Arts Festival & 12 Days of Aspen.
- (3) Cross train staff in marketing, membership and visitor services.

**C. Goal: Successfully secure all event contracts that are renewing in 2016**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Renew multi-year contract with FOOD & WINE for the FOOD & WINE Classic in Aspen.
- (2) Renew multi-year contract with Howard Alan Events for the Aspen Arts Festival.
- (3) Work with ACRA's administration on the renewal of the City of Aspen's Contract for Services to produce special events in Aspen.

**D. Goal: Find and participate in 2 educational and networking opportunities around event production**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Participate in webinars that are content relevant.
- (2) Take classes to help increase computer knowledge.

**| VISITOR/GUEST SERVICES |**

**Objective: Provide the highest level of service and training available to showcase Aspen as a premier destination.**

**A. Goal: To enhance and support ACRA's commitment to providing visitors an exceptional Aspen experience**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Provide visitors a variety of opportunities to experience and understand the natural and cultural resources of Aspen.
- (2) Provide a wide range of options for people of different ages, abilities and incomes.
- (3) Understanding the need to apply our knowledge of Aspen and the surrounding area to a diverse visitor population.
- (4) Emphasize the uniqueness of Aspen as a "one of a kind" town standing apart from many other resorts.
- (5) Incorporate the Defy Ordinary brand into the physical structures, as well as staff training, providing the guest with an experience that lives up to the brand.

**B. Goal: Implement real time texting for visitor questions and comments**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Coordinate training for ZipWhip with all appropriate staff allowing for people to get real time information.
- (2) Promote service in marketing materials.

**C. Goal: Create a Defy Ordinary email template for the information email address responses**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Create a header for the email responses.
- (2) Create a signature for email responses.

**D. Goal: Greater adoption of the service initiative through two education programs**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Continue to produce and distribute training materials.
- (2) Research a formal guest service instruction using a third party to implement a training program.

**| ADMINISTRATION |**

**Objective: Develop and maintain an organizational structure to support the goals of ACRA through efficient and professional direction of operational functions to deliver services and contracts.**

**A. Goal: Maintain internal policies and practices that assume the effective, efficient conduct of ACRA affairs**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Provide support for Board meetings, membership meetings, committee meetings and other official meetings of ACRA.
- (2) Maintain liaison and communications with the Officers and Directors regarding the operation of the Association.
- (3) Maintain a permanent record of Board meeting minutes.
- (4) Review benefit package for organization.
- (5) Conduct staff performance reviews.
- (6) Update long-term planning in the fall to reflect new 5-year plan.
- (7) Prepare annual budget for Board consideration and assume responsibility for the management of that budget.
- (8) Participate in educational opportunities for staff development.



**B. Goal: Ensure the financial stability of the Chamber as a result of conservative budgeting for all programs**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Encourage the staff toward achieving increased revenue and decreased expenses within the budget process.
- (2) Work with management staff on process for accurate forecasting and budgeting.
- (3) Prepare and present clear and concise monthly financial statements and all related worksheets.

**C. Goal: Partner with the City of Aspen in identifying a new visitor center and office space**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Form small committee of commercial real estate broker, attorney and banker to review.
- (2) Work session with City to discuss needs and usage.

**D. Goal: Utilize a technology plan for the Chamber for best efficiency for multiple locations**

*Strategies:*

- (1) Implement a rotation system for new computers to be installed.
- (2) Out-dated computer equipment to be recycled.
- (3) Keep abreast of technological innovations and work towards implementing these as needed.
- (4) Implement phone and computer system at new location.