

CONTACTS: Cara Schneider
(215) 599-0789, cara@visitphilly.com

VISIT PHILADELPHIA's 2020 YEAR IN MARKETING REVIEW
18 Marketing Initiatives Spanned Two Phases: Crisis & Recovery

PHILADELPHIA, December 17, 2020 – Early on in fiscal year 2020, VISIT PHILADELPHIA® announced plans for the year to help keep the Philadelphia region's tourism momentum going strong. But then came COVID-19, and with it, a change in strategy. Throughout 2020, VISIT PHILADELPHIA monitored the situation, surveyed travelers and adjusted marketing plans every step of the way to ensure that messaging was sound and impactful as possible.

Here's a look at what VISIT PHILADELPHIA did to build Philadelphia's image, support local businesses, drive visitation (when appropriate) and boost civic pride throughout the pandemic, along with Philadelphia's projected economic impact loss numbers to date due to the pandemic.

Crisis Phase (March through June, region under stay-at-home orders):

1. **City Partnership:** Formed immediate partnership with the City of Philadelphia; shared safety messages in fun, Philly dialect; for example: "[Use Soap & Wooder](#)," "[Stay on your Stoop](#)" and "[Cough into that Jaww](#)"
2. **Free Media Space:** Bartered for free media space, then posted [thank you messages](#) around town and online calling out more than a dozen groups, including doctors and nurses, sanitation workers, grocery store clerks and the media
3. **Civic Pride:** Released "[Philly Shines Blue](#)" spot to show appreciation to healthcare workers everywhere
4. **PA Craft Beer Promotion:** Promoted one of the pandemic silver linings — [beer delivery](#) from regional breweries; also fulfilled expectations of state grant to promote the regional beer trail
5. **Philly Live Weekends:** Pivoted Philly Live NBC10 segment to [Philly Live Weekends](#) on Facebook, giving free platform to 100+ regional businesses and attractions in need of extra exposure; 104 episodes with 1.8 million views and 17,000 average views per episode to date
6. **Love + Grit:** Shifted focus of the just-launched podcast, [Love + Grit](#), to the region's resiliency; guests — all with Philly ties — have included Hollywood writer Angela Nissel; Faheem Alexander, the Philly barber with a seriously loyal following; and singer/songwriter VINCINT (Love + Grit is among the few travel podcasts specifically for Black and Brown travelers.)
7. **James Beard Foundation Partnership:** Co-hosted the virtual [James Beard Foundation Award Nominee Announcement](#), which was to have taken place in Philadelphia. The show was an image-builder for the Philly food scene.
8. **Acknowledgement of George Floyd's Death:** Marked 8:48 seconds of silence on [visitphilly.com](#) in the wake of George Floyd's death
9. **Queer Eye Promotion:** Created a [Queer Eye guide](#) (accompanied by heavy social promotion) to tout season five in Philadelphia just after the episodes were released
10. **Hospitality Jobs Site:** Launched a [hospitality jobs](#) section on [visitphilly.com](#) as a one-stop shop for employment opportunities at hotels, restaurants, museums and attractions

-more-

Recovery Phase (July through December, activities begin re-opening, but subject to renewed restrictions):

11. **#OurTurnToTourist:** Soft launched [#OurTurnToTourist](#) in July with snappy, four-item itineraries on Instagram. The campaign aims to drive day and overnight visits and encourage buying from local businesses. Sample itineraries: [Get Your Art On, I am Woman](#) and [Roxborough Snack Crawl](#). Later ramped up the initiative with a [video series](#) showing how local influencers spend their time in the newly reopening Philly. The spots repackage everyday things into something special and celebrate creative, new offerings at local businesses. Two examples: [Josh Eats Philly](#) and [New York-to-Philly](#).
12. **TV Spots:** Produced a civic pride spot, “[Greater Philadelphia, Greater Together](#),” and a new Wawa Welcome America commercial for the all-virtual Fourth of July 4 festival
13. **Clean & Safe Messaging:** Corralled two mascots into the recovery story:
 - [Phillie Phanatic video series](#), showing the mascot traveling around a clean and safe city
 - [Eagles mascot video series](#), showing Swoop as a tourist in his own town
14. **Herr’s Partnership:** Forged a [Herr’s partnership](#), which helped extend VISIT PHILADELPHIA’s limited media buy
15. **Amtrak Offer:** Teamed up with Amtrak to offer 50%-off tickets for travel between December 2020 and March 2021
16. **Holiday Shopping Promotion:** Distributed 40,000 “I Shopped Philly” stickers to encourage local holiday shopping
17. **Black- & Brown-owned Business Initiative:** Announced [initiative](#) to showcase and promote the growth and economic development of more than 130 businesses
18. **Shop Black Business Friday:** Promoted “[Shop Black Business Friday](#),” a resolution issued by Philadelphia’s City Council

Metrics available upon request.

Economic Impact Of COVID-19:

Prior to COVID-19, 2020 started off strong and was looking to be another record-setting year, but by April, travel had come to an abrupt halt, and Tourism Economics predicts it will take until 2023-2024 to fully recover. Here’s a look at the impact through the end of the year:

- **Lost Travel & Tourism Jobs (Region):** 52,000 jobs (down from 192,000 to 140,000), a 27% decline year over year (projected January-December 2020)
- **Lost Leisure Hotel Room Nights (Center City):** 696,000 nights, a 74% decline year over year (projected March-December 2020)
- **Lost Group Room Nights (Center City):** 950,000 nights, a 93% decline year over year (projected March-December 2020)
- **Lost Business Room Nights (Center City):** 787,000 nights, an 80% decline year over year (projected March-December 2020)
- **Lost Travel from Canada & Mexico (Region):** 424,000 visits, a 73% decline year over year (projected January-December 2020)
- **Lost Overseas Travel (Region):** 562,000 visits, an 80% decline year over year (projected January-December 2020)
- **Lost Economic Impact (Region):** \$5.8 billion (projected March-December 2020)

###

VISIT PHILADELPHIA® is our name and our mission. As the region's official tourism marketing agency, we build Greater Philadelphia's image, drive visitation and boost the economy.

On Greater Philadelphia's official visitor website and blog, visitphilly.com and uwishunu.com, visitors can explore things to do, upcoming events, themed itineraries and hotel packages. Compelling photography and videos, interactive maps and detailed visitor information make the sites effective trip-planning tools. Along with Visit Philly social media channels, the online platforms communicate directly with consumers.

Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos and high-definition B-roll of Greater Philadelphia, visit the Photos & Video section of visitphilly.com/mediacenter.