

Brand USA is a non-profit, private partnership dedicated to increasing inbound international travel to the United States.



The law that created us is called the Travel Promotion Act—and it had overwhelming support from both sides of the aisle.



We are laser-focused on increasing international visitation to fuel the nation's economy.



Now in our seventh year, we're delivering on our promise to fuel the nation's economy by inspiring the world to visit the USA. In other words, it's working.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### About Brand USA (History & Operations)

#### It looks like international visitation to the United States is already up—so why do we need this program?

Visitation is up—but not enough. We have a lot of ground to make up to get even close to the market share we once enjoyed more than 10 years ago. In fact, between 2000 and 2010 the U.S. share of international arrivals dropped 36% (from a market share of 17% to 12.4%). The associated economic costs of that decline are estimated to be a loss of 78 million visitors, \$606 billion in spending, and support for 467,000 jobs annually.

The United States continues to regain lost market share. While the standalone results clearly demonstrate the success of Brand USA initiatives, global market share analysis adds additional perspective on our impact. The collective efforts of Brand USA and the travel and tourism industry have propelled the United States ahead of the global average since 2010. Nevertheless, the United States still has a long way to go to regain the market share that was conceded during “The Lost Decade,” a period after 9/11 during which the United States lost 30% of its global long haul market share.

One reason for the significant decline is because the United States did not have a nationally coordinated collaborative marketing effort. In fact, the United States was the only industrialized country without a program like this in place. Other countries have spent a tremendous amount of money (of more than \$100 million to \$200 million a year) running successful tourism efforts for years. Brand USA's marketing efforts resulted in millions of new international visitors who spent billions of dollars in the United States, which created tens of thousands of new jobs across the nation.

Absent the industry's specialized, coordinated efforts to attract additional international visitors, the United States would have continued ceding more share to other tourism markets around the world. For each measure of progress, we are not only counteracting, but outpacing a current that flows against us.

#### Why is the work of Brand USA so important?

Travel and tourism is a vital economic engine, providing skilled and high-paying jobs that can't be outsourced. And international inbound travel to the United States is a major driver of the engine. Ranking ahead of agricultural goods and motor vehicles, international travel is the single-largest services export, accounting for 31% of all services exports in 2014.

According to the Department of Commerce, in 2014, nearly 75 million international visitors came to the United States and spent a record \$220 billion on goods and services, which are counted as U.S. exports. In total, spending by international travelers while traveling the United States supported 1.8 million American jobs (directly and indirectly) and benefits virtually every sector of the economy.

## **How does the work of Brand USA benefit the United States?**

Boosting international tourism is one of the best levers we have to create new, outsource-proof U.S. jobs and spur economic activity. Visitor spending also provides much needed economic activity to local communities around the country.

Every sector of the economy benefits from more heads in beds, more passengers on planes and trains, more visitors to destinations across the country, more diners at restaurants, and more customers at local businesses across the country.

According to studies by the U.S. Travel Association, the average overseas visitor to the United States spends approximately \$4,400 per trip, which directly or indirectly supports one new job in the United States. In fact, according to the U.S. Travel, every 33 new overseas visitors to the United States directly or indirectly supports one new job in the United States.

## **What is the mission of Brand USA?**

Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States, is the nation's first public-private partnership to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and to communicate U.S. entry/exit policies and procedures to worldwide travelers.

**Our mission** is to increase incremental international visitation, spend, and market share to fuel our nation's economy and enhance the image of the United States worldwide.

**Our vision** is to be the best-in-class national destination marketing organization—earning the USA the largest share of the global travel market and significantly contributing to job creation, GDP, export growth, and tax revenues.

## **What and how was Brand USA formed?**

Brand USA began operations in May 2011. Originally created as the Corporation for Travel Promotion (and now doing business as Brand USA), the organization was established by the Travel Promotion Act of 2009 as the nation's first public-private partnership to spearhead a globally coordinated marketing effort to promote the United States as a premier travel destination and communicate U.S. entry policies.

This first-ever effort has put the United States on equal footing with other countries' tourism efforts and has brought millions of new international visitors to the United States who spend billions of dollars during their travels—thus creating thousands of new American jobs each year.

# Funding

## **Is it common practice for countries to charge a fee to international travelers?**

Yes. In fact, the \$14 fee for eligible travelers who come to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) is significantly lower than what travelers pay to visit other countries. To put this in perspective, it's important to note that on average other countries charge entry and/or exit fees of nearly \$60 per traveler per visit—usually attached to taxes and fees on travel purchases such as airline tickets. Some of these fees are as high as \$150 per traveler. In contrast, the \$14 Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) fee covers travelers from VWP markets for a period of up to two years regardless of the number of visits these travelers make to the United States.

## **How is the program funded?**

No U.S. taxpayer dollars are used to fund Brand USA's marketing efforts. Instead, the organization is supported by contributions from over 700 partnering organizations that are matched by fees paid by international travelers to the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program.

ESTA is an automated system implemented by the Department of Homeland Security in 2008 that determines the eligibility of visitors from 38 international markets to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). ESTA authorizations are generally valid for multiple trips over a period of two years or until the traveler's passport expires, whichever comes first.

## **Why should my organization contribute in-kind to Brand USA?**

For Fiscal Year 2012 & Fiscal Year 2013, over half of our funds were realized through in-kind contributions from our partners. Those funds go toward expanding our brand presence internationally as well as expanding partner opportunities at Brand USA. That means we can offer more ways to deliver value directly to you and leverage our collective marketing efforts around the globe. Additionally, we utilize contributed content and images to promote destinations and attractions through our social media channels, public relations, and events.

Together, our combined efforts are increasingly making the United States top-of-mind for international travelers.

## Success & Results

### What results is Brand USA seeing so far?

The campaign is driving results as intended—from intent to visit to consumer sentiment to engagement. Brand USA delivered powerful results in Fiscal Year 2015. According to a study by Oxford Economics, Brand USA's initiatives in the 14 markets where it had fully deployed consumer, trade, and co-op marketing outreach campaigns, contributed to a stronger more dynamic U.S. economy.

Brand USA's overall marketing efforts generated, over the past three years:

- 3 million incremental visitors who spent
- \$9.5 billion in incremental spending, resulting in
- More than \$21 billion in total economic impact, which support over
- Nearly 50,000 incremental jobs per year Brand USA operated both efficiently and effectively. Our return on investment for its marketing efforts is ranked among some of the most successful tourism marketing campaigns in the world. Brand USA has consistently managed its overhead to be at less than 15% (and most often significantly below that at 10%).

### How do you verify the study results?

The study results are valid and verified.

The study was conducted by Oxford Economics, the worldwide leader in economic impact studies, which is used by destinations worldwide.

The 3-prong approach used is a highly regarded and robust econometric analysis validated by consumer sentiment and market share analysis. In addition, this analysis fully considered external factors outside of Brand USA's marketing efforts such as macroeconomic conditions, direct marketing investments by others, policy changes such as visa waiver status of international markets, and other general market dynamics.

This assures with a high level of confidence that the effective results credited to Brand USA's efforts are valid.

### How does Brand USA measure its success?

Brand USA is tracking and measuring its success based on improvements and increases related to:

- Awareness and image of the USA as a travel destination
- International travelers' intent to travel to the United States and, most importantly,
- International visitation and spend

## Marketing Strategy

### What is Brand USA's current consumer campaign?

Brand USA's new campaign, "See How Far You Can Go," illustrates the diversity of the United States and invites travelers to share their own unique experiences. The "See How Far You Can Go" consumer campaign spans a variety of advertising and media platforms including, online videos, out-of-home signage, online display ads, and social media posts that will drive awareness of the new campaign and inspire visitation to the USA.

The campaign takes an innovative social-first approach, concentrating on shareable and relatable imagery and video content whose first person viewpoint will draw consumers into the frame and make them feel like they could have captured the shots themselves. Music also plays a significant role in the new campaign, with music tracks tailored to individual personas and reflective of sounds distinct to the USA.

In an era of likes, tweets and #latergrams, social networks are one of the most influential forces driving travel planning today. The campaign, which runs across Facebook, Instagram, and various digital networks, helps potential travelers discover the variety of experiences, hidden gems, and off-the-beaten-path destinations available throughout the USA.

## **How does Brand USA identify and prioritize key international markets for its marketing efforts?**

During Fiscal Year 2016 (FY2016), Brand USA will deploy its marketing efforts in a strategic combination of emerging and established markets that have the potential to drive the greatest returns in terms of visitation, spend, and market share.

The FY2016 target markets were determined by using a unique modeling tool that focuses on opportunity (feeder market size) and market opportunity rather than relying solely on past visitation to the United States.

The model considers international travel behavior, including expenditures and departures, and a variety of factors, including:

- Macroeconomic factors, such as GDP growth and unemployment
- Demographic factors, such as population size and age
- Sociopolitical factors, such as civil liberty
- Situational factors, such as visa waiver status
- Diversification factors, targeting a mix of established and emerging markets

## **How exciting are things at Brand USA with the wide variety of initiatives recently unveiled?**

Our team here in Washington, DC and our representatives around the world are extremely excited about our accomplishments to date and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Brand USA with and through the support of more than 700 partners worldwide has made notable progress towards our mission of increasing international visitation to the United States and by all accounts, our efforts are working.

- Generated more than \$100 million in industry contributions, including cash contributions of \$53 million (53% of all contributions) and in-kind contributions of \$47 million in recognized revenue (47% of all contributions).
- Grew Brand USA's partnership network from 577 partners through Fiscal Year 2015 (a 21% increase from Fiscal Year 2014) to 707 partners through Fiscal Year 2016 (a 23% increase from FY2015).
- Increased number of unique LOA contributors to 163 in FY2016 compared 154 in FY2015
- Maintained a partnership program retention rate of over 90%.
- Increased the number of state and regional destination partners participating in Brand USA cooperative marketing programs by 56% from 32 in FY2015 to 50 in FY2016 (including 30 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).
- Increased partner program participation in Brand USA multi-channel cooperative marketing programs by 13% from 245 in FY2015 to 277 in FY2016.
- Increased the number of partners featured in the print edition of the Brand USA travel inspiration guide by 3%—from 180 in FY2015 to 186 in FY2016—by increasing customization of partner content to create a richer magazine look and feel.
- More than tripled our program offerings over the past four years, with cooperative marketing opportunities that add or create demonstrated value for partners.
- Produced 665 in-language videos to promote partner destinations and travel brands through FY2015. Filled 100% of available exhibitor space in Brand USA pavilions at international trade shows, with a 5% average increase in the number of U.S. exhibitors per show.
- Hosted the second year of CMO and marketing roundtables—earning an 86% overall approval rating from attendees.
- Launched the Brand USA partner reporting portal on TheBrandUSA.com, enabling partners to gain real-time access to program results for their destination or travel brand.
- Presented at more than 100 industry events around the world.

## **How promising is it to see legislators in both houses and from both parties recognize the work Brand USA is doing?**

The support we are seeing for Brand USA is consistent with our beginnings. The Travel Promotion Act was passed in 2010 with strong support from both houses and parties—and given that Brand USA benefits more than just the travel sector and is one of the fastest paths to creating jobs, the bi-party support is not surprising.

We are pleased with the unbridled support that exists for Brand USA—which was exemplified by Congress' reauthorization of Federal funding for Brand USA through fiscal year 2020.

The reauthorization of Brand USA recognizes the positive impact international visitation has on the United States' economy.

A few notable achievements by Brand USA include:

- Generating more than 3 million incremental international visitors to the United States over the past three years.
- These additional visitors spent about \$9.5 billion in the United States, including travel and fare receipts.
- This spending has fueled the U.S. economy by generating:
  - More than \$21 billion in business sales
  - More than \$3 billion in Federal, state, and local taxes

The result? The creation and support of nearly 50,000 incremental U.S. jobs per year.

## **Where will Brand USA be active in 2017?**

Brand USA will be active in more than 40 international markets, which generate 90% of all inbound travel to the United States. Every 1% increase in visitation from these markets allows us to welcome 500,000 more international travelers to the United States, infuse \$1 billion in additional revenue to destinations across the country, and support an average of 50,000 new American jobs.

#### **Consumer:**

1. Australia
2. Brazil
3. Canada
4. China
5. France
6. Germany
7. India
8. Japan
9. Mexico
10. South Korea
11. United Kingdom

#### **Trade:**

1. Austria
2. Benelux Region (Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands)
3. Central America\*
4. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Countries\*
5. Hong Kong
6. Hungary
7. Italy
8. Nordic Countries\*
9. South Africa
10. South America
11. Southeast Asia\*
12. Spain
13. Switzerland
14. Taiwan

\*select markets

#### **What kind of marketing does Brand USA employ?**

Brand USA utilizes a number of market-driven platforms and programs to increase inbound visitor travel to the United States and drive tourism dollars to communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the five territories. Our programs include the USA marketing campaign, trade outreach initiatives, co-op marketing opportunities, and media/ public relations outreach that, in total, promote the United States in its entirety, and add and create value for partners.

- The USA Campaign includes any combination of broadcast, out-of-home, and social media/digital efforts, plus earned media and public relations.
- Our co-op marketing programs and platforms make up the majority of our marketing efforts and deliver an array of marketing options to increase awareness, visitation and spend. They include a variety of opportunities for partners of all shapes and sizes to participate and include: Brand USA Originals, Affinity Programs, and Market-Specific Programs.
- Brand USA currently works with its expanding network of international representatives, Visit USA committees, travel and tourism advisory boards, U.S. embassy personnel and U.S. commercial services teams to support participation in numerous trade activities, including: trade shows, sales missions, road shows and themed events, training initiatives, MegaFams, and Advisory Boards.

Additionally, through its public policy efforts, Brand USA works in partnership with its Federal partners to communicate U.S. entry policies and help make the international traveler's experience more welcoming upon arrival and departure.

#### **What are the components of the consumer marketing campaign?**

The USA Campaign aspires to reach the right person, with the right media at the right moment and includes any combination of broadcast, out-of-home, digital, and social efforts, plus earned media and public relations. The media mix varies by market.

## **Partners, Programs, & Contributions**

#### **How much time and involvement is required of my organization if we contribute in-kind to Brand USA?**

We have developed forms targeted to specific types of in-kind contributions that make the process easier. You can access the forms [here](#). These forms require a signature from your organization and documentation reflecting the value of the contribution. If you need assistance, email Brand USA at [InKind@TheBrandUSA.com](mailto:InKind@TheBrandUSA.com) and let us know what you'd like to contribute. Our in-kind coordinators can walk you through the process.

### **What is an in-kind Contribution?**

A donation of non-cash goods or services that will aid Brand USA in carrying out its statutory mission, as well as its matching requirements.

## **Current Trends & Issues**

### **How has the strength of the U.S. dollar affected Brand USA marketing programs?**

We are not putting the U.S. on sale, instead, we're finding that visitors are altering their travel plans. We realize they may shop, dine, or stay differently than before, but our research and studies show that they will still travel to visit the United States.

There's plenty to do in the United States for less. For example, virtually every destination offers free concerts, festivals, and fairs. Additionally, the United States has plenty of offerings in proximity to gateway cities. Travelers can take advantage of scenic "All American Road Trips," especially while gas prices are low.

Additionally, inbound and domestic travelers alike can explore our great outdoors. Last year, in partnership with MacGillivray Freeman Films, we produced *National Parks Adventure* a giant-format film that has inspired worldwide travelers to visit our nation's National Parks in commemoration of the 2016 centennial anniversary of the National Parks Service.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **What is the policy for using images and logos from Brand USA's corporate and consumer websites?**

The trade marks, logos, names, and images displayed on Brand USA websites are the registered or unregistered trade marks of Brand USA and others. All marks and images not owned by Brand USA are used by permission. Nothing on the Brand USA website should be taken as conferring by implication, estoppel or otherwise any license or right to use any trade mark displayed on such website without the prior written approval of Brand USA or such third party as may own the relevant trade mark or image. Users may not print, copy, reproduce, download, republish, broadcast, transmit, display, modify or re-use the materials from a Brand USA website for any other purpose without written permission of Brand USA or the mark or image owner, including in particular any purpose which publicly re-sells or re-uses the materials.

### **How does Brand USA address years (i.e. 2016, 2017, etc.)?**

Brand USA follows AP Style, with some agreed upon exceptions. Brand USA writes years as four digits, e.g., 1990. Years may be abbreviated by the last two digits preceded by an apostrophe if necessary (e.g., "Class of '81"). Decades should be spelled out using lowercase letters or given as a four-digit number followed by an "s" (no apostrophe needed). "The twenties," "the 1920s," NOT "the 20's." The first through ninth centuries should be spelled out in lowercase letters; others may be in numerals. "Second century," "18th century."