



# ATL UNGUIDED

## Where Legacy Meets Evolution - A Case Study

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Vice President, Brand | @DiscoverAtlanta  
Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau



**Why are we doing this?**

**Who are we doing it for?**

**How are we going about it?**

**What does success look like?**

What can we do if everything changes?

# Overview

**Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) was looking to generate awareness of Atlanta as a welcoming and inclusive destination, further encouraging bookings and visitation**

1. Inspire audiences through redesigning the website, expanding images and redeveloping the Heritage Guide
2. Dig deeper into Atlanta's history and culture. Spotlight Atlanta's pride in its diversity
3. Create a personalized experience for each website visitor

ACVB worked with their agencies to learn more about Atlanta's story and develop digital content and collateral that showcased Atlanta's diversity.



# Strategic Approach – IDEA Process



## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

What do we need to understand about ourselves and others?

Listen. Understand the situation, how it affects the team, the business and our role in the community.

Learn the key skill of leading D&I.

## RESEARCH & GATHER DATA

What do we know and where do we stand as an organization?

Get as much data as possible, explore what we gather, and clean it up. Validate. What are we missing? Start to identify objectives.

Observe and understand ACVB's status and progress.

## DISCOVER WHAT D&I CAN LOOK LIKE

Why is it important? What can/should we do to grow?

Analyze ideas. Enrich the dataset. Clarify the scope and initiatives. Develop plans, priorities and timeline for ACVB's journey.

Shift from understanding and awareness to action.

## BUILD A MODEL & EXPERIMENT

Will it work? Does it work? Is this the outcome we expect?

Implement, create, test, present ideas to others for feedback. Check in on those impacted, visualize the data to tell our story. Try to refine.

Iterate. Iterate. Iterate. What can we do better?

## DEVELOP COMMUNITY OUTREACH

How can we have the most impact? For whom? When?

Support D&I in our communities in ways that align with our mission, vision, values brand and CSR goals.

Support D&I both in and outside of ACVB.

## BUILD AN IDEA FUTURE THAT WILL LAST

Define and establish an all-encompassing sustainability model for ensuring Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility is part of ACVB's long-term focus.

References:  
University of South Florida, MUMA College of Business DEI Certificate, 2021  
Northeastern University Graduate Programs Data Analytics, 2021



# Steps 1-3

*step 1*  
**Empathize**

## 1. Emotional Intelligence

What do we need to understand about ourselves and others?

Open Conversations

ACVB Staff meetings

ACVB Team meetings

Employee Resource Groups

*step 2*  
**Collect Information**

## 2. Research and Gather Data

What do we know about where we stand?

Mandala Report

MMGY Black Traveler Research

Black Travel Alliance, NCBMP

MMGY Travelers of Hispanic

Descent

Mahogany Insights

Webinars

ACVB Research Team

*step 3*  
**Brainstorm & Ideate**

## 3. Discover what Diversity and Inclusion can look like

Why is it important?

Representative/Welcoming

**Who models this well:**

Partners/Clients    Google

Häagen-Dazs    Publix

Target

Dove



# Takeaways, Trends and Data

## 1. From the Team

- Representation
- Heritage Guide
- Diverse Groups/Events
- Keywords/categories in Digital Asset Management System

## 2. From the Data

Complex travelers and planners with varying interests and needs – more likely to visit a destination if they see Black representation in travel advertising

## 3. Discover D&I

Prioritize consumer and audience needs and those with similar interests. What does representation look like? Define, plan and develop a timeline





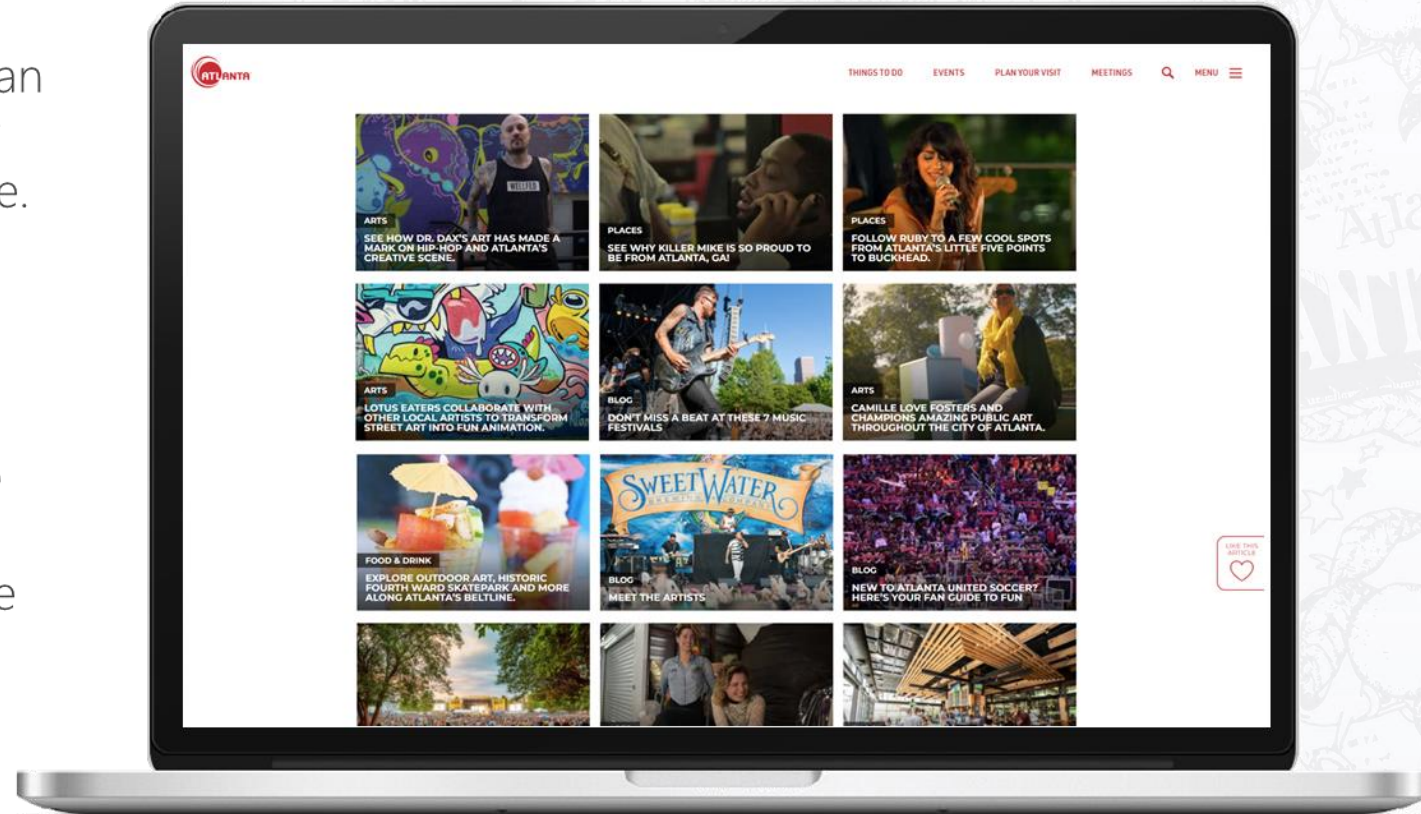


# Strategy

Our marketing strategy was built upon target audiences defined by their travel interests rather than what they looked like, how old they were, who they loved, their gender, or how much money they made. This was the foundation for authentically delivering on our diversity and inclusion goals.

Having content developed around travel intent enabled us to deliver collateral and a site to people of all demographics. By defining users by their interests, we were able to reach and represent more people because we were not targeting a specific population segment.

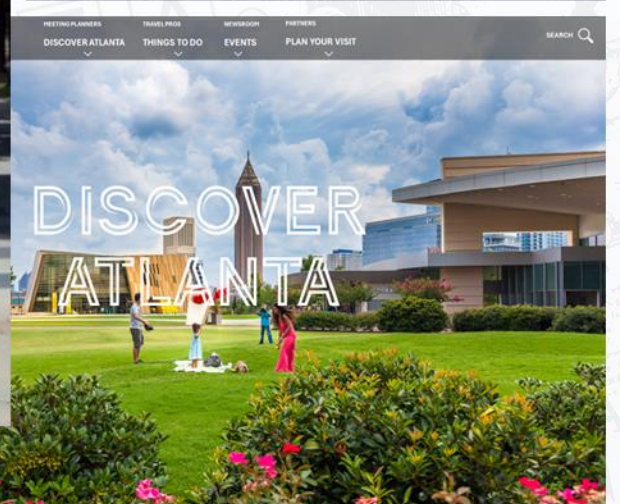
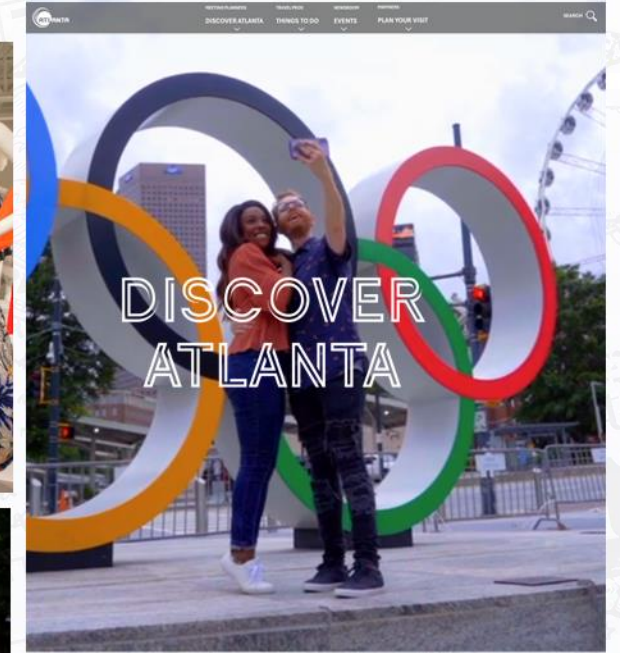
Using their research findings, Madden segmented our target audiences by Atlanta's value propositions, culture, landmarks, cuisine, attractions, entertainment and experiences that would resonate with our audiences.



# Introduction Video

When users reached the home page, they were greeted with a large header video that featured couples and families of all ages and ethnic backgrounds discovering things to do. The talent chosen for the shoot were real-life couples and families wearing their own wardrobe; ACVB and Madden wanted the video to be as authentic and relatable as possible. Each group was filmed at multiple locations doing activities that fit their interests.

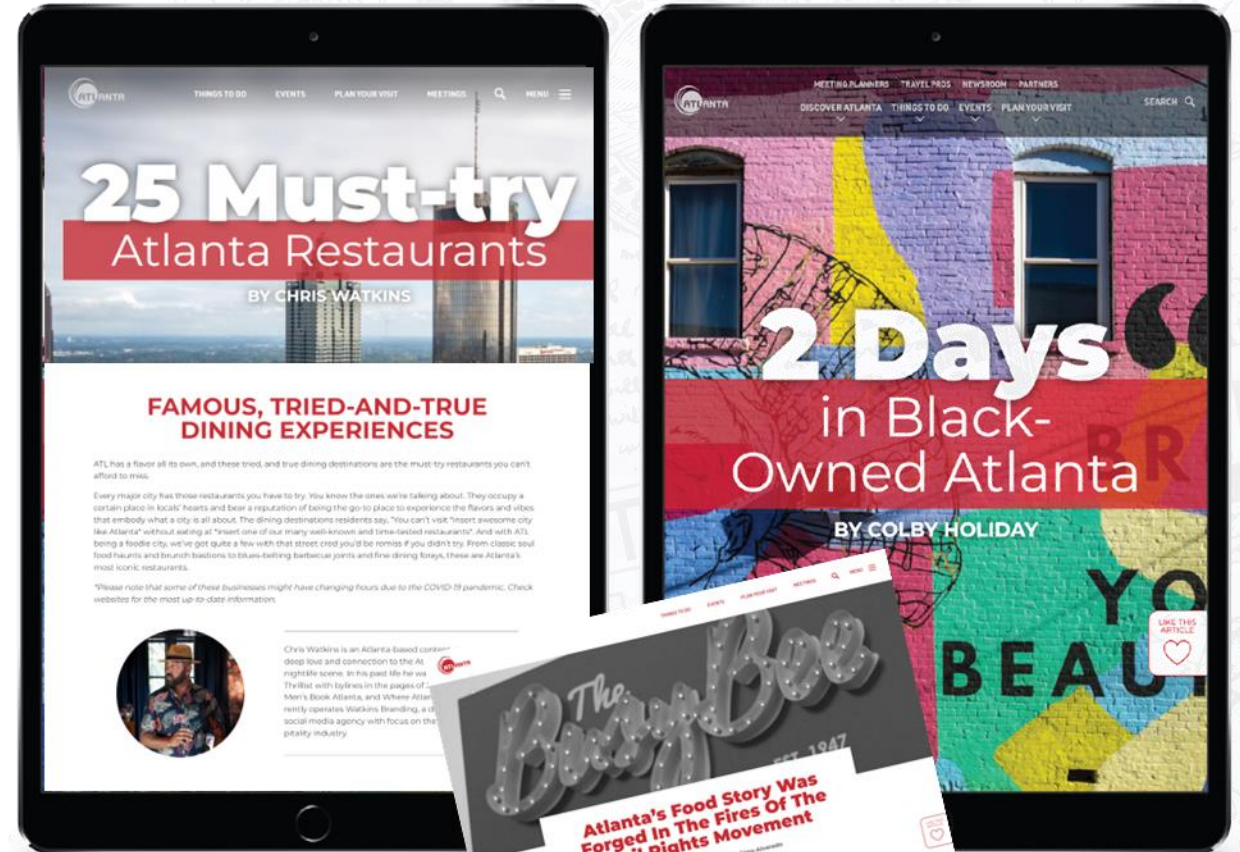
These choices delivered a diverse and inclusive video that represents Atlanta. The imagery and footage has been used throughout the site and in collateral for consistency of in brand storytelling, messaging and user experience.



# Storytelling

Clearly established audiences set the foundation for a content plan with stories that resonated with audiences with similar interests. This content plan prepared us to strategically develop content that celebrated diversity and inclusion. For example, a “Support Black-Owned Businesses in Atlanta” article could resonate with the “Culinary Tour” and “Arts and Culture Trip” audiences.

This interest-based targeting was reinforced by content recommendation technology integrated into the website. Users would be served storytelling links in content recommendation blocks at the bottom of each webpage they visit, offering them new articles to read based on their onsite activity. So, users reading “25 Must-try Atlanta Restaurants” and “2 Days in Black-Owned Atlanta” could get recommendations to read “Support Black-Owned Businesses in Atlanta” and “Atlanta’s Food Story.”



## DISCOVER MORE

Get to know Atlanta, and discover the best things to do around the city.



# Content Partners

To further align with our value propositions of diversity, boldness and collaboration, it was critical to highlight and amplify Black voices in our collateral and on our website, representing all walks of life within the city, welcoming Black travelers and those looking to learn more through a cultural travel experience. Knowing that representation matters in the storytelling of a destination, we worked with local Black content creators to write inspiring, personal stories of their favorite places to spend time in Atlanta so travelers would get a local's view of the city's outdoor activities, dining, history and more.

Each piece of new content included a headshot and bio from the writer along with photos of themselves or photos they've taken while exploring the city. Including these details further personalized the content from a local's perspective while featuring stories, activities and places that are intriguing and popular for travelers who are considering a visit to Atlanta.



**Lexi Felder**



**Nadeen White**



**Kent W. Johnson**



**Chris Watkins**



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# Content Creators

Social Media  
Manager +  
Community  
Management

Content Specialists

Content Manager





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# Influencers and brand ambassadors

# Steps 4-6

## step 4 Develop Solutions

### 4. Build a model and experiment

Will it work? What do we expect?

Great things happen when creativity thrives

Use feedback as a motivator

Be honest and helpful, not just authentic

## step 5 Engage

### 5. Develop community outreach

How can we have the most impact?

How do we help the community and the consumer have a better experience with our brands?

Intrinsically dedicated to co-creation partnerships that provide value. Values alignment

## step 6 Improve & Sustain

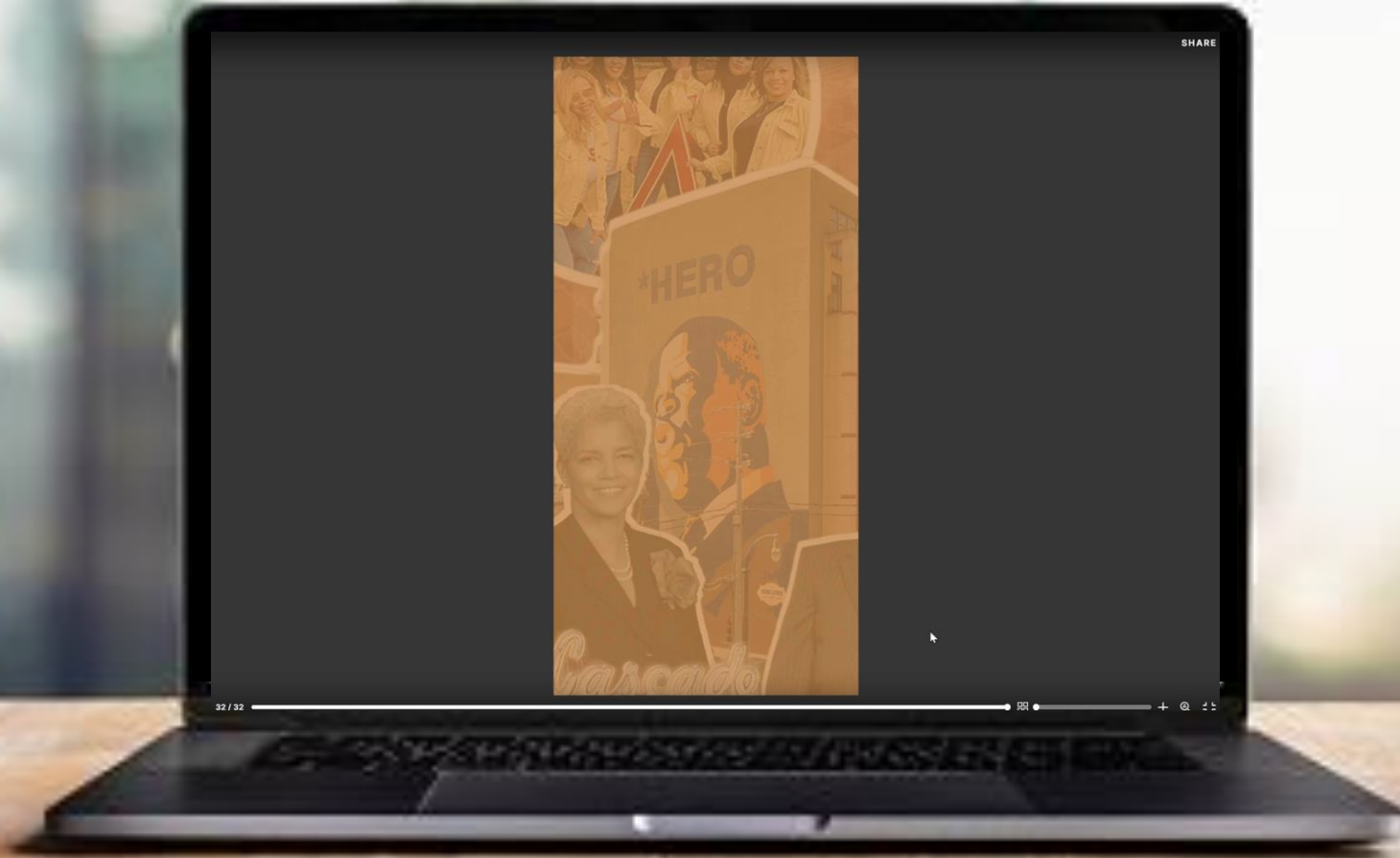
### 6. Build an IDEA future that will last

Define and establish a sustainable model  
Know what the brand actually stands for. Not just about the communication, it's about the customer journey

Measure and build trust. Deliver on brand promise

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# ATL Unguided Brochure Vol.1

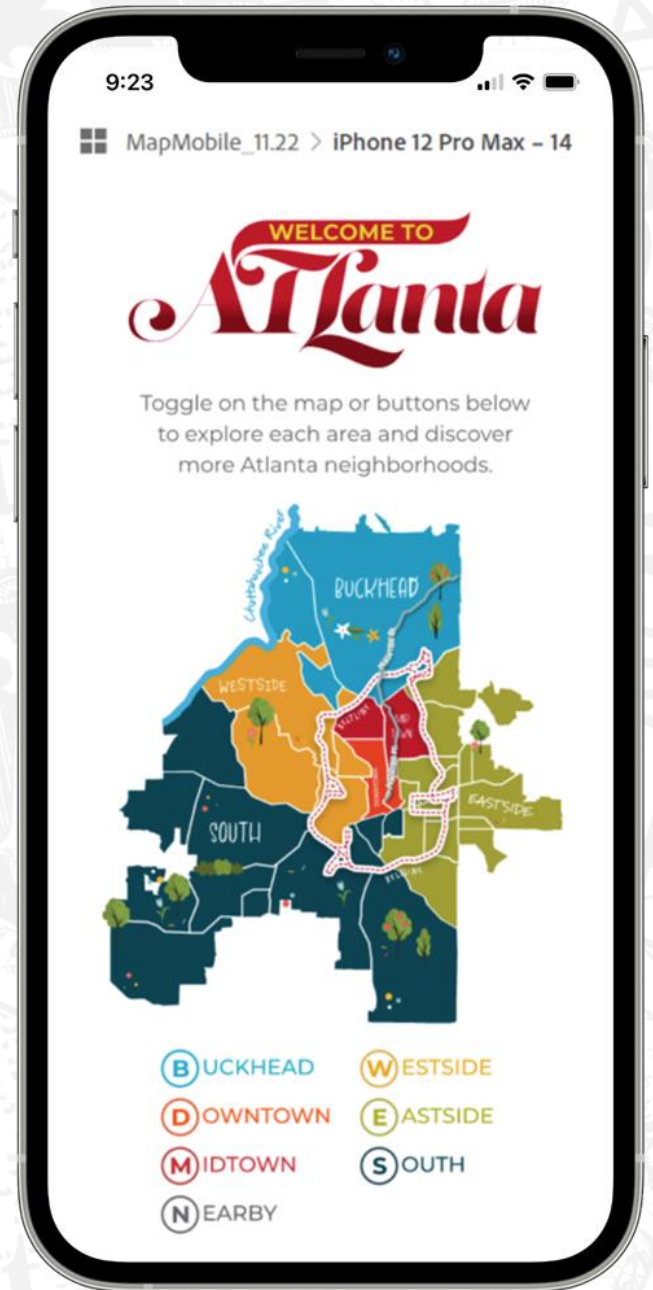




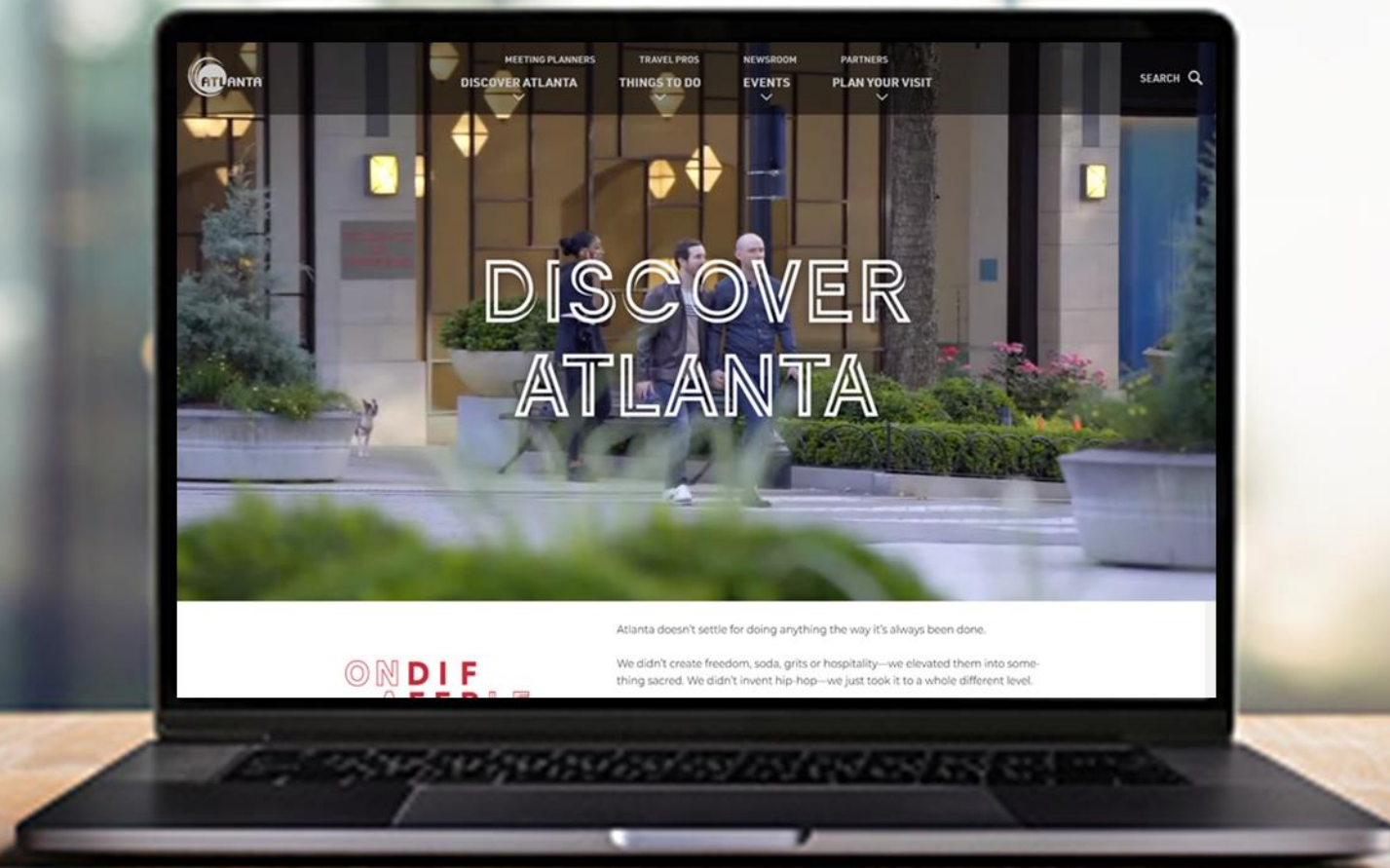


# Drove audiences to experiences & interests

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# Leveraged partnerships, SEO and media spend to concur search traffic



# Increased investment in social responsibility





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# Hosted Black Cultural Heritage Road Trip

# Delivered Results

Diversity and inclusion were the major areas of focus in the overall Discover Atlanta website rebuild project, especially ATL Unguided. Throughout the process, the team was able to increase the number of diverse writers and imagery representing diverse audiences.

# 58%

**IMPROVE SITE DESIGN:** Since the launch of the site in Oct. through mid-Nov., the bounce rate has improved by 7% and the number of pages per session increased by 58%

# 27%

**CREATE BRAND CONSISTENCY ACROSS**

**CHANNELS:** Organic search visits have increased by 27%

- Average session duration has increased by 4%
- New users coming to the site via organic search have increased by 30%

# 83%

**ORGANIZE AND CATEGORIZE CONTENT:** Content that speaks directly to intent-based audiences and an improved site map based on properly categorized content has led to a 30% increase in page views. Organic traffic page views increased by 83%



# Delivered Results – YEAR 1

# 14K

## **AUTOMATE BRAND CONTENT AND CONSISTENCY FOR OMNI-CHANNEL DISTRIBUTION:**

Content recommendation technology has been successful in delivering more than 14,000 content recommendations clicks since the site's launch

# 105%<sub>YOY</sub>

**MONITOR SYNDICATED CONTENT:** ACVB is monitoring content syndication and tracking the extended reach of its content. 367,713 organic sessions (baseline from previous site)

**DESIGN/UX UPDATE TRACKING:**  
Page load speed increased 40%  
Decrease in bounce rate supports that users are remaining interested in the site

# 58%

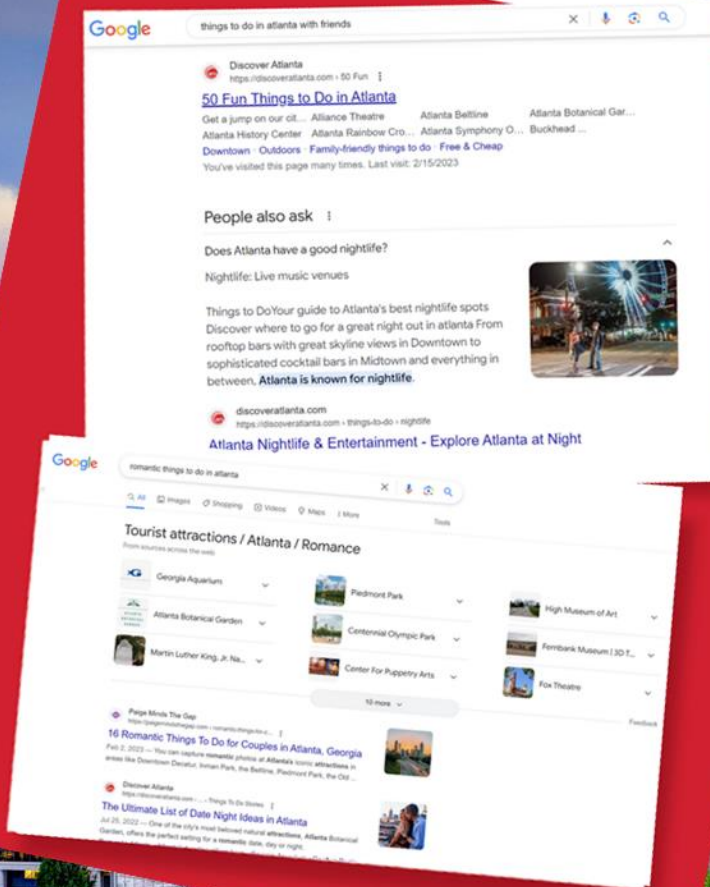
**INCREASE USER ENGAGEMENT:**

- Increases in pages per session (58% increase), bounce rate (7% improvement), and boost to average session duration (6% increase) show higher engagement



# Delivered Results – Year 1

As a direct result of this effort, the ACVB successfully added a number of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises to its membership base. Additionally, we've achieved success through Google search results with eight of the newly produced stories appearing through featured snippets.



# Delivering Results – Year 1

## FAMS

### U.S. BLACK CULTURAL HERITAGE ROAD TRIP

Partnered with and featured some of Atlanta's top black-owned businesses. Co-hosted more than 30 Black-owned business leaders at The Gathering Spot

Added to Black Cultural Heritage Tours book of tour itineraries

## DEI

### PRIORITIZED DIVERSE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Launched ATL Unguided brochure, website portal and new Black traveler content

Developed stories for Black, LGBTQ+, Asian and Spanish-speaking travelers as well as content for supporting businesses with DBE status on website and in Discover Atlanta Now magazine

## DBE

### CLIENT & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Added Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) status to business listings on DiscoverAtlanta.com and family of sites including venue catalog

Developed community engagement page



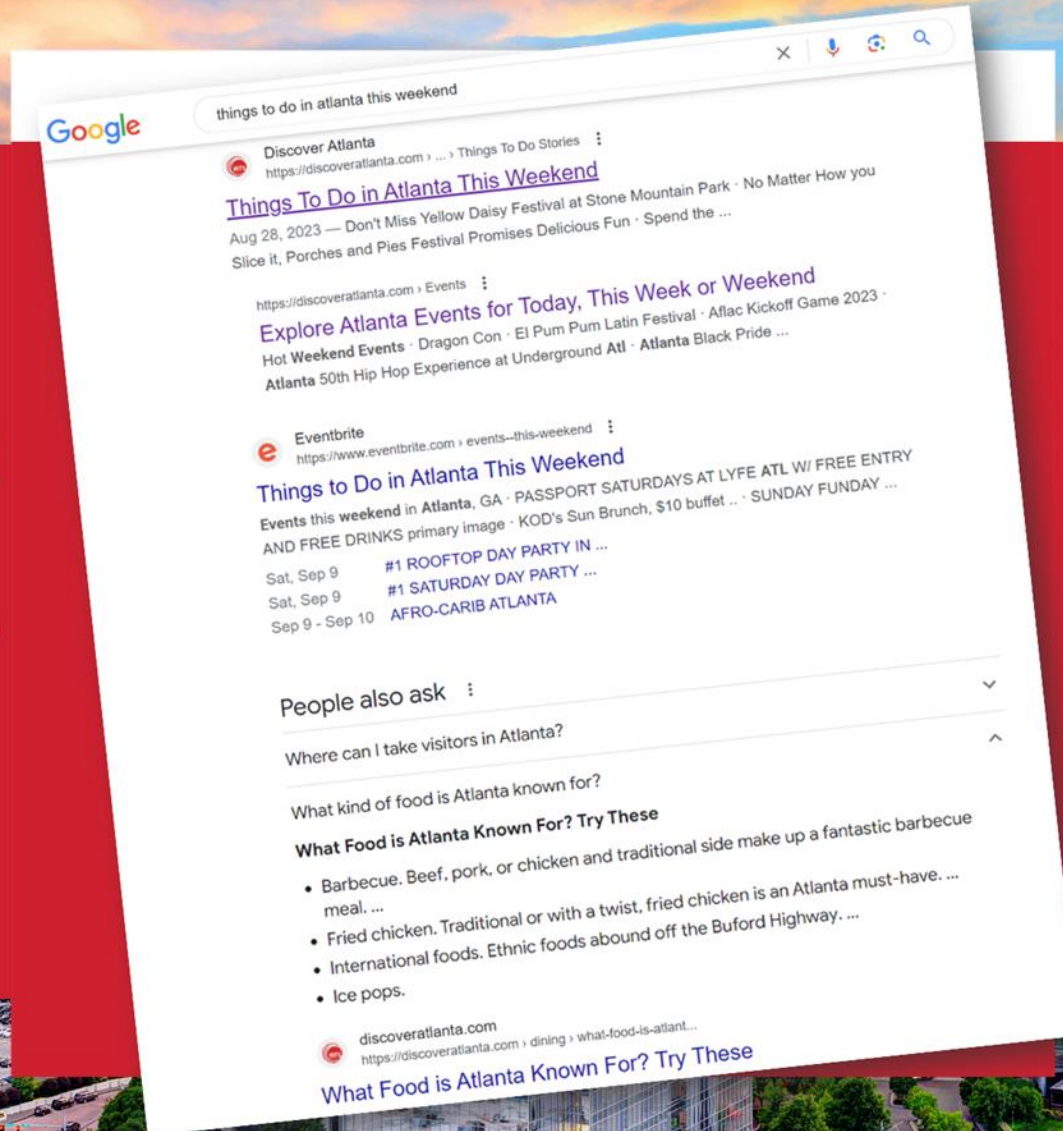


# Delivering Results – YEAR 2

# 11K

## DEVELOPMENT OF SPANISH CONTENT:

Organic sessions for Spanish content increased (up 66% vs. 2021)



# 59% YOY

**MONITOR SYNDICATED CONTENT:** 218,732 organic sessions (up 227% vs '19/'20)



# Delivering Results – YEAR 2

## HSMIAI

### PLATINUM ADRIAN AWARD

Top award in diversity marketing category for pushing the envelope, positioning ACVB as an industry expert both nationally and locally with a continued focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility.

## STORIES

### PRIORITIZED DIVERSE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Launched ATL Unguided brochure VOL. 2 with sponsors and increased distribution, updated website with new Black traveler content

Expanded the quantity and cadence of Spanish language content

Increased published stories for Black, LGBTQ+, Asian travelers and supporting partner businesses

## DBE

### CLIENT & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Expanded Community engagement resource to include new turnkey service for convention donations

Collective provides the resources to meeting planners, event attendees and companies to give back to nonprofits



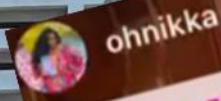
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# Collaborate, Engage Ask and Listen



TO SEE AND DO IN ATLANTA!

PRESENTED BY 



ohnikka

1st event of the  
year with  
[@discoveratlanta](#)

CHECKING OUT  
THEIR NEW APP  
AND WEBSITE



I AM  
ATL.



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# Sustainable – Stay Engaged and Follow Up Regularly



*Seems easy*



**What's next?**

Brand Excellence. Creative Excellence. Service Excellence.

Our presence provides value

# Content, Media and Distribution Strategy

## OBJECTIVES

Generate brand awareness

Drive website traffic and referrals to partners

Lead generation

Engagement/Mentions

## PROXY METRICS

Conversion rate from ad clicks, CTA clicks

Conversion rate event/webinar registration and attendance

Conversion rate from leads to sales qualified leads

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Creative Class

- Foodies
- Families with kids
- Sports enthusiasts
- Outdoors explorers
- Entertainment fans
- Diverse travelers

## KPIs

Increased customer retention and loyalty (retention rate/net promoter score)

Website traffic (SEO, referral traffic, pageviews, sessions, time on page/CTR) Ad clicks

Qualified Leads/Prospects

Shares, likes, clicks

Sign-ups, sales prospects from event, attendees

# Align PR, marketing and sales teams



**ATLANTA**

ATLANTA'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONVENTION CENTER

HOTEL PACKAGE

GETTING HERE & AROUND

DESTINATION SERVICES

WHY ATLANTA

EVENT VENUES

THINGS TO DO

DINING

THANK YOU FOR

## DISCOVER ATLANTA

CORPORATE ASSOCIATION OF ASSOCIATIONS  
SEPTEMBER 1-5, 2025  
WE'LL SEE YOU SOON

REPLAY INTRO VIDEO

Background image shows the Atlanta skyline at night with the Georgia State Capitol and a Ferris wheel.

MEET THE TEAM

OUTHWEST CHATTA HILLS

Monica Cyren  
Citywide Sales Executive

UP NEXT ATLANTA

Video player controls: Pause, 00:00:00, Select Area, Audio, Record Pointer.

Background image shows a woman in a black blazer and pearl necklace smiling in front of a red backdrop.



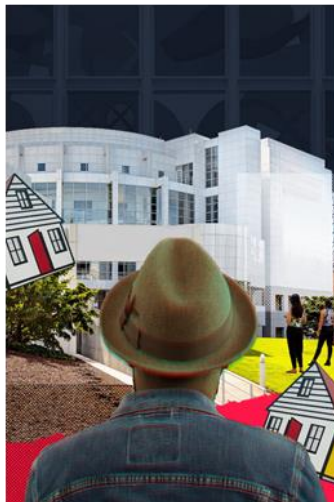
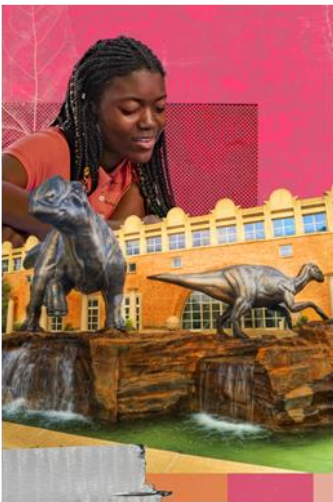
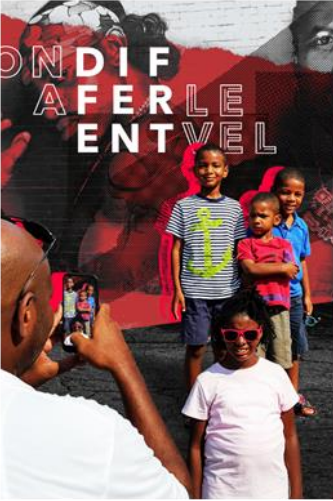
# Promote diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility



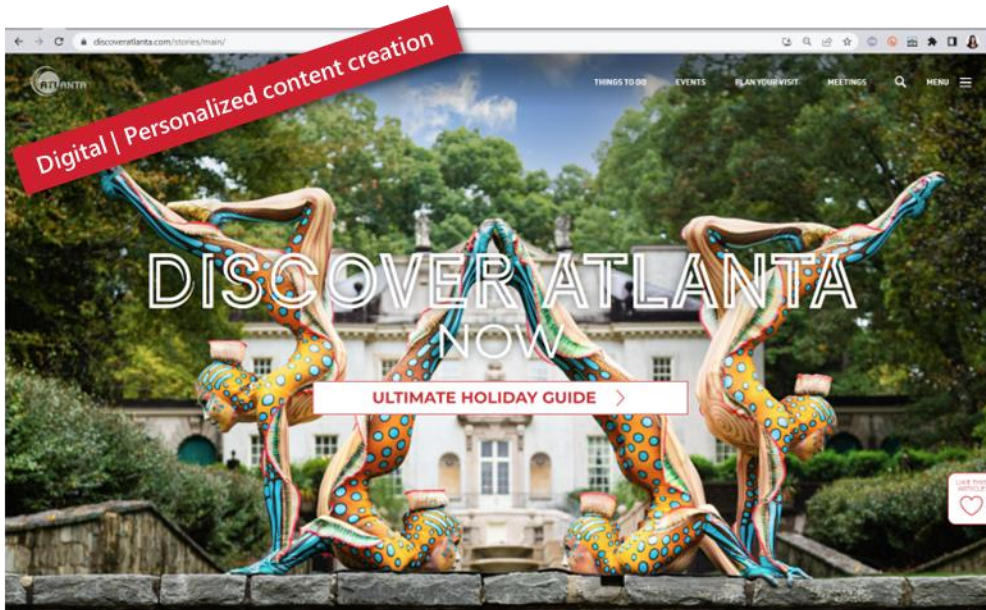
A study by Facebook showed that 71% of consumers expect brands to promote diversity and inclusion in their digital marketing strategies

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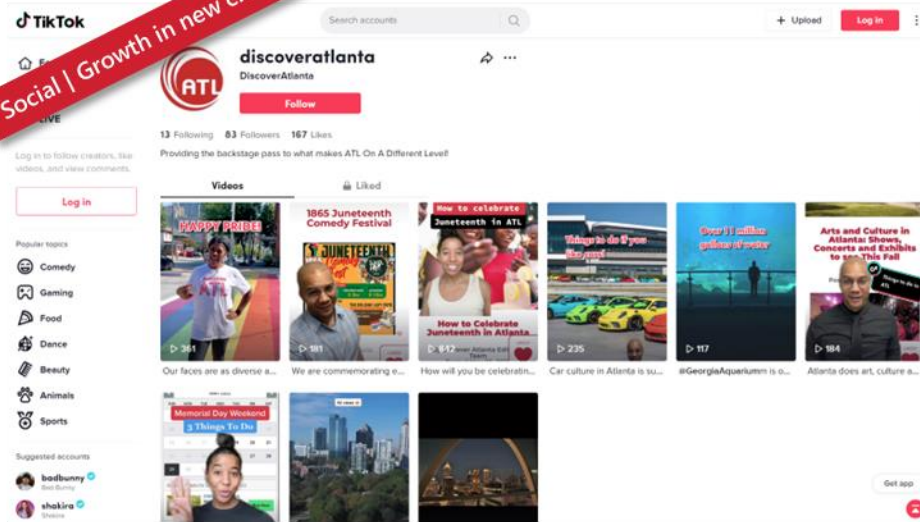
# Brand Consistency



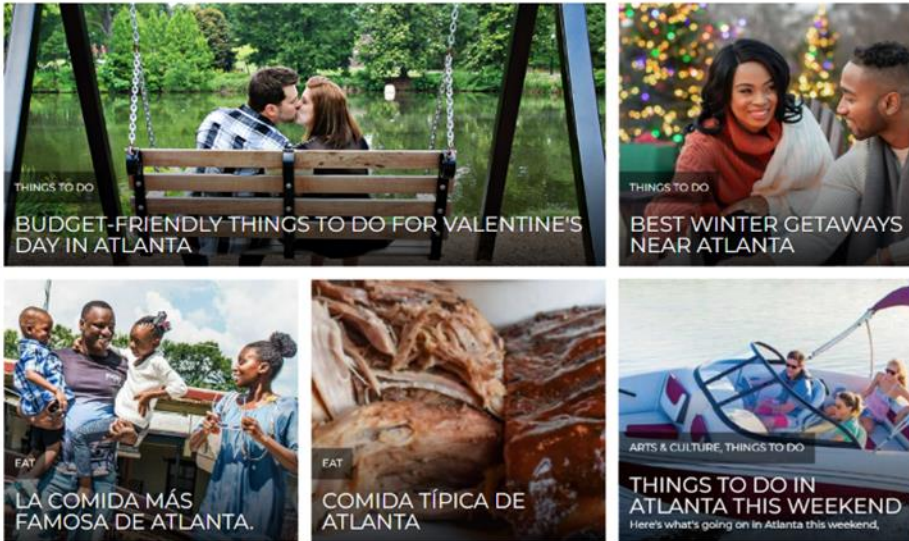
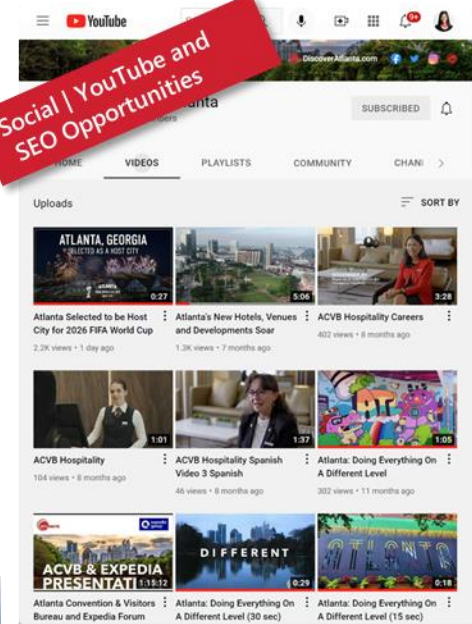
# Focus on Platforms and Resources



Social | Growth in new channels



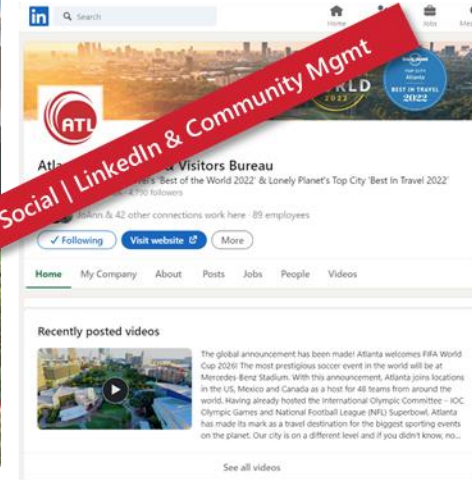
Social | YouTube and SEO Opportunities



Pitch Decks & Proposals



Social | LinkedIn & Community Mgmt



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# ATL UNGUIDED V.2



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# ATL UNGUIDED Vol. 2 (brochure)





# BEST IN TRAVEL 2022





# BEST OF THE WORLD 2022



NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

TRAVEL



"ATLANTA IS A CITY THAT'S SIMULTANEOUSLY KNOWN FOR ITS RICH HISTORY AND INFLUENCE ON THE FUTURE. A CITY OF TRANSFORMATION, IT'S THE BIRTHPLACE OF CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., AND REMAINS A POLITICAL HOTBED IN TODAY'S NATIONAL DISCOURSE."  
– Condé Nast Traveler



# Where are we now? | Delivering Results – YTD

## 3.91%

### DEVELOPMENT OF SPANISH CONTENT:

YTD, organic sessions for Spanish content increased 3.91% YOY.

YTD, organic users increased 4.62% YOY

## 117%

### NEW URLS & PERFORMANCE:

ACVB is creating more content for multiple audiences with 1.6K more URLs than 2022 = 159K organic sessions

**STORIES:** 117.82% increase in articles for our targeted audiences = more than 272K organic sessions

## 13M

### ENGAGED VIEWS:

Engaged views are up 1.8% at 4.1M YTD

Events are up 5.4% at 13M YTD



# Progress | YTD

# 829K

## CONTENT RECOMMENDATION TECHNOLOGY:

Discover More (footer on landing pages) -- 829K content recommendation total clicks since the site's launch. Three of top five articles clicked were written by ATL Unguided authors

# 44K

## CONTENT RECOMMENDATION TECHNOLOGY:

Read More (in-article links) 44K content recommendations clicks since the site's launch. One of top three clicked was written by an ATL Unguided author about Black-owned businesses

# 23% YOY

## MONITOR SYNDICATED

**CONTENT:** 725,093 organic sessions (up 304% vs. 2019/2020)



# Accountable and Sustainable | YTD & Next up

## IDE(A)

### INCREASED FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY

Follow 6-Step Strategic Process | MMGY Travelers with Disabilities (Mobility & Accessibility), Mahogany Insights, ACVB Research

Partnering with local organizations to understand, research and gather data

Partnering with travel writers for content supporting clients and visitors experience

Developing assets for DAMS

## STORIES

### PRIORITIZED DIVERSE TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

Increased distribution of ATL Unguided focuses on diverse groups, events and HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities)

Partnered with Telemundo to develop six episodes airing nationally

12K organic Spanish sessions YTD (75% increase vs '21)

## DBE

### CLIENT & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Organized community tours with partners and clients

Partnering with Georgia Hispanic of Commerce and Asian Chambers of Commerce





**TOP DINING**  
THE FIRST MICHELIN GUIDE  
SELECTION WILL BE REVEALED THIS FALL



**See you soon!**

**Sheretha Bell**

Vice President, Brand | @DiscoverAtlanta  
Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau