



About Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department

Official state tourism website helping visitors plan their vacation to Oklahoma

- Website: www.TravelOK.com
- Location: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Goals

- Drive economic impact for Oklahoma
- Identify the optimal advertising media mix
- Increase website visitation and pages viewed per visitor

Approach

- Divert 20% of summer campaign budget from television to YouTube TrueView
- Evaluate four different media combinations: TV-only, TrueView-only, TV plus TrueView and a control group
- Test untapped, high potential, expensive new markets

Results

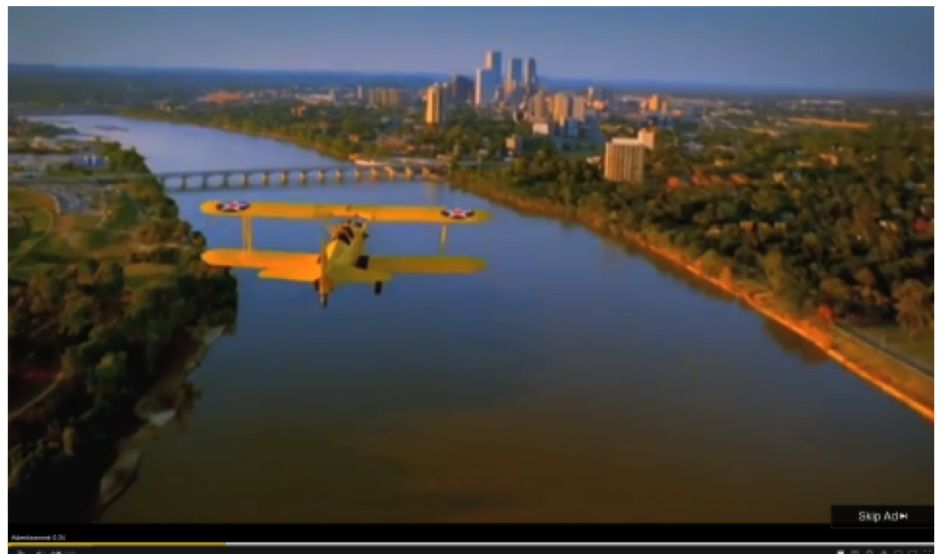
- TrueView-only performed best at 486% year over year growth in website visitation
- Oklahoma was the number one state tourism website visited for that month
- Learned that new markets are valuable sources of potential visitors

Travel Oklahoma used YouTube TrueView ads to grow site visitation by 486% YoY, earning the #1 spot among state tourism sites in April

What draws people to visit the state of Oklahoma? Anyone who has been there will tell you it's the people and how they treat others. Oklahomans are authentic, genuine, and welcoming - making visitors feel like they belong. At the same time, travelers fall in love with the uncrowded, pristine outdoors and attractions that offer authentic experiences. Lake Tenkiller is known as "heaven in the hills" for the way the clear water reflects the expansive blue skies, and the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum captures the city's emotional journey of resiliency and hope. For these reasons, tourism is Oklahoma's third largest industry and tourists spend more than \$7B annually, following the state's advice to "come see for yourself."

The people that work at the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD) truly embody the authenticity and natural joy of the state itself. Deby Snodgrass, Executive Director, leads a team that revels in pushing aside stodgy industry standards in favor of effective new strategy. She and her colleagues Jennifer Kalkman, Director of Digital Marketing, and Dick Dutton, Director of Travel Promotion, have diverse backgrounds (public affairs, finance, and broadcast television) but pride themselves in thinking and acting as a team. For this group, it's not about what other destinations are doing but about doing what's best for Oklahoma.

Jennifer and Dick manage a multitude of marketing channels, from television to print to digital, but have looked for alternatives to traditional media like TV ads which tend to be more expensive to reach their target audience. People are changing the way they consume media, mixing their live TV watching with



TrueView ad from the Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department

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*Deby Snodgrass, Executive Director,
Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation
Department*

recorded shows and internet videos, and interacting with multiple screens. Nielsen has even created a new segment to describe consumers who don't subscribe to traditional TV programming at all. This shift has made it important for advertisers to extend the life of advertising campaigns online so they can get the most out of their marketing investment. With a budget that's only a fraction of some neighboring state budgets, OTRD needs to make every dollar count. Dick emphasizes, "Taxpayers have entrusted their dollars to us to allocate as efficiently and intelligently as possible."

To secure the most bang for their buck, Oklahoma decided to conduct their own test on channel allocation, with the goal of finding a more effective way of connecting with today's traveler. "We're in the middle of a major shift of how people use tools to plan their travel. We know the web is the number one source of information with 85% of people using the internet," Dick explains. To test the value of online viewership and activity, OTRD reallocated 20% of their summer "Come See For Yourself" campaign investment to YouTube TrueView video ads.

Jennifer was especially excited about this campaign because it allowed for testing new markets with high potential for visitors. She enthuses, "We launched TrueView video ads in test markets we had been tracking for several years due to a high propensity to travel to Oklahoma, but we could never afford to reach them because they were too expensive to buy television in and were outside of our drive market - cities like Houston, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta."

After running the test Jennifer found that not only did YouTube TrueView ads enable OTRD to reach a broader audience at a lower cost, but they also drove higher website visitation than other marketing channels. TrueView-only markets blew all the others away by driving 486% year over year growth in website visitation. The twelve markets running TrueView-only ads accounted for 44% of their website traffic (284,000 visits) – funded by only 20% of the campaign budget.

What did this mean for Oklahoma? According to OTRD, these results catapulted TravelOK.com into the number one spot among state tourism department websites based on visitation during the month the campaign was live. It also drove TravelOK.com to rank second highest in terms of pages viewed per visit.

In regard to the previously untested, high-potential markets, the test produced some powerful data-driven insight as well. Every city in which TrueView campaigns were active jumped up into TravelOK.com's list of top 15 DMAs nationally that send visitors to the site. The top two California metros tested increased from 3% of TravelOK.com visitors to 15% at the peak. The marketing team at OTRD now knows, without a doubt, that some of the largest cities in the US have an interest in traveling to Oklahoma.

Given these strong test results, Jennifer plans to "request a bigger share of the overall marketing budget so we can do this more often." YouTube TrueView will definitely be a part of the OTRD media mix going forward and the team is already considering other innovative ways to use the format to drive economic impact for Oklahoma.

Deby, who first recognized the need for change, has been heralded by her team as the driving force behind the shift to a much more digital-centric marketing strategy. But if you ask Deby about her role in it all, she humbly states, like a true Oklahoman: "It takes a village."