

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Virginia Spirits Board Strategic Marketing Plan provides a template to manage, fund and evaluate initiatives to achieve the following objectives:

- 1. Improve awareness of Virginia Spirits.**
- 2. Solidly establish Virginia as a quality spirits producing region.**
- 3. Increase growth of Virginia Spirits sold in state, nationally and internationally.**
- 4. Increase profitability of distillery and spirit businesses in Virginia.**
- 5. Facilitate the development of Virginia agriculture and other complementary supply and service industries for the Virginia Spirits industry.**

The core of this plan consists of short term strategies with high-level marketing initiatives and one non-marketing initiative, as well as long term strategies. The Virginia Spirits Board, with guidance from the industry, will oversee implementation of these initiatives through a committee structure.

Every year, the Virginia Spirits Board will review the effectiveness of funded initiatives to ensure that the above objectives are met.

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

Initiative #1: Define Virginia Spirits Brand & Identity

Create a definitive, strategic brand identity with authentic presence and codes that inspire consumers and enhance Virginia's reputation as a quality spirits producing region.

Outcomes:

- Reconnect with market to better penetrate
- Raise Virginia Spirits profile
- Solidly establish premium products
- Increase recognition among consumers and industry

Initiative #2: Drive Sales of Virginia Spirits through Distilleries

- A. Virginia Spirits Trail and Guide
 - a. Continue to create this vehicle for easy access to distillery travel information.
 - b. Re-design to include all relevant Virginia DSPs
 - c. Develop limited-time incentive programming to encourage consumers to participate
- B. Build travel demand through media
- C. Create promotional opportunities to generate interest in visiting Virginia distilleries
- D. Partner with the Virginia Tourism Corporation to promote Virginia as a spirits destination
- E. Shift messaging for September Spirits Month to a travel focus
- F. Develop promotional program that supports Direct-to-Consumer shipping in-state
 - a. Investigate cooperative lower flat-rate shipping cost

Initiative #3: Drive Sales of Virginia Spirits through Virginia ABC

- A. Create a brick-and-mortar, profit-making retail store that leverages individual remote ABC licenses to supply only Virginia-made inventory
 - a. Leverage Virginia Spirits branding and marketing
 - b. Create promotional opportunities to generate interest
 - c. Develop experiential in-store events to engage consumers
- B. Partner with VABC to upgrade and implement marketing and POS materials
- C. Create/continue promotional opportunities to generate sales
- D. Develop specialty/seasonal products that drive education and engagement

- E. Develop restaurant/bar incentives, i.e. curated shelves/menus

Initiative #4: Build Virginia Spirits Brand through Strategic Events & Marketing

- A. Create an annual event environment, in a targeted market, that furthers Virginia Spirits direct-to-consumer capacity. Design the environment to reflect Virginia Spirits branding.
 - a. Actual distillers will host each booth for engagement and education
 - b. Develop marketing materials for take away
 - c. Invite trade and influencers
 - d. Set the tone of quality spirits
- B. Continue/develop localized Virginia Spirits Roadshows
 - a. Use this format to define important messaging for Virginia Spirits
 - b. Engage opinion leaders
 - c. Integrate audience into direct marketing outreach
 - d. Leverage brand advocate purchases, feedback and consumer data
- C. Continue/develop September Spirits Month Campaign
 - a. Emphasize the availability and quality of Virginia Spirits to the major components of the buy/eat/drink local social movement
 - b. Establish direct relationships between distilleries and high-profile localvore restaurants and bars
 - c. Develop local advertising program featuring travel-focused messaging with Virginia publications
 - d. Define/create messaging supporting Direct-to-Consumer shipping in-state

Initiative #5: Build Virginia Spirits Brand through Strategic Public Relations

- A. Increase education about breadth/depth of what's behind the bottle, i.e. complementary supply industries
- B. Continue to build opinion leader and influencer tours
- C. Vet blogs/spirits reviewers
- D. Provide media training to all Virginia distillers and brand ambassadors/advocates

Initiative #6: Support Complementary Supply Industry Efforts to Penetrate Virginia Market

- A. Create a designation that defines a "Virginia" category of spirit
 - a. Elevate an entire regional style
 - b. Signify to consumers what's in a bottle
- B. Advocate for low-interest loans or grants to incentivize distillers
- C. Investigate cooperative purchase structure

Initiative #7: Develop relationships with local and state government

- A. Economic Impact Study

- B. Annual report
- C. Outreach to economic development departments, local and state
- D. Meetings with local representatives, encourage attendance at meetings

VIRGINIA SPIRITS BOARD

VISION 2025

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

Build Interest for Sales & Distribution of Virginia Spirits Outside of Virginia

Targeted market opportunities

Targeted advertising

Influencer invites

Develop a national ad program with targeted publications

Create an e-commerce shop

Spirits Annual – educational content/interviews with distillers

VirgInfo Study - charting the mood of drinkers from year to year and giving us a chance to see where opinion slides on all matters, from price point to saturation point and how the times are changing, stagnating or even – about to explode once more