**PR News’ Advanced Writing Workshop March 20, 2018**

*Level Up: The Art and Science of Communicating With the C-Suite*

*Sample: Internal Memo sent to senior leaders, Cait DeBaun, Cait DeBaun, Director, Communications, Project: Time Off,U.S. Travel Association*



**National Plan for Vacation Day Highlights**

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**Media**

The planning message made news throughout the month of January, garnering more than 500 news stories including national coverage from the [Associated Press](https://apnews.com/eb8697e31e7140da9384824a6f5e75f3), [CBS This Morning](http://mms.tveyes.com/MediaCenterPlayer.aspx?u=aHR0cDovL21lZGlhY2VudGVyLnR2ZXllcy5jb20vZG93bmxvYWRnYXRld2F5LmFzcHg%2FVXNlcklEPTMwMzkzNCZNRElEPTkyOTU1MTYmTURTZWVkPTQ3OTYmVHlwZT1NZWRpYQ%3D%3D), [CNBC](https://www.cnbc.com/2018/01/30/unused-vacation-costs-workers-66-billion-in-lost-benefits.html), [CNN](http://www.cnn.com/travel/article/why-vacations-matter/index.html?sr=twCNN013018why-vacations-matter0132PMStoryGal), [Condé Naste Traveler](https://www.cntraveler.com/story/how-to-plan-an-entire-vacation-in-a-day), [Forbes](https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2018/01/30/travel-insiders-top-tips-on-deals-luggage-and-flight-delays/), [Good Morning America](http://mms.tveyes.com/MediaCenterPlayer.aspx?u=aHR0cDovL21lZGlhY2VudGVyLnR2ZXllcy5jb20vZG93bmxvYWRnYXRld2F5LmFzcHg%2FVXNlcklEPTMwMzkzNCZNRElEPTkzMDA1MzMmTURTZWVkPTY3NzMmVHlwZT1NZWRpYQ%3D%3D), [Inc.](https://www.inc.com/bruce-poon-tip/3-ways-a-traveling-vacation-can-supercharge-your-career.html), [Thrive](https://www.thriveglobal.com/stories/22140-why-planning-vacation-is-key-to-well-being-in-2018), [USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2018/01/30/plan-vacation-day/1076495001/). Broadcast coverage was far reaching with stories in all of the top ten media markets, 48 of the top 50, and 83 of the top 100. Members used the moment to drive local news coverage in record numbers. Some of our favorite examples: Illinois’ Cory Jobe had a [6-minute segment](http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=fcb654da-38c1-437b-92d4-f22b9dc0042e) on Windy City Live and Chickasaw’s Paige Shepard landed [multiple interviews](http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=766957af-22a6-428b-9420-eaa92e901603) with Oklahoma City stations. Of note, here are a few call outs where I felt the media coverage aligned well with our new focus on the benefits of vacation travel specifically:

* AP: “Stop making excuses. Start making plans.” (Verbatim our tagline) // “(Samantha) Brown also talked about the campaign in a recent AP Travel podcast, noting that travel has an economic impact as well: “You are supporting an incredible industry of hotel workers and restaurant workers and bell people. So to not take your time off is ... psychologically not the best approach to your professional and personal life, but it also has an effect on our economy.” // “Project: Time Off estimates the lost spending from unused vacation days cost the U.S. economy $236 billion in 2016, money that would have supported 1.8 million jobs.”
* CNN: “Start viewing vacation time as a non-negotiable—like the dentist or yearly checkup, it's a vital part of your health care, so start treating it as such.”
* USA Today’s story on “amazing places you should visit in 2018”: “And this isn't frivolous stuff — countless studies show that a good vacation can have great benefits to businesses and employees alike, as workers return to their jobs refreshed and energized.”

**Digital & Web**

Twitter served as the top social platform for Plan for Vacation Day content, totaling 15,000 posts with a reach of more than 100 million users. The conversation landed #PlanForVacation as a top 10 trend throughout the day, peaking at number 3 in the afternoon—especially impressive given the State of the Union conversation. And just to show how big a trend we were… [JCPenney](https://twitter.com/jcpenney/status/958359854330064897), [Toronto Blue Jays](https://www.instagram.com/p/BeluqNnAPSS/), [T-Mobile CEO John Legere](https://twitter.com/JohnLegere/status/958469014522494976), [Sephora](https://twitter.com/Sephora/status/958444171697754112), [Disney Pixar](https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2018/01/30/plan-vacation-day/1076495001/), and [Adobe](https://twitter.com/AdobeNews/status/958393985256402944) all joined in. The organic engagement (non-paid) with @ProjectTimeOff really blew me away. Our top tweets ([#1](https://twitter.com/ProjectTimeOff/status/958303735901573120), [#2](https://twitter.com/ProjectTimeOff/status/958326464662982662), [#3](https://twitter.com/ProjectTimeOff/status/955863168038948870)) received 80,000 impressions and 900 engagements (likes/RTs/views). For comparison, looking at December content, our top three posts had 6,000 impressions and 100 engagements.

Instagram looked like a travel magazine with all the great #PlanForVacation content, totaling 1,100 posts with more than 435,000 likes/views. The top post came from Experience Kissimmee’s partnership with [Doctor Mike](https://www.instagram.com/p/Bek7Ki2gq4C/), followed by [Discover LA](https://www.instagram.com/p/Bel4jZ0B5c3/) and [Pure Michigan](https://www.instagram.com/p/BeJCtjPnriV/).

Our Thunderclap resulted in 135 participants with a total reach of 5,180,059. TravelZoo and NYC&Co were the top participants.

The calendar tool proved to be a great success with 45 organizations embedding it on their site, 17,000 calendar views, and 2,300 calendars created. From our NPVD launch in November through the end of January, our website saw 92,000 visits with more than 10,000 views of our resource pages (a 64% increase over 2017). The videos featuring Samantha Brown were utilized by members social media accounts and included in news stories with 7,000 collective views on our channels.

*Note, Facebook saw great engagement from members, but tracking is not readily available.*

**Industry Participation**

It’s no surprise the industry raised the bar on National Plan for Vacation Day. We provided support through webinars, calls, emails, and tools to 120 organizations and saw participation from 2,500 influencers and organizations, including giveaways, media releases, deals and discounts, influencer activation, and more. Engagement from key U.S. Travel audiences are also up in 2018: 55% of U.S. Travel board organizations participated (vs. 40% last year); 83% of Project: Time Off Coalition organizations participated (vs. 67% last year), and 78% of state tourism offices participated (not tracked in 2017). A few of the top examples:

* **AAA** created a co-branded toolkit—inclusive of custom press release, radio script, social images, digital banners, videos, and blog post—to assist [regional clubs](https://twitter.com/AAAOhio/status/958484993562509312) in the celebration. AAA National headquarters took it to the next level by hosting an in-house event with infographics and giveaway items urging associates to plan for time off.
* **Airbnb** leveraged National Plan for Vacation Day to [rollout](https://press.atairbnb.com/national-plan-for-vacation-day-claim-your-days-off-and-plan-your-next-trip-using-airbnbs-pay-less-up-front-feature/) a new layaway feature, Pay Less Up Front. Inspired by Project: Time Off’s research (662 million unused days) they gave away a $5,000 voucher to the 662nd person to book using Pay Less Up Front. The feature landed a Quartz article with the headline: [AIRBNB’S NEW FEATURE IS FOR THE 54% OF AMERICANS WHO WASTE VACATION TIME](https://quartzy.qz.com/1191711/airbnbs-new-pay-less-up-front-feature-makes-your-future-vacation-a-reality/).
* **Alamo Rent A Car** brought back its successful National Plan for Vacation Day [promotion](https://twitter.com/Alamo/status/958352854431002624): 10 percent off weekly rentals between March 1 and August 30. They created a set of games to guide the vacation planning process and make it fun for the entire family and engaged their online influencers to blog and share. The [planning tools](https://www.alamo.com/en_US/car-rental/scenic-route/family-travel/vacation-planning-toolkit.html) included Travelgories, Travelopoly, and Vacranium.
* **Virginia Tourism Corporation** officially launched its CRUSH Friday campaign, a call to action for industry organizations state-wide. The campaign targets millennials, who our research shows leave the most vacation unused, in a [complete toolkit](https://www.dropbox.com/s/ayh3n2gjl1u3dw7/Crush%20Friday%20Industry%20Toolkit.pdf?dl=0) with video content, banner ads, radio spots, and mailers.  [Twenty-five](https://pressroom.virginia.org/2018/01/virginia-tourism-corporation-announces-25-local-tourism-programs-to-receive-10000-grant-for-crush-friday-program-marketing-fund/) Virginia tourism organizations received $10k grants to promote CRUSH Friday. Virginia Tourism Corporation also helped get #PlanForVacation trending in a Twitter Chat with the industry and local influencers.
* **Chickasaw Country** created custom [graphics and a promotional video](http://chickasawcountry.com/pto) detailing America’s vacation problem with Miss Oklahoma 2017, Triana Browne, as the event ambassador. With the destination, Miss OK facilitated a National Plan for Vacation Day [giveaway](https://twitter.com/Chickasaw/status/953030038282297357) to three local resort hotels. Paige also did a series of TV interviews.
* **Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority** created a [promotional video](https://twitter.com/Vegas/status/958402812232187904) to surprise and delight two hard-working Las Vegas entertainers with a spontaneous day off, and two sets of guests with Allegiant Air tickets for their next vacation to Las Vegas. The destination also presented the event along with Project: Time Off’s research and toolkit to local businesses, encouraging them to live the message internally.
* **Experience Kissimmee** kicked off a 2018 wellness campaign on National Plan for Vacation Day with a video of spokesperson [Dr. Mike Varshavski.](https://www.experiencekissimmee.com/blog/experience-kissimmee-doctor-mike-vacations-are-good-for-you) Dr. Mike uses Project: Time Off research to explain why vacation can help improve overall health. Experience Kissimmee secured broadcast spots in target under-vacationed markets including D.C., New York, Detroit, Atlanta, and more.
* **Expedia** leveraged National Plan for Vacation Day to highlight three of its major channels: CheapTickets, Orbitz, and Travelocity. [Homepage takeovers](https://www.orbitz.com/plan4vacay?BRANDCID=ORBITZ-US.SOCIAL.TWITTER.SOCIAL-PROMOCODE.HOTEL), banner ads, and [content](https://www.cheaptickets.com/blog/2018/01/10-states-leave-vacation-days-unused/?BRANDCID=CHEAPTICKETS-US.SOCIAL.TWITTER.SOCIAL-BLOG-ORGANIC.GENERIC&sf83561148=1) was created specific to each brand. The Travelocity [Roaming Gnome](https://twitter.com/RoamingGnome/status/958448205015924736) was a contender for our favorite! Internally, Expedia offered exclusive employee discounts on vacation packages as an extra incentive to plan.
* **Travel Channel** aired our Samantha Brown FOMO video on air 25 times the week leading up to National Plan for Vacation Day.

**Feedback from Members**

The most rewarding part of Plan for Vacation this year was hearing feedback from our members that confirmed the value they feel from their U.S. Travel membership. A few highlights below.

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