



DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Title of the Story: How To: Aspen, a commitment to sustain the natural beauty that sustains us.

Destination Name: Aspen, Colorado

Country: United States of America

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Position: Senior Manager of Content Strategy

Submission category: *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact top100@greendestinations.org

Issues faced





What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice?

Following the summer of 2017, which resulted in unprecedented tragedies on our local mountains, as well as a Colorado population boom (over 100K moving into the state each year), we reflected that with an increased population looking to recreate in the outdoors perhaps it was necessary to launch a campaign educating enthusiastic newcomers about how to enjoy our beautiful natural resources. This is when The How To: Aspen Campaign was born. Furthermore, during the onset of COVID-19, The “How To” campaign became a great example of how ACRA is a champion for a thriving community by taking health restrictions seriously and promoting tourism in a responsible way, making us a catalyst for business growth. Aspen’s economy is based on tourism and following the COVID 19 shutdown, we knew it would be imperative to restore tourism to our community for our businesses to survive. We knew we needed to add a How To: Aspen in a COVID-19 World to put our efforts into convincing people it was a safe place to visit once quarantine restrictions were lifted.

Methods, steps and tools applied





How was the good practice implemented?

The 'How To Aspen' campaign is your go-to resource for planning a trip to Aspen or simply for anyone seeking some local advice. It helps answer questions on How To Get Here, How To Enjoy Aspen, and tips on How To navigate the great outdoors properly. The campaign expands on three main categories: How To Get Here, How To Enjoy Aspen, and How To Get Outside, along with multiple sub-categories that help ensure a safe and fun vacation in the mountains. Our 'How To Get Here' section shares tips on how to get to Aspen by car, shuttle, or plane, as well as information on local transportation and maps. The 'How To Enjoy Aspen' segment contains information on adjusting to altitude and weather, special events, and details surrounding legalized marijuana for both consumers and non-consumers. Finally, the 'How To Get Outside' section includes vital information such as best hiking and biking practices, pet information, camping tips, wildlife and wildfire information, and tips for the best way to enjoy the iconic Maroon Bells. The campaign is being promoted on the Aspenchamber.org website, print collateral in our Spring, Summer, and Fall Brochure (distributed at visitor centers in town, 10 official Colorado Welcome Centers throughout the state, the Pitkin County Airport, and through direct mail for registered participants), and on all Aspen Chamber social platforms both paid and organic. Along with the written content and photography, we've also produced several 'How To' videos on Vimeo including: How To Hiking Etiquette, How To Wildlife, How To Visit the Maroon Bells, How To Carry your Skis, and How To E-Bike – all of which are being pushed on social platforms and corresponding website pages. The project also consists of an "Aspen Pledge" that follows a series of pledges that help the visitor experience and explore Aspen responsibly. The pledge has been administered at our visitor centers located in town for display in addition to printed copies distributed with crayons intended for kids to color and at our WeCycle panels throughout town. In the spring of 2020, we pivoted the content to address "How to Aspen in a COVID 19 World" showing all the precautions and guidelines the visitors could expect to encounter when visiting Aspen this year. As we rollout our Aspen Destination Management Plan, we will continue to pivot our existing How To: Aspen campaign as community and environment needs arise.

The 'How To' campaign was initially conceived to provide information on the outdoors experience, but as content was being developed it was quickly realized that the "How To" tagline lent itself well to inform guests of other Aspen specific events. This then allowed us to create the overall center of information on the website – providing a streamlined location for useful and relevant visitor information. The Maroon Bells portion of the How To campaign was also a result of the need to mitigate impacts on the popular recreation area and has thus developed into a partnership with the USFS to implement a reservation system. There has been widespread community adoption of the change in messaging surrounding the "Best Way to enjoy the Bells" (utilizing the public bus and by going midweek). The US Forest Service, ACRA Visitor Services, local hotels & lodges as well as Snowmass Tourism and other local stakeholders have implemented the messaging across the board. The 'How To Aspen' campaign was presented to the public along with our 'How To' videos at our annual Food & Wine Luncheon back in 2018, resulting in large community sentiment from the start. The community has continued to show great support for the campaign, wanting visitors to be more aware of the mountain home we live in when they visit. By presenting this campaign to the community, we gained the locals' support to become ambassadors to educate visitors and locals on the best and safest ways to enjoy Aspen.

During the onset of COVID-19, The "How To" campaign became a great example of how ACRA is a champion for a thriving community by taking health restrictions seriously and promoting tourism in a responsible way, making us a catalyst for business growth. Aspen's economy is based on tourism and following the COVID 19 shutdown, we knew it would be imperative to restore tourism to our community for our businesses to survive. We knew we needed to add a How To: Aspen in a COVID-19 World to put our efforts into convincing people it was a safe place to visit once quarantine restrictions were lifted. The campaign was conceived through our work convening the Marketing Advisory Committee. We partnered with member businesses to shoot the videos and then shared out the final assets to all stakeholders for use in their own marketing channels.

The How To Campaign demonstrates our shift into destination management that creates sustainable growth to the benefit of the local community and supports environmental, economic, social, and cultural values. To further incorporate community support under a larger umbrella and to make sure our destination management plan is collaborative, we conducted several opportunities for residents to provide feedback including town halls, surveys, workshops, and telephone interviews. Residents of the Aspen Region were asked for their opinions of the community through an online survey (live from July 20 - August 6, 2021). In total, 1,299 residents responded to the survey. This exceeded the initial quota that was set for 625 responses, assuming a normal distribution of 50%, a margin of error of 5% and a confidence level of 99%. Telephone interviews were also conducted with local industry members who confirmed some of what was identified in the research and survey, and they added ideas for future destination management opportunities in Aspen and ACRA's future role. Additionally, several workshops were hosted with ACRA, the Board of Directors, and industry members. By actively promoting Aspen's "mind, body, spirit" mentality, and actively inviting new residents and second-home owners to community events, perhaps ACRA can encourage residents to integrate themselves more into the community and reciprocate some of the value they derive from Aspen. With this feedback, ACRA is ready to evolve the campaign and execute recommendations with partner support, which will build resilience and sustainability into our economy and ensure that we are bringing value to all those that live, work and play here. We look forward to working alongside our many stakeholders in a leadership, partnership and advocacy capacity, in order to transform the recommendations into initiatives using working knowledge of the destination. This will elicit beneficial outcomes that protect the quality of life for our residents while preserving the very reason people enjoy coming here.





Key success factors

What helped you tackle the issues?

Besides quantitative and qualitative key metrics, it's imperative that our community resonates with our How To: Aspen campaign in order for it to be successful and impactful. Since our launch of the How To: Aspen Campaign, there has been widespread community adoption of the change in messaging surrounding the "Best Way to enjoy the Bells" (utilizing the public bus and by going midweek). The US Forest Service, ACRA Visitor Services, local hotels & lodges, Snowmass Tourism, the Aspen Skiing Company, the City of Aspen, and other local stakeholders have implemented the messaging across the board. Our Board and Marketing Advisory Group were a key part of the process in helping this campaign come to life. Having support of our stakeholders is an integral part of the process as it helped us gain insight and leadership from a diverse group of leaders in the Aspen community. Residents have shown great support for the campaign, wanting visitors to be more aware of the mountain home we live in when they visit. By presenting this campaign to the community, we gained the locals' support to become ambassadors to educate visitors and locals on the best and safest ways to enjoy Aspen. This support is imperative and set the precedent in gathering community sentiment as we roll out our Destination Management and make decisions that will sustain the future of Aspen. As a direct result of feedback from our stakeholders we redesigned and updated our Aspen Pledge to appeal to residents and visitors, making more of an impact. On July 11, 2022, we launched a new initiative under our existing How To: Aspen campaign that ACRA will be making a donation of \$18.80 for each pledge signed, which honors the year Aspen was incorporated, 1880. Those signing the pledge can choose between the Independence Pass Foundation and Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers as the beneficiary organization. For the initial launch, ACRA has committed up to \$50,000 in donations. We are excited to see the future success in our efforts to preserve Aspen as a sustainable destination for years to come.

Lessons learned





While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?

Since the launch of this campaign back in 2018, the most important lesson we learned is that it is ever evolving. Additionally, we believe both the original “How to” campaign as well as the “How to in a COVID-19 World” campaign should be conducted at other destinations. Educating visitors on etiquette in an outdoor recreation setting is as important as ever, considering the increased use of these assets during the pandemic and into the future as travel reopens. It is equally important that the visitor understands the expectations for visiting your community during these extenuating circumstances. We’ve spread this messaging locally and our neighbors in the Roaring Fork Valley have partnered to promote educational messaging during peak seasons. The Roaring Fork Valley Alliance Group consists of five Destination Marketing Organizations including: Aspen, Basalt, Snowmass, Glenwood Springs, and Carbondale with the goal to promote cohesive educational messaging. Our How To campaign was also presented at DMA West as the winner of the Best Idea program and ESTO for a winner in the “Road Less Traveled” award. It’s important we continue to submit this campaign for awards at travel associations to spread the idea of the impact of this campaign and allow other destinations to be inspired and adopt it as they see fit. As we shift into Destination Management with the rollout of our Aspen Destination Management Plan, we will adjust our How To: Aspen campaign with purpose-built tourism at the center. Utilizing destination management principles, purpose-built tourism is intentional in leveraging the visitor economy to push back against community challenges. Tourism is a potent force with immense potential for good. At its best, traveling increases empathy, forges friendships between strangers, and redirects resources for the greater good. When designed with intention, a place’s tourism industry can contribute to a higher purpose that supports the community and the natural environment.

Results, achievements and recognitions





What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice?

Aspen has won the WACE Best Idea Program in 2018, the 2021 ESTO Road Less Traveled award, and more recently the 2020 Rocky Mountain Region Regional Forester's Honor Award for the outstanding work that the our working group did in 2020 to implement the emergency reservation system for the Maroon Bells Scenic Area, providing public access to National Forest lands during the Covid-19 pandemic through creativity, innovation, and flexibility.

Since launching "How To" on May 1, 2018, this section of the website has seen 482,585 pageviews with over an average of 1-minute time on page. The Maroon Bells reservations page, since launching May 27, 2020 has had 2,645,885 page views. Bus ridership to the Maroon Bells has increased by 104% from 107,419 in 2020 to 218,889 in 2021. Our social campaign results are as follows:

Impressions Total: 5,035,492

Video Views Total: 1,583,254

Link Click Total: 40,474

Facebook

- Local Etiquette Campaign
 - Served to the local area surrounding Aspen from June through September 2020
 - Ads earned 596,006 impressions, reached 103,520 individuals, and resulted in 3,708 link clicks
- Local Tips & Tricks CA Flights
 - Served to potential visitors in drive and fly markets for two weeks in June 2020 and 1 week in September 2020
 - These ads earned 1,039,455 impressions, reached 351,743 individuals, and resulted in 7,734 link clicks
- How To: Covid-19 Video Campaign
 - These ran from August through the beginning of December 2020 and reached users in drive and fly markets
 - These ads earned 1,070,511 impressions, reached 380,236 individuals, and resulted in 27,492 link clicks
 - These videos earned 158,124 3-second video views and 31,089 views at 50%+ video length.

YouTube

- Summer 2020 How To: YouTube campaign focused on How To: Etiquette video content and was served to users in drive and fly markets
- These ads resulted in 2,028,746 impressions, 1,155,068 video views, and 1,540 link clicks.
- 49.48% of users viewed the videos to completion. Said another way, videos were viewed all the way through more than 571.5k times on this network.

StackAdapt In-Stream Video

- The How To: COVID-19 Video was run on this network during the summer/fall seasons of 2020
- These ads earned 300,774 impressions, 270,062 video starts, and 133,154 complete video plays.





Additional references

Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from YouTube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL (not WeTransfer).

Website Links:

<https://aspenchamber.org/plan-trip/how-to>

<https://aspenchamber.org/plan-trip/trip-highlights/maroon-bells/reservations>

<https://aspenchamber.org/COVID-19/Visitor-Resource-Guide>

<https://aspenchamber.org/explore/sustainability>

<https://aspenchamber.org/pledge>

Videos:

How To E-Bike: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czBYM99mZRM>

How To Carry your Skis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGypPxoFqbA>

How to Aspen: Wildlife Encounters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aI5uMlKOtQQ>

How to Aspen: Hiking Etiquette: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXAEjUokiHE>

How To: Maroon Bells: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0VD0ypNvms>

How To: Aspen Recreation in a COVID-19 World: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiu9bbEnZRA&t=1s>

How To: Aspen Hotel and Condo Stays in a COVID-19 World:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEEnAEJmASzg>

How To: Aspen Shopping in a COVID-19 World: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPP46J1icEo&t=12s>

How To: Aspen Visitor Dining in a COVID-19 World: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_UGWT0o1rc

How To: Skiing Aspen Snowmass in a COVID-19 world:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtAtAJtRoal&t=3s>

How To: Aspen Winter Transportation in a COVID-19 World:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVITaNKWcu0&t=3s>

How To: Aspen in a COVID-19 World: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1UFaU2q4sg>

