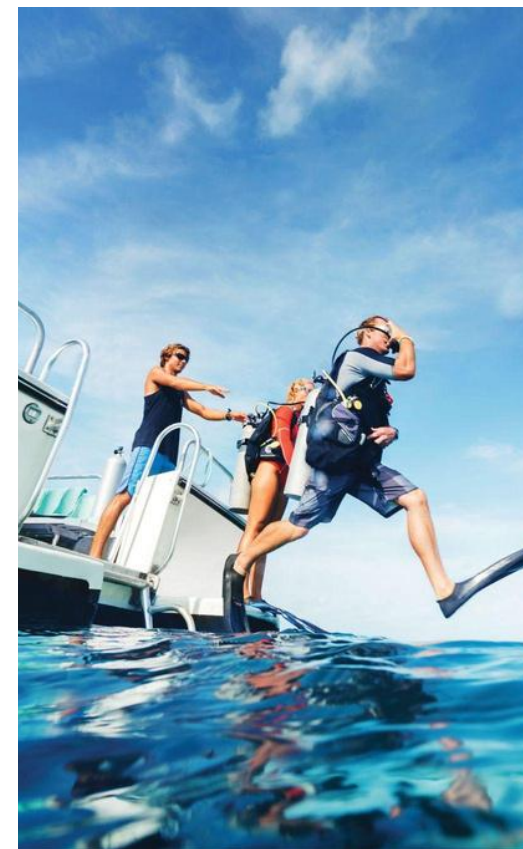
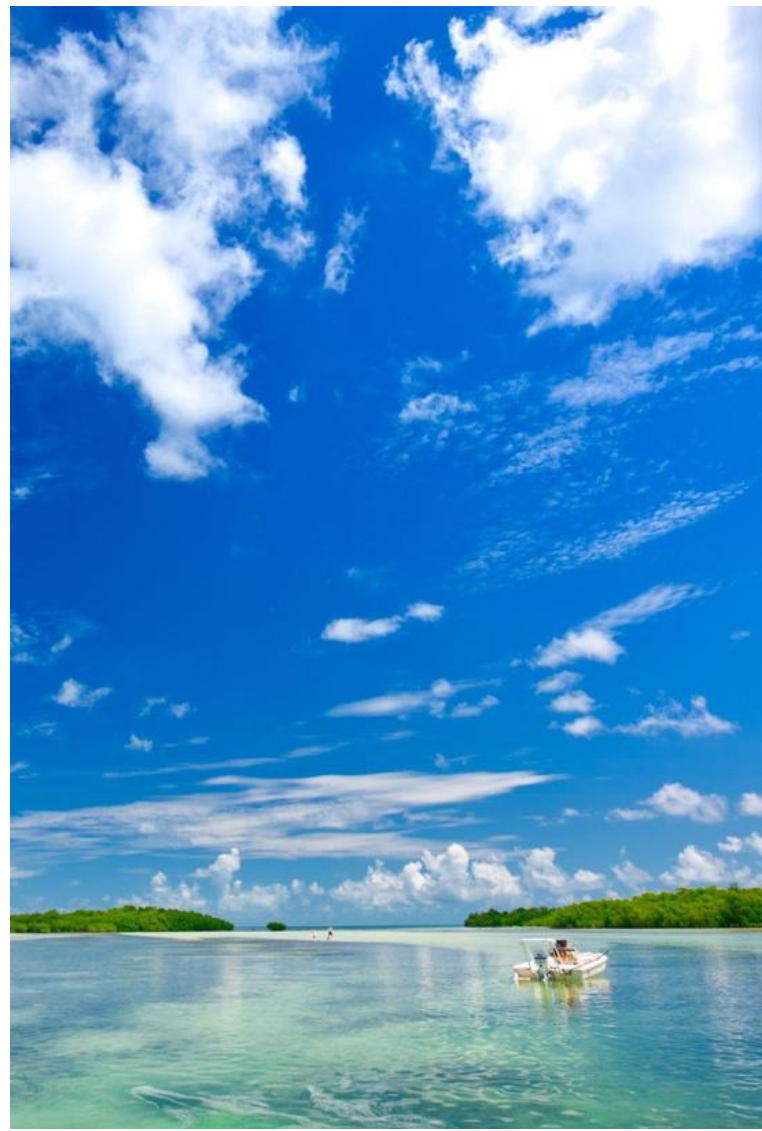


THE DELICATE DANCE OF DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP



Kara Franker
President & CEO

The
Florida Keys & Key West
... come as you are®



TRUST IS THE NEW REACH

42% of destination organizations expect funding reductions in the next three years.

-- DestinationNEXT Futures Study

**That is not a marketing problem.
That is a trust problem.**

TRANSPARENCY=
TRUST
FROM
ELECTED
OFFICIALS

If we only measure heads in beds, we will be treated like a line item. And eventually cut like one.



AUTHENTICITY=

TRUST FROM TRAVELERS

A captain in Islamorada who doesn't show up in structured data is becoming invisible to the next generation of travelers.

Everyone has a version of that fishing guide.

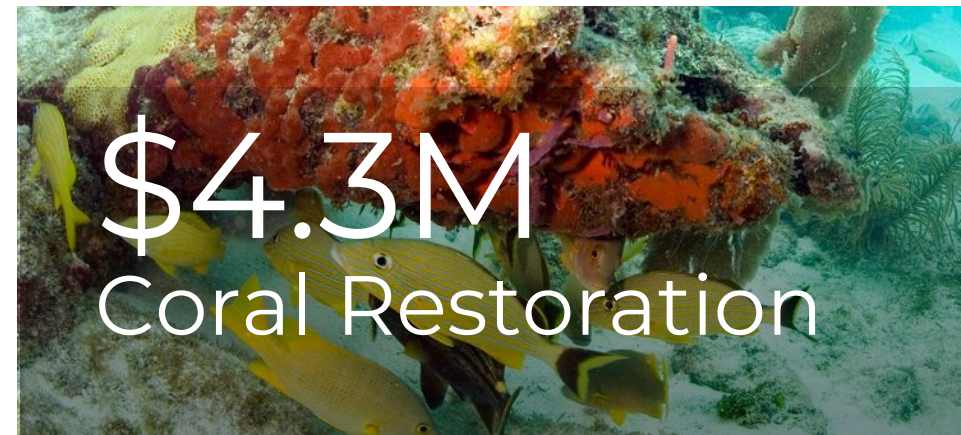
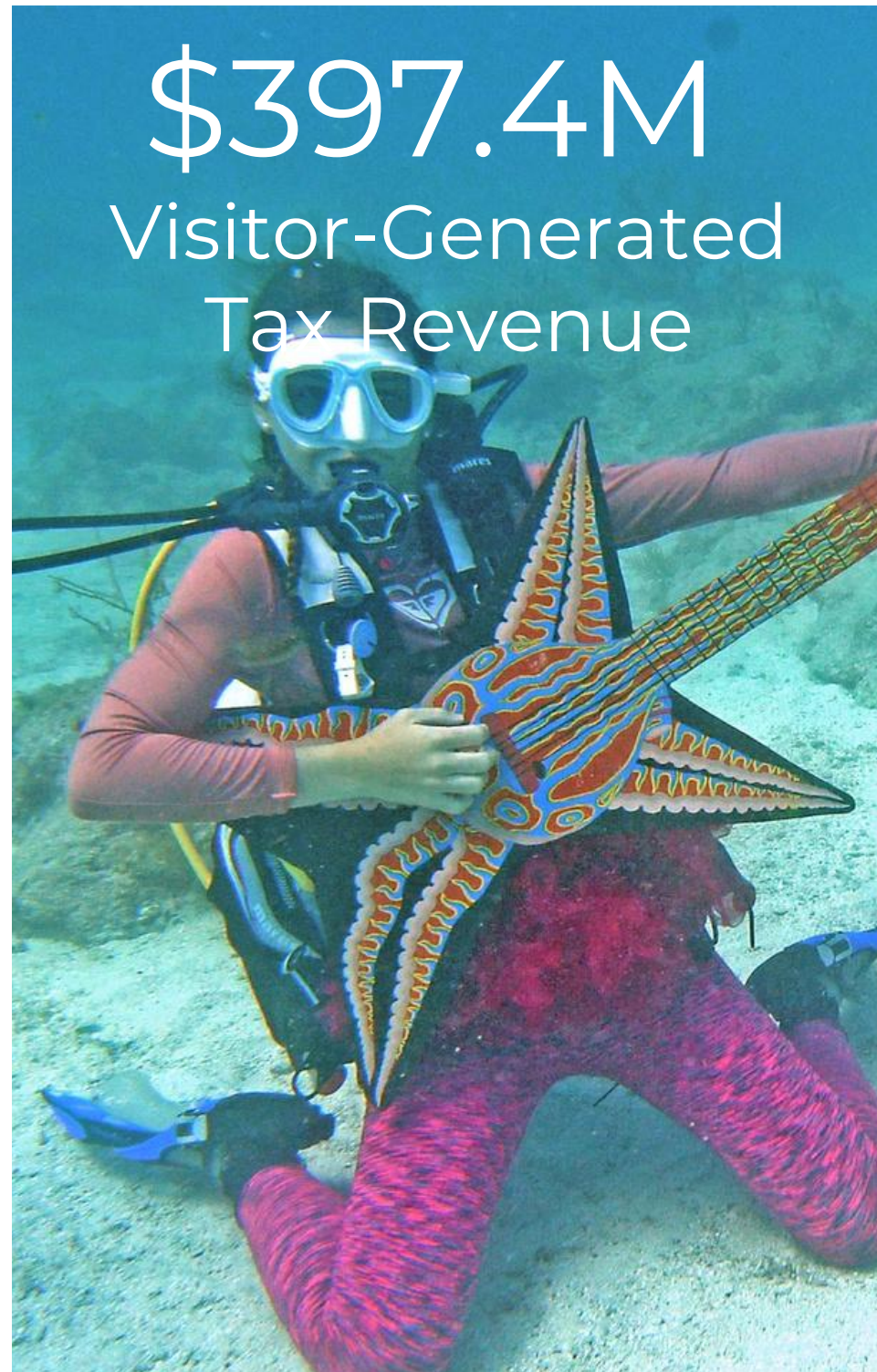


An underwater photograph showing three divers swimming in clear blue water. The divers are silhouetted against the bright light filtering down from the surface. They are wearing scuba gear, including tanks and fins. The water is a vibrant blue, and there are some bubbles and light reflections visible.

MANAGEMENT=
**TRUST
FROM
RESIDENTS**

Residents don't hate tourism.
They hate unmanaged tourism.
Our job is not winning arguments.
It is earning permission.

THE VALUE OF TOURISM



So what does earning permission actually look like? It starts with the basics. Showing your community how tourism benefits them.



THE WORLD HAS CHANGED



Step one was necessary.

It is not enough anymore.

What's happening right now is different.

If everything is changing, where do DMOs bridge the gap?

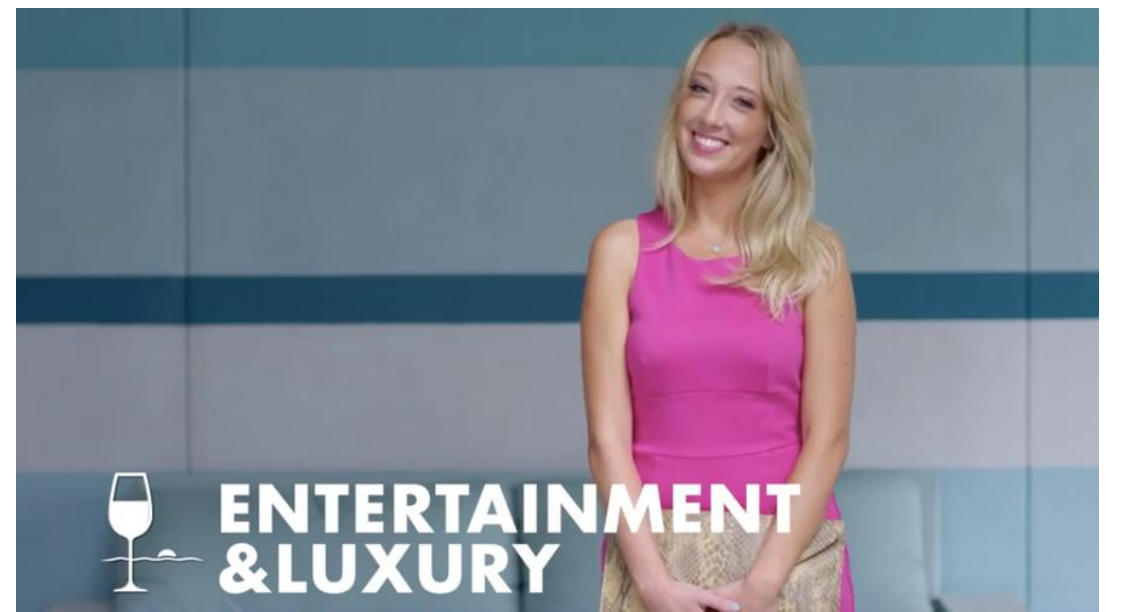


TRUTH =
**TRUST IN
THE AGE
OF AI**

This is not a technology problem.
It is a trust problem.

And AI doesn't care about your tagline.





Condé Nast Traveler

2015

FALL IN LOVE WITH
FLORIDA

FLORIDA KEYS AND KEY WEST GIVE ME THE KEYS

ADVERTISEMENT

FALL IN LOVE WITH
FLORIDA

VISIT FLORIDA LOVE YOUR STAY

ADVERTISEMENT

FALL IN LOVE WITH
FLORIDA

Visit Florida • Monroe County • LaPlaya Beach & Golf Resort •
The Seagate Hotel & Spa



“
Put the top down and
get ready to blast an
island-inspired playlist—
it's time for a road trip to
my favorite spots in the
Florida Keys. You don't
need to pack much more
than a swimsuit, flip-flops,
and a taste for adventure.”
—Kara Franker

With iconic hotels, amazing food, natural beauty, and wide-ranging activities waiting for you, you're sure to find your kind of getaway in Florida. Travel blogger Kara Franker shares the many ways to fall in love with the Sunshine State, from the eastern shores to the Gulf Coast to the Keys.



Olyvia Weisber

In the Florida Keys and Key West, there's a lot to love. Rich in history, arts, and culture, the area is also perfect for outdoor types, with eco-tours, snorkeling, scuba diving, sport fishing, and more. The 120-mile island chain is home to the continental United States' only living-coral barrier reef, so it offers up unparalleled diving experiences. In Key Largo, snorkel your way through schools of brightly colored fish at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, and visit the Spiegel Grove, a sunken U.S. Navy ship that's home to its own thriving underwater ecosystem.

Don't miss Islamorada, the village of islands where backcountry sport fishing and saltwater fly-fishing were pioneered. Cast your reel on a charter vessel, or board an eco-tour boat and explore backcountry

manatees, and crocodiles. Further south, in Marathon, history fans can see the Old Seven Mile Bridge, a section of Henry Flagler's original Overseas Railroad—it's also a prime spot for fishing or taking photos against a gorgeous backdrop.

In Big Pine Key, Bahia Honda State Park boasts an award-winning beach that's perfect for swimming and sunbathing: if you're up for an adventure, book a guide and go fishing for tarpon. Lively Key West, Florida's southernmost island and legendary home of Ernest Hemingway, hosts film festivals as well as regular neighborhood gallery strolls for art lovers. Last stop? A great outing for birdwatchers is a ferry ride to the 100-square-mile national park island cluster known as the Dry Tortugas.



ENDLESS EXPERIENCES

With unlimited options for fun, relaxation, and soaking up the sun, your love affair with Florida never has to end. Whether your passion is golf or shopping, the Turnberry Isle Miami resort has packages perfect for your interests. Charter a yacht at Capt. Anderson's Marina in Panama City Beach to enjoy a day of fishing or dolphin-watching near Shell Island. On unspoiled Amelia Island, explore nature trails and go for sunrise horseback rides on the golden sand. Near Fort Myers, watch unbeatable sunsets from Lovers Key State Park's beaches and bike over breezy causeways and through wildlife preserves.



HIDDEN GEMS FROM VISIT FLORIDA INSIDER KARA FRANKER

A bevy of mermaids put on an enchanting show in the clear spring waters at the Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, located just north of Tampa. Nature lovers should head to the nearby Plantation on Crystal River for its lush grounds, stately oaks and abundant wildlife—you can even swim with manatees in the warm springs.

The
**FLORIDA KEYS &
KEY WEST**
...Come as you are.



CHANGES IN THE FLORIDA KEYS

✓ Risk & Audit Improvements + Transparency

→ Reporting progress regularly

☀ Strategic Planning + Community Engagement

→ First time VFK ever had a strategic plan with public input

👥 New Staff Onboarded

→ Went from 12 staff to 30 in-house experts

📣 New Agencies Hired

→ No longer dependent on outside agencies

📢 Open-Door Governance

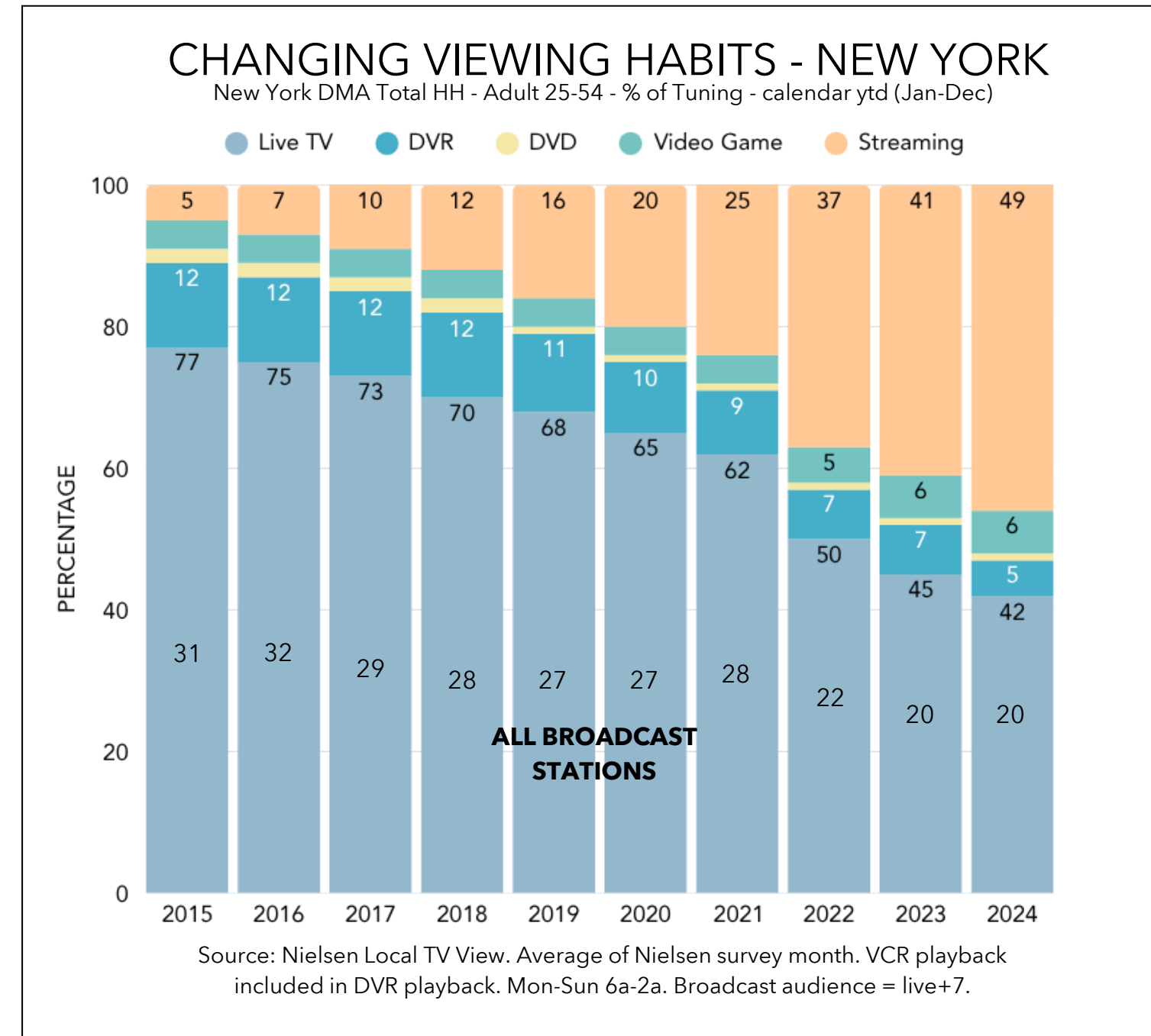
→ Public invited to TDC & DAC meetings

🌐 Marketing Refresh Underway

→ Community-informed brand campaign

🤖 Tech Forward: Embracing AI & New Website Launch

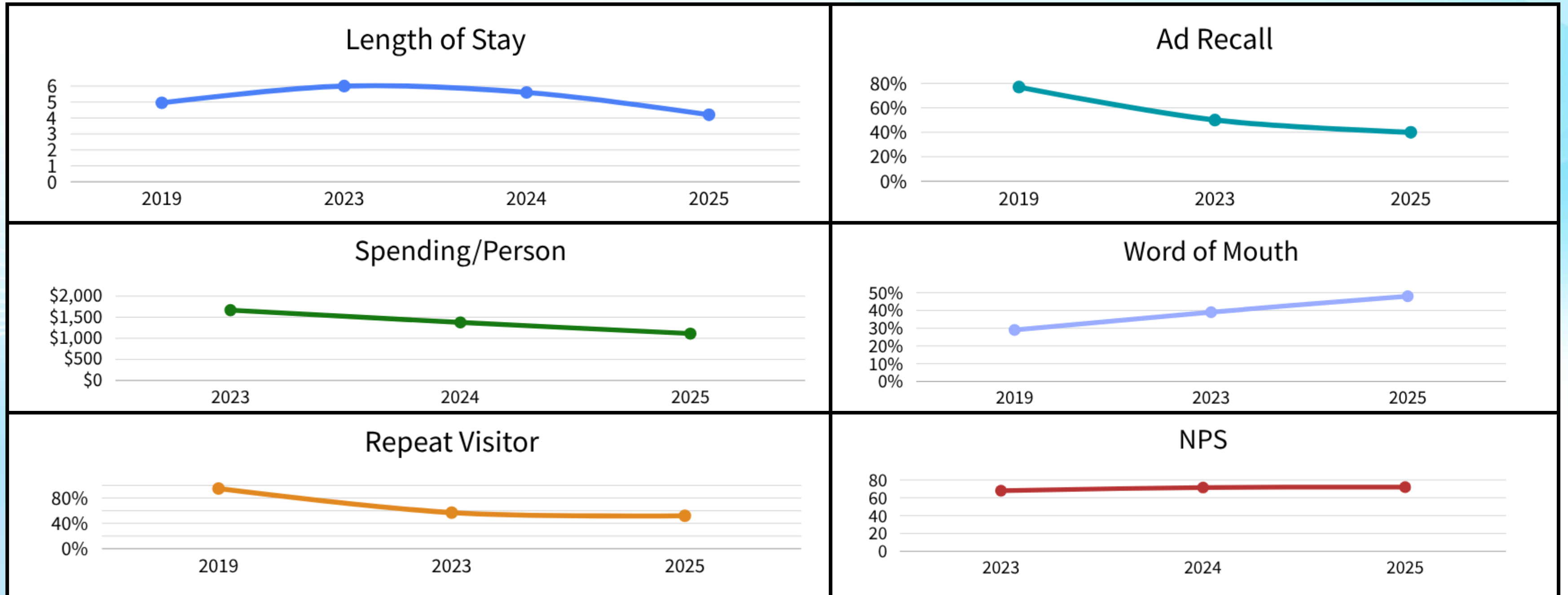
→ Leveraging AI to stay competitive + modern website



“That’s not strategy. That’s nostalgia.”

YOU CAN'T MANAGE WHAT YOU DON'T MEASURE

EXAMPLE: SYSTEMATIC TREND ANALYSIS USING AI



Key Message to Stakeholders: This is visibility into trends that, if continued without intervention, will erode economic performance in 2-3 years. Early visibility means we can act now.

An aerial photograph of a long, multi-lane bridge stretching across a vast body of water. The water is a deep blue-green color, and the bridge is a light grey. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

COLLABORATION AS A **TRUST** **MULTIPLIER**

This isn't a Keys story. Destination Stewardship is happening all over this state. A traveler moving through Florida does not see county lines.



**LEAVE
NO TRACE**



Bradenton
Anna Maria Island
Longboat Key



MARTIN COUNTY
Florida

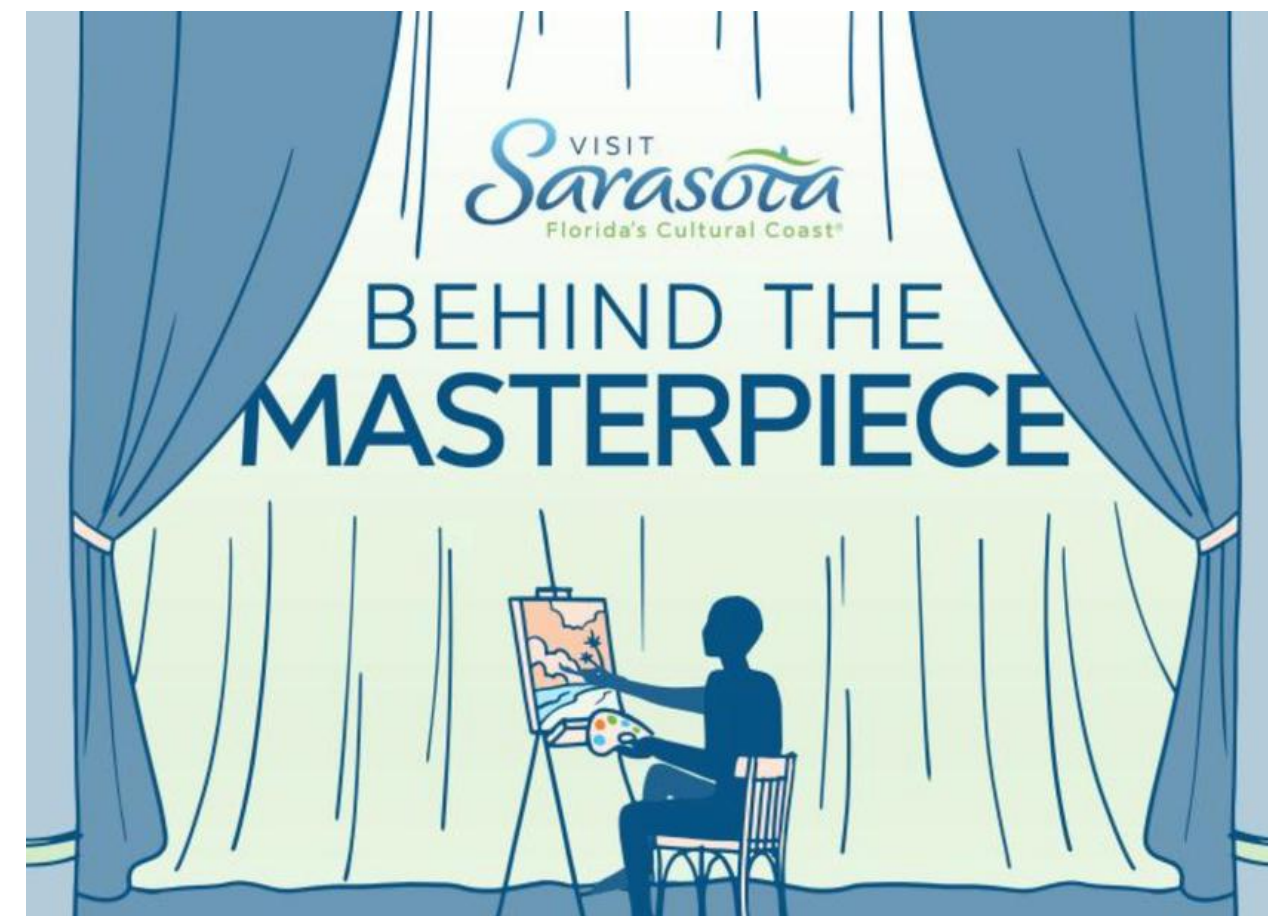
Sea to Preserve







Work WHERE YOU WANT TO **LIVE**®



1. VISIT

If you built a place where people want to visit, then you have built a place where people want to live.

2. LIVE

And if you built a place where people want to live, then you have built a place where people want to work.



4. INVEST

And if you built a place where business and residents will invest, then you have built a place where people will want to visit.

3. WORK

And if you built a place where people want to work, then you have built a place where business and residents will invest.

DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP BALANCES PROSPERITY & COMMUNITY

Destinations International defines “Destination Stewardship” as the continuous pursuit of a net-positive tourism ecosystem aligned with shared community values.

Taking a holistic, multi-stakeholder approach to a destination’s strategic planning and implementation, destination stewardship is aimed at improving the quality of all life—inclusive of humans and the natural habitats that surround us.

TRUST

Economic Prosperity

Social Well-Being & Resident Quality of Life

Conservation and Balance

Protected Culture and Heritage

Destination Stewardship



THE CORE OF COMMUNITY VITALITY

- **Champion tourism** as the top economic driver, fueling jobs and businesses.
- Drive **strategic marketing** efforts to consistently attract visitors year-round.
- Lead **responsible travel efforts** to protect the environment, cultural heritage and quality of life.
- Support **local stakeholders** by sharing their stories and offerings through our channels.
- Strengthen **community connections** through industry and resident engagement.

The work of a destination organization is directly connected to community vitality. Through brand management, destination stewardship and programs for promotion and sales, our own community vitality wheel will continue to evolve and our communities prosper.



SOUL SEARCH: GOALS THAT INSPIRE

Evolve Strategies

Evolve Marketing & Sales Strategies to Drive Sustainable Growth

Community Alignment

Deepen Community Alignment, Education and Engagement

Resilience & Excellence

Develop Organizational Resilience and Operational Excellence

Destination Stewardship

Strengthen Destination Stewardship to Balance Growth, Environment and Resident Quality of Life

The
Florida Keys & Key West
... come as you are®

FIND YOUR FRAMEWORK

T



TRAJECTORY

Long-term, trajectory-driven storytelling instead of disconnected campaigns.

I



INTEGRATION

Unified marketing, PR, sales, digital and partnerships instead of silos.

D



DATA

Decisions grounded in real-time information, not instinct alone.

E



ENGAGEMENT

Closing the loop with all stakeholders, not just visitors.

Building an operating lens around trust. Every decision runs through a filter that keeps trust at the center. TIDE is how we check ourselves.

EMPOWER THE TEAM



DAC I - Key West

Lead: Ed Simon
Co-Lead: Erica Brown
Co-Lead: Tracy McClellan



DAC II - Big Pine & Lower Keys

Lead: Jeanne Quinn
Co-Lead: Kelli Fountain
Co-Lead: Liana Pyne



DAC III - Marathon

Lead: Crystal Blaskis
Co-Lead: Allison Morgan
Co-Lead: Mary Haban



DAC IV - Islamorada

Lead: Allison Morgan
Co-Lead: Christina Day
Co-Lead: JoNell Modys



DAC V - Key Largo

Lead: Christina Day
Co-Lead: Jules Powers
Co-Lead: Sabine Pons



Cultural

Lead: Crystal Blaskis
Co-Lead: Allison Morgan
Co-Lead: Tracy McClellan



Dive & Eco-Tourism

Lead: Kaire Lindpere
Co-Lead: Crystal Blaskis
Co-Lead: Yves Vrielynck



Fishing

Lead: Kelli Fountain
Co-Lead: JoNell Modys
Co-Lead: Christina Day

THE TEAM = FRONTLINES TO THE COMMUNITY

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS



AND KEEP RUNNING THE PLAYBOOK

TRUST IN THE AGE OF AI



What are destinations
going to do about this?

And is AI really coming
for our jobs?

THE WORLD IS EVER-CHANGING.

Do I need a fishing guide to go fishing in Islamorada?

Where should I snorkel in Key Largo?

 What shall we think through?

How can I help you today?

+

Opus 4.7 v



Where should I eat in Key West?

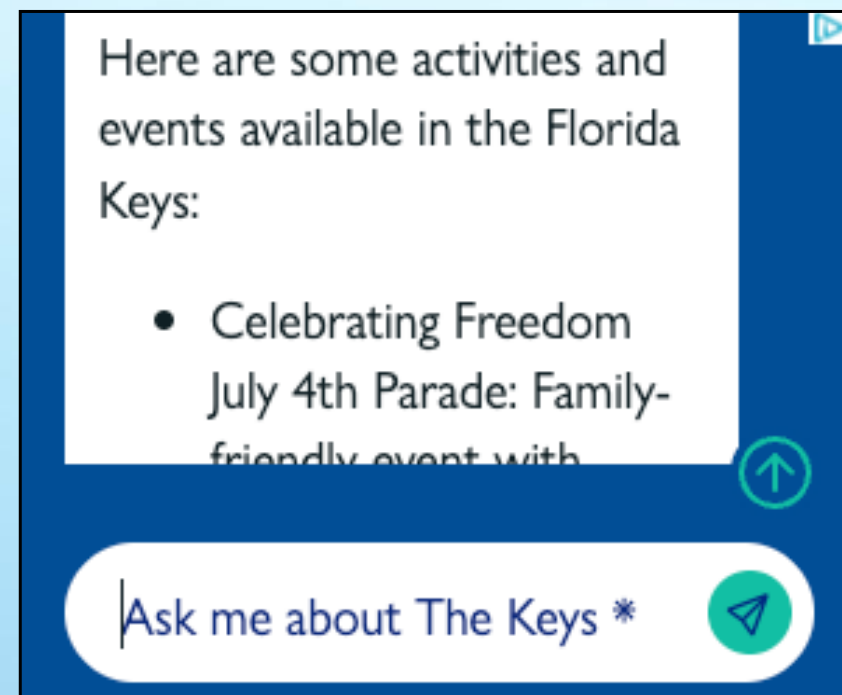
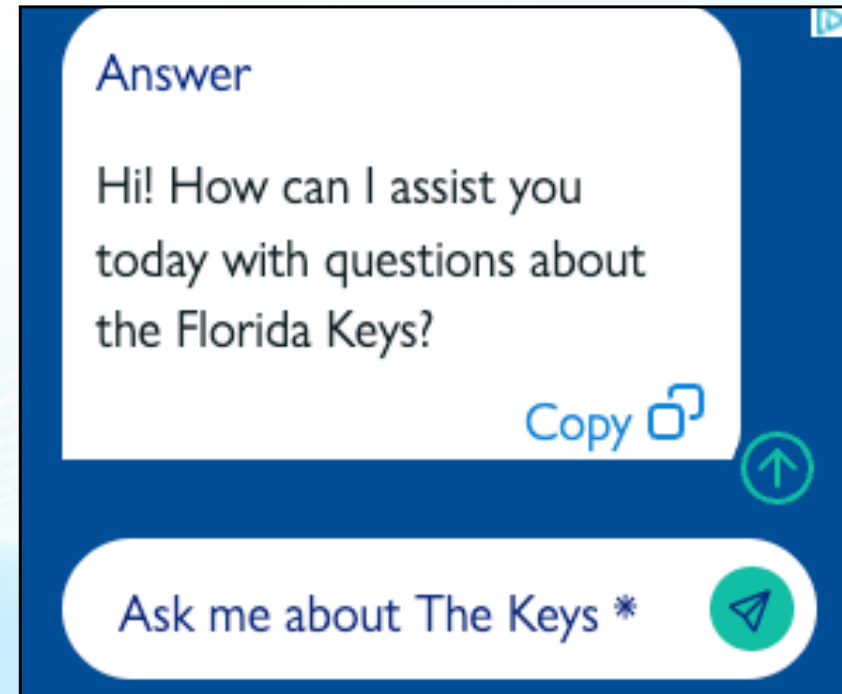
Claude, plan me a 4-day vacation in The Florida Keys.

So who stands in the gap? I think it's us. I think the destination must be the beacon of truth for its destination.

When the internet is flooded with generated content, we are the one that can say: this is accurate, this is real.

That's not a threat to our relevance. That's the strongest case for our relevance we've ever had.

TRAVEL PLANNING ANSWERED INSTANTLY: PULLING FROM OUR OWN CONTENT





CONVENER



STORY-TELLER



DATA TRANSLATOR

THE
**FUTURE
ROLES**
OF THE
DESTINATION

TRUST

IS THE NEW REACH.

STEWARDSHIP

IS HOW WE EARN IT.



Kara Franker
kara@fla-keys.com