



bluffton  
HEART OF THE LOWCOUNTRY™

TOWN OF BLUFFTON INDUSTRY METRICS  
FY24 - Q1 Update



HILTON HEAD ISLAND-BLUFFTON  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



# FY24 - Q1 Performance Metrics & Update

July 1 - September 30, 2023

As the Town of Bluffton's official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), we are the leader in promoting tourism to the destination. By understanding today's travelers and adapting to the changing landscape of the industry, we are able to execute the comprehensive Town of Bluffton Marketing Plan.

The quarterly report focuses on the metrics outlined within the contract, but we also wanted to share the additional efforts and initiatives worked on during FY24 – Q1.

## Town of Bluffton Marketing Plans, Reports, and Presentations

- Submitted monthly reports to the town staff.
- 8/15/23, Submitted the Town of Bluffton FY23 - Q4 report to town staff.
- 9/12/23, Presented FY23-Q4 quarterly report to town staff.

## Bluffton Video Series - Explore Bluffton

- The Bluffton video series continues to compliment the Heart of the Lowcountry™ by exploring and highlighting the rich culture and history.
- For the period of July 1 - September 30, 2023, the Bluffton video series received 2,843 views on the website.



# Dedicated Official Bluffton Vacation Planner

July 1 - September 30, 2023

The Official Vacation Planner is one of the first touchpoints visitors receive when planning their visit to the Heart of the Lowcountry™. In FY24 - Q1 we continued Vacation Planner sales and also worked with town staff to finalize events and business listings.

We receive requests for this piece from multiple platforms; VisitBluffton.org, media, and home inquiries. In addition, we distribute the planner to state and local welcome centers hotels, airports, AAA offices, tradeshow and included in all public relations outreach.



## FY24 - Q1 Mail Fulfillment and Distribution

Official Bluffton Vacation Planner: 4,402

Official Regional Vacation Planner: 14,602

## Research

We continue our efforts with the College of Charleston in collecting visitor profile surveys and understanding the demographics of those who are traveling to the Town of Bluffton.



# FY24 - Q1 Bluffton Website Performance

July 1 - September 30, 2023



Website  
Visits



Website  
Sessions

69,906

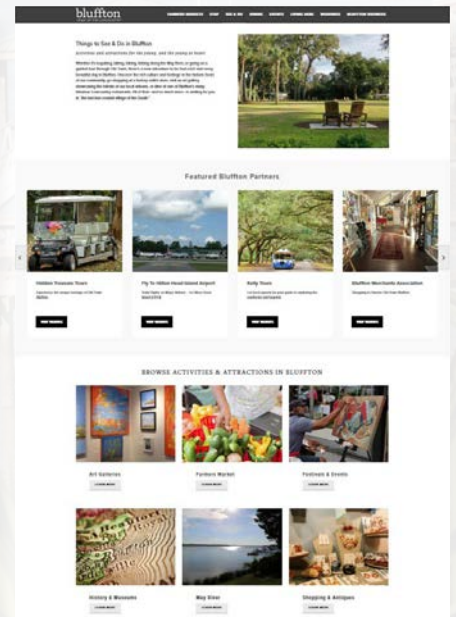
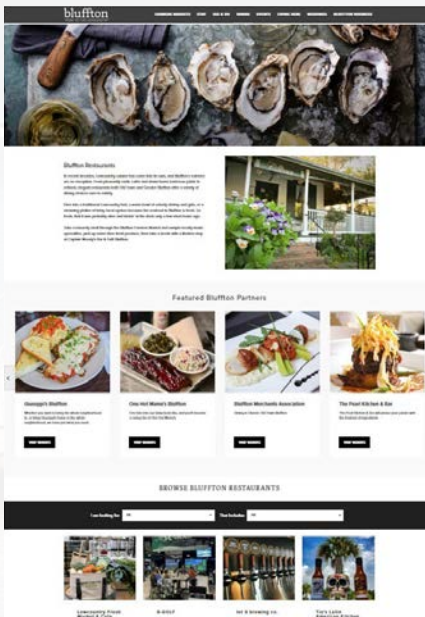
↑ +12.9%

Referrals/Click Throughs  
Made to Area Business

11,536

↓ -11.2%

The above delta changes are YoY comparing GA4 data to UA. Our highest session generating sources were Paid Social (50.3% of total), Google Organic (22.4% of total), Paid Search (12.5% of total). In terms of sources contributing to partner referrals our top three were Google Organic (38.5% of total), Paid Search (33.6% of total), Paid Social (10.3% of total)



# FY24 - Q1 Destination Social Report

July 1 - September 30, 2023

## Facebook Page Likes

34,433

↑ +15.3% YOY



## Facebook Engagements

83,488

↓ -16.4% YOY

## Instagram Followers

9,774

↑ +23.7% YOY



## Instagram Engagements

16,866

↑ +71.0% YOY

## X Followers

671

↑ +3.7% YOY



## X Engagements

132

↑ +38.9% YOY

## TikTok Followers

2,131



## TikTok Engagements

169

Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook all experienced YoY increases in followers. This growth can be attributed to our consistent use of videos to enhance organic reach and user-generated content (UGC) for word-of-mouth promotion.

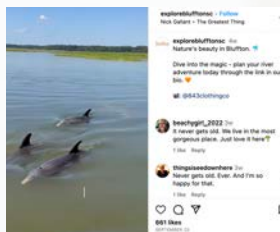
However, Facebook engagements witnessed a slight decrease YoY. This decline can be attributed to the ever-changing Facebook algorithm and a decrease in events during the summer months, which reduced the opportunities to engage with our followers.

As for TikTok, it remains in a growth phase since its launch. We are currently displaying performance metrics as totals until we have complete year-over-year data for comparison.

Facebook



Instagram



X



TikTok



# FY24 – Q1 Paid Media Partnerships

July 1 - September 30, 2023

## Garden & Gun Partnership

*Garden & Gun* is a lifestyle brand that covers the best of the South, including sporting, culture, food, music, art, literature, people, and their ideas.

### Media Partnership #1

Due to the success of a previous campaign, for this activation, we repurposed an existing article highlighting a weekend in Bluffton.

#### Activation:

Amplified boosted editorial promotion of previous content

#### Campaign Dates:

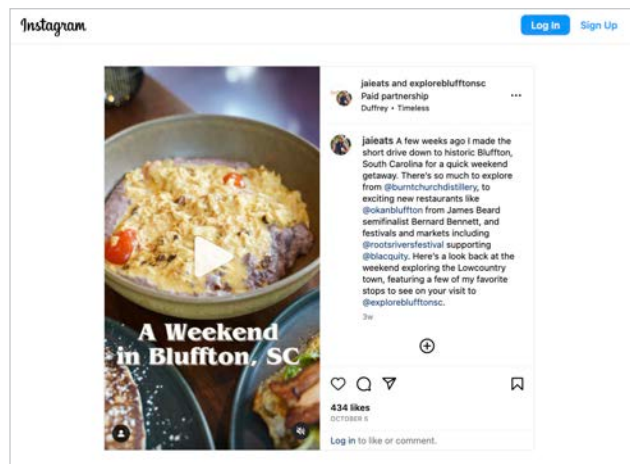
June – July

#### Results:

Total Impressions: 865,616  
(700,000 guaranteed)

Total Engagements: 40,791

Engagement Rate: 4.7%



### Media Partnership #2

In partnership with the inaugural Roots & Rivers Festival, we hosted a Garden & Gun contributor, Jai Jones, to experience the festival and Bluffton. Locations visited included Burnt Church Distillery, Old Town Bluffton Inn, Roots & Rivers Festival, Nectar Farm & Kitchen and Okàn. In addition, the writer conducted interviews with Councilwoman Bridgette Frazier, Billy Watterson, Chef Bernard Bennett and Gwen Chambers.

#### Activation:

Digital branded content featuring Garden & Gun contributor promoted on Garden & Gun website and social channels, along with newsletter feature and display ads.

[Jai Jones shared content on his channels.](#)

The article and social went live on Garden and Gun's channels in late October.

#### Campaign Dates:

September – November

#### Results:

A full wrap up report will be provided at the conclusion of the campaign.



# FY24 - Q1 Destination Metrics

July 1 - September 30, 2023

As the Official DMO for the Town of Bluffton and based on our official contract, below are the quarterly metrics for the time frame July 1 - September 30, 2023.



OCC: Occupancy Rates



July

78.1%

↑ +13.3% YOY

August

67.5%

↑ +23.5% YOY

September

69.4%

↑ +15.7% YOY



ADR: Average Daily Rate



July

\$256

↓ -15.8% YOY

August

\$222

↓ -21.5% YOY

September

\$254

↓ -14.6% YOY



RevPAR: Revenue per Available Room



July

\$200

↓ -4.6% YOY

August

\$150

↓ -3.0% YOY

September

\$176

↓ -1.1% YOY

Although Bluffton saw an increase in occupancy for FY24-Q1, the decreases in average daily rate caused a lower revenue per available room for the quarter. We will continue to monitor the health of the destination.

Source: Smith Travel Research, Monthly Trend Report

# FY24 - Q1 Events

July 1 - September 30, 2023

For FY24 - Q1 time frame, our organization's events included:

- Chamber Young Professionals
- Executive Connection
- Conversation + Cocktails
- Ribbon Cuttings

Events Held	Participation in Events by Chamber Members
5	353

# FY24 - Q1 Public Relations (Earned Media)

July 1 - September 30, 2023

Below are the overall stories and mentions for Bluffton-specific Public Relations for the quarter.

Mentions	Impressions	Ad Value
25	29,596,751	\$23,303

Source: Critical Mention / BurrellsLuce / Weber Shandwick



# FY24 - Q1 Public Relations (Earned Media)

Bluffton Story Highlights July 1 - September 30, 2023

## July

**Boca Raton Magazine (UVPM: 7,955)**

[5 Things to Know Before You Go To Montage Palmetto Bluff](#)

**The Travel (UVPM: 423,937)**

[10 Prettiest Places To Vacation On The East Coast](#)

**World Atlas (UVPM: 1,327,522)**

[10 Best Small Towns To Visit In South Carolina](#)

## August

**USA TODAY 10 Best (UVPM: 411,535)**

[Spice up your date night, or any night, with these 13 best cooking classes](#)

**Southern Living (UVPM: 2,530,157)**

[These Are 15 Of South Carolina's Most Idyllic Small Towns](#)

**World Atlas (UVPM: 1,327,522)**

[12 Prettiest Towns In The Southern United States](#)



## September

**Travel + Leisure (UVPM: 2,839,511)**

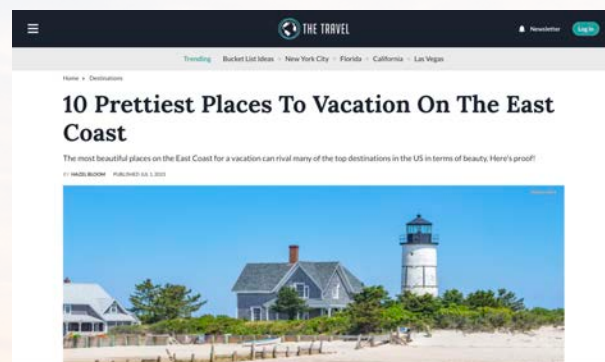
[How to Plan the Perfect Trip to Bluffton, South Carolina](#)

**Travel Noire (UVPM: 170,502)**

[Montage Palmetto Bluff's Well Living Program: A New Standard in Luxury Wellness Travel](#)

**Foodsided (UVPM: 34,768)**

[Okàn Restaurant showcases Chef Bernard Bennett's thoughtfulness](#)



# FY24 - Q1 Ribbon Cuttings

July 1 - September 30, 2023

The Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce promoted and supported one ribbon cutting ceremony for this quarter with one Bluffton business chamber member:



*Mobility City*



# FY24 - Q1 Budget

## Destination Marketing Organization

Revenues - Town of Bluffton DMO	\$ -
Town of Bluffton Special Grant - Special	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>	
Vacation Planner (Regional) (estimated)	\$ 5,000
Fulfillment - Regional Vacation Planner (estimated)	\$ 2,000
Vacation Planner - Bluffton Only Guide	\$ 18,764
Fulfillment - Bluffton Only Guide	\$ 3,148
Digital Promotions - Social Media	\$ 3,600
Digital Promotions - Website/SEO	\$ 7,511
Digital Promotions - Google/Facebook	\$ 14,024
Leisure Marketing - Other	\$ 31
<b>Total direct marketing expenses</b>	<b>\$ 49,078</b>
<b>Administrative (Based on 39% of expected annual revenues)</b>	
Salaries	\$ 27,925
Payroll taxes	\$ 1,955
Employee benefits - 401K	\$ 1,676
Employee benefits - Insurance	\$ 2,136
Operations - Other	\$ 285
Operations - Building Expense	\$ 149
<b>Total administrative</b>	<b>\$ 34,125</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 83,203</b>
Excess of revenues over expenses	\$ (83,203)

**Important Note on Estimated Costs:** The Vacation Planner/Fulfillment are shared expenses with the Town of Hilton Head Island, Beaufort County, and the State of South Carolina and are not reconciled until the end of the fiscal year.

# Meet Your Team

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