

How Your **Destination Imagery** Impacts The Expectation Of Experience

digitale



We're Not Monogamous.

With each **poke** of a new push pin in our client map comes **excitement**, focus and destination **immersion**. We leave our hearts in San Francisco, stay weird with Portland, keep it Coloradical in Boulder, say **yes** to all that in Park City and get lost on the shores of Amelia Island; and you can bet when it comes to our southern destinations, all **hearts** are blessed.





In This eBook.

- 1** DMO images that make the most impact
- 2** How to play off UGC images to create better brand assets for your destination
- 3** Why you still need to invest in your own imagery and videos
- 4** How to utilize these assets for meetings and sports needs

Perception Vs. Expectation

People's perception of a destination is built on their assumptions, along with word of mouth and a destination's reputation. This perception, whether good or bad, adds to their expectation of that destination.

The perception of a destination can be based on visual content — both branded on a DMO's site and/or user-generated — which can attract or deter a destination's potential visitors.





The Results Are In...

According to the study Destination Visual Image and Expectation of Experiences by the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, the most popular DMO images are:

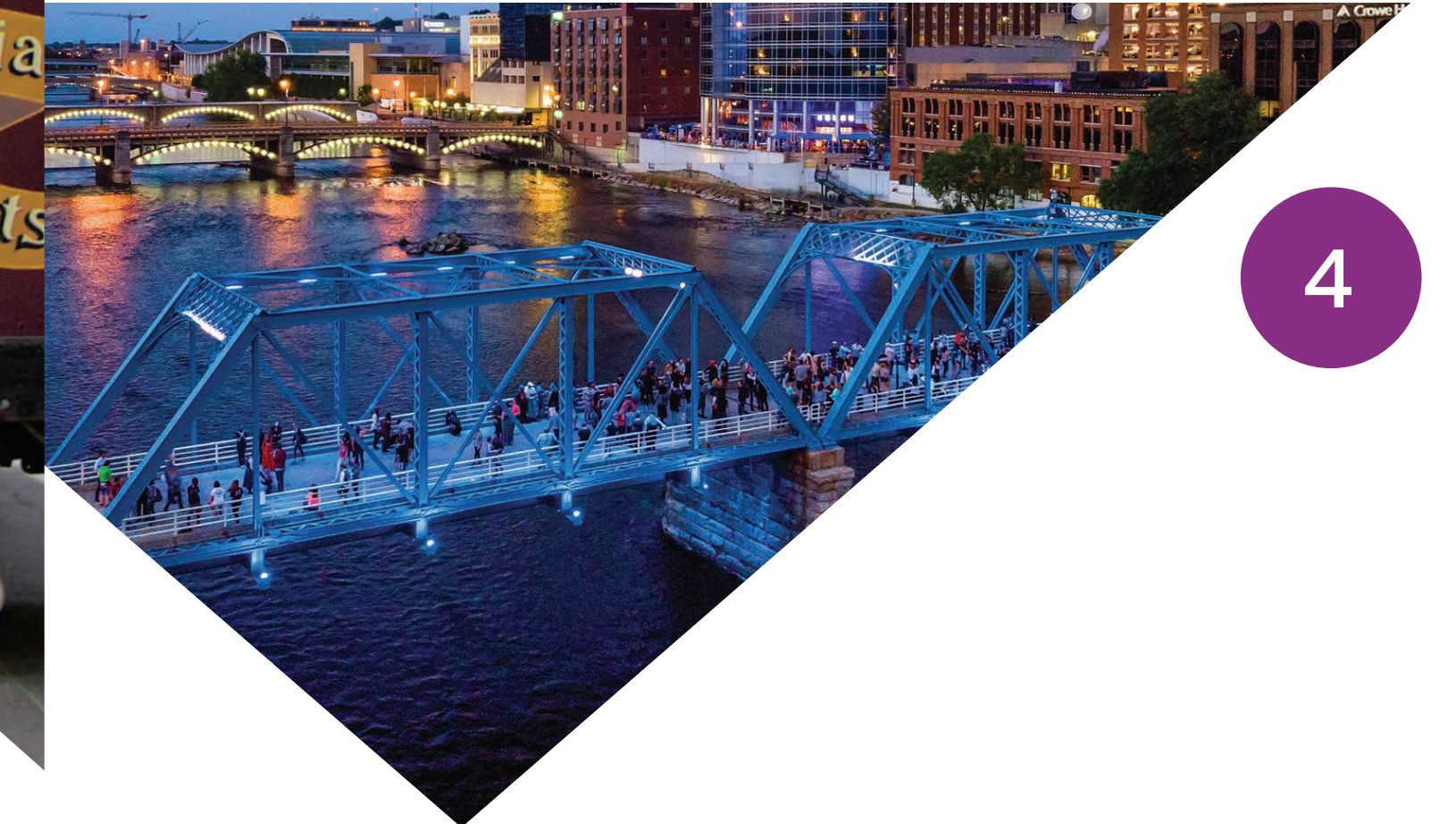
- *Natural landscapes and scenery*
- *People involved in recreational activities**
- *Man-made landmarks and buildings*

*Including visuals of recreational activities in your marketing is a significant opportunity for DMOs, especially in those efforts that pertain to meetings. With experiential meetings and “bleisure” trends on the rise, a destination’s activity offerings are a big selling point.

7 Traveling Experiences

Based on the image results, researchers were also able to define seven experiences based on the types of travelers and their expectations. For visualization purposes, we applied these experiences to our fellow destination clients.

- 1 Touring Experience** *San Francisco Travel*
- 2 Historic Experience** *Visit Park City (Historic Main St)*
- 3 Unique Dining Experience** *Atlanta*
- 4 City Experience** *Grand Rapids*
- 5 Diverse Culture & Arts Experience** *Travel Portland*
- 6 Relaxing Experience** *Amelia Island*
- 7 Sport Experience** *Boulder*



So, what were the **most attractive photos** from these seven experiences?



- 1 People walking outside near historic shops
- 2 Fireworks in view from an art museum
- 3 An outdoor scene of a gallery
- 4 A street view at night
- 5 A dining scene at a restaurant

A running theme within all of these photos:

The use of **People.**

Users want to see people walking around, enjoying the attractions, interacting with the community and locals, enjoying nightlife, dining and experiencing the destination's offerings.

What Do Users Want To See In **DMO Imagery**?

- Photos and videos that make them feel safe
- Photos and videos that provide an intimate feeling
- Historic elements that give them a sense of pride
- The imagery of couples in romantic/intimate moments
- Authentic imagery
- Unique dining experiences
- The imagery that suggests a feeling of community
- Nightlife

Visitors also enjoy:

The tranquility of a city

Smiling faces and the suggestion of friendly service and interaction

People walking around



How To Play Off Of **User-generated Content,** And Why You Still Need To Invest In **Your Own Imagery & Videos**

Tourists create their own content through personal blogs, reviews, photography and videos, giving DMOs useful insights into how they perceive the destinations they visit. This content is typically a composition of the most salient destination attributes.

User-generated content (UGC) photography tends to reflect tourists' strong interests in how people of a destination live their everyday lives.

DMO photography tends to present a well-rounded image of a destination by giving a share of "voice" to all that the region has to offer, as well as focusing on the destination's natural beauty, arts and culture.



TIPS

Take advantage of UGC photography to show a real-life interpretation of your destination.

Take advantage of leisure photos that showcase people and community, as well as social interaction.

Take advantage of the trends in UGC photography and refresh image assets within your library.

Organize UGC images; take low-level images, i.e., water, marine animals and glass and create a top-level gallery for "aquarium." This equates to tourist attraction.

Get your teams involved in the imagery process; people want to do what the locals do, not just travel the well-worn touristy tracks. As a resident of the destination, think, would you go there?

A man in a light blue button-down shirt and dark trousers stands smiling in a winery. He is surrounded by numerous wooden barrels, some stacked on racks in the background and others on the floor in the foreground. The barrels have various markings, including "HSW 1-09 3 2009". To the right, there is a stainless steel machine, likely for bottling or filtering wine.

Meetings Imagery

Should Be A

Hearty Mixture

Blending business with leisure travel (“bleisure”) isn’t a new brew, yet this hybrid travel trend is growing in popularity with each day in the barrel. That’s good news for DMOs marketing to meeting planners since leisure imagery can be integrated into the design to illustrate the authentic meeting experiences and allure of a destination.

So Long, Farewell...

Barren ballroom shots and empty spaces are underwhelming and leave little to the imagination. Use images with people enjoying the area and correlate them to the top reasons planners choose a destination. Try to stray from using cityscapes shots primarily, or photos and videos that focus on families or couples (unless it accompanies specific content about spouse and family activities while meeting in the destination).



For Sports Needs

Visitors enjoy various activities and have a desire to seek out local tastings and cultural events, but they also seek a community feel along with social interaction. Their perception of appealing visual cues ranges from sightseeing to other social activities.

Again, a running theme throughout the study by the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing:

The use of **People.**

TIPS

Play up your destination's appeal and think outside of space, dates and rates.

Shift the imagery focus to top destination experiences for visitors

Focus on images that stimulate people's imagination and perspective.

Identify the meeting planner or sports planner and their attendees. You will be able to identify significant visual elements for each group and generate visual communication.

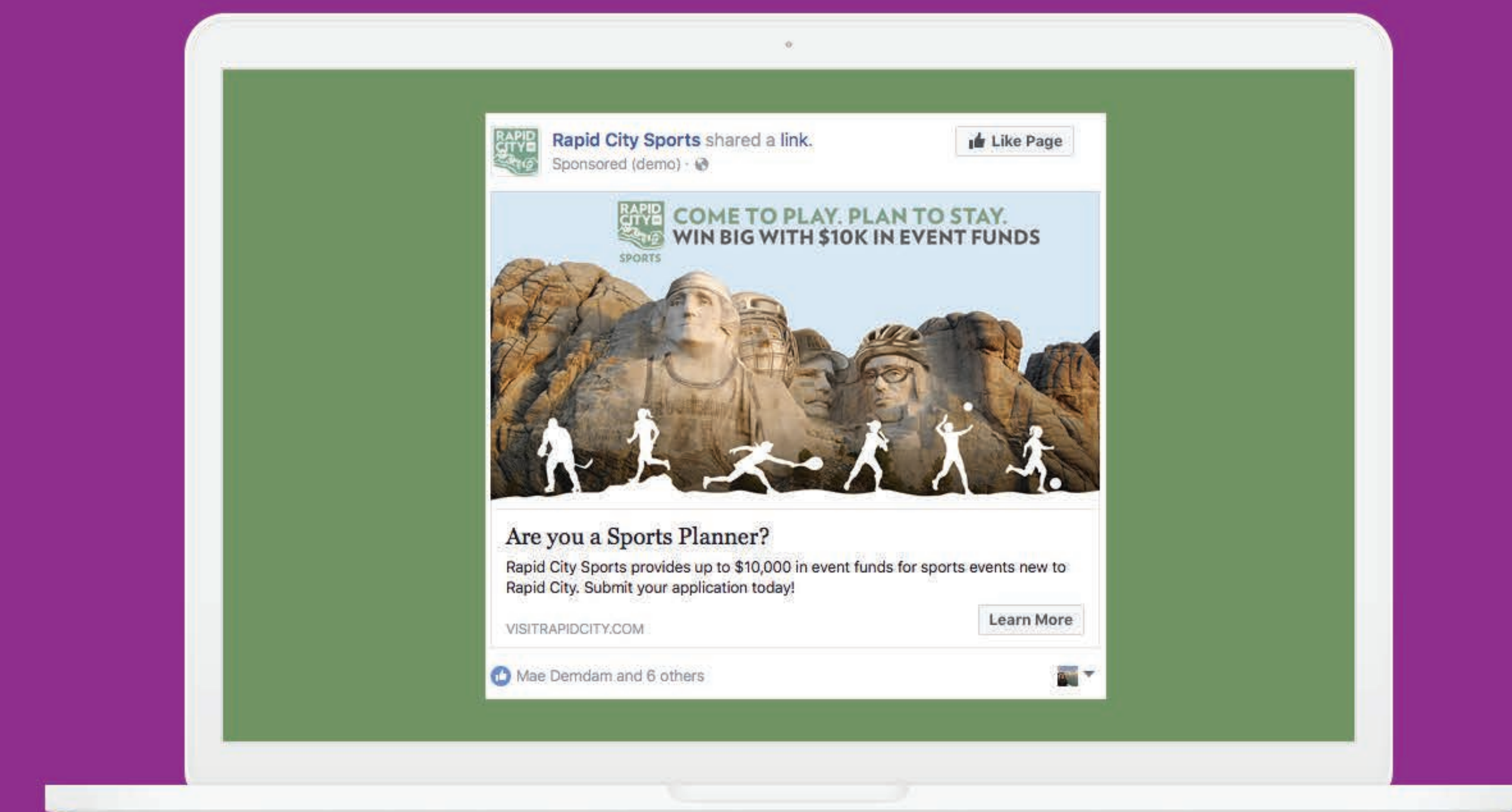
Driving Home

Victory

It's the bottom of the ninth, two strikes, two outs. This late in the game, you can't afford to not put your best players in the game. It's not enough to show empty facilities or tired, ambiguous stock photography or video.

It's time to drive it home. Invest in original photography and videography to showcase your destination offerings. Invest in a creative agency to help produce these assets. Having the assets isn't enough. You'll need a team to help integrate these assets into creative marketing campaigns.

Your victory (or failure) depends on it.





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VIDEO MAGIC

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