

CASE STUDY: CONVERSION RATE OPTIMIZATION

Visit Alexandria



SITUATION

Visit Alexandria knows that their website is the most important point of contact between their organization and potential visitors. While they are certainly proud of the nearly 2 million visits to VisitAlexandriaVA.com annually, the quality of that traffic is just as important. They want each user to easily find the information they are looking for and inspire them to visit Alexandria.

The “quality” of traffic on Visit Alexandria’s website is measured by web engagement, which can be challenging since a DMO’s website is used differently for a wide range of reasons. Visit Alexandria defines an engaged visitor as one that does one or more of the following:

1. Spends four or more minutes on the site in a given session
2. Visits four or more pages in a given session
3. Requests an Official Alexandria Visitor Guide (digital or printed)
4. Subscribes to the Alexandria Insider e-Newsletter

Site optimization can be used to improve all of these engagement metrics, but they began with the Visitors Guide. Their main goal was to increase the rate at which this goal is reached, while still maintaining a strong user experience.



SOLUTION

The Simpleview team understood how much Visit Alexandria cared about their brand and user experience, meaning they didn’t just want to place a giant “REQUEST A VISITOR GUIDE” banner in the header of their homepage. Although that may increase Visitor Guide requests, it wouldn’t be consistent with their brand messaging, and would decrease the user experience quality for site visitors. The key to this project was in maintaining a delicate balance between experience and “conversion” of engagement metrics.

Sometimes, small changes can yield big results. With that knowledge, a subtle change was made to the Things to Do page introduction text, as it was one of the top visited pages on the site. The “Request a Visitor Guide” call-to-action was buried deep on the page, so the team set-up a scroll map to see how visitors engaged with this element on the current page. After the analysis was complete, a small call-to-action link was placed at the end of that paragraph for an increase in visitor guide engagement. In theory, if website visitors increase engagement with the content, they also increase the chance they will visit in-person. If a strong connection (as opposed to just passing awareness) with the potential visitor is established, they are more likely to respond to the opportunity to visit.

THINGS TO DO ▾

THINGS TO DO IN ALEXANDRIA, VA

Whether you’re spending a long weekend or making a day trip from Washington, D.C., you’re in for an unforgettable experience in Alexandria, Virginia.

A combination of early American [heritage](#) and cosmopolitan sophistication, Alexandria boasts a wide array of [activities](#), ranging from boat cruises to [art galleries](#) and cozy historic sites. Combine these with award-winning [restaurants](#) and streets of boutiques, all within walking distance, and you’ll find an extraordinary city tucked just beneath the nation’s capital. For more things to do, events and area info, [request a free visitors guide!](#)

RESULTS

Simpleview's A/B Testing Tool was used to conduct the test through Visit Alexandria's CMS, which streamlined the process and tied directly to the DMO's Google Analytics account. The sample size for the test was 5,700 unique site visitors across a two-week time span. The variation, although small, won by 51% and held nearly 96% statistical significance. This shows that not all tests need radical changes to move the needle. By staying mindful of Alexandria's brand guidelines, the team was still able to see significant results.

With that, Simpleview staff wanted to see if a visual element could affect user behavior and increase conversions even further. The second iteration maintained visual consistency and helped Visit Alexandria achieve even more Visitor Guide views/downloads. By adding an additional (visual) queue, there was an 172% increase in results in comparison to the control (original), which even out-performed the first test. In addition, the second version also carried a 5.25% conversion rate, compared to 1.93% from the original.

Visit Alexandria was thrilled with the results, and now incorporates a strong testing process as part of their ongoing online marketing strategy.

