

CASE STUDY: BARBERSTOCK

Visit Santa Barbara



CRISIS CONTROL THROUGH COLLECTIONS

Time is of the essence in the tourism industry, especially when it comes to crisis communications. Very few cases exemplify this more than Visit Santa Barbara's wildfire emergency in 2017. Even as the wildfires were contained and most areas of the region were safe and restored, Santa Barbara's tourism remained low. The Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) needed to relay that the area was "open for business and a great place to visit" to the public in a speedy and efficient manner.

With Barberstock's help, the CVB was able to quickly deliver new photos, videos and

assets to the public and media, thus repairing the area's public image and bring much-needed tourism back to local businesses and attractions.

ABOUT VISIT SANTA BARBARA

Widely known as 'The American Riviera®', Santa Barbara is a stunning city on the Central California coast. Surrounded by blue coastal waters and the majestic Santa Ynez Mountains, it's a vibrant destination offering a wealth of sun, beach-side resorts and outdoor activities.

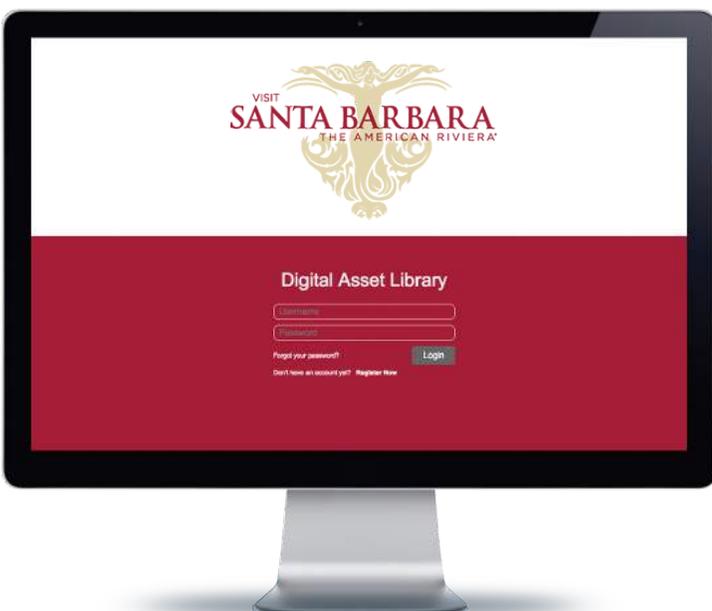
Santa Barbara's Mediterranean-style buildings and quaint red-tile roofs attract many visitors every year, and it's wineries, festivals and famed attractions have made it a world-famous vacation destination.



THE CHALLENGE

In December 2017, a devastating wildfire in Santa Barbara burned 280 acres of land. As a result, tourism came to a halt due to the poor air quality. Many businesses had to close or evacuate, while the news media and social media spread countless images depicting fire-torn landscapes and people in facemasks. To make matters worse, once Santa Barbara was clear of the fires, a mudslide hit, resulting in additional images of catastrophe getting spread across the media.

Ultimately, the destination recovered from both crises and the land began to mend. Despite this, however, the public had a lingering perception of a destination in distress. Tourism remained extremely low, affecting local businesses already hit hard in the previous months. The situation was so bad that for many, closing shop seemed imminent. Visit Santa Barbara faced a huge challenge: It had to change the narrative of what was being portrayed in the media and bring tourism back to the destination.



Barberstock is our main source to quickly get out images to partners & stakeholders & memberships. This was particularly helpful in managing communication for the 2017/18 wildfires and mudslides.

– **JessyLynn Perkins**,
Director of Digital Strategy
and Content Development
for Visit Santa Barbara

THE GOAL

The Visit Santa Barbara team quickly realized that they needed to get accurate and up-to-date images out to the media immediately. They also identified who was sending outdated images of the destination to the media. The team learned the fire-torn images were propagated not only by locals, but also by partners who didn't realize the photos and videos were having a negative impact on tourism. Knowing this, Visit Santa Barbara pushed forward with an immediate recovery plan.

The goal was to get new and accurate images and videos into the hands of their partners. To do this, they worked with local photographers and videographers and took real-time visuals of the destination, including videos, aerial footage and photos of iconic landmarks and locations, such as Sterns Wharf and popular hotels. All of the visuals were also time stamped to ensure people knew they were taken recently.



THE SOLUTION

The new images and videos were uploaded to Visit Santa Barbara's Barberstock library and placed into a Public Collection entitled, "Membership Toolkit." The link was then emailed out to all partners and made available on Visit Santa Barbara's website. This move ensured all the videos and photos in the collection were up-to-date and recent—a function that continues to benefit the destination to this very day.

THE RESULTS

Visit Santa Barbara's quick thinking and expedient efforts worked, tourism began to shift and businesses started to recover. The media and visitors received accurate and up-to-date images of the destination, resulting in a significant increase of visitors to the area. The Toolkit continues to work wonders, providing not only members and partners with current assets, but also sales teams with leisure and group travelers to Santa Barbara. Additionally, Visit Santa Barbara now has a cohesive PR crisis plan in place;

This has proven useful for both emergency situations and weather-related incidents.

The Visit Santa Barbara team also uses Barberstock's analytics tools to see who is downloading the files within the system and how many times these files are downloaded—a feature that provides Visit Santa Barbara with insight and strategy for future distribution and management of assets.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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