

## CASE HISTORY

- Synopsis:** Comprehensive research uncovers consumer attitudes, changes marketing and creative direction to reverse downward trends
- Company:** **RENO & LAKE TAHOE  
(RENO-SPARKS CONVENTION & VISITORS AUTHORITY)**
- Situation:** For years, frequent visitors to Reno were found to say that Reno was "more friendly" than Las Vegas. The Reno community embraced this notion and created commercials that called Reno "twice as friendly" (which was considered a reference to the dual communities of Reno and Lake Tahoe). Advertisements and commercials told potential visitors that "crowds were smaller, lines were shorter." Despite spending millions in advertising over a period of years, the number of visitors had declined for three consecutive years, hotel occupancies declined, gaming revenues were declining or flat, motel occupancies were off substantially, and tax revenues were seriously lacking.
- Action:** As Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer, I commissioned a study which asked travelers what was important in making their *initial* decisions to visit a gaming destination. Reno indeed was seen as friendly; however, "friendly" had little or nothing to do with influencing an initial destination decision for a casino resort vacation! The concept of "small" was a definite turn-off – when selecting a casino resort destination, potential visitors *wanted* crowds, they *wanted* noise, they *wanted* excitement and they *wanted* the idea that where they're going is a popular, exciting place where there's always something happening. Since Reno's own commercials told potential visitors that "crowds were smaller, lines were shorter," it told those potential visitors *not* to visit Reno because it didn't have what they were looking for!
- Results:** Armed with this research, I engineered a dramatic repositioning of Reno advertising and development of "The Ultimate Playground" as a strategic positioning platform, with a creative theme that told potential customers to "Come to Play." What followed was the best six-month period in Reno/Tahoe history in increases versus prior years ...
- Visitors increased 8 percent during the second quarter
  - Hotel/motel occupancy increased by 6 percent to an average of 83.7 percent
  - Occupied rooms increased by 99,271 additional room nights, or 7 percent
  - Gaming and tax revenues both increased accordingly

# Play Reno. Bright lights. Fun Spots.

Day or night, indoors or out, summer or winter — the action's in Reno and Lake Tahoe.

We start with unforgettable scenery, sunshine and weather that makes Reno/Tahoe the country's all-season playground.

Then we add indoor fun and games to test your skill and raise your excitement level. In our showrooms and cabarets, you'll sit back and watch the stars come out. In our restaurants, you'll dine and go to heaven.

We're event-full, too, with Hot August Nights, National Championship Air Races, the wildest, richest rodeo in the West, the Great Reno Balloon Race and festivals galore.

In Reno/Tahoe, you'll find more ways to have a good time than any other place under the sun. No wonder Rand McNally rated us #1 for fun in the USA!

Which is another way of saying Reno/Tahoe is the ultimate playground.

See your travel agent or call toll-free 800-FOR-RENO for reservations at more than 70 hotels/casinos and first-class motor inns.

And come to play!



# And hot slots!