

VISIT
Shenandoah
TEXAS

Shenandoah, Texas
CITY LIMIT
Pop 3,771

Staff: 1; since pandemic began.

Budget:

2018-19: nearly \$1.5 million;

2019-20: fell to \$889K;

2020-21: nearly \$1M

2021-22: nearly \$1.5 million





What Makes
Shenandoah, TX,
So Unique?

At just over two square miles in geographic size, Shenandoah is fortunate to be located in the burgeoning North Houston area. Straddling both sides of I-45, the city abuts Conroe to its north, The Woodlands to its west, and Spring to its south.

It is situated between three exits of the highway, and within its easy-to-navigate boundaries, it is currently home to 12 hotels, 4 indoor, climate-controlled entertainment venues, 5 shopping centers, more than 50 restaurants, 2 major sporting facilities that have hosted several NCAA Div. III national swimming and diving and football championships, and 5 hospital campuses that are located in, or abut its city boundaries.

To borrow Robin Williams phrase from Aladdin, “that’s an extraordinary amount of things to see and do “crammed into an itty-bitty living space.”



What strategies have you used that have contributed to your success?

As a small (city department of one), what strategies have we employed to help us successfully market our destination, and expand our reach and budget?

- 1) Take advantage of whatever larger initiatives are available to you in your area/region. There are a number of opportunities available out there, and we continue to try and expand our reach by participating in them. Just a few examples includes:
 - Travel Texas co-op programs;
 - "Around Houston" regional marketing program;
 - Texas State Travel Guide/Texas Historic Commission's Trails program
 - TourTexas.com website

Obviously, try to take advantage of "free" programs whenever you can, but often these are "pay-to-play" programs, and you just need to evaluate each opportunity for its potential return on investment for your destination.



Advocacy and reporting matter.

Always choose programs that help you tell and illustrate your story best!

2) Advocacy matters and is always important. Therefore, I have found that having more transparency and measurement for your marketing efforts can also be tremendously helpful, especially for smaller bureaus and teams.

When trying to evaluate any marketing program or effort, no one knows better than you as to what matters most to your constituents, so always look for programs and reporting that will help not only help you in promoting your destination and tourism partners, but that also provides you with excellent reporting, that's easy to understand.

In my experience, although they might be more expensive, the extra investment in cost is often worth it, especially if it helps you show a return on your ad spend and makes a great case for your financial stewardship.



When you're small, you need all the help you can get.

Look for great partners that can serve as an extension of your team and save you time and money!

3) When you're small (city department of one) and/or have limited resources, time and money matter. Therefore, when working with partners, try to find ones who understand your needs, and that are willing to serve as an extension of your team.

Since my arrival in Shenandoah four years ago, there has been no shortage of work to accomplish. A lot of our basic tourism infrastructure was outdated, broken or missing, and getting to where we are today has required a lot of time and effort that I could have never done solely on my own.

Having excellent partners/vendors for our work has been a critical part of our success. When you're small, you begin to understand that you often get what you pay for, and if you're trying to put your "best foot forward," nothing beats good, ol' creativity and ingenuity, and working with good and kind people, who understand your needs and want to help you succeed.



Never underestimate the value of a great idea...

4) Never underestimate the value of a great idea. When you are small, you are obviously operating with a number of limited resources: budgets; staff; and time. However, as someone who has spent his entire career working in the marketing and communications field, and has had the privilege of working on award-winning campaigns, there are no size or budget limitations involved with your own creativity and the power of a great idea.

In our quest to be great stewards of our financial resources, and to provide a great return on our marketing spend and programs, sometimes an epiphany or breakthrough, whether it be in the concepting of a creative campaign, the development and/or measurement of a new strategy or program you've begun, or a mutually beneficial collaboration with a colleague or neighbor – it can be an absolute game-changer – and, as Goethe said, "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it! Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."



Always remember,
“No” is a relatively
short and painless
word.

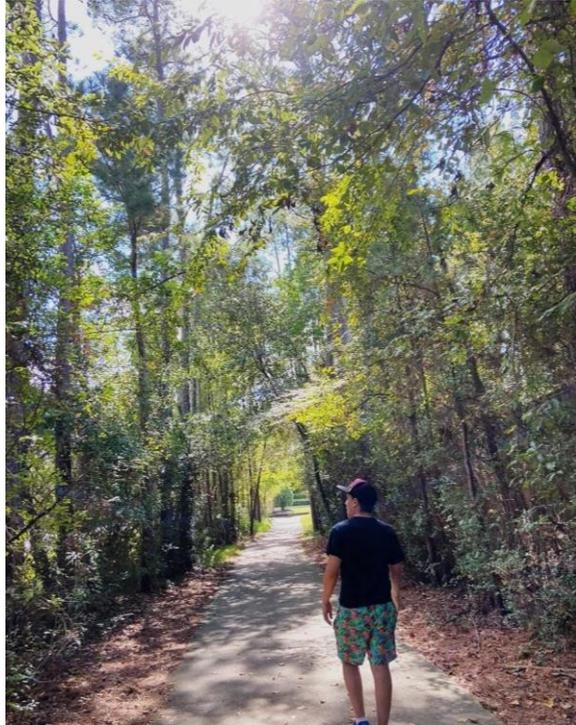
5) The aforementioned phrase has become a Mayner family mantra/truism –one that I’ve repeated throughout my adult life to myself, and shared with my family and friends.

I share it with you today, especially any of you who might be at all introverts and a bit more reticent to be bold and confidently express yourself, to realize that you should never be afraid to ask or inquire about anything import to you.

Whether you’re trying to strike up a mutually beneficial program with a colleague, have additionally needs that go beyond the scope of a contract, or have an idea for a new program you’re trying to build consensus for, just ask – and realize, even if the answer is “no,” it’s normally not a rejection of you, but might only indicate that its not the right time. If you truly believe in it, continue to work on it, and try to find a way to propel it ahead. In my personal experience, I’d much rather ask and know that I tried, rather than wonder – “Nothing ventured, nothing gained.”



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