
CASE STUDY

WY RESPONSIBLY:

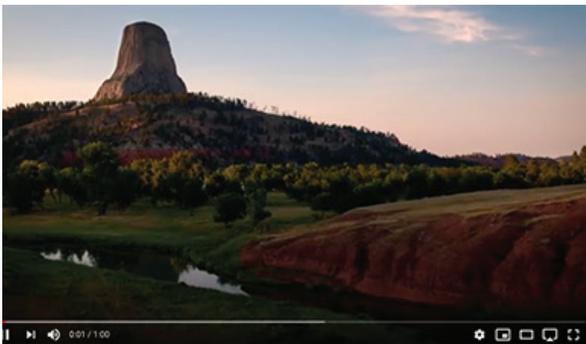
A calming, inspirational campaign to address COVID-19

The Wyoming Office of Tourism brand is based on the core human value of Adventure. And Covid-19 certainly presented a new one for everyone. So in just over a week, we developed a themed campaign that could help propel the brand and its followers through uncertain times -- but also act as a longer-term strategy for sustainability and safety efforts.

The idea:

It is in our nature to be wild and free. And to do so safely, it is important that we all act and adventure responsibly. At the Wyoming Office of Tourism, the wellbeing of our residents and visitors is our greatest priority. During times when public health is at risk, we must ask that all travelers and locals respect the health and safety recommendations that have been implemented to ensure collective wellness. By adventuring responsibly, we can maintain Wyoming as a wide-open safe haven and source of inspiration.

The work:



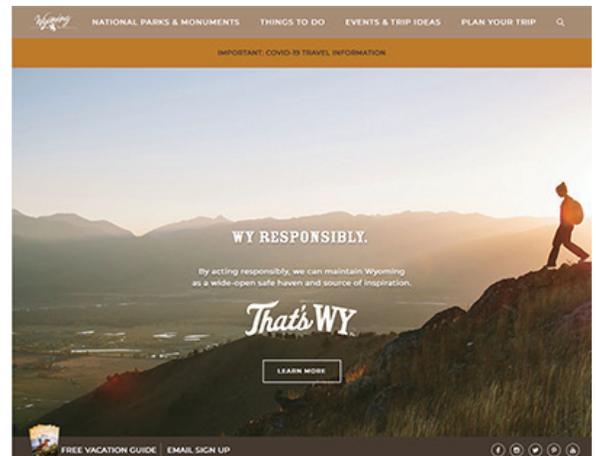
Stay calm. Stay inspired.

The campaign launched with a video inspired by the wide-open Wyoming landscape – encouraging people to use the silence and empty spaces to re-evaluate how they will approach life when it gets back to normal.



The Healing Power of Yellowstone

Believe it or not, a key ingredient used in most COVID-19 test kits comes from deep beneath the famous thermal pools at Yellowstone National Park. This video touting the healing powers of Wyoming's natural resources piggybacked on a story featured in [National Geographic. Advantage: science.](#)



Travelwyoming.com integration

From travel and safety updates, to industry support, to content that kept adventurous visitors inspired and connected to the brand, WY Responsibly was seamlessly integrated into the .com and connected to paid and owned efforts.

The idea:

Research showed that social media usage and engagement rose dramatically right around the time that COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. And, with people forced to spend more time indoors, an analysis of social engagements demonstrated a longing for nature, with “travel and mobility” ranking as the most highly discussed category on social media.

Knowing our target audiences were dreaming of travel and in need of both optimism and realism, we moved quickly to develop and launch the “Stay calm. Stay inspired.” video on Facebook and Instagram in March, and then followed up by rolling out the “Healing Power of Yellowstone” video. As part of the social media launch, we built from our existing #ThatsWY pre-COVID hashtag to launch a new hashtag called #WYresponsibly to build momentum and unification for our campaign.

In order to reach the most relevant audience, we geotargeted key areas and then layered on parameters to reach prospective travelers, including campers and outdoor enthusiasts, via Factual, a trusted, industry-leading third-party location data partner.

The results:

Before any promotional support kicked in and a week after the project kicked off, the “Stay calm. Stay inspired.” video attracted overwhelmingly positive response. To date, the two videos have been watched 610,00+ times (video must be watched 15+ seconds to count as a view), have been shared 1,400+ times, and comments have been extremely positive in sentiment, demonstrating the timeliness and resonance of the social media campaign.

- Michelle King Newlean: My husband asked me where I want to go once the quarantine ends. Without hesitation, I told him Wyoming.
- Kathy Riordan: My home state. This is the first thing that actually made me cry in all this. Stay safe, Wyoming, from this Wyoming girl. You will always be in my heart.
- Pam Rowe Brann: Wyoming is so beautiful! Everyone should go if you get the chance!

To build national awareness around the launch of the WY Responsibly, BVK leaned into an earned media approach targeting both consumer and trade news outlets – and the results were outstanding. The campaign generating over 67 million impressions across online and print publications like *Communication Arts Magazine*, *Media Post* and *Forbes* – where it was noted as some of the most inspiring travel campaigns within the industry.

“Wyoming serves up a little cowboy wisdom and a lot of beautiful scenery in this one-minute video that will make you want to get away from it all” – Forbes

Forbes

These Inspiring Videos Will Make You Want To Travel Again

No business has been harder hit by the coronavirus than travel. The World Tourism Organization estimates global international tourist arrivals could decline between 20% to 30% this year, causing a loss of between \$30 to \$50 billion in spending. Yet improbably, some of the most inspiring messages during this crisis have come from the travel industry. Their messages will make you laugh, cry – and maybe travel again. They also tug at your heartstrings – big time.

Here are some of the most inspirational travel industry messages:

Wyoming: Maybe all this alone time will serve us well

Wyoming serves up a little cowboy wisdom and a lot of beautiful scenery in this one-minute video that will make you want to get away from it all.



ca Communication Arts

Wyoming Office of Tourism spot

“WY Responsibly” encourages people to use the silence and empty spaces to re-evaluate how they will approach life when it gets back to normal.

Responded by Brian Caithner, executive creative director, BVK

Background: The purpose of the work was for the Wyoming Office of Tourism to show leadership and hope during COVID-19—a crisis that is devastating the travel space. We wanted to provide a calming, inspirational message to those who call Wyoming home and those who travel or aspire to travel there.

Insighting: It struck us that Wyoming’s wide open spaces are the perfect metaphor for what’s happening in the world at this moment in time. We’re all being asked to spread things out and give each other some space for the common good. This one-minute spot reinforces that message. It encourages people to overcome their fear and to use the silence and emptiness to reflect and re-evaluate how they will approach life when it gets back to “normal.”

Challenges: Ironically, the space that separated the team. Because of COVID-19, we had our producers, writer, art director, editors, account directors and clients completely isolated from each other throughout this process. The experimentation and collaboration that typically happens in a room together had to happen in a hazy, very remote way.

Specific demands: It’s hard for leaders—especially novel leaders—to kick their heels out and make a statement in the midst of this crisis. There’s the fear of saying the wrong thing and creating backlash. Finding the right balance made it harder. But what made it easier was a client with a spine who was willing to do the right thing and stand behind it.

Visual influences: The Wyoming landscape itself fueled the solution. We had a cache of epic footage from a bunch of different shoots. And what we’re captured in these shoots is what we call “epic scenes,” which are intimate, personal moments experienced in these amazing, wide open spaces. That played perfectly to our crisis-driven message about embracing the void and the separation we’re all experiencing.

Time constraints: In some ways, the time constraints helped us. Given the speed at which the news of the crisis, travel closures and shelter-in-place decrees were moving, we had to move fast to be on the front edge of a response. There wasn’t the usual amount of time to overthink things.

