

Orange 142 Helps the Tennessee Distillers Close a 100-Year Competitive Gap

Working with the Tennessee Whiskey Trail, Orange 142's behavioral targeting leads to 8 million visitors to distilleries and other iconic locations in Tennessee

About the Tennessee Whiskey Trail

The Tennessee Whiskey Trail is a state-wide tourism initiative that connects Tennessee's distilleries through curated routes, allowing visitors to explore the rich heritage and modern craft of Tennessee whiskey production through tours, tastings and experiential activities. The project spans more than 500 miles across the state of Tennessee, encompassing 28 spirit partners and over 40 destinations.



A Long Prohibition Period Puts Tennessee Distillers at a Disadvantage

Tennessee was a leader in distilling and whiskey production, especially in the early 1900s, just before Prohibition took effect. That changed in 1909 when responding to the temperance movement, the state passed two bills that essentially brought the entire industry to a screeching halt. The first made it illegal to sell or consume alcoholic beverages within a four-mile radius of any public or private school, while the second banned the manufacturing of any alcoholic beverages within the state. Once these laws were passed, most Tennessee distilleries relocated to Kentucky.

After prohibition ended, states like Kentucky revived its spirits industry. Tennessee, however, was slow to lift the ban on alcohol, allowing just three distilleries -- Jack Daniels, George Dickel and Prichard's -- to operate in the state. That law remained in effect until 2009, giving distilleries in neighboring states a long-term competitive advantage.

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Finally in 2009, Tennessee lawmakers repealed that prohibition law, allowing distilleries to operate in any county that allows retail package sales and liquor-by-the-drink sales. One hundred years after the first ban, a spirit industry was able to operate in the state.

Looking at the Kentucky Bourbon Trail as a model, the distilleries wanted to highlight Tennessee whiskey as well as the wonderful communities that host the now 25+ distilleries. In 2017, the Tennessee Distillers Guild launched the Tennessee Whiskey Trail to bring tourism into the state as well as promote sales. The trail features a diverse array of 25+ distilleries, from large and iconic ones like Jack Daniel's to smaller craft distilleries, spread across different regions of Tennessee.

With a small budget to promote the trail -- and a huge need to ramp out tourism and sales -- the Tennessee Whiskey Trail approached Orange 142 for help. Orange 142, a digital media and ad-tech company with a long-standard relationship with the Department of Tourism in Tennessee, was able to hit the ground running.

Partnership with Orange 142

The first step was to understand the audience for the Tennessee Whiskey Trail. When the engagement began in 2021, the primary audiences were Gen X and Millennials. Charity Toombs, Executive Director, Tennessee Whiskey Trail, was especially keen to gain a better understanding of visitor interests and behaviors so that they could rebrand the trail to focus on pillars that echo the state's attractions (afterall, a rising tide floats all boats).

Based on the behavioral data provided by Orange 142, Charity and her team realized there were untapped opportunities to combine whiskey tourism with other interests of visitors, including outdoor adventure, music, history, and culinary. By emphasizing attractions that speak to these interests, all campaigns could promote greater tourism and longer stays in the state.

"Orange 142 is an integral part of the Tennessee Whiskey Trail's success and growth. Their understanding of the traveling consumer allows us to take our branding and audience targeting methods to the next level. This partnership is one that is of the utmost importance to the Tennessee Whiskey Trail."

Charity Toombs,
Executive Director
Tennessee Whiskey Trail

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Tactics

Orange 142 used these interests as the basis of all digital marketing and advertising initiatives it launched on behalf of the Tennessee Whiskey Trail.



Behavioral Targeting

Orange 142 started with whiskey enthusiasts as a core audience. To further refine this group, Orange 142 considered additional factors: love for the outdoors, pet ownership, and even travel intentions. “This multi-layered approach helped us identify highly qualified leads – the low-hanging fruit – who are more likely to be interested,” Emily explained.



Seasonality

Time of year was an important consideration. The campaign focused on targeting users in the spring and fall, which are peak travel times for Tennessee. “We wanted to increase tourism for the trail and for distilleries, as well as for state attractions as a whole,” said Charity.



Digital Passport

From its website, users can obtain a digital passport that offers trail trips and must-see sites, as well as behind-the-scenes tours showcasing the detailed craftsmanship behind every bottle and jar of Tennessee Whiskey.



Pet-Friendly Tourism

Research shows that even post-pandemic, Millennials and Gen X still preferred to travel with their dogs. Given that 22 of 28 distilleries welcome dogs, pets featured heavily in campaigns. In fact, dogs get their own passport, Tails on the Trail.

The first campaign, called **Waterfalls and Whiskey**, targeted outdoor enthusiasts, highlighted Tennessee’s waterways, as well as the impact of the state’s limestone-rich water in enhancing the great taste of Tennessee whiskey. It was a huge hit.

That campaign was followed up by **Tastings & Tunes**, which paired visits to distillers with the state’s most iconic music destinations. For instance, Bristol, the town where country music began, is also home to Lost State Distilling.

Results: 8 Million Visitors in 3 years

Charity and her team heard from the distilleries that the campaigns were driving visits to their facilities, but she wanted data to back up those claims. That data came from the communities that surrounded the distilleries.

The reports showed that over a three-year timespan, the multiple campaigns drove 8 million visitors to Tennessee distilleries and the surrounding communities.

“The reporting told us that not only were those campaigns successful with engaging our audiences, but they delivered a significant economic impact for the communities. Our study showed that from the 8 million visitors on the trail, their largest expenditure was on lodging, retail, food and beverage. This helped us to add sustained value to our destinations,” Charity said.

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About Orange 142

Orange 142 is a digital marketing and advertising company with offices across the US, servicing marketers and agencies. We are part of Direct Digital Holding company, which is the ninth Black-owned company to go public.

We help marketers of all sizes grow their reach and revenue through data-driven media strategies. We also partner with agencies, executing campaigns on behalf of their clients.

Our team of experts has a deep understanding of the digital landscape and the latest advertising and marketing technologies. We work closely with our clients to develop and execute custom advertising and marketing campaigns that meet specific goals.

We are committed to providing our clients with the highest level of service and transparency. We believe that open communication and collaboration are essential to the success of every advertising and marketing initiative.

“Tennessee is the eleventh most visited state in the country, and we knew that if we could piggyback off those visits, we could meet the Tennessee Whiskey Trail’s expectations and budgets”

Emily Parli,
Senior Sales Manager
Orange 142

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