



# 2026 Business Plan



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## OUR VISION

The Baton Rouge Area will be a nationally recognized premier destination providing an excellent Louisiana experience to all visitors. Residents of Baton Rouge will value the contributions that visitors make to the economy and quality of life.

## OUR VALUES

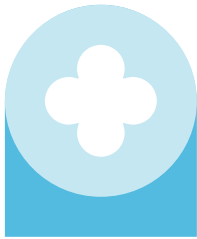
Visit Baton Rouge pledges to promote a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion through its marketing efforts, hiring practices, vendor opportunities and visitor experiences, while displaying a passion for an appreciation of the travel and tourism industry offering an authentic Louisiana experience.



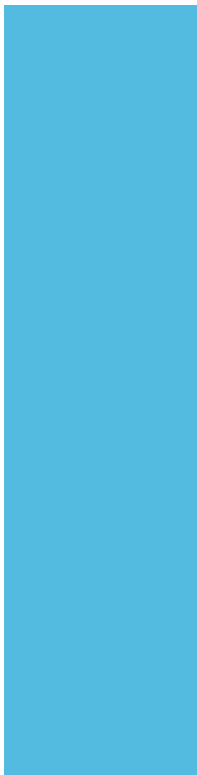
# OUR MISSION

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The mission of Visit Baton Rouge is to increase visitation to and awareness of the Baton Rouge Area thereby enhancing economic impact.



# DEPARTMENTAL GOALS



# Destination Sales

## Departmental Goals

03

### Generate 300 leads and book 40,000 room nights.

Offer a diverse group of meeting professionals and tour operators tailored, professional assistance from the first inquiry right through to event execution.

Staff engagement and consistent follow-up will ensure higher conversion rates.

The sales team will not only generate leads but also prioritize the conversion rate and implement effective strategies to close more sales.

### Target specific customer / market segments that deliver ROI

#### Meetings & Conventions

Focus on segments that show strong projected activity, such as Associations, Greek Life, Multicultural Groups, and Collegiate-affiliated groups.

Conduct targeted outreach through face-to-face appointments, phone calls, emails, and LinkedIn messaging.

Use industry databases such as CRM and Pipeline tools to identify and prioritize high-value prospects.

Participate in industry events, lunch and learns and trade shows to capture new leads.

Create customized proposals aligned with customer needs and budget constraints.

Follow up consistently to maintain momentum and keep prospects engaged.

Use closing techniques or incentives when appropriate.

Encourage referrals and testimonials from satisfied customers.

#### International Leisure Tour and Travel

Focus on elevating the city's international profile as an Americana collegiate sporting destination that offers far more than sports.

International expansion is a key priority.

Target UK and Brazil as primary markets while laying the groundwork for growth across Europe and to Australia/ New Zealand.

Leveraging Baton Rouge's collegiate sports identity as a cultural gateway. The focus will center on football and tailgating experiences.

#### Domestic Group Tourism

Focus will include student travel products.

Repackaging existing offerings in a format that attracts tour operators and group travel planners.

# Destination Sales

## *Departmental Goals*

04

### **Increase customized familiarization tours and site visits.**

Collaborating with local partners is essential for creating engaging experiences for meeting professionals and group tour operators during familiarization tours.

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Create an exclusive, customized site visit experience for third-party clients will position Baton Rouge as a compelling choice for future business opportunities.

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Connect with third-party clients who are key players in shaping site selection and booking decisions for meetings and events.

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Offer and showcase new, ready-to-sell packages that seamlessly integrate sports, culture, and local experiences.

### **Create a “come early, stay late” mindset to encourage length of stay and visitor spend.**

Thoughtfully curate itineraries to entice attendees to extend their stays and fully immerse themselves in the Baton Rouge experience.

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Request hotels to offer multi-night hotel packages for both the days leading up to and following the main convention.

### **Highlight community and responsibility initiative.**

Make it easier for meeting professionals and groups to evaluate how well Baton Rouge supports responsible events. This would allow them to extend the purpose of their meeting beyond business objectives.

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Showcase strong sustainability practices, accessible and inclusive infrastructure, and partnerships with local nonprofits.

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Offer clear corporate social responsibility options such as volunteer programs, green-certified venues, and community engagement projects.

### **Capitalize on convention health and wellness trend.**

Collaborate with the Experience Department to assist meetings and groups explore Baton Rouge while supporting local businesses and wellness-focused enterprises.

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Emphasize accessible wellness experiences that connect groups to local parks, the Mississippi River, and cultural spaces.

# Sports Development *Departmental Goals*



## **Position Baton Rouge as the premier sports destination in the South.**

Book 40,000 room nights.

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Generate 100 leads to be sent to hotel partners.

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Add 50 new prospective client profiles to the CRM.

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Continue to add sports scheduled events to the CRM to keep partners up to date for prospecting and general information.

## **Secure bid to host an international sporting event.**

Collaborate with LSU to secure an international sporting event utilizing their facilities. This game will attract visitors from across the globe to Baton Rouge.

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Leverage partnership to significantly enhance Baton Rouge's presence as a premier destination for upcoming sporting events.

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## **Secure bid to host national championship level events.**

Secure national championship-level events across various sports to bring the highest level of competition to Baton Rouge in our facilities.

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Secure regional level events across various sports in Baton Rouge.

## **Advocate for facility development.**

Collaborate with key stakeholders to secure and develop facilities that would elevate our portfolio and enable us to host new and large-scale events.

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Engaging and educating investors about the diverse range of events Baton Rouge can accommodate.

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Outlining the essential requirements for Baton Rouge to emerge as a sports destination that attracts the attention of sports rights holders.

## **Develop a Sports Authority.**

Working with a third-party consultant to find ways to generate more revenue for sports to operate and support sports tourism in Baton Rouge.

# Destination Experience

## Departmental Goals

06

### **Increase the number of visitors directly touched by Visit Baton Rouge to elevate the visitor experience.**

Provide informational, promotional, and educational resources to rideshare and transportation-for-hire drivers.

Continue to promote and encourage frontline personnel participation in our complimentary online hospitality training course, Capital City Champions (CCC).

Elevate the professionalism and presentation of the Airport Information Specialists by requiring each staff member to be trained and complete the CCC program. Ensure appropriate resources such as collateral, informational materials, and the True Omni Kiosk. Elevate staff appearance with official Visit Baton Rouge attire to ensure consumer confidence.

Reach the visitors at the future site of LSU Burden Gardens Visitors Center, via a True Omni kiosk promoting other attractions, events, shopping, and dining while visiting the area.

Continue visitor inclusion programs by partnering with the Marketing Department and BR Film Commission to utilize Bandwango passports and SetJetters BR Film Trail.

Continue to engage new students and their families at all higher education establishments through on-campus welcome activations, onsite sessions and the Bandwango student passport.

Promote and improve upon the Experience Welcome Box and online toolkits.

### **Secure a visitor-generating, high exposure special event or concert.**

Supporting the newly formed community collaborative, the Baton Rouge Music Fund, consisting of venues, key organizations, and sponsors in efforts to work with promoters and secure high attendance and high exposure events.

### **Continue education for all members of the Destination Experience Department to support consistency across staff touchpoints and inspire creativity.**

Ensure deep, up to date understanding of the city's attractions, culture, dining, and events.

Ongoing education in CRM system, inquiry management, and online servicing tools.

Participate in Servicing and Experience webinars and conventions, geared to provide resources and inspiration. Engage with professional groups such as ESPA, The Special Event, Biz Bash, and Catersource.

### **Work collaboratively with the Marketing Department, architect, and design firm to develop an engaging, forward-thinking, and interactive visitor center at 232 Lafayette Street that reflects the spirit of Baton Rouge.**

Ensure the space embodies creativity, local culture, and innovation through timeless architecture, technology and storytelling.

Incorporate digital touchpoints, immersive displays, and hands-on exhibits that educate and excite visitors of all ages.

Include family-friendly activities and design the experience to serve as a launch pad to encourage visitors to discover and explore area attractions, restaurants, cultural landmarks and events. Examples may include a scavenger hunt, interactive maps, and themed photo spots.

# Marketing + Communications *Departmental Goals*



## **Build local pride through brand awareness, storytelling and local advocacy.**

Support Destination Experience in Capital City Champions program.

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Select local ambassadors for recognition during NTTW and in national ad/social media campaign.

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Build out advocacy messaging and form steering committee for possible Tourism Improvement District.

## **Continue connecting visitors in-market with ways to stay longer, spend more.**

Enhance Bandwango passports with new incentives and promotions.

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Increase sessions on all TrueOmni kiosks by 1%.

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Work collaboratively with Destination Experience, architect and design firm to develop an engaging, forward-thinking and interactive visitor center at 232 Lafayette that reflects the spirit of Baton Rouge.

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Increase availability of resources for partners.

## **Complete the CRM transition to enhance partner and staff efficiency.**

Launch new CRM in February with Tempest.

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Train staff and build confidence in new CRM and reporting tools.

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Build standardized practices and procedures for CRM usage.

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Implement a bid proposal software.

## **Launch new, redesigned and more efficient website to increase usability by travel intenders, meeting planners and sports rights-holders.**

Launch new website in May with Tempest.

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Launch meetings microsite in May with emphasis on user-friendly experience.

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Increase signups for Consumer Newsletter by 3% and Welcome Guide Requests by 2%.

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Increase prominence of Meeting, Convention and Sports RFP call to action.

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Prioritize Meeting Planner Guide downloads in target market advertising.

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Prioritize leisure contact list growth for to engage repeat visitors.

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Restructuring SEO strategy to include Generative Engine Optimization (GEO).

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Leverage website attribution partner to connect website visits to economic impact.

# Marketing + Communications *Departmental Goals*



## **Enhance in-house advertising and research capabilities to support launch of campaign that deepens community connection and brand authenticity.**

Move media buying to in-house marketing director.

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RFP creative agency work for 2027.

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Tell brand story with ambassador program / video features.

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Leverage media attribution partner to connect paid advertising to economic impact.

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Use Symphony data for optimizing paid media tactics and targeting.

## **Capitalize on national media interest.**

Work with Governor's Office and LOT to get the most out of America250 promotion.

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Utilize local ambassadors to grow Baton Rouge awareness through earned media.

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Leverage LSU Arena and River Center planning to garner coverage from travel trade and meeting publications.

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Capitalize on large local events through earned media and paid social.

## **Prioritize restaurant and culinary promotion to create stronger visibility and measurable value for our partners.**

Capitalize on international Michelin recognition and work with restaurants to increase in second year.

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Increase Culinary/Restaurant Partner Referrals and ROI tracking through CRM.

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Prioritize restaurants/food within ambassador videos.

# Administration

## Departmental Goals



### Compliance & Oversight

Maintain internal controls in coordination with auditors and legal counsel to ensure ongoing compliance with state and federal laws.

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Ensure all annual training required for public servants is completed and documented.

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Verify proper collection of occupancy and short-term rental tax revenues.

### Process Improvement & Automation

Implement automated expense management software for credit card processing and reporting, train staff on proper use.

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Integrate payroll and HRIS data to support automated workflows.

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Streamline document workflows and digital record retention across Visit Baton Rouge.

### Team Success & Culture

Strengthen organizational culture by promoting employee satisfaction, inclusivity, and growth through training, communication, and recognition.

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Support a smooth transition into the new headquarters with ongoing collaboration across teams.

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Maintain consistent, transparent communication that keeps staff informed and connected to Visit Baton Rouge's mission.

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Continue organizational succession planning.

### Financial Management & Sustainability

Provide data-driven financial analysis to help senior staff align budgets with organizational goals.

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Explore new and diversified revenue streams to strengthen long-term fiscal stability.

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Support VBR-232 Lafayette St., Inc. (Public Benefits Corporation) with financial planning, intercompany loan tracking, and compliance consistent with VBR policies and public-entity standards.

### Strategic Projects & Partnerships

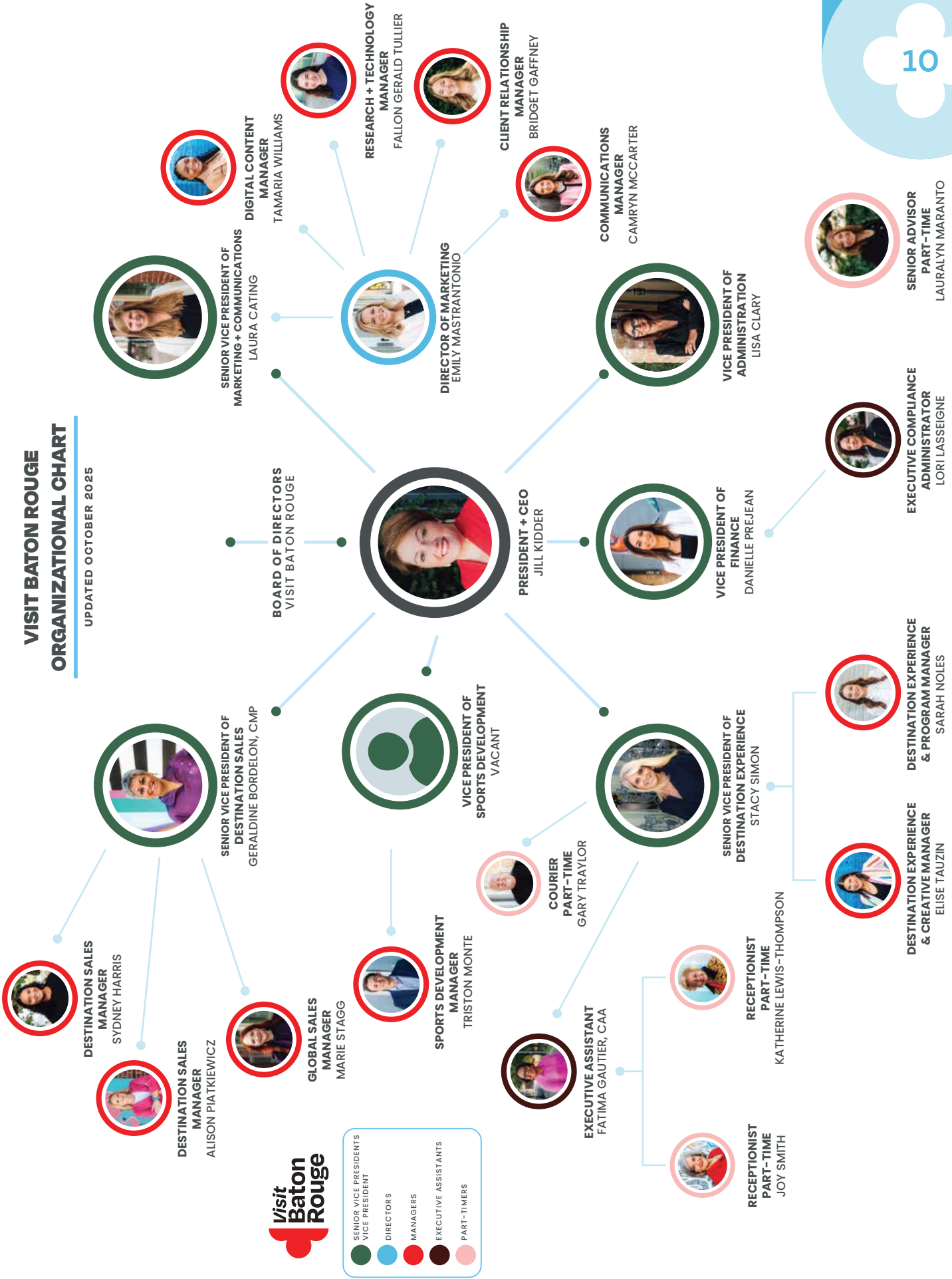
Oversee completion of the 232 Lafayette St. headquarters and visitor center project.

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Collaborate with community and government partners on major initiatives such as River Center redevelopment, convention headquarters hotel, and Plan Baton Rouge III.

# VISIT BATON ROUGE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

UPDATED OCTOBER 2025



- SENIOR VICE PRESIDENTS
- VICE PRESIDENT
- DIRECTORS
- MANAGERS
- EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS
- PART-TIMERS