

CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER

Visit Santa Barbara | Santa Barbara, CA





Santa Barbara

The American Riviera

There are seaside escapes — and then there's Santa Barbara. Nestled along a gentle crescent of California coastline, this extraordinary destination is framed by both golden beaches and dramatic mountain backdrops. Here, you'll find more than beauty; you'll find a lifestyle — where outdoor adventure is a daily ritual, community spirit runs deep and creativity is woven into every experience.

Santa Barbara offers a rare blend of natural splendor, cultural richness, and small-town charm with big-city sophistication. The region is home to thriving neighborhoods and distinctive communities — from the laid-back energy of Goleta to the refined elegance of Montecito — each contributing to the vibrant mosaic of the South Coast. Residents and visitors alike are drawn to the area's deep-rooted sense of place, environmental consciousness, and the shared commitment to preserving its coastal heritage.

Whether you're exploring scenic trails, diving into world-class cuisine, relaxing at sun-drenched beaches, or engaging with dynamic arts and culture, Santa Barbara invites you to live fully, connect authentically, and savor the extraordinary every day. This isn't just a place — it's a way of life.

[Arts & Culture](#) [Beaches & Parks](#) [Food & Drink](#) [Outdoor Recreation](#) [Shopping](#) [Spa & Wellness](#) [Wine](#)



Location, Location, Location

Centrally located between Los Angeles and San Francisco along Highway 101, Santa Barbara serves as a southern gateway to California's Central Coast and the iconic Pacific Coast Highway. Just 90 miles north of Los Angeles and 325 miles south of San Francisco, the city offers easy access with the feeling of a world away. Santa Barbara's own award-winning wine country is just a scenic 30-minute drive from the downtown core.

Getting Here

The charming Santa Barbara Airport (SBA) offers nonstop flights to major U.S. hubs, including ATL, DEN, DFW, LAS, LAX, OAK, PDX, PHX, SEA, SFO, and SMF. Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner and Coast Starlight lines serve downtown Santa Barbara and Goleta, while Santa Barbara Airbus provides convenient service to and from LAX. Travelers can also connect via Hollywood Burbank Airport, which links directly to Amtrak.

Getting Around

The city's compact size makes getting around an effortless breeze. With pedestrian-friendly downtown and waterfront districts, car-free travel is a very viable and inviting option. Downtown parking lots offer 75 minutes of complimentary parking, and rideshares, taxis, car rentals, and private car services are readily available for flexible mobility.

Neighborhoods & Towns

[Goleta](#) [Montecito](#) [Santa Barbara](#) [Summerland](#)

About Visit Santa Barbara

The mission of Visit Santa Barbara is to inspire overnight travel to the Santa Barbara South Coast in order to enhance the community's economy and quality of life. VSB's primary vehicles are tourism marketing, PR, and sales channels that lead to overnight bookings, increase business and tax revenue, and support jobs.

Visit Santa Barbara is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) organization jointly funded by the South Coast Tourism Business Improvement District and a membership of hospitality-related businesses, as well as grants from the City of Santa Barbara and the County of Santa Barbara. Annual spending by travelers to the South Coast totals more than \$2.24 billion, supporting more than 15,000 jobs and generating more than \$82.9 million in yearly tax revenues, according to Future Partners, a tourism market research firm.

Visit Santa Barbara provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetics. In addition to federal law requirements, Visit Santa Barbara complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment at its location.



POSITION SUMMARY

The Chief Strategy Officer will collaborate closely with our President & CEO, you'll lead a dynamic team and spearhead strategic initiatives to enhance our destination's allure and drive economic growth. The CSO will be a visionary leader with a passion for innovation and a knack for turning ideas into impactful results.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Imperative: Strengthen the organization's effectiveness

Leadership:

- Provide guidance and evaluate the current team, strategy, initiatives, and plans.
- Support and mentor four program teams to effectively deliver on goals for stakeholders.
- Prepare spoken remarks, supporting documents, and visual presentations for the VSB Board of Directors' monthly meetings and quarterly meetings of its committees.
- Support the President & CEO in organizational effectiveness, operational efficiency, public affairs issues, and cyclical planning requirements.
- Establish and lead cross-departmental initiatives to enhance collaboration between marketing and sales.
- Continue to foster a data-driven decision-making culture by ensuring all departments utilize key performance indicators (KPIs) for continuous improvement.

Reporting:

- Review and potentially develop new reporting metrics across VSB to enhance data-driven decision-making and improve reporting to our business community.
- Lead forecasting, budgeting, and the creation of the business plan.

Strategic Planning:

- Collaborate with executive leadership, key stakeholders, and respective staff discipline owners to formulate the annual strategic plan to maximize resource impact.
- Ensure program compliance with governing documents, including the association's bylaws, grant contracts, and TBID management district plan.
- Provide detailed support to the CEO during the renewal or modification of the South Coast Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), including stakeholder communications, budget modeling, management district plan drafting, documentation of assessed businesses, and petition tracking.
- Focus on demand-driving initiatives and work with the team to ensure a positive visitor experience.
- Lead the timely production of the TBID annual report, as required by the California Government Code.
- Spearhead long-term strategic initiatives aimed at infrastructure improvements that enhance Santa Barbara's competitiveness as a destination.
- When applicable, lead the development of a five-year tourism master plan in collaboration with government agencies, local businesses, and community stakeholders.

Financial Planning:

- Oversee the company's contracted bookkeeper.
- Accurately forecast TBID assessment revenue by modeling hotel performance and historical TOT/TBID data.
- Collaborate with the department heads to develop and manage the organization's budget, including accurate encumbrances, general ledger transaction detail reconciliation, and monthly expense forecasts on both an accrual and cash basis.
- Support all departments in negotiating contracted services.
- Submit quarterly reports as required by government contracts.

Strategic Imperative: Champion positive visitor experiences

Government Relations:

- Support the President/CEO and Board of Directors.
- Maintain situational awareness of public policy issues affecting the leisure and hospitality industry, including government grant funding, tourism-related taxes, and developments at public facilities (e.g., Santa Barbara Airport, waterfront).
- Prepare spoken remarks, supporting documents, and presentations for the CEO at city council and board of supervisor meetings.
- Develop positive relationships with local government finance departments to assist with TOT forecasts and tax/assessment policy changes affecting VSB stakeholders.
- Assist the CEO when needed as a key liaison with state and national tourism organizations to ensure Santa Barbara is positioned for funding and promotional opportunities.
- Work with the CEO on advocacy efforts for local policies that support tourism growth, including infrastructure investments and transportation improvements.
- Continue relationships with key industry partners, such as airlines and travel trade associations, to enhance accessibility and visibility.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Four years of strategy and marketing experience in a senior management capacity.
- Proven track record of developing and implementing successful strategic plans and budgets, ideally in the leisure and hospitality industry.
- Strong communication skills (written, verbal, and presentation) to effectively inform, influence, and lead stakeholders.
- Preferred professional certifications:
 - Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME).
 - Certification in Hotel Industry Analytics (CHIA).
 - Revenue Management Certification (RMC).
 - Certification in Advanced Hospitality and Tourism Analytics (CAHTA).
- Strategic thinker who proactively enhances the organization's effectiveness.
- Strong leader committed to inspiring and supporting team members.
- Team player with high emotional intelligence, fostering collaboration and positive relationships.
- Exceptional relationship-building and customer service skills.
- Sound problem solver and decision-maker.
- Skilled in Microsoft Excel, CRM databases (e.g., Salesforce), and AI tools for business efficiency.
- Ability to manage time effectively and work independently.
- Must have a valid passport, California Driver's License, auto insurance, and access to a vehicle for company business.
- Able to travel overnight and work varied hours, including evenings and weekends, as needed.



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If interested in learning more about this great opportunity, please send your resume to our SearchWide Global Executive, Nicole Newman.

SearchWide Global is a full-service executive search firm primarily for companies in the travel, tourism and convention, and hotel and lodging industries. We specialize in C-Level, Director and Management level executive searches for companies ranging in size from Fortune 500 corporations to mid-sized public and private companies.