



2026 Winter Conference

MARKETING TRACK

Your facilitators: *Jennifer Walker, Senior Vice President & CMO, Visit Dallas*
Mitch Whitten, Chief Operating Officer, Visit Fort Worth

AGENDA

Thursday, January 29

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:45 a.m.	Welcome to the 2026 Winter Master Class Conference! Opening Remarks then head to your tracks
9:00 a.m.	Course Overview & Icebreaker
9:30 a.m.	Priorities & Opportunities <i>Led by Mitch Whitten</i>
10:00 a.m.	Getting Started: Marketing Building Blocks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding your visitors, destination product and perceptions• The marketing funnel• Developing SMART goals• Developing KPIs• Marketing the Marketing <i>Presented by Jenifer Sarver, Principal, Sarver Strategies, Mitch Whitten, and Jennifer Walker</i>
10:30 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	Marketing Building Blocks continued...

11:15 a.m.	Optimizing your Website for AI Search <i>Presented by Kyle Huff, Content Marketing Manager, Tempest</i>
12:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Building or Rebuilding a Communications Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approach to communications• Social Media• Integrating paid/earned/owned• Stakeholder amplification & engagement• Resident engagement <i>Presented by Emily Zertuche, Chief Marketing Officer, Visit Corpus Christi</i>
2:00p.m.	WORKING SESSION - CHALLENGE SCENARIOS Led by Mitch Whitten
3:00 p.m.	Break
3:30 p.m.	Managing Issues, Preparing for a Crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues management• Stakeholder engagement• Demonstrating value & protecting your funding• Crisis communications• Media response protocols• Developing a crisis plan <i>Presented by Jenifer Sarver</i>
3:45 p.m.	Managing Issues, Preparing for Crisis continued...
4:30 p.m.	Wrap Up <i>Led by Jennifer Walker</i>

Friday, January 30

8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:45 a.m.	Welcome to Day 2! Morning Remarks
9:00 a.m.	Recap of Day One Learnings/Takeaways <i>Led by Mitch Whitten</i>

9:15 a.m. Cross-Departmental Collaboration

Marketing teams in small and mid-sized destination organizations collaborate constantly, often without real authority over the decisions that shape their work. This session speaks directly to that reality. When collaboration breaks down, marketing absorbs the impact through last minute changes, unclear direction, and repeated rework.

Instead of focusing on tools or tactics alone, this session helps participants recognize the patterns that create these challenges and introduces practical ways to bring clarity, alignment, and momentum to collaborative work. Attendees will leave with simple approaches they can use immediately with internal teams, partners, boards, and city stakeholders.

What Participants Will Learn

Participants will gain

- Clear insight into why collaboration breaks down and how to spot problems earlier
- Practical language to clarify decisions, timing, and ownership
- Simple tools that work even without formal authority
- Greater confidence navigating collaboration in small or lean organizations

Presented by Doug Bacon, Managing Director, Throwing Words

10:30AM Break

10:45 a.m. EQ Is the New IQ: How to set yourself apart

Presented by JJ Colburn, Co-CEO, Strategic Association Management

11:45 a.m. Wrap Up/Feedback
Led by Mitch Whitten

NOON Conference Ends

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