



Customer Profile

The Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) is responsible for growing tourism in this southwest Florida county. The VCB partners with local businesses to expand the pool of potential visitors to the area.



Permission to Pinterest

Smarsh Helps Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau Meet Open Government Laws

Visitors flock to Lee County, Florida for Major League Baseball spring training, scenic beaches, and the lively downtown of Fort Myers. The Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau (VCB) promotes this scenic southwest Florida location to tourists, both domestic and international, and works closely with local businesses to attract visitors to the area.

The VCB uses Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to promote regional attractions like Fort Myers Beach and historic downtown. What could be an even better way to draw tourists than testimonials from happy conventioners and honeymooners? The answer: Pictures from their trips to Lee County.

Business Objectives

As part of its marketing strategy, the VCB wanted to use the social network Pinterest to extend its visitor campaigns, while meeting the retention and production obligations of Florida's open government laws.

Smarsh Solution

Smarsh crawls and captures each page of the VCB's Pinterest site, maintaining all content (including links) in its original format. Content is accessible via the web for search, analysis, and on-demand production.

Business Outcome

The Lee County VCB can reach beyond traditional marketing channels using a wide range of social networking tools, including Pinterest. Because of its achievement and innovation in marketing, the VCB recently earned its third Platinum Adrian Award from the Hospitality & Sales Marketing Association.



Consequences of Non-Compliance

The Lee County VCB cannot let any of its communications slip through the recordkeeping cracks. All communications — including Pinterest posts — are covered by public records laws and must be producible for the public at all times.

The consequences of failure are real in the state of Florida. In nearby Sarasota County, the city of Venice faced costly litigation after a citizens group took action in 2009 over publicly inaccessible email communications in the utilities department.¹

“ We found Pinterest is a great way to show off our visually stunning county and its local attractions, including superb beaches, unique wildlife, and gourmet restaurants. It also gives us a way to interact with potential visitors through their own pictures and shared interests. ”

Pinterest: Social Networking Tailor Made for Tourism

Laura Chmielewski, Director of Marketing and Communications at the VCB, understands the power of pictures to lure visitors. When she discovered the photo-sharing site Pinterest, she knew it was a perfect fit to extend the county’s marketing reach and beckon tourists from all over.

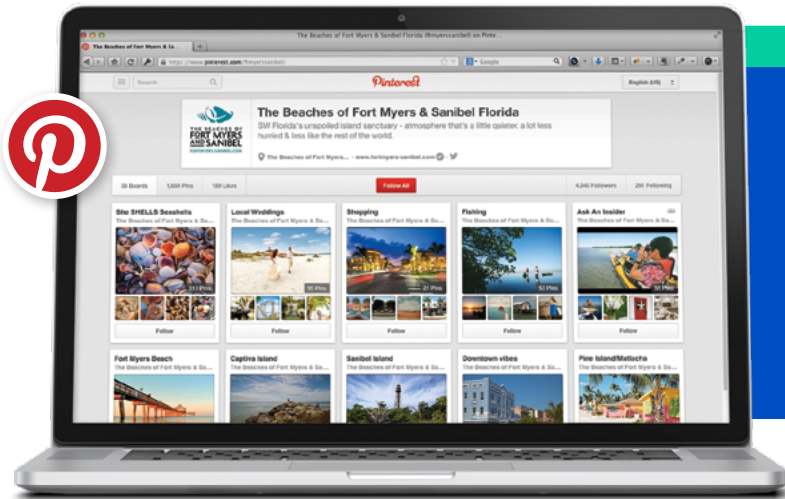
“We want to be part of the travel and leisure conversation, a place that people love to share and discuss,” said Chmielewski. “When colleagues in the office started using Pinterest at home, we thought, ‘We need to use this at work.’”

The Power of Pinterest

Chmielewski knew she wanted to use Pinterest to further the company’s marketing reach, however, she had to find a technology solution that allowed her to comply with the Florida Sunshine Law.

“We didn’t want to manually print and store posts, because that would have been time-consuming and costly,” said Chmielewski. “We needed a comprehensive, automated archiving solution for Pinterest before we could begin using it. Smarsh was the only solution that met our needs. Once we were up and running with Smarsh, we became active on Pinterest.

The VCB can recreate the experience of their Pinterest site from any particular moment in time, including working links and attachments. A filmstrip of screenshots enables their team to quickly scroll through the archive, and changes from capture to capture are highlighted. Lee County VCB has secure, cloud-based access to its Pinterest archive, viewable and clickable as if it were on the Pinterest page itself.



“Smarsh was the only solution that met our needs.”

Laura Chmielewski
Director of Marketing and Communications
Lee County VCB

Archiving for the Next Social Media Channel

Capturing data from each new social channel demands a unique solution. With Smarsh as a partner, the VCB is better prepared for whatever comes next in social media. Smarsh delivers not only innovative archiving solutions for compliance, but premier customer support as well.

“My Smarsh implementation specialist was a prince to work with. He was responsive and understood what we needed to do to comply with the Sunshine Law,” said Chmielewski.

Spending Time Growing Tourism, Not Saving Screenshots

Lee County VCB continues to promote the region using Pinterest and other social media platforms, and Chmielewski and her staff do not waste time manually printing and filing images of the VCB’s Pinterest site in case they need to produce content for a public records request.

“Had we not found Smarsh, we wouldn’t have been able to use Pinterest,” said Chmielewski.

Examining the Florida Sunshine Law

As a government agency, the VCB must comply with the state of Florida’s open government laws.

The Florida Sunshine Law, like similar laws throughout the country, demands that all government agencies make all relevant data available to anyone who asks for it. Any official business records made or received by the VCB must be available for public inspection. This includes paper documents as well as emails, social media posts, and all other electronic communication. There are thousands of state requirements focused on records retention throughout the country.² They are frequently employed to request electronic communications from public entities.



1) Webb, Shelby “Venice again accused of Sunshine Law violations” Sarasota Herald Tribune September 13, 2013.

2) Osterman Research “Archiving Requirements and Considerations for Government Agencies” May 2011, retrieved from <http://www2.smarsh.com/l/9442/2011-11-23/7QC1>



Smarsh® is the recognized global leader in electronic communications archiving solutions for regulated organizations. The Smarsh Connected Suite provides innovative capture, archiving, e-discovery, and supervision solutions across the industry's widest breadth of communication channels.

Scalable for organizations of all sizes, the Smarsh platform provides customers with compliance built on confidence. It enables them to strategically future-proof as new communication channels are adopted, and to realize more insight and value from the data in their archive. Customers strengthen their compliance and e-discovery initiatives, and benefit from the productive use of email, social media, mobile/text messaging, instant messaging and collaboration, web, and voice channels.

Smarsh serves a global client base that spans the top banks in North America and Europe, along with leading brokerage firms, insurers, and registered investment advisors. Smarsh also enables federal and state government agencies to meet their public records and e-discovery requirements. For more information, visit www.smarsh.com.