



5,700 businesses improved their digital presence with Discover Puerto Rico's La IDEA program

The initiative ends with a 360° photo update of the streets and beaches of Vieques and Culebra

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico, December 27, 2023 – Discover Puerto Rico's La IDEA program will complete its operations this week after helping more than 5,000 small and medium-sized businesses improve their business profiles on leading digital platforms used by travelers visiting Puerto Rico.

The initiative, which focused on providing free and personalized digital marketing training to Puerto Rican entrepreneurs, also provided digital photography services to 790 businesses and, as its last major project, updated the Google Street View of the main streets of Vieques and Culebra, and uploaded a compilation of 360° photographs of the main beaches and points of interest of these municipalities. The last major update of images about Puerto Rico on Google's Street View platform was in 2016.

"This project was designed to elevate the footprint of small and medium-sized businesses in the digital world to capture better those visitors looking for authentic and unique experiences in Puerto Rico. If they are well represented on the leading tourism platforms, our destination will be better positioned among potential visitors. With more than 5,000 businesses impacted, La IDEA delivered remarkable results," said Brad Dean, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Discover Puerto Rico.

Local businesses well received the initiative. Eight out of ten participants showed high satisfaction levels, and nine out of ten said they would recommend the project to other entrepreneurs. One in four businesses experienced a significant increase in sales to tourists in the first few months after improving their digital presence.

"This project showed the positive change a good digital presence can generate for a business. As we progressed through the initiative, we saw our industry's strengths and weaknesses better. In their daily operational hustle, many businesses don't have enough time to improve or cater to their profiles. This program gave them tools to simplify that process and stressed the importance of monitoring how they are perceived in the digital world. The results were excellent," said Haydil Rivera, La IDEA's program director.

The IDEA was recognized with a Mercury Award from the U.S. Travel Association and a Silver Adrian Award from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI). The Web Marketing Association also recognized La IDEA's website.



The project consisted of two phases. In the first part, businesses received an evaluation of their digital presence on the leading platforms used by travelers to plan their stays in Puerto Rico, such as Google Business, Facebook, Tripadvisor, Yelp, and the DiscoverPuertoRico.com website. After the evaluation, the entrepreneurs had personalized advice on managing their profiles on these platforms and the best practices in the industry. Over 2,500 new profiles were created in this process.

Businesses that completed the phase of optimizing their digital presence on the platforms could benefit from the second part of the program, which consisted of free digital photography. Over 10,000 images of businesses and places of interest were generated in this part of the initiative. Many of these images were uploaded to platforms like Street View and, as of December, had been viewed 4.8 million times.

The initiative was funded by \$2 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds, expiring at the month's end. Discover Puerto Rico will continue to offer direct services to small and medium-sized businesses with workshops integrated into the town hall meetings called Conversemos that take place throughout Puerto Rico. Meanwhile, work is being done with state and federal entities to reestablish a new phase with additional direct services to small and medium-sized local entrepreneurs.

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