

# SLO Marketing Activities Report

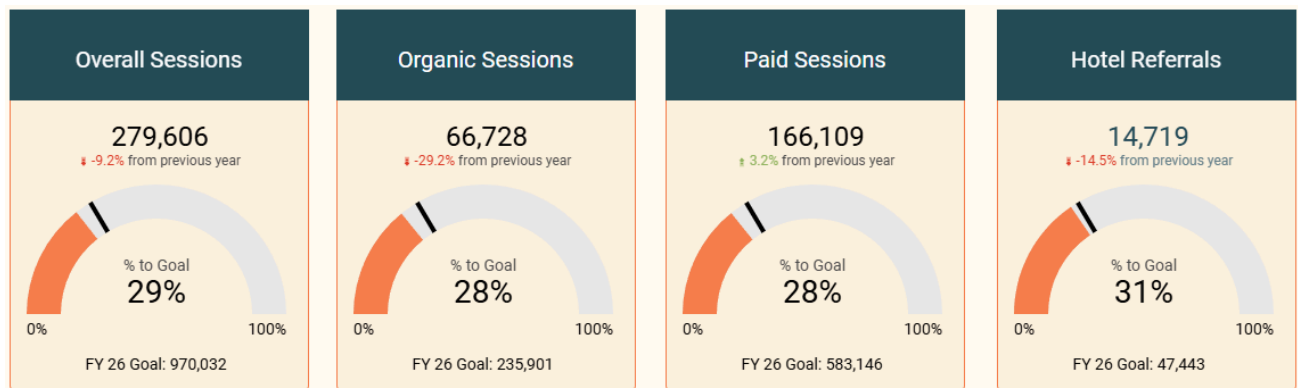
Key Performance Highlights  
October 2025



## At-a-Glance Highlights

- **Total Website Sessions:** 85,449 (+18% YoY)
- **Top Traffic Source:** Paid Social (+80% YoY)
- **Total Lodging Referrals:** 4,031 (+6% YoY)
- **Top Performing Ads:** YoY, SLO Life Coach Ads across Display, Demand Gen, and PMAX channels saw:
  - +153% increase in website sessions
  - +37% increase in impressions
  - +80% increase in lodging referrals
  - all at a +16% increase in cost
- **Public Relations:** 10/8/25: KING-TV [5 fall getaways that won't break the bank - New Day NW](#) (Brandon Schultz – P2P Opportunity) (**Reach: 1,761,350**)

## YTD KPI Performance



**Expected Pace through October: 33%**



## Overall Performance Summary

**Key Insight:** Despite industry-wide decreases in organic traffic of roughly 20-40%, the outstanding performance of the SLO Life Coach campaign has helped Visit SLO to achieve an 18% increase in overall traffic YoY despite seeing organic search traffic declines of roughly 28%. This is in part due to a 49% increase in Paid Social click through rates, leading to an 80% increase in Paid Social traffic at a 3% increase in spend. We also saw a 153% increase in traffic from Display, Demand Gen, and PMAX campaigns at a 16% increase in spend.

For context, organic search historically drives almost a third of total website traffic and almost half of partner referrals on [VisitSLO.com](https://www.visit slo.com). While we've seen large increases in traffic from Paid Social over the last few months, it is not a bottom-of-funnel channel and historically only drives 1% of partner referrals despite historically driving 12% of total website traffic.

Total website partner referrals saw a slight decrease of 6% however, lodging referrals saw a 6% increase YoY. The majority of the YoY decrease came from restaurant referrals coming from Organic Search, which saw a 64% decrease YoY.

As the way that people search continues to rapidly evolve, our new SLO Life Coach campaign has significantly helped Visit SLO to maintain YoY increases in total traffic and lodging referrals.

**Next Steps:** We are wrapping up the schema audit and implementation on VisitSLO.com to provide clearer context cues to search engine crawlers and enhance page visibility. We are also continuing to develop new SEO-informed SLO Life Coach itinerary-style content designed to perform well in AI-generated responses and rich SERP features. We will continue to monitor the rapidly evolving search landscape and adapt our strategies to reach potential travelers in the right channels at the right time. In addition, we continue to review TOT performance to gain deeper insight into visitation trends to better inform future campaign strategies.

## Paid Media Snapshot

- **Paid Search**
  - Impressions: 51,140 (+32% YoY)
  - Clicks: 5,554 (+22% YoY)
  - CTR: 10.86% (-7% YoY)
  - Sessions: 5,684 (+12% YoY)
  - Lodging Referrals: 2,492 (+26% YoY)
  - Cost: \$17,182 (+1% YoY)

- **Paid Social**

- Impressions: 1,513,778 (+27% YoY)
- Clicks: 46,878 (+89% YoY)
- CTR: 3.10% (+49% YoY)
- Sessions: 22,677 (+71% YoY)
- Lodging Referrals: 54 (+4% YoY)
- Cost: \$15,987 (+3% YoY)

- **Display, Demand Gen, & PMAx**

- Impressions: 1,967,716 (+37% YoY)
- CTR: 0.90% (-3% YoY)
- Clicks: 17,679 (+33% YoY)
- Sessions: 19,207 (+153% YoY)
- Lodging Referrals: 352 (+80% YoY)
- Cost: \$8,100 (+16% YoY)


- **Video**

- Impressions: 175,662 (-72% YoY)
- CTR: 2.11% (+110% YoY)
- Clicks: 3,709 (-41% YoY)
- Sessions: 3,075 (-24% YoY)
- Lodging Referrals: 31 (+343% YoY)
- Cost: \$4,200 (+3% YoY)

### Paid Media YoY Performance

Sessions <b>54,013</b> ‡ 39.9%	All Partner Referrals <b>5,362</b> ‡ 45.9%	Lodging Referrals <b>2,997</b> ‡ 30.8%
Things to Do <b>1,711</b> ‡ 91.0%	Hotel Referrals <b>2,887</b> ‡ 34.5%	Homestay Referrals <b>107</b> ‡ -25.7%
Food & Drink <b>608</b> ‡ 35.7%	Newsletter Signups <b>40</b> ‡ 21.2%	Event Referrals <b>178</b> ‡ 111.9%

**Key Insight:** Since the launch of the new SLO Life Coach campaign, we've seen outstanding performance improvements compared to last year. In October, at a +7%



YoY increase in spend, paid channels saw a +40% increase in total website traffic, a 13% increase in impressions, a 46% increase in total partner referrals, and a 31% increase in lodging referrals. Our new campaign is reaching more potential travelers in a way that resonates and ultimately drives more engaged website traffic and partner referrals.

## Owned Media Snapshot

### Email Marketing

We sent one email in October that spotlighted Artober, a giveaway on social media, and encouraged readers to book a stay, resulting in a 5% increase in lodging referrals YoY. Despite a lower click rate compared to the benchmark, the October newsletter saw a +33% YoY increase in total partner referrals and an open rate that was 40% higher than the benchmark. The October newsletter also resonated well with readers, shown by strong YoY improvements in engagement metrics across the board. Readers were more engaged overall (+2% increase in engagement rate), spent more time actively engaged on the website (+57% increase in the average engagement time per session), and visited more pages in their session on [VisitSLO.com](https://www.visitSLO.com) (+21% increase in pages per session).

- **Emails Sent:** 1
- **Avg. Open Rate:** 49.9% (33.25% [Benchmark](#))
- **Avg. CTR:** 1.4% (2.56% [Benchmark](#))
- **Total Sessions:** 475 (-50% YoY)
- **Total Partner Referrals:** 88 (+33% YoY)
- **Total Lodging Referrals:** 38 (+6% YoY)
- **Engagement Rate:** 60% (+2% YoY)
- **Average Engagement Time Per Session:** 1m 15s (+57% YoY)
- **Page Views Per Session:** 2.97 (+21% YoY)



## Your Fall Homebase Away From Home

Celebrate ARTober



October is National Arts & Humanities Month, and in San Luis Obispo, we celebrate it with ARTober. Think of it as your invitation to SLO down, get inspired and let creativity set the pace. Join us for a month-long celebration of shows, live music performances, museum exhibits and public art. We'll make sure you've got a front-row seat to all the color and culture.

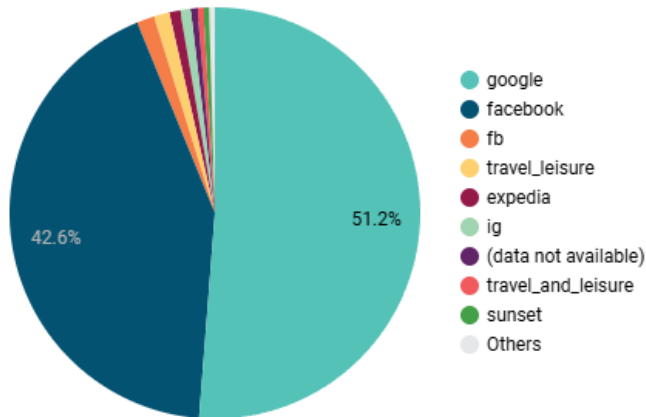
Experience SLO Art



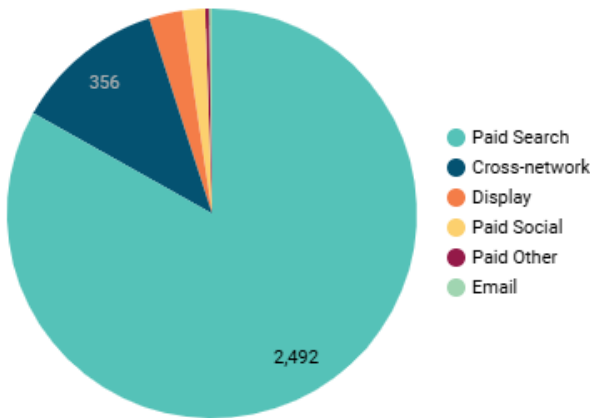
### Website

- **Total Sessions:** 85,449 (+18% YoY)
- **Lodging Partner Referrals:** 4,031 (+6% YoY)
- **Avg. Pages/Session:** 1.68 (-15% YoY)
- **Average Session Duration:** 2m 00s (+13% YoY)
- **Top Lodging Referral Channels:** Paid Search (61%), Organic Search (16%), Cross-Network (9%)

### Sessions by Source



### Lodging Referrals by Channel

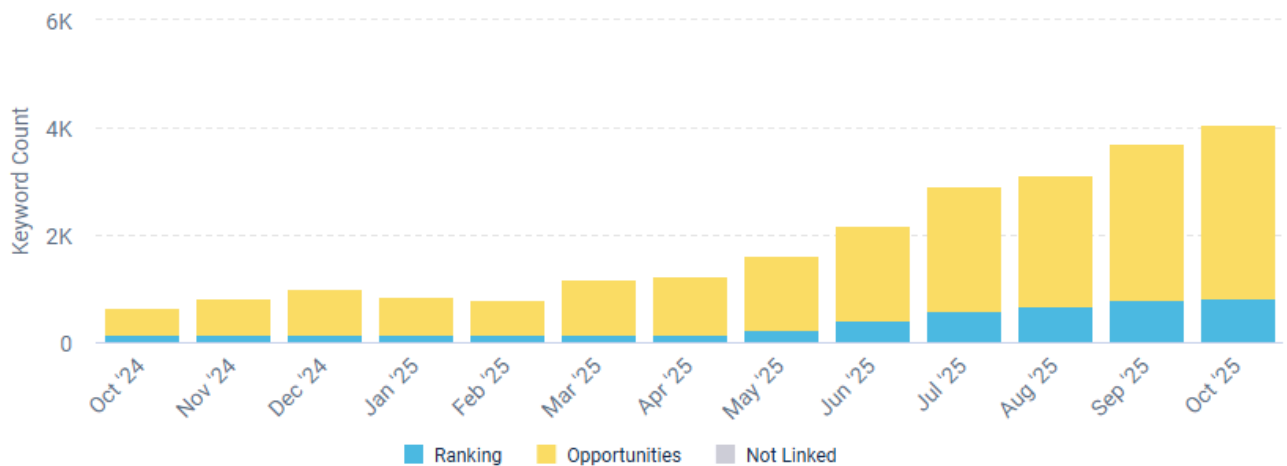


### SEO + Content

- **Organic Search Sessions:** 14,747 (-28% YoY)
- **Organic Search Partner Referrals:** 2,360 (-43% YoY)
- **Organic Search Impressions:** 1.36 Mil (-18% YoY)
- **Organic Search Clicks:** 10.8K (-38% YoY)
- **Organic Search CTR:** 0.8% (-20% YoY)
- **Page 1 Keywords:** 4.5K (-11%)
- **Sessions from LLMs (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, etc):** 240 (+2,300% YoY)
- **Top Losses:** things to do in San Luis Obispo, San Luis Obispo, Sunset Drive-In

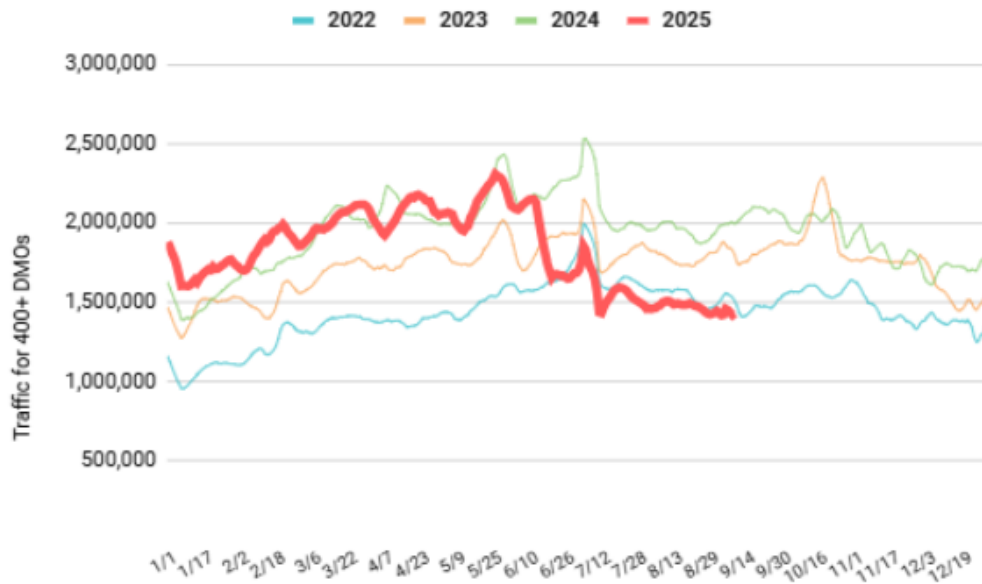
**Key Takeaway:** While organic traffic is down 28% in October, we've been improving Visit SLO's ability to be cited as a source in Google's AI Overviews. YoY we've seen a 3,618% increase in the number of AI overviews the website has been cited in, while we've only

seen a 411% increase in the total opportunities to be cited in. As organic search pages continue to increasingly have Google’s AI overview responses, the way that people search continues to change, and organic traffic declines are felt across the Travel and Tourism industry, among many others.



**Insight:** YoY drops in Organic traffic are industry-wide and are tied to a roughly 20% decrease in organic CTRs related to a rapidly evolving search engine results page, which now features AI responses and significantly more SERP features, allowing searchers to get more information without the need to click through to a website. A study done by Simpleview across over 400 DMOs showed that the average decrease in organic search traffic was 20–40% in 2025. We’re continuing to lean into new strategies to improve Visit SLO’s visibility in this new era of search.

## Traffic trends for 400+ DMOs



## Creative & Web Maintenance

### Website Maintenance, Repair & Optimization (MRO)

- Plugins and Updates
  - ACF Pro
  - Enable Media Replace
  - Gravity Forms
  - Events Calendar
  - Events Calendar Pro
  - Tiny PNG
  - Wordpress Importer (removed)
  - Yoast

### Website Services

- October Website Services Efforts:
  - 10h out of 120 hours were utilized for October 2025 (Remaining hours: 96.25)
  - Work Accomplished: Stakeholder Portal Build, New Featured Block, Mustang Weekend Form

### Creative Services

- October Creative Services Efforts:
  - 4.25h out of 150 hours were utilized for October 2025 (Remaining hours: 135)
  - Work Accomplished: New Biz Blog and QC of work.



## Earned Media Activity

### **Earned Media Highlights**

Total Impressions/Circulation: 1,762,287

Placements: 2

### **Press Coverage**

- 10/8/25: **KING-TV**: [5 fall getaways that won't break the bank - New Day NW](#) (Brandon Schultz – P2P Opportunity) (Reach: 1,761,350)
- 10/8/25: **KING-TV YouTube**: [5 fall getaways that won't break the bank - New Day NW](#) (Brandon Schultz – P2P Opportunity) (Reach: 937)

### **Upcoming Individual Press Trips:**

- November 12–14: Christina Silvestri (Arizona Foothills Magazine)