



## **Vibe Israel 2019 Annual Report**

2019 has been an exciting year here at Vibe Israel, full of new beginnings! After the extensive research and strategy building process we conducted with Bloom Consulting during 2018, this year was all about putting things into motion, and laying the groundwork for our new 5-year plan and core projects.

While we continue our work raising international awareness to all that Israel has to offer through our Vibe Tours program, much of our efforts this year have been devoted to raising awareness to the importance of branding and marketing Israel to the world within Israeli society and the Jewish Diaspora, and to understanding the specific needs of Israel's various stakeholders in order to inspire them and facilitate their active participation in the Vibe Israel Initiative. Check out our [new video](#), telling the story of the new and improved Vibe Israel.

### **Greetings from the Chair of the Board, Vibe Israel USA**

Greetings from Vibe Israel USA!

2019 was a year of great progress for our US operations. Working with our Board of Directors, we brought on a new CEO to focus on expanding our financial resources and implementing our plan for US expansion. Together, we aim to raise the profile of Vibe Israel's mission to change perceptions of Israel throughout the US, working with a variety of stakeholders and partners.

Much of this past year was dedicated to developing the Vibe Israel Academy, an educational tool to train our partners how to share our vision of Israel with their young adult stakeholders. We are looking forward to our first ever Storytelling Israel Summit, in partnership with Jewish Federations of North America.

Vibe Israel is lucky to have a dedicated group of donors and partners who support our work. Their vision and commitment to changing the way Israel is perceived by the next generation is truly inspiring. We thank all of you, our supporters, for sharing the vision of Vibe Israel. We look forward to an even more successful 2020!

Richard N. Bernstein, Chairman of Board of Directors

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## Vibe Tours

Our year of FOOD! This year we decided to focus our efforts on one field of interest and making a greater impact in that field instead of spreading our efforts in various fields. For this reason, all the tours this year focused on food!

Here are some interesting things to know about our 2019 Tours program:

- We hosted **3 food tours** this year\* (Vegan, Pastries and a general Food tour): 16 influencers, from 6 countries (USA, Canada, Chile, Sweden, Australia and the UK), with a potential reach of 4.5 Million followers.  
\* Because of our reorganization and efforts fundraising, we chose to run tours starting in the second half of 2019.
- **Engagement over Reach** - The world of social media is constantly changing, and we are frequently rethinking our methods and making adjustments to keep up and stay on top of it all. This year we put an emphasis on the level of engagement the influencers have with their community instead of the number of followers as we previously did. This choice has proven itself to be especially beneficial considering the personal and intimate nature of our tours. Influencers from all Tours this year reported unusually high levels of engagement, and that their followers stay tuned for all of their Instagram Stories, and comment regularly on them.
- **High ROI** - We updated our social listening technology and are now using a new system which evaluated the approximate worth of generated posts.
- **#IsraeliBreakfast** - Each tour this year had a special segment dedicated to the Israeli Breakfast, which is slowly but surely becoming [the next big thing out of Israel](#).
- **Returning Influencers** - This year we continued experimenting with inviting Vibe Tours Alumni to come back and recruit the other participants for the tour. Sarah Crawford ([Broma Bakery](#)) from our 2017 food tour reached out to a group of hand-picked colleagues and invited them to join her on our 2019 Pastry Tour. We found that this was a much more efficient way to recruit quality influencers and create a sense of community among our participants.
- **A life changing experience!** We know our Tours tend to leave a lasting impact on our participants, many of whom decide to adopt some "Israeliness" into their daily lives. However, this year we reached a new and unexpected record when three of our Food Tour participants TATTOOED the word "Sababa" on their arms during their stay, saying they felt connected to the general attitude of the people they met during their visit and reminding themselves that "It's all good".
- **The Israeli way of Celebrating life!** One of the challenges in our work is to convey the uniqueness of Israeli culture and way of life through experiences that surprise and challenge our influencers. In our recent #VibeFood tour, we knew we achieved

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this goal when one of our participants described a typical Friday Night Dinner experience as “Thanksgiving every week”.

## **Vibe Tour Participant Testimonials**

### Food 2019

Today is our last day in Tel Aviv. To say that this trip has been a life changing experience would be an understatement. Not only did I fall in love with this beautifully vibrant country, its breathtaking views, the out of this world food (can we please take a moment to take a look at this delicious Sabich) But I've also made friends for life. I felt home away from home. And can truly say that what captivated me the most is that after years of traveling, I've never met friendlier people.

--Diala Canelo, Diala's Kitchn


### Pastries 2019

Honestly, every second I spent in that country was truly amazing; I met so many kindhearted people, made new friends, and all around had such an incredible experience. I was immersed in the culture for 7 days of heaven where we toured historical sights, explored the colorful markets, visited different cities, learned to cook all sorts of incredible pastries, and ate more food (read: carbs) than I ever thought was physically possible.

--Mike Johnson, Mike's Bakery

### Vegan 2019

This week I have the privilege to cross off one of my bucket list items. Today, after years of studying religion and history, I finally find myself in Jerusalem.

As someone who no longer practices religion, I found it so beautiful to see every story I was taught in Sunday school, come back to me. It made me miss my family, it made me long for togetherness. 

We can have peace and togetherness, we can break bread as companions, we simply need to have empathy and love for one another.

Thank you @vibeisrael for making my dreams come true. My heart (and my tummy) are full (of hummus).

--Candice Hutchings, The Edgy Veg

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### **The Vibe Israel Academy**

The Israel Brand Academy is our new department dedicated to training others in telling Israel's story. We spent 2019 reaching out to potential partners and researching their needs in order to provide them with the most effective tools.

We identified that Israel has at least 10,000 brand ambassadors – people who talk about Israel publicly in their daily work. These ambassadors can be athletes representing Israel in international competitions, business people going on roadshows to recruit investors, chefs opening restaurants around the world, Israel educators in the Jewish Diaspora, and more. We aim to create tools that tell the story of the Israeli people and their spirit, and not of a specific industry. These tools can then be adjusted to fit any need.

Here are some of the accomplishments of the IBA in the past year:

- **Israel Brand Narratives Book:** In February 2019 we published our Brand Narratives Book, sharing the way we believe Israel's story should be told. The book is available for download [on our website](#).
- **International quantitative follow-up research:** We commissioned Bloom consulting to do a follow-up survey for the research they conducted for us in 2018 regarding international perceptions of Israel. This year's survey among 3710 Millennials and Gen Z's from 12 target markets strengthened our previous conclusions and confirmed that we are on the right track.
- **"Search Israel"** is a search engine for recommended places, experiences and speakers in Israel, based on our experience from the Vibe Tours program. The engine is currently being Beta tested and will be launched in March 2020.
- **"Unboxing Israel"** is an Israel toolbox for people interested in telling Israel's story in an attractive and compelling way. The toolbox is planned to be launched in March 2020 and will include a photo archive, infographics, printables, research highlights and more.
- We conducted a **needs assessment process** which included three round table events for the business sector with marketing, HR, and hi-tech professionals. As well as round table events and interviews with 30 people from 15 different organizations working with the Jewish Diaspora, including: IAC, World Ort, JCCA, Hillel, JFNA, Jewish Summer camp, iCenter, JAFI, HUC, and Jewish Learning Works.
- **Speaking Engagements and workshops:** Since we defined stakeholder management and training as one of our leading goals, we've put emphasis on using every opportunity to reach wider audiences and spread our messaging. Some of Vibe Israel and Vibe Israel USA's more prominent speaking engagements this year, included speaking and/or conducting workshops for: The Conference of Presidents, Hadassah, JNF, 2:22 (short "Ted" like lecture conference), Polish-Israeli Female

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Entrepreneurship Conference, Israel incoming Tour Operators Association Convention and more. In addition, we were invited to present Israel's brand and our bottom-up approach to branding Israel at City Nation Place – the global conference for Country Branding professionals.

### **Collaboration with the President's Office**

This year, we had the honor of collaborating with President Reuven Rivlin's office. In February we presented the results of our research and the Israel Brand Narratives we developed to the President and his team in a small and **exclusive event at the President's Residence**. Following this presentation, we were asked to assist in **creating new presentations** to be used by the team during various delegations and diplomatic visits. Following these collaborations, Vibe Israel was invited to manage, develop, produce and maintain a **year-long exhibition at Ben Gurion Airport** in 2020-2021 which will be based on the messaging and vision of the President's flagship program, "Israeli Hope". This Program aims to strengthen statehood and establish a partnership between the sectors that comprise Israeli society. The vision of Israeli Hope mirrors Vibe Israel's narratives which celebrate the cultural diversity in Israel. The Exhibition will be viewed by the 20 million people who go through the Airport yearly, as well as millions more via an accompanying digital campaign.

### **Growth**

We had refreshing changes of personnel both in Israel and in Vibe Israel USA. Becca Hurowitz joined our team in December, replacing Julia Ben-Shalom as CEO of Vibe Israel USA. Becca came to us from the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, where she worked in various capacities since 2010. You are welcome to read more about Becca and her move to Vibe Israel in [this article](#) by the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle.

To support the growing operation in Israel, we expanded our local team. The growth process has allowed us to retain existing staff members with 3 years of experience at Vibe Israel and promote them to senior positions. This enables us to better execute long-term plans and preserve organizational memory. The Tours team now includes a Director of Tours, as well as two new Tour managers. In addition, we added an accomplished Israel educator with several years of experience working with the Jewish Diaspora as manager for the Israel Brand Academy and related programs, added an in-house Digital content manager and a COO to manage the special projects and general operations of the organization.

For more information, review Vibe Israel USA's Form 990 [here](#).

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