

Boschulte Says Dept. of Tourism is Poised to Elevate Territory's Post-Pandemic Marketing Following Events in Dallas and Houston

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Dept. of Tourism Commissioner Joseph Boschulte By THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

The V.I. Department of Tourism said in a release that it is poised to elevate its post-pandemic marketing activities in areas such as Dallas and Houston, Texas and across the country following what the department hailed as successful events in those cities last week.

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According to the release, addressing travel advisors, meeting planners, members of the media and other hospitality and tourism professionals, D.O.T. Commissioner Joseph Boschulte shared the encouraging news of increased year-over-year airlift to the territory from Texas as well as other key cities in the nation. In addition, data shows that although the territory has been affected by the pandemic-related decline in leisure travel, the impact was significantly less than what its Caribbean neighbors experienced, comparing 2020 to 2019.

“The increase of airlift into the USVI from our airline partners signals a strong summer tourism season for the territory, and we anticipate strengthening our presence in Texas as well as other key markets in the mainland United States,” said Mr. Boschulte, noting that as the number of vaccinated travelers increases, the travel industry can expect to see continued recovery.

Recognizing that the tourism industry contributes an estimated 60 percent to the USVI’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Mr. Boschulte expressed the department’s gratitude to and praise for the territory’s locally based partners and stakeholders for their support during the exceptionally difficult past year.

“Our hoteliers, restaurateurs, tour operators, transportation providers, tour guides, retailers and the many allied partners who make our industry thrive have demonstrated remarkable resilience and innovation, and that has allowed us to be in a position to welcome thousands of visitors back to the U.S. Virgin Islands in the last six months,” he said.

Building on the foundation of recent marketing initiatives with strategic media partners Condé Nast Traveler, Pandora, Refinery29 and other key outlets, D.O.T. said it will enhance its sales activity in the months ahead, educating travel advisors, meeting planners, tour operators and wholesalers on the territory’s Covid-19 travel protocols, new developments related to hotel renovations and re-openings, and supporting them as they advise their clients to “Reconnect with Paradise” and to experience “St. Croix: A Vibe Like no Other”.

“Complementing our marketing and public relations work during the past year, much of our sales

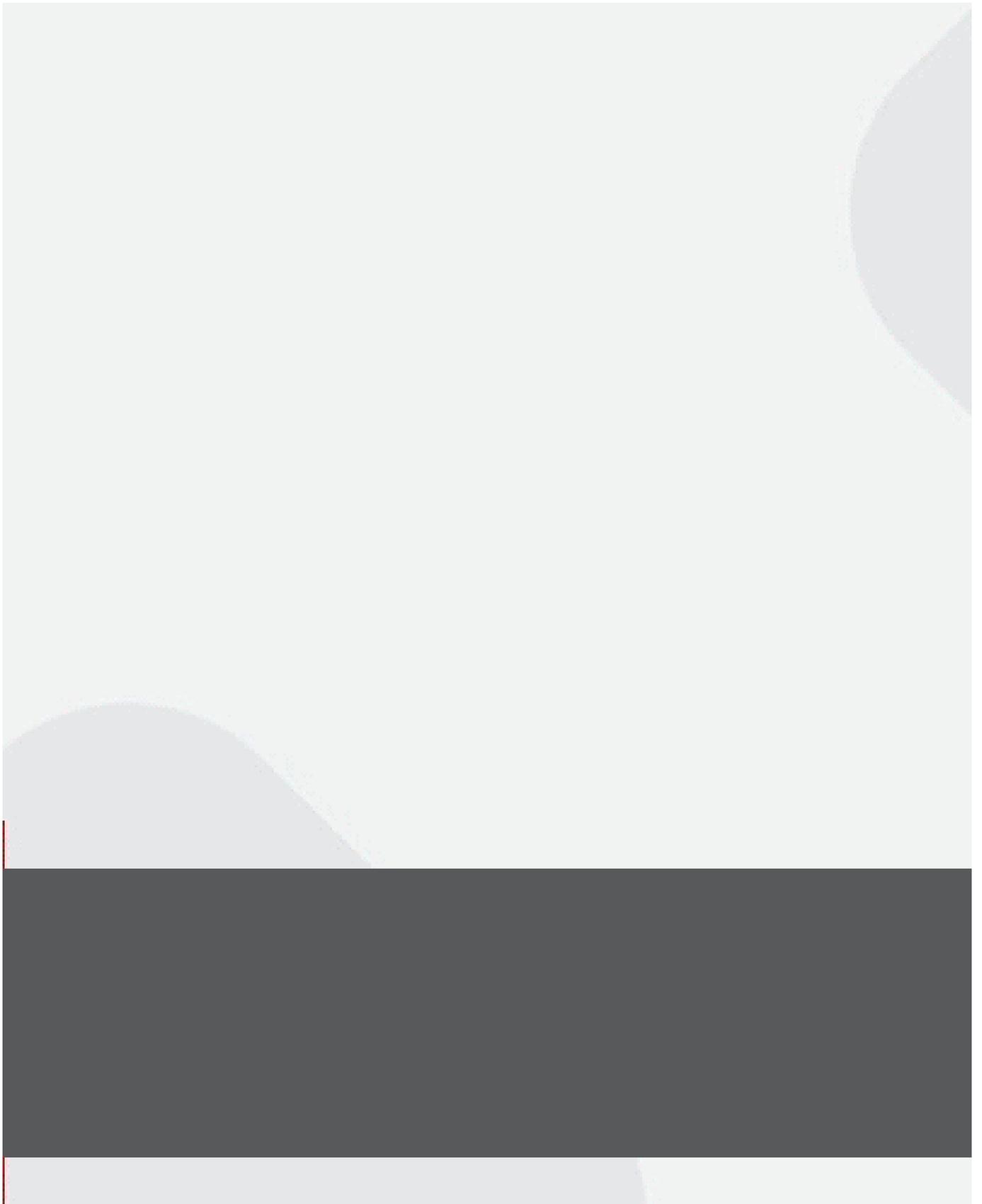
activity has been conducted virtually, out of necessity, making it even more gratifying that we have been able to keep the USVI 'top-of-mind' among travelers," said the commissioner, pointing to the relative ease of traveling to the USVI, combined with the USVI Travel Screening Portal tool, as key factors contributing to an unprecedented quantity of airlift and strong visitor arrivals and expenditures since the start of the winter season.

In addition to meetings with industry professionals, Department of Tourism representatives gathered with members of the Houston Virgin Islands Association (HVIA) to share positive news and developments in both the territory and the diaspora.

According to the release, meeting just in advance of Transfer Day 2021, the department congratulated HVIA President Carol Cuffy and her leadership team for the outstanding work the association does in serving its membership and communities as well as promoting the U.S. Virgin Islands as a travel destination. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner declared March 31, 2021, Houston Virgin Islands Association Day in Houston.

"Texas has been and will continue to be an extremely important market for travel to the USVI, and the Department is pleased with the outcome of our engagement with travel industry stakeholders and our fellow Virgin Islanders during this activation," reported the commissioner, who commended the HVIA for its proactive efforts to promote and strengthen the USVI brand.

"With positive developments related to travel trends, the growing availability of COVID-19 vaccines, and demand for USVI getaways, the Department of Tourism has a strong charge to boost our sales, marketing, advertising and public relations activities," Mr. Boschulte said, thanking Bolongo Bay Beach Resort, Secret Harbour Beach Resort, and Wyndham Destinations for supporting the Dallas and Houston meetings.



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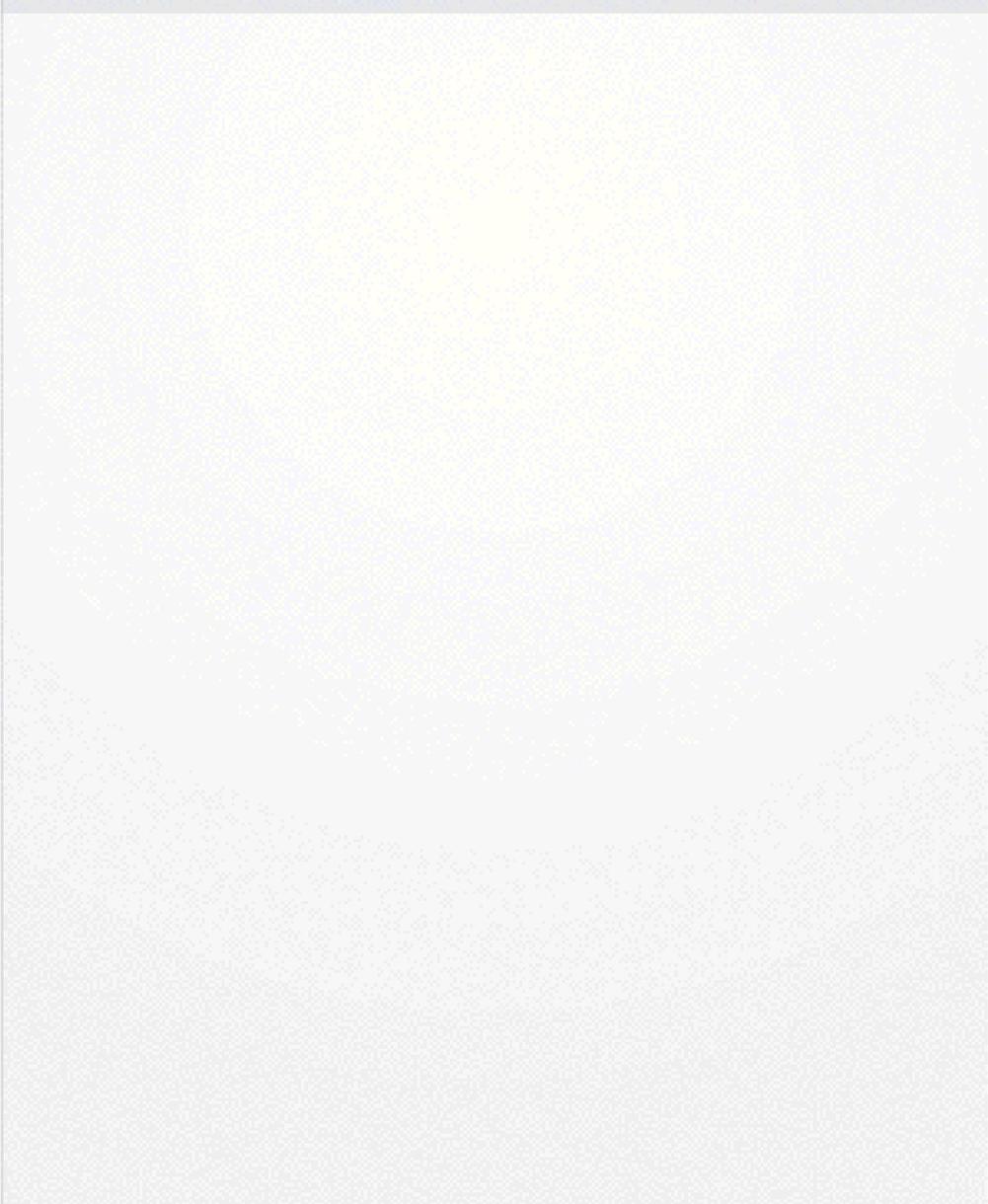
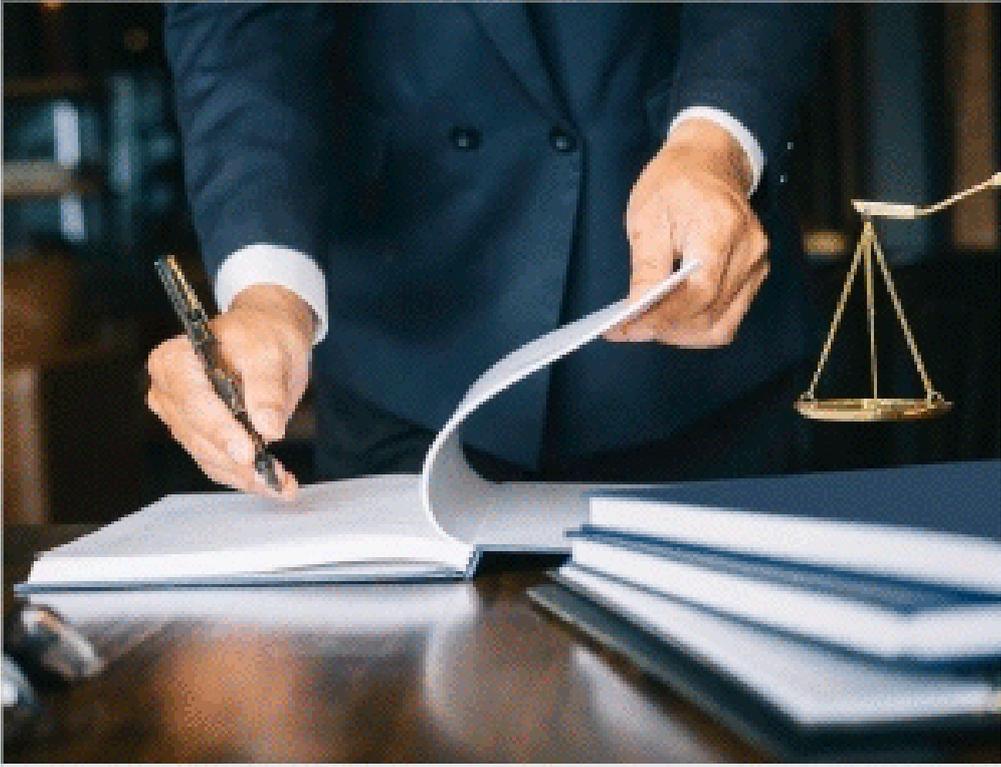
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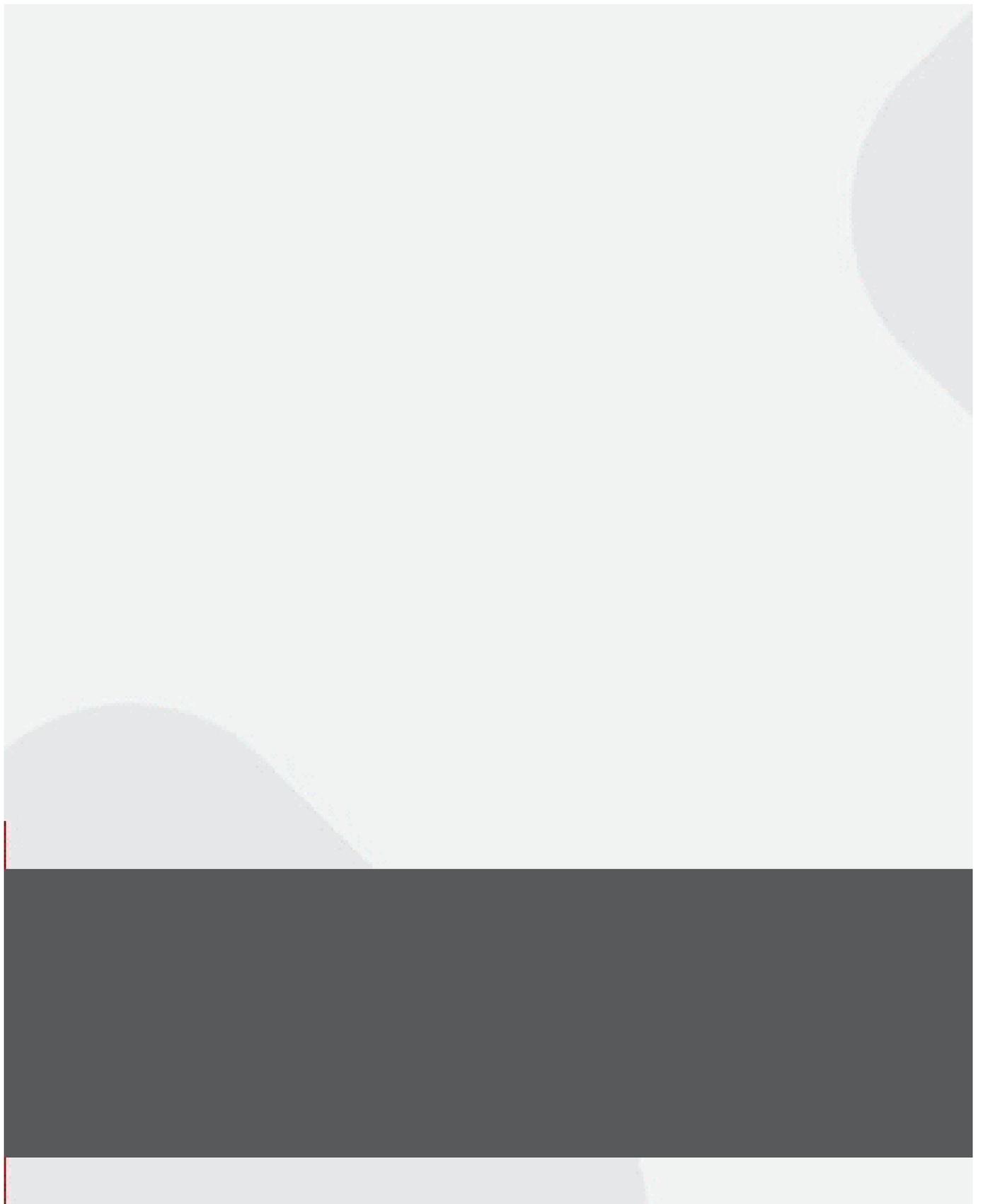
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