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Selling Space Travel To America (Without Relying On Nostalgia)

The Commercial Spaceflight Federation represents some of today's coolest space companies, but its old branding was the stuff of yesteryear.



JOHN BROWNLEE | 07.13.16 | 8:00 AM

Founded in 2006, the Commercial Space Flight

Federation is a 70-member industry group dedicated to realizing the dream of commercial space travel. It lobbies Congress and promotes space tourism on behalf of members like SpaceX, Blue Origin, and Virgin Galactic.

For example, last year, it was partially responsible for an updating of the [Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act](#), changing the way the industry had to report to Congress. It's also currently lobbying against

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commercial space industry. The CSF also helps set standards among industry members, bridges the gap

between academic space research and commercial research, and serves as a sort of catchall organization for promoting the industry through PR and marketing.

It's the kind of organization, says president Eric Stallmer, that wants to evoke visions of picnics on the ISS, vacations spent exploring lunar canyons, and colonists bouncing around on the surface of Mars.



Not that the Federation's existing website screamed any of that. Stallmer describes the old site as "stale, pale, and male." At best, it looked like an engineer built it, not unlike many other aerospace sites, including some parts of NASA: boring, old-fashioned, and purely informational. "In the past year, two companies have come up with reusable rockets, which is going to completely revolutionize how we access space," says Stallmer. That's an incredibly cool development, but nothing was cool about the old identity. It failed to relay the dynamism and excitement of today's space innovations.

The new Commercial Spaceflight Federation website, designed by Long Island-based marketing agency [Viceroy Creative](#), tries to do a couple of things. First, it's designed to make visitors excited about the poetry and adventure of leaving the planet. But it's also careful not to make its activities look too sci-fi. "We didn't want to be hyperbolic," by using, say, images of intergalactic spaceships or family vacations on Pluto, says Viceroy founder and president David Moritz. "We want people to

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understand that commercial space flight is real—it's right in front of you, not some grandiose future 1,000 years from now."

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To accomplish this, Viceroy Creative used a lot of beautiful, full-blown photographs on the CSF website to illuminate the reality of commercial space flight today. A reusable Blue Origin rocket, sitting in the desert after landing. The canopy of the clouds, viewed from low orbit. And almost infinitely dense field of stars, scintillating in the night sky. At the same time, Viceroy paid a lot of attention to the information architecture of the site, making sure that the new website does a better job of explaining what the industry

actually *does*, and what's happening in commercial space right now.





"The whole concept was designed to be classic, futuristic, and powerful," says Gabrielle Rein, a cofounder and creative director at Viceroy Creative. "We wanted to create something clean and elegant and beautiful, but which was also—because the CSF is an industry organization—corporate. It's meant to put a stake in the ground: This website is a representation of the commercial space industry itself, and this company represents all of its members."

Viceroy also designed a new logo for the lobbyist group. The existing logo—a line-drawn silhouette of a lantern-jawed astronaut's head looking upwards against the outline of the moon—looked very old-fashioned. The new logo is an abstract fractal, which almost looks like an origami space glider being flung into the sky. Unlike the old line drawing, the new logo will be more useful across many different materials and scales, from official stationery to business cards to app icons.

At the end of the day, Stallmer hopes that the new identity will help the CSF escape from what he calls the "aerospace echo chamber."

"I think the space business is the coolest industry out there, but we were preaching to the choir [with the old design]," Stallmer says. "Our message just wasn't getting out there." With the new website and identity, he hopes that the CSF will do a better job reflecting the incredible innovation of what's happening in commercial space over the next five years, while inspiring a whole new generation of would-be space tourists.

[All Images: via [Viceroy Creative](#)]

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