

Message from the President

Dear HMRA Members:
 I'm sure most of you are happy to see Fall arrive. As we enter the second season, it is time to reflect, analyze and plan for 2010. We'd love to hear your opinions on the summer, on the Rodney campaign and on any marketing ideas you may have. HMRA is always willing to listen to your viewpoints, feel free to drop us a line or give Susan a call.

Fortunately, the Employee Free Choice Act seems to have taken a back seat to the healthcare issue. We will be vigilant in following the issue and reporting back to our members.

With good weather and plenty of events on tap, the fall season is poised to be a success. Best wishes for success to all of you!

Sincerely,

John Lewis
 President

October 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Harbor Day
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24 Toast Our Coast
RESTAURANT WEEK →						
25 Toast Our Coast	26	27	28	29	30	31

SAVE & SAVOR

Our association has partnered with Ocean City Today to produce a standalone piece featuring the bios and menus of our fall Restaurant Week participants. This piece will be distributed in OC Today and also online at www.oceancitytoday.net. Advertising rates starting at \$115. Don't miss out on this great deal! Call Hope

Thomas for more details at 410-723-6397 or email her at hope@oceancitytoday.net.




October 18-25

Don't miss... 

For details, see page 3.



Your help is needed...

Due to budget cutbacks, the Worcester Technical High School culinary program is operating on 25% of last year's budget. Program instructor, Chef Paul Suplee has requested our help. He is asking local restaurants to donate any leftover items to the school so that he can use them to instruct his students. If you are able to help with a food or monetary donation, please call Paul at 443.880.1986 or 410.632.5050. He can also be reached via email at chefpaul@mchsi.com.

10 STRATEGIES TO BUILD MARKET SHARE

- 1 Reallocate marketing budgets from branding to direct-target marketing for a higher return on investment.
- 2 Know your customer. Build a marketing database designed to gain insights into customer value, vulnerability and potential.
- 3 Get smart about your customer data. Hotel sales and marketing teams should profile their best customers on highest value and target others that look like those best customers.
- 4 Leverage new customer insights on customer value, vulnerability and potential into campaigns that maximize ROI.
- 5 Test creative and offers to measure and redeploy what works best.
- 6 Track and report campaign response and conversion effectiveness.
- 7 Grow relationships with current customers. Use social media and electronic communications to increase loyalty and reasons to communicate with customers.
- 8 Update website analytics. Focus on visitor engagement: Examples include signing up for an e-newsletter or other value-added content like videos from your golf pro, spa director or chef. Data capture should occur on the site as much as possible and should include name, address, e-mail and phone number.
- 9 Launch programs that allow existing customers to consolidate their business with you. Give existing and new customers the chance and benefit for one-stop shopping.
- 10 Focus on trends such as marketing to baby boomers. Make websites attractive to boomers without being condescending. This is one of the most influential groups with the most buying power.

Source: David Ralls, AIR Marketing.
www.airmarketing.com

Welcome NEW MEMBERS

Associate

Sapia Hospitality
16th Street and Boardwalk

Allied

Aflac - Carrie Biscoe
Bank of Delmarva
Stong Fire Protection

HARBOR DAY *at the docks*

— A Waterfront Heritage Festival —

Saturday, October 10th 10 am until 5 pm

Join us for a day celebrating Ocean City's maritime heritage
This event is an innovative family friendly program highlighting Ocean City's important local maritime culture and traditions, including both commercial and sport fishing



SEAFOOD COOKING DEMONSTRATIONS
FISH CLEANING TECHNIQUES
FISHING GEAR & TACKLE DISPLAYS
LIVE MUSIC
KIDS ACTIVITIES
FISHTALES STORYTELLING
THE BLESSING OF THE FLEET
...AND MUCH MORE!

FREE PARKING!
Complimentary shuttle service from the West OC Park 'n Ride



On the Commercial Fishing Harbor
Sunset Avenue • West Ocean City

WWW.OCHARBORDAY.COM



UNION P D A T E

EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) will not likely make it up for full consideration before the U.S. Senate this fall, according to Majority Leader Harry Reid, signaling a shift in political momentum that could permanently sideline the hotly debated labor bill.

“We have too many other things on our plate,” including contentious healthcare reform and cap-and-trade carbon regulation, Reid said.

Source: Law360.com

THE FIRST ANNUAL BAREFOOT BENEFIT

The Jeffrey Marx Foundation

Saturday, October 3, 2009

Harborside Bar & Grill

12841 South Harbor Rd. • West Ocean City

\$20 at the door

Food, Discounted drinks, Auctions, Contests and Raffles

All proceeds will be donated to:

Worcester County Humane Society

Delmarva's Golden Retriever Rescue Program



OCTOBER 24TH & 25TH



NOON-4PM

at the Coastal Style Luxury Living Show

The Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association has teamed with the Coastal Style Luxury Living Show to create "Toast Our Coast" a celebration of food, wine and spirits. This event will take place at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center. Sample the delights of area restaurants. Ticket prices include admission to both events. Children under 12 are admitted free. We hope to see you there!

One Day Ticket - \$15 • Two Day Ticket - \$20

WWW.TOASTOURCOAST.COM

Don't miss out! Do we have your current email address? We have a new database and



would like to update our records. If you have not been receiving email communications from us (generally 1-2 messages a week) we do not have a valid email address for you.

If you would like to be on the list, simply send an email to amytingle@ocvisitor.com. Be sure to include your company name with your email.

TEN WAYS TO INCREASE HOTEL REVENUE

- 1** *Make sure you have email addresses for all your guests.*
If you don't, start a new policy of asking for the email both at the time the guest reserves the room (if possible) or at the time they register. Send a mailer to past guests for whom you do not have an email address that asks them for their current information (including email address) and reward them with a discount, free meal or similar incentive.
- 2** *Clean your mailing list at least once a year.*
One way is to simply generate a file and send it to the US Postal Service. They have a free service that will check for properly formatted addresses, moves, etc. Alternatively, you could mail a brochure and a coupon to all past guests with "address correction requested" on the envelope. Undeliverable mail will be returned to you and you can update your IN_GUEST table. Make sure that you ask for email addresses.
- 3** *Use the HOST profiles module.*
It is the perfect way to capture birthdays, anniversaries and other guest preferences. If you allow pets, get the names and the birthdays of the pets. Send email greetings on the special days for both guests and pets and on the anniversary of their last visit.
- 4** *Use the special features of your property to encourage repeat visits.*
If you have added something new, let the guests know. If the new feature appeals to families with children, create a mailing list segment for guests that came with children. Create a reason for the guest to keep your email or mailing piece by including a coupon with an expiration date.
- 5** *Have you designed your holiday packages for the coming year?*
You can list segments for guests that have come during a particular season in previous years for special promotions. Or encourage them to come in an alternate season.
- 6** *Do you have a frequent guest program?*
Can guests go onto your website to find out their frequent guest status? Do you let them know when they have achieved enough points for a free night or other benefit? Do you use email for the notifications?
- 7** *You should have a regularly published email newsletter.*
Create a place on your website for people to subscribe to your newsletter. HOST maintains the physical and email addresses of prospects as well as past guests. You can segment this data and customize the newsletter message to each.
- 8** *Make sure that guests receive a satisfaction survey after they check out.*
Market Metrics and Unifocus are two market research firms that have worked with HOST properties. Hammerman Associates has an interface program that automatically sends guest information to these firms when each guest departs.
- 9** *Analyze your denials.*
The easiest way to determine why prospective guests making inquiries did not make reservations is to analyze the reason they gave the reservationists. HOST uses the F11 key to record the reason, the possible arrival date and the lowest daily rate for that reservation. It is possible that a small rate or policy change could turn these denials into reservations. Hammerman Associates has a software product that can show the day-to-day revenue loss by reason for the loss.
- 10** *Older Americans appreciate the value of travel*
Provide activities that appeal to this market such as cooking classes by the top chef in your restaurant; golf classes by your local golf pro; and couples massage classes put on by the spa. Your HOST database can isolate guests by age if you are capturing birth date information.

Courtesy of Howard Hammerman • Hammerman Associates Inc. • www.hammerman.com

Congratulations to **Ross & Hope Palmer** on the birth of their son, Drew who weighed in at 7 lbs 14 ozs and was 19" long. **Hope** works part-time with **Ocean City Parks & Recreation** and **Ross** is employed by **Eagle's Landing**.

Kudos to **Greg Shockley** of **Shenanigan's/Shoreham Hotel** on being selected as the **Spirit of Ocean City** by the **Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce**.

Welcome to **Jennifer Taylor**, new Sales Coordinator at **The Grand Hotel**.

Congratulations to **La Hacienda** and **BJ's on the Water**, both celebrating their **30th Anniversary** this year!

Happy 21st Birthday to **Seacrets!**



Congratulations to **G. Hale & Christina Harrison** on the birth of their daughter, Haven. G. Hale's family are the proprietors of the **Harrison Group** properties.

Kudos to Gary Leach of **Centerplate/Delmarva Chefs & Cooks Association** on being inducted into the **2009 American Academy of Chefs**. The American Academy of Chefs is the honor society of the American Culinary Federation.

Congratulations to **Colleen & Eugene Rutzler** on the birth of their daughter, MadaLynne Dillon Rutzler. **Eugene** is employed by the **Harrison Group**.

CONDOLENCES

Our sincere condolences to the Hopkins Family of Mortgage Manor/King Charles Apartments on the loss of Evelyn Hopkins.

Our thoughts are also with Paul "Speedy" Tracey of Phillips Seafood Restaurants on the loss of his brother.

Maryland
tourism & travel
EDUCATING. INSPIRING & EMPOWERING **Summit**

We know you receive many requests for Silent Auction donations but this one directly benefits our industry! The Maryland Tourism and Travel Summit (MTTS) takes place this year November 4-6, 2009 at the Ocean City Convention Center and the Hilton Suites Oceanfront. Due to this exceptional venue and an excellent educational program, the attendance at the summit is expected to be high. This auction is a prime opportunity and an inexpensive way to help spread the good news of tourism to the summit attendees and MTC membership about what you have to sell or share and tell people about it.

To donate, go to www.mdtourism.com and click on "Tourism & Travel Summit"

Tuesday, September 29th
Ocean City Golf Club

For more information,
contact Diane Kaeufer at
410.289.9106



Atlantic General Hospital Foundation's
Fall Golf Classic

TOP 10 TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

SOURCE:PHOTCUSWRIGHT RESEARCH • WWW.PHOCUSWRIGHT.COM

<p>1 <i>Despite market woes, pockets of investment still exist.</i></p> <p>Innovation is the most important condition for transforming the crisis into an opportunity.</p>	<p>2 <i>The entire trip experience will be “informationalized”</i></p> <p>Access to more information than bookings is on the way.</p>	<p>3 <i>Software as a Service, Cloud Computing and Open Source spawn innovation.</i></p> <p>Open Source has matured to the point where many companies are fully dependent on it.</p>	<p>4 <i>Suppliers provide personalized booking tools.</i></p> <p>Future learning and shopping screens will adapt to the users’ profiles.</p>
<p>5 <i>Technologies continue to emerge.</i></p> <p>Nowadays, you do almost everything from one system or device.</p>	<p>6 <i>New mobile travel and location-based apps come to market.</i></p> <p>With the growth of 3G (broadband wireless) subscriptions and smartphone adoption, apps will embrace location and context in a new way.</p>	<p>7 <i>Advertising technology transforms travel distribution.</i></p> <p>The technology convergence will enable the convergence of business models.</p>	<p>8 <i>Still searching...for better search.</i></p> <p>As they begin to show differentiated business value, semantic technologies will gain traction.</p>
<p>9 <i>Democratization of supply levels the playing field.</i></p> <p>New technologies have all contributed to the development of an open marketplace for travel distribution.</p>		<p>10 <i>Business intelligence and analytics move to the forefront.</i></p> <p>Understanding what your competitors are doing and the effectiveness of your own operations are keys to success.</p>	



Susan says...

An inexpensive way to do a virtual tour of your property is to take a short video and upload it to YouTube. Then just link that video to your website!



BEST PRACTICES IN HANDLING ONLINE REVIEWS

SOURCE:Jonathan Barsky/Cindi Frame • HotelMarketing.com

**Editor's note: We have adapted this article slightly to apply to all of our member businesses, not just hotels. These suggestions can be applied to hotels, restaurants and anyone who serves the public directly.*

A recent survey conducted by Market Metrix and TripAdvisor found that 85% of hotels have no guidelines for monitoring, responding to or acting on guest reviews. Perhaps this lack of direction explains why, according to TripAdvisor, only 4% of negative reviews are responded to! Below are guidelines to handling online reviews, assembled by Market Metrix, based on the industry's "best practices".

MONITOR

Establish a process for tracking new reviews. Start by assigning one person at your property to monitor online review sites and have accountability to follow up on all reviews. This person should:

- Sign up for emails, alerts and RSS feeds to know when new reviews and scores have changed.
- Monitor the review sites frequently, depending on how often your company receives reviews.
- Make sure your property is listed on these sites and that your photos, videos and descriptions are up-to-date, accurate and complementary.

RESPOND

Management must clearly establish the property's response policy. Ideally, businesses should respond to all reviews within 24 hours in a personal and professional manner. This demonstrates the property's commitment to listening and acting on guest feedback. If a response is not possible within 24 hours, respond to all negative reviews first.

- If needed, forward negative comments to the appropriate person for assistance in responding and to let them know there is an issue in their department. Determine if and when the GM should be alerted.
- If a review is suspected to be fraudulent, immediately contact the review site to dispute it. If justified, the review will be removed.
- In responding to guest reviews, always start by thanking the guest for writing a review. For positive reviews reinforce hotel strengths and invite the guest to return.
- Forward positive comments to the appropriate person who can share the feedback with deserving employees.
- In responding to negative reviews, apologize for their experience, inform them what you will do to address the problem, invite the guest to contact hotel management for resolution and describe (or even post a picture) how the problem was resolved. Make sure to track which reviews have received a response.

ANALYZE/IMPROVE

User reviews expose the truth of a company's brand. Businesses are now challenged with maintaining high standards and meeting the expectations of customers who have done a significant amount of research before they travel.

Each review should be thoroughly evaluated. Ideally, results from all reviews should be stored in a database with a reporting package available for analysis. Analyze guest reviews to understand trends versus prior periods, identify performance gaps versus relevant competitors, uncover scoring differences among key customers groups, and provide an input for investment decisions. Review site feedback should be combined with your regular guest feedback program to get a full 360.

- Share issues, gaps and trends with appropriate managers.
- Set goals that are measurable.
- Consider tying employee compensation to appropriate guest feedback measures, as long as they are fair and unbiased.

In addition, display positive reviews on your site to show off positive experiences of other guest and to prevent travelers from searching for reviews on other sites. More people than ever before are reading reviews prior to traveling. Businesses that embrace online reviews and take actions can increase their business.

SEASON SUMMARY

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20 • 10AM - NOON

Our Annual Season Summary is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20th from 10am - Noon at the Roland E. Powell Convention Center.

This lively brainstorming event is open exclusively to members of OCHMRA, OCCVB, and Greater Ocean City Chamber. Without the restraint of press presence, business owners and managers speak freely about how the season went, and they offer suggestions on what we can all do to make next year better.

The information shared is not only invaluable to planning ahead, it brings the business community together for a common goal.

If there are any specific topics you would like to see covered at the season summary, please let Susan know at 410.289.6733 or susanjones@ocvisitor.com

2009

NOVEMBER 19
Carousel Hotel

DECEMBER 17
Captain's Table

2010

JANUARY 21
Princess Royale

FEBRUARY 18
Ember's

APRIL 15
Installation of
Officers & Directors
Harrison's Harborwatch

UPCOMING DINNER MEETINGS

HANG TEN IN 2010
at the OCHMRA
36th annual spring trade expo

MARCH 7 & 8, 2010 • CONVENTION CENTER • OCEAN CITY, MD
WWW.OCEANCITYTRADEEXPO.COM • 800.626.2326 X 2

*open to the trade only
no one under 21 admitted*

Staff

Susan L. Jones, Executive Director
Amy S. Tingle, Event Manager

Jayne Sawyer, Sandy Patrick; Part-time Tourism Coordinators
PO Box 340 • Ocean City, MD 21843-0340

410.289.6733 • 800.OCEAN • 410.289.5645 fax

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