



June 2014

# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## News from... THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Welcome New Members Active

*Touch of Italy*  
67th Street in the Holiday Inn  
Oceanfront

### Associate

*Coffee Beanery*  
94th Street Plaza

### Hotel Week August 17 – 28

Generate last minute summer business by participating in Hotel Week. This promotion is targeted to reach travelers whose schools go back after Labor Day. It features Beach Bargains and Free Nights. Check out the website for details. If you'd like to participate, let us know today!

### OC Tourism Strategic Plan

Stakeholder interviews are underway for the Town's tourism strategic plan. The plan is to develop a 5-year outline with defined goals, performance standards and to establish a framework to assist in making decisions and investments including target markets and guests. One concern to the HMRA Board is the drastic decline in winter business. If you have any input, feel free to share your thoughts with us!

### NASA new launch site

At a recent Tourism Commission meeting, a NASA rep stated that they will be implementing a new launch viewing site. The location will be at the OC Lifesaving Station Museum and will include a countdown clock. More details to come.



The wait is almost over! Ping Pong Summer arrives in theatres and onDemand on June 6th. It is truly exciting to have watched it all come to fruition. Listening to the producer pitch the possibility,

and the writer sharing his dream and love for OC, the Tourism Advisory Board, jumped on board and supported the film. Here's the plot: The year is 1985. Rad Miracle is a shy, 13-year-old white kid obsessed with two things: Ping-Pong and hip-hop. During his family's annual summer vacation to Ocean City, Maryland, Rad makes a new best friend, experiences his first real crush, becomes the target of rich, racist local bullies, and finds an unexpected mentor in his outcast next-door neighbor. Ping Pong Summer is about that time in your life when you're treated like an alien by everyone around you, even though you know—deep down—you're as funky fresh as it gets. Be sure to check out local Worcester Prep student, Emmi Shockley, among the award winning cast!

**PILATES**  
*on the beach!*

Mondays @ 9:00 am  
(Starting June 23rd)  
The Clarion Hotel, 100th St., OCMD

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, & Fridays @ 8:00 am  
(Starting May 27th)  
Off the boardwalk on Garfield Ave.  
Bethany Beach, DE

Thursdays @ 8:00 am  
(Starting June 26th)  
Castle in the Sand Hotel, 37th St., OCMD

*"In 10 sessions, you feel better,  
20 sessions you look better,  
30 sessions you have a  
completely new body."  
— Joseph Pilates*

**Classes just \$15,**  
*see you on the beach!*

SAVE TIME & SCHEDULE ONLINE:  
[www.beachpilatesandwellness.com](http://www.beachpilatesandwellness.com)  
CALL KELLY AT: 302-542-6521



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## Member highlights

Welcome to **Marge Steele**, the new Director of Sales and **Mike Hayes**, Director of Rooms, at Dunes Manor. Congratulations to **Keyanna Butts**, the new Social Media Coordinator at Worcester County Tourism. Congratulations to **Jimmy Glenn**, who was promoted to Executive Chef at the Clarion Fontainebleau. Welcome to the new General Manager at Ripleys Believe it or Not, **Nora Campbell**. Another congratulations to **Alina Mellinger** of Centerplate, on the birth of her baby Riley.

## Condolences

Condolences to **Deb Travers**, Comcast Spotlight, on the passing of her father, Carl R. Seal. Also, condolences to the family of **Sandy Patrick**, formerly Tourism Coordinator for HMRA.



## Member News

- **Holiday Inn Oceanfront** is partnering for a second Season with the Dickens Parlour Theater of Millville, DE to present Dickens on the Road Magic Shows. This summer, the shows will run 7 nights a week and in case of a rainy day, an afternoon matinee will help save the day. The shows will happen nightly at 7 PM from June 25 until Aug. 26 in the conference center of the Holiday Inn. Tickets cost \$20 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and younger and can be reserved by calling 410-524-1600 or visit [www.ocmagicshow.com](http://www.ocmagicshow.com). Call 410-524-1600 for more information.
- The aliens have landed at **Galaxy Golf on 33rd St**. Lots of new holes and fun surprises waiting around each hole!



Meet the Executive Chef of a **Touch of Italy**, **Ciro Verdi**, from New York.



Renee Seiden & Mark Elman from the Clarion welcoming Ravens Alum for the Ravens Beach Bash Tailgate Party.



Congratulations to new member **Barn 34** on a successful Ribbon Cutting!



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## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *Doug Buxbaum*

Doug "Buxy" Buxbaum came to Ocean City in 1986 from Johnstown, PA. By working at various local restaurants and bars such as the Purple Moose, Brass Balls, Bull on the Beach, & Shenanigans, he fostered the dream of owning his own Ocean City icon. After 4 years of searching for the perfect place, he opened Buxy's Salty Dog Saloon on 28th Street in 1999. Buxy's vision was to create a warm, friendly atmosphere with delicious food and good music—and now in their 15th year, they have succeeded. Incorporating his family into his passion, his wife Annie and mother have been instrumental in the restaurant's success. Buxy and Annie have a beautiful daughter named Bridget who has inspired the Buxy's onsies. Buxy and Annie also have 3 sons. In his spare time? Its been heard around town that he may or may not be a Steelers fan. The jury's still out.



**THE DISH:** *Restaurant industry trends* See the full article at [restaurantengine.com](http://restaurantengine.com)

### HOW TO DEFINE YOUR RESTAURANT'S TARGET CUSTOMER

When it comes to successfully running a restaurant, one of the most important things to consider isn't the food, the drinks, the décor, the locale or the service...

#### It's the customers.

If you want to run a successful restaurant, the customers are, without a doubt, one of the most important elements to take into consideration. After all, you rely on the customers for business, and their business brings in revenue; and it is the amount of revenue that you bring in that determines your success. Since the customer is such a vital element, one of the most important questions you can ask is this:

#### "Who am I trying to target?"

If you want to be successful in the restaurant industry, you have to define what demographic you are targeting. How do you define who you target market is? Here are some pointers that will help you define the people you are aiming to target.

#### Who is most likely to enjoy your establishment?

What type of menu are you serving? What is the atmosphere of your restaurant like? This will help you determine who your target market is.

You also want to be happy working in your type of establishment. So try to marry your style with that of your target customer.

#### Assess your location

The location of your restaurant is an important factor in determining what type of customer you will draw in.

#### Consider your prices

The prices you charge will also greatly influence the demographic you attract. Middle-class suburban families likely aren't going to dine at a restaurant that charges high prices. You are going to want to charge prices that the people in your surrounding area will be willing to pay.

Assessing your target customer can help determine where your prices should be. You always want to provide value to your target customer, but value is different to different people. Assess your target customer and create your menu accordingly.

#### What's your concept?

The concept of your restaurant is also going to be a big factor in determining your target customer. (tweet this)

The concept should meet the interests of the clientele you want to attract. For instance, if you want to draw in a crowd of 20- through 40-somethings who are looking to relax and have a good time, a sports bar, complete with televisions, a casual menu and a pub-like atmosphere will likely appeal to this demographic. If this is the concept and style that you want then you'll have to be comfortable not attracting people looking for quieter, more formal settings. This gets back to the idea of focusing on one target customer instead of trying to please everybody. A sports bar with luxury decorations just wouldn't work. You'd be confusing both sets of target customers.

**Your target customer base is, without a doubt, one of the most important elements for your restaurant. Your customers determine your success and when you appeal to the right demographic, you are sure to enjoy success.**



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## REST EASY: *Lodging industry trends*



### WANT MORE GROUP BOOKINGS? TELL A BETTER STORY. *By: Dave Spector*

Weddings. Family reunions. Milestone birthday weekends. Nothing fills your hotel like a group celebrating. They book multiple rooms, eat at your restaurant, and bring merriment (and revenue) to every outlet in the hotel. You'd love to book an event every weekend, but marketing to these groups is difficult and expensive. Party planners are fickle. Trends come and go so quickly, you're forced into costly updates and repackaging. But there is one timeless, common desire every guest wants. And you can sell it over and over at little cost to you. What is it?

A story they can repeat for years to come.

Whether you have all the amenities on their checklist or not, if you can show them the story they will someday tell, you've sold them. Of course, now the question is how to get the story into their heads. Let's examine some ideas together.

**BUT FIRST, YOU MUST KNOW WHAT CONSTITUTES A STORY.**

A story is not your lush green surroundings. It is not room décor or chef's creations or cake toppings. Those are details. More than likely, you already have a website and brochures full of details. A story is grandma traveling across the state to dance with 5-year-old Johnny. A story is the bride forgetting her something blue in her suite and the best man retrieving it just in time. Stories revolve around people. When you tell a good story, guests picture their grandma dancing in your ballroom and their best man dashing through your hallways.

#### 5 SIMPLE TRICKS TO EVENT-CAPTURING STORYTELLING

Now, that you have an image in your head of a good story, we can uncover some ways to make them public.

**1** Start small: You need a story to tell one. If you haven't booked a wedding in six months, you can still show your romantic side by creating a weekend engagement package. As more people propose at your hotel, use their stories. The internet loves proposal stories.

**2** Post a Treasured Memories page on your website: After an event, tell the planner you want to feature their party. Ask if you can interview a guest. It doesn't have to be the star of the party. Somebody who traveled far or who has known the guest of honor the longest usually has a good tale to tell. Remember, people love to share these stories. You simply need to ask.

**3** Use spontaneous quotes on social media: Spontaneous comments build associations between your hotel and emotions. For instance, a partygoer says to you, "I danced so much my feet will hurt for a week!" Instantly, your property sounds like a fun place to throw a party.

**4** Take control of social media by creating a hashtag: Business conferences use hashtags so attendees can connect. Chances are your private events will too, but learning what those hashtags are can be tricky—unless you create them. Sneak a #MarklovesMelissa or a #SamsAManMitzvah at the end of your first correspondence. Put your hashtag on welcome packages and cards. Get everyone excited about sharing their story on social media.

**5** Add-in your guest service skills: Now that you know where to find them on social media, join in on the conversation where appropriate. If everyone is enjoying dinner downtown and you know there is great live jazz next door. Use their special hashtag to suggest they check out the show. Essentially take the impeccable guest service you provide in private and broadcast it.

**Bonus Tip:** Don't wait until your next event to begin. Get in the habit of storytelling today. As you read this post, did a memorable guest story pop into your head? Share it with us in the comments. Or post this on social media with your favorite story from a past private event.

## Thank you....

Thank you to **Dunes Manor Hotel, Harrison Group Properties, the Flamingo, King Charles Hotel, Ocean Terrace Apartments, Harpoon Hanna's, Touch of Italy & Frontier Town High Ropes Adventure Park** for their hospitality in showing the OCHMRA staff their properties.