



# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## News from... THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Welcome New Members

#### Active Member

Longboard Cafe- 67th St Town Center

#### Allied Members

Absolute Security, Raggamuffin, & Vanderbilt Weddings

#### Tourism Metrics

After many discussions and tweaking, the new tourism metrics report is an extremely useful tool for tracking business. Tourism Director, Donna Abbott has done a wonderful job compiling the available information into an easily read report. These reports are also available online at [www.ococean.com](http://www.ococean.com) by scrolling to the bottom and clicking on the Media tab.

#### Data Collection

In order to effectively market, we need your assistance. Susan will be requesting zip code information from you to help track where our visitors are coming from. If you have RoomMaster, these reports are easy to pull. Please help us help the city!

#### Restaurant Week Returns

Make plans to dine out for Restaurant Week- October 13-27. Visit [www.oceancityrestaurantweek.com](http://www.oceancityrestaurantweek.com) for a list of participating restaurants. Make sure to "Like" our facebook page!

@OCMDRestaurant Week



## OCHMRA NEW ADDITION



We are pleased to announce Liz Walk has joined our team as Event Manager. Originally from Sarasota Florida, Liz received a Bachelor of Science from Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Currently, she is pursuing her Master's in Business. Her adventure in Ocean City began when she arrived a couple of years ago to take care of her grandmother. Once in OC, she quickly fell in love with the relaxed resort feel, the friendliness of the Eastern Shore and the sand between her toes.

Her love for hospitality came through her hostessing at Sunset Grille where you may still find her on occasion. Helping members comes natural as she honed her customer service skills while working with both the Berlin and Ocean Pines Chambers. In her free time, you can catch her on our coast enjoying her new hobby of paddle boarding.



### Ribbon Cutting!

Join OCHMRA and the OC Chamber for light refreshments to celebrate our new location!

**Tuesday, October 15 at 4 PM**

**5700 Coastal Highway (Above Suntrust)**

**3rd Floor #302**

## Happy Birthday to Us!

**18 Years & Loving It!**  
**We are all grown up now.**

**Thank You,  
Ocean City!**



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410-213-2400  
support@D3Corp.com  
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## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Gary Figgs - Seacrets

A true eastern shore native, Gary graduated from Snow Hill High School 1987. He began his tenure with Seacrets in 1990 as a doorman, moving up in 1993, to Comptroller and now serving as Vice President & Chief Financial Officer for both OC Seacrets and Seacrets Franchising LLC. But, he's not your typical CFO, he also handles all the marketing, advertising and sales pitches for Seacrets. Most recently, he's helped launch Tropic Ale, Seacrets brand of craft beer, brewed by EVO. In addition to his daily job and his service to the OCHMRA Board, Gary is also a board member of the OC Paramedic Foundation, the Worcester County Licensed Beverage Association and he serves on the Tourism Advisory Board. Any free time left is spent with his wife, Chrissy, and 3 lovely daughters traveling to their soccer and lacrosse games.

## Save the Date

### Dinner Meetings

**November 21** @ Princess Royale

**December 19** @ Captains Table

**January 16** @ Frescos

**February 20** @ Clarion Faontainbleau

**April 24** @ Harbor Watch

### Season Summary

**October 21 - 1PM** @ Convention Center RM 215

A comprehensive advertising and marketing review from the town's ad agency. And, a great forum to share your thoughts.



## THE DISH: Restaurant industry trends

### 10 SMART MOVES TO PROMOTE YOUR BRAND *By: Bob Krummert | Restaurant Hospitality*

So you don't have the marketing muscle of McDonald's. There are plenty of ways to create brand awareness, and some of them cost little or nothing.

1. One tried-and-true way to make an impression is to develop and promote signature dishes.
2. Leveraging partnerships with your suppliers—particularly wine, beer and liquor companies—is one very effective way to stretch your promotional budget.
3. Turn something ordinary into a cause for celebration. Restaurants don't need an official holiday to celebrate or create a special menu. Check out a calendar, consider your concept, then invent a reason to get people through the door.
4. Engaging your customers is the key to creating awareness of your brand, says Stone. Engaged customers are your fans, and they become your biggest advocates. "Word of mouth is critical to the success of any restaurant," Stone says. "You need to create a place where customers want to be seen with other people like themselves."

5. Another way to build credibility and loyalty is by hosting classes for the public.
6. Loyalty programs are so widespread that sometimes you need to get creative to reward regulars.
7. Social media and community involvement are two low-cost methods that can raise awareness of your brand.
8. Keep your concept fresh and give people a reason to visit through limited-time offers. They can be tied to the seasons, or to special events.
9. Take care of your current customers, but always be thinking about ways to win over new ones.

10. Finally, maybe most important, don't forget to review your marketing plan periodically. "A lot of times restaurants will conduct a market analysis when they open, but they won't follow up and do another one five years on, when the market and trends have changed," Pierson says. "You have to constantly revisit this over the life of the restaurant."

[Click here for the whole story!](#)



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Kudos to **Wajih Allam** who moved up to Group Sales Manager at the **Dunes Manor**. Many Blessings to **Will & Candace Savage, of the Majestic Hotel**, on the recent birth of their son, **William "Liam" Crawford Savage IV**. Congratulations to **Bob Torrey, Happy Jack**

**Pancake House**, who was blessed with the addition of two grandchildren last month. Congrats to new grandparents **Michelle & Kevin Ford of Gregory & Associates** and **Kone**, respectively. Also, a BIG thank you to our BikeFest volunteers- **Chris Trimper, Bob Torrey, Earl Conley, Jim & Annemarie Dickerson**.



Our deepest condolences to **Harry How, MAD Engineering**, on the loss of his mother.



## REST EASY: Lodging industry trends

### HOW TO USE TRIPADVISOR TO WIN GUESTS AND GROW YOUR BUSINESS

From: [eyefortravel.com](http://eyefortravel.com) Ritesh Gupta

Whether hotels like it or not, they cannot ignore TripAdvisor. Not only do people today write reviews, they also read reviews in the course of planning a trip. Not all happy guests will write a review but it is increasingly recognized that people are more likely to write a positive review than a negative one. That is more than enough reason to take the satisfaction of guests seriously. There is no shortcut for achieving a high rank year after year. "The secret is our people," says Gutman. "We hire happy people who love to be of service, and we train them and coach them to create a sense of pride in people pleasing."

The trick is to hire natural people pleasers. "If you do your bit to help them develop their skills and give them all the tools, plus the freedom to use their imagination and creative problem solving skills, needed to make people happy, you will be inspired to see how far they are ready to go for guests," says Gutman. Great people add so much value to a property; a guest will forgive you the unimportant physical shortcomings that almost any hotel has to deal with to some extent.

So how does this work in practice? When the group receives negative feedback it doesn't brush it off, but instead the team pools the creativity of all its managers to find solutions for the guest. On the other hand, when the group achieves a positive review, the team celebrates. The staff is constantly encouraged to offer great service and look for innovative ways to delight guests.

This means focusing on every minute detail. According to Gutman, this means breaking down the experience into every likely touch point the guest may have with the hotel. Then imagine likely scenarios be those answering a reservation request email or checking someone in. "Envision what practices can take the mundane delivery of a service and transform it into an opportunity to

connect with the guests and make the guest feel 'C.A.R.E.'," says Gutman. That is marketing speak for truly 'Cared for, Appreciated, and Respected at Every encounter.' In essence, this level of service is what Gutman is hoping to instill in every member of staff.

To achieve this, Gutman says they do not stick to a defined training schedule, but rather try to weave best practices – and review these - into every day tasks. "This keeps our priorities and values at the forefront of everyone's mind every day," she says. When staff are given positive feedback from guests, and enthusiastic reviews, they feel proud that their efforts are really appreciated – and in the hospitality business, this is what it is all about.

#### Top tips for getting it right

- Get all your most creative problem solvers together and go through the reviews to understand what people are saying about you now.
- Look at the positives and think about how to deliver that experience to all guests at every encounter.
- Examine negative comments and work to solve those issues, or at least do all the things you can to diminish future negative responses.
- Imagine the kind of reviews you would like to have and be the hotel that would inspire those reviews.
- Create a storyboard for each guest touch point, detailing the kind of behavior and best practice that you know should produce a very happy outcome.
- Then train, coach and inspire your team every day to do all that they can to make guests happy.
- Motivate them by giving them a sense of pride in their work and pride in service. Show your appreciation and celebrate their success.

To read the whole article- [Click here!!](#)