



**Myrtle Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
CVB Group Sales Committee Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2017**

Attendees: Christy Cochran, Anna Lillemoen Conley, Sabena Dayton, Alexia Edge, Heather Horner, Cindy Hull, Theresa Koren, Donna Rebello, Corrie Sanchez, Lynette Savidge, Bobbie Stanley, Heidi Vukov, Giedre Watkins, Patti Williams

Guest: Scott Murphy (Hampton Inn & Suites Oceanfront)

Staff: Kim DaRoja, Melanie Doty, Dawn Formo, Sandy Haines, Mary Carman Isenberg, Mary Mroz, Scott Schult, Mikki Walls, Josh Williams (Visibility and Conversions).

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1. **Call to Order/Introductions:** Sabena Dayton called the meeting to order at 3:30pm followed by committee and staff introductions.
 2. **Approval of Minutes:** Cindy Hull made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 7, 2017, meeting. Bobbie Stanley seconded and motion was carried.
 3. **Marketing Update:**
 - a. **CVB Funding Model Update** – Scott Schult presented a Power Point presentation on the new funding model. Scott did an excellent job explaining the difference between Public Revenue and Private Revenue and why this new model is so crucial to the stability of the Chamber and CVB. Public Revenue comes from Tourism/Development and ATAX and is Restricted. This covers out of market programs, such as TV ads, digital ads, tradeshow, etc. Private Revenue comes from CVB Advertisers and Membership Dues and is Unrestricted. This covers Chamber operations, building maintenance, computers/mobiles and staff. There has to be continuous efforts to find new ways to work together and earn more private funds due to restricted funds. This protects the revenue stream and provides the ability to maximize programs. This also provides a stable revenue source that will allow the Chamber to make great strides toward all goals, such as 20 million by 2020. This new model will be ‘a la carte and based on each market segment. This will give the members the ability to customize the package that will best fit their needs and goals. The Chamber Board of Directors will vote on all levels of pricing in April and will release the information and pricing to members shortly thereafter.
 - b. **2017 Advertising Strategy** – Mary Mroz presented a Power Point presentation on Group Sales advertising that has been placed so far this year, as well as what the plans are for the remainder of 2017. Marketing is looking to continue growing the visibility and conversions of the Group Sales market by focusing more on digital advertising and industry publications rather than print advertising. Mary also included in her presentation several samples of ads and email blasts that have been placed. These outlets include Sports Travel, Sports Destination Management, Sports Events, Connect Sports, etc. for the Sports Market. Successful Meetings,

Chicago Area MPI, SGMP, AENC, M&C, Potomac Chapter MPI, Meetings Today, Conventionplanit.com (new), Association Forum, etc. are being used for the Meeting & Conventions Market. These outlets allow the ability to contact meeting planners directly which is showing a lot of success. Group Tour outlets listed were MCA, Group Tour Magazine, ABA, Select Traveler, Group Travel Leader, SYTA, etc. Marketing is also participating in numerous editorials and placing many different banner ads that rotate between images of shopping, dining, beach and entertainment. Marketing is also promoting the individual URLs of the different segments by using myrtlebeachsports.com, myrtlebeachmeetings.com and myrtlebeachgroups.com.

- c. **Website & Digital Update** – Josh Williams with Visibility and Conversions reviewed the January 1– March 15, 2017, Group, Meetings and Sports Website Performance Year-Over-Year Report. The report shows YTD traffic and page views are up for both the Meetings and Sports sections of the website. There have been more visitors to the RFP page this year (+12%), however, there have been 31 fewer RFP submissions. This may be due to the desire for face to face, phone and/or email inquiries instead. They are now tracking a sample of in market arrivals to help measure media effectiveness and will soon have full YoY arrival data as well as leisure media performance to compare. This is primarily focused on Google, Display Network, Facebook, Bing and YouTube. New initiatives include Facebook and LinkedIn advertising as well as Bing search marketing. Sabena Dayton asked if the RFP process could be simplified. Kim DaRoja will check the form to see if can be further cut or customized for the market segment to make the process less cumbersome.

4. **Tradeshow/Sponsorship Update:**

- a. **International Tourism Bourse (ITB)** – Scott Schult attended March 8-12, 2017, in Berlin. The same participants attended this year with the same passion. Golf is still the main focus and the only consistent issues were flights and transfers to Myrtle Beach International.
- b. **Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA) Emerge** – Mikki Walls attended on February 7-9, 2017, in Chicago, IL and had a Co-Op with Doubletree Resorts, Myrtle Beach Convention Center and Alabama Theatre. There were over 124 planners that attended leading to 30 appointments and walkups. This is a good show for the religious market and will be in Omaha, NE next year. Myrtle Beach did bid for regional conference and did not win.
- c. **SC Society of Association Executives (SCSAE)** – Ursula Grant attended on February 9, 2017, in Columbia, SC. This show has been attended for 20+ years and always has a great turnout from Myrtle Beach partners. This year Alabama Theatre, Marina Inn at Grande Dunes, Sheraton Hotel, Doubletree Resort, Myrtle Beach Marriott, Vacation Myrtle Beach, Oceana Resorts and Myrtle Beach Convention Center all attended. There were over 100 registered guests in attendance this year. They are hoping to make some changes for next year as the setup was a little less appealing with Bureaus in the hallway and Suppliers in the exhibit hall. This show has led to 5 leads and 1 definite lead.
- d. **Your Military Reunion Connection (YMRC)** – Melanie Doty attended on February 12-17, 2017, here in Myrtle Beach, SC with several partners including Landmark Resort, Brittain Resorts & Hotels, Doubletree Resorts, Beach Cove Resorts, Sea Mist Resorts, Crown Reef Resorts and Alabama Theatre. The planners got to experience Myrtle Beach while in town and participated in Site Visits and FAMS at all the above venues. This show has been attended for 4 years and Melanie added a second show with YMRC that will take place in Savannah, GA in November. She has 15 appointments and 7 leads have been sent in relation to this show.

- e. **Heartland Travel Showcase** – Sandy Haines attend on March 3-5, 2017, in Pigeon Forge, TN with Alabama Theatre, The Calvin Gilmore Theatre, Brittain Resorts & Hotels, Original Benjamin's, Barefoot Princess Riverboat and Legends in Concert. Sandy attended this show for the first time as this was the first year the invitation was extended to southern states. All the partners went with a Dr. theme and handed out "shots of entertainment" that were syringe pens and all wore lab coats. This was a great show consisting of 32 pre-scheduled appointments.
- f. **Travel South Domestic** – Sandy Haines attended on March 12-15, 2017, in Branson, MO with Alabama Theatre, The Calvin Gilmore Theatre, Brittain Resorts & Hotels, Oceana Resorts, Vacation Myrtle Beach, Legends in Concert, Original Benjamin's and Fairfield Inn Broadway at the Beach. The state row of South Carolina had the most showing of and biggest support in attendance from Myrtle Beach. This show has been attending for 10+ years and is a great show resulting in 45 prescheduled appointments. Travel South has been awarded to Myrtle Beach for 2019.
- g. **MPI** – Mikki Walls attended on March 16-17, 2017, in Myrtle Beach, SC. This quarterly meeting was well attended and hosted by Doubletree Resorts.

5. Update:

- a. **2017 YTD Results** – Through March 26, 2017, 283 leads were generated which is at a pace of 25% and has generated 73,965 definite rooms nights which is at a pace of 27%. This leads the Group Sales Department into the 2nd Quarter ahead of pace.
- b. **YTD Prospects** – Out of 158 prospects so far for 2017, the sales manager's efforts have resulted in 28 converted to a lead status for a 17% conversion rate.
- c. **YTD Site Visits** – From January 1 - March 28, 2017 Mikki Walls has participated in 2 Site Visits with a 100% conversion rate. Ursula Grant has led 4 Site Visits with a 25% conversion rate. Sandy Haines has conducted 14 FAMS directly related to Travel South 2016 which a 98% conversion rate.
- d. **VIP Discount Card Program** – This program has expanded and developed throughout the years with the constant goal of producing more ROI. The design has changed to an accordion pocket size hand out that will hopefully encourage groups to hold onto the card and bring with them on return visits. All groups and each attendee can get one of these cards. The Chamber/CVB is looking for more members to participate so a small amount has been printed to date. Members should offer a universal year round offer and track the card so we can determine its success.
- e. **Member Appreciation Cookout** – The Myrtle Beach Chamber and CVB are hosting a cookout in the parking lot April 28th from 11:00am – 2:00pm for all members to show our appreciation for their partnerships.
- f. **Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID)** – An invitation for GMID was sent out through SimpleView and Outlook Tuesday and all Group Sales Departments and General Managers are encouraged to attend. The event is from 5:30pm – 7:30pm on April 6, 2017, at the Myrtle Beach Marriott's Atlantic Ballroom. We want to promote that Meetings Mean Business and participate in the Global Campaign to show how important meetings and the group market is, especially in a market like Myrtle Beach. Along with our members, CCU delegates, State

Dignitaries and Brad Dean will be in attendance as well. Members are urged to come celebrate with us and partake in food, beverages and entertainment.

- g. Myrtle After the Masters (MAMFAM)** – This is the 7th annual MAMFAM and will be held April 8-11, 2017, at Marina Inn Grande Dunes. There are 8 clients attending consisting of 4 Associates, 1 Third Party Company and 3 Corporations. The schedule is packed with sites to hotels and restaurants along with The Calvin Gilmore Theatre and a golf instruction class hosted by EnVents. The finale will be the Hootie and the Blowfish concert at House of Blues.
- h. Carolina Country Music Festival (CCMF FAM)** – The 1st CCMF FAM will be held June 9-12, 2017, at Sheraton Hotel. This FAM will consist of showcasing the area along with hotels, restaurants and the finale being the Carolina Country Music Festival. Invitations have been extended to 8 planners with 4 being Meetings & Conventions and 4 being Tour & Travel. Hoping this is a successful event and becomes an annual FAM.

6. Unfinished Business:

- a.** No unfinished business.

- 7. Adjournment:** Sabena Dayton requested the adjournment at 4:30pm. Heidi Vukov made a motion to accept and Bobbie Stanley seconded the motion resulting in the adjournment of the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 6, 2017, in the Chamber Boardroom.