



**Myrtle Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
CVB Group Sales Committee Meeting Minutes
June 6, 2017**

Attendees: David Amend, Sabena Dayton, Alexia Edge, Tim Huber, Cindy Hull, Pauline Levesque, Donna Rebello, Lynette Savidge, Bobbie Stanley, Heidi Vukov, Margaret Wallace, Patti Williams

Staff: Mike Anderson, Diane Charno, Kim DaRoja, Casey Dornhecker, Dawn Formo, Sandy Haines, Mary Carman Isenberg, Lisa Saguto, Mikki Walls, Josh Williams (Visibility and Conversions)

1. **Call to Order/Introductions:** Sabena Dayton called the meeting to order at 3:36pm followed by the introductions of summer temporary hire, Lisa Saguto. Lisa will be a senior at CCU next year. She interned with the CVB last year and we are excited she is back working for group sales and marketing this summer.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Cindy Hull made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 28, 2017, meeting. Lynette Savidge seconded and motion was carried.
3. **Stellar Award:** Casey Dornhecker was awarded the Stellar Award by Kim DaRoja. The Stellar Award is a recognition of an associate on a quarterly basis and is awarded to an employee that exemplifies company achievements, excellent customer service and honors all the Chamber Values of Promote, Protect and Serve.
4. **Marketing Update:**
 - a. **Website & Digital Update** – Josh Williams with Visibility and Conversions reviewed the January 1 – May 31, 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 and only slightly down for the Groups section. The top Groups page is dining/entertainment while the top Meetings page is RFPs and the top Sports page is Testimonials. RFP Form Starts is up 30% while RFP Submissions are down 29%. This has been the trend for a while now so they are looking at new ideas to encourage RFP Submission and reverse this trend. Some of the ideas they are going to start implementing are Facebook Lead Ads and Direct Targeting RFP Forms. Facebook Lead Ads can capture information from Facebook where there is a large target audience. This can be hyper focused as the Chamber/CVB desire. There will be ads on the banner feeds and will lead to capturing information with auto populated fields. This can then be downloaded into a spreadsheet and sent to the CVB as leads. These will be targeted based on geography, interest, job titles etc. The RFP Form will be simplified but with more direct targeting to make Myrtle Beach more relevant. This form will be customized to the customer with specific messaging based on their market choice. To increase the RFP Submission, the Group Planner Guide will be hidden behind

the submission form and require an email address. This will also increase contacts and flash drive requests while decreasing the need for print.

- b. **Toronto Sales Mission** – Diane Charno, Ursula Grant and Kimberly Hartley attended this mission with a Relax and Unwind component. They had several events scheduled including face to face appointments, media appearances, and morning show live cooking demonstrations with featured Chefs, Jamie Saunders from Johnny D’s Waffles & Bakery and Joseph Bonaparte from the International Culinary Institute of Myrtle Beach. The main event was held at the upscale, Island Yacht Club with 101 attendees. We held a 4-week promotion prior to event with 1 grand prize winner out of 800 for a trip to Myrtle Beach. Several leads and media requests have already been received from this mission. Myrtle Beach is not the only destination heavily targeting Canada now but many planners said Myrtle Beach has been the best. The CVB would like to grow this mission and have more partner participation in the future, possibly combining with IPW or by adding an additional sales mission to Canada.

5. Sports Tourism Update:

- a. **Stakeholder/City Meeting** – Held on May 12, 2017, the CVB and the City of Myrtle Beach met to address several recent concerns about the Myrtle Beach Sports Complex fees and policies as well as concern over the City’s new outdoor sports facilities fee structure. With being one-third into the year, the City stated there has been no economic fallout, however, the Chamber/CVB is aware of 2 major groups who do not plan to return due to this new fee structure. This decision has a big economic impact as most groups stay more than 7 days. This was a great meeting discussing the sustainability to maintain and maximize customers. Great start and a follow up meeting is planned to continue discussions and the impact on this important segment of our tourism industry.
- b. **Event Organizer, Coach, Parent New Incentive Program** – Mike Anderson is working with the Chamber and CVB to create an incentivized Sports program keeping in mind what each level would like in a program. This program will have 3 tiers: Event organizer, Coach, Parent. This will strive to impact and encourage the teams to stay within the partner accommodations. While the details are being completed they are looking at programs involving money reimbursement, gift cards, free parking etc.

6. Tradeshow/Sponsorship Update:

- a. **National Association of Sports Commissions (NASC)** – Mike Anderson and Casey Dornhecker attended March 27-30, 2017, in Sacramento, CA. This conference is geared more towards Sports Education while also discussing trends, networking and hold a marketplace. It’s held every year in April. This year they had 18 appointments consisting of 3 existing, 9 prospects and 6 weak leads. They had a paint by numbers artist with a Myrtle Beach scene that was a huge hit and made the booth a success. O total room nights thus far for 2017, however, overall total room nights are 26,813. Cost is \$20,000 to be an Elite Sponsor, which includes Annual Membership, Symposium Registration and Exhibit Booth.
- b. **Connect Diversity** – Ursula Grant attended March 27-29, 2017, in Las Vegas, NV. There were 35 pre-scheduled appointments with results of 1 lead and 1 lost so far. This tradeshow focuses on multicultural businesses in the meetings and conventions industry. It is a reverse tradeshow setup with numerous seminars and educational workshop opportunities as well. Cost totals \$1,627.91.
- c. **HelmsBriscoe Annual Business Conference** – Mikki Walls attended April 18-21, 2017, in Chicago, IL. This is the first time this show has been attended my Myrtle Beach. There were

over 1,900 attendees. This show has no scheduled appointments but rather a wait in line scenario. Mikki met with 30 planners. Mikki feels this is a great show that helps maintain and strengthen an existing relationship with HelmsBriscoe. Total cost was \$5,026.16.

- d. **Meetings & Incentive Forums** – Mikki Walls attended May 6-10, 2017, in Cancun. This is the second year attending this show. There were 185 buyers and 150 exhibitors. Mikki secured 39 appointments. Planners are all 3rd party representations who are pre-qualified leading to good appointments. Marina Inn Grande Dunes was the only partner that attended with Mikki. So far there has been 4 leads, 1 definite and 1 lost from this show. Total cost was \$5,609.39.
- e. **Brand USA China Sales Mission** – Kimberly Hartley attended March 20-25, 2017, in Beijing & Shanghai, China. This was the second annual sales mission hosted by China in six regional Chinese cities, two of which we participated in at Beijing & Shanghai. This mission provided a platform to showcase the Myrtle Beach area as a destination of choice in the Southeastern USA for international Chinese travelers. Appointments were set up by BUSA with high-level decision makers from the Chinese travel trade, including travel agents, tour operators, airlines and media. This show has a variety of planned events, an appointment marketplace and functions. Kimberly introduced our Southern Pearls tour which includes Asheville, NC; Myrtle Beach, SC; Charleston, SC; Savannah, GA and Atlanta, GA. Kimberly had 34 appointments in Beijing and 28 appointments in Shanghai. She recommends we attend this on an annual basis.
- f. **Active America China Summit** – Kimberly Hartley attended April 22-26, 2017, in Portland, OR. This show is appointment scheduled based and included American receptive tour operators who focus on the Chinese market, bringing Chinese visitors over from China to the USA. This summit is organized by North American Journeys and was our first time attending as a member. Chinese companies based in China were also invited in addition to USA based Chinese receptive operators from Los Angeles. The two days of appointments and sessions were very beneficial. It was an excellent opportunity to make new contacts and reinforce our destination. Kimberly also presented the Southern Pearls tour at this show, where it was received very favorably. Kimberly had 23 appointments and recommends this show is attended again next year.
- g. **ITB China** – Kimberly Hartley attended May 10-12, 2017, in Shanghai, China. This was a first-time effort for ITB to host a travel trade show in China to showcase close to 600 international exhibitors to the Chinese travel industry, which included local area travel agents, travel professionals and some media. Estimated attendance was close to 10,000. There were very few Chinese tour operator attendees. The show was heavily weighted with European and Middle Eastern exhibitors with only three USA exhibiting destinations including Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Myrtle Beach. It was good to be present at a first time show and return to this market to reinforce our presence and exposure. However, ITB China show will require a couple more years to grow and attract more USA exhibitors to build a stronger American message. ITB is considering having a Brand USA Pavilion next year since the USA was poorly represented. Kimberly had 24 appointments, 12 scheduled and 12 agents who stopped by the booth for information. Kimberly does not recommend participation in 2018.
- h. **North American Journey Summit East (RTO)** – Kimberly Hartley attended May 14-17, 2017, in New York, NY. She was a first-time attendee at this show, which is Eastern USA based receptive tour operators. It was a good experience with local area receptive operators who sell to China, the UK, Germany, South Africa, Mexico and Europe. The appointment based show was a full one day of appointments with a second day of market updates and educational sessions. Response to the Myrtle Beach area and our Southern Pearls tour was very positive with interest shown. Kimberly had 22 appointments and recommends attending next year.

- i. **TMAC AGM & Media Marketplace** – Kimberly Hartley attended May 24-28, 2017, in Quebec City. This is an Annual Travel Media Association of Canada AGM and media marketplace for Canadian freelance travel writers, which included two half-days of scheduled appointments plus sessions for both media and industry. Approximately 75 media from across Canada participated along with 125 supplier industry members. Excellent conference to make contacts with Canadian freelance travel writers to reinforce our story ideas for future press coverage via both traditional and online media outlets. Great interest in our destination with many requests to visit on individual press trips. Kimberly recommends this be attended next year as well.
- j. **China Summary** – Kim DaRoja talked about the trends in travel for the Chinese market and how they are expected to outgrow all the European market within the next few years. The countries topping the travel report by arrivals and spending are Canada, Mexico, United Kingdom, Japan, China, and South Korea. China is at the top of the Spending category and have a strong interest in shopping, cultural and history. The Chinese market is strong in FIT bookings and mainly consists of a young demographic that operate 80% off mobile devices. Although Myrtle Beach is a 3rd tier destination for this market we are seeing a growth in the 1st quarter of 2017 compared to 2016.

7. Update:

- a. **2017 YTD Results** – Through June 5, 2017, 503 leads were generated which is at a pace of 45% and has generated 142,477 definite rooms nights which is at a pace of 51%. This leads the Group Sales Department into the 3rd Quarter ahead of pace.
- b. **YTD Prospects** – Out of 44 prospects so far for 2017, the sales manager's efforts have resulted in 19 converting to a lead status for a 43% conversion rate. The goal for all sales managers to a 10% conversion date.
- c. **YTD Site Visits** – From January 1 – June 5, 2017 Mikki Walls has participated in 9 Site Visits with a 33% conversion rate, leading to 3 definite leads. Ursula Grant has led 9 Site Visits with a 22% conversion rate, leading to 2 definite leads. Sandy Haines has conducted 15 FAMS with a 79% conversion, leading to 11 definite leads. This has resulted in a greater than 60% YTD goal.
- d. **Myrtle Beach International Airport** – Myrtle Beach International Airport has increased efforts in many aspects leading to several positive 2017 trends including 38 non-stop markets, +419,000 new directional seats since 2012, +80 days with more than 5,000 directional sets and up to 1,119 directional seats per hour. Spirit is the dominant carrier at MYR, while Allegiant is the fastest growing. The number of directional seats have increased by 44% over the past 5 years. This is a direct result of training, networking and relationship building. Allegiant has also shown interest in hosting their 2018 annual conference in Myrtle Beach. Overall Myrtle Beach is hoping that all carriers will see this strategy initiated by Spirit and Allegiant and follow suit.
- e. **7th Annual MAM FAM Results** – This FAM was once again a huge success for the Myrtle Beach team, resulting in 3 leads thus far. These leads could produce 3,529 room nights and \$3.6 million dollars in revenue. Over the past 7 years, we've held 8 FAMs which have led to 31 leads, 7 definite groups and \$1.6 million dollars in direct spend.
- f. **Travel South Domestic 2019 Host City Update** – Travel South Domestic will be held in Myrtle Beach February 24-27, 2017. Sandy Haines and Dawn Formo attended the Travel South Right Start meeting in Biloxi, MS, to start the initial communications for the planning process and

conducted site visits of venues in Biloxi for the Final Night Reception that will be hosted by Myrtle Beach. This reception will be held March 20, 2018 at the Beau Rivage. This showcase will bring approximately 600 delegates in market during February 2019. The host hotel will be Sheraton Resort and the overflow property will be Marriott Resort at Grande Dunes. Rob Nolen, Travel South VP of Partnerships & Alliances, is attending the CCMF FAM and will be conducting site visits at additional venues for overflow properties and off property event space. Myrtle Beach will need lots of volunteers and planning committees. This event will also present several sponsorship opportunities to our members.

- g. CVB Funding Module Update** – Sabena Dayton stated that the new module has been approved by the Chamber Board. This module allows for an a la carte set up providing the opportunity for members to participate at different levels and markets. Hotel partners must pay a \$3 per room night fee for the Meeting/Conventions, SMERF and Tour & Travel markets. This is based on the contracted room nights and an invoice will be sent out quarterly to the partners for payment. It is imperative that hoteliers and the Chamber/CVB communicate contracted rooms so the Chamber does not become lead chasers. This implementation was crucial for the CVB and Membership is moving forward with presenting and selling to our members for 2018.

8. Unfinished Business:

- a.** No unfinished business.

- 9. Adjournment:** Sabena Dayton requested the adjournment at 5:00pm. Cindy Hull made a motion to accept and Patti Williams seconded the motion resulting in the adjournment of the meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, August 1, 2017, in the Chamber Boardroom.