



**Myrtle Beach Area Convention Bureau
CVB Group Sales Committee Meeting Minutes
September 22, 2015**

Attendees: Charlie Bradshaw, Jessica Chappel, Jessica Cutler, Sabena Dayton, Jonathan Fussell, Tim Huber, Anna Lillemoen, Scott Murphy, Karen Williams

Staff: Mike Anderson, Kim DaRoja, Ursula Grant, Sandy Haines, Danna Lilly, Mikki Walls, Michelle Schollmeyer

Call to Order: Charlie Bradshaw

Approval of Minutes: Sabena on made a motion to approve the minutes from the June 24, 2015 meeting, Jessica Cutler second, motion carried.

Digital Marketing Update: Josh Williams with Visibility & Conversions reviewed the Groups & Meetings Website Activity report from January 1 to August 31, 2015. Trends on group page similar to leisure. Budget hits have slowed down. Even though traffic is down the success metric with RFP is up. Danna mentioned that 2016 budget will remain flat. Josh asked for input on what could be improved in the RFP process. Looking at a November launch for new website design.

Trade Show/Sales Mission Recap

- **MPI-WEC:** Mikki Walls attended August 1-4, 2015 in San Francisco, CA. Meeting Professionals International welcomed 2,500 meeting, hospitality and tourism professionals in San Francisco, CA. for the associations World Education Congress. Attendance was approximately 25% higher than in 2014. 27 appointments were secured where Mikki Walls sat down, one on one with each planner to discuss our destination as well as their upcoming/potential business opportunities. In addition, we sponsored a table where we hosted 8 clients to a VIP experience called the Big Deal.
- **M&C InterAct:** Mikki Walls attended August 30- September2, 2015 in New Orleans, LA. M&C Interact, LA. Myrtle Beach filled every appointment totaling 18 over two days, along with networking events each evening. In addition, The Myrtle Beach Area CVB sponsored one of the lunches at the show. This enabled us to showcase our convention meetings video and get our destination in front of the 30+ planners that attended the event. Much of the conversations were about planners finding new alternatives to their typical locations like FL., GA, etc.
- **Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA):** Sandy Haines attended August 28-1, 2015 in Branson, MO. 30 appointments. Very good appointments, probably best SYTA that I have attended. Appointment where anyone from Bankers to Group Leaders, Tour Operators and anyone in between. Members who went along Ripley's Aquarium, The Alabama Theatre, The

Carolina Opry, The Palace Theatre, Courtyard Marriott BATB, Avista, Red Roof Inn and Pirates Voyage.

- **Connect Marketplace:** Ursula Grant attended August 27-29, 2015 in Pittsburgh, PA. This was a 2 day appointment based show that was divided into 3 markets; association, specialty and sports. Mike Anderson handle the sports market while Danna Lilly handled the specialty market. Sea Mist, Sheraton and Myrtle Beach Convention Center were represented. For the meetings market had 32 appointments. Appointments were overall very strong. Received a couple RFPs on the floor and strong potential for future RFPs.
- **American Society of Association Executives (ASAE):** Ursula Grant attended August 8-11, 2015 in Detroit, MI. Exhibited with Myrtle Beach Convention Center. This was a 3 day traditional style tradeshow. Great traffic. Met with approximately 40 planners that had serious potential for the area. Good show. No immediate leads but strong FAM candidates for MAMFAM 2016.
- **ExpoATL:** Ursula Grant attended September 2, 2014 in Atlanta, GA. This was a one day show that targeted regional meeting planners and offered an education component. Show was terrible. We were told 125 planners registered for the show but, only 20 actually showed up with no possibilities of meeting outside of the state.
- **Successful Meetings University – Southeast:** Ursula Grant attended September 9-11, 2015 in Hilton Head, SC. Hosted 24 group meeting professionals. Had 17 appointments and received 4 RFPs and will follow up on the potential of 3 more. Some great potential FAM candidates.

Sports Tourism Update: Mike Anderson reported that sports has continued to remain active. Anderson reviewed upcoming sports events.

Lead/Room Night Report: Kim DaRoja reported on the group sales goals report as of August 31, 2015.

- Total number of leads generated is 694 with total potential room nights of 218,154. Currently at 79% of the 879 lead goal for 2015.
- Total number of definite room nights booked is 124,821. Currently at 69% of the 181,445 room night goal.

Projects Updates:

a) **UK Sales Mission** Kim DaRoja attended September 12-18, 2015 – Dublin, Ireland, Manchester & London England. Met with over 200 tour operators, receptives and agents over 5 days hosting several barbeque-related events. The State of SC 2015 marketing promotional campaign is the Barbeque Trails of SC. We partnered with SCPRT, NC, and GA state and CVBs to promote this theme as barbeque has become extremely popular in the UK within the last 2 years. The campaign consists of multi-channels We have teamed up with a restaurant in the UK called Grillstock, our activation partner/tour operator is Internet Traveller and Foodism Magazine. The restaurant has even created SC inspired bbq sauces for some of their recipes! For 3 months SC was promoted on each table in the restaurant with a call to activation for a SC BBQ trail trip prize.

b) **Upcoming Sponsorships** Kim DaRoja reported on the following sponsorships

- i. **IMEX – October 13-15, 2015 – Las Vegas, NV**

Professional Education/Hosted buyer appointments/Networking events. Partners include: Kingston Plantation, Sheraton & Convention Center & Spring Maid Beach Resort & Leo Events. Each partner will have 44 appointments over three days. We will be hosting the Smart Monday Luncheon on Monday, October 12th at the Venetian for approximately 200 people. Our lunch will include a dynamic speaker and a southern style lunch complete with pimento cheese, bbq and assorted sweet tarts. In addition, we will partner with the Memphis CVB for the MPI Foundation event called Rendezvous on Wednesday, October 14th. VIP guests arrive at our rooftop pool event at Draï's where we have reserved a cabana for entertaining for the evening. Last year's party had more than 1,600 industry movers-and-shakers who contributed to making fundraising history for the MPI Foundation.

ii. **OMCA - November 14-18, 2015 – London, Ontario**

The CVB is sponsoring Awards Reception at the Museum of History. This is an extremely well-attended and beautiful venue. Sponsorship includes a booth right outside the door of the marketplace entrance as well as a ½ page ad in the conference program.

iii. **American Bus Association (ABA) – January 8-13, 2016 - Louisville KY**

Taking advantage of the latest in technology by presenting 10 X 8 LED Video Wall Booth! The theme is "A Taste of Myrtle Beach." Our breakfast sponsorship has become renowned for always being spectacular and a "don't miss" event. Along with the breakfast menu, "A Taste of Myrtle Beach" recipe book will be placed on the seats of the approximately 500 tour operators attending. The entertainment will be provided by The Carolina Opry.

- c) **Toronto Sales/Media/PR Event** Kim DaRoja reported on Canadian Sales/PR Trip – September 27 – October 1, 2015 – Toronto, Ontario. We will host one main event at the beautiful Palais Royale bringing media, tour & travel and meeting and incentive professionals together to showcase Myrtle Beach. Featured at the main event will be tribute artist, Kenny Chesney from Legends in Concert, 2 professional championship shag dancers from Myrtle Beach (Autumn Jones and Alan Stokes) and musician, David Gillease from Pawleys Island. For the media appointments, a cooking segment on one of the top-rated Toronto morning talk shows will feature Chef Joe Bonaparte from Horry Georgetown Technical College Culinary Institute. Heidi Vukov from Croissants will be presenting her new cookbook and signed autograph copies. In addition to the opportunity for networking at the main event, there will also be opportunity to schedule appointments around the event days. We extended the invitation to all CVB lead subscribers and Avista Resort, Springmaid Resort, Legends in Concert and Golf Holiday are partnering with us on this sales mission.
- d) **Travel South International/Travel South Domestic:** Kim DaRoja reported. December 1-4, 2015 in Charlotte, NC. Partnering with South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to host the post FAM, Christmas in Myrtle Beach" for Travel South International. Attendees at this show are international operators that sell leisure and golf.
- e) **Lead Generation Project** Danna Lilly reported on webinars that were done in conjunction with Northstar Media targeting convention and meeting markets.

- f) **Group Video/Ad Updates** Danna Lilly reported that we are working on updates to the group video. Difficult to get live events/ meetings. Will share ideas in December's meeting. Moving away from individual ad campaign.
- g) **Holiday & Student Guide Sales** Sandy Haines reported. They are mailed to 15,000 buyers and I also distribute them at trade shows I attend and on FAM trips.

The Student Guide only comes out every other year so don't miss this opportunity to promote your student friendly attraction or hotel. The deadline to reserve advertising space is August 3rd. Student Groups are important to our area and with our theater offering performance opportunities we have an opportunity to really grow this market.

The Holiday Guide is printed every year and is important so we can get groups here in our off-season. The deadline to reserve advertising space is October 1. The holiday guide will be printed in time for me to take it to the American Bus Association Conference (ABA) in January and start talking to groups about coming in 2016.

- h) **2016 Group Planner Guide** Danna Lilly mentioned that sales for the 2016 membership are underway.

Unfinished Business:

Charlie Bradshaw announced that the next meeting will be December 8, 2015.