

# THE JONES REPORT *Plus*

## The Report for SHOPPING CENTER MARKETING & MANAGEMENT

### Partner, Package and Promote

# Holiday Shopping Packages Could Give Last-Minute Sales Boost

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**S**ALES OFF THIS SEASON? No surprise. However, there is still time to do something about it. It takes a bit of effort, but the payoff can be huge.

In these tough economic times, what can we do to not only increase our tourism business, but also have our center stand out from the competition? Initiate your three Ps – Partner, Package and Promote. Partner with your hotels, develop holiday shopping packages with them and then promote to both the trade and consumers.

Too late for this holiday season? Any other year I would say yes. But this year I'll bet you are looking for some last-minute sales tricks, and I'll bet your hotels would love some last-minute bookings – thus, the perfect partnership – more Ps! If you follow these easy steps and look at some of the examples, you will be on your way to becoming a hero with your merchants and owners.

Hopefully, by now you have already made some good contacts with your key hotels and their directors of sales (DOS). If so, it is just a matter of picking up the phone and offering them some shopping and dining incentives. Since it is the holidays, you probably have gift wrapping you can include, perhaps even shipping facilities. Certainly you will want to include a visit with Santa. Some DOS may say you are too late, but it will depend on the hotel. (Some hotels are able to load packages quickly onto their website while others can take up to two weeks.) If that is the case, start now to develop

special spring shopping packages, year-round shopping packages and any others themed to major events you or your community have planned.

To get started, take a look at some of the packages we have in the Boston market with two America's Premier Shopping Places centers, the GGP tourism-branded centers. "Boston Winter Shopping Wonderland" is a partnership between Faneuil Hall Marketplace, an historic urban marketplace with 125 shops and restaurants including the world-famous Quincy Market and its more than 40 food vendors, and Natick Collection, a suburban luxury shopping center with all the top name-brand stores.

Together we are working with a number of hotels to promote holiday shopping, gift wrapping and shipping combined with a weekend getaway where guests can return to their nearby hotel with their purchases all wrapped and, if necessary, shipped for them. That gives them lots of time for sightseeing, enjoying the 60-foot live

tree at Faneuil Hall Marketplace and simply enjoying themselves for the weekend with no worries about last-minute wrapping of gifts late on Christmas Eve!

In some cases, such as with The Langham, Boston, a luxury hotel in the Financial District, the shopping package incorporates other area shopping venues as well. "We wanted to offer our clientele exclusive savings at a variety of shops in the Boston area," said Communications Manager Julie Shamrock. "We feel that if we can offer great incentives at several locations, we will attract a variety of clientele. Everyone will be looking for a bargain this holiday season," she explained. This package can be viewed at

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## Holiday Shopping Packages

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<http://boston.langhamhotels.com/packages/holidaypackages.htm>.

In the case of the Hilton Boston Financial District, the package is with our two centers only. This can be viewed at <http://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/specials.jhtml?tyhocn=BOSFDHF>.

“Not only are we hoping to attract the out-of-town visitor, but we think this package is a great opportunity to take advantage of the recent trend, the Staycation. (See JONESREPORT Plus, October 2008). We are taking the hassle out of holiday shopping this year by encouraging our guests to shop, wrap and ship. Then they have the rest of the weekend to enjoy our wonderful hotel and take in the great sites the city has to offer or catch a show at the theater,” explained Cindy Viana, director of sales & marketing, the Hilton Boston Financial District hotel.

At the Courtyard by Marriott, Boston Natick, we have a shopping package in partnership with Natick Collection. We are offering a great incentive to the trade. “The tour operator who books the most rooms with us will win a free weekend stay for two any time next year. Details on this incentive contest were sent to a database of more than 400 domestic tour operators in hopes of enticing more bookings,” explained

Mayra Cruz, sales manager for the Courtyard by Marriott. The package is at [www.courtyard-bostonnatick.com](http://www.courtyard-bostonnatick.com).

The Sandestin Alliance in Destin, FL, a group consisting of a major resort, hotels, shopping and retail centers, is about to launch its new brand called sandestination. The group’s debut will be a package of holiday events and offerings called Christmas on the Coast.

“Sandestination’s Christmas on the Coast is an unprecedented collection of events, shopping, terrific accommoda-

mas on the Coast is the most comprehensive series of holiday events and leisure activities on Florida’s coast,” said Hobbs. (Note: more about The Sandestin Alliance will be in the February 2009 issue of JONESREPORT Plus).

What’s in it for us? To begin with, our centers have worldwide exposure on these plus other hotel websites. Not only do we get exposure of our name, but in most cases this includes a description of the center, might include a photo and in most cases includes a

link back to our website — pretty great exposure for absolutely no financial commitment, just a commitment in time.

### Follow These Steps

So how do you get started? Simply follow this step-by-step approach.

- Select your top hotels based on proximity as well as on how well their clientele matches your target demographic.
- From that hit list, determine who has shopping packages already in place. Check

out their websites and go to something like: hotel deals, specials & promotions, packages, etc.

- Call to get the name of the director of sales, marketing director or whoever handles the packaging. If you are in a large market and a lot of hotels are on your list, you may want to start by just sending an e-blast to all of

The screenshot shows the website for The Langham Boston. The main content area features a 'Shop Until You Drop' package. The package description reads: 'Visit all of Boston's best boutiques in search of those fabulous bargains. This holiday season, treat yourself to a fantasy shopping getaway, whether you are shopping for yourself or loved ones. With our convenient downtown location, The Langham, Boston is within minutes of every shop and boutique the city has to offer. Our Shop Until You Drop package includes:

- Luxury overnight accommodations
- Full American breakfast for two in Café Fiorini
- A variety of exclusive savings including: famous department stores, Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Westbury Village Fashion Outlet, and Natick Collection
- 15% discount off all treatments in Chuan Body + Soul such as the "Feet Release" with a peppermint and lemon foot mask to soothe your feet after a long day of shopping
- Use of Chuan Body + Soul facilities, including fitness studio and indoor lap swimming pool
- All taxes and gratuities

This package is only available from November 21 to December 30, 2008. Rates from \$235 per room, per night, USD, based on double occupancy. For more information, please call the reservation desk at (800) 791-7781. All taxes and gratuities included.

Click here to book package

tions, leisure activities and a beautiful ocean gulf beach to bay resort experience. Christmas on the Coast is well suited for people of all ages, individuals and groups of all sizes,” said Laurie Hobbs, director of public relations at Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort.

“There are more than 20 holiday events and activities from November through January 1st. Sandestination’s Christ-

- them with what you can offer and see who responds. Everyone is busy, so you probably won't hear back from many of them and will need to call.
- Set up a meeting.
  - Meanwhile, create your package and get merchant participation. Besides just your coupon book or other list of merchant incentives, be creative and see what else you can offer. Perhaps you have impressive special services, or perhaps a few merchants may want to offer something major for the exposure. In some cases, a hotel may buy gift cards from you to include in the package.
  - Create a hotel Sales Call Manual. Include samples of other hotel shopping packages and what you can offer. Some hotel DOS respond better if you can show them what has been done in other markets.
  - Have what you can offer in a format you can leave with them. Include approved text, images and logo on a CD.
  - Find out what they are looking for and tailor your sales pitch accordingly.
  - Remember, you are selling your center to them. This is a "sales call."
  - Negotiate the terms – what you will provide, how you will promote it (on your website, e-blasts, signage, PR, etc.) and what they will provide (sold on their website, e-blast to their database, etc.). It might be helpful to audit what you have to offer well in advance.

- The package "lives" on both your website and the hotel's.
- Be prepared to discuss other programs, such as:
  - Show your room key and receive (the guest simply shows their hotel key at your fulfillment center to receive the VIP Welcome Packet)
  - Working with their concierge – keeping them informed of your activities
  - Laminated Welcome Letter in every hotel room – instructing them to show their hotel key for the VIP Welcome Packet.
  - Other collateral such as table-tent cards in hotel rooms.
  - Hotels might not want a package, but they may agree to distribute a fulfillment piece with a welcome letter at their front desk, or distribute a voucher to be redeemed at the center for the fulfillment piece. Your primary goal is to get their guests to your center – whatever way makes the most sense for the hotel and you.
  - See what they would like to do! Remain flexible. You want exposure to their hotel guests!

In summary, take a look at your stores, restaurants, their offerings, your services and your events. Package it all together and offer it to your partner hotels. It will make your holiday wishes of increased sales come true!

We are continuing this

series of articles on tourism every other month and would like to focus on some of the more innovative tourism



programs. Please submit your programs to me, either via e-mail [Carolyn@CJFMarketingInternational.com](mailto:Carolyn@CJFMarketingInternational.com), fax 732/545-3138 or mail. If possible, include samples of your graphics via e-mail. Full credit will be given to the person or team responsible for the program. Visit our new web site: [www.cjfmarketinginternational.com](http://www.cjfmarketinginternational.com). ■

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*CJF Marketing International offers a range of services for creating and implementing strategic tourism, economic development and marketing programs for shopping centers, urban entertainment projects, downtown retail districts, communities and commercial properties globally. The firm also offers educational programs and seminars for corporate meeting planners, shopping center developers, communities and re-development agencies. Feimster can be reached at 732/249-6080.*

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