

Conference Coverage

Top Ten Ways to Build Your Tourism Marketing

By Carolyn J. Feimster SCMD, President, CJF Marketing International, North Brunswick, NJ

“TOP TEN WAYS TO BUILD YOUR TOURISM MARKETING” WAS A PANEL AT THE RECENT ICSC FUSION CONFERENCE IN HOLLYWOOD, CA. The session was chaired by Rosemary McCormick, president of Shop America Alliance. The panelists included Kathy Anderson, president, Anderson Retail Tourism Marketing; Art Jimenez, senior director of leisure sales, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority; Peggy G. Ziglin, Colorado regional PR/tourism director, Craig Realty Group, and myself. These highlights of the presentation will help you build your own tourism marketing program.

Effectively targeting the visitor market can be as easy as counting to 10 if you take a strategic approach. Your tourism program does not have to cost a lot of money. In fact, even though the visitor market can account for 40% or more of your center’s total sales, you really don’t have to spend more than 20% of your budget.

“This makes targeting the visitor market a very effective way to maximize your marketing budget,” said McCormick. She explained, “We all have to be accountable and show a reasonable ROI, and there is no better way than by investing in the visitor market. Why? Because the visitor will typically stay longer and spend more money in your center.”

Idea Number One: The Power of Shopping Tourism. The Department of Commerce continues to prove that shopping and dining rank as the two top activities of the visitor market, with cultural heritage travel falling right behind. Global tourism has recovered strongly, showing an increase in 2010 of 6.7%. That represents 935 mil-

lion international tourist arrivals, according to UN World Tourism Organization reports. In the US, tourism is a \$700 billion business, with projected growth of 9% this year. The stats are back in our favor, and the timing for implementing a visitor program has never been better. If you already have one, audit your program to make sure you are on the right track.

Number Two, Branding Your Center for Tourism. Anderson presented several case studies on how shopping center developers and shopping centers have effectively branded themselves to better reach this lucrative market.

General Growth Properties’ MAXI Award-winning “America’s Premier Shopping Places” (APSP) was presented, with updates showing how strategies have evolved over the years to include much more on-line promotion with the OTAs (on-line travel agents) and the popular travel websites. A second case study was presented on Westfield San Francisco Centre and how it was re-

branded to better reach their target visitor market.

“The visitor wants to see visuals that communicate what makes a center unique and appealing. They are looking for an experience and attraction where they can shop and dine while they are on vacation,” Anderson said.

She suggested auditing your center by walking through it as though you were seeing it for the first time to see what aspects can become an “experience” so you create a sense of place. Be sure to use photography with people, and feature the destination, not just the center, by focusing on what gives your center a regional flavor or constitutes a unique draw.

For San Francisco Centre, the pure fashion image ad was replaced with new graphics that highlight the center’s food, fashion and unique architectural design, and promotes the fact that San Francisco’s largest day spa is in the Centre. Brochures, ads, vouchers and Passport to Savings offers all got the new graphic approach that is much

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Two sisters, 15 years apart received, the makeover of their lifetime! Hair, make-up and a new outfit from Saks Fifth Avenue Off Fifth at the Outlets at Castle Rock. Models are seen with Peggy Ziglin, fashion expert, Outlets of Colorado, and Fox 21 morning reporter Craig Coffey. Segment to air May 10.

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more exciting and enticing for the visitor.

Number Three, Partnering with your DMO (destination marketing organization) was presented by Jimenez. “The first thing you should do when you are embarking on a visitor program is to get to know the key people at your DMO. This will usually include the leisure, meetings and convention sales departments. Each can be a tremendous help in bringing in business for you,” Jimenez explained. The LVCVA is very aggressive in promoting shopping and dining in their destination, and is celebrating the 10th anniversary of their award-winning Shop Las Vegas Program. Jimenez showed how his program has evolved over the years and, like APSP, has a strong on-line promotional component.

Idea Number Four, Creative Co-opertition through Alliances, a topic I have covered many times in this series of JONESREPORT Plus articles, was presented by me. The rea-

son is simply because they work. Alliances allow you to form partnerships that leverage your time and money, a very important component in today’s competitive environment. Because I followed the idea of working with DMOs, I gave a couple more examples, as not all DMOs are created equal and not all are as easy to work with and as aggressive as the LVCVA.

The Ft. Lauderdale CVB is an excellent partner with Gulfstream Park, and we have developed several exclusive programs that target the Latin America trade through E-zine distribution to the travel trade and a shopping sweepstakes that targets the Colombia travel trade.

Historic Shopping & Dining Alliance is a partnership among Faneuil Hall Marketplace in Boston, South Street Seaport in NYC and Union Station DC. It was formed primarily to save on the marketing budgets, but has created a life of its own, with a tremendous and unexpected amount of press. More can be read about this Alliance in the January, 2011 issue of JONESREPORT Plus.

It’s important to keep in mind that these types of partnerships don’t just happen; they have to be cultivated over time. Once you have made your DMO your best partner and greatest supporter, you can move on to some more creative alliances.

Idea Number Idea Five: Tourism Media & Public Relations. After you have your programs in place, you need to promote them, Ziglin suggested. “First make certain your

program is newsworthy, and then spin it with a tourism twist. You only have 10 seconds to make a fabulous first impression, so make them count,” Ziglin advised. She showed a video that promoted makeovers visitors can have done while visiting her centers. It was picked up by a local television station!

“This was just one of those ideas for which I refused to accept ‘no,’ and it has turned into an amazing amount of press for us,” she added. Ziglin also increases her exposure with social media and recommends that everyone get involved with different organizations in order to network. “It all adds up to connectivity, and that is what PR and tourism is all about,” she said.

Idea Number Six, Package to Promote Tourism Online, was presented by McCormick who explained how she worked with her shopping center partners to develop more than 200 shopping and dining tours in 40 cities throughout the US. “We have contracted with over 20 OTAs, including the most popular names like Expedia, Travelocity and Orbitz. No shopping center can afford real estate on these websites, which is valued at approximately \$5,000 a month.”

Idea Number Seven, Targeting Your Tourism Markets, was presented by Anderson and me. With so many different market segments, you have to be strategic in your approach. Work with your DMO and decide which targets will be the most lucra-

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tive for you. This means both geographically and by type of traveler, such as group vs. FIT, leisure vs. business, domestic vs. international. Do your research, conduct an audit and write your tourism marketing plan to guide you appropriately. A lot of new data has been released on the international inbound markets to the US – enough to justify covering it in my next article. Stay tuned for the international market updates and how to reach them,

with case studies of new and creative programs!

Idea Number Eight, Working with Your Merchants, was presented by Ziglin. “Engage them, get them involved in your programs, and show how it will benefit them and be a win/win for everyone,” she said. It is important to demonstrate to the merchants that their traffic and sales will increase with an effective tourism program.

Idea Number Nine, Budget and Tracking Tourism for effective ROI, saw input from the entire panel. Tourism can be tracked by sales to the local market vs. the visitor market. Usually you will find a higher average expenditure from the visitor market. You can track voucher redemption, coupon redemption and dining voucher sales. Most importantly, your tourism partners can evolve into sponsorship dollars!

To conclude with the last Idea, McCormick presented a new ICSC/Shop America Alliance Partnership which is launching “Shop the World Tourism Seminars” in Cancun, Canada, Singapore and the Middle East. The objective is to promote retail as a tourism draw, thus boosting sales revenue of retailers and enhancing economic development for local economies worldwide. These are scheduled to launch this fall.

“The primary objective of the Shop the World Tourism Seminars is to promote retail as a tourism draw, boosting sales revenue for retailers and enhancing economic development for the local destinations,”

said Tim McGuinness, ICSC vice president of global trade expositions and conferences. “Shopping and tourism leaders from the United States, along with local market shopping and tourism experts, will share expertise and best practices in marketing, leasing and development to attract high-spending travelers.”

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, fax 732/545-3138 or mail. If possible, include samples of your graphics via email. Full credit will be given to the person or team responsible for the program. Visit our new web site: www.cjfmarketinginternational.com. ■

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