



September 2015

# Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through  
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

## News from... THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### MD Travel & Tourism Summit

Tourism representatives from around the State will gather at Turf Valley for the annual Summit on October 28-30. Nominations are now open for the many coveted awards given out at this annual conference. This event provides a great way to network with colleagues from around the state. If you would like to donate a door prize, please contact us ASAP. For complete information, visit <http://www.mdtourism.org/w/tourism-travel-summit/>

### Mark Your Calendars

As we approach the fall, please take a moment to add our dinner meetings to your calendars. It is always a wonderful time to reconnect with our industry! At our first dinner, the new MD State Tourism Director, Liz Fitzsimmons will share the State of MD Tourism.

**November 19,  
December 17, January 21,  
February 18, April 14**

## OCVisitor.com Gets a New Look

We are excited to announce the launch of our revamped site, [www.ocvisitor.com](http://www.ocvisitor.com). A huge thank you to the team at D3Corp for their expertise in creating the visual masterpiece. Our goal was for the website to be both user-friendly and visually appealing and we have certainly accomplished that. Visitors will get a genuine feel for what Ocean City looks like as there are no stock photos. Links for Stay, Play and Dine are the predominant focus of the site as we continue to push visitors to our members sites.

*Make sure you take a look asap!  
Click here!*

DELMARVA POWER COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAM

## CASH INCENTIVES ON MANY ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

Whether your business is large or small, we can help you reduce energy and save money through our energy savings program for businesses.

- **GENEROUS CASH INCENTIVES OF 40 - 80%** are available on many qualified energy efficiency improvements including lighting, heating and cooling systems, commercial refrigeration, kitchen equipment, combined heat and power and more.
- **MULTI-DWELLING QUICK ENERGY CHECK-UP** offers an energy assessment for dwelling units in hotels and motels. Also, we will include the installation of recommended low-cost energy efficiency measures like low-flow shower heads and smart strips – all at no charge.

Start saving money and energy to make your business more profitable. If you're a Maryland customer, visit [delmarva.com/business](http://delmarva.com/business) or call 866-353-5799.



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## BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: JOHN LYNCH

One could say that Past President John Lynch has been around for a while, but knowing his family's Worcester County roots go back to 1785 is certainly "a while!" Earlier this summer, John retired from the family business, the Commander Hotel, and left it in the capable hands of son Will Lynch and childhood friend Todd Burbage under Real Hospitality Group management. Through the years, John has served the community in many ways. In addition to his work with the OCHMRA, John was a founding member and the first President of the OC-Berlin Optimist Club and is a member of the OC Paramedic Foundation. Each year, the Tres Lynch Bank of Ocean City scholarship is given to a hospitality student in memory of his son Tres who passed tragically at the age of 37. (Tres was also an OCHMRA Board of Director.) John has been married to Linda for 48 years. His passion is hunting and fishing, which he is proudly teaching his grandson's Jack and John.



## REST EASY: Lodging industry trends

Abi Mandelbaum

### WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT GOOGLE'S NEW HOTEL ADS

Digital advertisers know that trying to keep up with Google's platform and algorithm changes can be harder than keeping up with Hollywood starlets' hair color changes. However, for hotel marketers, there is one recent change that can't be allowed to fly under the radar. In early May, Google announced that mobile search had overtaken desktop search in more than 10 countries. With that announcement came the revamping of several of its ad formats to be better designed for mobile devices, including ads for hotels.

Now, when a browser searches for a particular hotel, or a destination or search term that a hotel is keyword optimized for, the space once dominated by a carousel of local hotel options (which were ranked according to Google+ reviews and other organic factors) is gone. Instead, more page space has been dedicated to a hotel's Knowledge Graph panel on the top right when a browser searches for an exact hotel. If a browser is searching for hotels in a certain city, only the top three organically ranked hotels will display in the Google hotel stack.

The other major change accompanying this new format is that OTAs can take advantage of a "Book Now" advertising feature in the Knowledge panel. In this way, Expedia's price or Hotel.com's price, for example, can be listed alongside price ads sponsored by your hotel.

This is both good and bad for hotels: it's good because it creates an opportunity for guests to book instantly through the Knowledge panel without your hotel necessarily needing to pay for that ad unit. However, the downside is that your hotel may be competing for customers with OTAs who are selling the exact same product: your rooms. If an OTA has a better deal for a hotel, the browser will likely book through that site instead of directly with your hotel, and over time, that will dig into your profits.

So what can you do to be sure that your hotel is best positioned to capitalize on these changes?

The first and most basic thing you need to do is ensure that your hotel

has a single, verified and updated Google+ business page. This is for two reasons: Google gives preference to social signals created on its Google+ platform when organically ranking your hotel in search results, and this is the information that Google will pull from to create your hotel's Knowledge panel.

Second, optimizing your hotel's website for organic search ranking is more important than ever. Because Google has done away with the carousel, browsers will now only see the top three organic hotel search results on page one when doing a geo-specific hotel search. Winning the hotel SEO game now means getting into that top three ranking. If you don't currently work with an SEO agency to help improve your site structure and external ecosystem of inbound links, you may want to consider contacting one for a consultation.

Last, carefully consider whether to bid on "Book Now" ad units in light of your current offerings through various OTAs and where your current booking traffic comes from. If your room offerings through various OTAs are fairly consistent with your on-site booking rates, and most of your booking comes through OTAs anyway, it may make sense not to advertise on these spaces, because you would essentially be bidding against your own comparable offerings for that ad space.

It is also important to note how many OTAs are bidding on this space—if none are, then of course it makes sense for you to run ads in this space. This is to ensure that there is at least one book now option for guests viewing your hotel's Knowledge panel.

If you cover these three bases, you will be well positioned to take full advantage of Google's new hotel ad layouts, and ensure that you won't be left behind.



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## Eleven Tips for Motivating Your Employees

By: Dr. George Ojie-Ahamiojie,

Department Head and Associate Professor, Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Management, Wor-Wic Community College

The employees are the nerves that make every organization function efficiently. If the nerves in the body are not transmitting messages between the brain, spinal cord and other parts of the body correctly, there is something wrong somewhere. If employees are not motivated to do their best on the job, some of the employees may become complacent and apathetic. Motivating the employees could be easy by using some of the following 11 motivating tips.

- 1. Know the employees.** Make a point of duty to know the names of the employees that you supervise. Ask which name they prefer to be called; use that when calling or referring to them.
- 2. You are the manager, show some gusto!** As the supervisor, you set the mood and tempo of the operation. Come in to work with zeal, energy, enthusiasm, passion, and veracity.
- 3. Act as a "role model" for the employees.** As a supervisor, your credibility is only as good as what you say and do. When you "talk the talk," you must also "walk the walk!"
- 4. Be available and visible.** Always make sure that the employees can find and reach you when they need you. Having to look for you when they need you is an unwanted stress and hassle.
- 5. Ask the employees about the job.** Apart from providing the tools to do the job, ask what you can do to make their job easier. Asking this question is an indication that you care about them. This can also improve employee morale and self-esteem.
- 6. Ask what they want out of the job.** Everyone works for a reason. Some people want a job, others want a career. So, take the time to ask each employee what they want from the job, and what they think you can do to help them achieve this goal.

**7. Empower and delegate.** Empower your employees to make decisions. Coach and teach the employees on how to handle that unhappy customer. Delegate some of your duties to the best and most skilled and efficient employee, and hold the employee accountable. This builds trust between a manager and the employee.

**8. Monitor employees' performance.** Routinely engage the employees in discussions about their job performance. If an employee is not performing well, find out why, and address the issue genuinely with the employee.

**9. Promote creativity and ingenuity.** Creativity does not only invigorate, it breeds new ideas. Allow the employees free thinking and the use of their imaginations; then, watch the employees shine. You may have the future CEO of the company under your tutelage.

**10. Be supportive all the time.** The hospitality industry is very stressful, show some sympathy and empathy. Support and encourage the employees when they make mistakes or make the wrong decisions.

**11. Recognize and reward excellence.** Always remember to recognize and reward the employees. Praise the group, recognize the team, and reward the individuals. Always give recognition and praise in public. If you practice some or all of these tips, you will spend 80 percent of your time leading the employees and 20 percent running the operation. The employees will feel energized and enthusiastic, and the customers will receive excellent customer service. After all, the success of the employees and organization is a measure of your leadership abilities.

**Until next time, let the muzik play .....**

Books written by me:

- Essential Leadership Skills for Hospitality Supervisors: An Experiential Approach. ISBN#: 978143890146
- Upward Mobility. ISBN#: 9781438947389 Available from publisher: [www.authorhouse.com](http://www.authorhouse.com)



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## Condolences

Condolences to the family and friends of **George Hurley**, past **Ocean City Council President** and past **Worcester County Commissioner**. Condolences to **Dean Langrall, Jolly Rogers**, on the passing of his father, Hubert. Condolences to **Kathy Davis**, on the passing of her Husband, **James Davis**. There will be a celebration of life for James on October 4 at 2pm at Stevenson United Methodist Church in Berlin. Our beloved former County commissioner **Louise Gulyas** lost her daughter **Mimi Puesner**. The Chef at **Longboard Cafe, James "Duffy" Taylor** passed away, thoughts and prayers to his friends and family.



Congratulations to **Helen Ball, Mercantile Processing**, on the arrival of baby Elle, at 9 lbs 3 oz. Congratulations to **Amy Rohrer**, the new President and CEO of the **Maryland Hotel & Lodging Association**. Thank you to **Macky and Pam Stansell, Macky's**, who donated \$100,000 towards the \$1 million goal of the newly formed Worcester County Education Foundation (WCEF). Congratulations to **Shawn McMahon**, who just accepted the the General Manager Position at the future **Residence Inn by Marriott**, scheduled to open in 2016.



## THE DISH: Restaurant industry trends

### OCEAN CITY RESTAURANT WEEK

October is Shore Craft Beer Month! And, to celebrate, we are encouraging local restaurants to put a new twist on Restaurant Week. While the focus will remain "Great Deals on Great Food," we'd love to see craft beer and food pairings, or entrees created with local craft beer ingredients. Restaurant Week dates are October 11 – 25. So, restaurants --- we are offering you the ability to be as creative as you'd like – it's up to you to make this promotion successful! If you'd like to participate and be featured on [www.oceancityrestaurantweek.com](http://www.oceancityrestaurantweek.com), make sure you sign up today! Call us at 410- 289-6733 or email [inquire@ocvisitor.com](mailto:inquire@ocvisitor.com) to sign up.

## Pooch Palooza Dog Festival

Inside Ocean City & Delmarva Unleashed are once again producing the Pooch Palooza Dog Festival, October 3 at Frontier Town. This year, the effort is to help support the Worcester County Sheriff's K-9 Unit and enjoy a great day out with your dog. There are canine sports ( The Delmarva DockDogs), arcade style canine games, canine contest, vendors and oddles of canine fun!

They are still seeking sponsorship to produce the event and hope that you can help them help the K-9 Unit. No contribution is too small! You can support the event by visiting [www.PoochPalooza.com](http://www.PoochPalooza.com) and clicking the Sponsor/Vendor's tab or contact Sandy Phillips at 410-726-7334.

The Pooch Palooza Dog Festival is a great event for the entire family, including Fido!





## Dance of the Dolphins raffle tickets are available

The Ocean City Development Corporation is pleased to announce that raffle tickets are now available for two unique gifts: 1) a miniature (13" tall) sculpture made directly from the wax model of the actual Dance of the Dolphins structure by David Turner of Turner Sculpture located at the southwest corner of Coastal Highway and Route 90; and 2) the original watercolor of the Dance of the Dolphins sculpture by local artist, Stasia Heubeck.

The raffle tickets are \$100 for each ticket and only 200 will be sold. The drawing will take place on September 30, 2015 at the Dance of the Dolphins Plaza.



To purchase raffle tickets, [click here](#).

## Brandywine Senior Living at Fenwick Island is hosting its 4th annual Calendar Release Party! This is an event you do not want to miss!

Over the past 3 years we have raised \$13,000 with our calendar sales. Please help us make a difference. For every \$20 donation to the Alzheimer's Association, you will receive your copy of the Brandywine Senior Living 2016 calendar featuring our very own residents here at Fenwick Island. All proceeds to benefit the Alzheimer's Association.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH • 6:30-8PM

RSVP by September 11th to 302.436.0808 - [CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

*An important message from the OC CVB:* As we begin the fall season we remind you that our Bus Permitting process changed this year and a permit is now required year-round. Many of you have trips here for Sunfest and Winterfest so we wanted to remind you of those upcoming needs for permits.

Click here for a permit application for your use, and remember it is free when visiting our hospitality partners – hotels, restaurants, attractions or amusements.

## Upcoming Events

Brews on the Beach-

Hoopers Crab House- Sept. 12, Noon-5pm

Take Steps Walk for Crohns & Colitis-

Northside Park- Sept. 26, 4pm

