



May 2015

Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

News from...

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome New Members
Adams Radio Group
Kalbrosky & Associates

Shoaling Meeting

Shawn Harman and Susan attended a meeting organized by Delegate Carozza which included watermen & marinas, DNR, Army Corp of Engineers, Marinas Coastal Bays, Senator Mathias and US Delegate Harris. The bottom line- there needs to be a permanent fix to a problem that continues to ensue; the back bays filling with sand and waterways becoming more shallow. While the Army Corp of Engineers continually dredges, there has not been a real solution and commercial fishing continues to move north to New Jersey, taking millions of dollars out of our local economy. Since all affected parties were sitting at the same table, there appeared to be an air of understanding and cooperation to move forward to find a permanent fix. Stay tuned.

Inside Ocean City

The 2015 Edition is almost in your rooms! Sandy Phillips did an amazing job of pulling together 174 pages, (YES, the thickest one EVER) of ads, beautiful photography and captivating stories. She and her crew will be out soon delivering books to your hotel.

2015 Installation of OCHRMA Officers

On Thursday, April 23rd, Tourism Director, Donna Abbott installed the 2014-2015 Officers and Board of Directors of the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association at Harrison's Harbor Watch. Approximately 220 members gathered for this annual ceremony. **Bob Torrey of Happy Jack Pancake House** was installed as the new President, **Mark Elman of the Clarion Fontainebleau Hotel** was installed as 1st Vice President and **Will Lynch of the Commander Hotel** will serve as the 2nd Vice President. **Shawn Harman of Fishtales/Bahia Marina**, continues as Secretary -Treasurer.

The three-year Board of Directors installed include, **Austin Purnell of OC Motels**, **Spiro Buas of OCRooms**, and **Rebecca Taylor of Captain's Table**. Two-year Directors include **Caryl Cardenas of Park Place Hotel**, **Dave Robinson of Boardwalk Hotel Group** and **Brian Mushrush of Phillips Seafood Restaurants**. One-year Directors are **Gary Figgs of Seacrets**, **Tom Tawney of Cayman Suites** and **Danelle Amos of the Beach Walk Hotel/Pour House Bar**.

Outgoing President, **G. Hale Harrison of Harrison Group** was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his hard work and dedication as HMRA President. The new Board will have their first meeting on May 7th. The evening's festivities also featured other awards presentations as well as the Bank of Ocean City Tres Lynch Scholarship. Worcester Green awards were presented by Worcester County Tourism Director Lisa Challenger, along with Commissioner Joe Mitrecic.

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MAY 11 | Hospitality Industry Roundtable
COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT - OCEAN CITY, MD



You're Invited

Please join CohnReznick and the Ocean City Hotel Motel Restaurant Association for an intimate discussion on the state of the hospitality industry. The interactive dialogue will focus on insights and ideas that can help you take your business to the next level.

Topics will include:

- Current state of the hospitality industry: Are you positioned for growth or expansion?
- How to procure and manage the right seasonal and/or international employees to represent your brand
- Taking the mystery out of food allergies, gluten free menus, and nutritional labeling to maximize your food sales

Who Should Attend

The agenda is exclusively designed for restaurant and hotel owners and operators.

Panelists



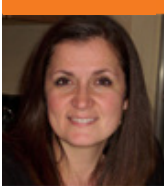
Greg Remeikis
Partner
CohnReznick LLP



Henry Pertman
Director
CohnReznick LLP



Nick Mautone
Consultant
CohnReznick LLP



Irina Capaldi
Work and Travel
Employer
Relations Manager
CCI Greenheart



Betsy Craig
CEO, Co-Founder
MenuTrinfo®, LLC



Co-Host

DATE

Monday, May 11, 2015

TIME

8:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

LOCATION

Courtyard Ocean City
Oceanfront
Two 15th Street
Ocean City, MD 21842

RSVP

Space is limited, so register today.

Email Angela Pueschel, Marketing Manager, at angela.pueschel@cohnreznick.com or call 410-895-7830.

About CohnReznick

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REST EASY: Lodging industry trends

By: Robert A. Rauch

As the hotel industry becomes less art and more science, hoteliers must be much more strategic in the way they operate and market their properties.

One of the most impactful trends in this pursuit is real-time marketing, or RTM. Although it would be unwise to discount the impact of traditional marketing, RTM must take place on a regular basis and incorporate content marketing, revenue management and social media. This must be a crucial component of the marketing mix in order to master the science of hospitality.

Providing content on an ongoing basis is dominating the industry and how we reach our target guests. It consists of three main components that should be a focus within our strategic marketing plan.

1. Content is king

When implementing a RTM strategy, we must first ensure our content is creating value. Online travel agencies understand this principle and are providing potential guests with content that is relevant and answers frequently asked questions. The hospitality industry is losing market share as a result, with intermediated bookings costing 25% or more in commissions.

To take share back from the OTAs, start with content. The content listed via global distribution systems should be thorough, and it should clearly show how potential guests can get answers from an agent on the phone. Content on websites must be informative. This might seem like a no-brainer, but often websites are not up-to-date or provide inadequate information for potential guests. A hotel website should be detailed and be able to answer the same questions the OTAs are answering.

We also need to tighten our mobile sites. Increasing amounts of reservations are booked via mobile devices, thus making the content on our mobile platforms as important as the content on our websites. When thinking of mobile technology, remember that mobile is the new "walk-in."

2. Revenue management

Revenue management always will be a factor in how we market our hotels. Whether using traditional marketing or RTM, revenue management strategies will affect a hotel's marketing efforts. Revenue management needs to be considered a daily task and done in "real time." Advances in technology can support immediate measurement of competitive market forces. Hoteliers now can update prices each day for all future arrival dates to match market demands and measure the cost of guest acquisition across

THE 3 PILLARS OF REAL-TIME MARKETING AT HOTELS

different channels.

A key trick: Avoid displacement of future, high-rate business by groups that are paying lower rates and ensure that goals (revenue managers versus sales teams) are in sync. Working as a team is still paramount.

3. Web 2.0

Incorporating social media strategies into the marketing mix is also critical when focusing on RTM. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and TripAdvisor have changed how the hospitality industry interacts with guests, creates experiences and offers a more highly personalized level of customer service. Think of a property's Facebook page as a second website with the option for guests to contact hotel staff to make reservations. Twitter will become increasingly important with the recent announcement of a strategic alliance between Twitter and Google whereby tweets show up in Google searches.

While Instagram is a very strong up-and-comer (now with more than 300 million users), the key is to pick only those key platforms that target your clientele. If we try to manage too many sites from the get go, our social media efforts will be ineffective and actually could be detrimental to our marketing efforts.

In addition to creating an experience on social media using RTM, hoteliers are also using their own guests to help market their property. Studies have shown that 75% of customers look for recommendations from people they trust before making a reservation.

When it comes to review sites, we all know how important it is to be present by responding to reviews on a regular basis. We often forget to implement a strategy on how we are going to improve ranking on these sites. To do this, hoteliers must implement a clear strategy and have attainable goals in place. Aim to improve the hotel's score, get staff involved in improving the score, set small goals and celebrate the achievements as a hotel.

Creating and distributing relevant content that grabs the attention of our target audience through RTM is quickly replacing traditional marketing. Hotels need to be able to recognize opportunities to market hotels and act on these opportunities. By listening to customers and reacting in real time with the right message, hotels will be able to outsmart their competition, win back share from the OTAs and transform their marketing efforts into increased bookings.

And that makes for more profitable bookings.



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BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SARA RUTKA KARST



As a fourth generation Ocean City hotelier, Sara Rutka Karst has witnessed the evolution of our city over the years. One thing that remains the same, is her love for the family hotel business. Built in 1924, the Lankford Hotel was opened by Mary Quillen, the aunt of Sara's grandmother. From 2005-2006, Sara served as President of OCHMRA following in the footsteps of her mom, Sally, and grandmother, Betty Frame, who are also Past Presidents. Currently, she and her sister Mary, along with their husbands, Vernon and Brian, respectively, run the oceanfront hotel, boardwalk shops and apartments. Sara is an Ocean

City native, graduating from Stephen Decatur High School and Salisbury University where she obtained a marketing degree. She has a 14-year old son, Michael who enjoys the OC Skatepark. In her spare time, you'll find Sara showcasing her artistic side doing needlework.



THE DISH: *Restaurant industry trends*

GOVERNOR'S BUY LOCAL COOKOUT 2015

You are invited to submit an original recipe for Governor Larry Hogan's Buy Local Cookout, to be held at Government House in Annapolis in mid- July as part of the Buy Local Challenge Week (July 18-26, 2015) activities.

We are soliciting recipes that showcase simple but creative ways to use Maryland-grown or Maryland-raised products in delicious, nutritious meals that can be replicated by busy Maryland families.

Submissions must be made by teams that include one chef and at least one Maryland food producer and/or farmer. If selected, your team will be invited to provide, prepare, and share the dish at the Governor's cookout. The recipe and biographies of your team members may be published in the Maryland Department of Agriculture's 2015 Buy Local Cookout Recipes as well as other department publications and releases.

Original recipes that showcase simple but creative ways to use Maryland-grown products will be chosen in each of the following categories:

- Appetizer
- Main Dish
- Side Dish or Salad
- Dessert

Original recipes will be selected based on simplicity, creativity, availability of ingredients, geographic representation, and maximum use of local ingredients. Previously submitted recipes will be considered ineligible.





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Welcome to **Heather McNeill**, who is replacing Jeff LeVan at the **Baltimore Sun**.

Welcome to **Carol Ann Beres**, who is joining the team at the **Breakers Hotel**. Wishing **Fred Wise** the best on his next adventure after retirement from the **Ocean City Convention Center** at the end of May. Welcome to **Ron Loman**, **Real Hospitality Group**, who is the VP of Operations for **Ocean1, Dunes Manor and the Commander**. Welcome to the new GM of the **Buckingham Hotel, William Peacock**. Congratulations to **Leonard Berger, Clarion**, on being named the 2015 recipient of the University of MD School of Medicine Alumni Leadership Award. Congratulations also to the **Clarion Resort's Horizon's Restaurant** on being named the #6 All-You-Can-Eat Buffet in America. Congrats to **Salvatore Fasano & Family, La Quinta**, for having the 32nd St. location named "The best new La Quinta in the Country". There will be a spring ribbon cutting to celebrate this accomplishment on May 5 at 2 PM.

Condolences

Condolences to **Rick Laws of Hampton Inn & Suites** on the passing of his mother, Ruth. Condolences also to the friends and family of **Mary Ann Furst**, former owner of the **OC Raquet Club**.

A long time vacationer brought to our attention that the American Flag is not displayed as often as it should be in our resort area. It was their wish that more businesses in the area would proudly display the Stars and Stripes. Fly your flag today!



Here is an opportunity to be listed on the State's new Fishing and Hunting website. Marinas, charter boats, lodging, any number of you may wish to take a look at this opportunity. Listings are free and reviewed by Isenberg Group and added to the site if they are relevant and are not currently in the system. Click here to add your business!



Information on OC's new smoking policy

The Ocean City Council was able to check another box off their strategic plan "to-do" list with the implementation of a new smoking policy on the beach and Boardwalk. The new ordinance, which was approved by the council in March, prohibits smoking on the Boardwalk, yet provides designated smoking areas on the nearby beach.

The new policy, which was a top priority on the City Council's Policy Agenda in 2014, has several important details pertaining to smoking areas in Ocean City, including public parks and covered bus stop shelters. A copy of the ordinance in its entirety can be found here.

However, here is what you need to know before the policy takes effect on May 1, 2015.

- 1. The Boardwalk & Beach Accessways are Smoke-Free.**
- 2. The Beach & Dune Crossings are Smoke-Free (Except in designated smoking areas on the beach).**
- 3. Ocean City Parks & Covered Bus Stop Shelters are Smoke-Free.**
- 4. The smoking rules apply to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, e-cigarettes, and any other matter or substance that contains tobacco.**
- 5. Smoking must be contained within 15 feet of the waste receptacle in each designated smoking area. The Boardwalk is a smoke-free zone.**

Voluntary compliance of the ordinance is expected. However, the Town of OC code allows for issuance of citations for violations.



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April Dinner Meeting

Click here for all pics!



Kim Gillis, Becker Morgan, and Carol Beres, Breakers Hotel



Michael Hayes, Amanda & Will Lynch, Commander Hotel, Susan Jones, OCHMRA, John & Linda Lynch, Pat Harman, Commander Hotel



Scott Comegys, Xpress Flooring & Kevin Jason, Contract Specialists



Mary Eastman, Cayman Suites, Susan Jones, OCHMRA, G. Hale Harrison, Harrison Group, celebrating Susan's 20th year at OCHMRA.



Installation of 2015 Board Members, (Top Row R to L) Brian Mushrush, Will Lynch, Bob Torrey, Mark Elman, Shawn Harman, Rebecca Taylor, Danelle Amos, Spiro Buas

Photos by
KRR Photography