



May 2017

Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

News from... THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome New Members Associate

La Abuelita Mexican Food

Allied

Revenue Optimization Consultants

Room Tax Update

At this time, the Mayor & Council have decided to put discussion of an increase on the back burner. We will continue to update you if there are any changes.

OC Film Festival

The Art League of OC is working on a great project to further the development of arts & cultural tourism. This four-day event is slated for June 8 – 11 and already has over 300 entries submitted. For 2017, this date was already set in stone, however, the group is willing to work with a different date in the future. Sponsorships are available. For complete info, check out their site by clicking here.

Help Those Who Help You

As the summer draws near, we are thinking about the OCPD and the great job they do in keeping us safe. An easy way to say thank you and to keep the officers hydrated, is to offer them a refreshing water/soda to cool off. We are putting together a list of members who would like to provide complimentary water/soda throughout the summer. If you'd like to offer such, let us know and we'll add you to the list!

2017-2018 Installation of Officers



On Thursday, April 20th, Tourism Director, Donna Abbott installed the 2017-2018 Officers and Board of Directors of the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Restaurant Association at Harrison's Harbor Watch. Approximately 230 members gathered for this annual ceremony. **Will Lynch of the Commander Hotel** was installed as the new President, **Gary Figgs of Seacrets**, was installed as 1st Vice President and **Tom Tawney of Cayman Suites** will serve as the 2nd Vice President. **Shawn Harman of Fishtales/Bahia Marina**, continues as Secretary -Treasurer.

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- Frozen Beverage - Blender/Smoothie Mixes
- Draft Beer Systems
- "5 Star" Quality Service Department
- 7 Days a Week Service

Now Offering...Slush Puppie!

- Well-known and trusted national brand
- Provides strong marketing & promotional material
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The three-year Board of Directors installed include, **Ryan Wilde of BEST Motels, Spencer Byrd of Courtyard by Marriott and Dave Robinson of Boardwalk Hotel Group**. Two-year Directors include **Danelle Amos of the Beach Walk Hotel, Karen Tomasello of Sello's Italian Oven and Steve "Chief" Hoffman of 28th St. Pit-n-Pub**. One-year Directors are **Spiro Buas of OCRooms, Rebecca Taylor of Captain's Table and Patrick Staib of Harrison Group**.

Outgoing President, **Mark Elman of the Clarion Fontainebleau Hotel** was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his hard work and dedication as HMRA President. **Caryl Cardenas of Park Place Hotel and Brian Mushrush formerly of Phillips** received certificates of appreciation for their service to the Board.

WHAT'S NEXT IN SERVICE FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, A CULTURE OF CARE?

Hospitality students enter the profession with the best of intentions - wanting to offer high-quality services to guests no matter their role. Yet on the job, students will inevitably observe that some hotel coworkers go above and beyond for guests while others underperform their roles. Some staff seem engaged and excited at work; others seem to be merely punching a clock - actively disinterested at work.

In her TED talk, Jan M. Smith, Founder and President of service industry HR firm Inland Management Group, focuses on the "culture of care" that good service organizations inevitably create, why care matters, and the positive benefits to service workers and guests alike from developing a "culture of care" in the workplace. If you want to have a career, life, and job you love with a hospitality employer, you'll find this talk motivating. [Click here.](#)



What HMRA can do for you and your business...

As we approach the season, we thought we'd remind you of the services we provide our members. OCHMRA answers an extension on the Town's Tourism hotline, 1-800-OC-OCEAN. During these calls, we offer visitors referrals to member properties and recommend where to dine and what to do while in town.

For our Hotel/Motel Members, we will call you weekly and ask your availability for the upcoming 5 weekends. Additionally, you are welcome to fax us this information so that we don't tie up your phone lines. The form for this is at this link. This info is written on the "weekend availability sheets" and is used by OCHMRA to assist visitors in making reservations. This list is shared with and used by the Town of OC tourism phone operators/visitors center staff and the Chamber Visitors Center staff.

During the summer, when a visitor arrives at the 40th Street Visitor Center and needs help finding a room, OC Tourism Department staff send visitors to the HMRA Help Desk.

Therefore, we will call our member properties and ask what daily vacancies you have for "walk-ins." While at the Help Desk, we will also make recommendations on where to dine and what to do while in town.

Please inform your front desk staff of our services so they are aware of our services.

***If you haven't checked lately, make sure you have your brochures in the 40th Street Visitors Center; thousands of potential visitors & convention attendees pass through their doors!



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Welcome **Steve Tingle**, who is the new Executive Chef at **Horizons Oceanfront Hotel**. Welcome **Lori Ewald**, new marketing and brand awareness manager for **Touch of Italy**. **Joanne Cunningham** has joined the sales team at **Dunes Manor**- Welcome! **Babbi Slack** has joined the team at **Purnell Properties** and is the new GM at **Thunderbird Motel**- Congrats! Welcome **Jim Keeley**, who is the new Regional VP at **Real Hospitality Group**. Congrats to **Spencer Byrd**, **Courtyard by Marriott**, who won GM of the Year by Newport Hospitality. Also, **Courtyard by Marriott** won the award for financial excellence and community service.



THE DISH: Restaurant industry trends

Considering that consumers of all ages are growing weary of the marketing campaigns and messages constantly bombarding them, 2017 could be a tough year for fast casuals to engage new and old customers. What still works really well, however, is engaging them on their own terms, and mobile channels are great for that.

Taking those stats into consideration, below are five things to consider when defining your 2017 customer relationship strategy:

1. Incentivize your customers to share personal data

The success of your marketing efforts heavily relies on what you know about your customers, and your customer database needs to be a year-round priority. Keep in mind that nobody will fill out guest experience cards these days. Customers want to release their personal information on their own terms and in the easiest and most rewarding way.

If you have a mobile app, the data gets richer as customers use it and engage with it, so make sure you continually give reasons for new customers to install it and existing users — to log in. If customers know upfront what they are signing up for and are incentivized, they'll be less likely to delete your loyalty app or unsubscribe from communications later on.

Ideas:

Make it a quick and easy experience for your customers to install your restaurant app and register their personal info using your wi-fi access. Offer an incentive like a menu item for the download.

Consider an ongoing lottery with a regular prize like a meal for two: restaurant guests are usually much more inclined to share personal data if there is a drawing involved.

2. Get laser focused with targeting

Use the year end and Q1 to exhaustively analyze which tools your specific audience engages with most and reflect on which campaigns have worked effectively for your restaurant. Then consolidate your marketing to fuel these efforts.

Ideas:

Segment your existing and potential customers based on demographics, favorite menu items, important dates, etc. A married couple doesn't need an email about a "singles special" on Valentine's — target your younger demographic instead. Nor should you send giant burger promos to your vegetarian customers.

Track birthdays: we see a high 35 percent conversion rate on average for birthday incentives in the fast casual segment, so invite your customers to stop by a week before or after their birthdays.

5 WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

3. Focus on mobile apps

In Q2, prioritize hands-on marketing campaigns and mobile channels for communications. We know for a fact that mobile-based gamification works great as people really enjoy collecting points for visits or gaining a certain status at the restaurant. Using mobile apps for these campaigns means you can encourage active sharing of pictures and engagement of your community (especially if there's an additional incentive to invite friends or share the message on social channels).

Ideas:

Consider investing in a digital ordering system, so your regular customers can rapidly pre-order their meals and pick them up at lunchtime. Offer the newest mobile and digital forms of payments that attract mobile-savvy customers. Customers now expect brands to offer these convenient options, and this trend will only continue to intensify.

4. Find creative ways to upsell

Your focus for Q3 could be on upselling and increasing the average check amount.

Ideas:

Offer additional points for a larger check or discounts for groups since summer is all about vacation and spending time with friends and family.

Use bounce-back coupons to give your customers incentives to come back within the first 7 days of their visit. Chances are, if customers visit twice in 1-2 weeks, they'll be coming back again — we've seen consistent success with this tactic.

5. Measure incremental sales

As you're reflecting on your results and reviewing your efforts in Q4, the emphasis should be on the incremental value of your marketing efforts.

Ideas:

If you are operating a fast casual chain, run a promotion in two locations out of four that perform at the same level. Then compare the revenue and other numbers with the locations that didn't run a promotion.

Analyze historical data for the same location comparing the week of running a promotion with the previous week. Pay attention to specific issues you are trying to solve: for example, if you want to fill up the restaurant at off-peak hours, run a weekly comparison of the off-peak purchases.

What are the key takeaways for restaurant owners and marketers?

Ditch simple offers in 2017, relying on the fact that a 10 percent discount or another free slice of pizza just don't cut it anymore. Instead, start building committed customer relationships through highly targeted and personalized mobile campaigns that deliver incremental value to your business.

Full article here ->



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GM Lodging Roundtable Recap

Approximately 20 owners and managers gathered for the industry chat resulting in a great flow of information. Revenue optimization was explored and it was pointed out that we must treat every day like its own season taking a close look at supply and demand. With the amount of new inventory coming to the market, everyone stressed the importance of not creating rate wars, but rather creating more guest loyalty through unique experiences at each property. The lack of mid-week business was discussed and everyone was encouraged to participate in the Mid-week Summer Splash. Staffing challenges will continue to be a problem until we can change the culture of the winter unemployment. However, different incentive programs for staff retention were explored. Finally, everyone was reminded to educate their guests about the phone scams occurring and that the guests should never give any caller claiming to be the front desk their credit card. Stay tuned for the fall roundtable date!



Stay United & Dine United

NEIGHBORS by supporting United Way!

Here are a few facts:

Total Raised in Worcester County	\$204,560
Total Program Funding to Worcester	\$336,949
# Worcester Residents Served	20,163
% of County Population Served	39%
#UW Programs Serving Worcester	52
#UW Agencies Serving Worcester	25

OCHMRA has partnered with the United Way for the STAY United/DINE United programs for Ocean City hotels, motels & restaurants to make a real difference for our community with our local United Way! Stay UNITED / Dine UNITED will take place June 1st and run through September.

The United Way of the Lower Eastern Shore is a local independent organization governed by a local volunteer Board of Directors. All policies, activities, and procedures are determined right here at home. The community volunteers who work on the Board of Directors and the many committees come from all walks of life and reflect the diversity of the Eastern Shore. A small professional staff of 9 works to optimize stewardship of all donations, support volunteer activities, produces information and materials, process campaign pledges, recruit and train volunteers, directly provides many programs and plans special events.

- 100% of donations stay LOCAL!
- They support 74 programs focusing on Health, Education and Financial Stability
- They are locally & independently ran & serve Somerset, Dorchester, Wicomico and Worcester Counties... for 72 years and counting!
- Their administrative costs are 17%... far below the National Average of 35%
- 1 out of every 3 LOCAL people will use United Way funded PROGRAMS this year!
- YOU are helping your FAMILY, FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS &

STAY United / DINE United works like this ...

Restaurants Develop Creative Fundraising Ideas ~

- \$1 of a Special Cocktail or Appetizer goes to United Way
- Employees have an extra good night? Ask them to make a small donation.
- Have a United Way Donation Box for both employees & customers
- Offer Payroll Deduction for employees to give even \$1 per week from their paycheck

Hotels/Motels Develop Creative Fundraising Ideas ~

- Set an amount from a special package go to United Way
- Contact Vendors to see if they will contribute or do a match
- Create an employee competition to increase special "stay united" sales
- Offer a payroll deduction for employees

Benefit for the business: HEAVY marketing promotions provided by United Way & OCHMRA, including printed materials, e-mail marketing, social media & online, local newspapers and radio. Winning Business receives Trophy, Bragging Rights & Great Community PR! Supporting neighbors in need feels good!

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OCHMRA SPOTLIGHT: LIZ WALK



They say “once a beach girl, always a beach girl.” That certainly describes OCHMRA’s Liz Walk who was raised in the gulf coast town of Sarasota, Florida. During her college years, she ventured north and graduated from Wheaton College outside of Boston; however, her favorite year was that spent studying abroad along the Australian coast in Cairns, Australia. Liz joined the OCHMRA in the fall of 2013 and has become an integral part of the organization, representing the Association on both the Green Team and Seasonal Workforce Committee. She finds enjoyment in riding bikes on the boardwalk and even once rode from West OC to the Delaware line and back! Two of her favorite spots are in the hammock on her front porch and laying on stinky beach (now officially know as Homer Guldesky Park); really, anywhere outside! Now that Liz is with Kyle Hughes, Next Wave Studios, she is proud puppy mama to Maggie, the cutest labradoodle in Ocean City.

Hughes, Next Wave Studios, she is proud puppy mama to Maggie, the cutest labradoodle in Ocean City.

Important Information on Social Security Cards for J-1 Students

The Social Security Administration Salisbury District Office staff will not be disbursing SSN Cards at City Hall every week, as has been the traditional practice for many years.

- SSN Cards will be sent to the address listed on each student’s SSN Application Form.
- The SSA Salisbury District Office will receive an Integrity Report if SSN cards are being sent to a specific address repeatedly. The only addresses approved by SSA for bulk sending are the two designated sponsor organizations with offices in Ocean City (United Work and Travel, and ASSE ASPIRE).
- If they do not have a permanent address at the time they apply, they will need to pick the card up in two weeks from the social security office in Salisbury.



Straws are some of the most common pieces of litter found in the ocean. Help keep our oceans and beaches clean by asking for no straw today.

Did you know that Americans use 500 million straws per day, many of which end up on our OC beaches?

Improve the efficiency of your business, save money, and keep our beaches clean with the Stop the Straw campaign. Post the following image around your operation while training your employees to abide by the “offer first” policy: servers

and hostesses first ask if the customer would like a straw before distributing them.

If you are interested in participating in this simple, free, and low-maintenance project, please contact Samantha Bingaman at seb5495@terpmail.umd.edu for guidelines and materials. Thank you.

From the OC Green Team: C2ES Webinar: Helping Small Businesses Build Climate Resilience

An extreme weather disaster can force some small businesses to close their doors forever. How can small businesses better evaluate, prepare for, and respond to the increasingly frequent and intense extreme weather events that climate change brings? This free webinar will explore:

- Challenges to making small businesses more climate resilient
- Resources for small businesses
- Recommendations for engaging small businesses on resilience

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE FREE WEBINAR

- Risks small businesses face from climate and extreme weather



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April Dinner Meeting Photos by KRR Photography



Judy Schoellkopf, Old Pro Golf, Veronica Kahn, Felecia BenZakan & Paul Kahn, Beach Plaza Hotel, Stan Kahn, Lisa Challenger, Worcester County Tourism



Will Lynch, Commander Hotel, John Lynch, Commander Hotel, Jason Nester, Recipient of the Tres Lynch Scholarship, Earl Conley, Bank of Ocean City



Duran Showell, Courtyard by Marriott, DeVanna Young, Revenue Optimization Consultants



Sam Stewart, Terri Sterling, Keith & Shelley Coffin, Delaware Elevator

Click for all the photos!

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