



Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

December 2018

News from... THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome New Members

ALLIED
Ark Systems
C & C Ultimate Construction

Harbor Day is Back!

After a 6-year hiatus, Harbor Day at the Docks will be returning on October 19, 2019. This maritime heritage festival was wildly popular from 2008-2012. Staged around the commercial fishing harbor, the event will have maritime related vendors, showcase the fishermen and their trade, and will have live music, seafood cooking demos and tasty treats. The event is being spearheaded by the Worcester County Recreation and Parks, along with help from the Chamber of Commerce, Worcester County Tourism and the OCHMRA. Mark your calendars!

Employee Handbook Guidelines

Over the last couple of years, we've seen an increase in labor litigation and members are spending thousands of dollars proving their innocence. The majority of cases call into question overtime/unpaid wages, sexual harassment and wrongful termination. While we are continuing to work with the Restaurant Association of Maryland, there have been several great seminars. If you've missed these, send us an email and we'll send you the presentations. In the near future, we'll send you labor attorney language once we receive. Another educational session is planned for March 4 at 9:30 am and will be led by RAM's employment attorney.



**MARYLAND
TOURISM
COALITION**

LESSONS LEARNED AT MARYLAND TRAVEL & TOURISM SUMMIT

Every year we look forward to the Maryland Travel & Tourism Summit and this year was truly inspiring. There were so many great presentations and tourism ideas floating around that it was impossible not to leave with a few takeaways. The Department of Commerce Secretary Mike Gill opened the summit and reminded everyone that tourism is about more customers, more revenue, and more jobs, noting that visitors spent \$17.7 billion in MD, up 2.1% from the previous year. He also reported that tourism brought \$2.4



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billion in state and local taxes last year and provided 149,000 jobs. In his charismatic delivery he reminded everyone of the following:



Build on your strengths!

It's the team!

Control your destiny – no excuses!

Audit your assets -look at what you do have – how can it generate revenue based on relevance to what people want

Best is the standard!

Liz Fitzsimmons, Maryland's Tourism Director reminded everyone to leverage the partnership with her office for promoting packages, specials and events. A partnership flyer which has a directory of who does what in her office can be found at this link.

Additionally, be sure to tag the State, here are their social media connections: #MDinFocus, facebook @TravelMD, insta VisitMaryland, twitter @TravelMD

CAPTURE THE CONSUMER TRAVELER

The session entitled "Capture the Consumer Traveler" provided a glimpse into the leisure market and stressed the importance of looking at the audience you'd like to reach, crafting a resonating message and reaching the audience through mediums/sources they are most likely to use. Other tips included articulating what makes you different in the first sentence, and using video/visual to tell the story as too much text makes people leave the page. Experiential vacations, such as health and wellness, and local, nostalgic, authentic experiences were stressed as the most desired travel.

The Canadian market was explored and noted that they are not afraid of cold weather and will drive. The Ontario/Quebec area has a strong economy and they take 3 trips per year with 55% staying in hotels. They are heavily influenced by deals and OTA's are a #1 planning tool for them, followed by search engines and traveler review sites. They use travel agents! It was suggested that we research Canadian Holidays and plan packages around them; for example Victoria Day is weekend prior to Memorial Day.

Germany was also represented and noted that their economy is strong with low unemployment. The average number of vacation days is 28.9, plus 9-12 days for bank holidays. Interestingly, 77% of Germans travel, with the average duration of 13 days and long haul trips are 18 days. The USA is the #1 long haul destination for Germans. Germans like printed material and use travel agents with tour operators being the #1 source of travel info. They are looking for authentic experiences and 74% use hotels.

Domestic AAA Travelers are most easily reached through their digital life. They want immediate and convenient information and are always connected, however, they want to feel special and get off the grid at times. They are now looking to balance between the digital and their human wellness, thus the



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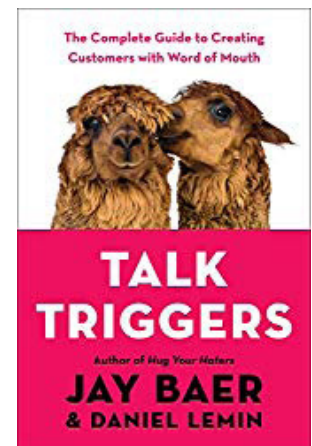
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increase in specific relaxation vacation preference. They also like being told what to do and to have easy laid out plans in front of them. So, be the person to provide guidance based on the need! AAA also noted that due to solo travelers, the Group travel market is picking up. Tournament travelers/attendees need things to do in between games and they do have down time; perhaps reach them in their tournament guides with ideas and itineraries.

Overall, the bottom line is content and it is critical to find people who your destination/business is relevant to. Follow up with targeted experiences, i.e. Foodie/Fitness/Family/Adventurer, and relevant, targeted messaging.

TALK TRIGGERS – TURNING CUSTOMERS INTO VOLUNTEER MARKETERS

Keynote Speaker Jay Baer stated that travelers visit 4.4 websites for research with the most popular being TripAdvisor and Instagram. His session focused on the fact that people have the marketing power, so give them a consistent story to tell and this will be the best way to grow business; have customers do it for you! First, we must understand what people need and what people expect. Then, do the unexpected, competency doesn't create conversation, but the unexpected gives a story to tell. His message was all about creating "Talk Triggers" or the unexpected story that will be worth sharing.



4 Talk Trigger Requirements

- Remarkable** – worthy of remark, interesting
- Repeatable** – create conversation daily/monthly
- Reasonable** – if too grand you create suspicion, be simple (doubletree cookies)
- Relevant** – has to make sense in context of who you are/what you are/what you do

5 Types of Talk Triggers

- Generosity** – more generous than is expected
- Responsiveness** – faster than people expect, get in front of the question curve – think Dr. who calls patients prior to surgery
- Usefulness** – take what you know and give it away - think real estate free guide on how to sell home on own
- Empathy** – when you treat customers good, it's talkable b/c it isn't expected, doesn't have to be factual first as emotion should be first, then info. Hug your haters
- Attitude** – do it a little differently and do it consistently

Cont'd



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How to Make a Talk Trigger (do what people don't expect)

Map customer journey – through all their touch points to you, how do they find you on the web, get email
Interviews – interview 18 people – 6 long time core customers, 6 new customers and 6 lost customers – ask them all the same questions; when you first called our business, what did you expect, brainstorm to figure out what they don't expect

Test and Measure – you don't know if it works until you try it out. Look for mentions of your talk trigger, actual surveys, call or email --- ask if they have told anyone about your business, what did they tell them.... did you tell others any of these things – one of them being the talk trigger – if 15-20% did tell about the talk trigger, then it works

A great resource for what people think about you is to review your business on TripAdvisor's word cloud; it show what visitors are most often saying about us. Many businesses don't have a strategy for PR/Word of Mouth marketing. Plan yours today! Audit your assets, see what you have and match what your are to a target audience with ROI – figure out how to find them, create clear message and tell it over and over.

A complete copy of his Talk Triggers is available in pdf form by clicking here

7 ESSENTIAL BEST PRACTICES TO REACH CUSTOMERS AND BUILD THE BOTTOM LINE

Miles Media shared that Google and Facebook control ¾ of online advertising with 75% of lodging bookings coming from Google hotel finder or pay per click ads. However, Word of Mouth is most influential and it drives repeat business. Furthermore, he noted the same thing the keynote speaker stated which is, "what content is most powerfully influencing travel".....the unusual & unexpected!

1. Quality is Job #1 - Focus on quality experiences
2. Tell the Full Story - Invest in content that tells a full story
3. Mobile Centric Marketing - Mobile friendly content & campaigns
4. Distribute Your Content with Google and manage your footprint on Google. Google My Business Listing: Make sure you have notifications on and check your answers frequently
5. Immersive 360 Opportunities - Create & share immersive 360 content
6. Advertising with Impact - Ensure your advertising has impact -Use Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, campaign tracking codes, URL builder -- -can't rely on click-thru rate!
7. Review, Report & Report - Review and refine by measuring what matters

His full presentation is worth reviewing here.



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SPORTS TOURISM

Kevin Smith of On Point Strategies shared his expertise with the group on sports tourism. He helped launch sports tourism in St. Pete Clearwater Beach area and remains active on their Sports Commission today. He began with noting the importance of discovering what is sellable in your destination; focus on what you do well! It is important to do an asset assessment and take what you have to offer and match it to your mission. As others had mentioned the importance of

doing the unexpected, so did Mr. Smith stating, "do what others may not do to create lasting memories and experiences." He noted to look at who benefits and determine how to make it better. Several different types of sports tourism were reviewed. Active participation events, such as golf, cycling and soccer tournaments are always good, but they have higher participation fees. Event sports where volunteering at events have become a popular form of sports tourism travel as has nostalgic visits to sports museums, iconic venues, army vs. navy games, etc.

Most events have down time so it is important to create "+1 days" for them. These are add on activities and itineraries that can be given to the tournament leader or placed in their event directories. In the sports tourism world, there are different levels on the sports pyramid: Elite, National / International, State & Regional, Grassroots in your back yard events. He suggested thinking about paying bid fees to any events you currently have by telling the organizer to increase the events by 10 teams outside a 100 mile radius.

He also suggested hosting stakeholder meetings with the community to engage and help them understand how tourism benefits everyone, as most Rec & Parks departments are set up to serve the community. You could also ask Rec Dept for a list of open dates on their local fields and then offer these dates to tournament organizers. Finally, he suggested think about new types of non-traditional sports, such as quidditch, dodgeball, kickball, cross fit, pickleball as these have lower participation costs, fewer facility restrictions and can be played in multiple types of venues. Additionally, ziplining, birding, yoga, sailing competitions, paddleboard, kayaking, eco sports tourism are options; most notably, think, "what can I do with what I have."

Congrats to **Dawn Nock**, who joined the Sales Team at **The Grand Hotel**.

Congratulations to **Lindsay Kline**, as well as **Lindsay Drake Deacon, Sysco**, who are both expecting new babies! Congrats to **Rich Gilbert, Maryland Tourism**, who was nominated Volunteer of the Year by the National Tour Association. Congrats to **Greg Grim, Harborside**, on the birth of new baby boy. Welcome to **Heidi Selby**, General Manager, and **Kristy Marvel**, Director of Sales, to the **Princess Bayside**.

Congratulations to the **Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce** for winning New Tourism Product winner for the Key Card Booklet.





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EMPLOYEES ARE THE LINKS TO YOUR CLIENTS!

By: Dr. George Ojie-Ahamiojie

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



Employees are the links between the owner of a business and the business's clients. In the hospitality industry, the employees are the frontline professionals who create the moments of truth and present products and services offered by the properties or operation to the customers or guests. In other words, the image the employees portray to the guest about the company will be the image the customers will remember. If you agree with this premise, why would you not want to treat your employees' right? Here are some tips you can take to make this happen.

Provide good examples

Leadership is about leading a group of people to achieve a desired goal. To be able to do this, the leader must lead by example, provide leadership in times of difficulty, fair and firm at all times, visible and available. More importantly, the leader must show the employees that the buck stops with the leader, and assumes responsibility for all actions. Even more importantly, always say thank you; you are doing a good job!

Create a culture of independence

There is nothing more important than the liberty to do a job without formal or informal interference from the supervisor. Employees want to be able to work independently and depend on their peers when necessary; the manager must be aware of this. Allow the employees to think independently and to make mistakes. However, make sure the employees learn from the mistake. By allowing mistakes, the manager is creating a culture of learners and independent individuals.

Allow employees to voice their concerns without reprisals

Employees are humans, they have opinions and views, allow them to voice those opinions and offer feedbacks; even if they are constructive (negative) opinions about the job or employer. A negative feedback is a gift. Ask the employee what can be done to change this view. The suggestions might make a difference in the delivery of customer service.

Focus should be on solving employees' everyday problems

Again, employees are humans and have everyday problems; be empathetic, sympathetic and offer solutions to the problems, or solve them if you can. Everyday problems are not having a regular ride to work, babysitting issues, asking to spend time with the family, taking a sick family member to see the doctor, asking for early release from the job to attend to a family issue, or asking for an extra break to just rest. We are all humans, the mind cannot be allowed to flounder; the body can only take so much. So, be empathetic!

Share company success with the employees

The employees contribute to the success of the company; share the successes with the employees. This is one way to show the employees that their work, contribution and sacrifice are noticed and appreciated. No employer or organization will be successful without employees. It is then paramount to see employees as those who to rely on to deliver the company's bottom line.

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



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Junior Achievement®

of the Eastern Shore

As a child, many of us dreamt of the day we'd become adults. We couldn't wait to be out in the real world. Well, this week, the 7th-grade students in Somerset County got a taste of what that might be like. Thanks to Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore, the 7th graders got to visit a new Finance Park facility in Silver Spring, MD; a Junior Achievement capstone program aimed at increasing financial literacy in students. JA Finance Park® is set up like a real city with a bank, grocery store, car dealership, insurance agency, and other storefronts. The storefronts are manned by volunteers that help the students with their budgeting and research throughout the day.

When the more than 100 students arrived at the facility, they were each handed a tablet with a life scenario. Some were 36-year-old landscapers with a spouse and two kids making \$40,000 a year and others were single 25-year-old architects making \$90,000 a year. Some had credit card or education debt and some had poor credit scores. All of these factors impacted the students' ability to obtain a mortgage or car loan. The simulation is also less than forgiving, throwing some students a curveball like a flat tire that they are required to fix.

The goal of the simulation is for students to understand budgeting and the importance of saving. Students first

PROGRAM AIMS TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT BUDGETING IN THE REAL WORLD

have to make a budget and set savings goals. After budgeting, they get to shop and put pencil to paper. Students have to purchase or rent a home, buy a car, pay for utilities, purchase car and health insurance. And, just like in the real world, all of these costs are impacted by the size of their family, the size of the house they picked, and the car they purchased. Maybe they thought \$500 a month was realistic for their mortgage payment but after shopping realized they can't buy that huge two-story house they wanted for so little. They then have to go back and adjust their budget. It starts to really click in their minds that unnecessary expenses like buying clothing and eating out can add up quickly.

A visit to the JA Finance Park® facility is the culmination of 14 days of in-classroom curriculum.

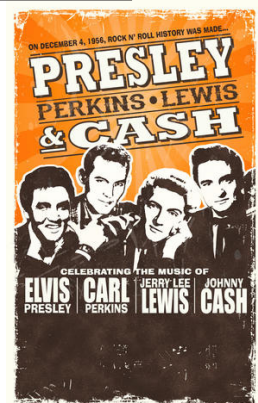
"Allowing students to experience, and I mean truly experience, what it is like to be an adult is something classrooms and presentations could never replicate," said Jayme Hayes, President of Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore. "Students learn by doing, and this will be something they will never forget."

Junior Achievement of the Eastern Shore is planning to take additional groups from Pocomoke High School, Snow Hill Middle School, and Stephen Decatur Middle School on similar Finance Park trips in the spring. Those wanting to sponsor or volunteer for one of these trips should reach out to Mary Holden at mary.holden@ja.org.

Sun Records Legends... PRESLEY, PERKINS, LEWIS & CASH ...Million Dollar Jam

Ocean City Performing Arts Center
Saturday, December 29th 8:00 pm

Tickets \$29.00 & \$36.00 available at the Ocean City Convention Center Box Office
.....or go to Ticketmaster.com or call Ticketmaster at 800-551-7328





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[View all the photos here.](#)



Skip Coleman, Clarion, Susan Childs and Mark Rickards, Town of Ocean City, Jackie Berger, Clarion, Georgette Smith, Carousel



Madalaine How, MAD Design Group, Ann Hillyer, OceanCity.com, Ruth Waters & Sara Simon, Harrison Group Sales



Lisa Challenger, Worcester County Tourism, Ivy Wells, Berlin Economic Development, Ann Hillyer, OceanCity.com, Liz Fitsimmmons, Maryland Department of Tourism Film and the Arts, Liz Walk & Susan Jones, OCHMRA



Jim Keely & Dan Jasinski, Real Hospitality Group, Joanne Cunningham & Joe Cann, Dunes Manor



Donna & Bob Torrey, Happy Jack Pancake House

**IT'S TIME TO GET READY...
JOIN US ON NEW YEAR'S DAY!**

**SAVE
THE
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TUESDAY, JAN. 1, 2019

REGISTRATION
10:00AM - 12:30PM
SWIM IS AT 1:00PM

MONDAY, DEC. 31, 2018

PRE-REGISTRATION
AND ADVANCE CHECK-IN
2:00-4:00PM

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