



Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

News from... THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome New Members
Action Elevator
Vasco Property Services

Food Truck Surveys

The Board of Directors discussed the pros and cons of food trucks. An 18% restaurant member response pointed to opposition of trucks in public thoroughfares and on the beach. Another reason for opposition was the many existing eateries on the Boardwalk and trucks not having to pay property taxes, or have bathrooms. However, there was some support for existing private licenses to be allowed to have trucks on their own property as they pay property taxes. Without an actual proposal before the Board, no formal vote was taken, however, our thoughts will be shared with the City Council.

OCHMRA Trade Expo

The Travel Channel's "Hotel Impossible" host, Anthony Melchiorri, will be at the 41st Annual Trade Expo on Monday, March 9th! He will share his expertise with hoteliers beginning at 9:00am in the new Performing Arts Center. Make sure you mark your calendars to attend!

Several new exhibitors have purchased booths, and if you are an Allied Member, it's not too late ~ a 10 x 10 booth is \$620, call the office at 410-289-6733 to reserve your booth today!

Free Events Return

On the slate for the summer of 2015, your guests will continue to be entertained with free fireworks and laser shows along the downtown beach and up at Northside Park. Additionally, the Tourism Advisory Board recommended a continuance of OOctoberfest in October and SandFest in August.

Once again... our members show their humble hospitality

First and foremost, we'd like to extend a HUGE thank you to all of you for bringing stocking stuffers and toys to our December dinner. Through your generosity, the families at the NOEL (Nothing Other than Eating & Loving) dinner will receive lots of goodies. Also, a BIG thank you to all of the businesses who further spread the holiday cheer by supplying door prizes! They include: **28th Street Pit 'n Pub, Ayers Creek Adventures, Captain's Table Restaurant, Castle in the Sand, Coconuts Bar & Grill, Comcast Spotlight, Holiday Inn Express, Hemingway's, Holiday Inn Oceanfront- 67th St., Horizon's Oceanfront, Jolly Roger Splash Mountain, Maryland Coast Pizza Huts, OC Bikefest, OC Museum Society, The Original Greene Turtle, Phillips Crab House, Planet Maze, Princess Royale Family Resort, RC Fine Foods, Ripley's Believe it or Not, & Sea Bay Cafe.**

Also, on behalf of **St. Peters Lutheran Church Cold Weather Shelter** we would like to recognize our members gracious donations: **Clarion** donated all the spreads, sheets & blankets, the **Carousel** donated extra sheets, toiletries, pillows & washcloths, **Harbor Linen** donated pillows, **Beach Plaza & Francis Scott Key** donated boxes of toiletries, and **Easco** donated a washer and dryer.



JOIN US IN MAKING OCEAN CITY A CRAFT BEER DESTINATION!

Assawoman Brewing Company

January 26 @ 4:30 PM

More Info: Call Ann Hillyer
410-703-1970



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REST EASY: Lodging industry trends

By: netaffinity.com

1. Personalization

2015 will see a rapid rise of personalized web experiences. Hotels will begin to use data in more sophisticated ways to develop tailored content & target customers based on their preferences & online behavior.

2. Mobile isn't a Trend.

Mobile bookings will continue to grow at a fast pace throughout 2015, With a prediction that mobile travel bookings will reach \$39.5 billion in 2015, contributing to 25% of the total online travel market.

Stats Source: www.revparguru.com

3. Booking Abandonment.

With approximately 98% of visitors to a hotels website abandoning the funnel, booking abandonment tools are the answer to driving customers back through the conversion funnel for 2015.

4. Meta Search.

There is still a long journey to be taken by meta search providers to make this an effective channel for hoteliers. The challenge for 2015 is to ensure meta search channels deliver bookings at a profitable CPA.

5. Mobile payment

2015 will see 'mobile payment' become mainstream for mobile hotel bookings. In the past year, the online retail industry witnessed a surge in alternative payment methods such as PayPal, with up to 1 in 4 mobile transactions now through these channels.

6. Owning your Real Estate

The average traveller journey from research to booking takes 24 days and includes 21.6 touch points. 2015 will see an increased focus

7. Pay to Play Social Media

Social platforms will continue to make significant algorithm changes which will affect the social reach of promotional and sales driven content, Hotels will increasingly need to pay in order for this content to be seen.

8. Personal Driven Content

Hotel must become customer-centric and look at a hotel through the lens of the customer rather than the hotel marketer. Hotels need to start understanding what their customer want & need from a hotel and tailor their experiences around this.

15 HOTEL MARKETING TRENDS FOR 2015

9. New SEO

With google now monetizing 100% 'above the fold'* for hotel search results, marketers must push the boundaries for organic traffic, 2015 is the year of new SEO - where optimization moves away from traditional tactics and focuses more on overall customer experience across all channels.

*Based on Avg Screen Size and currently only in the USA

10. Programmatic Marketing

We are set for an explosion of programmatic bidding throughout 2015.

Currently 35% of total ad spend is spent on display advertising bought through 'programmatic' technologies. (Stats Source: Business and Leadership)

11. Audio-Visual Content

Studies show that people remember 10% of what they hear, 20% of what they read & 80% of what they see & do. 2015 will see the growth in visual storytelling, allowing hotels to grow a vibrant and engaged community. (Stats Source: Google 2013 Travel Study)

12. Experience Driven Strategies

2015 will witness a growth of experience driven marketing strategies, Today's consumers want to stay with hotels that acknowledge their preferences & desires. . . engage your customers through immersive brand & product stories that create excitement & stir their emotion.

13. Proximity Technology

91% of smartphone users have their devices within arm's reach 24/7, hotel marketers can take advantage of this by using proximity marketing where various rich media and permission based messages can be pushed out to customers based on location. (Stats Source: www.Viralblog.com)

14. Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are the wealthiest generation & are becoming increasingly tech savvy with 33% of internet users now falling into this demographic. It's imperative that hotels include this generation when it comes to their 2015 digital marketing strategies. (Stats Source: www.dmn3.com)

15. Holistic approach to Revenue Management

The rapid change in consumer behavior will require hotels to adopt an integrated approach to revenue management by more strongly involving sales and marketing in the decision making process. Convergence of these roles will be crucial to managing distribution channels effectively in 2015.



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BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *Diane Kaeufer*

Past President, Diane Kaeufer was born and raised on the Eastern Shore, graduating from James M. Bennett High School and Salisbury University where she obtained a B.S. in Business Administration/ minor in Accounting. During college, Diane began babysitting for the Gibbs family, and upon graduating in 1988, she began working in Dough Roller office. Throughout her 26 years with the Gibbs family, she has filled every position and currently does the accounting for the Dough Roller Restaurants, Breakers Hotel, Rita's Water Ice, Boardwalk Fries and Edwards Condos. She is married to OC native, Steve Kaeufer who grew up on 1st Street. His family owns Foot Management which makes custom orthotics

for Professional and College Athletic teams and people around the country. Diane loves to spend time with her husband and 2 kids, Kirby, 9 and Kiley, 8. When there is spare time, you'll find her soaking up the sun on the beach, by a pool or fishing on the family boat.



THE DISH: *Restaurant industry trends*

Dominique Ansel starts his day the way every operator wishes he could: With \$1,000 in guaranteed revenues before the doors even open. But the chef and creator of the Cronut didn't set out to concoct a best-seller. "There was no magic formula or marketing strategy behind this croissant-doughnut hybrid," he writes in his book "Dominique Ansel: The Secret Recipes." He was simply trying to make a doughnut, for which he had no recipe.

Ansel followed the same creative process and poured in the same amount of time and effort that he applies to all of the confections he invents for Dominique Ansel Bakery in New York City. And for that, he's been called "genius" by Mario Batali and "a culinary van Gogh" by Food & Wine. "It was simply another creation," he writes. "Nobody could have imagined what would happen next."

Even if no one could have fathomed it, plenty of people in the restaurant industry would do anything to recreate that success. To find out what it takes to discover the next Cronut, Restaurant Business asked Ansel for his advice on how to conceive of something that's never been done before, how to sell customers on the idea—and, more importantly, how to do it again. His answer: Start with curiosity.

Practice your signature

The key to thinking up something "new," says Ansel, is to create things with your signature on it. "In the world of fashion, you look at a dress and immediately you say, 'This one is Chanel.' It's the heavy personal touch that is unique."

HOW TO INNOVATE

By Kelly Killian

Involve customers in the process

You have to find a way to reach out to customers and get their feedback, says Ansel. "I've found social media [to be] a great way to show guests what I'm working on and see their responses," he says. "Every time we launch a new menu, we're constantly asking our regulars what they think, and we often send out advance taste tests to our friends whom we trust in."

Create a culture of innovation

Running a business that encourages innovation is not just about investing the money. "You have to budget time," says Ansel. "You are not necessarily spending more on one type of ingredient versus another. It's about pushing yourself and being a self-starter and teaching your team to do the same. The whole company must have a culture of innovation, which is not something you can build into a business plan."

Don't jump to judgment

Motivating employees to be innovative takes a lot of work, Ansel says. "You have to keep pushing, and give constructive feedback on why one thing may work and another won't." You also have to let them try, he says. "It may not be my favorite idea, but until I see it, I won't judge too early."

"You always start with just curiosity. You can't start off trying to expand or increase profits. You need things to stem from passion."

—***Dominique Ansel, Cronut inventor***



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Congratulations to **Stan Kahn** on his retirement from the **Carousel**. **Christie Boden** has joined the Sales and Golf Sales team at the **Clarion**. Welcome to **Lauren Peret** and **Jared Martin** of **Chesapeake Hospitality**, who are overseeing the transition at **Fenwick Inn**. The **Grand Hotel** has added **Kerry Cettei** to the team as a Sales Manager. **Matt Akins** joined the team at **US Foods**, in the sales department. Welcome to **Jackie Miller**, new marketing director at **Seacrets**. A warm welcome to **John Barber**, who is the new owner of **Domino's** franchise.



EARN GRANT HOSPITALITY CLASSES

Final plans are underway for the hospitality bootcamp which is geared to educate supervisors & frontline. The first course is designed to assist supervisors, the classes will teach how to master managing a staff, create a positive work culture and much more. The courses are proposed for January 27 & 28, February 2 & 3. Caitlin Evans will be leading the classes which will be held at Dunes Manor. More details will be sent in the near future.



The 4th annual Susan G. Komen® Maryland Race for the Cure® is scheduled for Sunday, April 19, 2015. This event typically draws over 3,000 people to Ocean City. Komen

Maryland is seeking local hotels/motels to donate rooms for staff traveling from Baltimore, vendors, and volunteers leading up to the event – they have a total need of approximately 85 room nights for Friday, April 17th and Saturday, April 18th.

In appreciation of your support and partnership, Komen Maryland would list your hotel/motel as an official Race hotel offering Race weekend discounts to participants on our Ocean City Race website, include your hotel/motel in Race emails to participants, and also recognize local hotels as Race sponsors.

If you would like to help, please contact Jill Brady, Komen Maryland Ocean City Race Manager, at jbrady@komenmd.org or 410.913.6775.

January Dinner



Our January dinner will be held at the Dunes Manor Hotel.

Mark your calendars for January 22nd. Ocean City Director of Tourism, Donna Abbott, will provide a tourism update. And, the new management group, Real Hospitality, has put a lot of thought into the menu. I'm certain you'll be as excited as we were ~ stay tuned for your dinner invitation!





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December Dinner Meeting

Click here for all pics!



Cristina Pinte, Pete Cullim, both of the The Grand, Matt Brown, Quality Inn & Suites, Kim Wootteon, The Grand



Dave Schaffer, Comcast
Spotlight guest, Mary Knight, Town of Ocean City, Carolyn & Bruce Kennington, Senor Cigars



Susan Jones with 1st HMRA President Kathleen Harman, Ocean Mecca



Judy Schoellkopf, Old Pro Golf



Joanne Hunsicker, OC Convention Center



Mark Elman, Renee Seiden & Laura McCray of the Clarion, John Gehrig, D3Corp



Courtney Roy, Baltimore Sun, Jeff LeVan, Baltimore Sun, Trish Walsh, Insurance Management Group

Photos by
KRR Photography