



Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships

News from...

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
(board is on hiatus until September)

**A WARM WELCOME TO OUR
NEW EVENT MANAGER
LIZ WALK**

For those of you who may have missed the August newsletter due to summer craziness, Amy Tingle is now working at her children's school as Worcester Prep's Assistant Development Director.

OCHMRA's newest addition, **Liz Walk**, begins today, September 3rd. The transition will be seamless as Liz is definitely a people person. She will be assuming the role of newsletter editor, graphics guru, membership liaison, brochure and tradeshow salesperson and whatever else comes our way.

Liz's cheerful demeanor served her well in her recent role as Membership Coordinator at the Ocean Pines Chamber of Commerce. She has also been working as a part-time hostess at Sunset Grille. Originally from Sarasota, Florida, Liz attended Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Upon graduation, she moved to Salisbury to take care of her grandmother, who sadly just passed.

Feel free to send Liz a welcome note at: lizwalk@ocvisitor.com

Condolences

Our condolences to Liz on the loss of her grandmother, Jane Wood. Also sincere condolences to Patti Hopkins of the Mayflower and King Charles Apts. on the loss of her father-in-law, Jack Hopkins.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE SEMINAR SEPT. 17

As Obamacare continues to evolve, many questions surround the issue. Employers need to have an understanding of the dynamics that affect the individuals as it will be impacting group plans in the coming year. Therefore, we have teamed up with the Greater OC Chamber, Atlantic Smith Cropper & Deely and Keen Insurance to bring you "**Understanding Obamacare, a Community Education Seminar.**" This seminar will be held at the Ocean City Convention Center on Tuesday, **September 17th** from 9-10am in Room 215.

Join market experts, Chris Carroll & Chris Keen as they explain: How Obamacare affects you and your family; understanding tax penalties; your options under the health exchange market; can you qualify for federal subsidy to pay premiums; how an insurance agent can help and more. This seminar is also open to your employees. *Space is limited, reserve your seat by emailing inquire@ocvisitor.com or call 410-289-6733.*

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RESTAURANT FOR LEASE: Corner Restaurant located at 3rd St & Balt Ave oceanside in Monte Carlo. New tenant can occupy space November 15th 1350 sq ft, 2 bathrooms, hotel & 3rd St entrance, street signage. Includes: mop sink, three compartment sink, hood and grease trap. Business with liquor lic. preferred. Opportunity for room service and rooftop pool service. Email Clara at clara.ziman@gmail.com



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BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *Shawn Harman - Fish Tales & Bahia Marina*

Shawn's affiliation with OCHMRA goes back to the Association's beginnings when his mother, Kathleen, served as the first President. Pictured above with daughter, Devon Harman, Shawn recently was named **Maryland Restaurateur of the Year**. Shawn and his wife, Donna are also parents to Jesse Harman, who attends Flagler College and plays in the local band Hot Sauce Sandwich, while Devon is studying abroad in Singapore. Philanthropy is important to the Harmans. As creators of the Poor Girls Open, they have donated over \$500,000 to the American Cancer Society.



THE DISH: *Restaurant industry trends*

THE MOST SEARCHED ON MOBILE DEVICES *By: Bob Krummert | Restaurant Hospitality*

The explosion of smartphone ownership means **your restaurant now needs a strong presence on multiple online platforms, not just the internet.**

If you've been reluctant to make information about your restaurant easily searchable on mobile devices, the time to capitulate is here! A new study from custom market research firm Chadwick Martin Bailey finds that 81 percent of smartphone-owning consumers search for restaurants through mobile apps and 75 percent make dining decisions based on those search results. It's a huge market segment your restaurant may be missing.

"Eighty-four percent of consumers look at more than one online menu when they are making a dining decision. Moreover, 62 percent are less likely to choose a restaurant if they can't read the menu on their mobile device," says Chadwick Martin Bailey, VP Kristen Garvey. "The math is simple. It's no longer okay to ignore your online and mobile presence. If a restaurant's online menu is updated and available on mobile, it has a distinct step-up over competition in terms of conversion."

For this study, Chadwick Martin Bailey quizzed 1,497 smartphone owners on behalf of engagement marketing firm Constant Contact. **The key findings were:**

- * **81 percent** of consumers have searched for a restaurant on a mobile app in the last six months.
- * **92 percent** of consumers have searched for a restaurant on a web browser in the last six months.
- * **75 percent** of consumers often choose a restaurant to dine at based on search results.
- * iPhone owners are more likely to search for a restaurant than other smartphone owners.

* **80 percent** of consumers think it's important to see a menu before they dine at a restaurant.

* **84 percent** of consumers are likely to look at more than one restaurant before choosing where to dine.

* **70 percent** of consumers think it is important to be able to read the menu of a restaurant on a mobile device.

* 62 percent of consumers are less likely to choose a restaurant if they can't read the menu on a mobile device.

Numbers like these make it clear where the market is going. "Consumers today are armed with so many resources that they don't have to make guesses on what any given restaurant might serve them and they expect that the information they find will be accurate," says Constant Contact's Wiley Cerilli. "What we are seeing with the results of this survey is that online menus are essential in bolstering a restaurant's ability to attract new patrons. Those that are able to manage and update online menus in an effective and efficient manner are poised to benefit from repeat business and long-term success."

Estimates call for 192 million US smartphone users by the year 2016, with an annual US growth rate of 33 percent as measured in unit shipments from mobile phone manufacturers.

If you were holding out for convincing evidence that it's time to make your restaurant's menu and information easily accessible via smartphone, the wait is over. **Many consumers live their lives through their phones today. If potential customers can't easily read your restaurant's information on their device, chances are they won't be coming to your restaurant.**

[Click here for more great info!](#)



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Welcome back to **Joe Payne** who will take over as Banquet Manager at the **Clarion Fontainebleau Hotel**. And, congratulations to **Chuck Bryant** for his promotion as Clarion's Assistant Food & Beverage Director! Thank you to the super folks at **Comfort Inn Gold Coast** for our beautiful new office flower garden. Best wishes to **County Commissioner Louise Gulyas** for a speedy recovery!



REST EASY: Lodging industry trends

TEN SIMPLE MEASURES TO INCREASE YOUR DIRECT WEBSITE TRAFFIC

From: *ehotelier.com* Pedro Colaco

Direct website traffic is very important in the hotel industry. Hotel's own website and booking engine is where hoteliers have the greatest control over their image, rates, margins and several other essential factors that might also be somewhat controllable on other channels, although never as much as in the hotel's own channels.

Hotels have to be able to stand on their own, especially if they are relatively small and have little brand recognition. The Internet is a level playing field, but it is also very crowded and noisy. If hoteliers don't have a multi-channel digital marketing strategy, they will have great difficulty being noticed, and will consequently be dependent on Online Travel Agents.

Hoteliers not only need to have potential customers land on the hotel's own website: they need a website which is an attractive enough channel so as to guarantee that customers will actually book their stays, instead of booking through other channels.

So, how can hoteliers increase direct website traffic?

1. Truly best available rate

It's your own website, your own channel. It is the place where you have the greatest control over your values and margins and, consequently, the channel to which you should give privilege.

2. Better pricing on your booking engine

Dynamic pricing is about offering promotions and special offers, for instance, to returning customers and to particular consumers with your booking engine.

3. Good looking, optimized, website

Your hotel website needs to be appealing enough so that when potential customers stumble upon it they will get a positive impression of the hotel and will want to share it or bookmark it for future trips.

4. Creating backlinks is not that difficult

Remember to list your hotel in the many websites available out there. Not only should your listing have the basic contact and location information, it should also have your URL.

5. Social back links

With social media, you are given an opportunity to communicate with your customers in a more informal manner and, if you're an independent hotel or a small group of hotels, you can use social media to transmit a more friendly and small-business feel to your customers.

6. Leverage niches

Looking to just stand out on your locations search results (i. e. "hotels at XYZ") is terribly expensive and might even be prohibitive in costs. Instead, you should focus on markets that have more to do with your hotel.

7. Attack multiple languages

Your website should be made available in more than one language.

8. Optimize for mobile devices

As both mobiles and tablets show values of impressive growth, both your webpage and booking engine should be optimized for mobile devices.

9. Resuse offline content

This gives you the knowledge necessary to make posts for future guests to find your hotel, it also gives you important knowledge for your staff to be aware of when helping them in the future.

10. Have your pictures labeled properly

Lots of potential customers will search for your hotel and look at your website before making a decision. Some will make an image search to see its appearance before even going to the hotel's website.

Conclusion

Hoteliers should be able to promote their properties online regardless of their size. Please read the complete article by clicking here.