

**Minutes of Kure Beach Marketing Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 17, 2009**

Members Present:

Gilbert Alphin Brant Barnwell Anne Brodsky Peter Boulter

Members Absent:

Dick Clark

CVB Members: Lee Nettles and Paige Somervell

Advertising/Marketing Representative: Lauren

Meeting Notes:

Since this was a joint meeting, no minutes were approved.

New Business:

This meeting was a workshop held with the Carolina Beach Marketing Committee. See attached notes regarding exactly what was discussed.

It was a very positive meeting with many good ideas being brought forth. It was decided that we should meet quarterly as a group to follow-up and continue with this process

Old Business:

None

Next Meeting:

Next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 24th at 11:30 at the Courtyard Marriott.

Respectfully Submitted: Brant Barnwell

Pricing, Giveaways, Discounts, Coupons, Value

- Consumers are expecting lower prices – it's a buyer's market, we need to recognize economic times
- Pricing driven at the business level, not the destination level
- Concerned that people won't participate in giveaways because they have a slim chance of winning and wouldn't come otherwise
- Industry is saturating market with trip giveaways so it is becoming difficult to stand out
- Giveaways can help increase database, though
- Create a loyalty program offering discounts & special deals
- Customers want immediate satisfaction i.e. immediate coupon or discount
- Coupons/discount incentives drive more traffic because of immediate redemption opportunity
- Ask Chamber to encourage members to participate in rewards/referral program
- Chamber could collect CB/KB offers/discounts on-going
- Encourage businesses to be more liberal with discounts
- Combined CB/KB coupon book program?
- Coupons and such might be a nice add-on, but probably not compelling enough to prompt a visit
- Be careful not to cheapen perception of destination and expectation of stay – need to balance price with experience message
- Communicate value, that is, what you get for the money paid

Visitor Satisfaction

- Off the charts satisfaction rating
- Extremely high satisfaction level holds potential as a differentiator. How do we capitalize?
- Need to talk about satisfaction level in a succinct shorthanded way
- Public relations to communicate 3rd party research findings (satisfaction)
- Testimonials can also support satisfaction position
- Encourage trial...once folks try it, they're likely to become loyal, highly-satisfied customers (justification for aggressive accommodation deals?)

Referrals

- Referrals from friends & relatives are important
- Referrals remove some of the risk and uncertainty for new visitors, particularly important with less disposable income and fewer vacations taken
- Referrals – Locals and previous visitors are potential referrers
- Feel that testimonials/public forum drives more visitation than a giveaway
- Accommodation databases are best source for previous visitors...but accommodations will not want to share the visitor's info with the destination

- Previous visitors can convey satisfaction message, but are they inclined to keep CB/KB to themselves?
- Offer bigger incentives for referrals

Other Marketing Considerations

- Continue family, quality vacation message
- Maximize online communication opportunities
- Integrate the reality of it being a buyer's market into advertising message/on website/ in marketing collateral
- Develop a piece that can be used by businesses and sent out to their customers for ex. Email template with downloadable coupons, etc.
- Stand out by personalizing message
- Can perhaps no longer take summer month business for granted during tougher economic times and downturn in travel
- Utilize social networking programs
- Communicate events throughout area businesses

Trends, Observations, Miscellaneous

- Calm, quiet, relaxed
- Seeing a lot of last minute reservations & shorter stays
- Travel closer to home/less expensive
- Localized campaign to reach close proximity counties ex. Staycation
- Take care of the people who take care of us
- Freeman park lost 50% of revenue in 2008
- 55% of vacation rentals are now for rent by owners which creates a bad experience