

Meetings & Conventions

2009-2010 Sales Plan

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GOAL

Generate 85,000 definite room nights as a result of the leads generated by the Meetings and Conventions Department.

STRATEGIES:

Continue working with our partners and encouraging them to involve the CVB on booking business into the county. Assist meeting planners with all aspects of their requests for proposals. Inquire about flexibility with the client's proposed dates when distributing leads thus allowing as many properties as possible to submit a proposal for consideration.

Assist our hotel partners by participating in site inspections as well as FAM trips and providing meeting planners with all of the information on the services available to them.

Encourage properties to contact us when they are unable to accommodate a clients meeting requirement so that we can then contact the client and assist in the search to find an available property in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area that will fit their group needs.

Continue to host quarterly Meetings and Conventions Committee meetings where we update our industry partners on our sales efforts.

Attend and exhibit at educational conferences and tradeshows, organize sales missions and host client events in all geographical markets.

Corporate trade shows (Meeting Professionals International)
Association trade shows (FSAE, ASAE, Springtime in the Park, Destination Showcase)
SMERF market trade shows (RCMA, FEA, Rejuvenate)
Government market trade shows (SGMP, Affordable Meetings, Quest)
Multi-cultural market trade shows (NCBMP)

Our 'Backyard Marketing Campaign', will focus on telemarketing to associations and corporations in our own region. We will focus our sales effort to promote that local planners keep their meetings here, which will save them money on transportation, and stimulate the local economy.

Increase staff involvement in industry associations, such as MPI, with in each geographical market and plan to attend/sponsor monthly meetings to increase awareness of our destination amongst their meeting planner members.

GOAL

Increase the number of groups receiving services, and MINT reportable room nights.

STRATEGIES:

Promote comprehensive planning services by attending event planning meetings to provide promotion and attendance-building ideas, planning assistance, supplier referrals and destination materials.

Maintain history-reporting to Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), Meetings Industry Network (MINT) database program, for research specific market and date-available leads.

Encourage meeting referrals from hotel sales and services department for groups that did not originally book through the CVB.

Promote CVB concierge link for attendees to access destination information and activities using pre-meeting promotion and registration materials.

GOAL

Increase awareness and knowledge of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area as a meeting destination to corporations and associations in the northeast and southwest market .

STRATEGIES:

Propose we attend and exhibit at the FICP (Financial & Insurance Conference Planners Association) Annual Conference in Nov. 2010. Participating in FICP gives us access and opportunity to meet over 200 financial services/insurance meeting professionals.

Invitation to exhibit at the tradeshow is limited to approx. 50 suppliers, and is done by a lottery system. VSPC entered the lottery to attend the 2009 Annual Conference and did not receive an invitation. We will enter the lottery again in F/Y 09-10 in order to qualify to exhibit at the Nov. 2010 conference.

Participate in both Connecticut- River Valley and Westfield, NY- MPI Chapter Events. These events focus on the planners in the Hartford, CT and Westchester County, NY corporate and association headquarters. We will pursue partnership with Tampa Bay & Co. hosting these events.

Attend and sponsor MPI- Philadelphia Chapter Luncheon, and make additional sales calls to key clients. The demographic and airlift is favorable to yielding additional bookings from this market.

Attend and sponsor MPI- GNY Mix Event (Greater New York Chapter). NY Mix has established itself as the premier networking and educational event in the metro area attracting both corporate and association planners from the tri-state area. VSPC will pursue a sponsorship opportunity, while continuing to co- partner with Tampa Bay & Co.

NJ- MPI Golf Invitational.-The NJ MPI Chapter membership has a ratio of 58% planners to 42% suppliers. This chapter has an annual buying power of \$320 million, and the average MPI- NJ planner spends \$1.5 million annually. We will attend and sponsor a golf hole during this event.

Participate in MPI Houston Chapter luncheon and MPI Dallas Tradeshow opportunity in TX. We will support these events with sales calls to key accounts in the area. The focus will be on corporate, association, and key third party planners from the area. The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) will also be holding their Annual Conference in Dallas in 2010, and VSPC will pursue possible sponsorship opportunities.

GOAL

To increase new group business to our area by bringing qualified meeting planners to Pinellas County to experience the destination, and meet directly with the hotel partners. The objective is to increase visitation and familiarity with VSPC and increase bookings overall. Grow our database by encouraging and rewarding planners who already book our destination to provide us with new referrals on planners who would benefit from using VSPC services. Continue our efforts to aggressively build our relationships with our A list clients to produce more business.

STRATEGIES:

Coordinate a client event and “reverse tradeshow” in the Northeast, Midwest and Washington DC markets. The reverse tradeshow provides an opportunity for our partners to meet one on one with meeting planners and learn about all the different types and sizes of their meetings and conventions.

In conjunction with both Destination Showcase’s (Chicago and DC) we will participate in the “Hosted Buyer Program” with DMAI. This program provides us with exclusive access to pre-qualified key decision makers that are outside of the DC and Chicago territory. DMAI and the hosts will provide the round trip air and accommodations, to their choice of the 2 tradeshows as well as access to the educational sessions. In addition all “hosts” will have pre-set appointments with each of these planners aside from the tradeshow. This program will help us tap into new markets and build our database.

In these economic times we have noticed that customer loyalty is a key to rebooking business. We will be implementing a new program where we host “Definite Business Luncheons”. Clients that are booked definite for future years will be invited to attend the luncheons in Chicago, DC and Tallahassee/Gainesville.