



MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

2006 – 2007 SALES PLAN

Prepared by:

Shelby Jones

Director of Meetings & Conventions

GOAL

Generate 700 qualified meetings leads, a 62% increase over what is projected for FY 05-06.

STRATEGIES:

Identify, qualify, and pursue qualified leads from industry trade show attendees, sales missions, blitzes, telemarketing, and direct mail campaigns.

Attend and actively pursue 36 conferences/trade shows, 6 sales missions, 2 CVB team sales blitzes, 12 client events, and 1 Visit Florida sales opportunity:

- 19 Corporate market trade shows
- 2 Association market trade shows
- 1 Religious market trade show
- 1 Incentive market trade show
- 3 Government market trade shows
- 4 State Association market trade shows
- 4 Multi-cultural market trade shows
- 1 Reunion market trade show
- 1 Meeting Professionals International trade show focusing on the local corporate market

One of the main activities to generate new leads is a sales mission. A sales mission consists of the CVB and several area industry partners traveling to a specific market to jointly promote the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. The purpose of the sales mission is to meet, educate and develop relationships with meeting planners, business professionals and decision makers. In addition to calling on new potential clients, during a sales mission we sponsor luncheons within the local Meeting Professionals International chapter and make presentations focusing on bringing groups to the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. This allows us to meet and interact with the meeting planners on a one on one basis to inquire about future meeting plans. At the end of a sales mission, we then compile all of our data and develop a follow up marketing strategy targeted specifically towards meeting the individual needs of the meeting planner.

We will conduct 6 sales missions:

1. Conduct one sales mission in Indiana or Wisconsin focusing on targeting the local Meeting Professionals International chapters.
2. Conduct one sales mission in Washington, D.C., focusing on the association and government markets. During the Washington, D.C. sales mission we will host a minimum of 3 client events. The events allow the CVB to present the destination to meeting planners that may be unfamiliar with the destination and is a great way to generate new leads. We will work directly with our local account representative to set up sales calls and assist in setting up client events.



3. Conduct one sales mission to Dallas/Ft. Worth/Houston focusing on the corporate market.
4. Conduct one sales mission to North/South Carolina focusing on the corporate market located in Research Triangle Office Park.
5. Conduct one sales mission to Tallahassee focusing on the state association and government markets.
6. Conduct one additional sales mission to the Midwest. We will target the St. Louis or Ohio MPI chapter and sponsor a meeting.

The industry partners that participate in the CVB trade show booth will be required to purchase and wear coordinating trade show shirts. Due to the continued success of the "palm tree campaign", we will continue to distribute palm tree stickers at trade shows as a fun symbol representing the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. The palm tree stickers allow us to identify clients later in the show that we have spoken to which allows us to go deeper into establishing a relationship. This year, we will distribute "gold" palm tree stickers, which are indicative of the "upscale" direction that our destination is heading towards.

While in town exhibiting at a trade show, we maximize non-trade show time by setting appointments and meeting with local meeting planners and business professionals that are unable to attend the trade show. When in Chicago and Washington, D.C., we will work with our local account representative to assist in setting up calls for the CVB sales manager as well as industry partners.

Work with trade show organizers to create a "Florida" aisle in order to create a destination impact at trade shows that we attend. We will work specifically with the American Society of Association Executives regarding this initiative.

Email a bi-monthly "promo-mailing" to our meeting planner database as well as new clientele that we are currently soliciting. This email will be a photo of the meetings team taken at various locations throughout the county. The photo of the "Meetings Team" would allow meeting planners to easily identify the salespeople they meet and work with throughout the year at the 44 various tradeshow and sales missions. In addition, the photo will have a short "tag line" stating where the photo was taken and to remind them to plan their next meeting on "Florida's Beach". For example, we will take a photo of the team standing on the beach at Ft. De Soto Park wearing shorts on a sunny day and send the photo to planners located in the Midwest and the Northeast where it is a cold, blustery day in January. The caption could read, "It is 82° and sunny in St. Pete/Clearwater today. Why not plan your next meeting here?" If a different email photo is sent to the planners on a consistent basis, then they will be more likely to think of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Area as an option when planning their next meeting.

Conduct a training session at one of our Meetings and Conventions Committee meetings to discuss the services that the CVB provides, and how the Meetings Department operates. This will increase industry participation with the CVB in trade shows and/or sponsorship opportunities.

Research and identify current clients in the corporate market that have the potential of booking incentive travel in addition to their current corporate meetings.

Increase staff involvement in industry associations on state, regional and national levels in order to expand our individual relationships and client contacts.

Identify and prospect niche markets based on current market conditions, i.e., pharmaceutical and continuing professional education meetings.

Attend industry seminars to further enhance staff knowledge of market trends.



GOAL

Generate 71,700 definite room nights as a result of the leads generated by the Meetings and Conventions Department. This is a 44% increase over what is projected for FY 05-06.

STRATEGIES:

- The numbers are based on current performance levels, as well as having representation in Washington, D.C. and Chicago as a collaborative marketing agreement with the Tampa Bay CVB. We will work with our account representative on a weekly basis to monitor their production numbers and receive a monthly spreadsheet from each office reporting current goal attainment.
- Distribute and follow up on request for proposals once a client has supplied us with a qualified lead. The information is distributed to the specific properties indicated by the client, or only to the properties that match the needs of the group. We then follow up with each property the lead was sent to. This ensures their response reaches the client by the requested due date. We will rely upon our Chicago and Washington, D.C. account representatives to hand deliver bid books to our VIP meeting planners on our behalf.
- Inquire about flexibility with the client's proposed dates when distributing leads. This allows as many properties as possible to submit a proposal for consideration for the meeting so we can better assist the industry with definite bookings.
- Conduct two team "sales blitzes" into Washington, D.C. and Chicago to conduct a variety of sales calls, presentations, and client events. We will work with our Chicago and Washington, D.C. account representative to set up joint sales calls and client functions.
- Encourage area properties to involve the CVB when they are unable to accommodate a clients meeting requirements. The CVB 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.
- Encourage additional communication with industry partners regarding repeat clients that have rebooked at their property for our tracking purposes. And also to ensure the same high level of CVB convention services to increase the probability of the group returning to the destination.
- In order to further educate potential clients about the destination, we invite and encourage them to come to visit the area including conducting site inspections at several area hotels and venues. When a client does visit the area for a site inspection, we will develop a customized site itinerary portfolio utilizing a binder with the CVB logo which would include the proposals from the properties that the client will be visiting and a site itinerary checklist as well as area information. During the site visit we will include an appointment with the convention services department when appropriate, to inform the client of additional services they can provide as well as options for off-site venues.
- Encourage hotels to involve the CVB for groups they are working with that are either pending, or are here for a site inspection, so the meetings team can provide area information as well as assist in offsite venue information.
- Invite and encourage area industry partners to attend our quarterly meetings & conventions committee meetings, of which we discuss the status of current business, creative ways to obtain additional business as a destination, and how we can collectively work together to make an impact to meeting planners.
- Act as a liaison between the client and the hotel when working with planners that are coordinating citywide conferences. Stay in constant communication with the meeting planner from the point of initial contact through the time that their conference takes place.



GOAL

Research, target, and develop potential business from upscale, high-end associations and corporations from Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

STRATEGIES:

- Coordinate a “sales blitz” into the Washington, D.C./Baltimore and Chicago areas. This initiative will involve several members of the meetings team traveling to a particular city and conducting a week of prescheduled appointments. In addition, we will host a client luncheon event and an evening reception in order to form relationships with new clientele. There will be a minimum of 25 scheduled appointments completed in a sales blitz.
- Schedule the Chicago “sales blitz” during the time that the Chicago White Sox play the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, so we can plan a client event at the game. We can promote the area as an ideal meetings destination while maximizing on the opportunity to showcase one of our many area attractions.
- Continue to partner with the Council of Engineering and Scientific Society Executives (CESSE) and be a sponsor of their annual meeting that takes place in July. CESSE is a professional society comprised of over 150 science and engineering societies whose combined memberships total 4 million.
- Hold an event while in Washington, D.C. specifically geared towards the organizations that are members of the CESSE organization to continue to promote the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area.

GOAL

Aggressively solicit to increase awareness and knowledge of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area as a meeting destination to various Multi-Cultural organizations.

STRATEGIES:

- Coordinate one day of the Washington, D.C. and Chicago sales blitzes to specifically target various multi-cultural organizations.
- Attend and exhibit at 4 multi-cultural conferences.
- Maintain membership in the National Coalition of Black Meeting Planers and volunteer on a committee. In addition, we will work with the organization to add our website as a link to their organization site.