

Meetings & Conventions Department

2007-2008 Meetings & Conventions Plan

Prepared by: Suzanne Scully
Senior Sales Manager of Meetings & Conventions

GOAL

Generate 700 qualified meetings leads.

STRATEGIES:

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

Attend 40 conferences/trade shows.

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

To increase our visibility we will continue to work with trade show organizers to secure space in the "Florida" aisle in order to create a destination impact.

While in town exhibiting at a trade show, we maximize non-trade show time by setting appointments with local meeting planners and business professionals that are unable to attend the trade show.

In addition to our tradeshow schedule the meetings team and our industry partners will conduct 6 sales missions during this fiscal year.

Two of those sales missions will take place in the southeast market where we will target corporations as well as associations. We plan to organize one mission, along with our industry partners, to North or South Carolina and the other to Tallahassee.

The purpose of a sales mission is to meet, educate and develop relationships with meeting planners and business professionals. This will be done through joint sales calls to the clients' offices where we will make a presentation, via power point or other visual aide, and present Pinellas County as a premier meeting destination.

We will continue our quarterly Meetings and Conventions Committee meetings where we update our industry partners on our sales efforts. In addition we will discuss the services that the CVB provides, as well as how the Meetings Department operates. This will increase industry participation with the CVB in trade shows, sales missions and sponsorship opportunities.

Increase staff involvement in industry associations within each geographical market. For example a team member would attend a meeting for the local chapter of Meeting Professionals International while they are in that destination for another show or mission. This enables them to meet clients that may not attend the larger shows or that have smaller meetings.

Identify and prospect niche markets based on current market conditions, i.e., medical and franchisee meetings.

Continue our ongoing focus on the Multi-Cultural market by attending and exhibiting at 3 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 website.

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.

STRATEGIES:

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.

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.

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.

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

Maximize on our collaborative marketing agreement with the Tampa Bay CVB by participating in sales opportunities with both the Washington, D.C. and Midwest Regional Account Executives.

STRATEGIES:

Coordinate several aggressive sales missions that will consist of a week where we will set prescheduled appointments with meeting planners at their office. In addition we will host luncheons and evening receptions in order to form relationships with new clientele. These types of client events also allow us to present our area to a captive audience where the industry partners get one on one time with the clients.

We will conduct one 2 sales missions to the Midwest this year. On one mission we plan to target Indiana or Ohio and host/sponsor a monthly meeting for the local chapter of Meeting Professionals International. For the other we plan to host a minimum of 2 client events in either Minneapolis or Indiana.

We will continue to partner with the Council of Engineering and Scientific Society Executives (CESSE) and be a sponsor of their annual meeting in July as well as their Executive Symposium at the Renaissance Vinoy Resort in November. This enables us to develop our relationships within an organization that is comprised of over 150 science and engineering societies whose combined memberships total 4 million.

GOAL

Aggressively solicit to increase awareness and knowledge of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area as a meeting destination to organizations with focus on the Northeast and the Incentive markets as the destination turns more upscale.

STRATEGIES:

Hire a destination based representative in the Northeast by partnering with the Tampa Bay CVB or hiring a representation firm that is located in New York or Philadelphia.

We will add a Northeast sales mission to our travel schedule where we will also host a client event that will focus on high end associations and corporations.

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

We have also added the Incentiveworks tradeshow in Toronto, Canada to increase awareness of the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area amongst Canadian incentive meeting planners.