Marketing Council Meeting Minutes
April 16th, 2024
Meeting In MBACC Boardroom

Marketing Council Members in Attendance: Sean Bailey, Kristin Call, Matt Klugman, Declan McGonigal, Patrick Norton, Jacob Smith, Jay Smith

Staff in Attendance: Stuart Butler, Bob Harris, Diane Charno, Tiffany Henry, Kelley McDonnell, Denielle Van Dyke, Wes Bilyeu, Chris Mowder, Johanna Hodge

Others via Zoom: Leslie Holbrook (Fahlgren Mortine), Kimberly Miles (Fahlgren Mortine)

Call to Order: 9:00 AM

Approval of the Minutes: Matt Klugman – Motion, Jay Smith – 2nd – Approved -ALL

GTS Annual Update: Leslie Holbrook and Kimberly Miles from Fahlgren Mortine joined via zoom. The PR reporting encapsulates significant achievements in public relations, showcasing a remarkable outreach with over 4.75 billion media impressions and an ad value equivalency of $26.7 million for the month. Year-to-date, the initiatives have garnered 1.72 billion impressions and a $9.18 million ad value equivalency. Key campaigns include a culinary focus with a feature on Myrtle Beach's seafood spots and a collaboration with the James Beard Foundation, alongside a sensory-friendly programming effort and closing in on the launch of the children's book.

Groups Update: The Group Sales Marketing Council Update for April 2024, presented by Bob Harris, provided a detailed overview of the current group sales performance and initiatives aimed at promoting Myrtle Beach as a prime destination for various events and meetings. Year-to-date results as of April 15th show significant progress with 263 group leads generating 148,414 group lead room nights and 116,688 definite room nights, marking a 51% increase over the previous year. The presentation highlighted Myrtle Beach's recognition in the Meetings Industry for its 33% growth in meetings in February 2024 and ongoing promotional efforts in the Canadian market. Additionally, Bob discussed the success of recent tradeshows and upcoming familiarization tours aimed at further showcasing the area's offerings. Updates on sports marketing included Myrtle Beach's ranking in the Sports Business Journal and bids to host future NCAA Championships. The lodging sector also saw notable developments, including a new dual-branded Hilton project and renovations across several properties. The session concluded with an introduction to the new B2B digital marketplace by Travel Exchange, aimed at enhancing online visibility and bookings for local tourism businesses.

Marketing Updates: The April 2024 MC Marketing Update, presented by Diane Charno and Stuart Butler, provided a comprehensive overview of the latest marketing strategies and occupancy trends for Myrtle Beach. Key points from the presentation include:

New Team Member Introduction: Welcomed Kelley McDonnell as the new Content Manager, who will play a pivotal role in content management and publication production.

Media Strategy Adjustments: The marketing team deployed additional media in March and April, expanding linear and CTV buys and introducing new promotions like "Springs Hottest Deals / Free Night" to capture last-minute travelers.

Spring Break Occupancy: Reported stronger than anticipated occupancy rates during the spring break period, peaking between 80-90% from April 3rd to 6th, despite being slightly down compared to 2018.

Easter Week Analysis: Noted a variability in hotel and short-term rental occupancies around Easter week across different years, with a general trend of increased preference for short-term rentals post-pandemic.

Top Family Destination Ranking: Highlighted Myrtle Beach's recognition as the second most searched destination for family travelers in the U.S. for the summer of 2024, only behind Turks and Caicos.

Myrtle Beach Classic Golf Event: Detailed the schedule for the Myrtle Beach Classic, emphasizing significant events like the Ignite Women's Brunch, Junior Golf Clinic, and various pro-am activities scheduled from May 6th to 12th.

Formal Vote on RFP Submission: A formal vote was held to submit the printing RFP to the Full Board, following a recommendation from the subcommittee. Jacob Smith made the motion, seconded by Patrick Norton, with all members approving.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:14 AM, Jacob Smith -Motion, Matt Klugman - 2nd – Approved – All