Marketing Council Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2025
Meeting In MBACC Boardroom

Marketing Council Members in Attendance: Sean Bailey, Charlie Belissary, Suzanne Hinde, Mayur Jeram, Mark Lazarus, Declan McGonigal, Jay Smith, Tom Tse, Jordan Watkins

Staff in Attendance: Stuart Butler, Jen Brunson, Bob Harris, Tracy Conner, Diane Charno, Rebecca Edgar

Call to Order: 9:02 AM

Minutes Approval: Mark Lazarus -Motion, Mayur Jeram 2nd – All Approved

MMGY Agency Update: Several team members from MMGY presented via zoom shared a presentation focused on refining the strategic approach for current and future media campaigns, with a detailed review of market data, media strategies, and measurement approaches planned for the year. Key components discussed included adapting the media approach to target the right travelers effectively, leveraging data-driven strategies to ensure media placements are optimized across different channels, and utilizing a full-funnel approach to inspire, engage, and convert potential visitors.

A significant emphasis was placed on objective-focused measurement strategies to ensure that all marketing efforts align with the unique goals of The Beach,. The team reviewed upcoming promotional activities and media plans, outlining a strategy that includes digital and traditional media to raise awareness and drive bookings.

Important industry trends were discussed, highlighting consumer sentiment, rising travel costs, and the growth of travel technology and product innovation. MMGY plans to leverage these insights to enhance Myrtle Beach's positioning as a year-round destination appealing to high-value customers and value-focused travelers.

Additionally, new opportunities in creative testing and audience refinement were introduced, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of upcoming campaigns through emotional versus practical messaging and advanced digital strategies. The meeting provided a comprehensive overview of the efforts to maintain and grow Myrtle Beach's market share in the tourism industry, focusing on strategic planning, innovative marketing techniques, and robust data analysis.

Groups Update: The March 2025 Group Sales Update presented a comprehensive overview of group sales activities and results, as well as developments in lodging and attractions.

The Group Sales team has been actively engaging with various sectors through events and sales missions. Notably, the team completed a sales mission in Virginia and hosted a motorcoach familiarization tour in early April. Despite some cancellations from Canadian groups due to economic factors, efforts are ongoing to maintain relationships with Canadian clients. The American Bus Association Marketplace in Philadelphia was a significant event, with the team managing a large booth and fully booked appointments, indicating strong interest in Myrtle Beach.

In terms of lodging, substantial investments are being made to upgrade facilities, with multiple resorts undergoing renovations totaling millions of dollars. New attractions are also in development to boost tourism, including the establishment of a new location for Surfworks at Broadway at the Beach and several new exhibits and facilities at Brookgreen Gardens.

Marketing Updates: The March 2025 Marketing Council Update provided a detailed outlook on the anticipated spring break periods and occupancy forecasts, alongside updates on ongoing and upcoming promotional activities. The late Easter in 2025 is expected to disperse K-12 spring breaks over several weeks in March and April, with specific break periods for major feeder markets like Charlotte, Raleigh/Durham, Knoxville, and Atlanta outlined to aid in strategic marketing planning. College spring breaks are anticipated to peak earlier in March, affecting travel patterns and hotel occupancy, which is expected to increase week-on-week throughout March, experience a slight dip in early April, and then rise again peaking at Easter weekend.

The occupancy forecasts for 2025 suggest a lower occupancy in Q1 compared to 2024 but an increase during Q2. These forecasts are aligned with previous years' data and take into account economic factors and the timing of holidays. On the promotions front, notable activities include the Chef Swap at The Beach's Chef's Table Pass, Can-Am Days, the Montreal Golf Show, and collaborations with major events like the Wheel of Fortune Beach Week and Darlington NASCAR Race, among others. These initiatives are part of the marketing strategic efforts to boost tourism and engagement through targeted marketing campaigns and events tailored to draw visitors during the upcoming travel seasons.

Open Discussion: N/A

Meeting Adjourned: 10:57 AM, Mark Lazarus -Motion, Jay Smith - 2nd – Approved – All