



MEMORANDUM

Date: Friday, August 2, 2013
To: Marketing Committee
Cc: Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors
From: Mark Zimmerman, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing
Subject: Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes

Thank you to everyone for your participation in our Tuesday, July 9, 2013 Marketing Committee meeting, we appreciate your time and comments.

Members Present: Lani Baird, Lisa Karl, Kathy Smith, Joe Tamney, Maggie Atkins, Lee Leung, Renee Simons, James Wiley, Caryn Taylor-Lucia, Lynn Matthews

Staff Present: Mark Zimmerman, Bill Fitzgerald, Tom Haberland, Kenneth Chen

Agenda: Agenda was introduced starting with introductions of individual committee members.

2013 Fiscal Year Results: The bureau's fiscal year ended June 30, 2013. An overview of the results the marketing initiatives have produced in both the Convention and Tourism segment as well as electronic marketing was reviewed.

	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2012
CONVENTION SALES		
Leads/Room Nights	461 195,030	384 147,182
Definite Business / Room Nights	273 93,204	294 94,486
TOURISM SALES		
Group/Room Nights	1,976 6,326	1,537 5,282
TOTAL		
Leads/Room Nights Booked	2,249 99,530	1,831 99,786
ELECTRONIC MARKETING		
Unique visitors to website	190,005	153,471

Summer 2013 Marketing Campaign: A high level overview of the current consumer marketing campaign promoting weekend overnight stays was reviewed. The first three weeks of the campaign has resulted in more than 1,000 unique visits to the website, and 350 visits to participating hotel pages. There has also been significant media coverage generated by this campaign, including stories in both regional and national media outlets. Overall the committee felt good about the creative and strategic direction being taken.

Social Media Update: After the last marketing committee meeting, greater emphasis was placed on social media. The results of those efforts were shared with the committee. Valley Forge CVB has seen significant growth in all social media outlets including a 170% increase in Facebook likes, 15% increase in Twitter followers, a 174% growth in Pinterest and a 72% growth in LinkedIn. Additionally, our new blog, The Pursuit, launched in the previous quarter. Overall the committee expressed a desire to continue to emphasize and utilize social media, while at the same time not neglecting more traditional media channels.

Future Initiatives: The committee was asked to provide feedback and ideas for the November 2013 – February 2014 time frame. Historical hotel occupancies were reviewed. Several members of the committee including hotel partners, restaurants and the casino noted that December is one of their busiest months, although it is historically one of the worst months for hotel occupancies. Discussion centered on how to encourage people to stay overnight during that timeframe. Suggestions including targeting current group meeting customers to extend their stay, as well as creating a consumer-focused package. Creating a countywide event or “spectacular” to give people a reason to come to the area was discussed. Overall the group was positive about the current creative, and urged the bureau to continue to use George Washington as the icon.

Feedback:

Renee Simons suggested the bureau utilize Instagram and expressed excitement with the idea of using George as an icon, and finding promotional partners.

Kathy Smith stressed the importance of maintaining a mix of both social media and traditional media.

Lynne Mathews suggested the bureau leverage its members for database efforts and pointed out that George Washington always has to be easily identifiable. She also mentioned that marketing materials should showcase outdoor activities throughout the year (e.g. winter activities like snow shoeing, ice skating etc.).

Lisa Karl recommended marketing to the international travel audience.

General: It was recommended that the bureau continue to leverage George Washington including George sightings at local venues, George visiting local businesses, George greeting convention attendees and a “Dress Like George” contest. Creating a countywide draw in the winter months such as a unique event or festival was of interest, and the committee discussed a local focus as well as promoting it to overnight markets.

Next Meeting: TBD