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A Message from State Tourism Director Amir Eylon

Another month has gone by quickly, and we continue to move full steam ahead at the Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism. We are pleased to announce that our telemarketing RFP process has concluded, and that Teleperformance USA (formerly known as CallTech Communications) has been awarded the contract to continue answering the phone lines for us and our industry partners at 1-800-BUCKEYE. Progress continues on our other RFPs that are either in review and/or development stages, so stay tuned for further updates on that front as we continue the process to surround ourselves with the best agencies and service providers possible.

On other fronts, we continue with our current programming, as well

The Month in Numbers

Statistics represent a fiscal-year-to-date figure unless otherwise noted. The Division's fiscal year began July 1, 2007 and lasts until June 30, 2008.

as 2008 planning. Our team has been reviewing the latest research and trends data available and has been putting together some terrific ideas in terms of partnership development and future marketing directions. Once our primary marketing RFPs are concluded, we look forward to presenting the industry with a marketing strategy that will balance current needs with future opportunities and trends in order to increase our regional market share. As always, we will be committed to effective and innovative marketing to help lift us out of the general clutter in the marketplace.

To that end, I encourage everyone in our industry to look at the new places where people are gathering to see if there is an opportunity to send your message appropriately. Within the last two years alone, we have seen the boom of online social networking sites and "Web 2.0." Over the past year, the Division has used BuckeyeLine and educational workshops to introduce the industry to what this means for tourism marketing. In addition to reading some of the consumer research reports and marketing expert insights out there, it is essential that anyone looking to develop their online marketing presence becomes personally familiar with these new "gathering places." This is a very inexpensive (free!) form of marketing research.

As I continue to cross Ohio conducting Stakeholder Meetings with members of Ohio's Travel Industry, I often am encountering folks who still have not looked at sites like MySpace, Facebook, Flickr or YouTube. Now, don't get me wrong, I am not saying that everyone should run out and register on these sites (that is a personal choice), but what I am saying is that, as marketers of our businesses, we need to spend a few minutes surfing through such sites to understand how content is delivered, received, enhanced, etc. Not just that; take a few minutes to chat with friends, neighbors, children, or anyone that fits the profile of your target audience to discuss how they use those sites. You will get a lot of insight as to where things are going. I often tell folks that observing my eight-year-old daughter using Webkinz (those with children or grandchildren will know what I am talking about... I'll leave the rest of you to look it up) has opened my eyes as to how toy companies are training our children in the art of "online social networking" and teaching them how to make consumer choices as well.

Bottom Line: The trends are evolving even faster than the marketing books can be written, so we all must keep our eyes and ears open for the marketing intelligence we can glean by observing the world around us. Have a great October!

Teleperformance USA Retains Division's Call Center Contract

The Division of Travel and Tourism is excited to announce that TPUSA (formerly Call Tech Communications) has won the competitive bidding process for the 2008-2009 contract to answer the phones at 1-800-BUCKEYE. They also will handle the telemarketing programs for the Division's industry partners. TPUSA was the incumbent vendor and continues to provide excellent service and value. Congratulations to the TPUSA team.



DiscoverOhio.com Pageviews

Down 1% since August 2007
(through Sept. 30)



PR Earned Media Ad Equivalency

Up 31.8% YTD
(through Aug. 31)

Use Travel Buzz to Create Packages

These days, everyone is busy and searching for a quick, convenient way to get things done. Travel packages bring several components of a trip together, saving time and money for travelers, and possibly being the deciding factor in a sale.

Are you a B&B owner interested in partnering with a local restaurant to create a package? Perhaps you're a hotelier with a block of rooms that has suddenly become available and you're looking for an attraction partner.

Post a message on [Travel Buzz](#) to reach out to Ohio travel industry members. Share information, contact each other and create your packages. Travel Buzz makes it easy for you to make travel purchasing convenient for your customers.

Spring/Summer Calendar of Events Listing Audit Approaching

Thanks to everyone who submitted listings to the Buckeye database at DiscoverOhio.com to be considered for the 2008 Discover Ohio Spring/Summer Calendar of Events publication. The publisher has received all of the listings and edited them.

In the second step of this process, you will receive an e-mail from Great Lakes Publishing on Wednesday, Oct. 10, asking you to log into the publisher's database to review your listing for accuracy and make any necessary changes. Once you've reviewed your listing please click the "submit" button even if you have no changes. The deadline to respond to the audit is Wednesday, Oct. 17.

If you have questions during the audit process, please contact the publisher using the phone number or e-mail address provided in the Oct. 10 e-mail. Thank you for helping us provide travelers with the most accurate event information possible.



PR Earned Media Total Circulation

Up 79.9% YTD
(through Aug. 31)

Tech Corner: Online Video - It doesn't have to be hard (or expensive)

As the Internet becomes ever more interactive, travelers demand



increasing amounts of information about destinations before they go. Online video content is becoming increasingly important in earning visitors to your destination. Extremely positive written descriptions are often seen by savvy Web users as marketing fluff. Photos can be manipulated to enhance colors and crop out undesirable elements. But video has an air of authenticity that many consumers trust to be accurate.

Traditionally, capturing video has been an expensive and time consuming process. A cameraman and crew shooting high-quality video can cost hundreds or thousands of dollars a day. The cost for editing time in a video studio can be expensive as well. For broadcast quality video, these are still the realities. But for Web video, credibility is enhanced and money is saved using lower quality video.

Using a highly-produced video to demonstrate your destination online isn't the best way to go. Viewers will see it as "manipulated" and untrustworthy. But low-fi "amateur" video, conversely, is often seen as authentic. There are [many video cameras](#) on the market for less than \$200 that can capture Web-quality footage and sound. Uploading this video to your Web site is as simple as uploading photos from a digital camera to Flickr. Some programs even interface directly with YouTube to host your video content for free, rather than using your own server space. You can easily link to the video from your site, and the massive audience of YouTube makes it even more likely your video will be discovered there as well.

To start using video, try taking panoramas of attractions in your area, or parts of your destination (ie. guest rooms) and add them to the listing pages on your site. Next, start adding people to the mix. Whether you find a local personality to host your Web casts, like [Indianapolis](#), or you do it all yourself like [Door County, Wisc.](#), you can keep visitors coming back to your site and learning about your destination.

Best Practices: Holiday Shopping and Travel

It's October, and though the temperatures are in the upper 80s across much of the Buckeye State, the holidays are fast approaching. Many department stores already have their trees and lights on display, so it's not too early to start marketing your holiday travel opportunities.

One direction you can take is to encourage holiday shoppers to buy travel packages or gift certificates for their loved ones. You'll have to compete with Macy's and Walmart for holiday gift revenues, but if you differentiate yourself, you should see some success. For instance, place pay-per-click ads on sites like Google and try to tie in your keywords and offers to a shopping theme

Another direction you can take is to encourage holiday shoppers to visit your site and make a long weekend out of the post-Thanksgiving shopping blitz. CVBs, event organizers, shops, hotels and restaurants can partner to create value-oriented packages that will keep visitors in your area longer and help them spend more



PR Earned Media ROI Circulation

Down 38.1% YTD
(through Aug. 31)



Not a member? [Join](#) today!

Hot Topic of the Month: Are you using online video?

money in your community.

Either way, the holidays are a time when consumers are less wary about parting with their hard-earned money. It also is typically a slower season for tourism. So break out the promotions and offer experiences that travelers will want to turn into traditions.

Where in the World?

Oct. 12: Amir and Alicia in Cincinnati for Stakeholder Meeting

Oct. 17-19: Amir, Alicia, Eric, Tammy and Celeste in Sandusky for OTA Fall Conference

Oct. 22-25: Amir in Charlotte, N.C., for TIA Marketing Outlook Forum

Oct. 29: Amir in Cambridge for Fall Team Tourism meeting



Did you know that events and attraction listings in the Buckeye Database not only appear on the DiscoverOhio.com Web site? They are also used at 1-800-BUCKEYE by the travel counselors, exported for use in division publications like the annual travel planner and calendar of events, referenced when writing press releases and used on micro sites and in niche publications. You can see that keeping listings up to date is very important.

Discover Ohio!

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