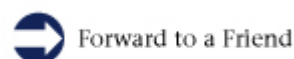




Nov. 6, 2007
Welcome!



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A Message from State Tourism Director Amir Eylon

Over the past few months, I have written about monitoring trends and online social media. I have received a lot of feedback from the industry requesting more information on these topics. Rest assured, we will continue to disseminate trends on our [Industry site](#) and via our other communications as it becomes available.

That being said, I have spent the last couple of weeks attending two terrific conferences that addressed the latest trends, forecasts, and innovative practices in tourism marketing. The first was the Ohio Travel Association's Conference on Tourism, and the second was the Travel Industry Association's Marketing Outlook Forum.

Both conferences brought top regional and national experts on a whole range of topics relevant to our industry. In addition to the quality of content, the opportunity to network and share ideas with our peers was just fantastic!

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.

While both conferences were well attended, there is always room for more. I know it is difficult to take time out for conferences and educational opportunities, but I encourage you to try to make the time to engage whenever our industry is gathering to share. This not only provides insight for our leaders, but also mentorship for our future stars. Many thanks to the Industry associations that work hard in partnership with the Division to provide the content that is most relevant and in demand by the industry.

In addition, the past month has seen the continued progress of our new industry dialogue with Stakeholder Meetings in Miami County, Columbus (exclusively for our group tour partners), and Cincinnati, which currently holds the record for largest local meeting turnout at more than 117! Progress continues on making improvements within our table of organization as well as on the RFP front moving forward to surround ourselves with strong partners (see articles below). Within the next few weeks, some important announcements about the Ohio Film Bureau will be made as well.

The holidays are rapidly approaching, but we are hard at work on the 2008 partnerships on behalf of the industry. Take the plunge and commit to the partnerships that will provide you with the best opportunities to learn, share, mentor, and succeed!

Have a terrific November!

Warmest Regards,

Amir

Division Staffing Update

While Amir and Alicia have been crisscrossing the state to gather Industry input for Division programs and offerings, the Division also has been looking inward to determine how best to capitalize on our strengths and organize ourselves for greater success. To that end, we are beginning to make some shifts in personnel.

Please join us in congratulating Joe Vargo on his recent promotion to Marketing Coordinator! In his new role, Joe will be responsible for the cooperative marketing program, continue to coordinate the efforts of eBrains to send out Ohio's periodic tourism email newsletters/messages, and work closely with Alicia to assist with the day-to-day coordination of Division advertising projects and campaigns. Joe can be reached at (614) 644-0786 or jvargo@odod.state.oh.us.

Joe's move leaves an opening in the Public Relations Office for a public relations coordinator. We are seeking an individual with excellent creativity and writing skills to develop press releases, oversee the Online Press Room, manage the Image Library and assist with Press Trips and Media Missions. The position description has been posted to the [State of Ohio Jobs Web site](#) and the Public



DiscoverOhio.com Pageviews

**Down 2% since
September 2007**
(through October 31)

Relations Society of America Web site and has been submitted to the OTA Web site. We ask your assistance in forwarding this information on to any qualified potential applicants.

Fahlgren Mortine PR Wins Public Relations RFP

The Division of Travel and Tourism is excited to announce that Fahlgren Mortine Public Relations has been awarded the 2008-2009 contract as the Division's public relations agency of record. Fahlgren Mortine was the incumbent agency, and it is a credit to them that their team put a great deal of thought and creativity into their pitch to take our efforts to the next level. We are especially excited about their ideas for non-traditional partnerships and mobilization of consumer generated marketing opportunities. Marty McDonald, of Fahlgren Mortine, along with Amir, presented a sneak preview of potential non-traditional partnership ideas at the OTA Conference. Watch BuckeyeLine for more details as the marketing plan is developed!



Calls to 1-800-BUCKEYE

Down 29% YTD
(through September 30)

Buckeye Fulfillment Center Honored

Andy Doty and the Buckeye Fulfillment Center were honored last month for Andy's work mentoring his MATCO assistant, Adam. MATCO is an organization that helps special needs people develop job skills; MATCO also manages the building that houses the Buckeye Fulfillment Center in London, Ohio. Andy has taken Adam under his tutelage to teach and train him on the various aspects of United States Postal Service regulations regarding mail along with teaching him how to process DHL shipments. Andy also is helping prepare Adam to become a certified forklift operator. Andy's training with Adam has been so intense that Adam can literally pick up a dime with the forklift. Congratulations, Andy!



PR Earned Media Total Circulation

Up 26% YTD
(through Sept.30)

Interactive Marketing Tip: Meta Elements

When you're designing a Web site, there are several elements that don't appear on the screen, but are built into the programming. These are called meta elements, and they're unwise to ignore, because most major search engines use them to find information about your Web site and increase their rankings in relevant keyword searches.

There are several meta elements, but the most important is the description attribute. In it, you should provide a concise (200-character) explanation of your Web site's content. This description normally appears under the url in search engine results, so it can impact click-through rates. Make sure you and your Web designer



PR Earned Media ROI Circulation

Down 31% YTD
(through Sept. 30)

both are familiar with your Web site's meta tags, and use them to every advantage in this very competitive online market.

Web Marketing: Should I or Shouldn't I?

Is your business worthy of Web marketing efforts? In today's business world, if you aren't marketing online you are ignoring a major segment of your potential customer base. Research shows that more and more, travelers are turning to the Internet to research and plan trips. If you don't have a quality, professional presence online, you're losing those potential customers to someone else who does.

"Marketing online" can mean many different things. The first thing that comes to mind is creating a Web site for your business. With so much competition in the marketplace, it is important to have a well developed site that reflects what you have to offer. Keep in mind that visitors will judge your business based on your Web site, and first impressions mean a lot. Just as you wouldn't show up at a job interview wearing jeans and an old t-shirt, be sure you put the time and money into making your Web site reflect the effort you've put into building your business.

Likewise, be sure to take advantage of any free marketing opportunities such as DiscoverOhio.com. Thousands of travelers each month visit the state's Web site looking for information on places to visit, stay, eat and play. By investing the same time and effort in your free online listing, including photos that show those potential customers exactly what you have to offer, you have yet another opportunity to take advantage of the immensely popular and expanding web marketing arena.

Be sure to watch Travel Buzz, the Ohio tourism industry message board located at www.DiscoverOhio.com/industry, for more discussions on Web marketing.

Tech Corner: What's next in Social Networks?

It seems every few months, there is a new Web site on the market offering a new twist on the amazingly popular phenomenon of online social networking. Keeping up with it all can be a huge challenge, so here are a few recent developments that may impact your online marketing plan in the coming year.

Facebook vs. Myspace: Facebook and Myspace are the two top social network sites on the Web. They are both mass-market sites, but there are a few important points of difference. Facebook is used primarily by high school and college students, while Myspace has a significant portion of older users. Myspace has more than 200 million



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



PR Earned Media Total Circulation

Up 26% YTD
(through Sept.30)

unique users, with 100 million unique users signing in each month. It is owned by News Corp, and is set up to allow banner advertising on each page, and some ad firms now specialize in marketing on Myspace. Facebook is currently independent, though rumors of offers have surfaced. Advertising not as easily integrated with Facebook. Currently the best way to market there is to develop a branded widget (or add-on graphic or program) and offer it to users. Myspace is affected more frequently by spam messages and account hacking, driving some savvy users away. Keep an eye on both giants in the coming months.

Niche Networks: As the big players battle for online supremacy, there are smaller, niche social networks popping up all the time. One, www.aSmallWorld.net, is invitation-only and requires a vetting process. It caters to the very wealthy, and is finding interest from luxury brand marketers. Toy maker Playskool has started its own social network www.CafeMom.com, which demonstrates a trend that may see growth in the coming year. The company is targeting new mothers and sends its users toy packages to get feedback on new products. Some other new sites include www.Dogster.com and www.Catster.com which focus on pet owners. Marketers of pet health insurance and pet foods have signed on as early advertisers.

Google's Plans: It's hard to go online without using one of the dozens of services Google provides. This company is the frontrunner on the Web, and its decisions in the next few months on social networking could determine where the industry is heading. Google has a reputation for finding a service and then offering a better version of that service. It took the lead in search engine traffic from Yahoo and it created a better mapping system to eclipse MapQuest. Google execs have recently been quoted as saying that social networking is extremely important, and accounts for a huge proportion of page views on the Web. Google is planning to use the information it has on the connections between users to offer better search results, and currently has its own emerging social network, www.Orkut.com, which many users think has better features than either Facebook or Myspace.

Best Practices: Creating Authentic Experiences

If you attended OTA's Conference on Tourism last month, you learned from Jim Gilmore that the experience economy is shifting to the authenticity economy. While offering experiences is still a requisite in the travel industry, the next step of that continuum is to ensure that the experiences you offer are authentic and not contrived.

An authentic experience is one that is natural, true and real. As consumers become ever more interested in how their leisure dollars are spent, they are looking for authenticity in their destinations. To that end, a restaurant serving local cuisine is more authentic than a fast food chain, though both offer unique experiences to diners. A shop that sells handiwork from local traditional artisans is more authentic than a shop that sells mass market goods sourced

globally.

If you look closely at the travel industry, many of the most popular destinations seem to be built on experience alone, with no authenticity. On its face, DisneyWorld is a fantasy land with few analogues to the real world. Las Vegas is a manufactured oasis of entertainment in the middle of a desert. Yet they have transcended that artificiality by creating their own stories and traditions and have generated their own authenticity. That's very hard to do on a smaller scale. As you look at the experiences you offer your visitors, think about two things -- don't try to be something you're not, and play up what's authentic about your business.

Where in the World

Nov. 2-6 – Celeste at NTA in Kansas City

Nov. 5 – Amir at NTA in Kansas City

Nov. 7 – Amir at Mohican Tourist Association Meeting in Loudonville

Nov. 8-9 – Roger at the 8th Annual E-Tourism Summit, San Francisco

Nov. 14-15 – Amir and Celeste in Geauga County for Stakeholder Meeting

Nov. 19 – Amir and Alicia at OH&LA Annual Conference in Columbus

Discover Ohio!

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Ted Strickland, Governor; Lee Fisher, Lt. Governor

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