

## MINUTES OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

November 16, 2011, 8:30 AM – SCVB Administrative Office

Attending: Carlin Strouse, Palm Bay Club; Debbie Allen, Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar; Jennifer Wohlfort, GWIZ-The Science Museum; Laura Trubac, Adult & Community Enrichment @ SCTI; Sam Davidson, Westfield Southgate; Sharna Rozin, Community Foundation of Sarasota.

Excused absence: Cusic Daniels, Charter One; Laurie Colton, Venice Theatre

SCVB Staff: Stephanie Grosskreutz, Bernadette Gottschalk, Janis Holland

Sam Davidson, Chair of the Partnership Committee, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, who then introduced themselves.

Bernadette Gottschalk noted that the committee's job is to discuss partnership issues generally, and the SCVB Board of Directors has asked for input from the committee on some specific topics. That input will be conveyed to the Board for a final decision.

National Tourism Week was the first item on the agenda. Ms. Gottschalk and Stephanie Grosskreutz gave an overview of what has been done in the past, with the most recent annual events being free events at different venues. The primary problem is getting nominations for the various award categories. Questions posed to the committee were:

- should the event be abandoned? If not, how should it be structured?
- how to fix the nomination process?

The committee had questions and ideas as follows:

- What do other communities do? Ms. Grosskreutz described the YouTube video that an Ohio CVB has done. One suggestion is to create a placard for people throughout the county to hold up in a photograph, saying "My mom is a housekeeper at XXX" or "My dad works as for XXX" and create a collage of the faces of tourism employees throughout the county. This could be shown at the awards ceremony.
- Individual awards are good but the nomination form needs simplification. Streamline the process. The nomination process should take place online, possibly through a survey monkey, thus limiting the time it takes to nominate someone.
- There should be an incentive to nominate someone by having prize giveaways to some nominators (maybe ten) with their names drawn randomly.
- The award ceremony in the past has not explained why the winner won. Tell the story or explain the experience that resulted in winning.
- Retain all four categories: Management, Front Line, Back of the House, Volunteer.
- Limit each nominator (by email address) to allow them only one nomination in each of the four categories.
- Either keep event free or charge a small fee to non-partners.

- Possibly have the electronic nominating form include a few short sentences and then a longer explanation (the story) of why the nominated person deserves the award.
- Eliminate the word 'guest' in the category descriptions.

The committee, without vote, appeared to agree on the following improvements to the National Tourism Week Awards process:

1. Make it a breakfast event.
2. Make it free.
3. Make the nomination form simple and make entry electronic, through a survey monkey link sent by email. This could be forwarded on to others in an organization to garner more nominations.
4. Provide an incentive for people to nominate by entering the nominators in a random drawing to win one of ten small prizes (example: a \$50 gift card).
5. Eliminate the word 'guest' in the award category description.

ACTION ITEMS: Committee members will be sent a link to the Ohio YouTube video and a proposed electronic nomination form (survey monkey) for their feedback.

The next agenda item was annual billing of partner dues and bundling of add-on components. Ms. Gottschalk said the Board of Directors had asked the committee to consider if there would be any advantage for partners to be billed on one set date annually, in contrast to how they currently are billed – annually on the anniversary date of joining the SCVB. The committee discussed this issue and concluded that partners join at the time of year that they have funds available to do so, and there would be no advantage to forcing all partners to pay dues at one particular time of the year.

Other suggestions regarding anniversary billing included:

- Change the name from 'dues' to 'subscription'
- On the invoice, show what is included with the basic subscription (e.g., website listing, Visitor Center collateral, Visitor Guide presence)
- Show the value of the basic subscription items by citing number of web impressions, number of visitors to Visitors Center, number of Visitor Guides distributed)

How can the SCVB increase revenue, including from the three-fourths of SCVB partners that only pay dues and don't spend extra advertising dollars?

- Offer upgrades to partnership that include different levels of add-on advertising components: Basic, Silver, Gold, Platinum. Each level would entitle partners to additional add-on components.
- With the anniversary billing, include all upsell options (premium web listings, web ads, photos in Visitors Center, etc.) so partner can plan the total annual expenditure with the SCVB. This addresses the issue of bundling billing of various advertising components.
- Demonstrate the value of partnership and limit the time for buying add-ons.
- Increase dues/subscription overall.

- Consider selling partners the opportunity to be in a featured section in the Visitors Center where people could pick up information on the top ten 'things to do, places to stay, dine, shop, etc.'
- Survey the partners, both online and at partner coffees, to see what they would want in terms of bundling and add-on advertising opportunities.

The next date for a Partnership Committee meeting is set for February 15, 2012, with a possible meeting in January if needed.

The Chair asked if there were any other matters that attendees wished to share. Jen Wohlfort noted that G.WIZ will be offering \$2.00 admission on the day after Thanksgiving.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.