

PR HOT SPOT October 2009

Hosting Media at Your Business Part 1: Dos and Don'ts of Journalist Screening When Contacted Directly for a Hosting

By Kimberly Miles, Public Relations Manager

The Myrtle Beach Area Chamber/CVB hosts dozens of travel media each year that produce quality stories for print, broadcast and online. What many don't realize is the CVB also receives many additional requests for free hostings that are not accepted. While most people that are looking for a complimentary hosting are legitimate journalists who will produce a quality return on investment, there are a few that are mainly looking for a freebie or free vacation with little or no return expected. Here are a few Dos and Don'ts if your business is contacted directly from a potential journalist.

- **DO** ask the journalist for some kind of credential. If the journalist is on staff for a publication, Google their name and media outlet to find past stories they've written. Most media are willing to send you copies of past stories when asked. If they are a freelancer and say they are on assignment for a publication, ask for a letter of assignment from the editor of the outlet they are working for.
- **DO** get all the details about their story angle, complete contact info, how many traveling with them, last visit to the area, length of stay, circulation, and projected date of story release.
- **DON'T** negatively interrogate the potential journalist. If this is a quality media opportunity you don't want to start off on the wrong foot or they may not cover your business in a positive light or at all. Politely ask for information and make a decision based on all you have gathered. Most media are accustomed to providing detailed information about their purpose for a free hosting.
- **DON'T** feel obligated to give comps to their entire traveling party. Most media, depending on their story angle travel with one other person unless they are doing a family story. If they are asking for comps for their extended family and four other friends that is above and beyond a reasonable request.
- **DO** ask the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber/CVB for assistance in making sure this is a worthwhile media opportunity. The Public Relations staff at the CVB and our PR firm MBooth and Associates has an extensive network of media contacts and can always provide advice on what your business should do.
- **DON'T** be afraid to say no after gathering all of the information. The circulation is too low, they don't provide you with advanced notice (most travel media are aware they need to give a business 4-6 weeks notice for a hosting) or their story angle doesn't match your business are all reasons to turn down a hosting.

- **DO** offer to provide them a discount or information in the way of a press kit or marketing materials if you turn down the hosting as a consolidation for their story.

Next Month: Hosting Media at Your Business Part 2: Tips Before, During and After Agreeing to Host Media

Print and Online Publicity Values

August 2009

Newspaper Articles 33

Nondaily Newspaper Articles 5

Consumer Magazine Articles 2

Trade Magazines 9

Web Articles 208

Total Circulation 98,433,960

Publicity Value \$676,087

Year to Date Ad Value for Myrtle Beach Travel News: \$18,822,554

What would you like to learn or see in a future PR Hot Spot? Want to be involved in this areas PR efforts? Have a PR related question? You can reach Kimberly Miles at 843-916-7218 or Kimberly.Miles@VisitMyrtleBeach.com.