

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at the Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California

Present: Lowell Daniels, Mike Caldwell, Chris Ambrosini, Cari Shafer, Donna Hufford, Gary Stone, Tony Smithers

Guests: Matt Kolbert, Cameron Tyler

The meeting was called to order by Chris Ambrosini at 12:07 pm.

The meeting agenda was reviewed and approved as submitted (Shafer/Caldwell/unanimous).

The minutes of the November meeting were reviewed and approved with the following correction: the HLA staff position under consideration is not specifically an Event Coordinator (Hufford/Caldwell/unanimous.)

The first Action Item was a report by Tony Smithers on the Paid Search and Social Media programs of the Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau. Highlights of his report were:

- The bureau spent \$78,000 in 2017 on Adwords
- The bureau just signed up with Logical Position to manage and enhance Google Adwords
- The bureau will be proposing an HLA investment in paid search to boost high performing keywords (those that convert to lodging clicks), expand geographic reach, and add Bing advertising.
- The bureau has over 41,000 Facebook followers, and has doubled Instagram followers to 2,223. There are growing audiences on Twitter and Pinterest.
- The bureau will be proposing an HLA investment in social media that may include paid boosting of content, dedicated staffing, a content licensing budget, and a budget for hosting social media influencers on Humboldt County familiarization trips.

The committee next heard from Matt Kolbert of the Misfit Agency, who came primarily to answer questions about the proposed 2018 campaign budget and to explain different options the agency had laid out for the committee's consideration.

Kolbert began by presenting some data that charted Humboldt County's growth in RevPAR during the past few years in which the campaign was active, then saying that he intended to dedicate a specific meeting in January or February to focus on campaign metrics. He then presented several spending options, some of which included social media services and some which did not. The resulting discussion included the following comments:

Cari Shafer: We need to lower our spend

- Chris Ambrosini: Why can't we recycle more ads?

(Kolbert replied: Some assets can't be reused. We are developing one new spot for cable this coming season; others can be reused)

- Mike Caldwell: We don't know as a group what is working best, so we don't know where to save money.
- Chris Ambrosini: Are any cable spots running right now?

(Tyler replied: Currently we are running value-added and make-right spots that Misfit negotiated with Comcast Sports, essentially doubling the budgeted spots on Warriors and Giants games).

- Gary Stone: Can we get a breakdown of the target demographics that are being reached by each of the campaign budget items?

(Kolbert replied: Yes, we can very accurately target the audiences in the digital parts of the campaign, less so for broadcast)

A general discussion of social media and advertising ensued, in which it was clarified that they were talking about two "buckets"—one was organic traffic generated by content postings and sharing on social media platforms, and one which

was paid advertising on social media platforms. “Marketing is changing and we need to evolve with it” said Chris Ambrosini, who was also curious about what return on investment the HLA would receive by spending on paid social media.

Cari Shafer asked : What about bloggers? (Smithers replied that the bureau continues to target social media influencers and would be expanding this element).

Mike Caldwell asked: What about the website? This advertising and the website are inseparable. At this point, Smithers showed the committee the draft of an HLA-specific home page on the bureau website that featured a custom booking widget including Arcata hotels.

The committee discussed the HLA website, agreeing that it did not send them any business. Gary Stone and Mike Caldwell were assigned the task of meeting separately with Matt Kolbert to explore ways in which the HLA website could be improved.

At the end, the committee voted to approve the campaign option #1 presented by Misfit (Daniels/Shafer/passed with Stone dissenting). This option is summarized below:

Media Summary

Cable TV: \$208,000

Digital (Video/Display/etc): \$146,628

Paid Social Media: \$87,115

Total: \$441,743

(Plus TBD amount of \$26,905, subject to board approval)

Creative/Acct Mgmt Summary

Cable TV: \$27,000

Digital (Video/Display/etc): \$34,300

Paid Social Media: \$37,500

Acct Mgmt: \$40,000

Total: \$138,800

2018 Campaign Total: \$580,543

Next the committee discussed HLA staffing. Smithers distributed a draft job description for an event coordinator he had prepared; then the committee appointed John Porter, Cari Shafer and Marc Rowley to form a staffing subcommittee to work on this item.

Chris Ambrosini raised the issue of the “bus wrap” advertising which the HLA had been running in San Francisco, asking whether the committee felt this should be continued. After discussion, Cari Shafer moved to approve continuation of this advertising through March 2018. Mike Caldwell seconded the motion, which passed with Lowell Daniels dissenting.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers