

## Need PR and Marketing Help? Ask Away!

By Jennifer Rodrigues, TravelInk'd

Wednesday, April 28, 2010

Q: We've just finished renovating our hotel to provide better spaces for corporate meetings and events. How can I market this new service effectively?

A: With marketing, it is important to let the right people know about your services at the right time. So it makes sense to target the people who plan meetings - both within corporations and also external planners - and one of the best ways to reach this audience is through meeting planner trade publications like Meetings & Conventions Magazine, One+ Magazine, Corporate & Incentive Travel Magazine, among others. These publications speak directly to both the internal and external planners and provide the information that they need to know to do their job more effectively. Also, most publications will profile venues to let their planners now about new and innovative properties that are available for meetings, conventions and corporate events.

Of course, there are two ways that a hotel could get exposure in these type of publications: through advertising or public relations (and the editorial placements that it can generate). Both can generate corporate bookings and an increase in exposure for your property but the decision between the two tactics comes down to a few different things:

- \* Budget - Obviously, price will be one of the biggest factors when choosing between advertising and PR because advertising is much more expensive (in general) than PR.
- \* The campaign's goals - It is important to determine what the goal of the campaign is - for example, increased sales or increased exposure (or both) - because that will influence the tactics that you use to achieve those results.
- \* Immediacy of results - Advertising can produce a smaller but possibly more immediate result than PR, which allows a property to develop a very successful brand and which over time, will also develop a strong sales push (typically best results will start to be seen after several months).

Another way to raise awareness of the new venues available at your property to corporate meeting and event planners is through sales and marketing outreach. And let me throw this thought out there - it is almost impossible to succeed in business without someone selling your product, even with PR and advertising. The direct sales and marketing component is very important because it is the only direct link to your audience and the only way to communicate a message that is specific to each potential customer, so please don't ignore the importance of this part of the marketing puzzle.

Your sales team should be trained to communicate the information and key messages about new space and the new services that you offer. Also, if you have a marketing list of planners (and if you don't, start creating one right away), develop a direct marketing campaign - email preferably - to let them know about the new space.



Another idea is to offer a promotion as an incentive to encourage people to book your space - maybe a free bottle champagne in every room they book with your room block, or a discount off of catering services. It could be anything really as long it is something that makes planners (and their clients) want to choose you over the competition. Once you've determined what the best promotion is, make sure that your sales staff, your marketing materials and your website all communicate the key details about the promotion immediately as that could be the thing that makes or breaks your corporate sale.

Did this information help you? If you have other questions, I'd love to hear from you - please don't be shy! Send an email to <mailto:jrodrigues@travelinkd.com> jlr@travelinkd.com.

And don't forget to check back twice a month for more PR and Marketing Q&As.

#### About Jennifer Rodrigues

jennifer\_rodrigues Jennifer Rodrigues, Visibility Specialist with ThinkInk and TravelInk'd, is a seasoned public relations professional with a passion for the hospitality industry, which is expressed in her role at ThinkInk's travel division, TravelInk'd. At TravelInk'd, she is responsible for developing cost-effective and creative public relations and marketing strategies for clients in the travel and tourism, airline, lodging, cruise and meeting/event sectors. For more information on TravelInk'd, please visit [www.travelinkd.com](http://www.travelinkd.com) or contact Jennifer at [jl@travelinkd.com](mailto:jl@travelinkd.com).



#### COPYRIGHT INFORMATION

If you wish to quote, copy, reproduce, or redistribute this document in any format please attribute Travel Ink'd

[www.travelinkd.com](http://www.travelinkd.com)