



**Date:** October 29, 2013  
**To:** Marketing Committee  
**CC:** Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors  
**From:** Mark Zimmerman, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing  
**Subject:** Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes - October 23, 2013

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Thank you for your participation in our Wednesday, October 23 Marketing Committee Meeting. We appreciate your time and comments.

Members present: Daria Fink (chair), Lani Baird, Jim Cohn, Jim Creed, Dulcie Flaharty, Eric Goldstein, Lisa Karl, Nicole Ream, Renee Simons, Caryn Taylor-Lucia, Barbara Ward, James Wiley

Staff present: Bill Fitzgerald, Mark Zimmerman, Dave Bradley, Kenneth Chen

Also present: Greg O'Loughlin

**Recap of July 11 Meeting Minutes**

Mark Zimmerman gave a brief recap of action steps the bureau undertook as a result of suggestions from the committee

Recap of the Bureau's Instagram contest (from Renee's suggestion). For two months, contestants were invited to submit photos of Montgomery County. 162 submissions received, and the top 50 winners received a postcard with their photo. The Bureau has photo rights to submissions, and it was estimated that participants had a total reach of 27,000 people total

International Marketing (from Lisa's suggestion) – The Bureau met with Brian Said (PHL), as well as the regional director of tourism from Macy's. Macys has a good database and spending from Brazil and China were their top international customers.

Mark stressed that any international initiatives will take 2-3 years for any return on investment. The bureau continues to dive into this segment.

The bureau will be attending two shows (one in Washington D.C., with the other one possibly in New Jersey) for receptive tour operators.

### **Overview of 2013 Summer Campaign**

Mark gave an overview of the summer campaign - The campaign drove awareness through bus wraps, radio ads, billboards, co-op with GPTMC. Website traffic increased 25% year-over-year, with 1,300 referrals to hotel booking pages.

Bill asked for feedback and suggestions for future campaigns. The main suggestion was to have a value added component or VF themed incentive (Lisa)

### **Discussion on winter campaign**

The bureau has limited funds, and it will take time for the ad agency(ies) to be ready, but the bureau would like to continue with its momentum during the transition.

Some ideas (from both the Bureau and the marketing committee) included:

- Cabin Fever
- Co-op with GPTMC
- Something for foodies
- Learning to...
- Shopping and a show
- Home for the holidays
- Pinterest campaign
- B&B Inns
- Come out of hibernation and hug the bear
- Christmas festival
- Fall festival
- Philadelphia is trying to attract suburban markets to go in to the city; the Bureau could do the reverse and target urban markets to come out to the suburbs
- The casino is having a celebrity chef every month (possibly every week?)
- Targeting the bachelor/bachelorette market segments, showers and weddings. Harrisburg/Baltimore markets? (Dulcie)
- Marketing the destination as a kid friendly area, as well as girls getaway packages (Caryn)

- Importance of imagery – make it sexy. Examples include videos of women in costume at the park; have the George Washington re-enactor (surrounded by bodyguards) visiting the destination or feeder markets (Jim Cohn)
- You Tube campaign –
- Tie-in with events
- Gingerbread contests in hotels
- Light show
- Philly vs suburb cook-off (Bill)

## **Overview of rebranding process/strategic planning process**

Greg O'Loughlin gave an overview

- Stakeholders optimistic
- Four different audiences
  1. Travelers from the seven counties (message: There's a real scene in Montco)
  2. Super regional travelers (message: There's more in Valley Forge)
  3. National/International (message: Valley Forge has it all together)
  4. Influencers/media (message: Welcome to Montco)

### **Timeframe**

Q4 – 2013 – Complete RFP Process

Q1 (2014) Rebranding

Q2 (2014) Relaunch Valleyforge.org (website)

Q3-Q4 (2014) – Summer Campaign

## **Suggestions from Marketing Committee Members**

1. Agencies need to know their clients/they should tour the county (Jim Cohn)
2. Consider partnering/working with CreativeMontco (Eric)
3. Discussion on why the Bureau retains the “Valley Forge” branding (vs Montgomery County”) – There are 17 other Montgomery Counties in the U.S., but only one Valley Forge
4. We're between such counties as Bucks, Chester, Lancaster, Philadelphia, but we should consider positioning ourselves as the hub of transportation networks
5. Look for hidden gems (Skippack Village)
6. Look at home grown/home manufactured products in Montgomery County (Caryn)
7. There's a perception that we're far from the city and that we should try to promote how close we are to the city (miles or minutes?) (Lisa)
8. Position ourselves as crossroad destination (Dulcie)
9. Spotlight that Montgomery County is a place to do business (vs Philadelphia).