

**Aspen Chamber Resort Association
Marketing Advisory Committee Meeting
Minutes | December 7, 2016 | The Gant**

In attendance: Jeff Bay, Angie Callen, Beth Mobilian, Bill Tomcich, Christian Knapp, Erin Young, Laura Smith, Nancy Lesley, Rose Abello, Nina Eisenstat, Renee Fleisher, Virginia McNellis, Greg Fitzsimmons, Melissa Wisenbaker

ACRA Staff: Debbie Braun, Julia Theisen, Eliza Voss, Liz Cluley, Sarah Reynolds-Lasser, Amy Roldan

City of Aspen Guest: Scott Bowman

Called to Order: Julia Theisen called the meeting to order at 9:10am.

Julia explained that the goals presented today should be viewed in terms of a 3-year plan and all goals are malleable and subject to change as this committee deems fit. The goals will be finalized for approval by ACRA BOD at January meeting.

Goal1: Increase occupancy in the late spring and fall shoulder season.

Debbie acknowledged she is cognizant of the community's desire to keep the off-seasons and the discussion around capacity, therefore DM wants to move forward carefully and purposefully.

Julia briefly reminded committee of current campaigns and efforts i.e. Secret Season, Fall in Love.

Virginia asked what the visitor experience for Secret Season is and Julia explained that it is a rate driven and first time visitor experience of Aspen.

Julia –goal is for a robust Memorial Day weekend through F&W, specifically weekday, and understands that May is a hard sell in general.

Beth - beginning of June, early October should be the focus for this goal, inclusive of group business. Stated that restaurants would open sooner for confirmed larger groups.

Rose – the goal needs specific dates so that community push back is minimized and the message needs to be affordability, drive the deals and it could potentially appeal to locals as well.

Debbie - should the focus be event driven or group driven? Rose suggested this should be group based and some FIT. Virginia added it should cater to an older demographic with no children, and/or affluent millennials with no children. Laura agreed. Rose agreed and reminded the committee weekdays are the “need” periods.

Bill added, September weekends were robust with retirees and gave an update on current and upcoming ASE flights.

Sarah - hotel renovations and town maintenance usually occurs during spring. Groups are more attracted to fall due to more reliable weather.

Christian gave a Ski Co update on plans for the next 3 years.

- Aspen Mountain: beautification project on top of Ajax 2017
- 2017 will be a construction year.
- Pandora will be the next project, new runs, extend double diamond runs.

Renee- saw a huge wedding increase this last year and caused people to stay an extra day or two, booking activities. Groups are a big help.

Rose gave a Snowmass calendar update.

Nancy - warned of unreliable weather in spring, 60-70% cancelled events in May due to weather and suggested that fall is more favorable to events. Reminded the MAC that Aspen has events every weekend.

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Jeff - September was a strong booking month and noticed the season moved later into the fall, he suggests a focus on wellness and fitness groups. Erin added that bringing wellness groups is a goal of the Aspen Club. She added, hopefully by fall 2018 Aspen Club will be 100% operational.

Laura asked if there have been partnerships with the Wheeler, perhaps bringing in different types of festivals similar to the HBO Comedy Fest in the past.

Julia - spring message of multiple activities, such as golf and uphill in one day. Laura suggested to mainly focus on the deals. Renee agreed and added that best rafting deals are in the spring.

Goal 2: Renew 5 year contract with City of Aspen 2018-2023 and RFP process for DM vendors.

Christian asked if the review of DM's PR and ad agency contracts will happen prior to going before City Council for renewal. Debbie answered the City contract was first, then RFP for the vendors probably following year. Rose warned that Snowmass went through this process last year, and summer programming was affected due to procedural delays.

Julia envisioned education being part of this goal, trying to educate the public about DM. Rose suggested focus groups from different stakeholders, then create tactics and programming based on their opinions. Nina agreed. Christian suggested surveying the membership on DM's role, which would create a bench mark to work on for the following year. He also reminded the group of changes coming: new airport terminal, new hotel at Lift 1, City offices, new W Hotel, etc and advised to keep these in mind when planning towards 2020.

Goal 3: Evolve Defy Ordinary campaign. Increase growth to website & engagement across platforms.

Eliza – ACRA will need new website in 3 years.

Laura wanted clarification on this goal. Does Defy Ordinary need to grow? If you change your ad agency, will you need a new tag? Rose asked if "Defy Ordinary" needs to evolve or just reevaluate the brand?

Angie - is 'Defy Ordinary' is a brand or a campaign? And suggested wordsmithing this goal. Julia agreed- intent is to increase brand awareness and the strategy is to increase website engagement.

Rose asked what DM is trying to accomplish with the website and use the answer to move forward.

Goal 4: Increase awareness of Aspen for non-winter months in key international markets.

Julia - current markets include, UK, Germany and potentially Mexico. Debbie - any air that we can be promoting with international markets, specifically in Mexico? Christian noted that a perception issue exists with Mexico now, and Canada has eased restrictions for Mexican tourism and advised on focusing on Mexico market. Angie added we need to have clear messaging stating, 'we want Mexican tourism.'

Rose asked if ACRA is trying to get China ready. What will the Chamber's role be in the process? She liked the vagueness of this goal, rather than stating specific markets, because it's malleable. Julia - DM currently in three markets, but is not limited to these if global fluctuations change the strategy. Laura asked if social media ads are considered for international markets. Christian – have bookings using social media ads and described the different markets; while China is not on the map, this will likely change in the future.

Goal 5: Increase lead generation by 10% YOY and support group, meeting and event business year-round with a focus on the shoulder seasons.

Rose asked if there are tools that the stakeholders could use to market themselves as meeting-centric locations. For example, creating a video promoting groups specifically and it could live on the stakeholder's website which would be focused on activities for longer stays, perhaps itineraries.

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Final additions:

Debbie added that we should acknowledge that we have a large day tripper population, they don't stay or buy much.

Jeff asked if there are any digital strategies that we have focused on, such as virtual reality. Christian advised that this makes sense for tradeshow, but could be expensive, around \$20-30k.