Are You Keeping Up With Your Public Relations?

By Leora H Lanz, Feb 28, 2006

Public Relations in 2006: Same skills with a new set of media.

It’s the most cost-effective method for promoting your travel product, establishing third-party credibility, and getting your name in front of the trade and the public. But in addition to obtaining editorial content by placing stories with traditional press releases or with bylined articles and columns, today’s public relations practitioners have a whole new promotional network at their fingertips.

Keeping up with the latest techniques and being one step ahead is paramount in these days of Internet crowds and chaos. The key messages are no longer the only key objective of your press release. In today’s technologically savvy world, you should also be using “key words” in your headline and lead paragraph to improve your positioning in the Internet searches! Are you utilizing Hyperlinks to make your brand/hotel “hot” and stand out? What about “market-driven” terminology to improve the number of visits to your website? For example, do we want to refer to our hotel as a “property” when web surfers are searching using the buzzword “hotel”?

It’s also important to differentiate yourself. Are you looking at your competition to see how they are ranked on the search engines? What kind of terminology they are using?

Blogs (coined from the word “Weblogs”) have become the online homes for self-declared world travelers and road warriors who post candid views and reviews about their (or even their friends’) hotel experiences. Just as the third-party travel agencies (e.g., Expedia and Hotels.com) appeared on the scene in the late ’90s and have become an accepted part of the hotel on-line distribution network, blogs are here to stay. That makes it crucial for you to monitor what your guests, third-party experts, and competitors are saying about you.

Start by making use of the blog search engines such as Technorati.com and PubSub.com. There are numerous popular travel blogs out there in Cyberspace: Tripadvisor, Gridskipper, Wandalust, Vagabonding, Right This Way, Hotelchatter, Snowgo, Ed’s Gone South, Mexicanwave, and Biznet. The list goes on! You can even start your own travel blog with Blogger.com.

We all know that e-marketing is widely successful when executed strategically. To further capitalize on your efforts and target more specifically, keep your strategy fresh and consider...
niche marketing – promoting to the bridal, scuba, golf, or family markets, for example. The media is not only reporting on what’s in your mini bar, but is anxious to write about seasonal promotions that offer considerable savings and clever packages that can tie into a lifestyle trend. Finally, consider utilizing an Internet portal (a website that provides a starting point, a gateway to other resources on the Internet) to manage an electronic clip book and view the clips and all that the media is saying about you!

The talent and skills associated with public relations professionals of the past still hold true today. But with daily innovations in technologies and communications, the tactics and vehicles for public relations are more varied, and keeping up with the times is key. If you would like assistance with how to take advantage of all the tools and opportunities at hand, please contact us at Leora@LHLcommunications.com.