



# ISHAE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE ENTRY FORM

## Communications Entry Category

Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association's  
Social Media Marketing Program

### 1. Goals & Objectives of Program

TnHTA's Social Media Marketing Campaign project was implemented in August 2014 and is ongoing. The Through TnHTA communication committee meetings, the staff and the board of directors identified that there was a strong need to increase general brand awareness of the association. Although hospitality is the 2nd largest industry in Tennessee, we have found that there are many individuals and companies who are unaware of what all is encompassed in the hospitality industry and the large positive impact the hospitality and tourism industry has on state dollars. When recruiting new membership, we have also found that there are many people unfamiliar with how an association operates and the general benefits of joining a professional organization. The growth in Social Media is exponential and offers a wealth of marketing opportunities for all associations.

When the project was first being implemented, the staff and board of directors chose three main goals in order to address their needs:

1. Create a mode of communication to current TnHTA members, including the promotion of upcoming events and driving members to our website
2. Increase TnHTA brand awareness to the general public in Tennessee through pictures and posts – Free repeat marketing exposure
3. Increase travel and tourism in TN by sharing the happenings around the state – i.e. festivals, events, new restaurants, new hotels, new attractions, ect. – foster an industry community in Tennessee

### 2. Target Audience

Our target audience included current TnHTA member, prospective members, and the general hospitality community. Our social media pages, especially Facebook, are based on the idea of a community and creating a platform for that community to share ideas, events, and general information about our industry on a state and national level.

### 3. Results of Program

In less than one year, TnHTA's social media platforms have become a premier source of information for all things related to hospitality and tourism in Tennessee. These platforms have done an excellent job of engaging current members, increasing overall brand awareness to recruiting prospective members, promoting TnHTA events, and promoting travel in Tennessee. We now have more Facebook followers than any other hospitality association in the country, as well as more than the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

Engagement is key to TnHTA for building their membership, as well as increase tourism to the great state of Tennessee. The exciting things about this project is that it engages current members, increases TnHTA brand awareness, and helps TnHTA recruit members. It has been a huge success and has real measurable progress. Facebook has grown to be the association's primary discussion forum.

#### 4. Evaluation Measures

We have based the success of our program on the number of social media followers, as well as the level of engagement we receive from our audience on each platform. We compare our followers each quarter to the previous quarter and we continue create new goals. We also monitor who is engaging in our social media posts. We consider it a success if we receive feedback from members who do not sit on our board of directors, as it shows that we really are reaching out to an audience beyond are typically active members.

#### 5. How was the program presented to the Target Audience?

The goals of the project are delivered to the target audience, current TnHTA and prospective members, through multiple social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest.

Posts include news articles focused on an aspect of the hospitality industry, best practices, news articles highlighting a TnHTA member, pictures from TnHTA events, flyers promoting upcoming TnHTA events, and general tourism-related events happening throughout Tennessee such as upcoming festivals or concerts.

Social Media requires momentum and is not something that can generate results after only a short period of time. In an effort to maintain momentum and consistency, TnHTA has created a “social media” calendar committed to daily social media activity. Daily, TnHTA creates at least 6 posts to Facebook, 2 posts to Twitter, 1 post to Instagram, plus miscellaneous timed posts to Pinterest and LinkedIn. Daily themes are used to engage audiences in the social media posts such as

- Monday Morning Hospitality
- Tourism Tuesday
- Hospitality Hot Tip Wednesday
- Throwback Thursday
- Foodie Friday
- Fun Fact Friday
- Scenic Saturday
- Hospitality Hot Tip Saturday
- Sunday Funday in Tennessee

Since using these themes, the staff has had several members reach out and tell them that they look forward to seeing what the “Fun Fact Friday” post will be or learning about different things to do in Tennessee on “Sunday Funday” posts. TnHTA also came up with their own hashtags, which they encourage members to use when posting to social media about our association. These hashtags are “#TnHTA” and “#EatStaySeeTennessee”. The latter hashtag follows the theme on the www.TnHTA.net website.

#### 6. Additional Information:

- **Facebook:** We currently has 6,379 Facebook fans, an increase of over 257% since the start of this program.
- **Twitter:** We currently have 264 Twitter followers, an increase of 450%
- **Instagram:** We currently have 296 Instagram followers
- **LinkedIn:** We currently have 171 LinkedIn followers, an increase of over 362%.

|           | August 2014 | September 2015 |
|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| Facebook  | 1,785       | 6,379          |
| Twitter   | 48          | 264            |
| Instagram | 0           | 296            |
| LinkedIn  | 37          | 171            |