



## INSIDER EXCLUSIVES

### Those #@! Press Releases: Do You Read Yours?

By Shebby Lee

On one recent morning as I started my day with a cup of caffeine, I looked at my email and saw an announcement from a supplier I have known and used for years. It was about a new addition its “family” of hotel properties, a restored and refurbished historic hotel. That’s right in my wheelhouse. I couldn’t wait to read more.

But there was something rather odd about this particular email blast. First of all, I was unaware that this hotel group had acquired another property—right in my backyard too. There had been no pre-publicity or other media coverage about this particular small-town hotel. “OK,” I thought, “I’m away from the office frequently. Maybe I just missed it.”

As I scrolled through the announcement, I was surprised that it contained one of my pet peeves about such social media communications: there was no indication whatsoever as to where this wonderful new hotel was located!

It’s utterly amazing how many suppliers—and even DMOs—assume that everybody already knows where they are located. (Do you have any idea how many Washington Counties there are in this country?)

This was actually worse, though, because all the other hotels in this management group are resorts in rural areas, but the new acquisition was a historic property in a nearby town. I knew this because I’m familiar with the region. But my guess is that few other tour operators receiving this

message would and certainly couldn’t have gleaned that knowledge from the announcement’s sparse description.

Wait! It gets even better: the helpful link telling me more about this magnificent new/old hotel was broken!

As I scanned the email again, I realized there were other signs revealing how hastily the announcement had been put together. HTML codes were visible that should have been hidden. The design was oh so simple (and boiler-plate). Most telling of all, the opening date was less than a month away. Somebody had slipped up. The renovations had taken longer than expected—whatever the reason. The impact of this message for the hotelier, I fear, will be far less than what it had hoped for.

In fact, it’s possible the company should have held off on making this announcement until it had been fully vetted and seen by several pairs of eyes.

Please, please, please, if you want group business (or any business at all, for that matter), make it clear in your very first sentence who you are and where you are located. You could save us all a whole lot of time.

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