

GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE "SPRING BREAK IS DEAD"



Situation Analysis:

Ever since the 1950's, Greater Fort Lauderdale's image was "Spring Break." A destination dominated by 400,000 rowdy college students who descended for six weeks a year on the city in their annual "rite of spring." In the late 1980s, tourism officials realized that a major over-haul was needed to replace the spring break revelers with a better year-round visitor. Noted for its work in destination marketing and brand re-positioning, M. Silver was hired to help the area rid itself of its college student audience and create a communications plan to promote a dramatically new destination image. Almost 20 years later, the agency is still the public relations voice for the destination, which annually welcomes 10.1 million vacationers and convention goers from around the world and is considered one of the country's most successful tourism areas.



Statement of Objectives and Goals:

- To break the image of Spring Break through internal and external repositioning campaigns aimed at the student market as well as consumer and trade audiences
- To position Greater Fort Lauderdale as a multi-faceted vacation destination with appeal for the broadest spectrum of travelers
- To position GFL as a leading convention and meetings destination
- To reach out to special audiences of travelers, including multi-cultural vacationers, sports interests, arts and entertainment enthusiasts, dining aficionados, shoppers, foreign travelers and gay and lesbian markets
- To find ways to make GFL's new image work for all segments of the local tourism and hospitality industries



Program Planning and Strategy:

- Specialized media campaigns (including a college campus initiative) and ongoing public relations strategies to reach a broad range of consumer and trade media locally, nationally and internationally to communicate the diverse aspects of the area, as well as its changing image
- Marketing programs to attract new visitors:
 - Superior Small Lodging program to promote smaller hotels and inns
 - Multi Cultural Visitors Guide
 - Summer of Discovery summer marketing program
 - Affordable Meetings Month
 - Travel Agent Appreciation Month
 - Scuba Month
 - HOTLINE and CVBulletin newsletters
 - Destination packaging: "Shore Thing" for cruise passengers, cultural tourism packages to promote exhibitions, sports packages to promote destination events

Results:

- Tourism growth from 200,000 visitors to 10.1 million annually
- Dependence on Spring Break has declined to less than 15,000 students
- GFL represents the fastest growing area in Florida – with a new airport, convention center, cruise port, hotels, restaurants, retail and attractions
- More than \$2 billion is being invested in tourism-related infrastructure and attractions
- Public Relations generates \$15 million in advertising value annually and 40 percent of traveler inquiries about the destination

