



# 2017 AAPA COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS

## Advertisements

### CRUISE CONFERENCE AD SERIES

#### Summary

The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) effectively targeted cruise leaders in its advertisement series that ran at the Seatrade Cruise Global conference this year. During the conference, Seatrade Cruise Global publishes a magazine each day that is distributed. The magazine includes articles and information on the cruise industry. The MPA placed an ad on the back of every issue for the four-day conference, in which it promoted its cruise terminal and the positive qualities of sailing from the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore. The advertisement informed the attendees where the booth to learn more information was located. Through effective ad placement, attendees visited the Cruise Maryland booth referencing the ad.

#### 1. Communication Challenges and Opportunities

As a state agency, the MPA faces challenges such as budget constraints and multiple levels of communication. The MPA leverages these challenges as opportunities to benefit its stakeholders. The MPA reports to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), as well as the Governor of Maryland's Office. The MPA is responsible for promoting and communicating on behalf of all public and private marine terminals located at the Port of Baltimore. While there are dozens of terminals at the port, the MPA only has direct control over six public marine terminals. The MPA advertises and promotes all the private and public terminals as the "Port of Baltimore." The Cruise Maryland terminal is located within the public South Locust Point terminal where cruise ships load and unload passengers.

Royal Caribbean and Carnival cruise lines currently call on the Port of Baltimore. Some destinations from the Port of Baltimore include the Caribbean, Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada and New England.



The MPA Communications Department designs, creates and places advertisements but collaborates and communicates with multiple other departments within the MPA and other state agencies. In order for the Port of Baltimore's brand to remain consistent, the Communications Department coordinates with other MPA departments, as well as with MPA's executive director and the Maryland Department of Transportation. For cruise-related ads in particular, the department



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also coordinates with Cruise Maryland's marketing director.

MDOT is MPA's parent agency and because of the relationship the port can disseminate messaging about its activities beyond the maritime industry to a broader audience of transportation officials and representatives. This applies to job postings, social media, advertising and more. The MPA also has "sibling" agencies under MDOT that can be used as resources and references to learn what has worked for them. While coordination may be challenging with more departments involved, the MPA is well organized and uses the involvement of others to its advantage.

The MPA Communications Department promotes why cruise lines should call the Port of Baltimore in these advertisements to get more business at Cruise Maryland. In Maryland, 127,000 jobs are linked to port activities, with 13,600 direct jobs. The port is a major economic generator for the state, with \$3 billion in personal wages and salaries and \$300 million in state and local tax revenue. It's important for the Communications Department to push out the promotion of Cruise Maryland so MPA can get the most popular cruise lines to call on the port and serve the residents of Maryland, as well as bring visitors to Baltimore to generate more revenue for the state.

The MPA has an in-house designer that creates all advertisements, which is cost efficient for the port and taxpayers. While this is a cost-saving measure it is also beneficial to the port because the designer is familiar with its industry, its customers and its brand. She can create visually interesting ads, such as this one, that can break down complex information without overwhelming readers. In this ad, the designer used photos of popular destinations in the state and included information that could attract cruise lines. This translates to a market where consumers can afford to take a cruise, it's close to another large market and a place that cruise goers may want to visit. The ad is seeking to draw potential cruise lines to want to homeport with Cruise Maryland and has a call to action "Homeport with us today" and then provides the booth number for where Cruise Maryland was stationed during the conference. The advertisement also includes contact information such as the Cruise Maryland website, Facebook, Twitter and phone number. This magazine is something that conference goers will be bringing home with them and with the prominent back page ad placement, the port has a good strategy for sticking in their minds.

### 2. Complementing the Overall Mission

The Maryland Port Administration has a mission to stimulate the flow of waterborne commerce through the State of Maryland in a manner that provides economic benefit to the citizens of the state. The port strives to capitalize on business opportunities. It provides, manages and promotes competitive, secure, state-of-the art





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terminals capable of efficiently handling diverse cargoes and leverages mutually supporting public and private sectors. It also acts as a good steward of Maryland's natural environment.

The MPA wants to leave a lasting impression for cruise lines to draw them to homeport at the Port of Baltimore so the MPA can take advantage of these business opportunities and provide economic benefit to the citizens of Maryland.

### 3. Planning and Programming Components

The primary audience for the advertisement are cruise industry leaders and cruise lines.

The goals of the advertisement are to:

- Inform current and potential port customers of the many benefits to calling on the Port of Baltimore for a cruise
- Prompt sales leads through the publication of the port's phone number, website, Facebook and Twitter, where readers can speak with sales staff
- Provide information on where cruise lines can find the Cruise Maryland booth at the conference
- Create an impression that will outlast the conference

The measurable milestones that can indicate the campaigns success include:

- The number of people that visited the Cruise Maryland booth at the conference
- The follow-up conversations the Cruise Maryland marketing director had with potential clients
- Popular cruise lines coming to the Port of Baltimore

### 4. Actions Taken and Communication Outputs Used

The budget the MPA is assigned from the state allows for an in-house media buyer and an in-house graphic designer. The Communications Department had the ad published in four of the week's cruise conference publications to ensure it reached the intended audience. The media buyer knew the rates for ads and had established relationships with the ad salesperson. She also had this ad placement every year for the conference. This secured the best price possible for placement to still achieve the desired outcome. The Communications Department kept meticulous files and documentation on ad placements, invoices and orders. The buyer communicated frequently and efficiently with the rest of the Communications Department, especially with the designer, on the due dates for the advertisements. The designer talked with the other members of the department to ensure all graphics and text were accurate and sent the correct messages for the intended audience.

### 5. Communication Outcomes and Communication Methods



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At the conference there was a lot of positive feedback on the ad. Many people went to the Cruise Maryland booth to get more information about the Port of Baltimore. Web traffic from this year's conference is not yet available to the Communications Department on this year's conference.

There was increased web traffic on the Cruise Maryland website during the conference, according to Google Analytics. During the conference, which was between March 13 and 17, there was a spike that accounted for one of the days with the most page views during March at about 1,500 page views.