



# 2019 AAPA COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

Port Tampa Bay

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**SeaTrade Global Cruise Tradeshow**

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**8. Overall Campaign**

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## SEATRADE GLOBAL CRUISE TRADESHOW

### SUMMARY

In May of 2017 Port Tampa Bay celebrated the first call for Royal Caribbean Brilliance of the Seas to sail to Havana, Cuba. The second ship from Port Tampa Bay to call on Cuba, the Carnival Paradise, departed the very next month. The addition of this port to a western Caribbean itinerary allowed us to showcase Tampa's 5-generation deep Cuban history that sits right in our own backyard. It was important to share the history as well as to highlight the exciting new growth in Tampa to showcase what Port Tampa Bay has to offer to the cruise lines and their passengers. Not only do passengers have access to travel to Cuba for the first time, but they can fully immerse themselves in the Cuban experience with our Latin Quarter in Ybor City before and after setting sail. We used the SeaTrade Global Cruise Tradeshow in Miami, Florida as an opportunity to create a tradeshow experience to tell this story.



## I. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### WHAT ARE/WERE THE ENTRY'S SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGES OR OPPORTUNITIES?

For Port Tampa Bay, the ongoing communication challenge is breaking through the misconception about Tampa and convincing consumers and cruise lines why Tampa is a good option for their travel plans. We are not the biggest port, and we are not the first port that people think about when someone says "cruise". There are preconceived notions about Tampa, leading cruise line companies and consumers to question if Port Tampa Bay can ever compete in the larger cruise markets.

We took a different approach than most do at the tradeshow to show and tell others why Port Tampa Bay is a great option for cruise travel, specifically focusing on travel to Cuba. Our goal was to draw attendees to the booth by appealing to all of their senses – through the use of visually and audibly stimulating videos, aromatic candles and cigars, tastes of local craft beer, and many varieties of giveaways. We had a completely branded booth that showcased the city of Tampa that surrounds Port Tampa Bay and all there is to offer within walking distance or a short trolley ride away from our cruise terminals.



SeaTrade Global Cruise attendees gather around the car bar in Port Tampa Bay's booth at the tradeshow.



## II. OVERALL MISSION

### HOW DOES THE COMMUNICATION USED IN THIS ENTRY COMPLEMENT THE ORGANIZATION'S OVERALL MISSION?

Port Tampa Bay's Mission Statement is central to the planning process of our marketing and communications efforts.

**MISSION:** *Port Tampa Bay will be recognized as a leader in the maritime industry. Port Tampa Bay will have a customer driven, strategic business focus in working with stakeholders to develop and manage marine terminals and supporting infrastructure for the benefit of the regional economy. Port Tampa Bay will employ sound financial, business, environmental management, and public safety practices in fulfilling its mission.*

The overall communication for the tradeshow specifically promoted the cruise sector of our business and highlighted the port's location and history and its relevance to our cruise market. Increases in new business and cruise line companies brought into Tampa Bay will help to surpass the 1 million cruise passengers already annually coming through Tampa, encourage longer visits, and promote spending money locally to boost the economy surrounding the port.

## III. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

### WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMPONENTS FOR THIS ENTRY?

The objective for this entry was to raise the awareness of the importance of Ybor City, Tampa's Latin Quarter, and to showcase the historical aspect of the Cuban culture, which sits so close to Tampa's cruise port. Passengers who are seeking a full travel experience can not only visit Ybor city either before or after their trip, but can also go directly to Cuba as part of their itinerary on their cruise.

The Strategy to do so was by showcasing what Port Tampa Bay can offer cruise passengers before and after their cruise. By using live demonstrations and giveaways that appealed to all senses of our attendees, we were able to bring parts of Ybor City and the Cuban heritage right into the booth. Between the smell of Cuban coffee beans given out as samples, to the cigar roller demonstrations, café con leche popsicles, Caribbean music and a completely branded table full of promotional materials and giveaways.

## IV. ACTIONS TAKEN

### WHAT ACTIONS WERE TAKEN AND WHAT COMMUNICATION OUTPUTS WERE USED IN THIS ENTRY?

You process information with all your senses. Our goal with our booth was to tactically appeal to all five senses to fully immerse booth attendees in the Cuban experience and to tell the full story of the Tampa Bay area, while making people feel welcome and excited to explore Port Tampa Bay as a cruise destination. We utilized a number of opportunities to draw attendees into our booth and initiate conversations.

Visually and audibly, we contracted Shooting Stars Post to produce a looping video with music that drew the eye to a video monitor playing video clips mixed with a tropical music bed showing what Tampa has to offer as a cruise port. It showcased the four cruise lines that currently call on Tampa, as well as the surrounding attractions, like Busch Gardens, the Florida Aquarium, an active Ybor City night life, and more. You can view the video by clicking [here](#).

To add to the Cuban feel of the booth, the front end of a 1954 Chevrolet Bellaire was converted into a bar by a local Tampa artist. The top of the bar was made from 100 year old reclaimed wood from the nearby Plant City Train depot. A working air horn and blinking lights aided in drawing attention and directing more traffic to our booth. We showcased several of our the cruise destinations including Havana, Key West, and Cozumel, along with a branded booth Port Tampa Bay inspired postcard that provided the guests with a way to write a note and mail to their friends or family. Our brochures had a carefully crafted message that explains all that Port Tampa Bay has to offer and why the cruise companies would want to





add itineraries or bring another ship into our port and the benefit to their customers.

Attendees were also drawn in to our booth by the aroma of a live cigar rolling demonstration. Our Latin Quarter in Ybor City, also called Cigar City, is known for its rich Cigar rolling history, and we showcased this by bringing in a Cuban-born cigar roller to do live demonstrations of the art of Cuban cigar rolling, while explaining the details of the type of tobacco leaf used and what goes into making each cigar in the unique Cuban tradition.

To serve a taste of Tampa to the show attendees, we had a local company provide a sample of Visit Tampa's Bay brew privately labelled for them by Florida Avenue Brewing to show some of Tampa's award-winning

local brews to the cruise lines companies. A local Tampa Bay company customizes the labels and flavors for this specific show. To be able to provide samples of popsicles with flavors that are specifically crafted to give you a taste of the tropics, from Café Con Leche, Key Lime Pie Pineapple mango, and Banana Berry Cream and introduced to give you the native flavors of the Caribbean, and specifically a nod to the Cuban flair.

For tangible items, we utilized a local coffee company (whose owners are Cuban born) to provide samples of their café con leche made from beans from three countries to mimic a Cuban style coffee blend. We also provided a variety of give away items, from chocolate coins

(a nod to Tampa's century-long history with the Gasparilla parade and event), to hand sanitizer, sun tan lotion, sunglasses with tropical colored croakies, lip balm, coconut scented candles, dry bags, and t-shirts all with a cohesive branded look, keeping with the theme of the booth.



## V. OUTCOME

### WHAT WERE THE COMMUNICATIONS OUTCOMES FROM THIS ENTRY AND WHAT EVALUATION METHODS WERE USED TO ACCESS THEM?

Overall, our booth was completely branded to inspire the Cuban feel and to showcase that Tampa is a premier travel and cruise port. We provided comfortable couches for people to engage in business conversations, easy to move orange and yellow seating Ottomans that complemented the color in the booth and could be easily adjusted for larger parties in conversations. Everything provided a cohesive look that added to the overall booth design, making it feel fun, engaging, and friendly and welcoming attendees to enter the booth. At any given point during the show, there was a line of people wrapped around the perimeter of our booth footprint waiting for one of the engaging displays. To help control to the constant high traffic, we staggered the times of each of our large demonstrators – the Cigar roller, Popsicle maker, and the craft beer samples – which allowed us to showcase specific aspects of Tampa to the attendees who were most interested in those products. We were able to showcase all that Tampa has to offer, and we got the attention of many additional cruise lines and

interested parties who all expressed interest in adding new itineraries to Tampa based on our booth.

