

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGY – RIDING HOLIDAYS (RH)

### Type of service offered:

- riding holidays
- rural holidays
- equestrian training
- teambuilding events for companies

### Target audience:

- expats: foreigners living in Romania who are interested in learning more about their host country and who want to experience true village life in Romania; they would be based in Bucharest or one of the major cities close to Lunca Ilvei (Cluj, Brasov, Iasi); they could be interested in any of the services described bellow
- Romanians: locals who are interested in horses and are medium to good riders; based in Bucharest, Cluj, Brasov or Iasi; they could be interested in riding holidays, equestrian training and teambuilding (I wouldn't promote rural tourism for them, because you would get in competition with all the fake rural tourism operators from Valea Prahovei who have the advantage of the location).

### Objectives:

- create awareness about RH among target audiences (on going)
- increase bookings for riding holidays and rural holidays (immediate, short and medium term)
- create bookings for equestrian training and teambuilding (short and medium term)
- create a steady in flow of bookings for all services (long term)

### Activities:

#### 1. Media relations

- invite journalists from Romanian and English language publications for free weekends in order to show the numerous feature article (and photographic) opportunities in the area
- proposed publications in Romanian:
  - Elle (most read women's magazine),
  - Tabu (well known women's magazine),
  - Ziarul Financiar, Esquire (men's magazine with a more serious touch, as in women are pictured with their clothes on, and the articles are more intellectually oriented),
  - Biz magazine,
  - Hotnews (online news),
  - Cotidianul newspaper
- proposed publications in English: the Diplomat, Bucharest Business Week, Vivid, Nine O'Clock, Bucharest Where What When, Hotnews in English

N.B. We have contacts in most of these publications already.

Paid for advertising is very expensive, especially in the high profile glossy magazines (Elle, Tabu, Esquire, Biz). However, the other publications, and especially the English language ones, might give a good price on advertising, especially if they also receive a nice weekend at Lunca Ilvei.

The problem with this activity is that even if you invite journalists over, it doesn't guarantee they will publish an article about you, especially in those publications where you won't buy any space. But if they have made the effort to come they are likely to publish.

## 2. Take part in events for expats

- there are probably 4 to 6 big annual events dedicated to expats, like balls and fundraisers
- RH could participate as a sponsor, e.g. giving away a free weekend
- as a sponsor at such an event, you will be able to present yourself and distribute various printed materials about RH among your target

I suggest we get into a partnership with Andrew Begg from Vivid magazine. Andrew is always present at expat events and he could give us a list of such events and put us in touch with organizers.

The advantage of this activity is that you have direct contact with your target audience. You would however need to find a person to take part in these events and network on your behalf. Would Danielle be willing to do this?

## 3. Direct mailing (DM)

- the first step of DM is to build a well researched database
- I suggest asking for the help of the Trade Desk of the British Embassy, as they must have an up to date database of UK business in Romania

The trouble with DM is that it can be expensive, because you need to send out at least 1,000 envelopes to get a minimum response. It also doesn't ensure that your correspondence will be read or that it will be read by the right person from that company (it might get stuck with the secretary). I suggest two ways of making direct mailing more efficient, but they both depend on other organizations, and they might not be interested in helping.

One suggestion is to try for a partnership with the British Embassy. I assume they sometimes communicate in writing with UK businesses in Romania and they could enclose a presentation material from RH. They might also distribute RH materials to their own events (I remember they often held lunches and dinners). It might not work, because they might think it's unethical to promote you and not others. It might work, however, if we give this promotion a humanitarian twist: keep the traditional Romanian way of life, promote horse welfare. It's worth a try, especially if you know someone within the Embassy who could tell you if they would ever go for this.

Another suggestion is to go for a partnership with Pegasus, a British owned courier company with national coverage. They could distribute your materials through their couriers, hopefully for a token fee, whenever they deliver an envelope to a company. The owner of the company is called James Grey Cheape. Do you know him?

## 4. Form partnership with adventure tourism operators

- based on intuition, I would say that people who are into horse riding, might also enjoy sports such as free ride skiing, hiking, paragliding, climbing.
- there are a few people in Romania who offer such services, it might be interesting to go for a cross promotion with them
- another idea that originated from this is to form a partnership with some of the more active mountain chalets in Romania, who attract sports fans (Postavaru, Balea, Plaiu Fojii, Omu): they are more off the beaten track (you can only get there on foot or with the lift), so you would get access to your target, who avoids chalets where you can get to by car. There is a well developed ski resort near you that should be explored in this regard: Borsa.

5. Form a partnership with Jockey Club

- I don't know anything about the Jockey Club, except that it exists
- You might however have dealt with them in the past, would they be a good partner to promote RH by distributing materials about you at their events?

6. Advertise in restaurants

- there is a service where you can distribute printed materials about your company in restaurants: they have these stands at the entrance, where people pay a fee and leave their materials. In Bucharest there are ads of this type in every restaurant and hotel, but very few about tourism offers; and those which do exist are poorly produced and unappealing.
- one way to avoid the above problem is to go about this a different way, by approaching the restaurant owners directly and asking them to distribute RH materials along with the bill; this way you could make sure that the clients of the restaurant really see your materials. But this would be quite labour intensive and would require a presence in Bucharest or the main target cities.

Any of the above activities would need that you print a high quality impressive leaflet / brochure. Something with striking photography, clean design and a well written text. I suggest you print somewhere around 2,000 pieces, which may seem like a lot, but which should be given out quite easily if we implement at least a few of the above activities.

I haven't budgeted any of the above, because I would like to know if any of these ideas seem feasible to you. Most of the ideas can in fact be implemented by RH directly, if you are working on a tight budget, so it would also be good to know where you think you have to have outside help. I think you need us and AMM for the following activities: design, print and distribution, media relations, advertising in restaurants.

Looking forward to your comments.