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Strategic Marketing & PR Case Studies: Four Moons Restaurant

Introduction:

Four Moons, a fine dining restaurant whose design, chef, menu and wine list were planned to offer an experience such as one might find in any metropolis in the world, opened in Orangeburg, SC in June 2008. The restaurant needed to quickly gain media attention for their high quality cuisine and atmosphere so as to draw diners in and generate a sustained “buzz” about the quality of the restaurant.

Strategic Marketing and PR partnered with the Charleston advertising agency working on Four Moons’ marketing. SM&PR created media relations / publicity campaign to drive diner interest nationally and regionally as well as in markets surrounding Orangeburg to generate restaurant patronage.

Situation:

Orangeburg, SC is a small S.C. town of 13,000 people and is an improbable location for a world-class fine dining restaurant. Gaining media attention for the restaurant would be a challenge as there is no awareness of Orangeburg as a fine-dining destination as is the case with Charleston, for example.

In addition, while Orangeburg is within short driving time of Columbia, S.C. it is perceived by patrons to be “far away.”

Strategies:

1. Build awareness of Four Moons through initial media release which was written as an article to increase pickup by local publications and by food based publications (digital and print).
2. Stimulate foodie blogger interest and cause them to write about Four Moons.
3. Get coverage on area television station with food / dining segment.
4. Get coverage in area business media.
5. Get coverage of Chef Charles Zeran and Chef Colleen Zeran in national and area publications to drive foodie interest.
6. In months following opening, gain national trade magazine inclusion so as to build awareness of Four Moons among influential food editors, writers and others leading to editorial coverage of Four Moons in national consumer directed food publications.



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Achievements:

Four Moons has gained significant media interest both locally, regionally and nationally creating a brand identity among targeted consumer and media contacts that will lead to first tier gourmet food dining consumer directed publications.

A *Stir* Columbia, SC magazine's restaurant reviewer wrote: "'A good meal is as much an experience as it is fine cuisine. Four Moons delivers. And it is priced reasonably enough that you can visit for more than just holidays--especially the extensive and well-organized wine list. Give it a try. In fact go twice, so you can take turns being the DD--mastering the wine list will be no easy feat. Or just start at the Phases Moon Bar, which features a steep discount during happy hour, and see where the evening takes you."

A Sandlapper's Tim Driggers wrote in his column, "Stop where the parking lot's full": "The dining room is stunning. The stylish blend of wood, stone and metal is accented by water and lighting conducive to distinctive dining," Driggers writes. As one of his dining companions describes it, it "has a mystic look true to the name of the restaurant."

One Orangeburg blogger wrote: "I can't stress enough how amazing the food is and the service is unbeatable! Fine dining has finally reached us and we have been freed from the tyranny of chain restaurants!! One tip- whenever you visit, please don't skip dessert!!"

Four Moons has achieved earned media in more than

- 40 publications/outlets/shows
- Greater than 4,726,809 reads/impressions in just 10 months.

(selected earned media coverage included)

1. Release picked up by area news publications (*Times & Democrat & Calhoun Times*)
2. Seven national & regional bloggers have provided Four Moons coverage; of special note-
 - a. *Hugging the Coast*-dined at the restaurant; wrote both restaurant and chef features for nationally syndicated blog;
 - b. *Skirt! Magazine* (Columbia) Editor's Blog wrote about opening
 - c. *Southern ByWays* national blog focused on travel and tourism in the South
 - d. *StarChefs.com* national foodie blog
3. Television coverage:
 - a. Columbia, SC TV station *WLTX-Restaurant Report Card* featured segment on Four Moons (coverage area includes Orangeburg)
 - b. Chef appeared on *Lowcountry Live* on WCIV-News 4 in Charleston area (coverage area includes Orangeburg)
4. Business Publication coverage:
 - a. *Greater Columbia Business Monthly* wrote in-depth piece on the restaurant



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- b. *SC Business Review* radio show featured interview with owner and manager
- c. *Orangeburg Chamber of Commerce* published photos of the grand opening in their newsletter
- 5. Chef features:
 - a. *Chef Magazine*, features (in an upcoming issue) interview with Chef Charles Zeran
 - b. *Stir Magazine* (Columbia SC) features Chef and Four Moons in restaurant coverage
 - c. *Skirt! Magazine* (Columbia, SC) features Chef Colleen Zeran in profile piece
- 6. National Trade Magazine Coverage:
 - a. *Chef Magazine*
 - b. *Restaurant Start up and Growth*
 - c. *Restaurants and Institutions*
 - d. *Nation's Restaurant News*
 - e. *Southern Hospitality*