



InterContinental Hotel Cleveland

On May 1, 2003, the InterContinental Hotel Cleveland, located on the campus of The Cleveland Clinic, opened its doors. Its state-of-the-art conference center, which features a 500-seat high-tech amphitheater, was built to be an ideal setting for meetings and special events and boasts more than 50 miles of cabling, Internet connections and interactive microphones at every seat, and 624 square feet of projection screen.

Challenge:

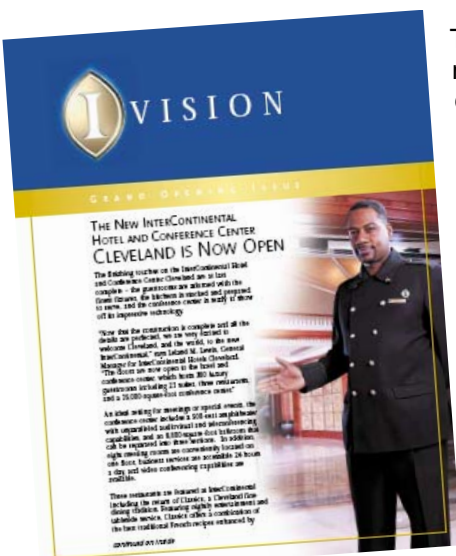
The new hotel is in a challenging location, situated just outside of the central business district of downtown Cleveland, which is not convenient for event and meeting planners. In addition, the Cleveland hotel market had been struggling with a bad economy for two years prior to the InterContinental opening, creating an extremely competitive marketplace for room nights and conferences. With the addition of 940 guestrooms in luxury hotels from 1997 to 2002 (according to Smith Travel Research), there seemed to be an unbalanced supply and demand and it was perceived by many in the business community that Cleveland didn't need another hotel.



Strategy & Tactics:

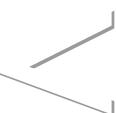
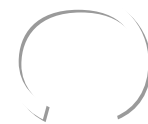
Landau Public Relations was hired while the hotel and conference facility was still under construction to create and execute a comprehensive PR plan that covered the construction and opening phases of the hotel, ongoing post-opening activities. A separate PR plan was created for its fine-dining restaurant, Classics.

Since the InterContinental Hotel Cleveland was built to be the premier host for meetings and events, it was essential to generate a full schedule of bookings before and after the hotel opened. Also, the hotel was expected to be one of the most luxurious in the area and play host to foreign and other high-profile dignitaries visiting The Cleveland Clinic.



The goal was to create awareness with event and meeting planners, produce excitement in the community, and generate local and national media coverage. To do this, we:

- Wrote and produced a series of four newsletters for a targeted list of local and national meeting planners, dignitaries, opinion leaders, and media
- Distributed three newsletters in the seven month period before the hotel opening and one newsletter post-opening, with articles covering the hiring of key staff, descriptions of services and amenities, construction photos with documentation of the work in progress, and the grand opening in May



- Drafted and distributed press releases announcing the hires of key personnel
- Introduced the general manager to influential community groups, including Leadership Cleveland
- Coordinated a press conference at a “Hard Hat Tour” with remarks from the mayor of Cleveland, CEO of The Cleveland Clinic Foundation and the general manager of the InterContinental
- Managed all media relations for the grand opening, including building media lists, creating the invitation, managing event RSVPs and coordinating and staffing interviews
- Created a unique invitation to the grand opening event, which included a room key card for a contest at the event – if their key unlocked the door display in the ballroom, they won a free weekend stay in the luxurious Presidential Suite
- Distributed invitation to local dignitaries, VIPs, business and community leaders, media, InterContinental Hotel Group executives and Cleveland Clinic executives



- Coordinated a ribbon-cutting ceremony and photo opportunity with the Mayor of Cleveland
- Wrote remarks and coached speakers for the conference center unveiling and demonstration
- Wrote comprehensive press kits, including press releases and fact sheets on the hotel opening, conference center, artwork collection, lobby mosaic design and executive team

Results:

We generated positive local and national trade media coverage resulting in an estimated total audience of more than 5.8 million. Additionally,

- The extensive capabilities of the new hotel and conference center were successfully communicated through the newsletters and targeted media placements, resulting in more than 100 events – including weddings, charitable events and meetings – booked before the hotel was even open
- Since the opening and with ongoing PR support, the InterContinental Hotel Cleveland has become a premier venue in the city, accommodating countless events ranging from small, intimate meetings to large, high-tech presentations and elegant weddings
- With a strong media attendance at the “Hard Hat Tour” and grand opening events, we received coverage from local and regional television, radio, newspapers, magazines and online, including WKYC-TV 3, WTAM-AM, WCPN-FM, *The Plain Dealer*, *Crain’s Cleveland Business*, *Detroit News/Free Press*, *Northern Ohio Live*, and *Continental* magazine
- Coverage in key trade publications included *Business Travel Executive*, *Medical Meetings*, *Meetings East*, *M.D. News*, and *Meetings & Conventions*

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