"The Opportunity Guy"
Joe Veneto

1-800-840-4919
Fax: (617) 786-1081
e-mail: joe@opportunityguy.com
www.opportunityguy.com

P.O. Box 69-2359
Quincy, MA 02269

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and more!

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HELPFUL HINT

Over the past several months I have been approached in my sales and marketing sessions concerning the mountains of daily e-mails that are now being sent. People literally get hundreds per day. The solution is simple, multiple e-mail addresses. Have a dedicated e-mail for key associates and direct reports that is given out on a selective basis. It will help with screening and prioritizing e-mails.

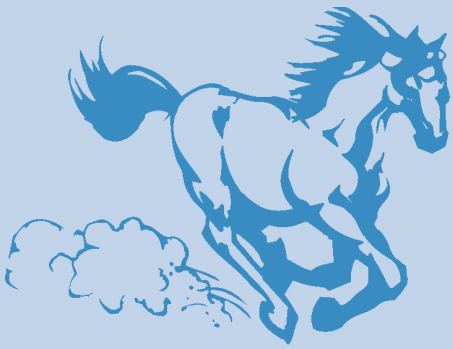
HAPPY NEW YEAR, THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

A lively and high-spirited year as the horse's tempo is fast, his disposition sanguine and steps erratic. Life will be hectic and punctuated with adventures. People will find themselves reckless, romantic and carefree. A definite time for advancement.

In business, it will be a time when decisions and projects will be incorporated at a high speed and with efficiency; action will be the key word. Industry, production and the world's economies will be on the upswing.

Exhilarating yet frustrating, at times, this year's pace will tax our reserve energies and may leave us feeling a bit depleted. It is a good time to let off steam and do some of the whimsical things you have been dreaming about! Listen to your senses and follow your intuition.

Brace yourself, the volatile Horse will quicken our pulses and bring added tension and stress to everyday lives. An excellent year as there will be freedom of movement. Be brave, bold, shocking and join Opportunities Unlimited in welcoming the Year of the Horse.



From: *The Handbook of Chinese Horoscopes* by Theodora Lau, 1979.

PASSPORT TO OPPORTUNITY

BUSINESS INFORMATION AND TOOLS TO NAVIGATE THE EVER-CHANGING MARKETPLACE

VOLUME 2, NO. 2

Navigating Through Uncharted Waters

I recently had the pleasure of keynoting the annual meeting of the Juneau, Alaska CVB. The subject was "Navigating through Uncharted Waters." This topic was chosen due to the current state of uncertainty in the Tourism Industry. As I reflected upon the topic, I tried to identify situations where I have had to navigate in uncertainty.

It took no time to bring me to one of my most memorable times of navigating in uncertainty, a 15-day product trip in the early 90's to develop a two-week tour in Italy. Upon arrival at the airport in Rome, I proceeded through customs and on to the rental car counter. Once my paperwork was completed, the clerk handed me the keys and stated, "nothing is safe in the car." My immediate retort was "what about me?" He shot back, "leave nothing in the car!"

I proceeded to downtown Rome, map in hand, and soon realized the map and designated streets did not always coincide, nor were all the indicated roads connected. As a Bostonian, I learned at an early age that the original streets of my city are paved cow paths but was unprepared for Rome where the main paved roads are the original chariot paths.

My first three days in Rome I was utterly lost. On numerous occasions, the locals were very obliging and continually reminded me of my inexperience. Being half-Italian was no help whatsoever, I heard brand new words and phrases. I was also frequently greeted with new innovative hand gestures and sign language.

After saying arrivaderci to Roma, I proceed to Florence. I was thrilled to be moving to a more enlightened destination, birthplace of the Renaissance. However, upon arrival I tried

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WHERE IN THE WORLD IS THE OPPORTUNITY GUY

JANUARY:

Phoenix, AZ
Atlanta, GA
Portland, ME
Cape Cod, MA

FEBRUARY:

Orlando, FL
Juneau, AK
Columbia, SC
Little Rock. AR

MARCH:

Atlanta, GA
Grayling, MI
Charleston, WV
Poughkeepsie, NY

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Happy New Year and welcome to the second edition of "Passport to Opportunity." For many of us the current outlook for both Tourism and economic recovery remain uncertain. This is not a comfortable place to be as we look to the year ahead.

Just this week, I spoke with a colleague who mentioned a prediction by the CEO of a major New England CVB to members on the 2nd of January. His prediction to colleagues was that the year would be flat. I was outraged by the comment based on the fact that this region, given the current shift by consumers, and reality of regional tourism has an opportunity to create results like none in recent memory.

What will the year be like for you? What are the opportunities you can create for your business? A recent article in USA Today noted that some of the largest and most innovative companies today trace their beginnings back to times of economic uncertainty. Is the glass half empty or half full?

While the year ahead will be challenging, it is certainly not over on the 2nd of January! I believe predictions on the remaining 363 days of 2002 should be based on action and not the result of a foregone conclusion.

Happy New Year and make it a year filled with Opportunities!

Enjoy,

Joe Veneto
The Opportunity Guy

(800) 840-4919 ▪ Fax: (617) 786-1081 ▪ www.opportunityguy.com

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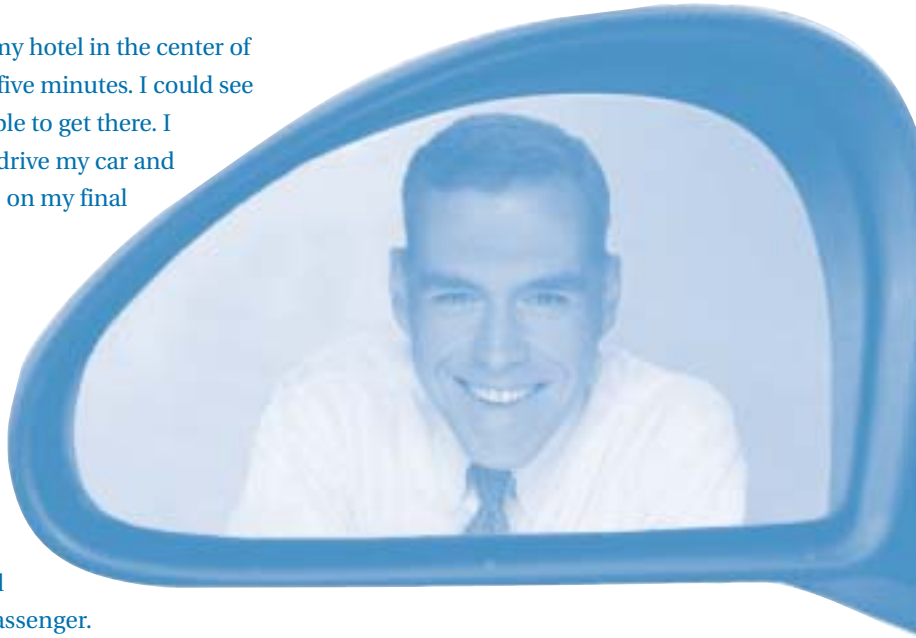
to navigate a path to my hotel in the center of the city for over forty-five minutes. I could see the hotel but wasn't able to get there. I almost hired a taxi to drive my car and me to the hotel. Then, on my final pass, I got there!



From Florence, I proceeded to Venice. Happily, I had a few days of rest since I had to park the car and take a boat. Here the locals transfer their road skills to the water and fortunately, I was a passenger.

Next, it was off to the south via the autoroutes and unbeknown to me I developed a new driving skill. In Italy, on many of the autoroutes there are two lanes in each direction, the passing lane and the putt-putt lane. Invariably, in the right lane, there are lots of Sunday drivers, regardless of the day of the week. This led me to frequently use the passing lane.

At each instance, I checked my mirrors, coast clear and proceeded. However, each time I thought the coast was clear, within a minute of shifting to the passing lane, a car driving at the speed of light was on my tail and ready to flatten me. This happened on so many occasions that I quickly adjusted my driving skills.

It became necessary to maneuver with my two eyes looking in two totally different directions. Each time I wanted to use the passing lane, I would look at the road ahead strategically with one eye while the other eye was tactically checking the rearview mirror. Just beyond the horizon and out of sight was an Italian Indy 500 trainee who was looming fast and furiously behind.

My trip to the south took me to places like Naples and Sorrento where traffic lights, no matter what the color, red, yellow or green all mean GO, GO, GO! Finally, I returned to Rome and familiar territory. In Rome, I had three additional days at the wheel and felt confident I finally knew my way around the city.

The day before leaving, with intense confidence and not a cloud in the sky, I mentally plotted my trip from the Via Veneto back to my hotel. I was so sure of myself that I was absolutely stunned when the entrance I arrived at was not my hotel, but that of an Italian parking garage! I proceeded to take a ticket and pay for an hour of parking. This was much easier than trying to explain to an Italian parking attendant that I was looking for my hotel and wound up in his garage.

When I returned to the states after 15 days of driving in Italy, I, like the Pope, kissed the ground! Now I know why he does that.

Most of the Tourism Industry now finds itself navigating in uncharted waters. This reality will continue throughout the 2002 season. I believe to create opportunity, it will be necessary to keep one eye strategically focused, while the other looks tactically in the mirror at the ongoing events and happenings. This approach will allow the Industry to be well positioned for both the short and long term. Even if the months ahead seem to unfold in a familiar pattern, be on your guard. The best way to navigate a successful course in uncharted tourism waters for 2002 will be to continually assess, change and maybe even ask for directions.

RESOURCES

The following sites are a great source of information on the current state of the Tourism and Travel Industry:

THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY OF AMERICA
www.tia.org is one of the premier US travel industry associations. Since the events of September 11th, the association has worked on an industry recovery plan that has included a series of initiatives. Recently, TIA has developed and been running prime time TV spots to encourage Americans to Travel.

YESAWICH, PEPPERDINE AND BROWN
www.ypb.com is a great source of information on both consumer and tourism industry trends. They produce the annual Travel Monitor as well as additional reports and proprietary information. Since the events of September 11th, YPB has conducted a series of polls of both business and leisure travelers to gauge the pulse and insight of customers in the marketplace.

Driving Opportunities for 2002

Due to conditions both on Wall Street and Main Street, post September 11th, the Tourism and Hospitality Marketplace has shifted. In order to drive opportunities for 2002, tourism professionals and travel suppliers need to understand the new paradigm to find customers. Leisure travel is the main bright spot on the horizon as business and corporate travelers continue to hold back.

The leisure market for clients is now local, in-state and regional. Focusing on customers in these areas will yield results for 2002. There is pent-up demand in the market for short trips of a day or weekend, as well as multi-day getaway travel over weekends or midweek. Customers will be found at various distance points from your destination. Picture your location surrounded by a series of concentric rings. Customers will be found in geographic population areas that are 1-2, 2-4 and 4-6 hours driving distance away from your destination.

"Driving opportunity will be about driving for 2002 as the traveling public watches the safety initiatives of the federal government and major airlines. For many suppliers, this may not only be a shift, but market segments that have not been a focal point for years.

Here are a few suggestions: 1) Regularly assess the pulse of consumers by tracking both economic and travel indicators, 2) Look for partners in the marketplace with whom you can package your products and who will recommend your services, 3) Identify regional associations to meet with potential customers as well as partners, 4) Be sure to maximize your current offerings in the traditional as well as on-line marketplace distribution channels.

To fast track results, Opportunities Unlimited created a new program for CVBs, Chambers and travel suppliers called "Driving Opportunities." It will create immediate results given the current market. This session was successfully presented in the fall in a number of locations.

Don't wait. Fast track your organization and associates in the first quarter to drive opportunities for 2002! Call the Opportunity Guy for complete details or visit us on line at www.opportunityguy.com. Click on the "driving" icon on the homepage for a complete outline and a description.

Comments on "Driving Opportunities" included:

"The 'Driving Opportunities' session is a hands-on approach to create results. It was so well received, our Industry leaders asked Joe back for our Governor's Conference on Tourism."

— **Noreen Bodman,** ***State Travel Director, New Jersey***

"Joe's presentation, 'Driving Opportunities' is a common sense useable approach to the current Market. He provided realistic and achievable solutions. It was as if the whole room took a collective sigh of relief."

— **Ann Melious,** ***Executive Director, Adirondack Regional Tourism***

YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING

Nickeled and dimed:

At the recent National Tour Association in Houston, Texas, I had the pleasure of hearing Peter Greenburg, travel editor of the NBC Today Show. He shared an experience about staying at an upscale Houston hotel three years earlier. It seems this hotel was charging $5 for each delivery of faxes and packages that guests received during their stay. The guests were unaware of the charges until check-out. Greenburg was incensed at the charges upon check-out during his first stay. He asked the clerk to adjust the charges and was told the hotel would make an exception because of who he was. He then told the clerk, unless the charges were reversed for all guests he would pay them.

During his next travel show on NBC with bill in hand, he proceeded to "Out" the hotel and their nickel and dime scheme on national TV.

Greenburg recounted this story to all the convention delegates at a luncheon. He also mentioned that upon check-in the day before he inquired as to the current hotel policy on delivery charges. He was told it was still in effect. As 4,000 people listened, I realized I was staying at the same hotel and had received several deliveries during the week. However, to my amazement upon checking out of the hotel, rather than being nickeled and dimed, all the charges had disappeared. I thought that perhaps Harry Potter had paid a visit to the hotel; I then realized it was Peter Greenburg who had the magic wand.