

Iolani Palace Public Relations Campaign

TLC PR has worked with 'Iolani Palace since 2000, when we offered pro bono services to assist with marketing and public relations activities. The mission was to build business for the Palace by generating public awareness both locally and in the visitor market.

We took a broad view of our assignment by conducting an "audit" to discover the assets and limitations of the Palace tour. Five marketing professionals were commissioned to personally tour the Palace and to conduct a review from the standpoint of presentation, convenience, pricing, quality and value.



Detailed reports were submitted to the Palace board of directors, along with recommendations on product improvement and a complete overhaul of the packaging and pricing, including special prices for kama'aina and military customers. The result was a completely new tour package that included a video presentation, the Palace Barracks and grounds, the upper rooms and the Galleries below.

The new package enabled the Palace to raise the price for the combined tour, while offering an excellent perceived value. After a media blitz, the Palace experienced an almost immediate upward trend in numbers due to the popularity of the improved tour.

Now serving as the Palace's formal public relations firm of record, our firm has generated thousands of media impressions in stories here in Hawai'i, in addition to stories placed at the national level. Important placements included *Conde Nast Traveler's* "14 Perfect Days in Hawai'i" and an extensive story in the *Wall Street Journal*.

TLC PR's national campaign on behalf of the Palace has included consumer and travel trade media, as well as design, lifestyle and meetings trade publications. Placements have been made in *Smithsonian*, *Sunset*, *Frommer's Budget Travel*, *TravelAge West*, *Hawai'i magazine* and the *LA Times Travel Blog*. Iolani Palace was featured in The Travel Channel's "Ten Things You Don't Know About Hawai'i."

In addition to promoting Iolani Palace as a leisure travel destination, TLC PR promoted the distinctive and historic Barracks building as a venue for events with national meetings and incentive media such as *Corporate and Incentive Travel, Insurance and Financial Meetings Management, Meetings and Conventions, and Smart Meetings*.

On the local scene, our goal was to position the Palace as an important cultural icon and to encourage visitors. TLC PR publicized many milestones -- the 125th anniversary of the construction of the Palace and the 125th anniversary of the coronation of King Kalākaua and Queen Kapi'olani. Both events resulted in front page coverage in the Honolulu Advertiser. In addition, we have been responsible for features and mentions in Pacific Business News, Honolulu Star Bulletin, *Honolulu Magazine* and *Hawai'i Modern Luxury Magazine*. We were instrumental in having the Palace named as one of the *Honolulu Star Bulletin's* Seven Wonders of Hawai'i -- the only man-made structure to make the list.

Results: The success of our campaign is in the numbers. The total visitor count for 2007 was 77,491, and ticket revenue was \$817,000. In 2012, the visitor count was at the all-time high of 115,573 and ticket sales revenue hit over \$1.2 million—the highest ever.

Client Comment: "Iolani Palace has phased out its paid advertising budget to attract visitors. We rely solely on the efforts of our public relations firm. Their work has allowed us to grow our visitor numbers dramatically over the last six years, both in the local market and in the off-shore market."

Kippen de Alba Chu, Executive Director
Iolani Palace