

South Florida cities, counties turn on Super Bowl marketing blitz

Robert Geitner thinks the 100,000 spectators and fans arriving in South Florida for the Super Bowl are just too many people to ignore.

So, the senior manager of marketing and communications with the Miami Downtown Development Authority is powering up downtown Miami's marketing machine to grab some attention. A public relations blitz is showcasing 150 restaurants, clubs and pubs throughout the area, many of which are hosting Super Bowl viewing parties.

He's promoting upscale hotels like the Four Seasons, Viceroy, Mandarin Oriental, Conrad and Epic, and is quick to mention that the InterContinental will be the official team hotel for the New Orleans Saints.

Geitner has been highlighting events, like the Black Eyed Peas at the American Airlines Arena and the Cavalia show from Cirque du Soleil co-creator Normand Latourelle.

For people whose last visit to Miami was for the 2007 Super Bowl, much has changed. It's a message Geitner wants to get out.

"Miami was being talked about negatively back then. It's a much different place now," he said.



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Jeff Zbar

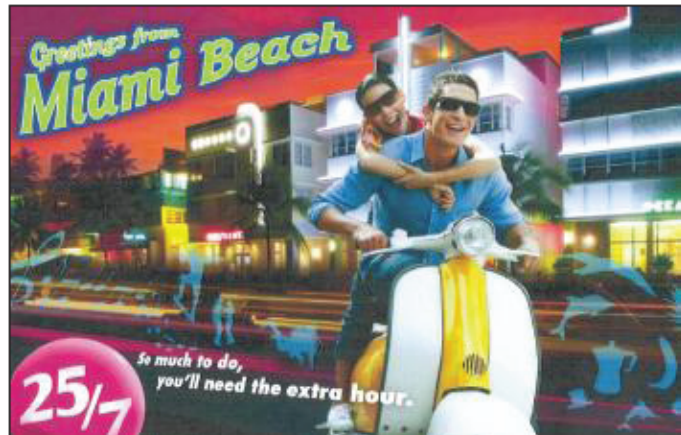
Across South Florida, cities and counties are ramping up their marketing in an effort to tap into the 11-day span that includes the Pro Bowl and the Super Bowl. In fact, "it would almost be irresponsible not to take advantage of everything a Super Bowl brings," said Scott Becher, president of Sports & Sponsorships, a Boca Raton sports marketing consultancy.

With the spotlight shining on the community, tourism organizations, municipalities and even businesses should capitalize on the opportunity, Becher said.

"It doesn't get any better than having a global captive audience in our backyard," he said. "Can you think of another time when thousands of reporters are all in our town, looking for good story ideas? How about the ability to show off your best



Becher



This virtual postcard was used for a one-time-only media event.

to Fortune 100 company executives in town for the game? It's an opportunity to build enduring relationships on our home turf."

Miami Beach is pitching the "Miami Beach 25/7" marketing campaign. The effort has a Twitter feed, and its Facebook fan page welcomes people to upload their own photos. "There's so much to do, you'll need the extra hour" is the campaign's tagline.

The Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau is promoting a host of events, from this week's Super Celebrity Fishing Classic Kickoff Party at the IGFA Fishing

Hall of Fame to charity events, concerts at area venues, a Super Game Day Chalk Talk at Levinson Jewelers in Fort Lauderdale, and the Lingerie Football League Conference Playoff at Hard Rock Live in Hollywood.

In Palm Beach County, officials have ramped up their marketing to lure fans north. Billboards say "Come Play, Stay, Score," playing off an ongoing marketing theme.

The county and cities within it planned 14 events over the 11 days, said Roger Amidon, executive director with the Palm Beach County Tourist Development Council. Among the events planned or held were Boca Raton's Community Blitz Day, Delray Beach's Art & Jazz on the Avenue, and the Super Clematis Celebration parade.

Back in downtown Miami, some 18 months of effort to spruce up and market the area has helped position the urban core in a favorable light, Geitner said. A grant program underwrote storefront improvements.

"One hundred thousand people are coming into the area, and a huge local population makes the Super Bowl a special day" Geitner said. "We want people to know there's energy and things going on downtown."

JEFF ZBAR covers marketing, technology and small business strategies. Contact him at jeffzbar@gmail.com or (954) 346-4393.