

## **International Industry Forum 12 Nov 2007**

### **Summary Roundtable Discussion Changes in the Distribution System**

#### **Industry Feedback**

##### **Question One: The Internet**

**What do you think are the most important elements of online marketing?**

- Key word optimization
- 1<sup>st</sup> page of Google a must, paid Google Ads & features
- Immediate response time, be fast
- 'Strata' software, online real chat, phone call to help consumers make the booking.
- Ongoing updates
- Cross promotions – links with partners, links to tour operator websites, offline packaging with suppliers
- sa.com.sg – free banner advertising and just the cost of the discount supplied
- Consistent brand and message
- No clutter/pop ups
- Fast broadband to regions
- Allocation
- Online advertising
- Niche small business easier to reach consumer
- Motivating images that showcase the experience
- Maps – location, local services, distances from airport & accommodation
- Yield management
- Brevity of information – simplicity
- Navigation: easy to use, informative
- Instant – bookings, reservations
- Booking engine/call to action
- Rate parity, protect rates
- Blog/piers
- Testimonials
- S.E.O.
- Pay per click
- Written for internet (not like newspaper)
- Target specific audience
- Make an impression (catch their interest)
- International appearance

## **Question Two: Mergers Wholesaler/Retailer**

**What issues and challenges has your business faced due to consolidation in the international market place?**

- Gained and lost access to market sectors
- Can lose staff training/personal connection when an agent is taken over.
- Can lose market knowledge when one person has greater responsibility for a bigger global area.
- Loss of relationship, rebuilding
- Larger companies dictate terms/conditions, however Adelaide market is strong
- There will be a need to market your product through different channels
- Positive in that you deal with less people
- Easier to reach market
- Maintain up to date knowledge of personnel
- Conglomeration of wholesalers and retailers
- Conglomeration bears the chance of gaining strong position with broad platform once featured
- Still wholesalers and retailers tend to operate on individual basis
- Keeping trace on who is who
- Non-iconic products face stronger pressure to remain in the race
- Uncertain continuity
- Funnels/narrows opportunities of tourism operators to gain position in wholesale programs
- Target smaller operators
- New specialists, niche segments erase from consolidation/conglomeration
- Once in the system, huge distribution/training platform

## **Question Three: Blog Sites**

**Have you ever used a “blog” to research or create content for your own business?**

**If ‘Yes’, what are the benefits?**

**If ‘No’, would this be something you would consider for the future?**

- Reluctance to do it due to lack of personal resources, misuse of blogs and cost of maintenance
- Yes – as operator. Moderation factor, pain/too much to manage. Taken Blog off new website
- Have opened up new business reviews, honest feedback
- Trip adviser only – get your own blog
- Establish network of bloggers to promote, encourage customers to put positive comments on sites
- Forward addresses (Blog sites) for testimonial re your business
- Something to consider
- Very beneficial to advise other travelers about tours/services (positive/negative)
- Have more weight/influence than your own advertisement
- As a consumer, narrow the field
- Insight into the State of Tourism – up to date
- Lots of detail from different perspectives
- Know what you want, discern what suits you
- Passenger feedback forms

#### **Question Four: Online Travel Agent**

**Do you distribute your products via an OTA eg. Zuji, expedia.com, wotif.com etc? Would you consider OTA's as part of the legitimate distribution chain?**

- Unanimous – Yes!
- Way of future
- Yes, eg. Connect SA (mainly accommodation and tours)
- Wotif, lastminute, needit, godo, red balloon, take a break, OZ stays, Romantic Holidays, readyrooms, Opodo, Travel.com.au
- Challenge – how to find a valuable OTA, how to deal with contract basis, very different price models (some OTA's even charge featuring the TO)
- Yes – will not pay monthly fees, happy to pay commission
- Hotels use software to manage inventory and rates on OTAs
- Yes – clearing mechanism for low booking dates
- Yes – appearing at all trade shows
- Research still must be done
- Travel agencies will survive
- Update sites continually
- Allocation of rooms issues for accommodation operators
- site minder – pulls out inventory, can list on more sites
- Weekly sites announced
- Few key supplier sites
- Brand integrity
- Enhancing their own websites
- Perhaps work with other strategic partners
- Issues with technology
- Treat as a tradi
- How do we stand out online – very clear and concise with images
- In the past rate driven
- Must get back to people asap – 15 mins
- The right packages, car parking, breakfast, value adds (eg. Hampers)
- Cooperative marketing (eg. pop up banners) with the OTA
- Come up early in a search (key search word optimization)
- Information, clear and easy to find, simple
- Live availability

### **Question five: Climate Change**

#### **What is your business doing/done to reduce its environmental impact?**

- Offsetting carbon emission with green fleet
- Recycling, Solar power, Gas
- Recycling of water, use of rain water
- External audit – waste management on tour operator
- Changed fuel – move environmentally sound product, investigate fuel saving technology eg. Tablet in fuel
- Packaging – refillable bottles
- Water saving – towels/laundry
- Talk about policy
- Align with green globe or similar
- Photos – footprints
- Corporate contracts/MICE groups
- Talk about what you do
- Awareness of what can be done
- Replace globes to energy saving
- Having energy & waste audit on operation
- Separate waste – food, paper, plastic
- Water reducing equipment (toilet, bath tubs etc.)
- Brochure reduction to cut paper waste (more electronic information distribution); CDs instead of brochures)
- Shop locally
- Leave no trace I the nature (take back with you)