“COOPETITION - KEY TO SUCCESS”
UNFOLDS THIS NOVEMBER IN DUBAI
PRESIDENT SPEAK

Dear TAFI’ites,

TAFI Convention 2010 has taken off and is set to land in Dubai on Thursday, 25th November. The theme for this year’s Convention is “Coopetition – Key to Success”.

Right after we sent out the first e-mail announcing the TAFI Convention 2010, we started getting a few mails and even some calls pointing out that there was a glaring spelling mistake in the theme!

There you go folks – that’s why TAFI Conventions are different: they make you sit up and take notice; they’re intended to stimulate thinking...And no – it isn’t a spelling mistake or a printer’s devil.

“Coopetition” is a hybrid word, a cross between “cooperation” and “competition”, which could mean either cooperation between ostensible competitors, or competition among partners. It was coined by Ray Noorda, the founder of Novell and has been the subject of some serious discussion and research at the Harvard Business School and the Yale Institute of Management, as well as other academic institutions.

The business paradigm has changed radically and is in fact changing almost on a daily basis; core competencies, niche marketing and a high degree of specialization are what the incredibly info-saturated consumer demands today. It is not possible for everyone to be all things to all people and it therefore makes eminent sense to collaborate with your peers even as you compete to maximise your profits. Code shares and mergers are a case in point. We shall present case studies and our panel of eminent speakers from across the world will present their insights.

Tourism is among the fastest growing industries in the world today and while we have just crossed the 5 million mark for inbound tourism, close to three times that number travel overseas annually from India. Dubai has traditionally been an extremely popular destination. It has a large expatriate Indian population, there are many cultural similarities and ties between the two countries have been getting stronger. Though there were other countries bidding to hold the TAFI Convention 2010, DTCM’s generous support and proactiveness meant that it would have to be Definitely Dubai in 2010.

We expect significant participation from local tour operators and travel agents from Dubai and its neighbouring countries. TAFI Convention 2010 will also provide an opportunity for our members to market Indian inbound tourism even as they acquire destination information on the host country.

We have planned a series of thought provoking Business Sessions with international Speakers addressing crucial issues of the trade today. I would sincerely urge all our delegates to make it a point to attend all the Business Sessions - which are scheduled only for the first half of each day. There will be ample opportunity and arrangements to go shopping and sightseeing in the afternoons. Nothing is more disheartening than seeing empty halls during the business sessions which are the critical core of the Convention.

Of course there will be gala evenings to network and enjoy yourselves. The TAFI Convention evenings have always been exceptional, and Dubai will be no different.

So, we look forward to welcoming Incredible India in Definitely Dubai.

Sincerely,

AJAY PRAKASH
President TAFI
CEO, Nomad Travels, Mumbai

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FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

Dear TAFI’ites,

It’s that time of the year when everyone is extremely busy...festivals, weddings, holiday planning, and of course for TAFI members, the eagerly awaited Annual Convention.

This year the Convention is being held in Dubai from the 25th to the 28th of November. You can all look forward to the legendary Middle Eastern hospitality in luxurious surroundings, and interact with friends and colleagues in truly remarkable settings. TAFI conventions have always stood out and this year too will be no exception. The theme for this year’s convention is Coopetition - key to success. This is a conundrum whose deciphering might well hold the key to our future.

The Convention Committee is obviously in overdrive mode. The sheer logistics are immense. Ticketing, documentation, planning business sessions, accommodation, post tours, seeking sponsors, and then the final coordination is indeed a mammoth task. It seems impossible but finally there always emerges a method to the madness. We are of course thankful to our many sponsors, especially Dubai Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM); without their support this Convention would not have been possible.

The Managing Committee held a successful Joint Council Meet in Mumbai recently. All TAFI Chapters around the country are now ready to take on the challenge of getting more and more members to get involved in our activities. After all the Association is for its members and they must come forward and let us know what their expectations are. We now have a golden opportunity for members to get familiar with their organisation by participating in large numbers in the Convention next month. Only true synergy among our multifarious members can produce discernible results.

This issue is once again dedicated to the Convention. In addition we have some very interesting features and other informative articles. Take a break - read TAFI Connect and get ready for the Convention.

Happy reading and compliments of the season to your near and dear ones!

CAPT. PROMOD KOHLI
Editor - TAFI Connect-Plus
MD, Lancer Travels Pvt. Ltd., Pune

You are only as young as the last time you changed your mind
~Timothy Leary
It is heartening to note that TAFI Connect is coming to us very regularly and the contents are very educative and purposeful. In fact I make it a point to circulate the copy to all my staff and make sure that they read the contents carefully. TAFI is giving us a lot of value addition by way of workshops from our local chapter as well. I am very proud to be a TAFI member. Please accept our congratulations for the excellent publication.

R. Srinivasan
Director, Travel Park Pvt. Ltd, Chennai.

I truly found the joint workshop on Do’s & Don’t’s which was held on 28th July here in Chennai very beneficial to all of us. I would like to personally applaud the joint efforts of TAFI, TAAI & IAAI. It is my desire to see many more such meetings or workshops being organised by our very own Tamil Nadu chapter. The joint committee also had a fruitful discussion with Air India on issues of ADM. The interaction was good and several ideas were put on the table.

What I like to see and expect from other regional chapters is a strong showing of support from travel bodies such as TAFI, TAAI and IAAI. There must be constant follow up on pressing issues like the TAP, Commission and Price Parity on Fares. Last but not least I would like to see the Associations stepping in to find ways to improve the serenity of people working in the agencies. It is important they work in an atmosphere free of anxiety and other disturbances which directly affect the fabric of our trade.

S. Baskar
Champion Travel & Tour, Chennai

The last issue of TAFI Connect was fantastic. There was a lot of useful information. Thank you and keep it up!

Musthafa
Meraj Travels, Madurai

Thank you for publishing an update on the Commission/TAP issue. These kind of articles are of immense help to members like us. It enables us to keep our knowledge about the issue up to date and we know that the information we are getting from TAFI Connect is reliable.

Sampat Damani
Disha Travel, Mumba

The Independence day issue of TAFI Connect was indeed a breath of fresh air. The curtain raiser to the upcoming TAFI convention in Dubai was informative. Thank you for introducing the managing committee members to all of us. We now know who is handling everything and are looking forward to the convention even more.

Rajesh Punjabi
Cozy Travels, Mumbai

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) to Dubai, United Arab Emirates for its 2010 Annual Convention.

Lama Tours is one of the leading Destination Management Companies in the UAE. Our enterprise, expertise and experience give us a unique competitive edge in the industry. We inspire people to travel, explore and experience our quality products and services.

We are delighted to be appointed as the official ground handlers for the 2010 TAFI Convention. This meeting of industry experts will significantly affect current and future business opportunities between India and Dubai and we will spare no efforts to ensure and deliver the highest services to meet the expectations of TAFI members and guests.

Our vision is to provide a one-stop-shop for every customer’s travel needs. We assure that you will be served with the utmost personal care and we will make you feel home with our warm hospitality.

Kulwant Singh
Managing Director, Lama Group of Companies

TAFI Connect is very interesting reading. It helps people like us who have a stake in the Travel Agency yet are not involved enough to understand the current developments in the industry. Keep the good work going.

Raju Mathew
Consultant, Vice Regal Travels

Please provide information in TAFI Connect on matters related to ADMs and the the correct method to dispute unwarranted ADMs. This will help all agents who are at a loss on how to handle the delayed ADMs from airlines.

Paulose K. Mathew
Coraz Travels, Cochin

Editor: Please read the article on ADMs on page no 28

TAFI has grown in strength over the last few years and our membership is over 1,200 in number. But numbers are not enough; what we require is active participation from our members. How many of us can truthfully say that we are utilising our TAFI membership to the full? TAFI’s strength is its members. Today the key to success in any business is networking. TAFI gives you the opportunity to network with colleagues from all over India. But to do this you need to attend the chapter meetings, conventions and other activities organised by TAFI. This will keep you updated at local and national level and allow you to air problems and work out solutions.

TAFI Connect is another powerful media to stay connected but how many even bother to read it? Repeated requests to contribute by sending in articles and advertisements are largely ignored. If you have anything to say do it through TAFI CONNECT; it reaches out to all sectors in the travel and tourism industry. The TAFI Convention which is held each year in an exotic location gives members the chance to mix business and pleasure at affordable prices. This is a chance to make new friends and benefit from educative business sessions. The next TAFI CONVENTION is in Dubai from 25th to 28th November, 2010 so get going and register at the earliest.

Let us all resolve to benefit from our membership of TAFI!

Rani Bachani
Vice President, Vice Regal Travels, Cochin
Convention MOU signed at 10-10-10 : 10-10

The official MOU between Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) and Dubai Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing (DTCM) for holding TAFI’s International Convention 2010 in Dubai between November 25th to 28th, 2010 was signed on August 10, 2010 by his Excellency Khalid A. Bin Sulayem, Director General for DTCM and Ajay Prakash, President for TAFI. National Managing Committee members and Chapter Chairmen of TAFI and several officials of DTCM including their India Representative Carl Vaz were present on the occasion.

Coincidently the function happened on 10-10-10 at 10-10 hrs which is considered by the Chinese as an auspicious date and time in their calendar. We hope it will indeed become the most successful TAFI Convention ever with a record number of registrations.
Convention Update

Ajay Prakash  
Chairman, Convention Committee

There has been an excellent response to the Convention. We have received 160 registrations in the first week itself. This is very positive and we are expecting 800 to 1,000 delegates to attend. Obviously there is an interest and it’s looking good. There is opportunity for both sides to showcase the products they have to offer. It’s not only for us to take tourists to Dubai but it’s also a chance for us to market ‘Incredible India’. The potential is enormous – there has always been an interest in Bollywood but medical tourism is something that also has a lot of potential and we should be marketing this to all the Middle Eastern countries. They have beaches and deserts but no wildlife sanctuaries – so this is something we can market as well. Conventions like this stimulate bi-national tourism, and our theme says it all – Coopetition = Competition with partners and Cooperation with competitors.

Vasuki Kalyansundaram  
Co-Chairperson, Convention Committee

Preparations for the Dubai convention are in full swing and most of the airline work is already completed. Things are looking great and with the cooperation of the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing everything appears to be on schedule.

The convention has generated a lot of interest among local Dubai merchants and vendors and we are getting a lot of enquiries. There is also a lot of interest from Indian travel agents from all over the country. I had thought that Dubai would be a challenging venue but we are getting countless enquiries. People are interested in traveling to Dubai as a short haul destination, to meet people, or to do shopping.

Last time’s committee set a benchmark at the last convention and therefore there are a lot of expectations from the convention this time too. A convention like this offers great networking opportunities. It is the perfect platform for growth and learning.

People are not merely registering names but are sending advance money and documents, calling to check whether documents are in order to ensure that they have a place reserved.

I feel attendance for this convention will surpass all previous conventions. It’s definitely going to be a ‘cool’ convention!

Carl Vaz  
Director - India, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM)  
Government of Dubai

We at Dubai’s Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing are keen to ensure that the annual TAFI convention in Dubai will be successful in terms of member attendance, convention content and the quality of destination’s experience they will imbibe. DTCM will host the inaugural dinner and entertainment at the Bubble and Sky Deck at The Meydan. This will be a unique experience for members and will showcase an amazing venue that Dubai offers for the business tourism or the popularly referred MICE segment. We are also supporting the TAFI convention and managing committee in other areas and are progressing in the right direction to ensure that members’ satisfaction levels will be met and surpassed.

India is one of Dubai’s top three source markets for inbound tourism. At DTCM India we have been working towards securing various industry conferences and conventions in Dubai. This strategy has been put in place by my office in order to provide a platform for our retail chain partners to experience firsthand the destinations, services and opportunities it offers to their customers and fellow Indian travelers. The TAFI convention is another step in this direction and thus a key aspect of our overall marketing strategy.

Inbound tourism from across the globe has always maintained a steady growth pattern for Dubai. Tourism is one of the Emirate’s key contributors to the GDP. For the first six months of 2010, global inbound visitor traffic into Dubai grew by 7% to cross 4.18 million hotel and hotel apartment guests. For our office in India, we also displayed a tremendous growth rate of 26% for the first 6 months of 2010 over 2009 crossing over 330,000 Indian travellers, making India the second largest source market this year. It must be noted that these figures only take into account hotel and hotel apartment guests. As a result, if we were to include the VFR and transit figures then the figures would be even higher.
Challenging Times Ahead

Continue to embrace change advises Peter Barlow, Chairman, WTAAA

It is no coincidence that the last two years have been among the most challenging for our Industry. The global financial crisis has affected us all in different ways while natural and man-made disasters continue to impact on the confidence of the traveller.

Difficult times bring change, usually positive change. The reality though is that things will not be as they were. Consumers will be smarter and more wary of how they spend their money or that of their employer. Most of you are evolving your business to meet this challenge and evolve we must!

New Zealand has a proud history of resilience, much like India I imagine. Whilst we are small and vulnerable, India is large and powerful and for different reasons we contribute greatly to the rich tapestry of life.

As President of the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) and as an owner of a Travel Group, I am acutely aware of the need to keep abreast of innovation. New ideas that will make my business, and our Industry, relevant and critical to the travel distribution system.

The biggest challenge to the Travel Agents of New Zealand has been the effect of the economy and the resultant defaults. TAANZ is currently in the middle of negotiations with IATA to renew the TAANZ/Airline agreement which will determine the future trading protocols of the Industry. I know that IATA will be demanding greater levels of protection for the Airlines. The issues in question include agent security levels, treatment of claims, early warning systems with regard to potential default, un-authorised third party transactions, consumer indemnities and a generic re-fresh of the principles of the agreement.

It would be fair to say that our ‘self insuring’ bonding scheme is unique to New Zealand and has served all parties well, for a very long time. All New Zealand travel agents must be bonded and the accumulated funds, in excess of NZD40 million, are held in trust to protect IATA and the consumer against agent default. The bonding fund is administered by an independent bonding authority and this regime has provided IATA a significant level of comfort. This will be tested over coming months.

Recently, in Sydney, I had the great honour to be appointed Chair of the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA). There is no doubt that we are now the single most important Travel Agents Group representing more than 70% of the various worldwide airline settlement plans production incorporating the most important country markets.

Our mission is not simple. Outside of the very important dialogue we share with each other each day, our engagement with IATA and their Airline members is critical. Whilst we have a seat at the table, we must ensure that we are not the meal.

The legacy of apathy and distrust between Agents and IATA still exist and many still question the relevance of IATA in the changing travel landscape. The reality is that that we must find a way to co-exist. It is my desire to develop some shared objectives and greater transparency so that we can move forward without the prejudices of the past. To achieve this, we all must give a little on some issues that have become walls to change. I have already started dialogue with IATA Geneva on these very things and will continue to push whilst I attend the PAPGJC and PACONF in October. This will, of course, take time.

Let me finish by reminding you of the challenge ahead. We must continue to embrace change and invest in our greatest assets, our staff and technology. We must find ways to communicate with our customers to assist their planning and booking but at the same time, we must remind the customer of the value that we bring. We must articulate the things we do for the customer that they won’t get through other channels. If we don’t, people won’t fully understand what travel agents do!

Wishing you all much success and good health.
Dubai may be defined by its shopping festival and all the temptations its malls carry but for those who prefer a different kind of experience, it also offers several unique options. Visitors who have more use for the camera than the credit card will find plenty of picture opportunities in settings ranging from sand dunes to busy waterways and heritage villages to zoos.

**Boat Rides/Cruises on the Creek**

Local residents recommend a boat ride on the creek as an excellent way to really get the feel of Dubai. The 14-km long creek divides Dubai into two parts - Deira Dubai and Bur Dubai. Tours are available on traditional wooden dhows or cabin cruisers, and provide an arresting view of the major landmarks can be seen from the waterway.

Dinner cruises allow you to experience the culture and cuisine of the region and combine it with some sightseeing. Traditional music accompanies a delicious meal and as you bob along the creek you can see the city light up around you.

**Desert Safari**

You can’t visit Dubai and not step out to experience the desert. A Desert Safari involves speeding through the desert over sand dunes in a 4-wheel drive. Known as ‘dune bashing’, desert driving can be a thrilling ride, and the sun setting among the sand dunes is an amazing sight. The Safaris take visitors to isolated villages and historical ruins, enabling them to experience local culture, history and lifestyles firsthand.

After the dune bashing, there’s an opportunity to unwind in a Bedouin camp, where a delicious barbecue dinner awaits, along with live entertainment. Camel rides under starlit nights are also on offer.

**Dubai Museum**

In what is thought to be Dubai’s oldest building is housed the Museum. Built in 1800, the Al-Fahidi Fort is now home to archaeological objects such as pottery, stone and metallic
items, stone engravings, and skeletons. Some pieces date back 4,000 years! A large section is devoted to locally-made musical instruments; there is also some deadly weaponry on display including curved daggers (hanjars), swords, spears, bows and arrows, shields made of sharkskin, pistols and axes.

**Heritage and Diving Village**

It may surprise you to learn that there was a time when pearl-trading and smuggling were Dubai’s main sources of revenue! The Heritage and Diving Village in the Shindagah area tries to recreate that time. Featuring traditional sand coloured houses and wind towers, it has several traditional shops, handicraft stores and exhibitions where potters and weavers display their crafts. Located near the mouth of the creek, this area is also popular in the evenings for its open-air cafeterias and live entertainment. The Diving Village offers visitors a collection of pearl-diving artefacts and pictures of Dubai’s pearl divers and marine life. Open daily from 9 am to 9 pm.

**Hatta Wadi Trips**

Hatta is an oasis located about 100 kilometers from Dubai in the Hajar Mountains. Special trips are arranged for tourists wishing to see the heritage village which depicts the typical village life of the mountains. The trip involves following the trails of the wadis, or dried riverbeds in the Hajar Mountains, to reach fresh water pools where tourists can take a dip and partake of refreshments. A 1-hour drive from the city and there is a fascinating view of the mountains. En route a halt is made at the Hatta Fort, which was built from mud bricks, mountain stone and palm trunks and fronds. Walk through the wadis and take in the exhilarating view.
of the greenery and wildlife around. Later, visit the 200-year-old Hatta Heritage Village and the Juma Mosque that stands amidst the palm groves.

**Scuba Diving at Khorfakkan**

For those with a yen for the outdoors, the coastline of the Emirates offers a colorful world of coral reefs and marine life just waiting to be explored. Khorfakkan, said to be the most scenic location in the area, is also the best scuba diving site. Called the ‘the creek of two jaws’, it provides breathtaking glimpses of underwater life. Scuba diving requires a license however but it can be obtained in a few days.

**Al Ain tour**

Known as a Garden City, Al Ain is a desert oasis where caravans have stopped over since time immemorial. For a peaceful experience, stroll through the oasis of Buraimi, followed by a stopover at the Ain Al Fayda Resort built around natural hot springs. Or go on an exciting trip to Hili Fun City, the amusement park. Also visit the Al Ain Zoo and Aquarium, which is home to the largest collection of animals in the region, including penguins and the endangered Arabian Oryx. For a spectacular sunset view, drive up the winding road of Jebel Hafeet – the UAE’s highest mountain peak.

**EVENTS**

Dubai has earned its reputation as the sporting capital of the Middle East. The sporting calendar is filled with international events that attract top sports personalities and avid fans from around the world.

**Dubai World Cup**

The world’s richest horse race, the Dubai World Cup is held annually at Nad Al Sheba Club. Feel the excitement rising every minute as the horses gallop towards the finish line. In this elegant and elite event, the scene-stealers are actually the women who display their finest gowns and hats as they compete for the coveted title of ‘Best Dressed Lady’ and ‘Best Hat’. The Dubai World Cup has established itself not only as one of the most important horse-racing events but also a fashion rendezvous that you can’t afford to miss.
Dubai Tennis Open
Held annually at the state-of-the-art Dubai Tennis Stadium, the Dubai Tennis Open attracts most of the world’s top players including Andre Agassi, Roger Federer, Marat Safin, Lindsay Davenport and the Williams sisters. In fact, Dubai made world headlines when tennis legends Andre Agassi and Roger Federer couldn’t resist the temptation to have a friendly match on the world’s highest tennis court, the helipad of Burj Al Arab, which is undoubtedly the world’s most luxurious hotel.

Dubai Desert Classic
A prestigious golfing tournament, the Dubai Desert Classic has been regularly attracting many of the world’s leading golfers and thousands of avid spectators, year after year. In addition to playing an important role in the international sporting arena, it is universally recognised as one of the finest golf events in the Middle East. The tournament is usually held during the winter months (January to March) and spectators get the chance to observe the masterful strokes of players like Tiger Woods, Vijay Singh, Ernie Els and Colin Montgomerie among other greats.

Dubai Rugby Sevens
The Emirates Airline Dubai Rugby Sevens is not only the opening round of the IRB Sevens World Series, but is one of the biggest social weekends of the year. Featuring sixteen of the best Seven-playing nations in the world, the Dubai Rugby Sevens has grown into an adrenaline-packed sporting event that attracts die-hard fans from around the globe.

UIM Class 1 World Offshore Powerboat Championship
Dubai has played an important role in the development of powerboat racing in the Middle East. With contestants coming in from all over the world, this much-awaited event is packed with tremendous excitement. It is also very popular because the country is home to the Victory Team, which is one of the best powerboat teams in the world.

Dubai International Sailing Week Regatta
Since 2000 the Dubai International Sailing Week Regatta has been making world headlines every year. With over 160 international sailors participating, this mega-event is held in the month of January and adds new life to the calm waters of the Arabian Gulf.

Dubai Traditional Dhow Sailing Race
Held at regular intervals from September to May, the Dhow Sailing Race is definitely the most spectacular event on Dubai’s water sports calendar. The sight of majestic wooden dhows racing through the aquamarine waters strikingly evokes the Arabian lifestyle of yesteryears.
Dubai International Kitesurfing Tournament

During the month of March, kitesurfing enthusiasts faithfully gather from around the world for this breathtaking event. Here, you can enjoy watching experts perform some amazing stunts. The tournament also holds a separate competition for racing and freestyle tricks.

A1 Grand Prix of Nations

The Dubai Autodrome, the region’s first fully-integrated motor sports facility, hosts the renowned A1 Grand Prix of Nations. Pitting driver against driver and country against country, this adrenaline-filled event is held annually. This state-of-the-art facility also holds the FIA GT Championship as well as the first 24-hour race in the Middle East.

Dubai Summer Surprises

The Dubai Summer Surprises (DSS) is an annual festival event that offers ‘Big Fun for Little Ones’, and focuses on knowledge and entertainment for kids during the yearly summer vacation. Attracting families from around the world, DSS offers unlimited fun and excitement for ten weeks and is usually held between the months of June and September. Savour the special surprises that are primarily held in Dubai’s outstanding shopping malls. There are nine themed events – School’s Out Surprises, followed by Food, Ice, Flower, Heritage, Water, Techno, Global and finally the Back-to-School Surprises. Don’t forget to visit one of the most popular destinations, Modhesh Fun City, where children queue up for the colourful and brightly-lit rides. Modhesh (Arabic for ‘incredible and amazing’) is the much-loved mascot of DSS. In fact, the birth of Modhesh gave this festival a fun and cheerful dimension. The major attractions at Fun City are the Modhesh Theatre and Kitchen and the various zones like Sand Sculpting, Clever Thinking, Art and Craft, Automobile, Lego, Soft Play, Family and e-zones. Also visit the Modhesh Fun Fair, which has many entertaining and challenging electronic games.

Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (DDCR)

As Dubai was primarily a desert, the Dubai government and Emirates Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa initiated the DDCR to preserve its natural habitat. This reserve is set on 225 sq km, which accounts for nearly 5% of Dubai’s total land area. Since the opening, Al Maha has reinvested 5% of its turnover to nurture the key components of the ecosystem, from flora and fauna to water supplies. Today DDCR contains over 300 Arabian oryx and 250 gazelle which can be viewed on the official excursions set up with the members of DDCR. In line with international conservation practices, the Reserve is segregated into four zones, each with a prescribed utilisation plan - from complete exclusion zones, which can be visited only on foot by researchers, to limited vehicle access zones for safari groups, excursions and desert campsites. The number of safari operators into this area has been restricted to four: Arabian Adventures, Alpha Tours, Travco, and Lama Tours.

SPAS

What better way to pamper oneself on a holiday than visiting a Spa? The city has several world-class spas with an exotic menu of mystical Arabian treatments and therapies, offering you a truly unforgettable experience. Book a half-day or full-day package and escape to a haven of bliss, relaxation and serenity. A popular option is the Moroccan Bath. Widely known as Hammam Maghrebi, this Middle Eastern tradition has been favoured by women for centuries and involves a lavish bathing experience, which will surely melt away all your stress. After a body scrub and refreshing steam bath, the therapist will wrap your body in Moroccan Rassoul mud, which comes from the warm, fertile valleys of Morocco. After removal, it will leave your skin feeling soft, smooth and supple.
Souqs or Arabic Markets are a cluster of shops where all kinds of goods are bought, sold and exchanged. Traditionally, dhows from the Far East, China, Ceylon and India would discharge their cargoes and the goods would be haggled over in the souqs adjacent to the docks. Walk through the charming alleys of the legendary Arabian souqs, where shopkeepers attract your attention to their wares. This is the ideal place to visit if you are looking for some great bargains. Haggling about the price is like a tradition. Take your time and plan 2 to 3 hours for your visit. The best time is the late afternoon. Usually, the shops are open until 10:00 pm.

Deira Old Souq
Widely known as a trader’s paradise, the Deira Old Souq is Dubai’s largest souq. In this fascinating maze of alleyways, you’ll find a variety of trinkets, kitchen ware, glass ware and textiles - all at very low prices.

Spice Souq
In the tiny lanes of the Spice Souq, take in the wafting aromas of spices, nuts and dry fruits. As you stroll around, observe how sacks overflow with frankincense, dried lemon, ginger root, cardamom, nuts, pulses and traditional medicine, giving you an authentic feel of Dubai’s trading past.

Gold Souq
As you walk past the glittering splendour of the world’s biggest Gold Souq, you’ll be convinced that Dubai is indeed the City of Gold. Ogle at the endless rows of dazzling ornaments that are available in 18 to 24 carat gold. The souq is packed with jewellery in every form imaginable, from bracelets, rings, earrings and necklaces to even gold ingots.
Take time to observe the wooden-lattice archways and roofs that take you back to a bygone era. If you are looking for some ethnic items, silver jewellery or pearl and precious stones, then wander through the narrow alleys to find a plethora of shops hidden behind the main arcade.

Deira Covered Souq
Gaze into the small shops of Deira and you’ll find rare antiques and curios of the region. Take home some of the popular souvenirs, which include the symbol of Arabic hospitality – dallah (coffee pot) as well as silver and wooden knick-knacks such as dhows, miniature camels and falcons, and beaded necklaces. Ancient rifles and decorative daggers (khanjars) are also popular buys. The souq also features exclusive alleys for textiles that are full of bright and inexpensive materials from India and the Far East.

Textile Souq
Meander through the Textile Souq in Bur Dubai, which has every kind of material you can dream of, in every colour and price range. From printed and plain silk to linen and cotton fabrics, the wide variety will surely amaze you. After buying your material, visit the nearby tailors who will be happy to turn your stunning fabrics into perfectly-fitting garments.

Night Souq
Scout the popular streets of Al Riqqa, Al Muraqabbat and Al Seef that spice up the action till the midnight hour. The atmosphere hums with excitement as street performers and a variety of carnivals offer a visual treat in addition to authentic Arabian gourmet treats at the numerous street-side cafés. Don’t miss the dazzling fireworks every evening that colourfully light up the night sky.
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As a travel professional you strive to deliver the highest levels of service standards to your customers. We at Big Blue Marble understand your needs and customer expectations. From a range of hotels, resorts, tourism attractions and charter flight operators; we provide you and your customer with quality and service at an affordable price. If it's new experiences you wish to give your customer, contact us!

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Al Murooj Rotana Dubai is a member of ‘Great Hotels of the World’ and part of the luxurious Al Murooj Complex on Sheikh Zayed Road. It raises the bar of luxury and sophistication to a completely new level. Masterfully blended outdoor settings featuring lavish green gardens, artificial lakes and magnificent waterfalls define the property as an oasis of relaxation and tranquility in the heart of Dubai’s busiest business district.

The Hotel features 247 luxurious rooms and suites. All rooms are equipped with the latest technology with interactive HITV system, IP telephony, high speed internet, video on demand, fully integrated TV/internet systems, beautiful view of the gardens and swimming pool or Burj Khalifa. The Ambassador Suites, Presidential Suites and Executive Suites possess an outdoor terrace with private Jacuzzi under a dome.

Al Murooj Rotana Suites represent a one-stop shop for living, working and chasing the pleasure of life. Al Murooj Rotana Suites offer 137 deluxe furnished apartments including studios, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 3 bedroom apartments, duplexes and magnificent penthouses for long term rental. It’s strongly Arabian yet international, traditional and contemporary.

The five-star property has introduced wireless internet connection facility in all public areas and guest rooms. The visitors are now able to stay connected and browse the net while relaxing over coffee in the lobby, getting tanned by the pool, dining in one of the restaurants or attending an event in any of the meeting rooms.

The full fledged F&B facilities include not less than 10 outlets such as the Double Decker Pub, C Bar by Crystal and Mawal Restaurant.

The Hotel has one of the largest coffee shops in Dubai with a seating capacity of 300 guests and spacious terrace overlooking swimming pool and gardens.

When it comes to meetings, Al Murooj Rotana Dubai is more than just a venue. It is perfectly designed to meet the requirements of any event or conference, from company business meetings to major banquets, receptions, weddings and other social functions.

The Bodylines Leisure and Fitness Club features the next generation Bodylines fitness centre, temperature controlled free shape outdoor pool, gymnasium and massage room. The services of the club are highlighted by the range of facial and body treatments. The menu is very extensive, and the offers provided are masterfully designed to ensure the best level of relaxation and satisfaction.
Organising a Meeting, Incentive, Conference or Exhibition can be stressful. It is important to rely on a team that has the know-how, the experience, and the will to make your event a resounding success. And while on your business trip, why not take a few moments just for you. Go on and indulge yourself in a moment of relaxation - even if it’s just for a coffee break this time. Your secret is safe with us.

Our growing portfolio includes four different property types in over 70 locations. Treasured Time. Our promise to you.
Rose Rayhaan by Rotana

Rose Rotana by Rotana, the world’s tallest hotel, certified by the Guinness World Records, is the UAE flagship property of the non-alcohol brand of Rotana-Rayhaan Hotels & Resorts. Setting a new benchmark of comfort and style in Dubai, soaring 333 metres (1,093 ft) and 72 storeys, this tower structure is the newest jewel in the crown of Rotana.

The hotel offers 482 spacious rooms and suites, all equipped with high speed Internet access, kitchenette, fridge, freezer, microwave, bathtub as well as complimentary tea and coffee making facilities. Other facilities such as valet parking, covered parking, daily housekeeping, laundry services, car and limousine rentals, shuttle bus services as well as multi-lingual staff members are provided to ensure the utmost comfort of the guest.

Rose Rayhaan by Rotana is ideally situated on the prestigious Sheikh Zayed Road, less than 5 minutes away from Burj Khalifa, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and a step away from the metro station. Dubai international airport is 10 minutes away, and Dubai Mall - one of the world’s largest shopping centres – is less than 5 minutes away.

Rose Rayhaan by Rotana offers three food and beverage outlets, each with its own distinct sense and place. Petals all-day dining offers breakfast, lunch and dinner in a casual yet stylish environment. Café Rose, located in the lobby, is the ideal venue for a casual get-together over a cup of coffee with home-made pastries. Aquarius pool café is the perfect place for light bites and refreshing mocktails by the pool, in a relaxing environment.

Bodylines Leisure and Fitness Club provides a fully-equipped gymnasium, outdoor temperature-controlled swimming pool for adults and children, beauty salons, as well as separate sauna, steam room, Jacuzzi as well as massage rooms.
To experience a journey through Dubai’s exotic Arabian heritage, a visit to At the Top, Burj Khalifa is a must. The observatory from level 124 of the world’s tallest tower offers extraordinary 360-degree views of the spectacular panorama and unparalleled vistas from the Gulf Coast to the Arabian Desert and beyond.

First a high speed journey in one of the world’s fastest elevators takes you to the top where you can take a closer look at the world below through avant-garde, high powered, telescopes. Then you can step out onto the world’s highest public outdoor observation terrace overlooking the ever growing skyline of Sheikh Zayed Road and the spectacular surroundings. There are several unique, interactive Burj Khalifa multi-media exhibits and the chance to integrate reality and special effects with At the Top Green Screen Photography.

At the Top gives you the experience of gazing over Dubai as you have never seen it before. It is recommended that you purchase your tickets in advance, especially on weekends to avoid long queues and experience At the Top, Burj Khalifa at your leisure. Group Bookings of 15 or more must be made at least 24 hours prior to arrival to ensure smooth entry to the observatory.

**Burj Khalifa Fast Facts**

- The concrete used for Burj Khalifa is equivalent to the weight of 100,000 elephants.
- The amount of steel rebar used for the tower is 31,400 metric tons. Laid end to end this would extend over a quarter of the way around the world.
- Condensate is collected from the building’s cooling system and used for irrigation of landscape plantings. Every year, 15 million gallons of water are sustainably collected this way.
- The cladding of Burj Khalifa contains over 24,000 individually cut glass panels.
- The curtain wall area of Burj Khalifa is equivalent to 17 football fields.
- Burj Khalifa’s observatory elevators are amongst the fastest in the world, with a speed of up to 10 metres per second.
- Burj Khalifa is the tallest building and free-standing structure in the world at over 800 metres high.
- The tip of the spire can be seen 95 km away.
- At the peak of construction, 12,000 workers were on site every day.
- With over 160 levels – no other building has more storeys.

**How to get here**

At the Top, Burj Khalifa is situated on level 124 of the World’s Tallest Tower, Burj Khalifa. Access to the Ticket Counter and entrance is via The Dubai Mall, Lower Ground Level. The closest Metro Station is Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall Station.
The Lama Group was first established in 1997 with the opening of Lama Desert Tours, an inbound tour operator in Dubai. Run by a team of young yet experienced professionals, Lama Tours has a reputation for consolidating the best deals with economical and luxurious hotels. Since its launch the Group has expanded to include the following companies: Lama Desert Tourism & Cargo L.L.C., Lama Desert Tourism & Cargo L.L.C (Branch), Lama Holidays, Lama Dubai-Floating Restaurant L.L.C., Lama Dubai-Floating Restaurant L.L.C. (Branch) Lama Safari and Cruise L.L.C., Lama Kiosk., Lama Constructions, The Bus Connection, Seven Sands Hotel Apartment.

Lama Desert Tourism and Cargo L.L.C is endorsed as one of the official tour operators inside the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (DDCR), unveiled by his Highness Sheikh Ahmed Bin Saeed Al Maktoum and Dubai Government Departments. Started in the year 2000, Lama Safari & Cruise L.L.C organises team-building activities, seminars and product launches in the desert or on board cruises. They have a visible presence in the international market and specialise in Indian markets. In the year 2001, understanding the potential and demand of Cruise Operations in Dubai, Lama Tours expanded their operations under a new company called Lama Dubai Floating Restaurants. The operations started with a two-decker cruise.

In the year 2005, having grown over 200% since 2001, Lama Dubai Floating Restaurant launched the largest three-decker cruise in the UAE with a seating capacity of 170 passengers. The three-decker cruise is excellent for corporate functions and get-togethers, full and half day conferences, business lunches and meetings, cocktail evening cruises, and product launches. Lama Holidays, established in the year 2005, has gained a reputed name for arranging packages to Europe, USA, Far East, Australia and New Zealand. In June 2007, Lama Tours launched Lama Touch Screen (Kiosk) ‘Tours on Spot’ machines. A first of its kind service, it provides various services such as Desert Safaris, Dinner Cruises, City Tours and other tourism related services to residents of Dubai and visitors. These machines are designed to provide an efficient and convenient way of securing products and services through the touch screen. Instant booking, instant confirmation and instant payment facility is available on Lama Kiosk. Lama offers visitors to Dubai a host of options for sightseeing, desert safaris, dhow cruises and fishing trips. The company has a huge fleet of luxury coaches and 4 x 4 vehicles with experienced drivers to facilitate an unforgettable Arabian experience for travellers. Lama Dubai, its three-deck traditional wood boat, has a capacity of 350 passengers, and is the largest in the creek! Needless to say a cruise on Lama Dubai is truly memorable. Luxury yachts are also available for those interested in deep sea-fishing.

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Dubai Meydan: The ‘Meeting Place’

The TAFI convention in Dubai promises to be a great experience for all the delegates. As usual the Convention Committee has been planning for the very best, starting with the inaugural dinner hosted by DTCM, which will be held at the Sky Bubble Lounge in the spectacular Meydan City.

Meydan is the Arabic word for ‘meeting place’. The enormous 18.6 million sq. m Meydan City project consists of four separate areas including the development’s central feature, the Racecourse with Meydan Hotel; Meydan Horizons; Godolphin Park; and Meydan Metropolis.

Located on Level 8 of the Meydan Grandstand, and positioned right under the iconic Crescent Roof that can be seen for miles around, the dining experience at the Sky Bubble Lounge is unique due to the fabulous views on offer. Guests can revel in the 360-degree views of the racecourse, which was built in time for the 2010 Dubai World Cup despite the global financial crisis. The Sky Bubble also offers great views over Meydan’s other ingenious and, in many cases, unique features, such as the world’s largest LED screen which runs almost 110 m along the track in front of the grandstand and has a screen area of 1213 sq. m.

The Meydan Grandstand is the longest and largest in the world with a span of 1.6 km or the length of 22 Boeing 747 planes; it has seating for 20,000 spectators, although its total actual capacity lies closer to 60,000. The Grandstand consists of several sections and lying at one end of the complex and taking up a third of it is the five-star ‘The Meydan’ hotel. The rooms are all fully integrated and 95% of them overlook the course itself.

At the other extreme of the Grandstand is a marina which, through the construction of a canal network, joins up to Dubai Creek, providing boat owners with a convenient place to stop during race days.

The 1.4 million sq. m. Horizons development will be a new business and residential centre containing its own marina with inter-woven bicycle paths, canals and pedestrian promenades. The iconic structures in the area will include the sail-shaped Meydan Gateway Towers and the Horseshoe Plaza. Metropolis takes its design inspiration from earth and metal and their associated values of strength energy and determination. The final and most outstanding section is Godolphin Parks which will contain a 40-storey tower featuring a horse image cut through its façade. The tower will be for commercial and retail use including the Signature Mall, a 1.4-km structure.

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Finding snow in the desert may seem like something out of a fantasy but in Dubai it is possible. Among Dubai’s numerous attractions is Ski Dubai, the first indoor ski resort in the Middle East. It offers an amazing snow setting for visitors to enjoy skiing, snowboarding and tobogganing, or just playing in the snow. A unique mountain-themed attraction, it offers the opportunity to enjoy real snow in Dubai all year round.

The snow here is made using a simple procedure similar to how snow is artificially made at outdoor ski resorts. The facility is like a specially designed massive cold box; the walls have numerous levels of insulation. The roof is five meters higher than the ceiling, providing very efficient insulation and making Ski Dubai one of the best refrigerators in the world!

Ski Dubai offers five different runs which vary in difficulty, from the beginner slope to more advanced runs. Professional instructors are available for lessons to lead you step by step to becoming a confident skier and enjoying the experience.

Rental equipment like jackets and trousers, ski boots with disposable socks, skis, ski poles and helmets for children are provided within the ticket price.

The world’s largest indoor Snow Park here is an amazing 3,000 square meters covered with snow. It offers tobogganing hills, a bobsled ride, tubing and a snow cavern filled with interactive experiences and amazing sights and sounds. The Snow Park also has a large observation tower, offering a view over Ski Dubai’s main slope. Children and parents alike can enjoy building a snowman and playing on the hills.

Ski Dubai has two great dining options. The St. Moritz Café, a cozy mountain ski lodge with a crackling fireplace looking out onto a fun-filled snow park offers a wide selection of international cuisines to satisfy a variety of discerning tastes. From snacks to hearty mains, as well as a kid’s menu, it is the perfect place to meet friends and family. For those out on the ski slope, the Avalanche Café at mid-station offers the perfect stop for a break. It has a great selection of soups, sandwiches, beverages and sweets for hungry skiers and snowboarders. The café offers an outdoor terrace so you can watch the action on the slopes.

Plenty of special events are organised here and special bookings can be made for birthday parties or school outings. For more details email: info@skidxb.com or call our call centre on 800 - LIESURE (5347873).
The Wild Wadi Water Park

Wild Wadi Water Park is a water theme park that covers an area of 12 acres in the rural area of Dubai, known as Jumairah. Themed around the tale of Juha, a character from Arabian folklore, it is designed like an Arabian wadi (oasis) and has 30 rides and attractions, many of which interconnect. Wild Wadi’s variety of rides suit kids of all ages, making it a favourite water sports destination.

Once you enter the Wild Wadi Water Park, you will be given access to all the water rides, as well as allowed the use of rubber rings, lifejackets and body boards. The water park has 90 lifeguards on duty, who will keep you safe while you are having fun.

The Rides

Jumeirah Sceirah - The tallest and fastest free-fall water slide outside of North America. Rising to 33 meters (108 feet) and thrusting riders up to 80 km per hour, it makes a great experience for thrill-seekers.

Master Blaster - Eight Master Blaster slides that are described as uphill water roller coasters, where riders can sit on either a single or double ring, which is propelled uphill by high-powered water jets.

Ring Rides – These are downhill gravity slides, where riders sit in either a single or double ring sliding down fast to the bottom of the slide.

Other Rides - Flow Riders, Juha’s Journey, Breaker’s Bay, Juha's Dhow and Lagoon, Wadi Wash, and Flood River Fly.

Six VIP cabanas located right along Juha’s Journey Lazy River can be booked for those who wish to relax, stay cool and get a fast pass access to White Water Wadi.

Wild Wadi Water Park has launched a new and fun alternative health and beauty treatment – FISHO, The Fish Spa. This latest addition to the park’s wide range of family entertainment uses toothless Garra Ruffa fish to safely and gently exfoliate the feet.

Eating Options

Bringing in food and drinks from outside is not allowed but the Park has several great eating places to choose from. The two main restaurants, Julshan’s Kitchen and Sinbad’s Galley, serve fast food favourites like burgers, shawarmas, pasta, pizza and fries as well as some more healthy options like salads and sensational sandwiches.

Ali’s BBQ offers the same great fare as Wild Wadi’s other restaurants but with the addition of a live cooking station serving flavorful grilled food like chicken tikka, kebabs, footlong hotdogs, chicken fillets and beef burgers.

Leila’s Stand is a great place to get healthy options such as gourmet sandwiches, manakish, pies and croissants. Located right next to the Riptide Flowrider, you may also choose to watch others on the ride while cooling down with delectable Sno-Kones, ice creams or cold drinks. Leila’s Oasis is great refuge when you need a healthy refreshing drink or snack! It serves fresh juices, smoothies and freshly cut fruits.

How to get there:

Wild Wadi Water Park is situated along the Jumeirah Beach Road, next to the Jumeirah Beach Hotel and Burj Al Arab hotel, approximately a 20-minute drive from the centre of city.

The park is open 365 days. Park timings are as follows:

- November to February: 10 am – 6 pm
- March to May: 10 am – 7 pm
- June to August: 10 am – 8 pm
- September and October: 10 am – 7 pm
Many large companies have over the years tried to find new ways to develop their products and sell them to the market. They’ve often had success, and particularly if their products had a competitive edge. But few have actually succeeded in doing so if they developed their products together with their competitors. So why then is ‘Coopetition’ a buzzword and a concept that should be considered as a tool to develop a company?

**General Background.**

Things have changed since the ‘good old days’ of the industrial society, and among other things, margins have been reduced greatly and the cost of product development has gone up, especially within the services sector. Therefore, what was previously not seen as the fast way to success, slowly developed into a new way of doing business. In the software industry in the late ‘80-early ‘90s, joint development between competitors of new software was spearheaded by Novell Networks, and many industries have since followed. Think of the aircraft manufacturing industry, where Boeing and Airbus, for a long time, considered joint development of a new large transport (before Boeing decided not to go along and Airbus went ahead with its A 380), and think of a very recent example from the car industry, where otherwise fierce competitors Peugeot, Citroen and Toyota have developed a new common platform for a common city car together (named 107/C1/Aygo respectively)! Mind-boggling isn’t it? That there are actually a number of very positive examples of coopetition in our immediate surroundings!

**The Travel Industry**

One might say that coopetition is a matter for the production industries to focus on. That such a concept is not transferable to the travel industry. But my claim is just the contrary! In my opinion, coopetition in the modern services industry actually ‘took to the air’ in the travel industry after the Second World War, when travel agencies had to find new ways to enable travel and tourism in war torn Europe. One of the answers, developed in the ’50s and refined ever since, was to cooperate with your competitors to be able introduce new tourist destinations by pooling charter flights (‘spilt charters’) between travel agencies, thereby allowing each of them to offer destinations that would otherwise be inaccessible to a single travel agency. They would cooperate on the transportation and compete on the products they offered at their joint destination! Not a bad invention at a time, when travel was for the few and difficult to come by.

And it didn’t stop with joint charter flights. The examples of coopetition within the airline industry today are abundant. As an example, just think of the way an airline opens a new destination on its route map. Although the average airline these days would love to do all its selling by itself, it has to rely on travel agents at the new destination to sell the majority of its seats, thereby creating a modern day coopetition product. The airlines simply wouldn’t survive if they didn’t have their primary sales outlets available, namely the travel agents! The development of ‘Airline Alliances’ is also a very strong indication that the air transportation providers have realized that coopetition is better than outright competition.

But joint transportation coopetition products are just one of the elements of travel where coopetition is possible and just waiting to be explored. There are a number of other areas where coopetition is a part of the game, but one that is especially close to my heart is the cooperation between travel agencies, agencies that are otherwise competitors. In an ‘incoming market’ like the one in Denmark, where the Danish incoming agents’ ability to cover all markets around the world are limited, we’re experiencing an increased willingness by our members to work together, especially in certain overseas markets such as the Russian, Ukrainian and Indian markets to ensure that the investments they make are large enough to be visible in these markets and at the same time allowing them to market their own Danish travel products to a large audience.

Also on the incoming scene, we’re seeing a number of companies from various sectors within the tourism industry that are teaming together to increase their exposure abroad, typically by creating new ‘bundled travel products’ for both the leisure and business travellers. One such joint product is sustainable study tours, where Denmark as a ‘green nation’ has been successful in attracting more visitors by offering ‘energy tours’ where interested groups can visit Denmark to experience our energy solutions firsthand and at the same time get a taste of what Denmark has to offer tourists. The biggest challenge with coopetition is interestingly enough not whether the products on offer get better or not (they actually do) but whether or not coopetition is a way to reduce competition! The reason behind that reasoning is, that in a western world terminology, cooperation between competitors is, or could be, the first step towards market control and thereby a way to allow market players to control the products and the pricing. Therefore companies that are established in western countries must be careful that when we ‘coopete’ we do not at the same time directly or indirectly control the market in a way that inhibits competition.

**The future areas of coopetition**

As hinted above, there are numerous areas of cooperation and competition that are being explored and you’d think that most have been discovered already. Having said that, there are indications that coopetition will again be at work when we in the coming years can expect an increase in what I’d like to call large scale gourmet tours. The concept of gourmet trips in itself is not new; the new thing is that it’ll be offered to the general public and be available as a bundled product on the Internet! In Denmark, we’re seeing an increased focus by overseas clients to focus on not only booking transportation, hotel, sights and maybe a rental car, but also that travel will undoubtedly create a new pressure on the travel industry to coopete in an area where all providers will most likely try to market their own food-products but without jeopardising the quality of the food or the survival of the really good restaurants that Copenhagen and the rest of Denmark has on offer.

The trick is therefore to use coopetition elements to make everyone’s (sub-)product better without reducing the level of quality or reducing competition. Whether that will work is yet to be seen but I’m pretty sure it will! Coopetition is here to stay!
In a recent interview to *The Economic Times*, director general and CEO of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Mr. Giovanni Bisignani remarked that there was no need to pay commission to travel agents.

The former Alitalia CEO and MD was asked whether travel agents were justified in seeking commissions for sale of airline tickets. His reply was that if you could get something for free, would you like to pay for it? Mr. Bisignani’s contention was that today it is possible for airlines to sell online and therefore, agents should not look for a commission.

He said that travel agents should earn by providing services. “If a tour programme is complicated, you will go to an agent. But why should I pay commission for a service I don’t need? If I have to book a Delhi-Mumbai flight, I can do it on the net. No great assistance needed. Many travel agents have disappeared because they cannot adjust with net ticketing.”

Hon. National General Secretary, TAFI, P. Sampath Kumar says in response, “Mr. Bisignani seems to have forgotten that IATA on behalf of its Member airlines, appointed Travel Agents in this country and across the world to create the first outsourcing industry to undertake the process of selling, handling, processing and servicing traffic for a small commission/remuneration as stated in a written agreement which is a base commission on which each and every ticket is sold.”

Travel Agents still sell over 85% of the airline inventory not only in this country but almost all developing countries across the world. “Mr. Giovanni Bisignani must also be informed that recently a CEO of a LCC airlines said that the online-only sales strategy would fail as legacy airlines who are IATA Members are still struggling to come to terms with Non-IATA LCC airlines tariff and marketing strategies. Mr. Bisignani appears to think that a machine will satisfy every need of the traveler,” adds Sampath Kumar.

“He must be reminded that the customer will decide his preferred choice of travel as also the means he wishes to use to secure a seat. IATA cannot think it can do away with Travel Agents without compensation for their efforts. One must ask who made some of the airlines the giants they are today - it cannot be denied it was we the Travel Agents who worked selflessly to influence customers to travel. If Mr. Giovanni Bisignani really meant what he has stated then will he come out in the open by saying we Travel Agents are no longer required and the airlines or IATA will no longer need our support to fill all the seats on offer from a member airline of IATA?”

Sampath Kumar suggests that Mr. Giovanni Bisignani should speak to several thousands of customers in this country and see how many are comfortable using a computer or how many have credit cards or how many are willing to experiment in being a travel professional themselves. “He should also ask IATA member airlines whether they have the capacity to market all their seats online without the marketing support of Agents who influence a traveler. Finally, he should answer honestly why is it that the customer is being made to pay a Travel Agent for services the Agent renders to an Airline?”

Does the IATA Chief Need a Reality Check on Commissions?

![Image of Mr. Giovanni Bisignani](image_url)
Understanding ‘ADMs’

Read the rules before accepting or disputing ADMs cautions
H.M. Talha Rahman, Travel Care (Madras) Pvt Ltd, Chennai

Travel agencies are not bound to accept all ADMs (Agency Debit Memos) issued by the Airlines; however they should not dispute them without valid reason. Before proceeding, we must thoroughly understand the rules prescribed in Resolution 850m of IATA Resolution, which are available at http://www.iata.org/whattwedo/travel-tourism/Pages/resolutions.aspx. Once you have read through the rules you will agree with the observations made in italics. The relevant number of the clause of the Resolution is given in brackets.

1. The Agent owes the issuing BSP Airlines the amount shown in the ADM for the reasons indicated, unless there is ‘some justification to the contrary’. (1.1) [In other words, the agent does not owe the airlines, if there is no justification for the ADM.]

2. ADMs can only be used by all the BSP Airlines to collect the amounts from the Agent through BSP mechanism only in respect of ‘issuance of traffic documents’ (1.2). [In other words, Airlines cannot use ADM route through BSP Mechanism for ‘non-ticketing matters’. All other reasons have to be settled outside the BSP Mechanism.]

3. Except where otherwise agreed in a market, ADMs should not be used to collect third party costs not directly associated with the initial ticket issuance of a passenger itinerary. (1.8 of Attachment A of Res 850m) [This is a reconfirmation of the above point. Only two third party costs namely TDS and Insurance premium are the exceptions agreed specifically in the market, ie APJC]

4. Airlines are required to ‘publish and communicate in writing’ their ADM policies to Agents in advance of implementation (2.1) [In practice, barring few, airlines have not communicated in writing their ADM policies to Agents]

5. ADMs shall only be processed through the BSP if issued within nine months of the final travel date. Any debit action initiated beyond this period shall be handled directly between the BSP Airline and the Agent. (3.1) [It is clear that ADMs should not be raised through BSP, after nine months of the final date of travel]

6. Airlines shall provide Agents with the phone or fax number and email address of a person or department that has knowledge of the concerned ADM (4.4) [if there is no such contact details in the ADM, the agents will have the right to dispute the same and send a mail to IATA Manager – BSP requesting him to remove this ADM from the BSP Link.]

7. An Agent may for reason dispute an ADM. An Agent shall have a minimum of 14 days in which to review and dispute an ADM prior to its submission to BSP for inclusion in the billing. (1.7.10.1.2 of Resolution 832) [So it is mandatory for the airlines to provide a dispute buttons in all the ADMs issued by them]

WHEN and HOW to DISPUTE?

Having understood the above important points in the issuance of ADMs by the Airlines, now it is our duty to verify the following in every ADM we receive from the Airlines.

1 You have only 14 days to review and dispute any ADM received from the airlines. So please make sure that BSP Links are accessed on a daily basis, if not hourly. If not disputed within 14 days, the amount will be included in the BSP billing and you cannot dispute it later. However it may be noted that the agent may contact the airlines outside the BSP Mechanism and ask the airlines to send the ACM.

2. Please check whether the ADMs are issued before the expiry of nine months from the final date of the itinerary. If not, use the dispute button giving the reason as “TIME BARRED ADM”.

3. Please check whether the ADM is issued ONLY in respect of traffic documents. If not, use the Dispute button giving the reason that “THIS ADM CANNOT BE RAISED THROUGH BSP MECHANISM AS PER CLAUSE 1.2 OF RESOLUTION 850M, WHICH HAS TO BE SETTLED OUTSIDE BSP”

4. Please check whether ADM is issued for third party cost not directly associated with the initial ticket issuance (exceptions are Income Tax deducted at Source and premium for Insurance Guarantee). Examples of third party cost include churn bookings, CRS violations etc. These costs should not be recovered through ADM. If the ADM is raised for this purpose, use the dispute button giving the reason that “THIRD PARTY COSTS CANNOT BE RECOVERED THROUGH ADM VIDE CLAUSE 1.8 OF ATTACHMENT A OF RES 850M”

5. In all the above cases, apart from disputing the ADM, please send out a mail simultaneously, giving the details of the ADM, to IATA Manager – BSP requesting him to remove this ADM from the BSP Link as it contravenes the provisions of the Resolution 850m.

CONCLUSION

This is only an attempt to make the agents to understand the issues involved in the ADMs and in practice many airlines violates the provisions of resolution 850m mainly because many of them are not aware of these provisions. (How many airlines have published and communicated in writing their ADM policies to the Agents.) The agents may succeed to some extent with the dispute by correctly mentioning the reason for the dispute and quoting the relevant clauses of the Resolution 850m.
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Starting off her career as an air hostess meant that the passion for travel was already well ingrained in her when she began her own company 15 years ago. It was after moving from Mumbai to Cochin that Rani Bachani decided she wanted to do something connected with travel and that’s how Vice Regal Travels came into being.

“I started Vice Regal Travels on 2nd January 1995 and in the beginning the focus was only on ticketing,” says Rani. She adds that over the years trends have changed. With most airlines no longer giving commission and the few that do offering very low commissions, ticketing has become a non-profitable business. “Clients are demanding yet not willing to pay for services. Unhealthy competition from other agents and delayed payment from customers are also killing the small agents.”

Diversification was therefore a must and her company got into conducting tours. “Our main source of income is from tours. We do both inbound and outbound tours and being in a state like Kerala we have developed a very good market for inbound tours.”

Finding a niche is very important, believes Rani. She understands that with so much competition a travel agency has to be special, and offer something different. “I decided to specialise in giving my clients custom-made tours to suit their interests and do tours that are not run of the mill. This makes me different from other agents,” she admits.

“In a package tour, for example, you would have the choice of maybe three star accommodations throughout the seven days of your trip. A custom-made tour allows you the flexibility of choosing a three star hotel for four days and a five star hotel for three days. It allows you to mix and match as per your requirements. Nothing is forced on you,” she says with a smile.

Her own favourite destination is Kerala of course, because it is God’s own country in her eyes! “Kerala has so much to offer and since I am a specialist in Kerala I can provide the specialised holiday packages that my clients want.”

One of Rani’s other specialities is her home stay option. Here clients have the opportunity to stay in a typical heritage Kerala home, to get the real flavour of the state. Not only is the ambience unique to the state but the cuisine offered to guests is also typically local. Special cooking demonstrations are also held for curious tourists who really want to soak themselves in local culture. Rani’s own home stay facility is just 45 minutes from Kochi. “Home stays have become very popular with tourists visiting Kerala,” she concedes.

Her family is not involved in the travel business and she is clear that she doesn’t want them to be! “I prefer to have professionals who understand travel and tourism and all its demands to work with me. I am a tough boss and expect 100% commitment from people who work with me, so if family is involved it can lead to a lot of ruffled feathers,” she states very firmly.

Her future plans include a venture called ‘WE’... Women Explorers. “It’s a travel club for women only and I plan to travel with the members of WE all over the world. I already have members from all over India and abroad and I want to do six trips in a year,” says Rani. The concept has already been put into action and WE’s first trip will take place in November; on the itinerary is Vietnam and Cambodia. “The idea is for women to see the world, and be totally relaxed without having to take care of their spouses and children. They can do all the fun things that women enjoy and make a lot of new friends,” she adds.

Membership to WE is only by invitation or recommendation from another member and she already has 150 people on board!

From advertising to marketing, and being an airhostess to running her own travel agency, Rani has done it all. So don’t be surprised if her ambition to set up the first travel agency in outer space becomes a reality. For this is a woman who can definitely achieve the goals she sets!
The swaying coconut palms and small village roads winding their way through verdant fields are a picturesque sight. The bountiful monsoon has left its mark and a green Goa greets visitors in this season. It’s a far cry from the usual picture of sun filled beaches, and a sight that will put a smile on even the grimmest face.

Goa in the rains doesn’t mean you have to be stuck in your hotel or resort with a book for company. There is a lot to be discovered in the interiors, away from the beaches, as we discovered. Long drives along little known villages, known only to the locals. Small fishing villages with roadside eateries that serve meals fit for a king. Children traipsing along with trailing schoolbags and elderly men gathered around the village square - it could be out of a picture book.

Yes, there are garish new mansions coming up to replace the beautiful traditional homes which often wear a forlorn and derelict look. But there is always something to make up for it like the newly painted village church or the temple.

Southern Goa, which for long was ignored by most tourists, has found its way onto the tourist map. A short drive away from Madgaon, the busiest city in South Goa, is the village of Loutolim. Off the usual tourist circuit, it features an open air museum cum park – Ancestral Goa - which certainly merits a visit.

The dream of one man wishing to preserve the past has resulted in this first-of-a-kind museum which showcases Goan life of a bygone era. Spread over nine acres, the village reflects rural life with statues depicting the different kind of people that once made up a traditional Goan village. From the Goan fisherman, the coconut husker, the traditional basket weaver and flower seller to the aristocratic landlady - all find place in the village.

A replica of a village distillery where feni and urak are made is part of the display and during season time actual demonstrations are held for visitors. The creator of this unique place, Maendra Jocelino Araujo Alvares, personally made the life like statues and converted this empty piece of land into a site worth visiting. Within it he has also created a spice and herb garden and fruit trees to give a glimpse of the flora of Goa.

This attraction is popularly known as 'Big Foot' after the footprint that Mr. Alvares found while developing the site. According to local legend a wealthy landowner lived in the village. Extremely generous people took advantage of his goodwill and he was left penniless. His strong faith in the face of adversity pleased the gods and they granted him a boon. All he asked for was a place to stand and pray. Legend has it that this was the place where he stood on one foot and prayed till he was accepted into heaven. He left his footprint behind. People believe anyone who prays here with a pure heart will be blessed with luck. It’s not surprising that a large number of students flock here before their exams!

Within the grounds is also India’s longest laterite sculpture of Mirabai, chiselled in the Greco-Roman style by Alvares in just 30 days. Alvares also runs The Big Foot Art gallery which promotes professional as well as amateur artists.

Just across the road from the ancestral village is the Casa Araujo Alvares. This two and a half centuries old palatial mansion is the ancestral home of the Alvares family. Carefully preserved antique crockery, furniture and various personal effects make this place a collector’s delight, and give an insight into how the aristocracy of those times lived. Within the mansion is a personal collection of over 1,000 Ganesh idols of all kinds.

The Big Foot Cross Museum is another labour of love. It features a collection of crosses assimilated from across the world and explains in detail their history and origin. Flanking the ancestral village it is well worth a visit.

The next time you’re in Goa, venture into the interiors for a truly different experience. There’s more to that beautiful state than sun, sand and feni!

How to get there: Loutolim is 10 kms from Madgaon, 15 kms from Colva Beach, 33 kms from Panjim, 23 kms from Old Goa and 21 kms from Dabolim Airport.

Timings: 9 am to 6 p.m. Open on all days.
email: info@ancestralgoa.com; Tel: 0832 2777034
The Commonwealth Games. The Olympic Games. The FIFA World Cup. The Paralympic Games. The Cricket World Cup. The Rugby World Cup.

For athletes of the world these (and many other) major sporting events represent the highest point of achievement on the international sporting stage. With the eyes of the world watching athletes are given the opportunity to prove that they are among, and possibly, the best in the world. Prominence, preeminence, profile and power – these are outcomes of being seen to play a part in the Games. Yet to earn the right to play a part takes years of preparation. Significant investment of time, energy and money are prerequisites. You have to really want it to be able to win your place on the podium. And you need to make every second of the Games worth it to be able to maximise the benefit of being able to say “I was there”. Because those few days of competition can change your life forever.

Winning a place in the Games is not the only competition involved in major sporting events. Equally fierce is the competition to win the right to be the place where the Games are held. Like aspiring athletes, aspiring host cities seek their moment of fame, the opportunity to show the world what they can do better than anyone, and anywhere, else. To be awarded the title and immense honour of ‘host city’ of a major international sporting event can have as profound an effect on a city, region and nation as on an athlete. It can change the profile of the place, and lives of the people, forever.

To take on the responsibility of host city (or nation) of a major sporting event demands unprecedented levels of commitment to delivery of a very tightly defined, carefully watched and painstakingly engineered set of contracted deliverables as defined by the Games ‘owners’ – the IOC, FIFA, ICC, IRB, etc. For an extended period of time the event grabs hold of the best of the city’s/nation’s resources – people, time, funds – taking over personal lives and professional careers. There is zero margin for executional error, zero opportunity for Plan Bs, zero space for exhale. And this is even before the Games begin.

So why do destinations do it? Why is being host city or nation so important? Why turn a place seemingly upside down for a few days of sport? A few locations of play? A few special athletes?

It’s all about one little word with massive impact: LEGACY.

The chance to play host to a major event is an exceptional opportunity to shape the future of the nation, especially its tourism sector. And with that, to magnify the multiplier effect of the tourism economy, and the greater spirit of the people of the nation itself.

From the perspective of the Tourism Economy, with major events come the potential for dramatic increases in a number of critical destination growth and development metrics.

For this reason major sporting events are actively sought after by governments. The long-term benefits far outweigh the shortterm cost. Through major events critical initiatives can be addressed, core attitudes shifted, key strategic priorities fulfilled. Which is why for a limited period of time national treasuries willingly turn into giant ATMs (with withdrawal limitations, of course), channeling funds into major, mandatory infrastructure projects required for the events, recognising the greater value of hosting as a powerful stimulant to their:

- Economy
- Key economic sectors (especially Tourism)
- National Brand and ultimately
- Global competitiveness.

Putting aside all of the glitz, glamour, grand excitement and great blessing of hosting a major sporting event, Games execution must be understood and positioned by the destination as a strategic lever within the greater Tourism Growth and Development Strategy.

Form and fanfare must follow strategic function.

It is critical that major sports events maximise short-term efforts for the long-term benefit of the destination to truly BUILD the destination:

- B: directly reflecting, and overtly driving, the essence of the destination BRAND
- U: working to UNITE the people of the destination, and its visitors, closer together in pride, in interaction, and in upliftment of quality of life.
- L: ensuring INFRASTRUCTURE supports delivery of both hard (transport systems, energy, stadiums, telecommunications, safety & security, accommodation, etc.) and soft (service culture, skills development, Brand delivery, policy, marketing & promotion, partnerships etc) areas of the experience.
- E: dramatically enhancing the destination’s ability to DELIVER the tourism Brand promise to travellers.

The benefits of hosting a major sporting event are as wide reaching, deeply penetrating and long lasting as the vision of the leadership of the local government and people of the destination. When the rules of hosting the game are mastered, and the role of the Tourism sector is played correctly, the host city/nation can only come out on top!

Let the Games begin!

© Anita Mendiratta / CNN TASK Group
Expedia announced the agreement of a working partnership with TAFI as an important part of their growth strategy after the launch of its Travel Agent Affiliate Program (TAAP) in India. The Expedia TAAP launched in the Indian market on August 1st and is already seeing a terrific number of enthusiastic Travel Agents signing up. Well above expectations.

The Travel Agents Federation of India comprises a large and influential core of the Indian Travel Agent community. TAFI stands for the development and consistent improvement of service standards and implementation of Best Practice travel processing in the Travel Industry. “We are very enthusiastic about our agreement with Expedia,” said Mr. Ajay Prakash, President of TAFI. “Expedia TAAP opens a wide world of Travel Inventory and Commissionable Rates not previously available in this market so we are very happy to partner with Expedia to bring this wonderful tool to our members.”

“The association between TAFI and Expedia is a perfect fit with great opportunities for TAFI members,” said Stuart Udy, Expedia Manager for Travel Agent Distribution APAC. “Through our discussions with TAFI, it didn’t take long to realise that we are heading in the same direction. TAFI is always on the lookout for tools which give their agents the edge in a highly competitive market and Expedia is continually working to provide Agents with not only the best and latest products but also the structure to support and educate Agents, to get the best out of the website.”

“Travel Agents love this program because they can earn revenue selling highly competitive rates and inventory otherwise not available to the Retail Trade,” said Mr. Udy. “Many TAFI agents have already signed up but we are very excited the TAFI Board, who has looked at the program in great detail, has determined to endorse Expedia TAAP to their members.”

Included in the agreement between Expedia TAAP and TAFI will be a concerted education program which will be geared to TAFI agents. Through Expedia TAAP, Travel Agents can gain direct access to Expedia’s massive global inventory and earn commission on bookings for flights, hotels, tailor-made packages, car rental and activities. Expedia is the largest online travel provider in the world and agents who sign up to the program will get access to the inventory and buying power of the online giant. To become a member of the program, travel agents will register online at Expedia.co.in. Affiliates will benefit from fast and simple site functionality, enabling them to research, plan and book the best possible trips for their clients using Expedia.co.in. Agent sign up is very simple, just go to www.expediaccess.com/in and fill in the application under “Become a Member” or go to www.expedia.co.in and click on Travel Agents Affiliate button. For more information go to www.expediaccess.com/in

About TAFI
The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI) is a dynamic organisation formed in 1986 to regulate the travel industry in India in accordance with sound business principles and ethics. TAFI represents a very large segment of Travel Agents and Tour Operators in the country and is a proud member of two well known International organisations namely, UFTAA (United Federation of Travel Agents Associations) and WTAAA (World Travel Agents Associations Alliance) representing Travel Agents the world over.

TAFI is a professional body of Travel Agents coordinating different segments of the travel trade and it is a non political, non commercial and not-for-profit body.

About Expedia
Expedia, Inc. (NASDAQ: EXPE), the world’s leading online travel company, operates Expedia.co.in (http://www.expedia.co.in) in India. Expedia.co.in helps Indian travellers plan and book their travel by providing a personalised service, the latest technology and a wide selection of holiday packages, flights, hotels, hire cars and in-destination attractions, activities and transfers to suit their travel needs.

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The Expedia TAAP was launched in India on 1st August 2010. 8,500 agencies worldwide are already earning commission on Expedia Internet bookings. YOU can earn substantial commissions on Hotels, Packages, Car Hire & Activities. Sign up online at www.expediaaccess.com/in and start earning now.

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Kerala Chapter
The Kerala chapter of TAFI held a meeting on 25th September, 2010 at Harbour View Hotel Cochin. National President Ajay Prakash addressed the members and later distributed TAFI door stickers to members. Chapter Chairman Paulose.K.Mathew presided over the meeting. National Committee member Rani Bachani also spoke on the occasion. Chapter Secretary Bindhu Bijimon presented the report of the last meeting and chapter Treasurer Unnikrishnan P also spoke.

KUDOS
PRADIP LULLA!!!

At the Safari India National Awards and at a conclave to the pre Commonwealth Games at Leela Hotel in Delhi on 18th August 2010, Pradip Lulla, Immediate Past President – TAFI was given the Best Industry Leadership Award for the year 2010 by L. N. Mishra, Ex. Secretary Tourism Government of India.

FROM TAFI SECRETARIAT
We welcome members who have joined the TAFI family during the last two months

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CHAPTER CONNECT
Gujarat Chapter

On the occasion of World Tourism Day the Gujarat Chapter of TAFI organised a visit to the Ahmedabad International Airport Terminal T2 as well as the domestic terminal. The aim of this programme was to create awareness amongst the public about the importance of the tourism industry for the economy. School students from Tapovan School were also invited. The group was accompanied by TAFI chairman Bhavin Shah and TAFI Secretary Chirag Patel, who explained airport formalities to the students.

A book titled ‘Destination Gujarat’ containing information on the tourism highlights of Gujarat state was given to each member.

Western India - Workshop on Correct CRS Usage

TAFI Western India in association with TAAI Western India held a workshop on Correct CRS Usage on September 9, 2010 at C. K. Nayadu Hall, CCI, Mumbai. The workshop was attended by representatives from the Scheduled Carriers, i.e., Air India, Jet Airways, and Kingfisher. Also present were Rodney D’Cruz from IATA with two of his colleagues, and representations from Amadeus, Abacus and Galileo. Frontline staff from accounts and ticketing divisions of agencies was also invited.

All the organisations made presentations on correct GDS procedures. Air India informed that a churned PNR is not debited till three churnings, after which all the churns are debited - irrespective of whether the passenger has travelled or not. Jet Airways clarified that they debit after five churns, only if the passenger has not travelled. In case agents have received HX segment due to upgrade, the same has to be deleted. Kingfisher clarified that these ADMs were not to earn money, but to nullify the huge GDS costs which arose due to misuse of the CRS.

There was a healthy question / answer session, where doubts of the members were cleared. Some members gave out of the box suggestions to work around the GDS Cost and the ADMs. On the whole the workshop helped increase awareness of the members while the airline representatives were able to understand the viewpoint of the agents.
Karnataka Chapter – Malaysia Tourism Meet

Director, Mohd Izal Bin Mahd Nor, Deputy Director, Mohd Fadzil Bin Abdullah and Marketing Manager, Nithya Manoj of the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board held a special lunch meet on September 27, 2010 at the Blue Ginger, Taj Westend, Bangalore. Karnataka Chapter members Mr. P Sampath Kumar (National General Secretary), Seeraj S Sabharwal (Chairman - Karnataka Chapter ) and Ashok of Excelsior Travels attended the meet. P. Sampath Kumar spoke about the forthcoming TAFI Convention at Dubai. Director Mohd Izal Bin Mahd Nor assured support of Tourism Malaysia to all local Travel Agents. Seeraj S Sabharwal, Chairman - Karnataka Chapter presented Mohd Izal Bin Mahd Nor Director, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board with copies of TAFI Connect and a DVD of the Chiang Mai Convention. Karnataka Chapter members were presented small mementos of the Petronas by the Malaysia Tourism Board.

Karnataka Chapter Meeting

The Bi-Monthly Meeting of the members of the Karnataka Chapter was held on Friday, September 17, 2010 at Chevron Hotel in Bangalore.

The meeting was well attended by over 45 members. After passing the minutes of the previous bi-monthly meeting, the Chairman Seeraj S Sabharwal requested K. N. Kumar of Travel Tours to come forward and felicitate General Secretary P. Sampath Kumar for having won the elections with a huge margin. K. N. Kumar placed the traditional Mysore turban on Sampath Kumar’s head. Chairman Seeraj S Sabharwal, Secretary S. K. Gupta and the Treasurer Amarnath garlanded Sampath Kumar and placed a Mysore shawl around his shoulders.

North India Joint Workshop On Do’s & Don’ts

TAFI- NI in association with TAAI and IAAI held a Joint Workshop on Do & Don’ts on 19th August 2010 at The Ashoka, New Delhi.

Immediate past President Pradeep Lulla and TAFI President Ajay Prakash attended this workshop. TAFI -NI took this opportunity to honour newly elected president Ajay Prakash and presented him with a memento.

All the three GDS companies, i.e., Galileo, Amadeus and Abacus made excellent presentations and replied to various questions from participants. The GM, Senior Sales/ Reservation Staff of Kingfisher and Jet Airways were present and spoke on Churn booking, ADM, how to cancel HX/UC segment and how not to repeatedly book many date/ flight changes in one PNR.

IATA BSP was also represented by Rodney D’ Cruz from Mumbai and Vinod Malhotra from Delhi. Nearly 167 senior staff members from over 100 agencies participated to make the workshop a success. The meeting was followed by high tea.
The Joint Council Meeting held in Mumbai on 26th August 2010 at Astoria Hotel was unique in more ways than one. For the first time almost all Chapter Office Bearers, i.e., Chairmen, Chapter Secretaries and Chapter Treasurers along with the National Managing Committee Members and office bearers were present.

Many issues related to the responsibilities of National Managing Committee Members and office bearers were discussed. Issues relating to the functioning Chapters were taken up and the need for teamwork was emphasized.

The President and National Managing Committee felt it would be a good idea if a calendar of dates was fixed in advance for Chapter Bi-Monthly Meets for 2010-11. Chapter Chairmen and Secretaries were instructed to decide on the dates and communicate the details to the National Secretariat.

The National General Secretary explained to Chapter office bearers the need for a good communication system, and up-to-date details of members’ contact information. He also stressed the need for proper agendas for the bi-monthly meets and maintaining of adequate minutes, attendance record, etc. Chapter Treasurers were briefed on the importance of collecting subscription dues and maintaining proper accounts.

Following the official meeting, members moved on to informally network at 'Joss Meeting Place'. The National Team 2010 was asked to officially take the oath of office before the large gathering of TAFI members, airline personnel, hoteliers, international tourism office representatives, press reporters of travel trade magazines, and other invited guests. This get-together also gave the Chapter office bearers time to interact with everyone present and discuss various problems at the Chapter level with National Managing Committee Members. Live music, cocktails and dinner made the evening even more memorable.
I am a ‘tea traveller’. I sell tea. This takes me to fairly unbeaten paths from where tea is grown to where tea is drunk - like from the jungles in Assam, India to the little dusty hamlets near Isphahan, Iran. I travel solo and have been doing so for the past 30 years. I walk down the roads in these places, watch people, talk to them, experiment with food, new places, new neighbourhoods in old places, take photos and try and write. Luckily for me tea is a ‘street beverage’.

TEA to me means a Travel Experience Always! When in the hot, green tea-carpeted plains of the Brahmaputra Valley or in the mist laden green covered step slopes of the sub Himalayan region one experiences the indelible stamp of British culture - from the iconic chai bungalows to tea and scones in the verandah after the days ‘kamjari’ (work).

Be ready to start at 4 am equipped with sturdy walking shoes and cotton pants; this is when tea manufacture at the factory commences. Follow this up by a full breakfast and then walk around the leech-filled plantations to watch women in colourful sarees pluck the ‘two leaves and a bud’ with their nimble hands. It’s difficult to believe that behind a simple cuppa tea is a whole way of life. Don’t miss out on that tea plantation visit, be it in Assam, Darjeeling, Sri Lanka, Indonesia or the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania: the British legacy is well imprinted across all growing regions.

Tea or chai (which has become popular even in Starbucks) is sold in the gullies of Mumbai and Lucknow. It’s an unparalleled experience to drink tea at a railway station from a mud kullar or off the streets, rubbing shoulders with the common man. Watch the tea maker make ‘cutting’ chai or ‘tea by the yard’ and then pour the frothy golden milky liquid with gleeful exuberance.

Move to the other end of the spectrum…iconic Tea Rooms like Flurry’s in Park Street, Kolkata, or the super sophisticated Mariage Frères in Paris or Ginza, Tokyo, or the Harrods tea counters in Knightsbridge, London, watching ladies sipping superlative teas over animated conversation.

The Solo TEA Traveller

Sipping a cup of tea in different parts of the world can be a great experience

The largest tea consuming countries are really the most exciting, such as Iran - the Land of Rumi and Hafees and Peri. Walk through the Persian Bazaars where tea is an integral part of daily life. The samovar, with a pot of Assam tea, is bubbling all day (always ready except during Ramzaan). Partake of impeccable Persian hospitality, as you drink the saffron flavoured tea served in little glasses with fresh and dry fruits. A walk along the gracious tree lined Valiasr road, the artery of Tehran, stopping by at the occasional ‘chai-khana’ is another pleasant experience. Stop along the highway in the hilly deserts of Iran en route to Isphahan to sip tea and taste ‘gaz’ (a local sweet) and sweet cherries.

Respect the Persian culture and they will respect you. Dismiss the remarks people make about this country; for a woman visitor, Iran is the safest place to visit.

Egypt, Land of the Pharoahs, has compulsive tea drinkers. My tea travels have taken me there too. Walking on Taalat Harb, make a stop at Richesse Café - the tea and coffee house where renowned author Naguib Mehoofooz would sit, sip tea and draw inspiration for his many writings. Sit at the Meena Oberoi, watch the sun set behind the pyramids, draw on hookah and sip tea!

I travel solo and my tip to solo travellers is simple - safety first. No walking in deserted areas, and parks are a strict no-no after sunset. Use this opportunity to do some eavesdropping! It’s amazing how much you can pick up about a country and its culture just listening into to people over chai and conversation. You can get to the heart of a culture hanging around in tea places.

My tips to TAFites… there’s nothing like a firsthand experience before you recommend a place or hotels to a trusting traveller. Try and get as much of this if you are in the travel business.

Sangeeta Kichlu
Vice President [Tea Exports & Marketing]
JayShree Tea Ltd., Kolkata
You would have to live on another planet not to notice the plethora of business books and articles discussing the importance of developing a positive organizational culture at work. The research is clear. Positive leaders, positive work environments, and positive engaged employees produce positive results. However, if building a positive business is so important and beneficial, then we are left to wonder, “Why aren’t more companies, more positive?” Why are there not more people skipping through the halls, smiling at their co-workers and loving their job? Why do more people die Monday morning at 9am than any other time? Why does negativity cost companies 300 billion dollars and sabotage teamwork, careers, morale and performance?

The answer is simple; you don’t build a positive business by osmosis and it clearly doesn’t happen by sitting around, holding hands and singing Kumbaya. Successful, positive companies with positive employees and positive cultures are created like anything else - through a set of principles, processes, systems and habits that are ingrained in the corporate culture and each individual employee. Positive companies aren’t born. They are developed by positive leaders. And when you build a positive business, culture drives behavior and behavior drives habits.

Positive Leaders are required

In my work with businesses, schools, churches and professional sports teams I have found that in order to build a positive culture the leader must drive the bus. They must make their organizational culture a priority, lead the initiative and be engaged in the process. If the leader is not driving the bus, positive change won’t happen. But when the CEO, school principal, head football coach, or team leader decides it’s necessary to build a positive culture and they commit to the process, then amazing things result. An example of this is Coach Mike Smith, the head football coach of the Atlanta Falcons. Last season before Coach Smith’s arrival the Falcons team culture was in shambles and the organization was filled with negativity. Mike was hired to turn things around, and to do this, he knew he needed to change the culture. As part of this process, Coach Smith gave a copy of The Energy Bus to every player and coach and he also brought me in to speak to the team to reinforce the positive message found in the book. Coach Smith also engaged in a number of initiatives to build trust, improve communication, weed out negativity and build a winning team. He was and is actively involved in every aspect of the process, and if you asked him he would tell you it’s his #1 priority. Within 6 months, Coach Smith has completely changed the culture, mindset and actions of his team. He drove the bus and led the way.

Build a Positive Leadership Team

Once the leader is committed to the process of building a positive business, it is essential to then build a positive leadership team that shares this commitment, focus and purpose. I have met too many leaders who have tried to create a positive organizational culture by themselves. I’ve also worked with too many organizations where I have been brought to speak and, 2 minutes after my talk, employees will come up to me and say, “this all makes so much sense, but the leaders who need to hear this are not here and they are part of the problem.” The employees are right. To build a positive organization fueled by positive energy, the leader must invite his/her leadership team on the bus and develop a shared vision, focus, purpose and direction for the business. The leadership team must join the leader in making their organizational culture a top priority and be engaged and committed to the process. After all, positive energy trickles up and sideways through an organization but it flows powerfully from the top down: from leaders, to managers, to employees to customers. To get the leadership team on the
To build a positive business, it’s not enough to just be a bus driver yourself. You must also develop a fleet of bus drivers in your organization. This involves a process where a united leadership team shares the company's vision with their managers and employees, invites them on the bus and then encourages and empowers them to drive their own bus. The leadership team explains that it’s their job to create a positive environment where managers and employees can perform at their highest level and it’s each employee’s job to stay positive and utilize their gifts and strengths to contribute to the goals and vision of the organization. Individual conversations should also take place between leaders and managers, and managers and their employees. Each person needs to understand the organization’s vision and identify how their personal vision, job and effort contribute to the overall vision. When this happens, instead of one bus with one driver, you now have a fleet of bus drivers all moving in the same direction. This generates a tremendous amount of power and momentum in the organization.

**Develop a Fleet of Bus Drivers**

Leadership is not just about what you do, but also what you can inspire, encourage and empower others to do. To build a positive business, you must also focus on the people that drive the numbers. A great example of this is John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach. He never focused on the fruit of the tree—stock price, profits, costs, etc. and ignore the root—the culture, trust, people and positive energy of the company. Leaders who run successful, positive companies over a long period of time know that when you take the time to time and let go of your negative people, but the best critical that you take action to cultivate the positive and weed out the negative. Like a garden, you’ll have to get rid of weeds from the root of the tree you will always be pleased with the fruit it supplies. However, if you ignore the root, eventually the tree will dry up and so will the fruit. Of course you have to measure results. But you do so with the knowledge that the outcome is simply a by-product of your culture, teamwork, vision, talent, innovation, execution and commitment to your people and process. You know that it’s not the numbers that drive the people but the people that drive the numbers. A great example of this is John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach. He never focused on winning. He focused on the culture of his team, the character of his players, winning teamwork, fundamentals and daily improvement. As a result he won a lot.

**Weed out Negativity**

It’s the biggest problem in business today and the biggest obstacle to creating a positive business. Yet, it’s like the elephant in the room. Everyone sees it but they ignore it—allowing negativity to ruin far too many careers, teams and organizations. Not anymore. To build a positive winning culture, you must deal with the cost of negativity head on. At work you’ll likely face organizational and individual negativity. You’ll have to deal with processes and systems that create poor communication and negative interactions. In other cases negativity will arise from negative co-workers and customers, a group of office complainers and/or a boss who is a jerk. That’s why I encourage every individual and organization to ask and answer the following question: **How are we going to deal with negativity, challenges and energy vampires (negative people)?**

Dwight Cooper, the CEO of PPR, a nurse staffing company that was voted one of the best places to work by SHRM, asked himself this question about negativity and his answer was a company policy he called The No Complaining Rule. Cooper decided to deal with the subtle negativity that acts like a cancer in an organization. The rule states that “Employees are not allowed to mindlessly complain to their co-workers. If they have a complaint they can take it to a manager or someone who can do something about the problem, BUT they must also offer one or two possible solutions.” The intention is to eliminate mindless complaining which leads to a toxic work environment and encourage justified complaints that lead to new ideas, innovation and success.

Cooper is not alone in the fight to cultivate a positive culture and weed out negativity. Colorado Permanente Medical Group chose to deal with negativity by letting go of 10-20 negative doctors each year, increasing morale and profits in the process. Turns out the negative doctors were creating a poor work environment and scaring away patients. 2 First Transit dealt with the low morale and negativity of its bus drivers by initiating a positive reinforcement process that required managers to praise drivers for their positive behaviors and positive actions. The result was less absenteeism, enhanced morale and profits.

Regardless of your situation or the source of negativity, it is critical that you take action to cultivate the positive and weed out the negative. Like a garden, you’ll have to get rid of weeds from time to time and let go of your negative people, but the best way to deal with the weeds is to create a positive environment where the good grass grows healthy and strong eventually to the point where the weeds have no where to grow. In this spirit you’ll want to ingrain positive energy into your systems, process and culture and eliminate negative energy wherever you find it.

From hiring practices to recognition programs to communication processes, you’ll want to identify the people and the gaps in your processes that are contributing to negativity. You will want to address these gaps and incorporate positive strategies and best practices that are proven to hire, develop and fuel positive, engaged people and teams.

**Get The Right People on the Bus**

Building a positive business always begins with selecting the right people. In the classic book Good to Great, Jim Collins says to build a successful organization and team, you must get the right people on the bus. His research shows that great companies and organizations do this. They get the right people and put them in the right seats. However, a bigger question that is not in his book is “Who are the right people?” After all, in order to get the right people on the bus you must identify who the right people are. The intention is to eliminate mindless complaining which leads to a toxic work environment and encourage justified complaints that lead to new ideas, innovation and success.

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are better able to identify who the right people are for each job at the hotel. It’s not enough to say that we need to get the right people on the bus. We must identify who the right people are, make sure they are positive, and create a process that gets them on the bus. We must also make sure we let the wrong people off the bus. Too many leaders know who their negative employees are but they don’t know what to do with them, and so they do nothing, which leads to dangerous consequences. Like a cancer, one negative employee can spread negativity throughout a team and organization. While you should give them every chance to get on the energy bus and contribute to your positive culture, if they don’t make the necessary changes, then at some point you’ll have to let them off the bus. Post a sign that says “No energy vampires allowed” and eliminate anyone that sucks the energy and life out of your organization. It may not sound positive, but it’s essential to create a positive culture.

**Fill the Void**

With the right people on your bus, you want to make sure you communicate consistently and effectively with them so they always know where the bus is going. Peter Drucker says that 60% of management problems are the result of faulty communication. This is because where there is a void or gap in communication, negative energy will always fill it. When people feel fearful or uncertain or unheard they start thinking the worse and act accordingly. And as negative energy fills more voids and grows in these gaps, the positive energy can’t flow through the organization. By designing systems that enhance communication, you eliminate the gaps and allow positive energy to flow through the business. Companies such as PPR address these gaps by hosting company wide, Monday morning 8:31 meetings. The meeting lasts 10 minutes and everyone in the company is briefed on everything each department will be working on that week. Consider it a company’s version of the football huddle. Google creates wide open work spaces and meeting rooms that foster better communication and idea collaboration. Southwest airlines communicates in many ways to their employees via daily intranet updates, newsletter, conference calls, and town hall meetings.

And think of Ken Blanchard, who is not only a leadership guru for many other companies, but his own as well. Ken’s title is Chief Spiritual Officer and each day he holds an all employee call where he shares an inspirational message. Employees not only want to be seen and heard but also desire to hear, see and be part of the team. Daily and weekly meetings allow businesses to communicate with their employees, share their vision and values, celebrate successes, recognize individuals for their accomplishments and infuse their associates with team spirit—and this makes all the difference.

**To build a positive winning culture, you must deal with the cost of negativity head on.**

Love your Passengers

It’s a simple fact. When you care about your employees and the people you work with, they are more likely to stay on the bus and work harder, with more loyalty and greater positive energy. In turn, they are more likely to share their positive energy with your customers, enhancing service and the bottom line. That’s why I say the greatest customer service strategy has nothing to do with customer service, but rather it has everything to do with how you treat your employees. If you treat them well, they will treat the customer well. Just the other day I was speaking at a hospital and was told that they were doing patient satisfaction surveys as a way to improve nurse performance. “What about nurse satisfaction surveys,” I asked. “No we’re not doing that,” they said. The problem was clear. Measuring patient satisfaction will not make nurses more energized, positive and attentive. Patient satisfaction will go up when nurse satisfaction goes up. I have found that that organizations who deliver the best service also have the best culture where employees are valued, listened to and cared for and, in turn, these employees value, care for and serve their customers. Great service begins with a positive culture where employees are engaged and energized at work and enjoy sharing positive, contagious energy with their customers.

Best Buy, for example, utilizing a twelve question survey from the Gallup organization started to measure the engagement of their employees and in the process saw service and profits improve. T-Mobile dramatically improved and transformed their customer service when they improved the culture in their call centers by listening to their employees. And Woodloch Pines, a family owned resort in Pennsylvania, wins awards every year because they treat their employees like family who then treat their guests like family. So how do we love our employees when hugs are not an acceptable business practice? The ways are endless and practical, and here are a few to get started.

» **Treat them like a person, not a number.**

The number one question every employee in every organization is asking is “Do you care about me and can I trust you”. Employees want to know if you care about them. If you do, they will be more likely to stay on the bus and work with you. If you think talking about love and business in the same sentence is corny, consider that one of the questions in Gallup’s engagement survey is “Does your manager care about you.” Employees are more engaged at work when their manager cares about them.

» **Develop a relationship with them.**

Andy Stanley said “Rules without relationship lead to rebellion.” Far too many managers and leaders share rules with their people but they don’t have a relationship with them. So what happens? The people rebel and disengage from their jobs and the mission of the team. I have had many managers approach me and tell me that I helped them realize they needed to focus less on rules and invest more in their relationships at work. The result was a dramatic increase in team performance and productivity. To develop a relationship with your employees, you need to listen to them, make time for them, recognize them, invest in them and mentor them. And, when relationships are created, they stay—because they have invested in others and others have invested in them.

» **Appreciate them.**

The main reason why people leave their jobs is because they don’t feel appreciated. When you love your passengers, you thank them and appreciate them for the work they do. For
example, Doug Conant, the CEO of Campbell Soup, has written over 16,000 thank you notes to employees over the last 7 years and created a very positive business in the process.

**Drive with a Bigger Purpose**

Loving your passengers keeps your people on the bus, but when you drive with purpose they will help you push it when the bus breaks down. The fact is every organization will face adversity and challenges and be tested on their journey. And the answer to these tests is a positive culture filled with purpose driven people.

The research shows that people and organizations are most energized when they are focused on a bigger purpose beyond themselves. Howard Shultz, founder of Starbucks, for instance, told his people from the beginning that we were not in the coffee business serving people, but in the people business serving coffee. He inspired his employees with a sense of purpose to make a difference. Unfortunately, there are far too many people in the business world who are hopeless and purposeless. This is fueled by the glaring misconception that, in order to live a life of purpose, we have to leave our jobs and go solve world hunger, or feed the homeless or move to Africa or start a charity. While these are all noble causes and there are people called to do this, for many of us our bigger purpose can be found in the here and now, in the jobs we have, right under our noses. And when we find and live this purpose at work, it will provide the ultimate fuel for a meaningful and successful life and career. I recently spoke at a conference to a large number of bus drivers. Ironically, when the conference organizers booked me to speak they didn’t even know I had written a new book, The Energy Bus, a story about a bus driver named Joy who changes the life of a marketing manager who rides on her bus. After my talk I met a gentleman who told me that he was a pastor of a small local church. He said he originally started driving a school bus for the insurance benefits. But after a few years of driving a bus, it occurred to him that he was having a bigger impact on people as a bus driver than as a pastor at his church. Wow. The truth is we don’t have to go on a mission trip to be on a mission. Every day we can live our mission at work. I heard of a janitor who worked at NASA and felt his bigger purpose was to put a man on the moon. I met a hairstylist who saves lives. I met an administrative assistant who has become the Chief Energy Officer of her company. I heard of a grocery store bagger who inspires his customers with positive notes in their bags. I know a Popeye’s Chicken employee named Edith in the Atlanta Airport who makes millions of air travelers smile. Ordinary people, doing ordinary jobs with an extra-ordinary purpose. In any job, our purpose waits for us to find it and live. It’s not the job we have but the energy and purpose we bring to it that matters. I can’t tell you what your bigger purpose should be for your organization or your career. But I can tell you that every leader needs to identify a bigger purpose for their organization, and every employee must tap into this purpose. I can tell you that we can find the excitement in the mundane and the extraordinary in the ordinary. I can tell you that even business and every job matters, regardless of how glorious or boring it may seem. Purpose is the ultimate fuel that energizes your culture, keeps your people focused and perpetually moves things with extraordinary consistency, comment, focus and positive energy. To build a positive business, you must be able to not only identify your vision and purpose for your organization, but make it so it is ingrained in the culture, mindset and actions of your people. Encouraging your employees and team to read positive books and attend workshops is one thing, but translating knowledge into action and habits is another. Having the desire to be a positive business is wonderful, but it won’t happen unless you relentlessly focus on your culture, people, processes and systems. As part of this process, I encourage you to utilize my books The Energy Bus and The No Complaining Rule as a roadmap to build your positive culture and as a tool to empower your managers and employees to take positive action. In addition to books, we provide consulting, executive workshops and employee programs that help you build a positive business, develop a fleet of bus drivers and transform vision and purpose into action and results. I wish you all green lights on your journey. Stay Positive, Jon Gordon

**About the Author**

Jon Gordon is a speaker, consultant and author of the international best seller The Energy Bus: 10 Rules to Fuel your Life, Work and Team with Positive Energy and The No Complaining Rule: Positive Ways to deal with Negativity at Work. Jon and his books have been featured on CNN, NBC’s Today Show, and in Forbes, Fast Company, O Magazine, the US News & World Report, Wall Street Journal and The New York Times. Clients such as The Jacksonville Jaguars, PGA Tour, Northwestern Mutual, Publix Super Markets, Denver Public Schools, and Campbell Soup also call on Jon to get their team “on the bus” and moving in the right direction.
Service Tax on Air Travel Illegal: IATA

Global aviation body IATA recently termed the service tax on air travel in India as “illegal” and said the “disconnect” between various ministries on aviation issues was “embarrassing” India in global fora.

Maintaining that there were differences between the Ministries of Finance and Civil Aviation on policy issues like FDI in aviation, the International Air Transport Association asked the government and related agencies to evolve a coordinated policy approach to prevent the interests of the sector from being compromised.

Citing the levying of service tax on air tickets by the government, IATA chief Giovanni Bisignani said Finance Ministry’s move was “illegal” and embarrassing for India which was a leading member of the International Civil Aviation Organisation and a signatory to the Chicago convention.

Addressing a CII conference here, he said “the disconnect the Finance Ministry and the Civil Aviation Ministry has put India in an embarrassing position. It is not following the rules that it helped to create”.

Bisignani also said the government collected USD 34 million in aviation fuel sales tax between 1994 and 2001. “Eight years after a parliamentary act made it illegal, and despite the efforts of (Civil Aviation) Minister Praful Patel, the Finance Ministry has not complied and airlines are still waiting for the cash”.

While India helped formulate global standards for advance information on passengers to improve security, its Bureau of Immigration “developed its own standards and processes”, he said giving yet another example of the “disconnect” between the Ministries of Civil Aviation, Home (immigration) and Finance (customs).

Describing India as an important player in aviation industry, shaping global policies and standards, Bisignani said Civil Aviation Ministry’s foresight to reduce the costs of doing business was being compromised by other Ministries adding costs, reducing competitiveness.

This, he said, was “making Indian Government less influential in the global community”.

Questioning the “unique” restrictions on FDI in airlines, he said the Commerce Ministry was following “very old world approach to foreign direct investment in aviation” and “the insular approach cuts India off from global expertise and global trends”.

“India allows 100 per cent FDI in mass rapid transport systems, ports and harbors, hotels and tourism... But it restricts foreign ownership of airlines to 49 per cent. “Does it make sense that a foreign airline could make a 100 per cent investment in a greenfield airport project but cannot invest even one rupee in an Indian airline,” he said, adding “success of India’s airlines should not be compromised by an investment policy that isolates it from the world”.

Source: The Times of India

India will need 1,000 aircrafts over 20 years: Airbus CEO

BEADS’ unit Airbus expects the Indian aviation market will require more than 1,000 aircraft in the next 20 years, its chief executive Tom Enders said recently.

At a media briefing he said that their market forecast was usually quite conservative but that they expect at least an additional 1,000 in the next 20 years in India, which after China is one of the big growth hubs for the aviation industry.

Airbus’ India chief Kiran Rao said the country’s demand, specifically for 1,032 planes, over 20 years, was valued at $138 billion.

A burgeoning middle class, driven by an economy that is growing at 8.5% a year, has boosted demand for air travel in India. New entrants in the country’s airline sector and India’s plan to overhaul its defence systems also make India an attractive market for Airbus and U.S. rival Boeing.

Government data showed air traffic through August this year rose more than 19$ in domestic travel. U.S. rival Boeing (BA.N), which sees India’s expanding aviation sector needing 1,150 commercial jets valued at $130 billion over 20 years, is set to sign a $5.8-billion defence deal with India ahead of President Barack Obama’s November visit to the country.

Airbus had not sold any planes in India this year but expected to see orders being booked from 2011, Rao said. “Indian carriers want to keep a young dynamic fleet going,” Rao added. “It might not be as big a market as it was in 2005 which saw a huge boom, but we will see a steady growth.”

Airbus, which has a 180-strong team at its engineering centre in India, aims to more than double it to 400 by 2013.

Source: reuters.com
British Airways-Iberia Could Buy Indian Airline

British Airways has indicated that it may buy an Indian airline following its merger with Spain’s Iberia. British Airways CEO Willie Walsh speaking in the Indian city of Mumbai, said he would not dampen speculation that International Airlines Group (IAG) – to be formed from the merger of BA and Iberia – would be interested in investing in the Indian market.

And the embattled chief executive – who faces a Christmas strike threat in the UK - went a step further, praising Kingfisher, the Indian airline owned by beer magnate Vijay Mallya, as “clearly the best partner” in the former British colony. He warned however that Indian regulators will need to relax the rules in order for such an tie-up to occur, given current onerous investment restrictions. “I can certainly let you speculate that IAG will be interested in investing in the Indian market,” he added, before saying that he saw the agreement with Kingfisher as the start of a “long and successful relationship”.

According to The Telegraph, presently, strict Indian laws make it impossible for a foreign airline to even become a minority investor in a domestic Indian airline, however foreign companies outside the industry can buy up to an 25% stake. Changes to the restrictions were discussed as recently as two years ago, although it is not thought there are any current plans to relax the rules.

Source: indiatraveltimes.com

Cruise the Ganges

Exotic Hospitality Management team and Pandaw Cruises (India) Pvt Ltd., the Operator of Rv BENGAL Pandaw, announced the new programme season (2011-2012) of the Ganges Cruise.

Rv Bengal Pandaw operated the first Ganges passenger cruise on September 28, 2009 and successfully completed nine scheduled cruises till March 31, 2009. From an uncertain explorative start, their maiden voyage mistakes have allowed them to hone the Bengal Pandaw Experience. They now have a fully-trained crew, improved cuisine, and excellent housekeeping.

Covering 1200 km, the route offers a feast of culture and history including Kolkata, Chandernagore, Bandel with British, French, and Portuguese architecture, terracotta temples at Kalna, Murshidabad, with its Moghul palaces, museums, and mosques, Raj Mahal and the Moghul monuments, the Munger School of Yoga, Nalanda, Vikramshila, the 8th century ancient Buddhist University, Bodh Gaya where Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment, Patna museum, Sarnath, and the oldest living city in the world Varanasi.

All cruises aboard Rv Bengal Pandaw include comfortable accommodation in air-conditioned, en suite cabins, gourmet meals including local mineral water, daily escorted excursions with English-speaking guides, entrance fees, local transfers, and the use of barge facilities such as a large sundeck to laze on.

Goa Charter Tourism Starts for the Season

The state’s charter tourism season got off to a start recently as 336 tourists from Russia disembarked at Dabolim airport. According to Sita Travels vice president Ernest Dias, the two flights brought not just tourists but travel agents scouting business opportunities in Goa. “Both flights brought in 336 tourists,” Dias said. “Around 40-odd travel agents have also arrived on the flights. They will scout hotels and places of tourist interest.” State tourism department officials were also present at the airport to greet the season’s first charter tourists.

The Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG) has estimated a 10% growth in charter flights this season. The state received 626 charter flights bringing in 1.37 lakh tourists during the previous tourism season. According to TTAG spokesperson Ralph de Sousa, 718 charter flights have already confirmed a landing at Dabolim airport over the next six months. TTAG estimates that this number could touch 740 flights, as the process for holiday bookings is still on. According to statistics provided by TTAG there is an increase in flights from most countries. Some 232 flights will arrive from the UK as against 202 last season. Around 266 flights have been confirmed from Russia, as against 259 last season. “This will increase by another 25 flights as we are awaiting confirmation,” de Sousa said.

Similarly 22 flights will arrive from Switzerland as against 20 landings last season. Germany has confirmed 35 flights as against 22 flights last year. “This may change if the proposal for dual landing is aborted,” the TTAG spokesperson added. Scandinavian countries, comprising Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, have confirmed 78 flights as against 89 last year, while the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries have 41 confirmed flights as against 35 last season. Poland, Iran and Estonia have confirmed a total of 25 flights, which is the same as last season.

Source: timesofindia
Cathay Pacific Inks Deal with Airbus for Biggest-Ever Aircraft Order

Cathay Pacific Airways concluded the purchase agreement with aircraft manufacturer Airbus for the delivery of 30 new A350-900 aircraft, representing the airline’s biggest-ever single aircraft purchase. The new acquisitions are valued at HK$60.84 billion at list price. Deliveries will begin in 2016 and are scheduled to stretch over a three-year period.

The all-new A350-900 XWB (“Extra Wide Body”) will replenish and expand the fleet of Cathay Pacific, serving principally long-haul destinations in Europe. The aircraft will be powered by two new-generation Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines and is expected to deliver improved payload range capability at competitive costs, at the same time providing high standards of passenger comfort and safety.

Featuring an all-new design, the A350 aircraft will represent a step change in operational efficiency, burning significantly less fuel than existing aircraft of a similar size and offering a corresponding reduction in carbon emissions.

Cathay Pacific currently operates a fleet of 128 wide-body aircraft, and with the Airbus A350 now has a total of 60 aircraft on firm order. Last month the airline also expressed its intention to exercise existing purchase rights for six more Boeing 777-300ER ultra-long-haul aircraft, which would take its total order for the type to 36.

The investment in the new A350 aircraft is in addition to significant investments Cathay Pacific has already committed to make between now and 2013 including aircraft already on firm order, the new cargo terminal at Hong Kong International Airport and enhanced products in the cabin and on the ground.

Virgin Galactic Completes First Test Flight of Commercial Rocket

First commercial space flight may take off in 2011

Virgin Galactic’s commercial space ship, VSS Enterprise, has completed its first solo test flight in California. The plane was carried to an altitude of 45,000 ft by another aircraft. Afterward, it was dropped to glide back to the Mojave Air and Space Port in California.

Founder Sir Richard Branson said that his company will be “pushing to the final frontier of space” by 2011. The company is gunning to become the world’s first commercial “spaceline” offering passengers a short trip above the Earth’s atmosphere.

Virgin Galactic says that up to 80,000 people have lined up for tickets that costs $200,000 (£126,000) a pop.

Source: indyposted

Ryanair to Axe Pilots and Train Airhostesses to Land in Crisis

Budget airline Ryanair is thinking of axing co-pilots and training airhostesses to land planes in a crisis. Boss Michael O’Leary reckons a second pilot is a waste of money. “Why does every plane have two pilots? You only need one,” he was quoted as saying. “Let’s take out the second pilot. Let the bloody computer fly it,” he added. Asked about what would happen if the pilot had a heart attack, he said, “A hostess could take over.” Jim McAuslan, general secretary of the British Airline Pilots’ Association, described O’Leary’s suggestion as “totally preposterous”.

Source: indiatraveltimes.com

Russian Firm to Build Space Hotel

A Russian firm has announced it will have a space hotel in orbit possibly by the end of 2015 or the beginning of 2016. Pravda reports that the Moscow-based Orbital Technologies has sky-high hopes that its planned Commercial Space Station can serve as a tourism hub for well-heeled travellers and offer overspill accommodation for the International Space Station and workspace for science projects.

According to the Associated Press, the firm plans to launch a seven-room station by 2016 but may decrease or increase that capacity based on customer demand.

A cosy fit, the first module will measure just 20 cubic metres (706 cubic feet) and have four cabins, designed for up to
seven passengers, who would go into orbit using the Soyuz shuttle, chief executive Kostenko said.

Up to now space tourists, who have included the Canadian founder of the Cirque du Soleil, Guy Laliberte, have squeezed into the International Space Station (ISS) along with cosmonauts and animal life including fruit flies.

The new hotel will offer more comforts than the ISS, Kostenko said.

Source: etn

Cebu Pacific: In trouble for going ‘Gaga’ over flight attendants flight safety ‘demonstration’?

By the time you read this, the video of Cebu Pacific flight attendants dancing to Lady Gaga’s ‘Just Dance’ song, as they ‘demonstrated’ the safety features of a flight from Manila to Butuan City on September 30, 2010, has gone viral on the Internet, with as many as over 7 million views and counting.

The video starts with Lady Gaga’s tune playing over the PA, puzzling some passengers, and then the captain says, “Ladies and gentlemen, please direct your attention to the cabin crew as they demonstrate the safety features of this aircraft.” The flight attendants then proceeded to dance as the captain informed passengers about the flight’s safety features.

The scheme prompted some passengers to bring out their cameras and began filming the ‘routine’. Passengers applauded at the end of video.

According to reports, Cebu Pacific vice president Candice Iyog has said the “dance routine was only a test dance demo and they will not replace the regular serious safety demonstration”.

However, some are not amused. The Flight Attendants and Stewards Association of the Philippines (FASAP) is said to be not happy. Reports are claiming that FASAP is “deeply perturbed” by the video spreading on the Internet of flight attendants dancing to catchy songs, while doing the pre-flight seatbelt and life vest demonstration.

With this latest gimmick, it is clear that airlines are getting more and more craftier in their attempt to catch the world’s attention. Thankfully, this is not the brainchild of Ryanair chief executive Michael O’Leary, who may have seized the opportunity to charge for the scheme. Knowing O’Leary, who has a penchant for coming out with the most outrageous ways to charge its passengers (remember the toilet charge scheme he proposed?), it won’t be long till he comes up with his own version. Or not.

Source: etn

Dubai Entry Visa Process Now Simplified

Dubai Travellers typically have to navigate a very intricate process to get an entry visa; however, DubaiShortStay.com is launching a new service for travelers who book with them. They make assistance available to their clients in order to assist them in getting through the details of the process.

A Unique internet site that allows website visitors an opportunity to get assistance on their entry visas for their stay in Dubai. It is distinctive for the reason that it offers this assistance as complimentary just for booking a holiday rental. What this means is that users can rest easy about navigating the process of attaining a foreign entry visa into the UAE. You will find other notable features including such as having direct access to an agent that knows the issues surrounding the process, as well as any changes that might not be clear on the website.

Owner Hassan Morcel Explains that he developed this site because he wanted to help his clients who wanted to stay in Dubai for longer than the normal term, but almost ruined their stay because of the complications they experienced getting their entry visas. “It is not enough for visitors to get a great deal on a rental, if they are discouraged by getting to Dubai in the first place”.

Morcel explains, “Dubai is fast becoming a significant tourist destination as well as an international business hub and that means more tourism (even with struggling economy) for the city. In 2003, all Dubai Hotels and Dubai Apartments welcomed about six million people. But by 2010, it is expected that number will rise to 15 million. It is projected to rise again to 40 million in 2015.

For more info, visit the website DubaiShortStay.com

Source: etn
Pilot flies better than driving

In an attempt to keep the passengers from standing or moving around before taxiing was completed, the purser of a SouthWest flight said over the PA: “Ladies and Gentlemen. Our pilots FLY much better than they DRIVE so please remain seated until the captain finishes taxiing and brings the aircraft to a complete stop at the terminal...”

Hard landing...

Overheard on a flight on a particularly windy and bumpy day. During the final approach the Captain really had to fight the weather. After an extremely hard landing, the Flight Attendant came on the PA and announced, “Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Anchorage, Alaska. Please remain in your seats with your seatbelts fastened while the Captain taxis what’s left of our airplane to the gate!”

Mind if I ask you a question?

An airline pilot hammered his ship into the runway really hard on a certain flight. The airline had a policy, which required the pilot to stand at the door while the passengers exited, give a smile, and a “Thanks for flying XYZ airline.” He said that in light of the bad landing, he had a hard time looking the passengers in the eye, thinking that someone would have a smart comment. Finally everyone had gotten off except for this little old lady walking with a cane. She said, “Sonny, mind if I ask you a question?” “Why no M’am,” said the pilot, “what is it?” The little old lady said, “Did we land or were we shot down?”

Things which do you no good in aviation:

- Altitude above you
- Runway behind you
- Fuel in the truck
- Half a second in history
- Approach plates in the car
- The airspeed you don’t have

From the squawk sheets

Problem: “Number three engine missing.” Solution: “Engine found on right wing after brief search.”
Problem: “DME volume unbelievably loud.” Solution: “Volume set to more believable level.”
Problem: Dead bugs on windshield. Solution: Live bugs on order.

Innovation!

During the heat of the space race in the 1960s, the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration decided it needed a ball point pen to write with in the zero gravity confines of its space capsules. After considerable research and development, the Astronaut Pen was developed at a cost of about US $1 million. The pen worked and also enjoyed some modest success as a novelty item back here on earth. The Soviet Union, faced with the same problem, used a pencil.
She’s been on strict plankton diet. Put on her best swimsuit. And all she needs is someone to play with. So where the bloody hell are you?

We’ve switched on the lights. Turned up the Verdi. And the champagne’s on board. So where the bloody hell are you?

We’ve shampooed the camels. Laid on a nice sunset. And the beer is waiting at the other end. So where the bloody hell are you?

We’ve fertilised the tree ferns. Had the garden watered. And pacified the Tasmanian devils. So where the bloody hell are you?
To experience the iconic wonders of Karnataka, visit a destination called Skyway.

Planning to visit Karnataka in South India. You’re in luck. For those who’d like a leisurely trail around Karnataka, there’s a luxury coach that departs from Bangalore every Friday, for a 15-day tour of the state. Should you prefer to see the abundant wildlife in the forests of Nagareshwara and Kabini, we also have on offer customized wildlife trails. Whatever your travel needs in Karnataka are, make Skyway your first destination.