Getting More Business from the United States

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ASTA
ASTA Membership

ASTA membership offers a unique package of benefits for developing global business.
ASTA Membership

• Grow Your Business On-line
  ➢ WebExchange
  ➢ Consumer Leads
  ➢ On-Line Buyers Guide
  ➢ Company Profiles on Travelsense.org
  ➢ “Get to Know an International Member”
ASTA Meetings

• International Destination Expo (IDE)
  - Lyon, France
    - April 2008
  - South Africa
    - March 2009
ASTA Meetings

#1 travel trade show in North America

- Connects you to thousands of travel sellers, destinations and travel related companies
- Join us!

- Orlando – September 7-9, 2008
Travel agents and tour operators are all looking for the same thing … and it’s not just destination information.
Business Language

Speak the language of business:
- Credentials
- Experience
- Facilities
- Staff
- Reputation
- Commitment to quality
- Guarantee
- Commission

These words are more important than “price.”
8 Steps to Increasing Int’l Business

1. Know your target audience.
2. Communicate with them regularly.
3. Develop alliances.
4. Establish credentials.
5. Talk about business, not just travel.
6. Sell the benefits, not the features.
7. Emphasize quality, quality, quality, not price.
8. Follow up.
#1 — Know your target audience

Most US travel agents …
- sell established wholesalers.
- do not do their own packaging.
- sell primarily US destinations and the products of large international wholesalers, not FITs.

Exceptions: Niche Specialists
- Access these lists by becoming a member of a trade association, such as ASTA, or a consortium.
With the Internet there is no reason for travel agencies—large or small—to invest in costly mailing or advertising campaigns to start growing their business.
#2 — Communication is everything

E-mail communications should always …

- make **comparisons**.
  e.g., a 6-night package with all the frills vs. a 7-night, basic package.

- show them what it is they are getting and **why it’s better** than another deal, even if it costs more.

- tell the reader why you are **unique** and what separates you from the others.
#3 — Don’t walk alone!

To be successful in business, it’s critical you develop alliances and friendships.

Partnerships do work!
#3 — Don’t walk alone!

- Local ASTA Chapter
- National tourism organizations
- National airlines
- Tour operators doing business in the US
- ASTA members in the US
- Consortia, franchises and international chains
#3 — Don’t walk alone!

Overcome the “trust factor.”

US agents care more about their customers than money. Quality trumps price every time.
Potential business partners measure a company by:

- its past endeavors,
- the experience of its staff,
- its reach, and
- the quality of the product it delivers.
“Straight from the horse’s mouth”

A terrific way to lend credibility to your agency and your product is with references and testimonials from satisfied clients and travel agents with whom you have worked.
#5 — Talk business, not travel

Show them the benefits of working with you and buying your programs.

Compare, compare, compare.
Now is your chance to prove your value.
#5 — Talk business, not travel

Talk about business opportunities you can develop together. There are partnership and niches to explore.
#5 — Talk business, not travel

Creativity coupled with hard work separates the winners from the pack.
#6 — People buy benefits, not features

State upfront what the benefits are of working with your agency:

- You have the most experienced guides.
- You offer luxury touring sedans, not cars or buses.
- You put guests up in upscale hotels, and specials meals and events are included.

Leave no doubt as to why you and your products are better.
A small business cannot turn into a global firm overnight, but laying the foundation for a quality product can quicken the speed at which you get there.
The quality process is similar to farming bamboo. Once the bamboo seed is planted, the farmer waters it every day. He does that for four years before the tree even breaks ground. But when it finally does, it grows 60 feet in the next 90 days.
#7 — Quality

To that end and in everything you do, you need to talk **quality**.

- Promise quality.
- Deliver quality.
- Prove quality.

Guarantee **quality** and you will win, regardless of price.
#8 — Follow up

- Poll your clients.

- Ask them…
  - what they liked.
  - what they didn’t like.
  - what they’d do differently.
  - what they’d do again.

- Follow-up again once clients have reached home.
If you do not think about the future, you cannot have one. This holds true for future business, as well. If you don’t plan for it, you won’t get it.
Follow up with the agent with whom you worked.

Solicit feedback on the overall business experience.

Share client feedback.

Thank agents for their business, and ask for their future business.
“Closing” is defined by Webster's Dictionary as:

- “To bar passage.”
- “To deny access to.”
- “To suspend or stop operations.”
- “To bring to an end.”
Opening Relationships

You don't ‘close’ the sale. You ‘open’ relationships. The end of the first sale is really the beginning of the next sale to the same customer.
Opening Relationships

• It is no longer enough to make the sale.
• It is no longer enough to follow through.
• It is no longer enough to remind the customer you're still doing business at the same location with new and improved products.
• It is no longer enough to sell the product and the values that surround the purchase.
Beginnings

There is no close.

There is only a beginning.
ASTA: In the Business of Selling Travel