

Your Market – Your Future – Your Magazine



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market anymore.

It's become commonplace in the group travel publishing market that magazines trade advertising for editorial. They woo potential advertisers in with the promise that they will write fluffy editorial stories about that company if they throw a few dollars at the publisher. Conveniently, these editorial stories appear adjacent to the supplier's ad – a “Where's Waldo?” approach to magazine publishing. Some “editorial” is masked to appear as if the publisher is writing the story, others are so blatant as to put the CVB's byline in the article.

As publisher, I don't play that game. I insist that editorial stories that my team writes are based on quality of content, not whether that company is lining our pockets. I trust my team of professional journalists – most are travel industry veterans, having planned tours, checked groups into hotels and been on the firing lines of planning group itineraries. Since they've “walked the walk,” they can “talk the talk.”

Think about this next time you read one of the “other guys.” Is the information on its pages really as good as “advertised”, or are they only stating claims because the advertiser wants them to? Do you feel compelled to plan your next group trip to a destination based solely upon who's advertising, or would you rather find that out-of-the way destination, or hidden jewel based on our writer's ability to research and report on what's truly unique?

Don't get me wrong, we LOVE our advertisers – they are the principle reason that we are able to distribute Leisure Group Travel to you seven times per year, free of charge. But we don't love them to the extent that it compromises our judgment to deliver editorial that's relevant, timely and helps you plan better group trips.

While we practice this business philosophy everyday at Leisure Group Travel, it's perhaps best articulated in our annual Industry Forecast edition. Here, we solicit the brightest minds in the business to give us their perspective on emerging markets, best practices and how they envision their industry developing and changing.

Take for example our Cruise Panel, written by Cindy Bertram. Carnival Cruise Lines has never advertised in Leisure Group Travel, but that doesn't mean that their opinion (as the world's leading cruise line) isn't valid. Additionally, we've solicited the expertise of Kevin Wright, the man who literally wrote the book on Religious Travel, to break down this enormous (\$18-billion) marketplace in to opportunity segments for readers and suppliers. We were also able to tap into the extensive resources of PhoCusWright Research as they share with you the drivers that are influencing the online group travel market, and we can all learn from leading tour operators what's worked and what hasn't in 2007, and their strategy for 2008.

We're now entering our ninth year publishing Leisure Group Travel. We've grown up with a lot of you, as our magazine has changed and developed to reflect the shifting tides that are consuming the group travel business. There's little doubt that this isn't your grandmother's group tour market anymore, and it's our job, I feel, to help bring the industry into the 21st century. You can't do that by compromising your integrity and values by printing canned advertorial. So we continue to march to our own drummer, write about destinations and topics that need to be covered – and put our heads on the pillow each night with a clear understanding of our purpose and responsibility to this industry.

Enjoy our 2008 Industry Forecast, and best of luck to you and your travel program in the coming year.

We'll be here to support you.

Happy Travels,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jeff Gayduk
Publisher