



The appeal behind “T and E”

Business travel and entertainment seeing light at the end of the tunnel.

BUSINESS AND FAN travel account for an enormous amount of overall dollars spent on hotels, air flights, car rentals and resorts. Just ask anyone who is responsible for “large account, corporate or group sales” for any hotel chain. This part of the tourism industry was hit like a Mack truck during our recession, and only now are they starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Despite financial health, almost all corporations faced cutbacks in their “T and E” budgets, or travel and entertainment. Online tutorials are in place instead of sending sales teams to the Bahamas for a week for informative business sessions. Technology has come into play in a huge way, just check out everycast.com, which uses the Internet and web cams for conference calls and media sharing.

The “need to escape” aspect of travel is largely underestimated. BCS Bowl Committees base their decisions primarily on the travel history of certain universities’ fans.

Response from late 2009 was refreshing for all involved in travel. Fans traveled in surprising numbers considering the economy. Keep in mind, there are many variables involved with fan travel as opposed to corporate travel.

How many times has your team played in the Rose Bowl in recent years? Bowl games are announced roughly a month in advance, so fans have to make snap decisions while companies running tour groups have to creatively and feverishly fight for this niche travel market. Corporations take clients to big name events, despite the climate or headliner. Hotels can no longer price gouge for the Super Bowl, Masters, World Cup and Olympics because of the lack of supply and huge demand.

While we are still in the midst of one of the most uncertain times in our nation’s economy, people who make their living in the travel arena are sleeping a little more easily. And travelers are more willing to “splurge” on items that were once commonplace. The travel industry has been forever altered, and like all economic corrections, this could be a good thing for all involved. ■

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