

**Escorted Tours**

Huge selection of tours in U.S. and worldwide.  
Budget to luxury.

**Europe Vacation Tours**

Book Your Holiday to European With Liberty  
Travel For Great Deals

Ads by Google

**NTA Strategic Partners Mean Business, Education, ROI**

Written by Lisa Simon, CTP

Wednesday, 19 August 2009 13:08



We often talk about the fragmentation of the travel and tourism industry. There are tour operators, travel agents, motorcoach operators, car rental agencies, hotels, destinations, attractions, airlines, cruise lines and the list goes on. And then within each of these segments, we all work with different markets and audiences. In the end, there are so many diverse needs to serve.

NTA has long recognized this diversity, so whenever there is an opportunity for collaboration, we go to great lengths to develop partnerships and encourage working together.

NTA has worked with sister organizations, like ASTA, USTOA and SYTA to name a few, for years, primarily on government advocacy efforts and education. NTA began developing strategic partnerships with sister organizations because we realized how diverse our membership is. Because our members serve inbound, outbound and domestic travelers, who are individuals, groups, families, students, seniors, baby boomers, and people with all types of special interests, we found one of the best ways to serve their diverse business needs was to seek partners who specialize in these various niches. This allows NTA to embrace the diversity and serve our members' individualism.

Working within this framework, NTA has formed collaborative agreements with the International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association, Travel Professionals of Color and the World Religious Travel Association. Each organization serves the needs of a particular market segment, and by developing these relationships, NTA and its partners can educate the other on market opportunities, find ways to bring new business to each of the association's members and develop synergies such as cooperative memberships and show attendance.

A perfect example is on the education front and event attendance. IGLTA, TPOC and WRTA have all presented educational sessions to NTA members to help them learn about the markets their members serve. NTA has done the same, and we have a presence at each other's events. We all understand that collaboration is key—working together is working smarter.

Another area of focus for NTA's strategic partnerships has been developing a balance of business opportunities in the international marketplace. Since its founding in 1951, NTA has been strong on domestic (North American) travel. However, NTA tour operators also work the international inbound and outbound markets, and NTA's membership does represent 40 countries. NTA can meet its members' needs in these areas through partnerships and bring business to them that they would typically work years to garner and pay for dearly. Relationships with the Africa Travel Association, American Tourism Society, Indian Association of Tour Operators and Sister Cities International extend international business opportunities to NTA.

When you look at serving the international inbound needs of NTA's North American-based operators, suppliers and destinations, our partnerships with IATO and Sister Cities fit the bill. India is a market with huge potential, and as NTA maintains the list of tour operators qualified to serve the U.S. inbound leisure group market from China, finding business opportunities for the Indian market also is of great value to NTA members. IATO members operate travel both to and from India, and NTA is working with its new partner to nurture this potential. With Sister Cities, its very essence is promoting cultural understanding and what better way to do this than through travel. NTA and Sister Cities are a perfect match as the members of our organizations can develop relationships for future business deals.

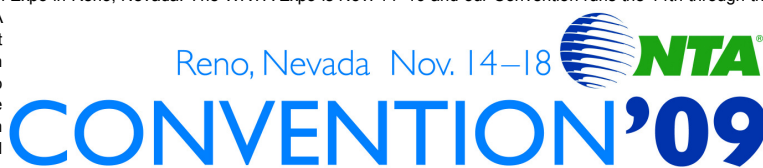
On the international outbound front, ATS and ATA are strong partners with NTA. This year, NTA will host its second Product Development Trip in conjunction with the ATS conference. ATS focuses on tourism development for U.S. professionals to transformational destinations, and this year we'll join them in Mecklenburg, Germany. NTA and ATS members will be together for the conference Oct. 26–29 and then have more time to network and learn from each other on the post-conference trip. NTA first worked with ATS in 2008 on a trip to Egypt following the conference, and this year promises another great experience as together we will celebrate history and the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Our partnership with ATA is very new, and the potential is tremendous by bringing NTA members interested in travel to African nations together with the experts at ATA. This relationship serves not only NTA's North American-based tour operators, but also our buyers from Italy, the UK and other areas.

NTA also has partnerships with Destination Marketing Association International and Sustainable Travel International that focus on education. We're charged with educating the decision makers at DMAI about the value of leisure travel. In many destinations, leisure travel is already raised to the level of importance enjoyed by the meetings and events business, but others are still behind when it comes to tourism marketing. Supporting sustainable travel is one of NTA's core values, so we are working with STI to educate members that sustainability and green travel is not a fad, but a way to save money, develop a marketing advantage and protect the future of what they sell—the earth. As a partner with STI, NTA is proud to endorse its Sustainable Tourism Eco-certification Program, the world's first comprehensive, global sustainable tourism eco-certification program. NTA members receive exclusive discounts on this program and other services offered by STI.

As I mentioned earlier, travel and tourism is fragmented, and it can be expensive to effectively work with different markets. NTA is addressing this head on with some of its partners through co-location of events to bring more value under one roof. The fewer trips our members make to reach their target markets, the better. This gives our members a better return on their investment in the NTA Convention, more opportunities for business and more access to education.

One example of this is our work with the United Motorcoach Association. We announced last year that our two organizations have been exploring co-locating our annual conventions within the next few years. We've already worked together the past couple of years. NTA took its product development expertise to UMA and managed the Destinations and Attractions Aisle at the UMA Expo. UMA has managed the motorcoach display at our Convention. It's the perfect fit.

This year we're excited to co-locate our NTA Convention and the World Religious Travel Expo in Reno, Nevada. The WRTA Expo is Nov. 14–16 and our Convention runs the 14th through the 18th. This opens doors for new markets and new buyers, all in just one trip. The WRTA Expo brings together buyers and sellers of faith-based travel products. The buyers at WRTA are primarily travel agents while many of the sellers are tour operators, in addition to destinations and suppliers. At Convention '09, NTA tour operators will have access to the WRTA Expo floor free of charge and WRTA buyers also will have free access to the NTA floor during the Destination Pavilion days. NTA suppliers and DMOs will be in contact with the estimated 250 buyers at WRTA through a number of combined networking events.



WRTA is working with another NTA partner, the National Association of Career Travel Agents, to bring its members to the WRTA Expo. It will be an incredible opportunity for these agents to not only meet with sellers of faith-based product, but also to meet with NTA operators, destinations and suppliers on the NTA business floor.

Earlier this year, NTA partnered with NACTA, which held its Western Regional Meeting in conjunction with our 2009 Spring Meet in Monterey, California. Our Spring Meet, which is an intimate, casual event for business, education and networking, was the perfect venue to nurture relationships between agents and operators, and we're already planning our next collaboration.

The bottom line as to why NTA develops these partnerships is to best serve our members. To be the gathering place for business in the packaged travel industry, NTA constantly seeks connections where our members can reach new partners, have access to expanded educational opportunities and work more efficiently. If we can do this in the spirit of collaboration, that's all the better.

Comments

[Add New](#) [Search](#)

Write comment

Name:

Email:   do not notify

Website:

Title:

UBBCode: **B**  **U**    



Please input the anti-spam code that you can read in the image.

[Next >](#)

Last Updated ( Wednesday, 19 August 2009 14:00 )

User Rating:      / 0

Poor      Best