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Booking Business Travel via the Internet

Portland, Oregon – April 4, 2007 – Since 2001 Topaz International has conducted comparative studies of corporate travel airfares between actual corporate travel agency booked itineraries and various public internet sites, including Orbitz, Expedia, Travelocity and airline direct websites. During the most recent results from 2006, Topaz found that business travel itineraries booked by a designated corporate travel agency averaged \$75 less than the same itinerary booked on a public internet site, one of the largest margins since 2002. In addition, the average agency fare and average internet fare were the highest they have been since 2002.

	Agency Fare Equal or Lower	Agency Fare Higher	Average Agency Fare	Average Internet Fare	Difference
2001	93.26%	6.74%	\$458	\$629	\$171
2002	91.13%	8.87%	\$594	\$748	\$154
2003	91.02%	8.98%	\$503	\$572	\$69
2004	93.57%	6.43%	\$478	\$558	\$80
2005	93.29%	6.71%	\$427	\$483	\$56
2006	94.03%	5.97%	\$508	\$583	\$75

Further evaluations were conducted to determine if the volumes of corporate airfare spend influenced the results. In the charts below, smaller corporations generally have higher priced airline tickets when compared to corporations with larger volumes of air spend. However, and very telling, some small sized corporations are spending less per ticket than some of their larger counterparts who should have greater discounts because of their volume.

2006	Agency Fare Lower	Agency Fare Equal	Agency Fare Higher	Average Agency Fare	Average Internet Fare	Difference
Less than \$20M	77.74%	17.34%	4.92%	\$436	\$473	\$37
\$20M to \$99M	80.29%	10.03%	9.68%	\$667	\$820	\$153
\$100M and Greater	90.53%	5.34%	4.13%	\$556	\$663	\$107

2005	Agency Fare Lower	Agency Fare Equal	Agency Fare Higher	Average Agency Fare	Average Internet Fare	Difference
Less than \$20M	83.13%	11.02%	5.8%	\$434	\$490	\$56
\$20M to \$99M	69.52%	22.80%	7.68%	\$416	\$464	\$48
\$100M and Greater	73.02%	18.2%	8.73%	\$431	\$504	\$73

2004	Agency Fare Lower	Agency Fare Equal	Agency Fare Higher	Average Agency Fare	Average Internet Fare	Difference
Less than \$20M	64.44%	28.32%	7.24%	\$501	\$574	\$73
\$20M to \$99M	85.63%	6.13%	8.24%	\$451	\$515	\$64
\$100M and Greater	97.01%	0.08%	2.91%	\$514	\$665	\$151

2003	Agency Fare Lower	Agency Fare Equal	Agency Fare Higher	Average Agency Fare	Average Internet Fare	Difference
Less than \$20M	64.14%	25.49%	10.37%	\$522	\$554	\$32
\$20M to \$99M	80.09%	11.82%	8.09%	\$490	\$602	\$112
\$100M and Greater	95.01%	0.35%	4.64%	\$445	\$581	\$136

“The five years of comparative airline purchasing patterns indicates that the online alternatives are not always cheaper, but in fact are higher than the past few years” said Bradley Seitz, President and CEO of Topaz International. “The game of distribution continues to be fragmented and a great cause for headaches all over the world. Full content is not full content, availability is not consistent, and as I have said in the past, the overriding desire of the airlines is to control and price their product where they can obtain the most value.”

“The complexity will continue. Airlines must raise their rates to compensate for the recent losses in the industry and the continuing rise of fuel costs. The challenge of every corporate travel leader will be to ensure that they have processes in place to locate and book the lowest alternatives, and validate that their service providers are giving the levels of contracted offerings that have been agreed to. What travel management companies have done, and proven here, is that they continue to show value to those that use them in both price and in service.”

Topaz International will continue to conduct these studies where we compare data between traditional booking sources and various internet sources, giving corporations the ability to measure the performance of their travel program against alternative distribution channels.

About TOPAZ International

Topaz International provides strategic support to the corporate travel management professional. With over 25 years of experience analyzing travel related expenditures, Topaz is a world leader in airfare & hotel auditing, providing benchmark information and consultancy services to improve the delivery of corporate travel services. Supporting travel managers, buyers and agencies, Topaz helps improve performance and facilitate cost savings.

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