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Latest TOPAZ Internet Studies Continue to Show Similar Results

Portland, OR: During the first six months of 2003, TOPAZ compared over 15, 000 agency-booked itineraries with various internet travel sites including Orbitz, Expedia, Travelocity and carrier-specific sites. TOPAZ found that itineraries booked through a designated corporate travel agency averaged \$60 less than the same itineraries booked on the public internet travel sites, saving corporations an additional 10% in airfare expenses. The average agency-booked fare during this time period was \$516 while the average fare booked through the internet sites was \$576.

The results of this study reflect a continued trend that supports managed corporate travel programs. However, with 8.42% of itineraries in our study coming back lower, the resulting 1,200 trips where the public internet sites did come back cheaper is a crack in the total success of the program. "The ability of the corporation's traditional reservation methods in tandem with their corporate internet sites to return the lowest fares is imperative to the successful running of a corporate travel program. As long as lower airfares are available on the internet for the exact same itineraries, travel managers will continue to receive calls from those travelers who find cheaper fares," according to Bradley Seitz, TOPAZ President and CEO.

Corporate travel managers are increasingly turning to web-search technologies through their agencies or online booking systems to ensure all resources are used to find the lowest fares. "The continued challenge will be how hard a travel manager wants to chase lower internet fares. The additional cost of searching various public web sites may prove to be too much to make it worthwhile. Technologies continue to be developed that will assist the corporations and travel management companies in this arena. In the end, travel managers must obtain the data and facts to work with internet sites, suppliers, and new technologies to make their programs the best they can be." stated Seitz.

TOPAZ International, Ltd., based in Portland, OR is an airfare auditing, benchmarking, and statistical information firm specializing in the use of knowledge and technology to reduce travel costs for business.

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Internet Comparisons January – June, 2003

Methodology

TOPAZ International, Ltd. is contracted by corporations and agencies to conduct comparison studies between the GDS booked fares vs. the internet fares. Itineraries are booked through a managed travel program (i.e. agency and/or online booking system). The itineraries are replicated on the requested internet booking sites. Sites included in the study include Orbitz, Expedia, Travelocity and various Airline websites.

Results

% of internet fares lower than corporate managed fares	8.42%	% internet fares higher than corporate managed fares	78.07%
Approx. # of itineraries in study	15,000	% of itineraries completed on each site	
		Orbitz	24%
Average Savings		Expedia	21%
Per itinerary	\$60	Travelocity	29%
Overall	10%	Airline Site	26%
Approx. total \$ included in study		Average fare	
Agency	\$8.2 million	Agency	\$516
Internet	\$9.1 million	Internet	\$576

