

MAX NAJAR, AXIS TRAVEL CENTRE

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1. ATIA name is still not in the minds on many Industry partners and especially with consumers. AFTA remains top-of-mind BUT this is NOT a criticism of ATIA marketing (yet) but ATIA has to be placed in front of ALL MEDIA (Consumer and Industry), GOVT, INDUSTRY and PAX.
2. It is OK to charge extra fees per year BUT must have and deliver extra value to us Agts as we have only intangible facts to give pax to trust us. The old Chargeback scheme when using cards was worthwhile, but with MINT and TRAVELPAY adopting similar systems then have ATIA strongly market and maybe recommend these products as we can expect Airlines and Supplier to go bust soon.
3. ATIA should promote and work stronger with CATO members and have Agts reference and book via these members more rather than any un-accredited CATO suppliers.
4. To establish an externally audit Trust Acc is really a lot of nice words ! . Does not work brilliantly though as an Audit on a Tuesday can be reversed in data on a Wednesday. Lawyers and Real Estate Agents and Accountants are brilliant in thwarting the system with frauds etc and this also applies to Agents. An externally audited separate Client acc (not necessarily trust !) is worthy but the ultimate test is unannounced "spot-audits" that are made against any Travel Agent at least 3 – 4 times per year and advertised to agts and media nd pax thus !! Yes this is scary but it will at least add teeth to the equation of trust, confidence and reliability. Sorry to say this but this will add weight and costs to the new breed of Home-Based advisors BUT we must, must consider the end-game, being the PAX trust and ability to rely upon any human advisor-no matter where or how they work if they wish to carry the ATIA accreditation symbol. Raise ATIA fees by a nominal amount and get QF or VA to sponsor flights for a forensic Accountant to do this work. Myself and Phil Hoffmann did this initially with the old AFTA-ATAQ system and it worked very well until the ;large Multi-National Networks decided that *"they dd not need this structure to verify their viability"* and it was discarded!! This was against old TCF legal advice to discard this protocol! YES-you will have agts hate this protocol BUT if systems and monies are balanced well-then there is no reason to worry. Monies paid by a PAX can ONLY BE USED for that PAX and a quick Audit with traceability should note this. There is no 100% perfect solution to guard against fraud, human greed and scams-but this will go a long way to decipher the solid agents against the unethical agents and also delete other "new" agents from applying for ATIA accreditations. Marketing such a protocol will also instil confidence by CATO members to do business with Agsts, and improve our confidence via all Media and instil PAX trust.
5. Minimum training of all staff in attending seminars, webinars, educationals, staff internal Training., ATIA trainings etc etc should be reConsidered as a minimum standard, say 20-30hrs

per human per year (verified) for front line selling staff at least. Once again-this is not uncommon in other Industries who promote themselves as professionals.

6. An absolute solid marketing campaign with Govt funding and ATIA support to state in all public and Media circles that using an ATIA agent demands respect and expect them to levy nominal fees for their experience, expertise and efficiencies. Make comparisons/analogies with other professions. Stop the rot of those minimal agents and OBE etc who do not levy fees. I say that *"If a Travel Agent/advisor cannot and does not add value to the travel equation then that agent/advisor should not exist . Adding value is NOT only in the price paid but in the overall advice, services, saving time, experience ongoing services and assistances that they offer as part of the complex travel equation"*.
7. ATIA should not be scared to publicly give examples and humiliate/upset the Airlines, Hoteliers and some suppliers. I am finding many Airlines are deceitful as are Hoteliers etc in requesting emails of pax and phone ## but then ask them to book direct to secure a lower rate, extra Freq Flyer points, upgrades, free Bfasts etc . I respect that some data MUST be applied to CRS and other bookings but these should NOT be used as a marketing avenue to communicate better/lower etc benefits to the same pax that we-as agents-worked so hard to secure and refer onwards, It is these same suppliers etc who ask us Agents to book them -especially when their sales are low! ATIA should communicate with them and let them know-without excuses-that ATIA agents are against such marketing and will call out them to all industry, including sharing this with ASTA, TAANZ, ATAS etc associations worldwide. If you add inexperienced sales-staff and incoming AI ability to sway a travel agents Pax onto such marketing ploys-you can understand our agency frustrations.
8. ATIA should engage and contract paid Travel agency/advisor experts from all states who are learned and experienced in the agency circle who own 2-10 staff Agency sizes and not rely upon the advice and ideas alone from multi-national Network giants who want to follow the pay scales of Elon Musk and really need not focus on the day-to-day struggles of an Agent.