

ASBTA: Travelers Booking Online Missing Out On Best Deals Travel Industry Has to Offer

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Meta-Search Engines Save Small Business Travelers Even More Time and Money

Small business travelers who book itineraries online may be missing out on substantial savings, especially if they're not using meta-search capabilities to find travel deals, reported the American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA). ASBTA is a national, non-profit alliance that provides valuable services and functions focused specifically on the travel needs and interests of small business owners.

"Traditional online travel agents -- such as Expedia, Travelocity and Orbitz -- are great, but new Web-based technologies called meta-search engines are really changing the nature of booking travel online," said Chet Gray, ASBTA vice president of Sales and Marketing. "Meta-searches can empower travelers to proactively create additional savings for themselves by searching a number of online outlets to find the best fares and schedules for their flight plans or hotel stays."

Meta-Searching Finds Best Deals

Like traditional travel search engines, meta-search engines provide small business travelers with a single location to search for the lowest prices on various travel services, such as flights, accommodation and car rentals. Unlike traditional search engines, however, meta-searching scours the entire Internet for the best deals, rather than just the major vendors. This means that meta-searches have the potential to uncover deals that might not be found on traditional travel search engines. An increasing number of travel meta-search sites are cropping up on the Internet, including Kyak.com, Mobissimo.com, SideStep, TravelGrove and TravelZoo. Even Yahoo! joined the fray with its 2004 acquisition of FareChase.

"Many travel experts are touting meta-searches as the next best thing for the travel industry and project that this year will see a dramatic increase in the number of players in this segment," said Gray.

More Information Equals Better Travel Choices

"In addition to lower airline fares and hotel rates, small business travelers can use the results of a meta-search engine to get more information and make the best choices possible," said Gray. "Our research indicates that price is important, but the availability of flights for the right travel time is also one of the top issues when it comes to making purchase decisions.

"Saving money on travel by booking online has never been easier," said Gray. "For many, it's just a matter of knowing where to look and how to maximize savings based on what's out there. We believe that meta-searches are one of the best developments in the online travel industry and recommend that small business travelers explore this option."

About ASBTA:

The American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA) is a national, non-profit organization serving small business travelers by providing information regarding resources and services, savings on air fares, car rentals, and accommodations, as well as and technology designed to improve and enhance the travel experience. To achieve its mission, ASBTA will utilize an integrated communication program while working closely with travel-industry companies in sectors such as airlines, hotels and lodging, car rental companies, travel agencies and other companies that serve small business travelers. If you're a small business owner and want to learn more, visit our site and register (free until December 1, 2005) at www.asbta.com.

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