



News from America's Largest Travel Trade Show Shopping and Dining Venues Come into Own at Pow Wow

TRADE SHOWS ARE AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE OVERALL TOURISM MARKETING PROGRAM FOR MANY SHOPPING CENTERS. *If you spend the time and money to participate, it is imperative that you select the shows appropriate for your center and really work them.*

Pow Wow, this country's largest travel trade show, is produced by Travel Industry Association of America (TIA). This year it was held in New York City in May, and was by far the best Pow Wow I have ever attended, with over 5200 delegates, a 10% increase over last year. Although last year's Pow Wow in Los Angeles was the first upbeat, successful Pow Wow since 9/11, it was nothing like this year. A couple of factors led to this year's success. First New York City was an attraction, and second, international travel to the US is on the rise. Other factors include the weak dollar and improving economies in some of our major markets.

TIA estimates that more than \$3 billion in travel to the US over the next three years will result from contracts negotiated at this show. An estimated 10%, or \$300 million, will be for travel to New York City and New York State.

The Most Efficient Trade Show

If you are interested in attracting international markets to your center, but are not sure how to approach such a monumental task, Pow Wow is for you. There is no more efficient

way to talk to so many tour operators in a few days. This year, there were 1300 buyers from 70 countries (compared to 1200 buyers last year), and 185 were new buyers. As an added bonus, TIA now allows appointments with domestic operators, as most suppliers prefer to sell to both the international and the domestic markets. Also, a record 456 members of the international and domestic press were registered.

Several highlights from this show are worth noting. After much effort, shopping and dining venues are finally considered an important part of the travel experience. For years, we were considered "value added."

What has helped this change in perception are the "commissionable packages" and the fact that tour operators can now make money from shopping venues. The leader in commissionable package programs is Shop America Tours'

website www.shopamerica-tours.com. Member malls can post their commissionable packages on the website and do not have to worry about the bookkeeping. Since Shop America Tours was launched just 18 months ago, over 4500 packages have been sold. (I have done commissionable packages on my own, and it is very much a challenge to gain the same kind of exposure yourself. Even if you could contract with a large number of operators, the bookkeeping would be a nightmare.)

"We have worked hard to establish relationships with many of the leading tour operators and travel partners, including Gray Line Worldwide, Mark Travel International, United Vacations, Southwest Vacations, Expedia.com, Orbitz.com, Travelocity.com, Keith Prowse, AlliedTPro and many more," explained Michael O'Connell, executive director of Shop America.

"Participating in Pow Wow gives us the opportunity to seek out the top international tour operators and meet with them one-on-one to establish a relationship, and subsequently contract with them. This just gives added value to www.shopamericatours.com and can even generate revenue back to the center," explained O'Connell. He went on to say, "This year's Pow Wow was a great success for Shop America Tours and our participating shopping centers. As a result of meetings during the show we



DESTINATION MAP | TRAVEL TRADE

Las Vegas, Nevada



Desert Passage at The Aladdin
With dozens of stores unique to Las Vegas, plus award-winning restaurants, The Shops in Desert Passage at the Aladdin are a delightful oasis to escape the ordinary. [Click here to view the packages.](#)

Fashion Outlets
Fashion Outlets - To call it just a mall would be to call Las Vegas just a desert town. Save up to 75% at more than 100 designer outlets. In addition to transportation this package includes the following amenities: Choose from the Shop & Shuttle Package or Shop & Dine & Shuttle Package. [Click here to view the packages.](#)



Fashion Show
One of the nation's largest shopping centers and Las Vegas' premier retail destination, Fashion Show showcases 250 extraordinary shops and restaurants with seven flagship department stores, including Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's, Dillard's, Robinsons-May, and Nevada's debut of Bloomingdale's Home and Nordstrom. [Click here to view the packages.](#)

Forum Shops at Caesars
The Forum Shops at Caesars boasts a unique atmosphere that simulates ancient Roman streets and has no visual rival in the world. Where else can you shop at high-fashion stores among dazzling surroundings, including fountains, statues and facades? The Forum Shops offers fabulous shopping in a visually stunning atmosphere! [Click here to view the packages.](#)



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were able to contract with another six operators and to generate leads for dozens more.”

Behind-the-Scenes Opportunity

Another highlight was learning about the importance of technical tours, especially as they relate to shopping centers. It is not uncommon to find a group planning a trip to the US from the retail or shopping center industry in another country that wants to see how we operate here. They value a “behind the scenes” tour of malls. Paul Kastner, SCMD VP-director of marketing-retail for Grand Central Terminal and a first-time participant at Pow Wow said, “Not only was I impressed with the professionalism of this show, I was thrilled when a top Japanese tour operator told me he was planning to bring a group of retailers from a train station in Japan to New York City and wondered if I could schedule a tour! We have since hosted the group and they were most impressed with the retail/dining component of Grand Central as well as how well the building was restored. I was able to get insight into how

our families and visitors from those who wish to harm us and welcoming those who wish us well. One of the most interesting aspects of the show was keynote speaker General Colin Powell. He spoke of the importance of the travel industry in crafting the image of the US. He went on to discuss the importance of building international alliances to promote democracy and peace, and the travel industry’s role in that mission.

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Another interesting finding was in the Saturday, May 7, 2005 issue of *International Pow Wow Daily*. The article, entitled “Study Explores Shopping Patterns of Overseas Visitors,” starts out by saying, “Shopping continues to rank the

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their operation is both similar and dissimilar to ours. It was a great sharing experience.”

Need for Balance

While the visa issue is still a problem for travelers to the US, it was not brought up by the tour operators, as it has been in the past. Also, TIA President and CEO Roger Dow is taking on the challenge of improving the worldwide image of the US. He feels it is necessary to strike a balance between protecting



How to Quantify Results from a Trade Show

Some suggestions:

- The number of contracts you sign to become a part of a tour operator's voucher system.
- The number of commissionable packages you sell to new tour operators.
- How many new groups did you bring in as a result of the show?
- How many new partnerships, such as with hotels, did you form?
- Do a cost-to-reach-per-person analysis for each show and compare.

Pow Wow

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highest on the list of activities overall for international travelers while visiting the US. In fact, nine out of 10 (87%) of overseas and Mexican air travelers (16.8 million) shopped during their visit to America's shores in 2003. While shopping is the number-one activity for international travelers, they also want to explore the culture and ethnicity of the place they are visiting, according to Taubman Centers." This is Taubman's second study on the topic. Both were conducted in cooperation with the US Department of Commerce.

General Growth Steps Out

A show such as Pow Wow is often the venue to introduce new product. For example, General Growth Properties introduced a new national tourism program featuring 43 of their 200+ centers, branding them as "America's Premier Shopping Places." The program, which integrated The Rouse Company's tourism centers with the GGP tourism centers after their recent merger, includes a new trade and media sales campaign, branding and collaterals.

"In our strategic plan, Pow Wow was where we wanted to launch the new GGP tourism brand and campaign in order to maintain both companies' existing business relationships and to inform the travel industry of our expanded tourism center portfolio," said Susan Houck, VP of marketing for General Growth Properties. "GGP had a major presence at

the show, with a double booth, two hosted lunch tables, a private press conference and the debut of all-new collaterals promoting our variety of tourism offerings, including a new visitor incentive program, 'Premier Passport,' offered at all 43 of America's Premier Shopping Places nationwide," Houck added.

Making the Most of the Show

Another valuable aspect of participating in a trade show such as Pow Wow is the opportunity to network with suppliers you always want to meet with to discuss a partnership program but never have the time.

If cost is an issue, share a booth with your destination marketing organization. Not only does it cost you nearly half, but you also spend a minimal amount to purchase an extra set of appointments, one for you and for your partner. You end up with more contacts for less money than if you took your own booth.

You must work the show – before, during and after! To be successful, you must research and find the best tour operators for your destination and your product. During the show, attend everything and network. After the show, follow up with the tour operators on a timely basis. For more information on effectively working the trade shows, see JONESREPORT November 2004 and January 2005 issues.

While in a particular city, it is also a good idea to stay a couple of extra days to make sales calls. Shop America Alliance took advantage of this and scheduled two days of calls to

tour operators, travel agents and receptive tour operators. Sales presentations and a dinner function were scheduled. "This gave us an opportunity to further promote www.shopamerica.com by hosting training sessions with the employees of some major companies," said O'Connell. As tired as you might be after a trade show like this (and we were all tired), it was a perfect way to wrap up a week of hard work.

We are continuing this series of articles on tourism every other month and would like to focus on some of the more innovative tourism programs. Please submit your programs to me, either via e-mail CFeims1000@aol.com, fax 732/545-3138 or mail. If possible, include samples of your graphics via e-mail. Full credit will be given to the person or team responsible for the program. Visit our new web site: www.cjfmarketinginternational.com. ■

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