

1. PERSONAL BENEFITS

Tour Operators

PERSONALLY (Members of an Organization)

- ◆ Developing personal relationships in professional environment
- ◆ Talk Face-to –Face with suppliers; exchange information
- ◆ Better able to think outside the box
- ◆ Expanded relations and knowledge of supplier products
- ◆ Satisfaction from having a voice in the industry and doing my part to make a difference

Notes: Industry marketing
Trends (doing my part)
M of O

Suppliers

PERSONAL Benefits of Membership

- ◆ Networking/Contacts
- ◆ Friendship/Relationships
- ◆ Travel to new places

Synopsis

This is probably one of the greatest strengths that SkiTops has. The networking that takes place has been the attraction that surrounds the Fall Conference as an event. The ability to develop relationships that can override seasonal ups and downs is critical to the personal feelings and organizational support of SkiTops and the benefit it brings to its Members. It is my opinion that this alone has been what Suppliers have continually used to justify the expense of coming each year. I also feel that SkiTops made a significant step forward by examining the trends of the coming decade (See Trends) reinforcing the need of some members to be able to see the big picture and “do their part.” If time permitted, it would of benefited the group to examine and share “best practices” throughout the industry and among the Suppliers. In hind sight, this should of become the focus for the Suppliers meeting from 0900 –1200 on Thursday morning hosted by Ken, Kris and myself. I still feel tha the overview of the website tools given by Ken was of value due to the large number of first-tine Suppliers who had not been to a Fall meeting.

2. PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS

Tour Operators

PROFESSIONALLY (Organization of Members)

- ◆ Understanding of partners/suppliers and their challenges in the industry (*Strategic*)
- ◆ Opportunity to work together towards great cooperation
- ◆ Networking
- ◆ Stay in tune with industry and technology and best practices and people
- ◆ Exchange ideas with contemporaries and other TO

Notes: What are TO doing?
TO Survey
O of M

Suppliers

PROFESSIONAL Benefits

- ◆ Relationship building and networking
- ◆ Preferred Partnerships (better understanding and higher familiarity)
- ◆ Education 1 on 1 (Ongoing contracting)

Synopsis

Professionally speaking, this is where the TO's are separated from the Suppliers. Because Tour Operators started SkiTops, the long-term, global or big-picture perspective needed to drive the organization is found in this group. The Suppliers still see the organization as self-serving since up to this point they have had no input into the formal organization. That perspective will begin to change as representation on the Board from the Suppliers becomes a reality and Suppliers are asked and sometimes forced to deal with issues that are affected by industry, technological, and property changes. The "secrecy" of Tour Operator business and a need to know what the TO's are dealing with in the industry is now on the table for discussion and development. This was a HUGE step forward in building a strategic partnership between the two groups. This dissolution of separate entities into "one" governing body and the selection of such a talented individual to represent Suppliers have done more to build this organization, strategically, than anything else. Copper represented the cultural merging of the two groups; Alyeska represented the strategic merging of the two groups.

3. REPUTATION

Tour Operators

- ◆ #1 source that consumers should go to for credible information and travel packages
- ◆ Good housekeeping seal of approval (*Consumer vs Trade; Elements ie. FDIC*)
- ◆ Members are leaders in ski industry and inspire trust by the consumer
- ◆ Quality and ethical business practices (*Industry*)
- ◆ Represent top companies with industry leaders
- ◆ Best professional networking in the industry
- ◆ Trendsetters (*University Certificates*)

REPUTATION

Suppliers

- ◆ Integrity/ Accountability/Trust
- ◆ Preferred Resources (SkiTops Tools for Lodging, Resorts, Transportation)
- ◆ Innovative Experts

Synopsis

Reputation is implied credibility and accountability based upon performance. Up to this point, SkiTops has been unable to develop any type of widespread reputation within the industry, except for the affiliation of the Vision committee with NSAA. It is incumbent upon the Tour Operators to get Suppliers to become the advance “marketeters” making the TO’s items a reality. I believe that reciprocity is the key here, as Suppliers should be asked what industry conferences, trade shows or events the TO’s can attend in order to expand the awareness of the benefits of being a member of the organization. A marketing packet should be designed using the website (our largest sources of SkiTops marketing although internally) as the source of information and distributed through the Suppliers network of resorts, transportation, etc. TO’s can set up their own booth and share the benefits of joining...unless there are organizational restraints which I am unaware of. TO’s can set up visibility here if for no other reason than to “tap” into the Suppliers side and get a feel for what expectations are out there for an organization like SkiTops. A quick survey, a promotional demonstration of the website, etc are all things that can be explored. Ken Castle’s role as PAO just got bigger. In short, this is where we can begin to influence the industry to our strategic goals and strengthen our “political” ability.

4. CHANGES AS KING OR QUEEN

Tour Operators

KING OR QUEEN

- ◆ Increase membership (Orientation packet, mentor program, Session Ambassadors, Session objectives, FAQ section on website)
- ◆ More time for open discussion in TO meeting (Restructure conference agenda for more working time)
- ◆ Supplier involvement on Board (Roles and Responsibilities, By- laws, Communiqués)

Suppliers

KING OR QUEEN CHANGES

- ◆ Increased year round business for all
- ◆ Supplier Board representative/membership (Define roles, 2nd supplier rotation)
- ◆ Increased loyalty and Preferred partners

SYNOPSIS

Three major items come to light here—marketing collateral, Board representation and restructuring the fall conference. As mentioned in my conversation with David, the Board must be aware of the issues surrounding succession and commitment to serving on the Board.. The mindset of the board must be that it is time to move from this period of transition and stability to the next set of rapids as SkiTops moves out into the industry. The people selected must be marketing oriented and be able to see the industry as an opportunity to build organizational credibility as well as continue to develop Supplier confidence in becoming a member. Industry, as well individual benefits to joining SkiTops, must be developed and marketed from both a Tour Operator and a Supplier perspective of expectations. An orientation program for new members is now a must and should be written by a group of Suppliers, a Board Member as well as Ken Castle and Ken Overstreet. This could become another ad-hoc committee and should become one of the first action items for the Supplier Representatives(s) to the Board.

The roles and responsibilities for the Supplier Rep to the Board need to be written and reviewed by both Board members and Suppliers. I would have Supplier Rep choose 5 people (the nominees would be a good start) to come up with the R & R (Roles and Responsibilities) for the Board's review and input. This also can become an ad-hoc committee for the sole purpose of writing the R & R's only to be dissolved after the task is done. R & R's could be posted to the website and Ken could send out a blast fax or email to notify everyone to visit the site and see what was developed. At the same time recognition and kudos need to be given to the committee for its work. Communication issues from Kris to the Suppliers should be upright and objective. Here is where Andrew Milne comes in handy. Also, the issue of overlapping tenures for Supplier representation was brought up to ensure communication and continuity.

As noted by Andrew Milne, the agenda has to come out well enough in advance so that he and the board can review it. Supplier issues need to be gathered up and factored into the Agenda well in advance of the conferences. A form with guidelines for submitting issues and concerns should be developed on the website with a link to the Supplier Rep. Submittals do not always guarantee inclusion into the agenda. Perhaps the first 3-hour session of the conference could be for individual Tour Operator and Supplier as Groups with the second 3-hour session being a collaborative, joint continuation of the issues that came out in the first session. This joint session and additional time may be what is needed to give the organization a chance to improve communication and integration issues affecting both groups.

It was mentioned that mentors should be used to bring new members into the organization and I agree. Perhaps a welcome committee could be developed to identify new members to the conference(s) and a quick FAQ session held for them. This would continue to build the partnership already in place and give new people a chance to ask educated questions. Perhaps a section on the website for new members with a FAQ section they can go to before they arrive at the conference site.

5. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

Tour Operators

Opportunities

1. Expand University (More Info on Year Round, Certificates, FAQ)
2. Working on Aspect to increase business
3. Educate consumers about advantages of packages through ST TO
4. Free Sell Calendar needs commitment of minor and major vendors per resort
5. NSAA and Vision strategy (Invitation to NSAA to attend SkiTops and need pilot resorts, information packet of what it takes to host program)

Suppliers

Opportunities to expand

- ◆ Airlines
- ◆ Car Rental Companies
- ◆ Need more TO's--Domestic
- ◆ CEO's of Ski Resorts
- ◆ CEO of other trade Assocs.
- ◆ Inform and Invite our Honorary Members of our Meeting
- ◆ Increase sales
- ◆ Year Round focus
- ◆ Tour Ops commitment to use SkiTops Tools

SYNOPSIS

The focus of this question was the commitment each group would have to the other group in supporting the efforts and time it takes to fully utilize the tools developed over the past three years before we move on. The expansion of the University and the use of the Calendar are two of the most interactive components of the committees' efforts and therefore the most visible. The use of these tools will be a litmus test for trust and commitment expected from both groups. This trust and commitment will help the Suppliers recommend additional Tour Operators to the organization. The Vision committee with its affiliation to NSAA and the need for Pilot resorts to market the program will be an important part of SkiTops visibility at a property level. This bird (SkiTops) on the elephant's back (NSAA) should be maximized with clear intent and purpose with recognition and follow up promo pieces abounding.

It is obvious and it is time to bring an Industry specialist who is notable in a tangential market of SkiTops. It is important to keep a perspective on the big picture with an eye towards a greater understanding of the industry and interconnectedness and not let the speaker do a sales pitch for their company. We must be careful here and Andrew's help will be greatly appreciated. Also, we could develop some incentives to get the CEO's and Directors of the Supplier operations to come to the next Fall meeting or even the Spring meeting. Depending upon the style and personality of the individual we could offer them their choice.

6. FALL MEETING

Fall Meeting Reasons

Tour Operators

- ◆ Sharing best practices and ideas
- ◆ Chance to give input on future development and direction of SkiTops
- ◆ Opportunity to change and improve way we do business together
- ◆ Learn what SkiTops is all about
- ◆ Opportunity to learn about host resort

Reasons to Attend Fall Meeting

Suppliers

- ◆ Benchmark the competition
- ◆ Discuss trends/education and industry direction
- ◆ Face time in a casual setting

Synopsis

The ebb and flow of the fall meeting needs to be discussed in parallel with the development of the agenda. With more input into the agenda from Suppliers who are responding to the market, we must remain flexible in order to take quick action to address those submitted issues, which are the greatest concern to SkiTops members.

Session outcomes need to be developed within the agenda so that attendees can make an educated choice if they would like to attend or if something in the agenda could apply to someone else who could be invited thus expanding our numbers. It was decided that the conference would always be held during the last week of August. Periodic announcements should go out

throughout the year in print to increase exposure and awareness of SkiTops role within the industry. Dialogue should begin with Suppliers to see what can be done to develop shoulder seasons and a year round continuity of experience at the resort level.

Let me mention here, that it is important that the Tour Operators continually be looking for ways to show the benefits of wholesale to any and all Suppliers and how wholesaling approaches can enhance revenue streams within the Suppliers operation—throughout the entire year; that is year round. ☺