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Maritz Travel Insight:

The Key To Motivating Your Diverse Workforce



Domestic and international travel remains a popular and sought after experience for a majority of Americans.

For those in charge of incentive programs, continuing to raise the bar each year while maintaining the desired effect of the program – motivating the workforce – is quite challenging. It is especially difficult for managers of incentive programs with recurring top performers and large groups of 1000 or more, as there are only a small number of properties in the world that can provide top-notch experiences for groups of this size.

But the travel incentive challenge goes deeper than merely finding new locales and accommodations for large groups of earners who qualify each year. Workforces – particularly sales forces – are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of their cultural background, where they live, and their attitudes and expectations.

As the American workforce changes, incentive program managers also must take into consideration the disparate ages, sexes, cultures, background, and thus, preferences of their employee base or channel partners. What motivates a 25-year-old African-American female from New York can be quite different than what motivates a 50-year-old white male from Phoenix.

The growing number of satellite and virtual offices also poses a problem. Incentive program managers must motivate people living and working throughout the US and abroad. Many are asking themselves questions similar to, “How do I motivate my Caribbean employees if my yearly incentive trip is to the Caribbean?”

Finally, many incentive program managers are under pressure to improve their sales numbers beyond what a group of top performers can deliver. The answer may lie in uncovering ways to motivate the so-called “middle performers,” while continuing to reward their best performers.

In the past, decisions regarding destination, length of trip, and activities have been made on an ad hoc basis with little participant insight and understanding of how programs could be improved to provide the maximum motivation for the largest segment of participants.

Maritz has met the challenge of motivating a large, diverse workforce by partnering with its own integrated research company, Maritz Research. Maritz Research scientists have designed Maritz Travel Insight, a survey and analysis tool that helps companies determine the optimal incentive travel award that will motivate their large, unique workforces. This one-of-a-kind tool allows



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companies to design their incentive travel programs based on the voice of the end customer – the incentive program participant – as opposed to guessing based on instinct, past experience, managerial judgment, and general beliefs.

Travel Insight Survey Methodology

The Maritz Travel Insight survey measures the impact on motivation of several different “attributes” that make up an incentive travel program. The survey participants are shown two different trips side by side and are asked to choose the one they would work harder to earn. For example, an employee taking the Maritz Travel Insight survey looks at two trips, Trip A and Trip B. Trip A offers ten different destination choices at a large luxury hotel for a four-night stay. Employees can choose between four dates to travel and may bring a guest, but no children. Trip B offers only one destination, at a large luxury hotel with a five-night stay. This trip is offered on only one date and also allows participants to bring a guest, but no children. The employee must choose between Trip A and Trip B. They repeat this choice exercise several times with systematically different trip options and attributes to consider.

The survey also asks participants about activity choices.

For example, out of four trip activities:

- (1) local dining/restaurants
- (2) cultural experiences (such as destination-specific cooking [i.e., Cajun, French], art/painting lessons, etc.)
- (3) scenic/nature tours, and
- (4) hunting/fishing

Participants must choose one activity they would like to do most and one they would like to do least. They do this repeatedly with different subsets of activities.

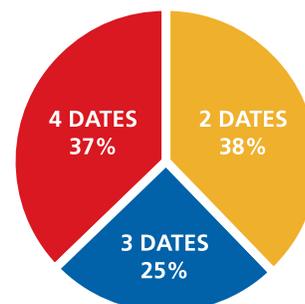
Using this methodology, Maritz quantifies which trip designs and trip activities have the highest motivation rates among all respondents as well as sub-groups of respondents.

Once the survey is completed, program managers can work with an easy-to-use decision support tool to carve out employee groups by age, sex, and other demographic features to determine which trips and activities best motivate these sub-groups within the company or channel. They can then use this tool to determine which options will best motivate participants for the money spent. For example, the program manager can view how a four-day trip motivates parents with children at home, compared to a seven-day trip. Or, the manager may view how Gen X employees respond to having a choice of two dates for a trip rather than one.

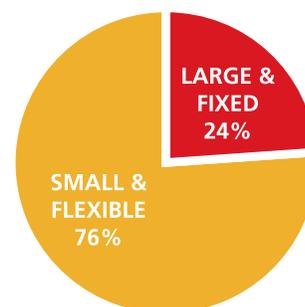
* Indicates percentage of respondents who prefer a choice of 2, 3 or 4 different trip dates.

** Indicates percentage of respondents who prefer a smaller trip with more flexibility or a large trip with fixed activities.

Date flexibility*



Trip size/opportunity for choice**



This tool can be particularly powerful in providing an understanding of the travel award structure that will be most motivating to the middle performers. It provides the information needed to design a program that can help “move the middle” and generate incremental effort and revenues.

A Case for Choice

Maritz worked with a major financial services company to design a multiple-destination travel award program for its incentive program participants. Those who achieve their goals choose their travel award from a host of offerings, like touring wineries in the Italian countryside, accompanying an animal safari in Africa, backpacking in the Australian outback, or a family trip to Orlando. The company has found that employees are more motivated when offered a choice of experiences, destinations and departure dates because they work harder to earn a trip that is personally appealing and meaningful.

Additionally, this company uses its incentive travel program to demonstrate the company's culture to newly-hired sales recruits. The new recruits see first-hand the camaraderie and once-in-a-lifetime experiences their colleagues receive when they meet or exceed their individual performance goals. The experience doesn't just drive new hires to perform well throughout the year. Building strong bonds between novice salespeople and their colleagues compels them to stay with the company for many years. In fact, this particular Maritz client has one of the financial services industry's highest employee retention rates, which the company attributes in large part to its incentive program.

By addressing diversity in their workforce through a multiple destination award structure, the company is able to reinforce their values, build employee loyalty, and consistently achieve growth objectives with more than 50 percent of their eligible participants qualifying each year.

Key Findings

When Maritz conducted the Travel Insight survey among people who have participated in an incentive travel program within the past ten years, the overall, nationwide results were as follows:

- Smaller trip sizes that allow choice of destinations, dates, and activities are vastly preferred over larger trip sizes with less traveler choice
- Program length, all expenses paid, and the ability for people to choose the type of individuals they travel with, i.e., families or adults only, were the next most important attributes
- There is a great deal of variety among respondents in terms of their preferences – at least four distinct segments of respondents

- Beach/sun/water sport activities and leisure/unscheduled time were the two types of activities most preferred by respondents, but there is even more respondent variety in activity preference by sub-group than in program attribute preference

While these results may differ according to each company's unique situation, they demonstrate that:

- Incentive travel program participants will work harder toward their individual performance goals when they are given travel award choices
- One size does not fit all, when it comes to incentive travel program structures and/or activities
- A diverse employee and/or channel partner base will respond very positively to travel reward programs that provide date, destination and activity flexibility

Conclusion

As Maritz's own nationwide Travel Insight survey reports, 76 percent of respondents prefer smaller trips that offer choice in dates, destinations and activities vs. 24 percent who prefer larger trip sizes with less traveler choice. These results indicate that more top performers, as well as program participants who haven't qualified in past years, could be motivated to higher performance levels if offered more appealing choices based on their stated preferences.

Maritz's experience in designing and operating client programs offers additional anecdotal proof. Clients that have allowed participants to a) choose between a family or adult-only trip or b) choose a date that fits their schedule or c) go on the type of trip they prefer, have seen both an increase in qualifiers and a reenergized top-performer group, with sales results exceeding prior years' performance.

In addition to performance improvements, many of Maritz's clients who offer more choices are seeing cultural changes within their program participants. Employees and/or channel partners who believe their incentive travel program sponsor is listening to their desires, and acting upon them, generally have more positive attitudes and are more loyal to the company.

The Maritz Travel Insight tool is designed to help managers better predict what will motivate participants in incentive travel programs to ultimately improve company performance. Using Maritz's scientifically-proven methodology to derive fact-based information from program participants, companies are able to identify the highest performance-boosting incentive travel program structure for their participants.



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