



OTA 2006 Advisory Forum – The Idea Market
Wednesday, April 26, 2006 1:15pm-2:45pm Royal Ballroom CD

Description:

Do you ever feel that the best part of a conference happens between sessions in casual discussions? Attend this Idea Market where Conversation Leaders and Facilitators stir up lively discourse with attendees on a variety of topics in a highly interactive, fluid session. Share your experiences, or just listen in. Find out how other travel companies have addressed real world business questions relative to OTA. Join a brainstorming group and actively participate in a discussion of one or more topics of interest. This is your chance to find people interested in talking about the topics you are most interested in discussing. The format creates an opportunity for people from different backgrounds to learn from the experience of others and generate new Idea.

How the Session Will Be Conducted: All Audience Participation, All the Time

An Idea Market uses an open street market as a metaphor. It takes place in a large meeting room with no chairs. Rather than stalls selling vegetables or other wares, there are several idea stations each with a Facilitator and a Conversation Leader to lead the discussion and a flipchart to use as visuals.

After a brief introduction and a few starter questions and answers, each Facilitator leads a discussion around a chosen topic, posts the questions or issues to explore about the topic, and records the Idea that come up during the discussion. As sheets fill up, they are taped on the wall so attendees can see the points covered.

Idea Market attendees are free to roam around the room, shopping for Idea until they find a topic or discussion of interest. They can listen, voice their opinions, offer their experience, and get involved in the discussion. Attendees are welcome to stay at one station during the session or move around as they like, which often makes for variety of input and dynamic discussion among attendees. Attendees can choose to have a dialogue or a multilogue (where there is more than one discussion going on in the group).

OTA Idea Market Session topics and starter questions:

1. What can OTA as an organization offer to members and non-members to make them more successful?
 - As they participate in OTA workgroups and committees?
 - How can OTA help justify participation in OTA in their workplace?
 - What kind of recognition can OTA provide?
 - How can OTA increase participant's expertise?
 - Should OTA provide more networking opportunities?
 - How would the offerings differ by travel segment?
 - How would the offerings differ by region of the world?
 - Why do you participate?
2. What should OTA be looking at to make its message structure more valuable to support your companies' objectives?
 - Message architecture and emerging technologies
 - Documentation options
 - Implementation tools
 - Other forms of communication like forums, blogs or chat rooms
 - New messages
3. Should OTA facilitate message exchange across suppliers?
 - Is a GDS by-pass feasible? In what situations?

- Is the super-PNR achievable? Who would own it and who could access it? How would OTA support it?
 - How can customer service be enhanced? Who would pay for it? What would the ROI be?
 - Is a la carte packaging really what the traveler wants? If so, who would 'own' the customer? How would suppliers communicate?
 - What privacy concerns should be considered?
4. How can OTA provide value to companies in the travel industry?
- What is the value proposition to companies for participating in the OTA and adopting the standard?
 - How can the OTA be more effective at getting visibility with the decision makers within an organization?
 - How does that value change between industry verticals?
 - How can the OTA assist in better communicating and adopting the standard within organizations?

After the Idea Market:

Facilitators will report out briefly on their group's two top discussion points to all attendees. All flipchart topics and brainstorming Idea will be transcribed and made available to all Advisory Forum attendees.



OTA 2006 Advisory Forum – The Ideas Market Topics and Responses
Wednesday, April 26, 2006

5. What can OTA as an organization offer to members and non-members to make them more successful?

As they participate in OTA workgroups and committees?

How can OTA help justify participation in OTA in their workplace?

What kind of recognition can OTA provide?

How can OTA increase participant's expertise?

Should OTA provide more networking opportunities?

How would the offerings differ by travel segment?

How would the offerings differ by region of the world?

Why do you participate?

Responses:

- Need more exposure internationally – can we leverage the agreement with UNWTO?
- Maybe could do an Advisory Forum Lite in Europe or connect up with other European conferences/organizations.
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- What can we do to entice new members and growth?
- Do people know what we have to offer?
- The business message needs to be portrayed better.
- Need to get the word out that the major players in travel are participating in OTA.
- Maybe have a program that if you get a new member, you get a discount (pjh – I know we used to have this, not sure if we still do)
- Need to look at incentives by member type – vendors/suppliers
- Perhaps our forum should be back to back with HTNG
- Perhaps for a company attending the Forum for the first time, give them one free registration.

- Would giving members an OTA logo to display on their sites be helpful? Yes
- Perhaps we should have levels of membership (such as gold, platinum, etc.) based on number of messages implemented.

- Need to highlight better the benefits of membership –
- Get to be on the listserves
- Maybe members get the spec free; non-members have to pay a nominal fee.
- Maybe there should be penalties for not participating – such as, losing voting privileges

- Is there something we could do to encourage NBTA – maybe offer/do something that is only open to members of both NBTA and OTA?
- When someone joins, need to have someone (from the appropriate workgroup) call them, rather than just sending an e-mail.
- Maybe it is time to get out of our travel verticals and have more merged work groups that work on project team proposals. These groups could do more than just messages – are there some of the arch items that could be done by another merged group.

- Send out a questionnaire to members asking them to fill in a couple of bullets of 'what is important to me'
- Get new members involved in speaking as to why they joined and others should join.
- It would be helpful to have materials to take back following an OTA forum so that people can go back and immediately show their management what they heard/learned.
- Provide information on how you get OTA work going in your own company and keep momentum going.



- More internships – not just travel, but may marketing/PR students who could do some of our marketing/PR work for us.
- Statement was made that if we are marketing the same way today that we were a year ago, then we aren't marketing correctly.
- Need to transition from technical to marketing. Need to look at from the top down.
- More examples of messages
- Provide info on what technical and communication layers everyone is using.
- Provide a test system to ping off of. Provide an aggregated web services sandbox that everyone can test against. Perhaps find companies that would offer some space on their test system if the other company were an OTA member.
- Marketing networking - in large cities, get an OTA member company to sponsor a half day event and invite potential member companies in the area to find out what OTA is all about. (See Jennifer G. for more info on this)

6. What should OTA be looking at to make its message structure more valuable to support your companies' objectives?

Message architecture and emerging technologies

- Time Split:
 - 80% improving documentation
 - 20% new development

Documentation options

- Documentation needed may vary by workgroup. E.g. Hotel seems to have a lot of variability, with some messages well documented, and some not
- Some examples are too short to be useful; too much ambiguity in how it's really being used in "the field" and not in how it was designed to be used.
- Purpose – need to know what each message is intended for?
- Need structured diagram about message – object diagram
- The HITIS message model was recommended as useful.
- Use case scenarios – need to know all of the different use cases for the messages.
- What's in message – boxes & arrows diagrams
- Need more specific guidance for documentation. Need a template for the MUG that details use case, description etc.
- List of usage profiles – more than 1-2 – need list of 12. Currently messages might have 1-2 usage profiles, but people could be using the message for MANY different purposes. We need more like 12 usage profiles, not just 1 or 2.
- Would like to know other scenarios in which the message has been implemented. Would implementers be willing to share their scenarios? (Chuan Yu, Hotel Info Systems would be willing to publish scenarios for some of her implementations)
- Sample XML is often out-of-date with message.

How do we keep the documentation up-to-date, without spending all of our time rewriting it?

- Could we have a Wiki – where people could post real-world examples?
- Sample instances are not real world; we need real world examples.
- We now have a good pool of messages – but we need good emphasis on documentation to help new people
- Once a business relationship has been reached, the trading partner usually provides sample instances, usage profiles etc, but attendees expressed a need for more concrete instances prior to signing agreement with partner. (Could this also help drive membership? –cw)
- Time Split: Creating all of this documentation is a huge endeavor. How should the OTA balance new message development vs. documentation? Our discussion suggested that the VAST



- majority of resources should be spent on the documentation. It isn't new messages that people need; it's getting a grip on the existing message set.
- 80-90% of time should be spent improving documentation
 - 20-10% of time should be spent on new developing new messages.
 - Most people felt like they had the base set of messages they needed.
 - Attendees understood that you would never be able to go to the OTA site and figure out exactly how to connect to different partners. But you should be able to get a good enough idea so that you can plan your project.
 - Idea of "samples" link
 - Documentation on individual elements
 - Compare differences
 - Wiki –
 - On the negative - OTA loses control
 - On the positive, it would give us real world examples
 - Could a wiki be moderated by the OTA?
 - Would people really post to it?
 - Would companies provide guidance to trading partners via a public Wiki?
 - Schema –
 - Have too many optional elements
 - When implemented -> many become mandatory,
 - Could we learn up front before partnership agreement what elements are mandatory at what partners or for which usage profiles?
 - MySQL website –
 - People post comments on documentation. The posted comments are separate from the official documentation, so you know what you are looking at. And this could be loosely moderated.
 - Could we start something like that by posting the MUG from OTA? - People could add comments, but they can't change the original documentation.
 - If we put the MUG online, people could post comments on each section. But we'd still retain the original.
 - We would then have threaded discussion on the MUG by section.
 - OTA Implementer's Forum
 - Topics proliferating -> may become hard to search
 - Publicity re. Implementer's Forum
 - Cross Links
 - List in MUG
 - Include link in spec download
 - Readme file – reference in PDF
 - Plug registration!!

New messages

- Updating profile outside of res messages
- Participants want more info re existing messages but also continue the opportunity to create new messages as the need arises. – automation, new product to see
- We need a mechanism for overall spec management, not just on a release basis. How do we remove messages if no one is using them? Are there messages that don't need documentation because no one is using them?
- Should we ever remove messages? Is it enough to just not document them? But why remove anything?
- Do we need to approach things with a longer-term vision?
- Do we need a mechanism to trim pieces out of messages if they are not used?
- We have a good system for adding, but no ability to remove messages. Some ability to remove message parts through the deprecation policy.
- Deprecation policy - need robust registration to know who would care



- Website and other forums need Suggestions “box”
 - New messages
 - Changes
 - Deletions
- We need better visibility of past comments; once a release is out all comments disappear.
- Usage profile –
 - Which messages you use of which parts of a message do you use?
 - How do you use a message?
 - Use case?

7. Should OTA facilitate message exchange across suppliers?

Is GDS bypass feasible? **Yes**. In what situations? **By a travel agency owning the customer or by customers owning themselves.**

Is the super-PNR achievable? **Yes**. Who would own it and who could access it? **It would be owned by a travel agency or by the customer themselves. The customer could be the owner by means of an application on a cell phone, blackberry, windows, etc. How would OTA support it? By defining multi-supplier booking messages to service the customer once the trip has begun. Publish/Subscribe – Also by creating notification messages for each type of transaction that could take place. All verticals would need to participate in order for this to work**

How can customer service be enhanced? **If a hotel is oversold, they could intercept the guest before they arrive at the hotel to direct them to another hotel. Customer care equals increased loyalty. Who would pay for it? What would the ROI be?**

Is a la carte packaging really what the traveler wants? **Yes**. Who would own the customer? **The customer would own himself or he would be owned by a travel agency. How would suppliers communicate? Through the customer.**

What privacy concern should be considered? **Since the customer would own themselves, privacy issues really fall back on the customer. The customer would decide what information he wants to share with whom.**

- Individual supplier needs to be aware that their reservation is part of a Super-PNR.
- It costs to house passive PNR segments in a GDS...need to find another solution.
- Should the phone companies become involved?
- The customer managing the PNR facilitates direct connects
- What would an independent hotel do with that info? They could initiate messaging through their PMS system.
- A client application could be used to pull all of the references for each component together.
- Download of the XML could be an available option in addition to printing or emailing the confo.
- The customer would own themselves.
- Customer has the choice to manage the Super-PNR through a travel agency or by himself.
- Should OTA play a bigger role than just supplying the messages?
 - UDDI as a repository of interface definitions.
 - Registration is an unstructured repository of interface definitions. This could be used to start with and then it could evolve into a more structured and electronically available repository.
- May only store references to the segments in the Super-PNR. Each component has a reference to the other components within them. Along with some common data.
- Make booking with multiple components, synch components.
- Supplier issues with owning the Super-PNR



- If multiple hotel companies are in the PNR all data may not want to be shared hence a reference to the individual components from a Super-PNR may make more sense then housing all of the components in the entirety together. Permission/Privacy
- Sharing some information electronically may not be possible. It may not be legal to share some info such as the FAA has rules that do not allow an airline to share information regarding whether a particular passenger has boarded a plane.

8. How can OTA provide value to companies in the travel industry?

How can the OTA be more effective at getting visibility with the decision makers within an organization?

- **Marketing**
 - Demonstrate that it is a repeatable process.
 - Talk about time to market and value proposition
 - More OTA marketing to make it a more tangible/viable organization
 - More registrants and visibility
- OTA assisting in getting trading partners that use OTA to talk to each other (contact info)
- Create a list of companies that have implemented OTA (use list from Advisory Forum)
- **Visibility**
 - Consultants on board, active within OTA
 - More trade magazines
 - ↳ Buy advertising and get editorial
 - ↳ Include case study
 - More press releases
 - Travel bloggers
 - OTA implementation awards
- Get vendors or customers of suppliers to push OTA
- Expand OTA to travel and transport

What is the value proposition to companies for participating in the OTA and adopting the specification?

- Time to market \$\$ savings
- Cost of second implementation reduced
- Articulate “Lower Overhead”
- Articulate value of “XML” as soft value proposition
- Case studies of generic XML success stories
- **Participation**
 - You can dictate where specification goes—you have a voice
 - Reusability of your development
 - You get first hand knowledge of what is going on
 - Use participation as marketing tool for your company
 - Involve marketing counterpart to help sell OTA
- **More credible organization**

Does that value change between industry verticals?

- **Air and GDS**
 - More mature in adoption of electronic standards
 - Smaller value prop/elongated adoption
- **Hotels**
 - Less mature
 - OTA allowed leapfrog to next generation of technology
 - More capital available than Air
- Grow the market applies to all
- Air has more to gain because they are losing money
- Air

- Benefits from cross vertical or new businesses or services
- Bring on more direct connect partners faster (no IP infringements)
- Cruise - Value prop for big guys (e.g. Carnival) is lower but higher for smaller competitor
- Rail – Monopolies
 - Little value
- Dynamic packaging
 - Need all players to play
 - OTA value proposition is probably higher for external vs. internal usage

How can the OTA assist in better communicating and adopting the specification within organizations?

- Organic growth is how it is occurring
- Better explanation of what's available after the download. (e.g. via email or call)
- Email the specification instead of download