

The 21st Century Travel Agent

Besides the suggested changes in TMCs' supplier relations, Asata's 21st Century Travel Agent thought leadership paper presented at the conference gave delegates five other recommendations on how to change their travel business to deliver value and build strong, trust-based relationships with customers.

The recommendations are the result of a qualitative and quantitative market research study whereby Asata electronically surveyed 27 corporate buyers and held focus groups and one-on-one telephonic discussions with

strategic and operational agents.

The key recommendations:

- 1 TMCs must change their business value proposition in response to changes that continue to take place in the macro-economic and the industry environments.
- 2 TMCs should become far more customer-centric and focus on providing services that are relevant to customers' needs at a price that is appropriate.
- 3 TMCs should build strong, intimate relationships with their customers, based on trust and credibility.
- 4 TMCs should fully utilise
- 5 Travel agents should start investing in educating and motivating their employees.
- 6 TMCs should manage their supplier relationships carefully to balance their value proposition to their customers with the value received from and offered to their suppliers.
- 7 TMCs should change their remuneration model to focus on the perceived value they add to their customers. ■

their operational travel knowledge and expertise to become specialist advisers.

