

# Learn Why Marketing Travel Is Like Wine Tasting at Ft. Lauderdale Conference

Recently, Travel Trade's ever-efervescent business revivalist Keith Powell gave visitors to a wine festival in Albuquerque, NM, quick seminars on wine tasting — and the winery sold the most wine it ever has at the annual Labor Day event.

Powell adapted his new sales and marketing concept, called SPE, for the wine tasting seminars, and he will show travel agents how they can prosper in new vineyards using SPE during his workshop "Bringing Home More Bacon — Fun Marketing Techniques for Home

Based and Brick and Mortar Professionals," at the Travel Trade 22nd Annual Leisure Travel/Home Based/Winter CRUISE-A-TTHON, Dec. 1-4, in Ft. Lauderdale.

Powell said that his new concept — SPE, for Slow down, Pay attention and Experiment — is really old wine in a new bottle.

"It is basic marketing, but we need to slow down what we are doing because nowadays we are doing stuff too fast and the quality, focus and direction can just get lost."



**"You have to be proactive about the kind of business that you want."**  
— Keith Powell

Powell noted that it is much better to do one high quality marketing and sales campaign per quarter than a bunch of half-baked ones.

"We also have to pay attention to what we are doing — to the overall process of what we want to achieve via our sales and mar-

keting programs. And pay attention to the details because success is in those details and quality is all part of that."

### Try Something New

Also, experiment with new ideas, noted Powell. "Not all of them will work, but we are better off trying something new, going forward with new promotions and new selling techniques."

That is where the "power of creativity" comes in, noted Powell, who will also discuss how to combine creativity

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with being pro-active about your marketing programs.

"You have to be proactive about the kind of business that you want. If it is groups or high end business, then concentrate on getting that and don't worry about everything and everyone."

Powell's workshop is part of a conference program check-out  
*Continued on page 2*

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## ASTA Panel Seeks Governing Plan

**By John Stone**  
ASTA national secretary Mary Louise Seifert, CTC, has a big job ahead of her, and she knows it.

Seifert, owner of Welcome Aboard Vacation Center in Scottsdale, AZ, is the head of an eight-member ASTA Governance Committee formed to

address the next step in the restructuring of the travel agent association following the overwhelming approval last month of ASTA's new business plan by the membership.

The ASTA secretary knows her committee job is tough because this is her second stab at a governance proposal fol-

lowing one rejected in 2003 by a majority of voting members opposed to any consolidation of their local ASTA chapters.

"We've got a huge task," said Seifert. "Governance issues will include everything involv-

ing bylaws, the board of directors, the chapter presidents council, the committee structures and the chapters and regional areas."

Seifert said issues that her committee will not look at include completing the

York) director Stephen Fiore, owner of WorldTek Travel in West Haven, CT.

■ Area 2 (Southern California) director Robert Kern, owner of PNR Travel in Los Angeles.

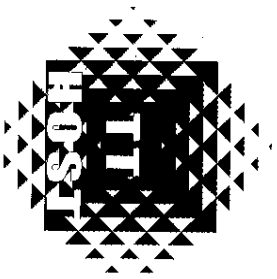
■ Delaware Valley Chapter president Kari Thomas, CTC, owner of Will Travel in Langhorne, PA.

■ South Florida Chapter president Nina Meyer, CTC, of Travelleaders in Miami.  
■ T



Travel Trade editor and publisher Joel M. Abels (second from left) received the CLA Hall of Fame award from (l-r) Revelex president and CEO David Goodis, Eileen Kennedy, VP of marketing, Gallileo; and CLA

## Dickinson Says Charters



# HOST AGENCY CORNER

## TPI Focuses on Training, Professionalism

By John Stone

Travel Planners International, the host agency based in the Orlando suburb of Winter Park, FL, has built much of its professional reputation in the industry on its affiliated travel school, the Gagliano Career Academy, started by the family of TPI's CEO Anthony Gagliano.

Kim Shernet, the TPI director of agent relations in charge of recruiting independent contractor agents to the agency, started her industry career at the Gagliano Academy in 1997.

"I was a military wife and we lived in Germany for eight years," said Shernet. "We traveled a lot. After my husband retired and we moved back to Florida I wanted to do some-



ANTHONY GAGLIANO

thing fun. And I decided to go to travel school."

After a two-month training program, Shernet served an internship by working as an independent contractor for TPI while retaining her job in a Hawaiian clothing shop. Soon,

with the blessing of both TPI and her shop owners, the fledgling agent was selling cruises to go with flowered Aloha shirts and sarongs for her newly-acquired agency clients.

### Dramatic Change

Shernet, with eight years in the travel industry, has seen dramatic change in the home based agent category.

"People did not take home based agents seriously in 1997," she said. "But Sept. 11, 2001 changed all that and agents began moving to independent contractor positions." TPI, which was one of the first agencies with a host program starting in 1988, has built the business over 17 years of "catering to a wide spectrum of independent agents," according to Shernet.

Independent agent business models hosted by TPI include small home based agents, higher-volume home agencies, brick-and-mortar agencies without ARC appointments and corporate travel department agents.

Overall, TPI has approximately 1,100 agents of whom the majority is home based but a strong minority is brick-and-mortar, said the director of agent relations.

Among TPI program features are a preferred consortium membership in Vacation.com, which TPI independent agents receive with their hosting fees, exclusive Seminars at Sea arranged and hosted by TPI and a proprietary travel booking platform.

Agents gain access with a monthly fee to any of the four major GDS systems and TPI will recommend to home based

agents which GDS best serves their needs. Members have access to two TPI Web sites, including TPIONline.com and TravelAgentFromHome.com.

The host agency, according to Shernet, places professionalism at the top of its mandatory member qualities and requires at least six months of industry experience in any customer relations category or graduation from an accredited travel agency school in order to qualify for membership.

As for his take on the current state of the host agency sector of the industry, Anthony Gagliano said, "You have to lead by example."

The CEO advocates "an industry standards test, administered by CLIA or ICTA or a respected industry organization. It could be administered by a licensed private school in the way that realtors

are tested and licensed."

"I also believe there should be a Uniform Seller of Travel Law based on a model state statute that could be adopted across the country," said Gagliano.

"As people expect professionalism from us as a host agency," he added, "the entire industry should hold our reputation high enough to be proud of our public image as travel agents rather than continuing to let our reputation be lowered to the level of used-car salesman."

TPI's annual membership renewal hosting fee is \$169 to the first agent in an independent contractor agency and \$79 per additional agent. Included services are 24-hour access to an agent service help desk; 24/7 reservations center service for clients needing service when the IC agent is unavailable and a \$1 million E&O policy.



## 2005 MEDIA PROFILE

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## Selected Host Agencies

Click on to Travel Trade's comprehensive Host Agency Guide on [Traveltrade.com](http://Traveltrade.com) for complete, updated information online regarding the Host Agencies listed below.

- A Small World Travel**  
321 N. 121 St. Suite 211  
Waukesha, WI 53226  
(414) 443-0388  
Fax: (414) 443-0390  
E-mail: [busys@smallworldtravel.com](mailto:busys@smallworldtravel.com)  
[www.smallworldtravel.com](http://www.smallworldtravel.com)
- Golden Planners**  
3300 University Drive, Suite 802  
Coral Springs, FL 33065  
(954) 582-2166  
Fax: (954) 544-0875  
E-mail: [ross@goldenplanners.com](mailto:ross@goldenplanners.com)  
[www.goldenplanners.com](http://www.goldenplanners.com)
- Golden Value Center**  
6 Egleston Road  
East Brunswick, NJ 08816  
(908) 251-7447 / (732) 257-4645  
Fax: (732) 360-7438  
E-mail: [ross@goldenvalue.com](mailto:ross@goldenvalue.com)
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