

服務費之本在於出色服務

Sterling service is bedrock of service fees

本刊記者 Staff reporter

六十多名會員出席了研討會，認為服務費模式是可行之道。

Over 60 members attended a seminar, and agreed that the fee-based model is viable.

過去十多年，航空公司削減甚至撤銷旅行社的佣金，加上在網上購買機票的旅客又越來越多，因而對票務旅行社的業務造成不小的衝擊。經營環境既已轉變，票務旅行社就應知道不能再單靠佣金維生。要逆境求存，必須改變行之已久的經營模式。

為了幫助會員思索未來的方向，訓練委員會於二零一二年七月十一日在議會培訓中心舉行「如何面對轉變中的票務營運環境」研討會，邀請了四名來自業界和學術界的講者陳述見解並與會員交流。活動共有六十三人出席。

服務費模式是可行的，可是……

研討會首先由票務委員會召集人盧輝華先生發言。他認為應付削佣有幾種策略：(一)減低營運成本；(二)把業務轉型，開拓不受削佣影響的消閒旅遊產品；(三)建立以服務費為主導的商業模式。旅行社的價值在於具備專業知識，全面掌握市場產品的資訊，能為顧客選擇最切合他們需要的產品。只要旅行社能提供一流而專業的服務，顧客就會覺得服務費是物有所值的。服務費模式獲顧客接受後，就可為旅行社帶來長遠的利潤。

職業訓練局才晉高等教育學院兼職講師申育成先生則指出，中小型零售旅行社可採取專業化或低成本的競爭策略。專業化策略指發展獨特的產品或專注於冷門市場，好處是有助提升行業的整體水平和專業程度，但旅行社要投入更多資源不斷改進產品和服務。低成本策略則以低價提供大量標準化產品，優點是合理的價格能符合顧客期望，弊端是會令利潤下降，而且新對手容易進入市場，令競爭

Over the past decade or so, ticketing agents have been hard hit by the reduction or even elimination of commission from airlines and the growing popularity of Internet booking of air tickets by travellers. Now that the business environment has changed, ticketing agents should realise that they can no longer rely solely on commission. To survive in adversity, they must change their well-established business model.

To help members ponder their future direction, the Training Committee held a seminar on the strategies in the changing ticketing environment at the TIC Training Centre on 11 July 2012. Four guest speakers from the industry and academia were invited to talk about their views and exchange ideas with 63 attending members.

A fee-based model is viable, but ...

The first speaker was Ticketing Committee Convenor Mr Larry Lo, who suggested several strategies to tackle commission cuts: (1) lower operating costs; (2) shift the business focus to leisure travel products unaffected by commission cuts; and (3) establish a service fee-driven business model. The value of travel agents lay in their professional knowledge, a good grasp of the information of products on the market, and the ability to select products that best suited the needs of customers. As long as their services were first-rate and professional, customers would find that the service fees were well worth paying. Once the fee-based model was accepted by customers, travel agents could secure long-term profitability.

Mr Edic Sun, a part-time lecturer of the School for Higher and Professional Education, the Vocational Training Council, pointed out that SME retail agents might adopt either a professionalisation or a low-cost strategy in order to compete. The former meant developing unique products or focusing on niche markets, which could help raise the overall standard and professional level of the industry but which required more resources for continuous enhancement of products and services. A low-cost strategy was to offer a large quantity of standardised products at a low cost. While its merit was that customers would find reasonable prices satisfactory, it would drive profits down, and new competitors could easily enter the market, thus intensifying competition. **He considered that the role of a modern travel agent had changed from a middleman to a consultant, who should cultivate a long-lasting**

更加激烈。他認為，現代旅行社的角色已由中介人變為顧問，應與顧客發展長遠的代理人與委託人關係，推行服務費模式是今後可取的做法。

……怎樣去收取服務費？

另一名講者是富聯美國運通旅遊有限公司總經理彭銘東先生，他講述了自己實行服務費制度的經驗。他表示，旅行社以往從航空公司身上賺錢，推行服務費制度後，則變成從顧客身上賺錢。旅行社收取服務費要有透明度，宜與顧客簽訂合約，清楚列出服務範圍及所有收費項目。至於如何令顧客接受這種模式，他認為只要旅行社能為顧客創造價值，顧客自然樂意付出費用。

立成旅遊有限公司董事湯立成先生強調，旅行社要留住顧客，就必須以客為本，與顧客建立良好的關係。良好的服務態度可以令旅行社得到忠心的顧客，他因此非常重視員工的培訓。他提到網上訂購旅遊產品雖然方便，卻缺乏售後服務兼且有欠靈活，互聯網始終難以取代旅行社。

出席的會員都同意，只要旅行社能提供優越的服務，顧客就不會介意付出服務費。有會員表明，減佣的趨勢已無法逆轉，旅行社必須適應經營環境的轉變，培訓員工以改善服務。此外，旅行社還要瞭解顧客的需要，為他們提供最新的產品資訊，並做好售後支援服務。總之，優良服務就是服務費制度賴以成功的基石。

自從一九九九年有航空公司率先削減旅行社佣金以來，其他航空公司紛紛倣效，有幾家更已撤銷佣金。旅行社為零佣金時代做好準備，使消費者習慣並接受服務費模式，方為上策。這或許不能一蹴而就，但到了今天，難道還可以不起步嗎？

principal-agent relationship with customers. Adopting a fee-based model was a desirable approach to future development.

... how to collect service fees?

Another speaker Mr Anthony Pang, General Manager of Farrington American Express Travel Services Ltd, gave an account of his experience in adopting a fee-based model. He remarked that travel agents used to earn money from airlines, but with the fee-based system in place, they would earn money from customers. Any fee-based schemes adopted by travel agents should be transparent, with the scope of services and their fees clearly stated in contracts signed with customers. As to how to make customers accept such a model, he believed that customers would be willing to pay the service fees so long as travel agents could create value for them.

On the method of retaining customers, Mr Jackie Tong, Director of Travelux Ltd, stressed that travel agents should be customer-oriented and build a sound relationship with their customers. As a good service attitude could engender customer loyalty, he attached much importance to

staff training. Although it was convenient to make travel bookings online, the Internet was unable to replace travel agents because it lacked after-sales service and flexibility.

The attending members agreed that customers would not mind paying a service fee provided that the services provided by travel agents were invaluable. Some members stated that since the trend of commission reduction was irreversible, travel agents had to adapt themselves to the changing business environment and train their staff to provide better services. They should also know the needs of their customers, provide them with up-to-date product information and offer good after-sales support. In short, quality service is the cornerstone of the success of a fee-based system.

Since the first airline cut its commission to travel agents in 1999, many airlines have followed suit and some even dropped the commission altogether. The best strategy for travel agents is to prepare themselves for the zero commission era and help customers adapt to and accept the fee-based model. Even though success cannot be easily achieved, can they afford not to take the first step even now?



▲ (左起)湯立成先生、彭銘東先生、申育成先生、盧輝華先生與會員探討如何應付當前的挑戰。
(From left): Mr Jackie Tong, Mr Anthony Pang, Mr Edic Sun and Mr Larry Lo discuss ways to meet the current challenges with members.